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Kosovo: From Separation to Integration*

Dušan T. Bataković
Ambassador of Serbia and Montenegro
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The future of Kosovo and Metohija, a southern province of Serbia under UN administration since June 1999, within Serbia and Montenegro depends on the willingness of both Serbs and Albanians to engage in serious and accountable negotiations through international mediation in order to restore basic human rights and freedom of movement for all of its inhabitants and provide for the return of internally displaced persons. The ultimate aim would be to rebuild a multicultural, multiethnic society in compliance with the UN Security Council Resolution 1244 of 10 June 1999. This Resolution has reaffirmed the sovereignty of the Federal Republic of Yugoslavia (FRY, Serbia and Montenegro since February 2003) over Kosovo and Metohija, foreseen the return of an agreed-upon number of Yugoslav security forces in the province, and implied the establishment of “substantial autonomy” for Kosovo and Metohija within FRY (i.e., Serbia-Montenegro). The chief aim of UNSC Resolution 1244, at least the officially declared aim, was not the separation of Kosovo and Metohija from the rest of Serbia and FRY, but its rebuilding as a democratic society that would eventually, possibly with a high degree of autonomy, be reintegrated into a future democratic framework for a common state of Serbia-Montenegro.

Although democracy was finally restored in Belgrade, after the ousting of the authoritarian regime of Slobodan Milošević in October 2000, a restoration in which both federal and republican authorities were willing to cooperate with the United Nations Interim Administration Mission in Kosovo (UNMIK) and start serious negotiations with Kosovo Albanians, none of these goals have been achieved in the past four years. On the contrary, the whole process of rebuilding Kosovo and Metohija as a democratic, multiethnic society failed due to both the inability of the UN Mission and the Kosovo Force (KFOR) to

* All statements in this paper, presented at the 2003 National Convention of the American Association for the Advancement of Slavic Studies in Toronto, on 20 November 2003, constitute personal views of the author, as an experienced researcher on this subject, and do not necessarily reflect the official position of Serbia and Montenegro.

protect Serbs and other non-Albanian populations and prevent a large-scale ethnic cleansing, this time primarily against Serbs. Orchestrated by Albanian extremists, this new wave of postwar ethnic cleansing was tacitly approved not only by the majority of the Kosovo Albanian population, but also by their political leaders, as a kind of justified revenge for crimes against ethnic Albanians previously committed by the Serbian police or paramilitaries under the Milošević regime.¹

Therefore, the overall situation concerning basic security and freedom of movement for the non-Albanian population, the return of internally displaced persons, and the building of interethnic tolerance, have been constantly deteriorating since June 1999. The first positive achievement of the UN mission was the quick and safe return of hundreds of thousands of Albanians who had left or were forced to leave Kosovo during the NATO bombing campaign. They safely returned to their homes within several weeks after KFOR and UNMIK took control over the province. Nevertheless, tens of thousands of Albanians from northern Albania also entered Kosovo in order to pillage the property abandoned by those Serbs who fled to Serbia or Montenegro, according to local Serbs.

Conversely, most of the Serbian and other non-Albanian population was forced out of the province, while those remaining were deprived of their fundamental human rights. In spite of joint efforts by UNMIK and KFOR, the systematic persecution of non-Albanians by Albanian extremists in the last four years has continued to be the main obstacle to any viable progress in building a tolerant multiethnic, multicultural, and multireligious society under the rule of law.

During the first three months of UN administration, approximately 250,000 Serbs and other non-Albanians (Roma, Muslim Slavs, Croats, and members of the tiny Jewish community) were displaced and expelled from Kosovo, finding asylum in the rest of Serbia or in Montenegro. According to data from the United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees (UNHCR), an additional 11,115 Serbs left Kosovo in 2000, while more than 900 others were forced to leave in 2001.

Within weeks, a prewar population of 40,000 Serbs in the provincial capital Priština was reduced to only 120 inhabitants. They were confined to a single apartment building. They had no freedom of movement and were heavily guarded by KFOR. Serbs were also evicted from important towns like Peć, Prizren, Djakovica, and Uroševac within weeks after KFOR took over. There,

¹ A review of the first period of UNMIK rule, mostly during the administration of Bernard Kouchner, can be found in Alexandar Yannis, *Kosovo under International Administration* (Athens: ELIAMEP/PSIS, 2001).

of thousands of Serb inhabitants, only a few dozen—mostly elderly—remained, surviving by hiding in churches and in the Serbian Orthodox Theological School (*Bogoslovija*) in Prizren, which was also under the protection of KFOR forces.

These people, like the approximately 90,000–120,000 other remaining Serbs, are still living in virtual segregation within KFOR-protected enclaves in Kosovo and Metohija, deprived of basic security, freedom of movement, and all other fundamental civil rights. Only those living north of Kosovska Mitrovica (districts of northern Mitrovica, Zubin Potok, Zvečan, and Leposavić), due to the direct territorial link to central Serbia, are not completely isolated from the outside world; this, however, is not the situation with other Serbs who live in the enclaves bordering mostly Albanian-inhabited areas (Štrpce, Kosovska Vitina, Gračanica, Gnjilane, Goraždevac, Novo Brdo, Velika Hoča, and others).

According to the data provided by Serbian police and confirmed by UNMIK, since 1 January 1998 there were 1,303 missing persons: 944 Serbs, 210 Muslim Roma, and 149 Albanians. According to the data provided by The Hague Tribunal in June 1999, there were 547 Serbs killed and 932 Serbs and other non-Albanians kidnapped. After four years of international rule in the province, 1,192 Serbs were killed, 1,303 kidnapped, and another 1,305 wounded in 6,391 ethnically motivated attacks by Albanian extremists.² Nevertheless, none of the perpetrators of these ethnically motivated crimes have been arrested or sentenced.³

From June 1999 until December 2000, all the judges and prosecutors were ethnic Albanians. Seven Serb judges were later appointed, but were forced to leave their posts and flee to inner Serbia after being threatened by Albanian extremists. The appointment of international judges proved to be insufficient due to constant pressures by extremists in the predominantly Albanian environment, who were totally unwilling to cooperate in finding the perpetrators of ethnically motivated crimes. According to the report of the Secretary-General on UNMIK of 26 June 2003, there were only fifteen international judges and ten international prosecutors serving in the local judicial system; they are capable of dealing with only three percent of all criminal cases. The inevitable consequence of the inefficient judiciary was the emergence of a culture of impunity surrounding violence against the non-Albanian population and Serbs in particular.

² Figures provided by the Coordination Center of Serbia & Montenegro and the Republic of Serbia for Kosovo and Metohija, Belgrade.

³ More details in *Memorandum o Kosovu i Metohiji Svetog Arhijerejskog Sabora Srpske Pravoslavne Crkve* (Belgrade, 2003).

In addition, thousands of houses and apartments (approximately 75,000) as well as land owned by non-Albanians are still under usurpation by local Albanians, while 30,000 other homes and properties were robbed and burned. In comparison with approximately 70,000 Albanian properties that were destroyed during the fighting in 1998 and the NATO bombing campaign in 1999, Kosovo's postwar record under UNMIK administration is clear evidence of large-scale revenge, a nineteenth-century-style collective vendetta against a distinct ethnic community.⁴

From June 1999 to June 2003, the number of destroyed and desecrated Serbian Orthodox churches—at least one-third of them important Byzantine-style medieval Serbian monuments—has amounted to 117, while the most important medieval monasteries, from the Patriarchate of Peć to Dečani to Gračanica to the Bogorodica Ljeviška Cathedral in Prizren, have been under constant protection from KFOR since June 1999.⁵ There is a general impression that, after the establishment of UN administration, there has been an orchestrated attempt by Albanian extremists not only to evict all Serbs but also to remove all traces of their cultural and historical heritage, something that the Albanians perceive as an important precondition for obtaining independence for an Albanian-dominated Kosovo.

As stressed on many occasions by representatives of the Kosovo Diocese of the Serbian Orthodox Church (*Eparhija Raško-Prizrenska i Kosovsko-Metohijska*), this is a strategy of cutting off Kosovo Serbs from their historical and religious traditions. Only in November 2002, for instance (a day before UN Secretary-General Kofi Annan's visit) two separate explosions blew up two Serbian Orthodox churches in western Kosovo: a church in Ljubova was leveled, while the interior of a church in nearby Djurakovac sustained serious damage. In addition, during the same month, several graveyards in Dečani and Kosovo Polje were vandalized by Albanian extremists,⁶ raising the toll of

⁴ More details in Tim Judah, *Kosovo: War and Revenge* (New Haven: Yale University Press, 2000).

⁵ Cf. documentation in *Crucified Kosovo. Destroyed and Desecrated Serbian Orthodox Churches in Kosovo and Metohia (June-October 1999)* (Gračanica: The Voice of Kosovo and Metohija, 1999). Additional documentation can be found in: Branislav Krstić (ed.), *Saving the Cultural Heritage of Serbia and Europe in Kosovo and Metohija* (Belgrade: Liber Press, 2002).

⁶ Serbian Orthodox Diocese of Kosovo and Metohija Info-Service (ERP KIM), report from Gračanica of 28 November 2002, *idem*, report from Gračanica of 30 November 2002: The statement of the latter report is as follows: "Marking the national holiday of Albania, the so-called Flag Day, during the night between November 28 and November 29, local Albanian extremists destroyed a total of 46 grave stones at the Orthodox cemetery in Kosovo Polje [...] the grave stones of prominent Serb families and Serbs killed after the arrival of the international mission in Kosovo and Metohija. On most of the grave stones the photographs of the deceased

desecrated Serbian graveyards to several dozen throughout the province. The discovery of a powerful explosive device in the vicinity of the Monastery of St. Archangels near Prizren, prevented a massacre of at least one thousand Serbian pilgrims who came, under heavy KFOR escort, to celebrate the 650th anniversary of the monastery's founding. In May 2003, Spanish and Greek soldiers of the KFOR contingent were attacked with hand grenades while protecting Serbian churches in Istok (Monastery of Gorioč) and Uroševac respectively.⁷

Although reports from the Organization for Security and Cooperation in Europe and the UNHCR stressed that in 2002 the number of ethnically motivated crimes continued to decrease, it was only due to the fact that many Serbs simply disappeared from previously ethnically mixed areas after continuous threats, attacks, and assassinations by Albanian extremists. Since May 2002, KFOR has begun to scale down its presence in the so-called "minority areas," which was a signal to Albanian extremists to continue with their strategy of ethnic cleansing and persecute Serbs from all parts of Kosovo and Metohija through a new series of ethnically motivated crimes in order to force them to leave the province, and, additionally, to discourage those willing to return.

The decreased percentage of ethnically motivated killings in 2002 has, however, shown that the targets were no longer large Serbian communities, but mostly smaller and more vulnerable ones, those in ethnically mixed areas. On 6 January 2002, a Serb was killed by a grenade in front of his house in Kosovska Kamenica. On 23 February, a Serbian woman was killed in Lipljan after an unknown perpetrator fired at her and her son. Five Serbian houses were destroyed in August by explosive devices planted in Klokot near Kosovska Vitina and several persons were injured, including two American KFOR troops. In October, a woman from the same village was murdered. In December, a Serbian peasant from the village of Cernica, near Gnjilane, was killed as well. The number of attacks that did not result in the death of victims was considerably higher. The number of ethnically motivated attacks against Serbs resulting in serious injuries has increased from 274 in 2001 to 454 in 2003.

were completely destroyed and their names removed. [...] Following the attack of two days ago on the cemetery of Dečani, this latest act of vandalism demonstrates the intent of the Albanian extremists to fully achieve their goal and erase the last traces of Serb graves and holy places in Kosovo and Metohija. In all of this, especially disturbing is the fact that the UN mission and KFOR have no solution to this problem and that cemeteries and more recently built churches have been completely abandoned to their fate and the barbarism of the 'Balkan Talibans.'"

⁷ ERP KIM Info-Service, Obilić, 4 June 2003.

Despite the arrest of several suspects, all the assassination cases remained unsolved. The next wave of the ethnic cleansing campaign targeted other areas with a strong Serbian presence but weak security protection. Three more Serbs were killed in ethnically mixed villages from April to late May, and on 4 June 2003 three members of the Stolić family from Obilić near Priština were massacred.⁸ A Serb was shot by an unknown perpetrator while fishing on 12 June.⁹ On 14 August, two Serb youths were shot dead and four others wounded while swimming in the Bistrica River in the thousand-person Serbian enclave of Goraždevac near Peć. The assassination occurred on the day of the arrival of the new (the fourth one since 1999) UN Special Representative of the Secretary-General for Kosovo, Hari Holkeri of Finland.¹⁰ After strong international pressure, Kosovo Albanian political leaders half-heartedly and unconvincingly condemned their compatriots' act of violence against the teenage Serbs.

Despite some efforts, the UN administration has proven unable to restrain the strategy of violence on the part of certain extremist groups of Kosovo Albanians, a strategy that still enjoys the approval of the majority of their compatriots. The prevalent atmosphere of legal disorder and ethnically motivated revenge against non-Albanians and the dramatic security situation in Kosovo concerning the status of Serb and other non-Albanian populations has not substantially changed. In addition, under the rule of the Albanian majority, Kosovo became a hotbed of all kinds of organized crime—including the illegal trafficking of drugs, guns, human beings, cigarettes, and petrol—which turned the province into a paradise for all kinds of smuggling. The “Republic of Kosovo,” as proclaimed by the Albanians, has been turned into a “Republic of Heroin,” as it was labeled by some international observers that monitor illegal trafficking in the Balkans.¹¹

Within the regional context, Kosovo continued to be a main instigator of political crisis. The spillover effect of the KLA insurgency in the Preševo area (Ground Safety Zone in southern Serbia) and western parts of the Republic of Macedonia (FYROM) during 2001 was possible only after

⁸ ERP KIM Info-Service Obilić, 4 June 2003

⁹ The list of ethnically motivated assassinations is available in *NIN*, Belgrade, 21 August 2003, p. 11.

¹⁰ Ian Trainor, “Atrocity at the Bistrica Beach,” *The Guardian*, London, August 15, 2003. As stated by Fr. Sava Janjić of Dečani, “The massacre of innocent children in Goraždevac is, first and foremost, a shocking indicator of the real situation in Kosovo and Metohija that the majority of UNMIK and KFOR representatives, together with Albanian political leaders, are persistently attempting to hide from the global public in order to rationalize their own failures” (ERP KIM Info-Service, Gračanica, 15 August 2003).

¹¹ Cf. *Vreme*, Belgrade, 27 August 2003, pp. 15–18.

Kosovo was used as a logistical military and political base for the Albanian guerrillas, who recruited their followers from the former KLA. The successful containment of Albanian terrorism in southern Serbia by Yugoslav and Serbian forces was coupled with confidence-building measures, including a mixed police force and substantial financial support for its implementation.¹² On the other hand, in the western parts of the FYR of Macedonia, the Albanian revolt, strongly dependent on the logistical and manpower support of Kosovo Albanians, was terminated only after NATO and EU mediation.

Since October 2000, Belgrade has called for a full implementation of UNSC Resolution 1244/99, demanding that the *Constitutional Framework* for the transitional institutions be based on that document. At the same time, there were numerous attempts by Belgrade authorities to engage in dialogue with moderate political leaders of the Kosovo Albanians, but all offers were declined by the Albanian side. All 1,894 Albanian prisoners from Serbian jails have been released in order to facilitate this dialogue, and to show the difference from the Milošević regime. However, Kosovo Albanians have not found or released any of the approximately 1,300 missing Serbs. Under the UNMIK plan, only eighty out of approximately 250,000 displaced Serbs were able to return to Kosovo (village of Osojane) in 2001, under the auspices of KFOR. Overall, in four years of UNMIK administration, only two percent of Serbs have returned. At this pace, the eventual return of all displaced Serbs would take another 125 years.

Although there has been no progress in a political dialogue with the Kosovo Albanian leadership, the Yugoslav government, through its Coordination Center for Kosovo and Metohija, headed by Deputy Prime Minister of Serbia Nebojša Čović, has established a closer relationship with UNMIK. International representatives have become increasingly aware that there could be no solution for the Kosovo crisis without involving FRY in the process of the full implementation of UNSC Resolution 1244. Despite serious complaints by the Yugoslav government regarding the *Constitutional Framework for Interim Self-Government in Kosovo*, approved by the UN Secretary-General's Special Representative Hans Haekkerup (regarding the protection of Kosovo Serbs and other non-Albanians), the Yugoslav authorities had encouraged Kosovo Serbs (including internally displaced person in Serbia and Montenegro) to register for the general elections in Kosovo that took place on 17 November 2001. Roughly 170,000 Serbs (probably 80 percent of the eligible Kosovo Serb population) agreed to be registered. After a

¹² The complete plan for resolving the crisis in the Preševo area is available in Milo Gligorijević (ed.), *Serbia after Milošević. Program for the Solution of the Crisis in the Pčinja District* (Belgrade: Liber-Press, 2001), 69–148.

special agreement on institutionalized cooperation had been signed between FRY and UNMIK in Belgrade on 5 November 2001, the Yugoslav authorities called on the Kosovo Serbs to participate in the general elections in order to promote reconciliation and foster further cooperation with UNMIK.¹³

Nevertheless, only a month later, Haekkerup decided to leave Kosovo after heavy pressure from Albanians resulting from the conclusion of the agreement with Belgrade. The Serbian political coalition “Return,” which joined the transitional institutions of Kosovo, including the Parliament, was rewarded for its cooperation by the constant efforts of the Albanian deputies to disregard, by a majority vote, all of the Serbian deputies’ proposals aimed at rebuilding interethnic confidence and implementing measures important for the protection of basic human rights for the Serbian and other non-Albanian communities. For the Kosovo Albanians, the only question to be discussed both with Kosovo Serbs and the Belgrade government is the date of the proclamation of the independence of Kosovo.

At the same time, a wide range of options for the possible final status of Kosovo and Metohija has been discussed,¹⁴ although the main preconditions, as envisaged by UNSC Resolution 1244 have not been met. This was confirmed by various human rights monitoring groups including Amnesty International.¹⁵

The policy of “standards before status,” inaugurated by the third UNMIK chief, Michael Steiner of Germany, and approved by both the UN and the EU, was welcomed by Belgrade, where hopes were high that this policy would put an end to the strategy of ethnic cleansing perpetrated against the Serbs in the province of Kosovo and Metohija. Nevertheless, during 2002, rather unaccommodating approaches to Kosovo’s realities prevailed at the UN Security Council due to different priorities. Steiner consistently praised the progress made in rebuilding transitional institutions, while still acknowledging that the return process had been “too slow,” and that it was disgraceful that in 2002 there were still enclaves in Europe.¹⁶

¹³ All documents regarding the cooperation between the Belgrade government and UNMIK are available in a bilingual (Serbian/English) edition of *Documents on Kosovo and Metohija/Dokumenti o Kosovu i Metohiji* (Belgrade: Liber Press, 2002).

¹⁴ A good review of these options is available in: *Kosovo Final Status. Options and Cross-Border Requirements* (United States Institute for Peace, Special Report, July 2002).

¹⁵ Amnesty International’s concerns for the human rights of minorities in Kosovo/Kosova.

¹⁶ Steiner admitted, however, that about 1,000 people returned in the first six months of 2002, while 268 had left, without specifying their ethnic origin. (UN Security Council, 30 July 2002, SC/7472)

In contrast, the Serbian deputy prime minister, Nebojša Čović, insisted that the UN mission and KFOR were still incapable of preventing violations of human rights where the remaining Serbs, other non-Albanians, and the few returnees to the region continued to be subjected to terror, murder, and robbery on a daily basis. The Serbian representative stressed that international peacekeepers and mission personnel had been unable to prevent the spate of murders and robberies, despite the *Principles for Return of Internally Displaced Persons from Kosovo and Metohija*, which he had presented to the UN Security Council in April 2002, and UNMIK's own *Concepts of Rights to Sustainable Return*. Despite the uniformity of both texts, as stressed by Čović, the return process remained a "dead letter." Čović also stressed that sustainable return, freedom of movement, restoration of property rights, and basic security had to be supported by the representatives of local self-government.¹⁷

Both Serbia and Montenegro and Kosovo Serbs understand that obtaining a territorialized self-government for the Serb-inhabited areas in the province is the only remaining way of stopping the ethnic cleansing campaign which is still under way and of maintaining the multiethnic character of the province. For Kosovo Serbs, the constant claims by UNMIK that the largest Serbian region, north of the Ibar River in Kosovska Mitrovica, should give up its partially parallel local structures to the provisional Albanian-led government have been rejected only because it would inevitably lead to another large-scale ethnic cleansing of Serbs, most of whom are living there in a kind of a safe haven under the protection of KFOR.

Up to this point, Kosovo Albanians have been determined to pursue their quest for full independence. Everything they have done during the four-year UN mission in the province is aimed at fortifying this demand. Considering this demand for independence, every means—from political to terrorist—has been used to undermine the Serbian presence in and influence on the internal affairs of Kosovo and Metohija, and to achieve—contrary to UNSC Resolution 1244—a clear and definite separation of Kosovo structures from those of the Republic of Serbia and the state union of Serbia and Montenegro. Within this narrow, nineteenth-century concept of full ethnic domination, regional consequences are disregarded, including the possibility of a new major crisis in the Balkans that would provoke a domino effect with unforeseeable consequences.

Despite these shortcomings, the authorities of Serbia and Montenegro remained fully committed to working with both the international community and UNMIK in Kosovo to build democracy and the rule of law for all inhabitants of Kosovo and Metohija province. They are persistent in demanding re-

¹⁷ UN Security Council, 30 July 2002, SC/7472.

gional stability by fully implementing UNSC Resolution 1244, which envisages “substantial autonomy” and “meaningful self-government” within the state union of Serbia and Montenegro. The Belgrade government has, however, on many occasions shown its unambiguous commitment to joint efforts by the international community to combat all kinds of terrorism and extremism in Kosovo and Metohija. For Serbia and Montenegro, the main goal in Kosovo and Metohija is to contribute to the improvement of basic security for all its residents, provide for the return of all displaced persons to the province—irrespective of their religious and national affiliation, promote interethnic reconciliation, enforce the rule of law, and fully participate in rebuilding a multiethnic society.

To this end, the Belgrade government accepted, through the mediation of the EU, the UN and the Contact Group, a dialogue with Priština in Vienna, which started on 14 October 2003. There will be further discussion on the issues of basic security, the return of internally displaced persons, and transport and energy issues. The policy of “standards before status” remains a pillar of the approach accepted by the international community. The Serbian side, fully accepting this concept, has demanded that these standards (basically covering the establishment of democratic institutions, the rule of law, the sustainable return of internally displaced persons, basic security for all, and sustainable economic development) be clearly defined and properly measured.

The gradual reconciliation of Albanians and Serbs, although still not evident, will significantly contribute to reconciling the whole of Kosovo and Metohija with the rest of Serbia and with the state union of Serbia and Montenegro. It is of the utmost importance that neither of the two sides involved in solving the Kosovo status issue feel defeated or betrayed, thus fueling further confrontations and renewed regional instability. Only through the reconciliation of all its residents and through a mutually accepted agreement between Belgrade and Priština, can the status issue for the province be solved. The first review of the progress in these fields will be made in mid-2005. There are, however, no problems that cannot be solved within existing state borders and within the prospects of the common European future. In addition, long-term regional stability will not allow any change of the internationally recognized borders. Hence for Kosovo and Metohija the road to the European Union should pass through Serbia and Montenegro.

Jovan Ristić at the Berlin Congress 1878

David MacKenzie
University of North Carolina Greensboro

*We are agreed about our urgent need for a territorial increase,
but we fear this increase will be covered with burdens...
We fear Austrian controls over Serbia from which hopefully
your patriotism and wisdom will preserve Serbia.*

Grujić to Ristić, June 1878

The Berlin Congress was one of the most important diplomatic conclaves in modern European history, vital in determining Balkan frontiers and power relationships. Participating as full members were all major European powers: Germany, Austria-Hungary, Russia, France, Britain, and Italy. Smaller Balkan states, such as Serbia, Montenegro, and Romania, whose frontiers and status were determined by the Congress, sent representatives, but they were excluded from formal Congress sessions. However, most decisions, later confirmed by the Treaty of Berlin, were reached by all participants, including Serbia, informally behind closed doors. It was there that the outstanding diplomat, Foreign Minister Jovan Ristić (1831–99), played a crucial and positive role for Serbia.

Tasks facing the Congress delegates included working on a Bulgarian settlement, determining Russian gains in the Balkans and Asia Minor, and delimiting the frontiers of the Serbian states, while plenary sessions remained largely empty formalities. The Austro-Hungarian occupation of Bosnia-Herzegovina was assured from the start as was Serbia's reliance upon Vienna for territorial gains beyond those in the Treaty of San Stefano. However, the Serbian states' long-term allegiances and precise frontiers remained most uncertain.

Theoretically heading the Russian delegation in Berlin was Foreign Minister A. M. Gorchakov, but physical infirmity, impatience, and ignorance of Balkan geography rendered him unfit to direct the defense of Russian interests in Berlin. The Chancellor's incapacity placed a heavy burden on Russia's number-two delegate, Count P. A. Shuvalov, but he handled numer-

ous tasks with rare ability and good humor.¹ Having the real authority among Russia's delegates, Shuvalov made the crucial decisions averting a conflict with Austria and England, conferring with Gorchakov only for show. Frankly admitting his relative ignorance of Balkan affairs, Count Shuvalov worked assiduously to overcome that lack.² As a whole, Russia's delegates were neither a powerful nor united team. Unconcealed hostility between Gorchakov and Shuvalov endangered Russian and Serbian interests in Berlin. Gorchakov adopted his government's pacific view as the Russian delegation resolved to avoid war if compatible with national honor. Declared Gorchakov: "Russia brings her laurels here, and she hopes the congress will convert them into olive branches."³ Russia was caught in an Anglo-Austrian vice, wrote Gorchakov's assistant, Baron Jomini, and had to make major concessions.⁴

Austria-Hungary, whose vital interests were at stake in Berlin, dispatched an unusually capable delegation led by its genial Foreign Minister Julius Andrassy, notable for his quick grasp of important issues. His assistant, H. von Haymerle, performed much of the routine work aided skillfully by an expert, hardworking staff all well acquainted with Balkan problems.⁵ As a whole, the Austrian delegation was the strongest at the Congress. Considering the western Balkans as its legitimate sphere of interest, Austria-Hungary aimed to extend its holdings to Mitrovica and unite most Serbs under its aegis. Presiding at the Berlin Congress was Germany's premier statesman, Otto von Bismarck, who earlier had led German unification. He and his German delegation were linked closely with their Austrian allies. As Congress president, Bismarck was often impatient and paid little heed to small states like Serbia; he insisted that questions be discussed according to their importance. The future of Bulgaria, the most dangerous and controversial of these, absorbed the delegates' attention for the first two weeks.⁶ Any settlement of Bulgaria's frontiers would affect significantly Serbia's boundaries. An Austro-British agreement stipulated on 25 May/6 June 1878, that an autonomous Bulgaria could extend only to the Balkan Mountains on the south and the Morava valley on the west. Facing solid Austro-British opposition

¹ B. H. Sumner, *Russia and the Balkans, 1870-1880* (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1937), 502-03.

² G. I. Bobrikov, *Zapisi G. I. Bobrikova* (St. Petersburg, 1913), 100-01.

³ Das Staatsarchiv. Sammlung der officiellen Actenstücke der Geschichte der Gegenwart (Leipzig: Duncker und Humboldt, 1878), XXXIV, Nos. 6753, 6759.

⁴ Charles and Barbara Jelavich, *Russia in the East 1876-1880* (Leiden, 1959), 77, Jomini to Girs, June 14/26, 1878.

⁵ Sumner, 508.

⁶ W. N. Medlicott, *The Congress of Berlin and After: A Diplomatic History of the Near Eastern Settlement 1878-1880* (London: Methuen, 1938), 45 ff.

over Bulgaria's boundaries, Russia had to make major concessions. Austro-British pressure compelled Count Shuvalov on 9/21 June to agree to Bulgaria's partition at the Balkans with the creation of a semi-autonomous Eastern Rumelia to the south.⁷ Disputes over Bulgaria's frontiers, continuing until late in the Congress, had an important effect on Serbia's eastern boundaries.

Everyone, reported Ristić, Serbia's envoy from Berlin, sought to avoid irritating the Austrians because of their powerful position at the Congress. To succeed in Berlin the French delegate warned Ristić to agree with Count Andrassy and to not displease Austria-Hungary. For Serbia, Ristić reported, everything depended on reaching agreement with the Austrians. Only with Austrian support could Russian General Bobrikov's proposals for a Bulgarian frontier be defeated. Nonetheless, Ristić maintained harmonious relations with the Russian delegates. "In no case," warned Ristić, "can we utilize Austria-Hungary as a weapon against the influence of Russia in our areas."⁸ In any case he knew generally what Andrassy would agree to in regard to Serbian demands, inasmuch as before coming to Berlin, he had conferred with the Austrian foreign minister and his assistant, Baron von Schwegel, in Vienna.

On 12/24 June Ristić submitted to the Congress a memorandum containing Serbia's maximum demands: independence guaranteed by the Powers and the territorial increases sought from Russia before the Treaty of San Stefano. Thus he did not accept Andrassy's advice to limit Serbian claims to what was clearly obtainable. Serbia's historic rights must be expressed, affirmed Ristić. However, the memorandum's allusion to Bosnia was so innocuous that it did not offend Andrassy, who was determined to have the Congress approve Austria's occupation of Bosnia and Herzegovina.⁹

During the second Serbo-Turkish War of 1877–78, noted historian Slobodan Jovanović, Serbia had secured more or less by chance the positions it needed in a possible future struggle with Bulgaria over Macedonia. Ristić's problem was to hold onto those territories with Austrian support. Its two wars with Turkey had involved Serbia in the caldron of great European politics. Serbian efforts, persisting difficulties, and Ristić's diplomatic skill gave proof, affirmed Jovanović, that the Serbs had life force for independence.¹⁰

⁷ E. von Wertheimer, *Graf Julius Andrassy, sein Leben und seine Zeiten*, III (Stuttgart, 1910–13), 113–17; Sumner, 517–25.

⁸ *Zapisi Jevrema Grujica*, III (Belgrade, 1923) 334–36, Ristić to Grujić, 8/20 June 1878.

⁹ *Ibid.*, 337–38, Ristić to Grujić, 12/24 June, nc. 4.

¹⁰ Slobodan Jovanović, *Vlada Milana Obrenovića*, I (Belgrade, 1926), 439.

At the Congress, the main questions for Serbia were independence and a possible European guarantee; economic relations with Austria-Hungary; and frontiers. Ristić encountered the greatest difficulties in delineating Serbia's southern and eastern frontiers and reaching an overall agreement with Vienna.¹¹ He was aided by Kosta Ćukić, his envoy to Vienna; together they represented Serbia most ably. The question of Serbian access to formal Congress sessions, wrote Ristić, was unimportant because the Serbs remained free to confer with the Powers' delegates and present their case informally.¹² Serbia's prospects at the Congress appeared reasonably favorable, Ristić confided to the German diplomat, C. A. Busch, because Austria-Hungary, he had been assured, would probably support its territorial claims on the southeast frontier. Ristić personally was not so insistent on major territorial aggrandizement, but the Serbian public, he explained, insisted on such compensation for its wartime sacrifices.¹³

From the start of the Congress the Russian attitude distressed Ristić. Their growing coolness towards Serbia after San Stefano could be attributed to Belgrade's approach to Vienna, its independent attitude, and St. Petersburg's pro-Montenegrin views. Russian efforts to salvage most of the San Stefano Treaty could not benefit Serbia.¹⁴ General G. I. Bobrikov, an earlier Russian envoy to Serbia, deplored his colleagues' behavior in Berlin:

It was strange to see our own diplomats turn their backs on the Serbs and act disdainfully. They turned their backs on our stake in the strengthening of the Serbian nationality in the balance of Power in the Balkans upon which our importance in the Slav world depends.¹⁵

On 2/14 June at a very important meeting of the Council of Ministers in Belgrade, Ristić's reports from his negotiations in Vienna were read. However, Prince Milan's warm letter to Count Andrassy was not discussed, and none of the ministers knew about it. When one minister learned about it, he declared: "That letter surely indicates Ristić's full authorization [to negotiate]!" Then the ministers criticized the Vienna government. "Mr. Ristić, thank God, knows that under our constitution no burdensome agreement can be

¹¹ See Grujić, III, 323–76. For the correspondence among Serbian leaders during the Congress see Arhiv Istorijaskog Instituta (Belgrade), Hartije Jovana Ristića, 22/1–89.

¹² Grujić, III, 334–36, Ristić to Grujić.

¹³ C. A. Busch, "Die Botschafterkonferenz in Konstantinopel und der russisch-türkische Krieg," *Deutsche Rundschau* 141, p. 368; Jovanović, I, 418.

¹⁴ Busch, 368.

¹⁵ Bobrikov, 95.

concluded without the approval of the Skupština (parliament)!” The Serbian government would not decide anything from Berlin without a formal preliminary protocol from Ristić. Being on the spot, he was better able to discern what was the most Serbia could achieve at the Congress. That ministerial meeting ended with empty talk, doubts, and fears, but no decisions. Premier Stevča Mihailović stated: “Give me that Ristić letter so I can study it again, then either I will write him or see to it that we will meet and reach agreement!” But Jevrem Grujić, standing in for Foreign Minister Ristić, realized that Ristić could not wait for Mihailović to restudy all his reports. So Grujić wrote Ristić at length describing the ministers’ meeting and concluded:

We are agreed about our urgent need for a territorial increase, but we fear this increase will be covered with burdens not just on our territorial increase but on other inherited lands... We fear Austrian controls over Serbia from which hopefully your *patriotism and wisdom will preserve Serbia*.

Count Andrassy, noted Grujić, had confronted the Serbs in Vienna with a deplorable choice: either quick agreement to a major binding economic treaty, or the danger of losing Niš, a key area, thus compelling a signature. Grujić urged caution and proceeding slowly.¹⁶

Ristić’s negotiations with the Powers’ representatives outside the formal Congress sessions proceeded favorably. He wrote Grujić:

I don’t have to submit my reports or “proposals” to the Council of Ministers, as it is evident from your letter that you understand.... I wish to remain in solidarity with my colleagues and share responsibility with them, and even if all this responsibility should fall on me, then approval of my work by His Highness [Prince Milan] is sufficient for me.

Noting that he remained in full agreement with the Russian representatives at the Congress, Ristić added: “In no case can we serve as tools of Austria-Hungary against the influence of Russia over our areas, and if this nonetheless occurred, it would be with the full consent and knowledge of Russia.”¹⁷

Before the Serbian question came formally before the Congress on 16/28 June, Ristić was busily ascertaining Russian and Austrian frontier proposals and working to obtain maximum territorial gains for Serbia. Russia’s General

¹⁶ Vladan Đorđević, *Srbija na Berlinskom Kongresu* (Belgrade, 1890), 25–26.

¹⁷ Đorđević, 27, Ristić to Grujić, 8/20 June.

Bobrikov had proposed an eastern frontier of Giljan, Sveti Ilija, Snegpolje, and Ak-Palanka, leaving the Pirot and Trn regions to Bulgaria. That could not satisfy the Serbs who had occupied those areas during the second Serbo-Turkish War. The Austrians, on the other hand, suggested the frontier: Kopaonik, Golak, Trnovac, Sveti Ilija, Stara Planina, and Sveti Nikola, which would expand Serbia greatly in the east while reducing it somewhat in the west compared with the San Stefano Treaty.¹⁸

Writing under the pseudonym Ljubić in a polemic with his opponents, Ristić asserted that Russian diplomacy had lost an opportunity and erred in letting European powers in Berlin dictate the treaty desired by Count Andrassy and Britain's Lord Beaconsfield and strongly supported by Chancellor Bismarck by letting the Austrians occupy Bosnia-Herzegovina. Russian diplomacy prior to the Russo-Turkish War of 1877 lacked the skill to guarantee its eventual success. Despite all its efforts and sacrifices, Russia obtained little from that or from other wars with Turkey. If Russia, through its Balkan policy created from Serbia, Montenegro, and Bosnia-Herzegovina, had a single strong Serbian state which could stand as a bulwark against Austria-Hungary, its chief Balkan rivals, the German powers would have had to abandon efforts to penetrate to Salonika. Nonetheless, concluded Ljubić, "We must still thank Russia warmly for the support and services she has always given us at critical moments." Inept diplomacy, concluded Ristić, was the basis of Russia's mistaken policy in Berlin.¹⁹

Ristić sent the following note to Bismarck as Congress president requesting Serbia's admission to formal sessions with an attached memorandum explaining Serbian needs and wishes:

I have the honor to inform you that His Highness, the Prince of Serbia, has instructed me to represent Serbia's interests at the Congress... and has given me the necessary powers. In that capacity let me express the hope that the Congress before making a definitive decision on the subject of Serbia will accord me the high honor to hear the explanations that I could present to it.²⁰

However, that request was denied.

On 3/15 April 1878 Ristić had telegraphed Milisav Protić, his envoy in St. Petersburg, after the governor of Sofia, Bulgaria—who was a Russian—had

¹⁸ Arhiv Istorijskog Instituta (Belgrade), Hartije Jovana Ristića 22/36, Ristić to Grujić, 1/13 June.

¹⁹ Ljubić (Ristić), *Radikali i naši diplomatski uspesi* (Belgrade, 1898), 24–27.

²⁰ AII Ristić 2/62, Ristić to Bismarck, 12/24 June.

pressured Belgrade to abandon the areas of Vranje, Pirot, and Trn, opposing that until Serbia received all areas that were to go to it under the Treaty of San Stefano. Assistant Russian Foreign Minister N. K. Girs agreed fully with Ristić that the existing military situation should be retained until final Congress decisions. From Berlin on 7/19 June Ristić telegraphed Prince Milan and Jevrem Grujić that the Austrians had not yet drawn up their demands on Serbia and that the Congress was proceeding very slowly: “[Count P. A.] Shuvalov advises me *to reach agreement with Austria-Hungary in any case*, and he would then seek St. Petersburg’s approval of frontiers Austria-Hungary could agree to.”²¹

On 7/19 June Prince Milan telegraphed Ristić advising him to request a continuation of his talks in May with Andrassy in Vienna because Milan feared that sooner or later Serbia would have to accept Vienna’s terms. However, Ristić stressed Serbia’s need to seek maximum territorial gains at the Congress. Otherwise the entire success of the second Serbo-Turkish War would be compromised in Serbia and abroad. If concessions to Vienna were the price for increasing these Serbian gains, they should be made.²²

France’s chief plenipotentiary, Foreign Minister M. Waddington, an old friend of Ristić, also urged him to satisfy Austria-Hungary especially in its sphere of interest, including Bosnia-Herzegovina. He too advised Ristić to confer again with Austrian leaders stating: “*Serbia can only succeed (in Berlin) to the extent that it agrees with Austria-Hungary.*” The crux of Serbia’s affairs at the Congress, concluded Ristić, lay in Austrian hands. Then on 7/19 June, Foreign Minister Andrassy asked Ristić to meet with him to discuss terms.²³ The question of Serbia’s eastern frontiers was touched upon that same day in a narrow Austro-Russian commission discussing Bulgaria’s boundaries. There Russia’s General Bobrikov reiterated his well-known position that the Bulgars should receive Trn and Pirot from Serbia. Ristić hoped Bobrikov’s view would fail if he, Ristić, reached agreement with Andrassy because he also counted on Count Shuvalov’s support for Serbia’s claims to Trn and Pirot and territory in the east all the way to Sveti Nikola.

On 8/20 June Ristić sounded out Andrassy with his draft memorandum omitting anything that could provoke Austrian dissatisfaction, such as any claim to Bosnia. This was to prepare the way for a formal step at the Congress. His memorandum sought Serbian independence with a great power

²¹ Ristić, *Diplomatska istorija Srbije za vreme srpskih ratova za oslobođenje i nezavisnost 1875-1878*, II (Belgrade, 1896-1898), 186–87.

²² Ristić, 187–88.

²³ *Ibid.*, 188–89.

guarantee and the territorial increases Belgrade had submitted to Russia before San Stefano as its legitimate reward for victory.²⁴

Ristić's position in Berlin then was difficult and delicate. Pressed by the Austrians to yield territory in the west and by Russia to abandon the Pirot-Trn area to Bulgaria in the east, Ristić strove to insure adequate Serbian gains while maintaining friendly relations with both Powers. Ristić protested strongly to Count Shuvalov against General Bobrikov's efforts to obtain Pirot-Trn for Bulgaria:

When the Austrians, say, drive us from Novi Pazar, you are not in a position to defend us, and when they offer us some compensation, you oppose it. Compensation—*especially that* [Pirot-Trn]—is of such concern to us that we must have it at any price, and that it will come dearer to us will be your fault because Austria-Hungary, realizing that because of your opposition, it holds the key to our southeastern frontier, and will not reduce its onerous demands. It is a sorry spectacle for us to see Russia quarreling with Austria against us. There have been enough mistakes. The San Stefano peace would have given almost all of Old Serbia [Kosovo] to the Bulgarians. There is an opportunity now to correct those errors and not to leave an apple of discord between two brother peoples on the one hand, nor on the other to leave them with memories which will alienate the Serbian people from Russia.

When Ristić objected especially to Russo-Bulgar claims to Pirot, Shuvalov countered: "But according to our people, everything there is Bulgarian." Replied Ristić: "Perhaps so, but we will accept the result of a plebiscite there whatever it may be." When Russia settles account with Austria-Hungary in war, warned Ristić, Serbia would be a much more valuable ally than Bulgaria. Ristić believed his frank words had struck home because Baron Jomini and General Bobrikov soon agreed to consult the people of Pirot and Trn provided Serbian administrators and troops were withdrawn.²⁵ However, that did not signify a basic change in Russian policy over Serbia's eastern frontiers.

In Berlin during June 1878, Ristić had to utilize his full diplomatic skills in two directions. He had to reduce Austrian economic demands as far as

²⁴ Ristić, 189–92.

²⁵ Grujić, III, 339–41, Ristić to Grujić, 14 and 15 June.

possible, then with Austrian help he had to increase Serbia's territorial gains.²⁶

Ristić knew that because of Austrian opposition with Russia's support, Serbia could not obtain Bosnia or even a common frontier with Montenegro. Nor could it even retain all territory taken from the Turks during the 1877–78 war. The only territories Serbia had hopes of getting were those which Russia had intended for Bulgaria south, southeast, and east of Serbia. Thus Ristić at the Congress sought what Serbs regarded as their historic territories: Old Serbia and most of Macedonia after proving somehow that they were truly Serbian in population. However, Ristić knew he must remain content with what Austria-Hungary and Russia would allow. The first obstacle was Russia's ardent protection of the Big Bulgaria of the San Stefano Treaty. Serbia could obtain territory only to Kopaonik, separated from Montenegro, and a guaranteed railway route through Mitovica for the future rail line to Salonika. Thus Serbia could not then obtain Kosovo where Serbian troops in the war had reached Gračanica and whose liberation had become a key Serbian war aim. On Trn and Vidin Russia yielded under the pressure of Austria and other Powers and partly to satisfy the Serbs whom St. Petersburg did not wish to alienate. Although both Russia and Austria-Hungary agreed to prevent undue Serbian expansion, each had weak spots which Ristić discerned and utilized. Both wanted Serbia as an ally, or at least a friend.

Austria-Hungary would aid Serbia primarily by supporting its demands in the east against Russia. For its part Russia had a moral obligation towards Serbia. Russian and European public opinion largely supported a Serbian expansion won in war rather than expansion by Bulgaria, which had gained everything at San Stefano without any sacrifice. Ristić utilized all his skill working with the Germans, who supported the Turks in order to prevent Russian access to the Mediterranean Sea. Succeeding beyond expectations, Ristić acted stubbornly, pretending to be clumsy when necessary. He carefully avoided extreme demands which could antagonize the Powers. For Bismarck he sketched the broad framework of Serbia's demands treating each territorial demand concretely as virtually separated from the whole because the entire package could provoke suspicion and opposition. Where necessary, Ristić spoke primarily about Christian liberation from Turkish oppression rather than about Serbian unification. He told each delegate and Power what he or it wanted to hear, even the Turks. Generally, Ristić presented Serbian aggrandizement as a concrete issue unlinked to the Serbian national question. Examining the documents on this, historian Radomir Lukić was amazed by

²⁶ Živan Živanović, *Politička istorija Srbije u drugoj polovini devetnaestog veka, I* (Belgrade: 1923–24), 370.

Ristić's skill, stubbornness, patience, and cleverness in devotion to the national ideal.²⁷

When necessary to show that a territory was Serbian, not Bulgarian, especially when he had to convince Russia, Ristić utilized modern methods, such as stressing national affiliation. The national principle, recognized in Europe during preceding Italian and German unification, was utilized in the Balkan states' liberation from Turkey because during the nineteenth century the natural right of a nation to its own state was respected by the European Powers. Ristić also utilized sociological methods. The inhabitants of the areas that Ristić wanted to join with Serbia should indicate by referendum their nationality. Thus the inhabitants of disputed areas were organized by signing statements and by pleas claiming they had always been Serbs. Ristić skillfully utilized Serbian military occupation to induce uncertain populations to declare for Serbia. These methods proved successful, although opponents claimed that the inhabitants' declarations had been organized forcibly. Those innovative methods contributed significantly to obtain more for Serbia than had been expected when Ristić began that effort after San Stefano. Many Turks were also in some of those areas. Thus Ristić advocated recognizing them and the Jewish minority as equals of the Serbs with all rights they enjoyed in contemporary Europe, thereby presenting Serbia as a modern and civilized European country.²⁸

On the western frontier of Serbia, Count Shuvalov in discussion about the Novi Pazar "enclave" lying between Serbia and Montenegro met strong opposition from Count Andrassy who demanded its annexation as far as Mitrovica to Austria-Hungary. When Shuvalov remained obdurate, Andrassy declared Turkey could administer the enclave but Austria would station troops there if Bosnia's security were threatened. Andrassy stated that Austria-Hungary would occupy the enclave by force eventually whether Russia approved or not.²⁹ No final agreement was reached then on Serbia's eastern or western boundaries. At first Tsar Alexander II was resolved to order Shuvalov to stand firm on the enclave.³⁰

Ristić telegraphed Belgrade on 15/27 June that he believed he had overcome Russian opposition to Serbia's acquisition of Trn and Pirot, because Russian delegates were now suggesting polling the local population about whether they wanted to belong to Serbia or Bulgaria, provided Serb adminis-

²⁷ Radomir Lukić, "Jovan Ristić i srpsko nacionalno pitanje 1878," *Život i rad Jovana Ristića: Povodom 150-godišnjice rođenja*, SANU Naučni skupovi, knj. XXV Belgrade, 1985, 49.

²⁸ Lukić, 50–52.

²⁹ Shuvalov to Girs, 7/19 June, in S. Goriainov, *Le Bosphore et les Dardanelles*, 378.

³⁰ D. A. Miliutin, *Dnevnik D. A. Miliutina, III* (Moscow, 1947–50), 74.

trators and troops were withdrawn. Ristić asked Prince Milan about possible Bulgar agitation from Sofia and the Vladika (church leader) in Pirot. Milan telegraphed that same day that there were only two companies of Serbian troops in Pirot and Trn. People, especially in the villages, were very pro-Serbian, and the Prince was confident the vast majority would vote for Serbia without any Serb agitation. But removing Serbian administration would give unique scope to Russo-Bulgar agitation. If necessary, he advised Ristić, install a temporary administration there under European control.³¹

Apparently, Ristić's conversation with Shuvalov had produced some results because Ristić visited Baron Jomini and General Bobrikov two days later. Both agreed to heed popular wishes in the Pirot and Trn regions. But first, urged Bobrikov, withdraw all Serbian troops and administration, then hold voting under the supervision of a European commission empowered to decide the whole question based on the vote's outcome. Reported Ristić:

It is not certain that this method will be adopted, but if it happens, it would be an important question for us whatever the outcome. If we can rely on a favorable outcome, then already now we can adopt another tone towards Austria-Hungary. If not, then we must reach an agreement. The agreement may not result in a vote because Austria-Hungary can reject that, especially since for understandable reasons it does not favor voting.³²

In further negotiations over Serbia's southeastern frontier, Serbia met opposition from England and Turkey. Mehmet Ali, the Turkish delegate, proposed at the seventh Congress session "a natural and strategic line" and demanded that Kuršumlja, Vučitrn, Prokuplje, and Leskovac counties remain Turkish as well as the Gdelica Pass for the defense of the Priština and Vranje provinces. England supported the *Porte's* demands.³³

On the east, noted Ristić, the Serbs sought as their boundary the old frontier of Niš county, a good natural boundary. However, Serbian and Bulgarian interests conflicted there. Under a Russian military plan presented in the delimitation commission, Serbia's eastern frontier would run from Sveti Ilija to Snegpolje, then to Pandiralo, depriving Serbia of Pirot, Trn, and Sveti Nikola. "We would lose all areas linked with the most glorious memories of the last campaign," complained Ristić. "We had to seek help wherever we could find it." The Russians advised Ristić to seek Andrassy's support. The political

³¹ Ristić, *Diplomatska istorija*, II, 204–05, citing Milan to Ristić, 15/27 June.

³² *Ibid.*, 215–16.

³³ *Ibid.*, 216–17.

commission was divided. For Serbia there were four or five votes, while against it were two or three on practically all Serbian affairs. On the southwestern frontier, Kopaonik—favored by the Austrians—was selected as the frontier. When Serbia was threatened with the loss of Vranje, Andrassy assisted the Serbs by demanding a commission vote. Voting for Serbia were Germany, Austria, France, and Russia; against it were England, Turkey, and Italy. After that vote, the English envoy opposed ceding Vranje and Grdelica to Serbia, threatening that England would oppose the new Serbian frontiers. Because a Congress decision had to be unanimous, Bismarck delayed a decision on Serbia's frontiers. But then Waddington, the French delegate, proposed a frontier south of Vranje giving the Turks security while Vranje itself would remain in Serbia. That compromise proposal was adopted and went to the delimitation commission.³⁴

Serbia's shift at the Congress politically from Russian to Austrian patronage required a careful evaluation of the situation, not to mention tact and skill in seeking Austrian support without breaking with Russia. Prince Milan quickly evaluated the overall situation while Ristić possessed the tact and diplomatic skill to implement the shift. Perhaps more clearly than Ristić, Prince Milan realized that after San Stefano, only Austria-Hungary could save Serbia's gains. Ristić yielded to Austria only what was necessary. Other Serbian ministers feared Ristić would submit wholly to Vienna, and insisted that he inform them of his every move and do nothing without their preliminary agreement. However, Ristić refused to become their simple tool and generally acted independently. But when it came to concluding an economic agreement with Vienna, he had to seek the entire cabinet's support. The ministers hesitated and delayed. It seemed to them that Serbia could not make the concessions the Austrians sought until they could ascertain what the Austrians would do overall for Serbia at the Congress. Understanding that the economic agreement with Austria had to be signed before the Congress ended, Prince Milan finally broke his ministers' resistance and advised Ristić to sign it if necessary without his cabinet colleagues' consent. Inasmuch as Ristić's fellow ministers were mostly nationalists with an old imbedded hatred and distrust of Austria-Hungary, Prince Milan and Ristić had to drag them along.³⁵

Ristić realized that the lack of Russian support made the conclusion of an economic agreement with Vienna essential. He claimed that his strong objections in Vienna in May to Baron Schwegel's original drafts of an economic convention had caused their modification incorporating most of Ristić's suggestions in a revised version. Ristić believed that Schwegel's original draft

³⁴ Ristić, *Diplomatska istorija*, II, 220–21.

³⁵ Jovanović, 425.

would have threatened Serbia's independence by giving Baron Hirsch full rights to exploit Serbian railways that were to be built at Austrian demand. Agreeing to that before a territorial settlement was reached, objected Ristić, would "place a knife before our throats." Count Andrassy advised Ristić not to take Schwegel's original draft so seriously. On 18/30 June Schwegel sent Ristić a revised proposal, and on 21 June/ 3 July Andrassy presented a final draft agreement to the Serbs.³⁶

Meanwhile Kosta Ćukić, Serbia's envoy to Vienna, arrived in Berlin to assist Ristić and begin technical negotiations on proposals for the economic convention. On 16/28 June Ristić sent him to Baron Schwegel to obtain precise information on the draft convention and on Austrian demands. Schwegel read Ćukić his drafts dealing with Serbia's obligation to build railways and the economic convention.³⁷

Ristić summarized Austria's final terms: 1) Vienna would link its railway system with Serbia's at Belgrade within three years; Serbia was to construct railway lines to Mitrovica and Niš in the same period; 2) the two governments would arrange links with Bulgarian and Turkish lines; 3) the construction and maintenance of these railways was to be uniform; 4) an Austro-Serbian commercial treaty was to be signed right after the Congress; 5) Austria-Hungary would assume responsibility for the regulation of Đerdap on the Danube River. Ristić favored immediate acceptance of these terms in order to assure a favorable Austrian decision on Serbian frontiers.³⁸ He considered only the three-year railroad construction requirement to be onerous. Everything else, he assured Minister Grujić, left much room for subsequent negotiations. Convinced that these agreements were less severe than Belgrade had anticipated and that he could not obtain further Austrian concessions, Ristić urged their prompt approval by the Belgrade cabinet.³⁹

But the Serbian ministers remained unconvinced. Until Serbia learns what it will obtain territorially with Austrian support, replied Grujić, the cabinet cannot reach a decision. However, if most Serbian territorial increases depended on Austria-Hungary, its terms would have to be accepted. "We shall rely on your patriotism to resolve that question." That same day Ristić warned Grujić: "The Congress will come to an end, and we will be passed over if there is further delay." Unless the cabinet approved the convention with Austria-Hungary immediately, he would renounce responsibility for Serbia's fate. Andrassy had already pledged, noted Ristić, to advocate to the Congress,

³⁶ Grujić, III, 349–52.

³⁷ Đorđević, 65.

³⁸ *Ibid.*, 343–44.

³⁹ *Ibid.*, 349–52, Ristić to Grujić, 23 June/5 July, No.10.

including the Pirot-Trn region in Serbia and the western boundary proposed by the military commission only if the Serbs accepted the economic convention. Its rejection thus would expose Serbia to unknown losses, Andrassy had warned. Although Prince Milan repeated his unconditional support for the convention, acting Premier Grujić raised more doubts on 25 June/7 July:

When there are not only no guarantees of success, and we are threatened with Austrian hostility..., then there remains nothing else than to seek as a last resort the serious protection and support of tsarist Russian delegates. If they cannot help us, then, depending upon the Russian view of the convention, conclude it with Austria-Hungary on terms most favorable to Serbian interests.

Clearly, Grujić still believed that Serbia could choose between Russia and Austria-Hungary. To dispel such illusions, Ristić replied that to adopt Grujić's policy would be ridiculous and harmful:

From my letters you know that the Russian delegate [Count Shuvalov] told me not only to reach agreement with Austria-Hungary, but to undertake nothing at the Congress without its approval, and that we would succeed to the extent that we agreed with her. Now, with the convention, we are on the verge of success on the eastern frontier and precisely there Russia demands Pirot for Bulgaria despite all my oral and written appeals. Thus to seek her support in such circumstances would be equivalent to asking for Austria-Hungary's backing to acquire Novi Pazar [the enclave].

The Serbian cabinet finally yielded to this dual pressure.⁴⁰

Noting the Serbian cabinet's hesitation, on 24 June/6 July Prince Milan wrote Ristić that of the ministers only Radivoje Milojković understood Serbia's true vulnerable situation. Obtaining the cabinet's agreement with great difficulty, Milan urged Ristić to sign the convention even without the government's full backing in order to assure to Serbia an important territorial increase rather than leave it without any result or with reduced gains because of the ministers' ignorance of foreign affairs. He telegraphed Ristić on 25 June that he believed it was unnecessary, as did the ministers, to consult Russia because it was not supporting Serbian territorial claims. The Prince added: "You have *carte blanche* to act as seems best to you."⁴¹

⁴⁰ Dordević, 359–64; AII Ristić 22/65.

⁴¹ Dordević, Ristić 22, 85, and 89.

In his negotiations with Andrassy, Ristić had insisted that the economic agreement would stipulate obligations on both sides. Otherwise it would look as if Serbia's economic and political independence had been renounced in Austria's favor. Count Andrassy yielded on the matter of form. Thus the economic convention was not as severe as the Belgrade cabinet had feared. For Serbia a major gain was the Austrian obligation to link Serbia's railways with its own and to help Serbia secure a link with Turkish and Bulgarian railways.⁴²

Kosta Ćukić informed Baron Schwegel on 26 June/8 July that Ristić had received authorization to sign the convention. Ristić told Andrassy as he took up his pen to sign the convention: "Allow me, Count, to tell you that this agreement could not be defended before the national Skupština unless Serbia on the east would obtain the frontiers which Your Excellency promised to support, and if I had not dared to take responsibility to accept it. I doubt that anyone else could be found to do so!" Andrassy heard this and in an ill temper he replied: "I, Mr. Ristić, am not a trader to bargain and do business with. The absence of your signature on this convention would for me be sufficient reason to vote in the Congress against any new Serbian frontier!" Ristić knew full well that opposing Austria-Hungary would gravely endanger Serbia. Thus the convention was signed to secure Austrian support especially for Serbia's new frontiers. In Ristić's place, affirmed Đorđević, any good statesman and patriotic Serb would have signed it.⁴³

Ristić took steps to satisfy the objections of his ministerial colleagues. Wrote Baron Schwegel:

In view of the great financial sacrifices which the convention would impose on us, [his colleagues] are asking me which territorial gains Serbia can count on thanks to the Austro-Hungarian government's generous support. I hope, Baron, that Count Andrassy in his correctness will find this step by the Serbian government to be natural and that it came from the wish that our mutual intimate relations will be insured from uncertainty.

Instead of a reply, Schwegel and Haymerle issued threats if the convention were not signed and complained that the Serbs seemed not to believe in the chivalry of Count Andrassy who had promised to do his best for Serbia.⁴⁴

⁴² Jovanović, 422–23.

⁴³ Đorđević, 76–77; Grujić, III, 365–67.

⁴⁴ Đorđević, 75.

When the question of Serbia's independence came before the Congress, Waddington of France proposed it be granted provided Serbia accepted the complete equality of all religions. His proposal was approved unanimously but without any mention of a European guarantee. The delegates stated that the new independent Balkan countries needed to reveal their strength without a European guarantee. In compensation, independent Serbia would no longer have to pay an annual tribute to the *Porte*. The German scholar, Leopold von Ranke, congratulated Ristić for securing recognition of Serbia's independence "as the greatest good that a country can obtain." Territorial gains, he continued, also had significant value, but independence was the basis for countries to become real and to guarantee their future as shown by Prussia's history. Naturally, added Ristić, "We agreed to the condition assuring religious equality."⁴⁵

When Ristić received authorization to promise the equality of all faiths in return for Serbian independence from Prince Milian, he hastened to inform his friend, delegate Waddington, who told him:

I advise you to communicate this in writing to the president of the Congress [Bismarck].... I am convinced that communication would have a good effect also on your other questions.... I find that you, in such difficult circumstances, are so directing Serbian affairs that both you and Serbia can be proud. Your homeland will obtain the maximum it can receive in the present circumstances.

Ristić expressed his sincere thanks for the support French delegates had given to Serbia at the Congress, noting that he was merely serving his prince and country as best he could. "Therefore, every piece of advice of Your Excellency for me is so dear that I consider it my duty always to act accordingly."⁴⁶

Upon Ristić fell the task of removing from Serbia the burden of capitalization and tribute payments insisted on by Turkish and English delegates. They would be unfair, declared Ristić, "because we won our independence militarily." Fortunately for Ristić, Chancellor Gorchakov strongly opposed capitalization and regarded the new independent Balkan states as free of all such obligations except in their new territories. Count Shuvalov strongly supported Gorchakov's rejection of Lord Salisbury's arguments. The capitalization question turned wholly in Serbia's favor when Waddington of France joined the Russian delegates and Andrassy supported the Serbs equally

⁴⁵ Ristić, *Diplomska istorija*, II, 206–07.

⁴⁶ Đorđević, 72–73.

strongly. Thus the Congress decided to eliminate the draft article on capitalization of Serbian and Romanian tribute.⁴⁷

Referring to Serbia's territorial gains at the Congress, Ristić claimed major success despite Serbia's coming into conflict with the interests of almost all neighboring countries. Thus Serbia's area increased from 783 to 993 square miles and its population rose from 1,360,000 to 1,640,000, or 56 square miles and 54,000 more people than it obtained under the Treaty of San Stefano. Ristić asserted that the benefits of the Berlin Treaty for Serbia predominated over its burdens: independence with new strong frontiers, including Niš, the key to Serbia. Only the railway burden appeared onerous, he concluded.⁴⁸ In a speech in 1880 to the Skupština, Ristić declared that the Austro-Serbian convention had saved Serbia's wartime gains: "The convention brought us only benefits and no sacrifices beyond those imposed by the Berlin Treaty."⁴⁹

At the Berlin Congress the small Balkan countries had great difficulty in holding onto what had been promised to them at San Stefano. Only Serbia received one-fourth more territory at Berlin. All Balkan diplomats there, except Ristić, raised bitter complaints against one Power or another hurting their prospects. Only Ristić, coming modestly before the Congress, obtained everything necessary without offending any Power and remained on good terms with all. That raised Serbia, affirmed Bošković, to an enviable height from where the Serbian people could look calmly to their future.⁵⁰

As a result of a Ristić request, the Congress decided to provide confidentially excerpts of the Berlin Treaty as it affected them to delegates of participating countries. Ristić received the excerpt relating to Serbia on 2/14 July and sent it immediately to Grujić commenting that until the Berlin Treaty was ratified, it was not to be made public.⁵¹

Ristić's successes in Berlin were greater than they appeared to many contemporaries. By gaining control of the Nišava and south Morava valleys, Serbia became the ruler of the main passages to the Balkans from Europe, and the Vardar valley route was opened. Without that and independence, Serbia could not have played its subsequent role in the struggle for Yugoslav unifi-

⁴⁷ Ristić, *Diplomatska istorija*, II, 239.

⁴⁸ *Ibid.*, 227, 236; *Istok* (Belgrade), 30 July/11 August 1878, No.87.

⁴⁹ Ristić, *Govor g. Jovana Ristića...u Skupštini 24 maja 1880 u Kragujevcu o železničkoj konvenciji...* (Belgrade, 1880).

⁵⁰ Jovan Bošković, *Dr. Jovan Ristić. Životopisne beleške* (Belgrade, 1898), 13–14.

⁵¹ Đorđević, 92.

cation. Furthermore, at Berlin, Ristić completed Serbia's long struggle with the Ottoman Empire.⁵²

The negotiations in Vienna and Berlin in May and June 1878 represented a great personal success for Ristić. Since settling the fortress question in 1867, he had had little diplomatic success. Only at the Berlin Congress was his diplomatic reputation enhanced and confirmed. Typically he did not leave his services to Serbia unrecognized or unnoticed. After the Congress Prince Milan in a proclamation on the restoration of peace devoted an entire paragraph to Ristić's achievements. He had, stated Milan, "represented the Serbian cause with great wisdom and patriotism."⁵³

Belgrade's reactions to the Berlin Treaty were generally favorable. The Serbs of Serbia rejoiced that the treaty had brought unexpected gains in the east. Ristić's account of his work at the Congress on 13/25 July was warmly received by the Skupština.⁵⁴ Praising Ristić's achievements in Berlin, General Miloje Lešjanin blamed Serbia's failure to obtain all desired territories on the Powers' selfishness.⁵⁵

Unquestionably, Jovan Ristić's role at the Berlin Congress marked the peak of his diplomatic career. A major service of his was to obtain whatever could be achieved of the Serbian national program under the given circumstances utilizing the doctrine of self-determination. His method of proving the national identity of people in disputed territories was wholly modern, prefiguring the plebiscites utilized after World War I. In Serbian history, Ristić's success at Berlin, although incomplete, signified Serbia's emergence from an expanded Belgrade province and its entry into the ranks of sovereign states setting firm territorial bases for Serbia's later successes, including the creation of royal Yugoslavia. Ristić in Berlin revealed himself as a bold, farsighted statesman in a situation, as he put it, "when national states must undertake their tasks courageously, entrusting their fate to the providence of God."⁵⁶

⁵² Vasa Čubrilović, "Jovan Ristić (1831-1899)," *Srpski književni glasnik* 32 (Belgrade, 1931): 402.

⁵³ Jovanović, 427.

⁵⁴ *Istok*, 9/21 July, No.78, "Sa narodne Skupštine," 12/24 July, No. 79, Speech of Gliša Gersić.

⁵⁵ AII Ristić 22/192, General Lešjanin to Ristić, 30 July/11 August 1878.

⁵⁶ Lukić, 52.

Milorad Pavić's *Dictionary of the Khazars* as Translational Fiction

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Milorad Pavić's "lexicon novel," *Dictionary of the Khazars*, originally published in Serbo-Croatian in 1982, has received world-wide acclaim as one of the leading fictions of postmodernism and as a precursor of hyperfiction. The novel is presented in the form of three dictionaries: Hebrew, Muslim, and Christian. They share a story of the so-called Khazar controversy in which the Khazar people converted to one of the three religions (each version claims victory for its own religion), and of the attempted reconstruction through the ages of the dictionary and, by extension, of Adam Cadmon (a mythical giant) that is continually defeated by demons. The goal that most of Pavić's characters pursue and that some oppose, then, is to compile the *Dictionary of the Khazars*. Its parts, scattered over the face of the earth, keep disappearing and reappearing from the eighth century through 1982, when the novel ends, while this process of weaving together a single narrative out of disparate strands, arguably, continues eternally. Even if the Christian, Islamic, and Jewish dictionaries vary considerably, they all agree that the assembled *Dictionary* would return to humanity the Adamic language embodied by man's angel ancestor Adam Cadmon/Adam Ruhani/Adam, the brother of Christ. Thus the *Dictionary's* compilation, beyond being a scholarly or pragmatic translation project, has a clear messianic function.

One of the most unusual aspects of Pavić's text is the difficulty of reading it in a straight line, from front to back. Rather, the lexical items are cross-referenced with each other, making a zigzag reading far more likely. Another possibility would be for the reader to jump around to find the *fabula* that, when arranged chronologically, converts the lexicon into a novel. The narrative's intricacy and puzzle-like nature (characteristic of Pavić's fiction in general), its self-reflexivity, and its situation at the boundary of history and fiction are all aspects that have been explored by scholarship.¹ However, de-

¹ On narrative complexity, see Tomislav Z. Longinović, "Chaos, Knowledge, and Desire: Narrative Strategies in Dictionary of the Khazars," *Review of Contemporary Fiction* 18.2 (Summer 1998): 183–90; on self-reflexivity, see N. Katherine Hayles, "Corporeal Anxiety in

spite the many references to translation in general and to specific translations at various points of the text, to date there has been no critic that has dealt extensively with these interrelated questions: to what extent can the three dictionaries be considered translations of each other; and, in what sense do the original Khazar controversy (which of the three religions should be chosen as the official state one) and the subsequent project of reconstruction constitute translation projects? This paper will argue that translation is indeed an applicable term for the relationship between these alternative views of the Khazar controversy, and that Pavić has deliberately presented us with a fiction that enriches or at least complicates our notion of what translation is and does.

The view of the *Dictionary of the Khazars* as a translational fiction is bolstered by the resemblance of the general outline of its story to that presented in Genesis 11, the famous Tower of Babel story. The Khazars, like the Babylonians in the myth, possessed a single language which became “confused” as this single, unified people was torn apart by religious controversy. In reality, the language of the people known as the Khazars who inhabited the southern Volga region of the steppe land has indeed been lost to history, which furnishes the pretext for the novel’s mythical plot of reconstructing Adam. Though no controversy of the kind discussed in the novel has been attested, we know that many Khazars were converted to Judaism and that the empire received emissaries from El-Andaluz and from Byzantium.² A modern Khazar controversy concerns the degree to which Ashkenazy Jews might trace their origins to the Judaized Khazars.³ The story of Babel is itself analogous to the story of Adam and his fall, as expressed in the term “post-lapsarian language,” meaning language as it is actually used in human societies, with arbitrary signifiers and ubiquitous opportunities for miscommunication. Thus, the language of the Khazars may be seen as a *reine Sprache* or “pure language” in the sense developed by Walter Benjamin, while the three different dictionaries are, to use Benjamin’s metaphor:

[f]ragments of a vessel which are to be glued together [and] must match each other, although they need not be like one another. In the same way a translation, instead of resembling the meaning of the

Dictionary of the Khazars: What Books Talk about in the Late Age of Print When They Talk about Losing Their Bodies,” *Modern Fiction Studies* 43.3 (Fall 1997): 800–20. Studies of the book’s historical references are found in the Yugoslavia section of this paper.

² Jonathan Shepard, “The Khazars’ Formal Adoption of Judaism and Byzantium’s Northern Policy,” *Oxford Slavonic Papers* 31 (1998): 11–34.

³ For a review of the evidence, see Paul Wexler, *Two-Tiered Relexification in Yiddish: Jews, Sorbs, Khazars, and the Kiev-Polessian Dialect* (Berlin: Mouton de Gruyter, 2002), 534–41.

original, must lovingly and in detail incorporate the original's mode of signification, thus making both the original and the translation recognizable as fragments of a greater language, just as fragments are part of a vessel.⁴

Benjamin did not invent this image: George Steiner informs us that "almost all linguistic mythologies [...] concurred in believing that original speech had slivered into seventy-two shards or into a number which was a simple multiple of seventy-two, [...] whose reconstruction would lead men back to the universal grammar of Adam."⁵

Pavić wrote the *Dictionary* as a mimetic treatment of this myth and this imagery, and as a fictional representation of the ultimate "task of the translator." Images of jars and vessels appear with some frequency, and we will relate below one example of these that is specifically linked to translation. More importantly, however, the three separate dictionaries do not duplicate each other, but rather touch and supplement each other at various points. Relatively few lexical items appear in all three dictionaries, and those that do—the entries "Ateh," "Kaghan," "Khazars," and "Khazar Polemic"—have explanations that differ radically from one another. Taken together, the three lexicons are intended to "capture" the historical reality known as the Khazars. Hence, these three lexicons do what we expect languages to do: report on a single *noumenon*, while filtering and symbolizing it in different ways. Languages, as Roman Jakobson points out, "differ essentially in what they *must* convey and not in what they *may* convey."⁶ This dictum applies to the Christian ("Red"), Muslim ("Green"), and Hebrew ("Yellow") dictionaries of Pavić's text.

What can a reading of the *Dictionary of the Khazars* as "transmesis," that is, as a mimetic treatment of a translational situation, yield us? The purpose of translational fiction is to open up the "black box" of translation. The "black box" encloses the actual process of creating or recognizing equivalent messages in two or more languages. The equivalence itself provides no clues as to the process by which it is achieved, just as a single message within any one language provides no clues as to *how* it achieves meaning. Linguistics, philosophy, and translator's prefaces have all been used to get inside the "black box" of translation. Yet for Pavić, a citizen of the culturally and linguistically

⁴ Walter Benjamin, "The Task of the Translator," trans. Harry Zohn, in *Theories of Translation*, ed. Rainer Schulte and John Biguenet (Chicago: U of Chicago P, 1992), 79.

⁵ George Steiner, *After Babel: Aspects of Language and Translation* (Oxford: Oxford UP, 1992), 62.

⁶ Roman Jakobson, "On Linguistic Aspects of Translation," in *Theories of Translation*, ed. Rainer Schulte and John Biguenet (Chicago: U of Chicago P, 1992), 149.

fragmented Balkans, something larger is at stake in translation that cannot be confined to linguistics or individual *aperçus*. He turns instead to a fictional form at once totalizing and deconstructive.

Pavić himself sees the translation theme in the novel as related to its “writerly” aspects, i.e., to the intended co-construction of its meaning through reader interaction with the text. He takes delight, for example, in the various translations of the novel that change the ordering of its entries, and particularly in the fact that it acquires different endings in the various languages, confirming his view that “my novels have no beginning and no end in the classical meaning of the word.”⁷ Far from our stereotype of a modernist author who considers his “work” as autonomous and translation as a loss or unraveling of its meaning or aesthetic structure, Pavić instead considers translations into various languages to be perfect examples of the fact that every reading is a rewriting. As Pavić himself remarks, “*Dictionary of the Khazars* is ‘a lexicon novel in 100,000 words,’ and according to the alphabet of various languages, the novel ends differently.”⁸

The remainder of this essay will proceed in three stages. We will first bring together a number of concrete references to translation that are scattered throughout the three dictionaries, and that together demonstrate Pavić’s concern with translation issues and the tenor in which these issues are developed in the novel. We will then discuss the cultural and linguistic situation of the Balkans, and particularly of Yugoslavia, as a referent for the text. Finally, we will examine how the totalization referred to above includes the novel’s bringing linguistic translation into conjunction with its related themes of transmutation and transmigration of souls.

Translation References in the *Dictionary of the Khazars*

The title of Pavić’s novel is both self-referential and transitive. That is, the reader is simultaneously acquainted with a version of the 1691 *Dictionary* by Daubmannus, and with the story of attempts at reconstructing that dictionary, which includes events after 1691. What overarching plot there is involves the reader’s reconstruction of the battle between scholars involved in the reconstruction and their enemies the demons, who ensure that the culture of the Khazars remains forever lost. The original *Dictionary*, as well as the text we are reading, is divided into three different sections, the Christian, Muslim, and Jewish books. The languages of the three sections were Greek, Arabic, and

⁷ Milorad Pavić, “The Beginning and the End of the Novel,” <http://www.khazars.com/end-of-novel.html>. Accessed 16 Dec. 2002.

⁸ Pavić, “The Beginning and the End of the Novel.”

Hebrew, respectively, "as well as Serbian, this being how the text was submitted to the publisher."⁹ Thus, the reader traverses a text in Serbo-Croatian (or in English) that tells him it was originally composed in at least three other languages. The sentence does not make clear whether the Serbian is a fourth, supplementary section or a translation of the other three.

The latter possibility makes the most sense, given that it corresponds to the lexicon novel published by Milorad Pavić. Here, then, is the most obvious and comprehensive translation aspect of the novel. The *Dictionary* seems to demand what Lori Ween has termed a "translational backformation," that is, a text originally written in a language which does not appear to be its original due to the cultural context of its occurrence, and which therefore calls out for "back-translation" into a non-existent source. Ween works with the novel *Dreaming in Cuban* as an example, which, as the title indicates, deals with Cuban-Americans and should have been written at least partly in Spanish, of which language only a few fragments and familiar expressions emerge.¹⁰ If such is the situation in the *Dictionary*, then under the surface of the Serbo-Croatian we should be able to perceive expressions and idioms that were originally part of the "original" Greek, Arabic, or Hebrew. Can such disturbances in the text be found? In one sense, yes: There is a large number of unusual and surprising tropes and expressions in the text, which could be explained as translations from other languages where they are familiar idioms or "dead metaphors."

The suggestion that Daubmann's text was translated into Serbian provides a mirror image of the *Dictionary*'s purpose of recovering the Khazar language and culture. The supposed Khazar controversy involved the choosing of one "world" religion over the other two as the state's official creed. The result, as implied, was the disintegration of Khazar unity and the loss of Khazar culture and language, recoverable only in fragments couched in three languages. The only Khazar words preserved in the *Dictionary of the Khazars* are "Kaghan," the word for king, and "Ku," a special fruit that grows near the Caspian Sea. Apparently, the reason for including "Ku" in the *Dictionary* is that it was "the only word the devil left in the memory of the Khazar Princess Ateh after she forgot her own language."¹¹ On the other hand, the Arabic entry on Ateh

⁹ *Dictionary of the Khazars: A lexicon novel*, trans. Christina Pribičević-Zorić (New York: Knopf, 1989), 239. "Odnosno srpsk[i], onako kako je tekst rečnika predat izdavaču"; Milorad Pavić, *Hazarški rečnik: Roman leksikon u 100.000 reči* (Beograd: Prosveta, 1989), 186.

¹⁰ Lori Ween, "Translational Backformations: Authenticity and Language in Cuban-American Culture," *Comparative Literature Studies* 40.2 (2003): 127–41.

¹¹ *Dictionary of the Khazars*, 160; "Reč ku [...] šejtan je jedinu ostavio u sećanju hazarske princeze Ateh pošto je zaboravila svoj jezik," *Hazarški rečnik*, 142.

notes that “[a] number of her poems, or texts written under her supervision, are believed to have been preserved in Arabic translation.”¹² Here the view of translation seems indebted to the second law of thermodynamics: poetry can be neither created nor destroyed, but may be translated. If a poem appears in a language, it is in fact a translation from some other source. The translation of a poem signifies not its growing importance, but rather the dwindling away of the “original,” which gives its meaning and energy to the translation. This dwindling is tied to translation in a Khazar state where, according to the “Khazars” entry in the Hebrew dictionary, people find other languages more appealing than their own:

People not proficient in the Khazar language, which is the official language, are more highly regarded in the civil and administrative services. Consequently, even people who are fluent in the Khazar language will often deliberately speak it incorrectly, with a foreign accent, from which they derive a manifest advantage. Even with translators—for instance, from Khazar into Hebrew, or Greek into Khazar—the people selected are those who make mistakes in the Khazar language or pretend to do so.¹³

Ateh personifies this process of cultural forgetting that, paradoxically, creates the need for the *Dictionary* and for translation; her forgetting is also, the text hints, a product of her words being “translated away” from her. We will see in the next section that this passage represents one of the points in the novel where one can replace “Khazar language” with “Serbian” to understand Pavić’s point.

That a language can be “forgotten” by an entire ethnic group that once spoke it is of course a linguistic fact with many contemporary examples, as the number of living languages around the world continues to dwindle. The role that translation may play as an intermediate step in this forgetting is as difficult to define as it is intuitive, but one remarkably solid historical example of the connection is the Rosetta Stone of Egypt. This stone, it will be remembered, was the key to recovering the meaning of Egyptian hieroglyphs

¹² *Dictionary of the Khazars*, 131; “Smatra se da je u arapskim prevodima sačuvan izvestan broj njenih pesama ili tekstova nastalih po njenom staranju,” *Hazarški rečnik*, 120.

¹³ *Dictionary of the Khazars*, 254; “više se cene u javnim i administrativnim službama oni koji pokazuju nedovoljno poznavanje hazarskog jezika, iako je to službeni jezik. Otuda često i oni koji dobro znaju hazarski homitično govore ovaj jezik sa greškama, stranim naglaskom i zanoseći, iz čega izvlače očiglednu korist. Čak se i za prevodioce, recimo s hazarskog na jevrejski, ili sa grčkog na hazarski, uzimaju takvi koji greše u hazarskom jeziku ili glume da greše,” *Hazarški rečnik*, 198.

because it showed the same message written in three different languages: demotic Egyptian, hieratic Egyptian, and Greek. The Rosetta Stone became necessary under the Ptolemies as the Greeks converted Egypt from a theocratic into an economic society and Greek became an official language of Egypt, rivaling the prestige of the priestly language that had existed for thousands of years. The Stone documents an intermediate stage of translation, as the priestly, hieroglyphic Egyptian language—and eventually Demotic as well—was gradually “forgotten.”

Pavić has deliberately placed direct references to translation in the entries on the three original Khazar controversialists, (Cyril, Ibn Kora, and Sangari) as well as in those devoted to the modern scholars who attempt to find or reconstruct the Khazar dictionary. Given the limited scope of this paper, we will confine our examples to the former group. The Christian Constantine, “loved languages [...] and he changed them as the Khazar kaghan did women of different faiths.”¹⁴ He “translated church writings from Greek into Slavonic,”¹⁵ for which act he runs afoul of the Trilinguists, who hold that worship can only be offered in Greek, Latin, and Hebrew. Repeatedly, the Pope upholds the appropriateness of Slavonic for liturgical use. The Trilingual position was based upon the belief that certain meanings are available in the three allowed languages that are not embodied in others. Such an idea represents a compromise between what George Steiner calls the universalist position (that “the underlying structure of language is universal and common to all men”) and the monadist (“that universal deep structures are either fathomless to logical and psychological investigation or of an order so abstract, so generalized as to be well-nigh trivial”) concerning translatability.¹⁶ Translation is possible, but only between a select group of languages. Naturally, the Trilinguists adduced historical and theological arguments, but their basic position shares much with traditionalists around the globe who see translation as belonging in the same category as picture-taking or recording, a dilution of pure meaning or presence. Naturally, the triadic idea in the term “Trilinguist” points to the three parts of the *Dictionary*, which in turn allegorize the three elect peoples thought to share a common Yugoslav identity, as explained in the next section.

Furthermore, Methodius, brother of Constantine, wished

¹⁴ *Dictionary of the Khazars*, 61; “...je voleo jezike [...] i menjao ih kao hazarski kagan žene raznih vera,” *Hazarski rečnik*, 62.

¹⁵ *Dictionary of the Khazars*, 65; “Prevodio je crkvene spise sa grčkog na slovenski,” *Hazarski rečnik*, 66.

¹⁶ Steiner, *After Babel*, 73–74.

to establish a Slavic school under Greek influence, with its own students, a Slavic alphabet, and books translated from Greek into Slavonic. He and his brother had known since childhood that birds in Thessalonica and birds in Africa do not speak the same language, that swallows from the Sturmica and swallows from the Nile do not understand one another, and that only albatrosses speak the same language everywhere in the world.¹⁷

The inspirational origin of the two brothers' invention of the Cyrillic alphabet is invoked in the metaphor of the broken vessel: four jugs stand outside their cell; Constantine breaks one, draws the pieces inside, and reassembles them. "This they now did with the Slavonic language: they broke it in pieces, drew it into their mouths through the bars of Cyril's letters, and bonded the fragments with their saliva and the Greek clay beneath the soles of their feet."¹⁸ Here we see one of the many passages that materialize language and make its learning (or forgetting) a material rather than a mental process.

Farabi Ibn Kora, the delegate of Islam to the Khazar polemic, finds among the poems of Princess Ateh in Khazar the one text he has been seeking as the model for his own life: "Ibn Kora translated the account into Arabic, thinking how the truth was merely a trick."¹⁹ Ibn Kora's translation (given in Serbo-Croatian) of Ateh's poem is in prose, hinting at the "loss" perennially associated with acts of translation. Furthermore, the "Ku" entry in the Islamic dictionary, notes it as the word Ateh utters "weeping as she tries to remember her forgotten poems."²⁰ The close proximity of the two entries implies that Ateh's gradual forgetting of her own language occurs as a result of translation.

The Jewish controversialist, Isaac Sangari,

¹⁷ *Dictionary of the Khazars*, 86–87; "stvoriti slovensku školu pod grčkim uticajem, s učenicima, slovenskim pismenima i knjigama prevedenim sa grčkog na slovenski. On i njegov brat Konstantin znali su od detinjstva da ptice u Solunu i ptice u Africi ne govore istim jezikom, da se lasta sa Strumice i lasta s Nila ne razumeju i da jedino albatrosi svuda na svetu govore istim jezikom," *Hazarški rečnik*, 82–83.

¹⁸ *Dictionary of the Khazars*, 64; "Tako su uradili i sa slovenskim jezikom, razbili ga na parčad, uneli ga kroz rešetke ćirilskih slova u svoja usta i ulepili krhotine svojom pljuvačkom i grčkom glinom ispod svojih tabana..." *Hazarški rečnik*, 65.

¹⁹ *Dictionary of the Khazars*, 157; "Ibn-Kora je zapis preveo na arapski, misleći kako je istina samo jedan trik," *Hazarški rečnik*, 139.

²⁰ *Dictionary of the Khazars*, 160; "i plače pokušavajući da se seti svojih zaboravljenih pesama," *Hazarški rečnik*, 142.

made a point of stressing the values of the Hebrew language, but he knew many other languages as well. He believed that the differences between languages lay in the following: all languages except God's are the languages of suffering, the dictionaries of pain. 'I have noticed,' he said, 'that my sufferings are drained through a rupture in time or in myself, for otherwise they would be more numerous by now. The same holds true for languages.'²¹

This passage also refers back to Ateh's forgetting; languages themselves, it says, are capable of "forgetting"—optimistically, of forgetting sufferings, but we might find the truth of this *prosopopeia* in processes of semantic drift, for example, which result in current meanings of a word having little in common with its "original" meaning. A frequently given example from English is the word "silly," which many centuries ago had the same meaning as "pious" does today (cf. German "selig").

Finally, it is important to note that the *Dictionary* also provides numerous images of what we may call "non-translation," in which there appears to be a transfer of some kind from one language to another, but without the type of mental processing normally associated with true translation. One example is the notion of dream-hunting developed throughout the text. Those with the ability to acquire another person's dreams do so without necessarily having the requisite linguistic skills to translate the thoughts they acquire. This quality can be seen in the Serb Avram Brankovich, one of the modern dream-hunters of the Greek text. Brankovich

cannot stay with one language for long: he changes them like mistresses and speaks Walachian one minute and Hungarian or Turkish the next, and he has begun to learn Khazar from a parrot. They say he also speaks Spanish in his sleep, but his knowledge melts by the time he is awake. Recently someone in one of these dreams told him a poem in an unintelligible language. He remembered the poem, and in order to interpret it, he had to find someone skilled in the languages Brankovich does not know. This led us to a rabbi, and Brankovich recited the memorized verses for him. There were not many, and they went: [six verses given in Hebrew alphabet]. Having heard the be-

²¹ *Dictionary of the Khazars*, 274; "Naročito je insistirao na vrednosti hebrejskog jezika, ali je poznavao brojne druge jezike. Smatrao je da je razlika između jezika u sledećem. Svi su sem božijeg jezici patnje, rečnici bolova. Primetio sam—kaže on—da kroz neki procep u vremenu ili u meni otiču patnje, jer bi ih inače dosada moralo biti više. Isto vredi i za jezike," *Hazarški rečnik*, 241.

gining, the rabbi interrupted Brankovich and continued to recite the remainder of the poem from memory. The poem had been written back in the 12th century, and had been compiled by a man named Judah Halevi.²²

At the beginning of the passage, we might think of Brankovich as a polyglot, but by the end we realize that he is possessed by these various languages, as opposed to mastering them. The parrot is introduced as a symbol of speech without understanding, followed by Brankovich himself parroting a poem in a language he does not understand. It turns out that the poem comes into his dream from the mind of Joseph Cohen, author of the Hebrew dictionary. Cohen experiences a symmetrical appearance of Brankovich's native language, which he does not recognize: "when he dreamed at night he mumbled in some strange language he could not speak when awake, a language that turned out to be Walachian."²³ Brankovich and Cohen transmigrate into each other's dreams and "learn" each other's language, but without comprehension.

The connection of language and translation with physical and physiological processes recurs throughout the novel, connecting both with the political aspects of language encountered by Pavić in his own life, and with the novel's thematics of reincarnation and transmigration of souls.

The *Dictionary* as Allegory of Yugoslavia

It would appear that the *Dictionary of the Khazars* fits perfectly into Fredric Jameson's famous—though contested—model of the "novel as national allegory" in the Third World.²⁴ It seems to prophesy the collapse of Yugoslavia, which had been meant to unify Croats, Serbs, and Slovenes under a single

²² *Dictionary of the Khazars*, 28–29; "ne može dugo ostati na jednom jeziku, menja ih kao ljubavnice, i govori čas vlaški, čas mađarski ili turski, a od nekog papagaja počeo je učiti hazarski. Kažu da u snu govori i španski, ali se mu to znanje na javi topi. Nedavno mu je neko u snu pevao jednu pesmu na nerazumljivom jeziku. Pesmu je upamtio i da mu je protumači morali smo tražiti nekoga vičnog jezicima koje Branković ne zna. Tako smo došli do jednog rabina i Branković mu je izrecitovao upamćene stihove. Nije ih bilo mnogo i glasili su: [...] Rabin je čuvši početak prekinuo Brankovića i nastavio napamet da kazuje ostatak pesme. Potom je zapisao ime pisca stihova. Pesma je bila napisana još u XII veku, a njen sastavljač je neki Juda Halevi," *Hazarski rečnik*, 35–36.

²³ *Dictionary of the Khazars*, 211; "...je noću mrmljao u snovima nekim čudnim jezikom koji nije poznavao na javi i za koji se kasnije ispostavilo da je vlaški," *Hazarski rečnik*, 210.

²⁴ Fredric Jameson, "Third World Literature in the Era of Multinational Capitalism," *Social Text* 15 (Fall 1986): 73–98. For a contestation, see Aijaz Ahmad, "Jameson's Rhetoric of Otherness and the 'National Allegory,'" *Social Text* 17 (Fall 1987): 3–25.

cultural identity. At the same time, the disappearance of the Khazars' language and culture under the influence of powerful outside forces alludes to the history of the Balkans as the battleground upon which empires have confronted each other for thousands of years, converting and reconverting the peoples of the region linguistically, culturally, and socially in the process. In words eerily reminiscent of the dream-hunter idea of the *Dictionary* (as well as of the Shylock theme, as we will see below), Slovenian author Slavoj Žižek writes: "In former Yugoslavia, we are lost not because of our primitive dreams and myths preventing us from speaking the enlightened language of Europe, but because we pay in flesh the price of being the stuff the Other's dreams are made of."²⁵

To begin with the latter point, Pavić's own autobiographical statement demonstrates both the importance of Babel in his upbringing and the fact that such diversity was neither natural nor non-violent:

The first time bombs rained down on me I was twelve [World War II]. The second time I was fifteen. In between those two bombings I fell in love for the first time and was made to learn German under the German occupation. I also learned English secretly from a gentleman who smoked fragrant pipe tobacco. At the same time I forgot French for the first time (I was later to forget it twice more).

Finally, in a kennel where I had sought shelter from the Anglo-American bombing, an emigré Russian imperial officer started teaching me Russian. [...] Today I think learning languages was a kind of transformation into different bewitching animals.²⁶

In the next section we will revisit the mythical dimensions of the idea of language variance as transmutation. This narrative presents what we might call a "diachronic Babel," where the confusion of tongues is spread out through time rather than space. Notably, forgetting languages is as important as remembering them in this anecdote: besides the idea of forgetting French, there is the complete repression of the other languages spoken in the former Yugoslavia—indeed, Pavić does not even mention his own language, "native" Serbian, though implicitly it was a language of resistance that helped him to survive and to maintain his identity in the face of domination by outside forces. The lesson of Pavić's remembrance seems to be that he has experi-

²⁵ Slavoj Žižek, "Caught in Another's Dream in Bosnia" in *Why Bosnia?*, ed. Rabia Ali and Lawrence Lifschultz (Stony Creek, CT: Pamphleteer's P, 1993), 238.

²⁶ Pavić, "Autobiography," www.khazars.com/autobiography.html. Accessed 17 December 2002.

enced on his body what the Serbs and Serbian literature have experienced as a body politic and corpus of texts. In the history Pavić published on Serbian Baroque literature, for example, a few years before he began work on the *Dictionary*, he described literature's defense of Serb nationhood under the Austrian Empire and the Venetian Republic as well as under Ottoman occupation, each foreign domination bringing with it a different language.²⁷

One of the root stories "told" by all three dictionaries concerns the so-called "Khazar controversy," namely the conversion of the Khazars to one of the three religions—naturally, each version claims that the Princess converted to its respective religion, and thus that Christianity, Islam, or Judaism counts among its converts the Khazar race. Just as the *Dictionary* implicitly asks about the extent to which one religion can be seen as a translation of another, one culture the translation of another, so too it implies that translation is conversion. The entire text conveys the tension and paradox of religion as a force equally for untranslatability (over specific religious practices) and for translatability (i.e., in the recognition that the god[s] of another culture are really the same but with a different name).²⁸

Jacques Derrida reminds us that at least one Latin verb for translation ("vertere") is the same as for conversion. Furthermore, Derrida gives some idea of the cultural stakes of translation in his analysis of "relevant" translation. Derrida sees Shakespeare's *Merchant of Venice* as an economic model of translation processes, for example, between monetary and bodily values that block payment of Antonio's debt. Furthermore, however,

[t]his impossible translation, this conversion (and all translation is a conversion: *vertere*, *transvertere*, *convertere*, as Cicero said) between the original, literal flesh and the monetary sign is not unrelated to the Jew Shylock's forced conversion to Christianity, since the traditional figure of the Jew is often and conventionally situated on the side of the body and the letter (from bodily circumcision or Pharisaism, from ritual compliance to literal exteriority), whereas St. Paul the Christian is on the side of the spirit, sense of interiority, spiritual circumcision. This relation of the letter to the spirit, of the body of literalness to the ideal interiority of sense is also the site of the passage of translation,

²⁷ Pavić, *Istorija srpske književnosti baroknog doba* (Belgrade: Nolit, 1970) 334; cited in Petar Ramadanović, "Language and Crime in Yugoslavia," in *Regionalism Reconsidered*, ed. David Jordan (New York: Garland, 1994) 191.

²⁸ Cf. Jan Assmann, "Translating Gods: Religion as a Factor of Cultural (Un)Translatability," in *The Translatability of Cultures: Figurations of the Space Between*, ed. Sanford Buick and Wolfgang Iser (Stanford: Stanford UP, 1996), 25–36.

of this conversion that is called translation. As if the business of translation were first of all an Abrahamic matter between the Jew, the Christian, and the Muslim.²⁹

By identifying translation with conversion, Derrida alludes to the play's ending, where Shylock is forced to convert to Christianity. This conversion, of course, is analogous to translation in that the "new Christian" emerging from the process is not the exact equivalent of an "old Christian." The very impetus behind conversion—fear of the residue of Otherness within a supposedly homogeneous Christian culture—insures that this residue will continue to be worn as an exterior sign. No matter how great the exterior conformity of Jewish converts to Christianity, the suspicion will linger that these are but surface signifiers for a continued, hidden Jewish signified. (Shakespeare's own hidden significance in this play about intolerance and conversion may have been the struggles of Elizabeth's regime to root out Catholicism by exposing and punishing recusants—i.e., crypto-Catholics—a practice from which some of Shakespeare's family suffered.)

Shylock's forced conversion to Christianity at the end of the play is a kind of somatic translation—just as the proposed payment of Antonio's debt through his pound of flesh was a translation of specie and material into living matter. Among translation theorists, Douglas Robinson has made the most compelling case for a somatics of translation: "everybody is aware of the somatic grounds of translation equivalence." Perhaps not accidentally, Robinson claims elsewhere that "the practical aim concealed behind and mystified by the ideal [for translation] has almost invariably been conversion."³⁰ Pavić's comment equating languages with spirit familiars speaks to this somatic aspect of translation, and identifies his learning of French, German, and Russian as various moments of Shylockian "conversion." The most powerful image of such conversion in the *Dictionary* is the swordsman Averkie Skila, whose sword cuts opening the entrails of his opponents are signs of the zodiac, who writes a book entitled *Finest Signatures of the Saber*, and who hopes that the right cut will provide passage out of his circular and tormented existence.

However, not only "great-power" conversion has been at work in Balkan history; there has also been "small-power" imperialism in the region.³¹ To

²⁹ Jacques Derrida, "What Is 'Relevant' Translation?" *Critical Inquiry* 27.2 (Winter 2001): 184.

³⁰ Douglas Robinson, *The Translator's Turn* (Baltimore: Johns Hopkins UP, 1991), 18, 209.

³¹ For a fuller account of these differential terms, see Peter Mentzel, "Remembering and Inventing: A Short History of the Balkans," *Libertyhaven*,

give only a few examples, during World War II the Croatian Fascists forcibly converted Orthodox Serbs to Catholicism; at the same time, they treated Bosnian Muslims as “Croats of the Muslim Religion,” hence converting these latter ideologically into Croats. Similarly, Albanian Kosovars have been officially treated in Yugoslavia as “Islamicized Serbs.” Publications in Albanian were forbidden; in 1918, Albanian schools were closed, and pro-Serbian Bosnian Muslims became the instructors in schools, which taught only in Serbo-Croatian. At least some of the citizens of Tito’s Yugoslavia took seriously the stated goal of converting all these ethnic identities into the “New (Socialist) Yugoslav Man” whose language was Serbo-Croatian.

Given the highly unstable and mobile status of ethnicity in the region, it should not surprise us that Pavić has

traveled the world explaining to the Jews that his Khazars were really Jews, dropped in on Croats to hint that the Khazars might have been Croats, claimed to the Basques that the Khazars were none other than Basques. Today, after joyfully sliding into the Serbian warrior camp, Pavić explains that the Khazars are simply Serbs.³²

First of all, we notice the process of translation at work in these various interpretations of the Khazars. In this section, however, we are interested in the last equation, Khazar=Serb=Yugoslav. In this reading, the three dictionaries that aim at one reflect the “one people with three names”—Croats, Serbs, and Slovenes—who were supposed to have enjoyed an original ethnic and cultural unity that in nationalist mytho-history had become frayed in the course of events, but that would be restored by the state of Yugoslavia. Andrew Wachtel has pointed out that a likely source for the idea of the Khazar controversy is the Primary Chronicle of Rus’ for the years 986–88, which reports delegations for each of the three religions.³³ Following this process of condensation through, we arrive at the view of a Slavic people divided by religious controversy that eventually yields “Islamicized Serbs” and “Croats of the Muslim Religion,” among other things. Behind the tripartite dictionary it is not difficult to discern the formation of Yugoslavia in 1918 as the “Kingdom of Serbs, Croats, and Slovenes,” and perhaps as well the fact that Tito’s Yugoslavia had three official languages (Serbo-Croatian, Slovenian,

<http://www.libertyhaven.com/politicsandcurrentevents/warpeacediplomacyorforeignaid/r...> Accessed 17 Dec. 2002.

³² Dubravka Ugrešić, “Intellectuals as Leaders,” *Partisan Review* 4 (1992): 681.

³³ Andrew Wachtel, “Postmodernism as Nightmare: Milorad Pavić’s Literary Demolition of Yugoslavia,” *The Slavic and East European Journal* 41.4 (Winter 1997): 633.

and Macedonian). The continual, tragic defeat in this text of those who would reconstruct Adam must resonate with readers from Pavić's part of the world.

Translation as Transformation and Transmigration

"Today I think learning languages was a kind of transformation into different bewitching animals." With this quote, Pavić summarizes the themes of transformation and transmigration that inhabit views of language in the *Dictionary of the Khazars*. In Pavić's image, language is not a tool or faculty for communication but a mode of being. We are "men made of words," to use N. Scott Momaday's formulation.³⁴ To speak different languages is to transform ourselves.

Besides providing images of translation as a somatic or physical operation not necessarily tied to meaning, the transmigration of the *Dictionary* also moves beyond the purely linguistic point of view. The cataclysmic event that shattered the Khazar civilization leaves the three dictionaries as fragments of, to use Pavić's governing metaphor, the shattered vessel of originary meaning. If the Khazar language stands for Benjamin's "pure language" or for Adamic language, then its reassembly, in which both the novel's characters as well as the reader play a part, would have far-reaching, extra-linguistic, messianic consequences. Furthermore, the path towards this reconstruction cannot be and is not limited to human language(s), whose "words come not from the head or the soul but from the world, from sticky tongues and malodorous jaws; they have all long since been picked dry, spewed out and become pulp from constant chewing. They have not been whole for a while."³⁵ In addition to the three dictionaries, the project—and the novel—hinge on what can be seen as other translation modes, namely, dream interpretation, transmutation, and the transmigration of souls. Even if not the most traditional translation types, all of these either fall within or border on Jakobson's category of inter-semiotic translation, defined as "an interpretation of verbal signs by means of signs of nonverbal sign systems."³⁶ This would be in agreement with George Steiner, who claims: "because it is interpretation, translation extends far beyond the verbal medium."³⁷ Jakobson's alternative term for inter-semiotic

³⁴ N. Scott Momaday, "Man Made of Words," in *The Remembered Earth*, ed. Geary Hobson (Albuquerque: U of New Mexico P, 1981), 162–71. The title of the anthology is taken from Momaday's essay.

³⁵ *Dictionary of the Khazars*, 304; "...reči ne dolaze iz glave i duše nego iz sveta, s lepljivih jezika i iz smradnih čeljusti; sve su već davno oglodane, ispljuvane i umašćene od stalnog žvakanja. Odavno nisu cele," *Hazarški rečnik*, 270.

³⁶ Jakobson, "On Linguistic Aspects of Translation," 145.

³⁷ Steiner, 275.

translation is transmutation, a useful reminder that Pavić's heroes have, as did the alchemists, metaphysical aims at stake in their reconstructive efforts.

As we learn, the *Dictionary* dates back to the Khazar dream hunters. Why the concentration on dreams rather than on divine *logos*? Firstly, dreams are the only divine language comprehensible to humanity in its current fallen state. A seventeenth-century monk and a seventeenth-century dream hunter speculate on God's language. The monk believes that "nouns are for God and verbs for man,"³⁸ while the hunter assures us that "[t]he fact that nouns are destined to lie in the nature of human names is only further proof that they do not belong to the same order of words that create God's name."³⁹ Under "Khazars" in the "Yellow Book" we read:

the truth cannot be understood on its own, like a lie, but only by comparing it with lies, by comparing the white space with the letters of our Book, because the white spaces in the *Khazar Dictionary* mark the translucent places of the divine truth and name (Adam Cadmon), and the black letters between the white spaces are where our eyes cannot penetrate beyond the surface.⁴⁰

This, of course, is a piece of advice on how to approach the novel; only by sifting through lies do we stand some chance of arriving at the truth(s). In this case, since the two statements exclude each other, man's languages, with their verbs and nouns, cannot approximate the divine idiom. To continue the metaphor, how possible is it to translate verbs into nouns, and vice versa?

Secondly, the path towards humankind's lost divine nature lies through dreams, since humankind's angel ancestor "thought the way we dream."⁴¹ His body can be recomposed, or incarnated, on earth if all human dreams are compiled. The dream-hunters, who start out as a Khazar priestly sect and who undergo two cycles of reincarnation, once in the seventeenth and once in the twentieth century, devote themselves to this task. *Dictionary of the Khazars*

³⁸ *Dictionary of the Khazars*, 93; "imenice su za Boga, a glagoli za čoveka," *Hazarski rečnik*, 88.

³⁹ *Dictionary of the Khazars*, 225; "To što su imenice određene da leže u prirodi ljudskih imena, samo je jedan dokaz više da ne pripadaju onom redu reči koje tvore božje ime," *Hazarski rečnik*, 223.

⁴⁰ *Dictionary of the Khazars*, 258; "istina se [...] ne može shvatiti neposredno kao laž, nego samo iz upoređenja istine i laži. Uz poređenja belina i slova naše *Knjige*. Jer beline *Hazarskog rečnika* obeležavaju prozirna mesta božanske istine i imena (Adama Kadmona). A crna slova između belina—mesta gde naši pogledi ne prodiru dublje od površine..." *Hazarski rečnik*, 201.

⁴¹ *Dictionary of the Khazars*, 165; "...je mislio na taj način na koji mi sanjamo," *Hazarski rečnik*, 147.

itself, we are told, was started by Princess Ateh as “nothing more than an attempt to compile the records kept over the centuries by dream-hunters who wrote down their experiences.”⁴² As the only way to read this *Dictionary* is to sort through lies, recovering as much truth as possible in the process, the reader her/himself, as the novel’s compiler, participates in the dream-hunters’ efforts. As we can see, their work aims at transmutation: human dreams collected all together will turn into “the heavenly Adam, man’s angel ancestor.”⁴³ This metamorphosis would take place according to the algorithm described in the Gospel of St. John, “the Word became flesh” (1:14). It is, therefore, no accident that “whoever opened [the poisoned copy of the *Dictionary of the Khazars*] [...] would die on the ninth page at the words *Verbum caro factum est* (‘The Word became flesh’).”⁴⁴ Since only two copies were left from the 1691 edition until Pavić’s supposed reconstruction of the text, there was a fifty-percent chance that anyone reminded of this magic formula in a context where it has creative power would drop dead. This makes for little surprise if we recall the identification with the prohibition against pursuing wisdom/knowledge inappropriate to humans (e.g., the Tree of the Knowledge of Good and Evil) that goes back to Paradise. Does the *Dictionary’s* compilation indeed belong to the realm of proscribed quests?

According to some sources it does, while according to others it does not. It is probable that “in 1692 the Inquisition destroyed all the copies of the Daubmannus edition,”⁴⁵ except for two, while “in the Moslem [Moorish] community, an eight-hundred-year ban was placed on reading the “silver copy”⁴⁶ for this very reason. The book fares best in the Jewish community, where it becomes merely “subject to periodic attacks by learned men.”⁴⁷ The Jews, without a state apparatus, naturally had less opportunity to ban books than did the other two religious groups. More importantly, however, we can see a major affinity between gathering entries in this *Dictionary* on the one

⁴² *Dictionary of the Khazars*, 207–08; “ništa drugo do pokušaj da se na jednom mestu saberu zapisi koje su lovci snova vekovima skupljali beležeći svoja iskustva,” *Hazarški rečnik*, 185.

⁴³ *Dictionary of the Khazars*, 165; “nebeski Adam, andeoski predak čoveka,” *Hazarški rečnik*, 146.

⁴⁴ *Dictionary of the Khazars*, 6; “Ko god bi otvorio knjigu [...] umirao [bi] na devetoj strani kod reči koje glase: *Verbum caro factum est* (Reč postade meso),” *Hazarški rečnik*, 15.

⁴⁵ *Dictionary of the Khazars*, 5; “Inkvizicija je 1692. godine uništila sve primerke Daubmanusovog izdanja,” *Hazarški rečnik*, 15.

⁴⁶ *Dictionary of the Khazars*, 7; “u mavarskoj islamskoj sredini [je] ‘srebrni primerak’ osuđen na zabranu čitanja od 800 godina,” *Hazarški rečnik*, 16.

⁴⁷ *Dictionary of the Khazars*, 7; “je povremeno bila izložena napadima učenih ljudi,” *Hazarški rečnik*, 16.

hand, and man's function within the universe prescribed by the Kabbala on the other.

Even though the active search for these fragments was carried out primarily by the Kabbalists and adepts of Hermes Trismegistus, Walter Benjamin's "The Task of the Translator," mentioned earlier, is also linked to this tradition.⁴⁸ When Benjamin proclaims that translation's task is to "lovingly and in detail incorporate the original's mode of signification, thus making both the original and the translation recognizable as fragments of a greater language ["pure language" or "*reine Sprache*"], just as fragments are part of a vessel,"⁴⁹ he is referring to this quest. This endeavor can follow more than one trajectory: The Kabbalists and Hermeticists, according to Steiner, "scrutinize[d] the hidden configurations of letters and syllables and appl[ied] them to ancient names, particularly to the diverse nominations of the Creator."⁵⁰ Another path to re-assembling the shattered vessels depends on morality and spirituality. In Gerstein's account, "[i]t is the job of humanity to discover these [divine] sparks [originally contained in the vessels] and raise them back so they can be used to repair the vessels. This process of rectification ("Tikkun") occurs through spiritual conduct, acts of love, righteousness, etc."⁵¹ Benjamin, in his turn, elevates translation to the "task of profound philosophic, ethical, and magical import."⁵² For Pavić, dreams open the door into pre-lapsarian speech "for at the bottom of every dream lies God."⁵³ If we adopt the breaking-of-the-vessels paradigm, the divine sparks fell into human dreams. Of equal importance is the fact that in dreams the unity between body and passion has remained intact, in contrast to post-lapsarian reality. One of the first dream-hunters ascribes the division between them to "a terrible calamity"⁵⁴ and calls the humankind suffering from this condition "a strange creature, more sluggish than ourselves, [...] glued to the land with all its weight, deprived of the passion we inhabit like our own bodies."⁵⁵ Thus, *Dictionary of the Khazars* sets up a dichotomy between those entities—

⁴⁸ Steiner, 62, 67.

⁴⁹ Benjamin, 79.

⁵⁰ Steiner, 67.

⁵¹ Mark H. Gerstein, "Breaking of the Vessels"—The Story." *Qabala for Beginners*. <http://www.geocities.com/Athens/Troy/2795/qb5.html>. Accessed 12 January 2004.

⁵² Steiner, 67.

⁵³ *Dictionary of the Khazars*, 68; "jer na dnu svakog sna leži Bog," *Hazarski rečnik*, 80.

⁵⁴ *Dictionary of the Khazars*, "strašna nesreća," *Hazarski rečnik*, 80.

⁵⁵ *Dictionary of the Khazars*, 67–68; "jedno čudno stvorenje tromije od nas, [...] zalepljeno za svoje kopno svom svojom težinom, pri tome lišeno slasti u kojoj mi živimo kao u sopstvenom telu," *Hazarski rečnik*, 80..

whether the divine vessels, Adamic language, or humans prior to the above mentioned cataclysm—that are whole, without a need for supplement, and those that are fragmented, lacking something, in dire need of reassembly—the broken shards, human languages, and the current human condition. Putting all human dreams together would ameliorate the other particularizations. The reader participates in this collection through the translational effort he/she exerts on Pavić's text, and thus plays a part in the magical, messianic work as well. It is perhaps for this reason that Pavić has shown an unusual interest in and tolerance for the many translations his work has received, as noted above.

This process of reconstruction has not gone smoothly and quickly for the Kabbalists, for Pavić's heroes, or for "Yugoslavia." As we already know, the compiler working with the Daubmannus edition faces an evens-odds risk of deadly poisoning. Furthermore, political, linguistic, and religious divisions always interfere with the mission, frequently resulting in the collectors' physical demise. To make matters worse, the dream-hunters' project "can bring an imaginable benefit or terrible misfortune,"⁵⁶ depending on whether Adam Ruhani is ascending or descending the ladder of reason at the work's completion. Demons from all three hells (Jewish, Christian, and Muslim) stand in the way, "for [they] cannot permit a book of his body to become a state."⁵⁷ Their attacks will intensify "when in the end of the 20th century after Isa [Adam Ruhani] follows an ascending orbit of his wanderings [and] his state of dreams will approach the Creator."⁵⁸ The difficulties seem so formidable that Andrew Wachtel concludes: "the desire for synthesis [...] is seen as a utopian and foolhardy quest; for when it is achieved, synthesis leads not to perfect knowledge, but rather to immediate death and destruction."⁵⁹ Even if the thirst for knowledge and synthesis may be perilous, it will remain an integral part of the human psyche. Furthermore, another translation mode of the *Dictionary* mitigates the heroes' personal demise: the transmigration of souls.

In this paradigm, validated by both Eastern religions and the Kabbala, the soul, which takes on successive bodies, operates as a translational invariant of sorts. The seventeenth-century dream-hunting triad, Avram Brankovich, Samuel Cohen, and Jusuf Masudi, returns as Dr. Isailo Suk, Dr. Dorothea

⁵⁶ *Dictionary of the Khazars*, 167; "Od našeg poziva lovaca na snove [...] može doći neslućena korist ili ogromna nesreća," *Hazarski rečnik*, 147.

⁵⁷ *Dictionary of the Khazars*, 138; "jer ne mo[gu] dozvoliti da knjiga njegovog tela postane država," *Hazarski rečnik*, 177.

⁵⁸ *Dictionary of the Khazars*, 138; "kada [Adam Ruhani] bude krajem XX veka od Ise na uzlaznoj putanji svog lutanja [i] njegova država sna približiće se Tvorcu," *Hazarski rečnik*, 177.

⁵⁹ Wachtel, 636.

Schultz, and Dr. Abu Kabir Muawia two hundred and ninety-three years after their deaths in 1691. Their reincarnation incorporates a gender transformation, since Samuel Cohen comes back as Dorothea Schultz. Their three demons also re-appear, having switched not only their genders, but also their hell citizenship. The transmigration will hardly stop in 1982. On the contrary, we have to presume that the three will be translated into yet another dream-hunting team later on. In this context, it is important to note that the transmigration functions are among one of the novel's multiple infinities. Pavić has admitted to an ambition "to make literature, which is nonreversible art, into a reversible one."⁶⁰

There are three more anti-closural devices directly linked to our topic: linguistic translation; the *Dictionary*'s future transmutation in the receptive reader's mind; and the synthetic activity an obedient reader should perform with the novel's assistance upon finishing "Appendix II." Pavić hopes for another type of afterlife for his words: over time, mixed with a grain of sand and voices, they may transform themselves into a pearl in the reader's consciousness. The transmutation to be accomplished immediately requires one female and one male, bound together by a spell woven by the lexicon novel itself:

Let that lovely woman with quick eyes and languid hair who, in reading this dictionary and running through her fear as through a room, feels lonely, do the following. On the first Wednesday of the month, with the dictionary under her arm, let her go to the teashop in the main square of town. Waiting for her there will be a young man who, like her, has just been overcome by a feeling of loneliness, wasting time by reading the same book. Let them sit down for a coffee together and compare the masculine and feminine exemplars of their books. [...] [T]he book will fit together as a whole, like a game of dominoes.⁶¹

In one lexicon entry Pavić informs us that neither masculine nor feminine reading can grasp any text in isolation. The spell further reinforces the read-

⁶⁰ Pavić, "The Beginning and the End of the Novel," 142.

⁶¹ *Dictionary of the Khazars*, 335; "Ona lepa osoba brzih očiju i lenje kose, koja se čitajući ovaj rečnik i trčeći kroz svoj strah kao kroz sobu oseti usamljena, neka učini sledeće. Neka s rečnikom pod pazuhom izađe u podne jedne srede pred poslastičarnicu na glavnom trgu svoje varoši. Tamo će je čekati mladić koji se upravo, kao i ona, osetio sam stračivši vreme na čitanje iste knjige. Neka sednu zajedno uz kafu i neka uporede muški i ženski primerak ove knjige. [...] [K]njiga će im se sklopiti u celinu kao partija domina," *Hazarski rečnik*, 296.

er's function in the re-assembly of Adam Ruhani's body. The novel tells us repeatedly that Adam is a male and a female at the same time. If the human angel ancestor, an unbroken vessel, was androgynous, then joining a man and a woman, two fragments from a broken vessel, is a step in Adam's reconstruction. Indeed, Pavić tells us: "part of [Adam's] immense body-state can at any moment and in every one of us be killed again or revived. It only takes the prophetic touch of the fingers, the masculine and the feminine, provided that we have built at least a part of Adam's body behind these fingers."⁶²

Conclusion

As we have seen, dream interpretation underlies the task that the novel's heroes and its readers have to accomplish. To extract fragments of Adam Ruhani's body from man's dreams also means to gain access to the undivided Adamic language, the *reine sprache* Walter Benjamin refers to in "The Task of the Translator." This would further remedy humankind's fallen state, with its two divisions (body/passion, male/ female). Seen within the Kabbalistic breaking-of-the-vessels paradigm, we have encountered three types of fragments waiting for reassembly: our angel ancestor Adam, languages, and human society. The collected dreams can only become Adam Ruhani through a transmutation process. The transmigration of souls provides new adepts for the task, which always meets with formidable difficulties. In terms of the last two categories, various textual references, allusions, and the author's own statements make clear that Milorad Pavić has the Balkans in mind as a site in need of "reassembly" through "conversion." These three translation tasks are thus indispensable to *The Dictionary of the Khazars* and, together with translation proper, mark the novel as translational fiction.

⁶² *Dictionary of the Khazars*, 320–21; "deo njegovog ogromnog tela-države može u svakome trenutku u svakome od nas ponovo ubiti ili oživeti. Dovoljan je proročki dodir prsta. Muškog i ženskog. Pod uslovom da smo bar deo Adamovog tela izgradili iza tih prstiju," *Hazarški rečnik*, 283–84.

**More Than Words: Reading with Perceptual Unity in
Milorad Pavić's *Dictionary of the Khazars***

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A common complaint during the last third of the twentieth century has been the “subject’s” increasing inability to define the physical space he or she occupies. This spatial uncertainty can be thought of as a symptom of a more general confusion that also concerns time and language, which has been described as characteristic of the “postmodern” era. As an example of this psychological frustration Fredric Jameson uses his experience in Los Angeles’ Bonaventure Hotel. The first puzzling features of the structure are its three entrances, none of which leads to the main check-in lobby, and a glass façade that reflects the surrounding urban structure rather than indicating its own presence as a building. Inside, an elaborate system of elevators and escalators precludes the need and even the ability to travel by foot, and an indoor lake and a greenhouse serve as vertical book-ends for a vast column of empty space. The author/hotel patron struggles to conceive of an appropriate place for his body within this amalgam of diverse, technologically inspired, and counterintuitive spaces.¹ For Jameson, this experience is an indication of a more general “incapacity of our minds to map the great global multinational and decentered communicational network in which we find ourselves caught as individual subjects.”² Just as the spaces within contemporary architecture can lack well-defined markers that might help us to construct a mental representation, or “cognitive map”³ of our position relative to the structure as a whole, so do the spaces that comprise a flexible network of global politics, economics, and communications.

While such manifestations of global capitalism and information technology are generally the most recognizable phenomena to provoke the wrath of the often disgruntled and bewildered postmodern subject, the Serbian author Milorad Pavić, in *Dictionary of the Khazars*, locates this same perceptual

¹ Fredric Jameson, *Postmodernism, or, the Cultural Logic of Late Capitalism* (Durham: Duke University Press, 1991), 39-43.

² *Ibid.*, 42.

³ *Ibid.*, 51.

confusion in places seemingly unrelated spatially or temporally to Los Angeles's ostentatious display of technology and capital: the Khazar Empire of medieval Eastern Europe, and twentieth-century communist Yugoslavia. While the latter is never explicitly mentioned, many critics find convincing evidence that the story of the Khazar polemic is an allegorical representation of Pavić's contemporary Yugoslavia.⁴ Regardless of its political references, the unconventional poetics and structure that work to challenge overarching historical narratives in the *Dictionary* can induce a sense of bewilderment similar to that expressed by Jameson as he describes the Bonaventure Hotel. Accordingly, the conflation of the *Dictionary*'s unique form with its geographical and historical content into one concise bundle that nevertheless has no definite starting or ending point suggests that it is just as much a work of cartography or architecture as it is fiction or history. And since, according to Jameson, we do not know exactly what postmodern space looks like anyway, why not give this "map" the form of a book? This spatial and formal confusion, however, accomplishes a more important task than simply leaving the reader perplexed and mistrustful of any type of rational political, spatial, or literary unity. Rather than reading the *Dictionary* as an implication of the naïveté in thinking that "difference can be bridged and history demystified"⁵ in communist Yugoslavia, I suggest that the subversive nature of the narrative is a challenge to the ideological underpinnings of unity in the first place. By exposing the disjunctions within what we perceive as the complete conceptual categories of space, time, and language, and then unifying the "fallout" into a comprehensive map/history/novel, Pavić challenges the reader to reconsider an elemental ideology of unity rather than accepting unity's various divisive ideologies—one of which, not insignificantly, is Yugoslav communism.

Although like the rest of the *Dictionary*, the "Preliminary Notes" are by no means devoid of questionable historical information related to the reader by imaginative surrealistic imagery. These introductory comments remain Pavić's most explicit section of prose in the work. Much like the legend of a map, section three of the "Notes" establishes a symbolic code to aid in understanding the *Dictionary*. Here, Pavić indicates that a cross, a crescent moon, and a Star of David will accompany items within the text that can be found, respectively, as entries in the "Red, Green, and Yellow Books." This system allows the reader "to move through the book as through a forest, from one marker to the next, orienting himself by observing the stars, the moon, and the

⁴ See Vasa Mihailović, "Parable of Nationhood," *World and I*, 3.11 (1988): 378–83

⁵ Andrew Wachtel, "Postmodernism as Nightmare: Milorad Pavić's Literary Demolition of Yugoslavia," *The Slavic and East European Journal*, 41.4 (Winter, 1997) *JSTOR* 20 May 2004 <http://www.jstor.org>, 638.

cross.”⁶ Already, the book appears as an exercise not only in deciphering a written text, but in navigating through the physical world. By suggesting this and various other unconventional ways of reading the *Dictionary*, Pavić offers possibilities for rectifying his lament that “[Today’s reader] never changes his manner of reading in any case.”⁷ He suggests that readers capable of this adjustment have “long since vanished from the face of the earth,”⁸ much like the Khazars, indicating that a more unified type of reading is not impossible, only forgotten.

Pavić, however, does recognize that the reader needs guidance in rediscovering these older, unified methods of reading, and as the *Dictionary* progresses, he forcefully “jars” the reader’s memory by repositioning cognitive categories into unexpected arrangements to construct a new perceptual template rather than simply deconstructing the traditional one. “Time” and “language” are obviously crucial elements in a conventional map, but they typically defer to “space” as the prime application. Likewise, clocks privilege “time” while literature privileges “language.” Histories ultimately find ways for all three components to assume dominant roles at various junctures. But Pavić’s “novel” demonstrates that despite the ideologies in which each of these modes of representation—maps, clocks, fiction, and history—are engulfed, the categories of time, space, and language contribute equally to the conceptual value we derive from them even though we may not realize it. For example, a map of the Kingdom of Serbs, Croats, and Slovenes depicts very nearly the same space as does a map of Yugoslavia, but that space is read differently on each representation simply because of variations of time and language. Similarly, Pavić describes “a night so thin that two men, one standing in Tuesday, and the other in Wednesday, could shake hands.”⁹ Here, time is described spatially, as “thin” and able to be physically occupied, and accordingly, the names of days of the week, which usually indicate a discrete amount of time, now become geographical concepts. By reshuffling these apparently static cognitive categories, Pavić seems to ask, “If place can change through time and language, then why can time and language not change through place?” In extending this question to the overall structure of the book, we see that it also renders words and time geographically. Regardless of whether the reader of a map looks at Sarajevo or Belgrade first, he or she still ultimately recognizes a representation of Yugoslavia upon viewing its en-

⁶ Milorad Pavić, *Dictionary of the Khazars: A lexicon novel*, trans. Christina Pribičević-Zorić (New York: Knopf, 1989), 13.

⁷ *Dictionary of the Khazars*, 11.

⁸ *Ibid.*

⁹ *Ibid.*, 43.

tirety. Likewise, each entry in the *Dictionary* contributes to the totality of the narrative, but can be read in any order the reader chooses.

The original Khazars themselves seem to demonstrate this ideological unity of perception the way Pavić describes them. Not insignificantly, the fact that this original unity was lost when other, still existent historical factions attempted to coerce them into “new” and “separate” unions suggests an ideology of division that underlies all contemporary campaigns for unity. The “Green Book” recounts a Khazar legend that dictates that “all creation, the past and the future, all events and things, melted as they swam in the fiery river of time, former and subsequent beings mixing like soap and water.”¹⁰ While a reader may recognize this myth as strikingly similar to contemporary cosmological theories regarding the creation of the universe, Pavić’s fantastical and surreal rendering of it exposes our ideological predisposition to regard with incredulity the fusion of what we assume to be discrete categories of time, space, and materiality. Furthermore, “the Khazars can read colors like musical notes, letters, or numbers.”¹¹ Here, what are usually interpreted as distinct symbolic categories become interchangeable sources of information for the lost tribe. By grouping colors—naturally occurring signifiers—with other arbitrary modes of signification, Pavić calls into question our ability to “read” in the first place. While the “reading” of colors appears less instinctual than the “reading” of music, words, or numbers, it is actually a more organic (although not necessarily more accurate) endeavor. Of course, on a map, colors can be “read,” but only when imbued with linguistic value from the key or legend. By dividing his work into “books” classified by colors—red, green, and yellow—each denoting a separate religious interpretation of the Khazar Polemic, Pavić illustrates that we really are reading colors anyway, because our readings are informed by our own ideologically influenced interpretations of the motives of each religion along with the reasons for choosing a specific color to represent it. The deterioration of the Khazar’s cohesive and organic epistemology into more random forms of representation becomes especially apparent when it is revealed that the “god of salt”¹² separated the Khazar’s primordial “soap and water,” and that the Jewish influence on the Khazar empire caused them to forget how to read colors. While even these details of an ideologically motivated “Green” retelling of the story are not to be trusted, the apparent dissolution of the Khazars’ perceptual unity reveals that only when more contemporary styles of interpretation (i.e., religion) press upon the

¹⁰ *Dictionary of the Khazars*, 144–45.

¹¹ *Ibid.*, 145.

¹² *Ibid.*

ancient tribe, does their all-encompassing system of categorization become filtered and diluted.

Another unique Khazar perceptual curiosity is their conflation of spirituality, the subconscious, time, and geography:

The Khazars imagine the future in terms of space, never time. Their places of worship are built in a strict predefined arrangement, which, when connected, forms a picture of Adam Ruhani, the third angel, the symbol of the Khazar princess and her sect of priests. With the Khazars, a character moves from one dream to another, and the Khazars can follow it from village to village.¹³

In this respect, the Khazars truly show a geographical conception of the non-spatial phenomena of dreams in a way similar to the *Dictionary*'s mapping of history and narrative. Since dreams comprise the spirituality of the Khazars, their religion becomes spatial in a way difficult for the contemporary reader to comprehend. Adam Ruhani, the angel who is depicted structurally in Khazar urban planning, represents a totality of humanity, time, and space, which, when physically assembled from dreams—that are first verbally transcribed by special dream-hunters—will unify all of these perceptual categories into a paradoxically well-organized whole. Presumably this is the same kind of cognitive solidarity Jameson would need to make sense of the Bonaventure Hotel.

But perhaps the *Dictionary* shows us that our notion of “what makes sense” is actually the cause of our confusion—not that all attempts at clarification are futile because no inherent “sense” exists in the first place. Because each of these dream-hunters, along with their modern-day and medieval counterparts in the *Dictionary* who are trying to construct an entire map or narrative of either Adam Ruhani or the Khazars, eventually dies before his or her goal is realized, it is easy to read “the desire for synthesis” in the *Dictionary* “as a utopian and foolhardy quest.”¹⁴ Accordingly, this message could be projected onto the already precariously “unified” communist nation of Yugoslavia, with obvious implications of the imminent failure of the whole project. However, the character of Theoctist Nikolsky offers another interpretation of Pavić's literary mapping endeavor. Although mentioned in various entries of all three books of the *Dictionary*, Nikolsky only receives a thorough examination in “Appendix I.” His character's structural separation within the work parallels his ideological separation: unlike the dream-hunters, aca-

¹³ *Dictionary of the Khazars*, 145.

¹⁴ Wachtel, 636.

demics, and religious representatives, Nikolsky avoids the common obsession with attempting to derive or create any kind of cohesive symbolic whole out of the corpus of knowledge relating to the Khazars. Although a scribe, he has vowed not to write after recording the fast of St. Peter of Corishia as fifty rather than five days in duration, prompting a monk to imitate the rite and die as a result. Besides simply noticing the dangers involved in the conflation of ideology and language, Nikolsky also understands that unity, like division, is simply an ideological and linguistic construct. As he explains,

there is no man's reality around us that someone else is not dreaming about in this human ocean tonight, nor is there somebody's dream that is not becoming a reality of another. If one would go from here to the Bosphorus, from street to street, one would count all the seasons of a year from date to date, because autumn and spring and all the seasons of a human life are not the same for everyone, because nobody is old or young every day, and an entire life could be gathered like that of a candle's flames, and if you blow it out not even a breath remains between birth and death.¹⁵

In this statement, Nikolsky understands that although everyone is linked as part of an overarching totality that spans both the physical world and the subconscious, differences in systems of measurement and interpretation such as city names, streets, seasons, and calendars will inevitably cause splits and separations. For this reason, Nikolsky simply memorizes each "book" of the Khazar history without attempting to derive a meaning from any of them either separately or as a whole. Rachel Kilbourn Davis writes, "[Nikolsky] is a creator because he destroys the illusion of meaning (order, God, etc.) as the primary aim, by showing us that the value of the experience is in the searching, not the finding."¹⁶ Analyzing the writing to "find" its significance would require a system of interpretation that would immediately imply arbitrary categorization. Thus, the devil (a character who appears in various forms throughout the *Dictionary*, always concerned with preventing the work's completion) cannot destroy Nikolsky's true "cognitive map" as he does to each of the dream-hunter's manuscripts, and he cannot destroy Nikolsky himself since he is not aware of the scribe's knowledge.

¹⁵ *Dictionary of the Khazars*, 314.

¹⁶ Rachel Kilbourn Davis, "Dictionary of the Khazars as a Khazar Jar," *Review of Contemporary Fiction*, 18.2 (Summer, 1998), 20 May 2004 *EbscoHOST*: <http://web8.epnet.com>, 172.

Although Dr. Dorothea Schultz is one of the academics whose attempt to assemble a complete history of the Khazars is sabotaged by this devil, her particular form of spatial and temporal confusion suggests another of the *Dictionary's* unifying mapping functions. To the reader, she appears schizophrenic. From various locations in North America and Israel, she sends letters to a younger "version" of herself who lives in Cracow. Schultz's apparently irrational act of writing implies that she really does believe that her past physically exists in her present and demonstrates one of Jameson's characterizations of postmodern schizophrenia rather accurately: "If we are unable to unify the past, present, and future of the sentence, then we are similarly unable to unify the past, present, and future of our own biographical experience or psychic life."¹⁷ While her inability to unify various documents relating to the Khazars does not necessarily cause her schizophrenia, it nevertheless demonstrates the disorientation that can arise from trying to extract truth from language. Upon second glance, however, perhaps her failure to differentiate her own past from her present is not an undesirable symptom of this quest for linguistic unity, but a manifestation of an older, more Khazar-like unity that we simply cannot interpret because we have lost the appropriate ideological template. What if Dr. Schultz's past and present can coexist not only temporally but also spatially? Calendars and maps tell us that these two characters (her former and present selves) are separated by time and space, but to Khazars, who imagine the "future in terms of space," and who can track dreams "from village to village," her schizophrenia could be regarded as completely ordinary. While we perceive her personalities to be "split," the Khazars would recognize them as healthily unified.

Perhaps no character demonstrates this non-pathological type of schizophrenia more explicitly than Princess Ateh. According to the "Red Book," Ateh has seven faces. In the "Green Book," part of her punishment for choosing Islam over Christianity and Judaism during the polemic is "to live forever; she could return endlessly and without haste to each of her thoughts and each of her words, because eternity had blunted her feeling for what comes before and what comes after in time."¹⁸ Finally, the "Yellow Book" reprints one of her poems that compares wakefulness to a rehearsal and dreams to performances, and asks, "May your eye behold me when I am well rehearsed, for no one is either wise or beautiful all seven days of the week."¹⁹ Ultimately, this pivotal figure in Khazar history apparently has seven different visual manifestations, cannot differentiate between the past and the future,

¹⁷ Jameson, 26.

¹⁸ *Dictionary of the Khazars*, 132.

¹⁹ *Dictionary of the Khazars*, 208.

and reverses the common notion that waking life takes precedence over dreams. While Pavić intends for the reader to assume most of the responsibility for assembling the identity of each character in the *Dictionary*, the details provided about Ateh reveal that in her character's case, this task may prove most challenging. We know only that her identity is enigmatic and fleeting, but also eternal, and based on the lines of her poem ("for no one is either wise or beautiful all seven days of the week"), we can surmise that she is conscious not only of her own "schizophrenia," but of a universal schizophrenia as a normative rather than a deviant condition of being human.

Because the modern reader, according to Pavić, "never changes his manner of reading," Ateh's lack of ability to be represented in a traditional way results in the obscurity surrounding her character in the *Dictionary*. While Ateh's own recognition of her lack of stasis appears harmless enough and even reinforces the *Dictionary*'s playfully imaginative style, this characterization, along with Nikolsky's tragic experiment in transcription, indicates some of the more dire ramifications of adhering to conventional approaches to reading. Specifically, these are approaches that attribute an undue amount of significance to the meaning and order of words themselves at the expense of other qualities that contribute equally to the totality of the text. For example, the letters inscribed on Ateh's eyelids before she takes her rest each night "[come] from the proscribed Khazar alphabet, in which each letter kills as soon as it is read."²⁰ For the Khazars, written language implies not only ideological, but actual physical danger, and so their alphabet is forbidden. The *Dictionary* itself apparently has the same power. According to Pavić, a single golden copy of Joannes Daubmannus' 1691 Khazar Dictionary called *Lexicon Cosri* on page nine contains the words "*Verbum caro factum est* (The Word became flesh),"²¹ which, when read, kill the reader. Pavić's inclusion of these examples of the direct corporeal impact of written language not only presupposes, but also provides explicit—though admittedly fictionalized—evidence of the dangers of misreading. Thus, my purpose in this paper is not to debunk Wachtel's assertion that "Pavić's novel was not held aloft by Serbian soldiers in battle, nor was it quoted copiously by the ideologues of nationalism. Nevertheless, there is evidence that it had significant effects, particularly on the thinking of Serbian elites."²² I do want to show, however, that Pavić preemptorily issues a warning against this very type of misreading (i.e., considering written text independently), and includes his own work as a possible subject of such dangerous misinterpretations. Pavić even goes as far

²⁰ Ibid., 21.

²¹ Ibid., 6.

²² Wachtel, 638.

as to remove the formation of ideology as the mediating process in the link between written text and violence, a step that Wachtel intuitively acknowledges, as would most of us. It is this recognition that words, even the author's own, can be dangerous when considered independently that leads Pavić continually to implore the reader to invent new ways of reading by supplying hints as to how this endeavor may be approached and warnings against ignoring its absolute necessity.

Although a reassessment of the meaning and order of words themselves is an obvious starting point for a revamping of postmodern reading, Pavić extends this assessment to acknowledge that any category of interpretation becomes problematic when considered independently. Until now Pavić has conferred most of the blame for a flawed contemporary reading style on an unhealthy obsession with semantics at the expense of other problems that might arise within a text. However, this indictment of the contemporary tendency to privilege words and their meanings over other aspects of reading is not an assertion of the triviality of language, but rather a prompt to consider it equally as influential as the spatial, temporal, and spiritual functions of the *Dictionary*—or any book, map, dream, etc., for that matter. The importance of the written word to this complete perceptual unity (as opposed to the deleterious effects of its overemphasis) emerges as the remaining copy of the Daubmannus edition rests unread on the shelf of its eighteenth century inheritors. Rather than reading it, they simply place a wooden cross into the lock of the book, causing the spirit it formerly harbored to refuse to return back inside and “[wreak] havoc all around.”²³ If the book would have been opened and read, the spirit could have reentered, less eager to cause disaster and mayhem. So neither the words nor the spiritual significance associated with a particular work are inherently dangerous, but when a reader attributes the entire value of the work to either category while neglecting the other, the threat of the misread text emerges.

Of course, the contribution of other categories to the safe and unified reading of the book is implicit. In the situation of *Lexicon Cosri*, the sheer physicality of the text asserts its significance as it engages with intangible notions of evil: the spirit needs a “place” to which to return. Furthermore, the hourglass installed in the 1691 edition endows the book with temporal significance. Not only does this built-in chronometer serve as a simple alarm to remind the reader when to turn the book upside-down and begin reading in the opposite direction, but it also indicates that an immediate physical reversal will aid in preventing the mistake of conferring eternal value to the words contained by the book. Once again, Pavić stresses the interaction rather than

²³ *Dictionary of the Khazars*, 7.

the disjunction of spiritual, temporal, and spatial qualities involved in one single text to provide the reader with an ample repertoire of strategies aimed at altering the experience of reading. Ideally, these suggestions will prevent the postmodern tendency to separate such categories in the interest of our own mental wellness, and will also help to alleviate the hazard of examining words, or any other discrete type of perceptual unit, alone.

Of course, Pavić never explicitly proposes for us eagerly to adopt Dr. Schultz's or Ateh's schizophrenia, but the *Dictionary of the Khazars* does leave open the possibility for the existence of unities within realms that we normally consider incompatible. So rather than discounting the possibility of unity altogether, the *Dictionary* simply suggests that certain current ideological pretexts (i.e., communism) might preclude it. If time and space are the same, and only language separates them, it follows that Yugoslavia has always been the same, and that giving it a new name or drawing it all in the same color on a map simply represents a linguistically and hence ideologically determined concept of unity. By infusing his book with interpretive devices in addition to a textual narrative, Pavić demonstrates not the deconstruction, but rather the coalescence of various forms of media, that in turn suggests the possibility of unification through alterations in perception rather than representation.

Before 1989: Literature as a Criticism of Ideology in the Slavic World and Serbian Literature

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A new and significant cultural phenomenon took place in the Slavic world of the former Eastern Europe at the end of the twentieth century. In the course of two decades (1968–89), before the fall of communism, in some Slavic literatures a new literary style emerged—the literature of critical resistance, of demystification and dissatisfaction. All those Slavic literatures—Russian, Polish, Serbian, and Czech—have been exposed to the influence of Marxist aesthetics and the literary ideology of socialist realism for a long time. It was from that part of Europe that many great and important works of modern literature reached the West, completing and altering the general poetics of postmodernism. Contrary to the Western ideas of the absurd and alienation, the search for the essential, and everlasting existential topics—cosmic anxiety and flight from politics into a pure and self-enclosed world—the radical consciousness of the Slavic world of Eastern Europe has bred a subversive style: literature of defiance and critical non-acceptance of the ruling ideology and Party culture.

The forefathers of such a literary style and intellectual ethics were the “outsiders,” writers rejected and banned by the Bolshevik revolution, and unrecognized and censored authors read in secrecy. Their books, rewritten in hiding and copied by laymen, were distributed underground. Thus it was precisely those that the official administration wished to destroy and eradicate, those who in Russia became the first true creators of critical spirit, the proponents of an alternative culture of resistance. Without that culture, at the end of the twentieth century, socialism could not be conceived. Alexander Solzhenitsyn, Varlaam Shalamov, Joseph Brodsky, Vladimir Voinovich, or Alexander Zinoviev could be considered natural heirs to the moralism of Nikolai Berdyayev, Osip and Nadezhda Mandelstam, Anna Akhmatova, Marina Tsvetaeva, Mikhail Bulgakov, and Boris Pasternak.

That specific and significant literary phenomenon—that *glasnost'* in Slavic literatures—became apparent in Yugoslavia after World War II as well. The strong resistance of the Yugoslav authorities to Joseph Stalin and Cominform in 1948 soon resulted in a bold duel between dogmatism (in the abandonment of the imposed theory of reflections) and the comprehensive

criticism of socialist realism, a movement that manifested itself in forced and artificial optimism. The movement included the black-and-white contrasting of values of crude, one-sided pedagogical realism and rigid ideological indoctrination. Serbian post-war literature, which had preserved a strong democratic tradition of aesthetic and stylistic pluralism from the period of modernism and avant-garde at the beginning of the twentieth century, readily accepted such a spirit of resistance and succeeded in quickly melting the icy layers of ideology. In reality it never completely rejected Stalinism and its unhealthy ideological suspicions, with which the ruling Party bureaucracy always “welcomed” the cultural initiatives of the critical intelligentsia. For a certain period of time the official cultural policy supported creative trends toward freedom of artistic expression, trying to use this intellectual movement for its own political and pragmatic purposes. Thus freedom was not completely achieved, although it strengthened Serbian alternative literary thought. Arts and sciences reached the values and heights of Western civilization. Broader and freer vistas were opened, placing Serbian and Yugoslav cultures almost at the same level with Europe.

Resistance to the vulgar forms of the aesthetic theory and creative practice of socialist realism had two quite different stages, and the change in relation to realism was reflected in the changes that occurred in the very structure of the literary text. The first stage of that initially quiet, wary, arid, and hidden resistance to the dogmatic pressure of political and Party bureaucracy upon literature was marked by the idea of an escape from reality, by a yearning for isolation in the sterile and safe space of so-called “pure art,” which was attained through high professionalism and mastery of aestheticizing. Many years ago, Czesław Miłosz in *The Captive Mind* introduced this form of aestheticism and neutrality regarding spiritual and moral mimicry and called it “professional Ketmanism”: the inner reality of art that can liberate its form to a certain extent, but cannot and must not leave the “reservation.” It is opposed to the outer reality of the objective world, but it is nevertheless unable to influence or to change anything in the existing social and ethical system of values. In other words, there is a tacit understanding between the authorities and the artists, a delimitation of competencies: politics to politicians, art to artists. By this self-isolation and self-censorship, the creative spirit defended itself from vulgarity, depersonalization, and submersion into the common life. This first stage, which in fact added many valuable literary achievements to Yugoslav literature from 1953 to 1968, has been called the stage of *neutral temporality* or *socialist aestheticism*.

The next, more concrete and higher form of resistance grew from the passivity and half-freedom of stylistic forms and approaches. The communicative social function of literature which complemented the aesthetic one and im-

plied a gnoseological and moral influence effected a change in any and every unnatural and static position and, consequently, a corresponding transformation of the literary form. The erratic spirit of creative skepticism could not accept the passive and subordinated position of literature, which was herded onto a reservation and pushed into the margins of social life. Contrary to the expectations of the ruling circles, after 1968 a trend towards renewal and transformation of critical spirit was noticeable among Serbian and Yugoslav writers. Critical thought was to react to deepening moral contradictions and to human alienation. The renewal and transformation of critical alternatives were considered the firmer and more direct answers of terrorized literature to oppression. It was a form of negation of the exclusive, false, and hypocritical aesthetic theory of manipulation and the "engineering of human souls."

Between 1968 and 1989, Serbian literature generated a new literary style, a form of literature which was recognized as a new concept of aesthetic cognition, as the criticism of the mystifications of the ruling ideology. That *critical fiction* or *critical literature* denoted a spiritual, aesthetic, and stylistic form of resistance to the totalitarian practice. It initiated a culture in opposition that became an alternative to unified ideologies. Serbian critical fiction was a creative alternative to the political normative ordering of the character and task of literature, especially of the ideology and practice of socialist realism, which was a closed system of thinking based on dogmatic communist concepts of art. Without any illusions about its ability to make things correct, literature was forced to search for its own identity. Willingly or reluctantly, literature was in the position to develop some sort of new ethics and philosophy. In a way, this new literary philosophy was extorted, especially in some monistic systems and in communist societies. It was part of the critical disposition of the intelligentsia oppressed by ideological monism and violence, by the perfidious manipulations of the ruling system and by ever-shrinking room for the appearance and development of an alternative. Literature was striving to restore the balance of its aesthetic and ethical meanings, to expand knowledge about the condition of man and, in its own way and through its own means, to help change our conscience. In other words, literature was creating new spiritual presuppositions for the further liberation and transformation of the human mind. By coming to terms with themselves, and by contemplating themselves in the contradictions of contemporary history, writers were discovering, with horror and hope, that in a totalitarian age literature itself had to be a form of ideology.

In times of intensified and carefully elaborated forms of political pressure on culture and art, several old questions which seemed to be inherent in the very nature of literature imposed themselves over and over again: Is literature independent from ideology or is it, itself, a form of alienated and "false" con-

sciousness? Can literature fulfill its communicative function in human society as a pure and optional amusement or as an adventure of the restless spirit? Is literature a weapon of social action, an accomplice, and a mirror of social transformations, or is it a calm and gentle haven for the creative mind, a new, independent reality, subjected to its own aesthetic laws, and indifferent to the color of the flag displayed on the city walls as well as to what is sung in the streets?

The search for answers to these questions had again become one of the existential necessities of art, a key to its spiritual survival at the end of the Communist era. Critical fiction has its roots in philosophical teachings and critical systems which recognize the basic onto-anthropological properties of art and respect its right to independence and ideological dignity in the culture of the epoch. It lives in an organic unity with this consciousness. It is a constituent part of the same general need of the critical mind to overcome the limitations and rigidity of dogma. It is an aesthetic form of critical thinking which strives to liberate modern man from tension, humiliation, and alienation in confrontation with great and powerful ideologies and the ever-growing terror of history over the individual.

A certain advantage of critical fiction as compared to social critical theory is contained mainly in the force of self-transition. While critical theory, as a system of thought, is primarily discursive, critical fiction, as an artistic form, is primarily imaginative. On one hand, its intrinsic qualities function to prevent dogmatism, and, on the other hand, to call for an open projection of a possibly better world. The aesthetic projection of an imagined world—as a different reality modeled on utopian expectations and the poetics of hope—surpasses by its creativity and imagination the limitations of critical theory. According to Herbert Marcuse, theory, as a discursive form, can only serve negation and rejection, while “critical literature” projects and constructs an entirely new imaginative world.

Critical fiction possesses its own independent form and full aesthetic autonomy. However, it has a critical attitude toward reality, representing an intellectual, moral, aesthetic, and stylistic form of resistance to the totalitarianism and monism of ruling ideologies. After the tragic experience of the modern world with totalitarian regimes and state violence, which had undermined the spirit and the consciousness of humanity, resistance to ruling ideology did not come from enemy lines only. After World War II, among intellectuals, there prevailed, to an ever-greater degree, a deep and instinctive skepticism toward any type of ideology and forcefully imposed consciousness. Ideological criteria, which penetrate every pore of modern life, were replaced by the most paradoxical forms of intellectual resistance: from defiant and fierce gatherings under the banners of the opposition, to submissive acquiesc-

ing to retreat from the struggle for a different world, to accepting a forced flight into the unreal, to bending one's head and disguising oneself as a saint or a comedian, to giving up any direct participation in intellectual movements of one's time, and to accepting the marginal and decorative role of art as well as the idea of society without conscience.

The intellectual skepticism of today which questions any belief, dogma, and eschatology, even its own self, is a form of rebellion of consciousness against the rule of force. By opposing ideology, art is defending its very purpose of being. As much as various forms of protest limit art, through resistance and criticism, it still returns to its meaning. That was precisely the situation in some Slavic literatures as well as in Serbian literature before 1989. Literature became the protagonist of critical and alternative consciousness, while the official ideology locked itself into the bondage of dogma.

Similar phenomena have been noted in other Slavic literatures, especially in Polish literature (Czesław Miłosz, Andrzej Kusniewicz, Witold Gombrowicz, Sławomir Mrożek, Stanisław Witkiewicz), in Czech literature (Milan Kundera, Václav Havel, Bohumil Hrabal, Josef Skvorečský), in Hungarian literature (György Konrad, Péter Esterházy), and, of course, in Russian literature (Boris Pasternak, Mikhail Bulgakov, Vladimir Voinovich, Joseph Brodsky, Alexandr Zinoviev, Varlaam Shalamov, Alexandr Solzhenitsyn). These were literatures which, for a shorter or longer period of time in post-war history, were exposed to dogmatic pressures of the normative aesthetic theory of socialist realism, in the societies in which democratic traditions were reduced while public opinion (*glasnost*) was suppressed by the monistic structure of bureaucratic power. The sources of critical energy and new forms of critical alternative art are discovered wherever the social context of literature is tested. American critic Gerald Graff, who in his book *Literature against Itself* analyzed the function of literary ideas in contemporary society, pointed out that postmodern tendencies in literature were characterized as a "breakthrough of new energies of critical negation opposed to the dominant socio-cultural directions of the 19th and 20th centuries." English critic Terry Eagleton, in the last chapter of his *Literary Theory* entitled "Practical Criticism," insists that "the history of modern literary theory is part of political and ideological history," so "any 'pure' literary theory is an 'academic' myth." For Rosemary Jackson, in her book *Fantasy*, even literary fantasy has a subversive function, representing dissatisfaction and frustration with a secular cultural order: "modern fantasy is a subversive literature."

From the morphological point of view, it is interesting that critical literature has no genre limitations. The most frequent form is, certainly, the novel. It has acquired critical coloring in the newer Russian, Czech, and Serbian literatures (Solzhenitsyn, Zinoviev, Voinovich, Kundera, Ćosić, Kiš, Selenić,

Pekić). However, Poles, Czechs, and Serbs often use the grotesque and dramatic forms as well (Mrožek, Havel, Dušan Kovačević). There are also some outstanding poetic contributions, from the poets of great reflective and ethic density (Akhmatova, Miłosz, Desanka Maksimović, Brodsky, Matija Bećković, Ljubomir Simović) to the rebellious mass media poetry of Serbian rock singers and bands.

The critical fiction which is being created currently springs from the need for an alternative and better world. This need grows from the critical doubt that, within the confines of history, the autonomy of spirit can be developed, the autonomy which is indispensable to man if he is to change his condition and redeem the threatened dignity of his personality. All those who examine and interpret the changes in the structure of literary thinking and in the semantic layers of the language, keep noticing, with increasing clarity, that there is some sort of tension growing between the play of fantasy and the historical currents of life. According to Jacques Derrida, every play, even the purest and the most innocent ones, always boils down to the question of “absence and presence.” Ronald Harwood calls it “taking a side.” Each spoken or written word, each poetic form, each image and each metaphor, contains in itself a kind of responsibility before history. Everything is constantly in the state of permeation and interaction, in a profound and dynamic mutual relationship. Even ideologies are neither the basic nor the most powerful forms of social consciousness any more. Ossified and institutionalized ruling ideologies which, by their omnipresence, deeply permeate and determine both social relations and the social mind of an epoch, reveal more and more obviously that they are nothing but the form of an alienated and “distorted” consciousness, presently confronted by utopia as an alternative.

This does not mean, however, that literature—which, like utopia, projects and builds the “other reality”—tends to rid itself of all responsibility before history. To the contrary, one may say that we have to cooperate with history, with the context and acceptance of historical reality, but only from a new and critical angle of alternative. This approach has the charm of adventure and the beauty of temptation to transform the world by substituting the dynamic forms of change to static, petrified forms. In that sense, literature does not lose its ideological character through the utopia of the “other reality.” It only determines itself according to the ideology of expectation. By their very nature, all literary works are permeated with the experience of history since both literary word and literary form, according to Roland Barthes, are filled with ideology as a “signified connotation.”

Many leading theoreticians of culture, who, like Mikhail Bakhtin, have examined the relationships between art and ideology from different aspects and with different motives, have agreed that ideology fatefully permeates the

whole of today's consciousness and that it substantially determines all of its forms. As a form of cognition and "signified connotations," in monistic political systems literature is directly linked both with the changes of the social and historical mind and with the changes in the language of culture. The changed *Weltanschauung* lends new contents to the world of literature. It gives a new direction to literary thought and a new meaning to literary form. Within this framework, changes in one's consciousness are condensed and shaped. All the norms of human activity are redefined and through them culture influences the changes in the ideological course and historical currents of the epoch.

The critical fiction that developed in the Slavic world and represented a significant stream in Serbian literature before 1989, corresponds to the human belief in the increased possibility of self-realization through art and creation. The aesthetic function of critical fiction complements the ideological function of critical thought. The latter takes an active and critical stand towards all aspects of social practice and towards the whole historical reality of the epoch. This literature is the voice of the man who, through his practical and creative self-realization in freedom, overcomes the historical alienation of his fate. The critical spirit of skepticism and the aesthetic energy of catharsis constitute the main driving forces of critical fiction in modern Serbian literature which creatively overcome all ideological lies.

In Serbian literature there were also some characteristic examples of the overt critical demystification of the Bolsheviks' ideology and practice. In his novels *The Sinner* and *The Renegade*, Dobrica Ćosić describes the background of the Communist movement in Yugoslavia and the destiny of leftists and revolutionaries in the USSR. The same is the case with the novels of Dragoslav Mihailović and Antonije Isaković, which paint the brutal reality in the Yugoslav gulag on Goli Otok, a desert island in the Adriatic Sea, where the prison for the communist followers of Stalin and Cominform was located after 1948. This same critical note can be found in the book of short stories *A Tomb for Boris Davidovič* by Danilo Kiš, the satirical grotesque novel *The Dictionary of the Khazars* by Milorad Pavić, as well as in the novel *Fathers and Forefathers* by Slobodan Selenić; the latter describes the defeat and downfall of the Serbian bourgeoisie during the Communist revolution. In its own special way, the same can be seen in the grand cycle of novels entitled *The Golden Fleece* by Borislav Pekić, which is founded on the phantasmagoric history of the Balkans from pre-mythical times until World War II.

Looking at its extreme variations, it becomes obvious that Serbian critical fiction has been to a degree a form of the ideological take on reality as well as a critical sign of the age. It raised and liberated in itself the immanent ideological charge of critical thought. It was full of inherent ideological connota-

tions that pointed at the imaginative transcending of the given historic reality. Critical fiction possesses a natural capacity for organizing imagination and for projecting—in itself and through itself—a new aesthetic reality which exists in its autonomous aesthetic space.

This constructive function of Slavic critical fiction should be considered both aesthetic and social. Critical fiction is both an aesthetic and socially concrete form of the negation of all dogmatic normativism by any over-ideologized mind. At the same time, it is an open creative projection of a different world and different possibilities for mankind. It is a constituent part of the same general need of the critical mind to overcome the limitations and rigidity of dogma. It is an aesthetic form of critical thinking which strives to liberate modern man from tension, humiliation, and alienation in the confrontation with great powerful ideologies and with the ever-growing terror of history over the individual. The literary struggle against any oppressive ideological doctrine, with all its open and hidden forms of censorship, pressure, and manipulation of works of art, cannot be forever carried on by means of constant reconciliations with evil. Such a “fight” would mean the preservation of the *status quo*. That struggle can be supported neither by an extorted isolation nor by an artistic flight from the truth. The guerrilla warfare of literature against the terror and violence of totalitarian power allows, to some extent, different tactical tricks and camouflage, but it denies that fear and hypocrisy can be taken as the main virtues of the epoch and that lies and injustices can become the lasting conditions of human survival. But, of course, one should not forget the warning, formulated by the German professor Thomas Metschner in his essay on literature and art as a form of ideology, published in *New Literary History* in 1979:

Without a strategic functional reorientation of the ruling ideological-aesthetic institutions, the development of a democratic socialist culture under the present hegemonic relations is quite unthinkable. The building of an ‘oppositional culture’ may indeed be able under certain conditions to fulfil an essential progressive function, but without a simultaneous functional reorientation of the institutions of the ruling ideological state apparatus, in the long run it will be unsuccessful.

As an expression of the general need for an alternative, critical fiction in the Slavic world and Serbian literature before 1989 did not hide its intentions. It strove to broaden and purify literature’s space in the spiritual culture of the epoch. It did not demand autonomy for culture against society or for society against the state—this was not within the possibilities of its influence. It asked for the ethics of demystification and served as a form of aesthetic catharsis. It

pleaded for full and free interaction of all cultures in the world, for the autonomy of the creative spirit from ideology, for the creative dignity of every human being against the alienating power of ruling bureaucracy. Ivory towers and glass shades are not different from jails and concentration camps along the road taking literature to isolation, submission, or silence. Wherever ideology has become a form of pressure of the ruling classes, art emerges as an alternative: Its very critical spirit tends to re-establish the lost space of freedom. In that sense, critical fiction proves the thesis that literature must have an ideology—even if this ideology is the one that brings all other ideologies into question.

Reinventing Classics in the Post-Communist Balkans: How a *Suspicious Character* Became *The Balkan Spy*

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Yugoslavia's transition into a post-totalitarian constellation of independent states marked the most tragic history of the late twentieth century. No less tragic were the consequences of the 1990s Balkan wars for the world image of the Serbian nation. Serbia was doomed to carry the stigma of totalitarian hegemony and political aggression exercised by its last communist regime. By revisiting the decade preceding the ethnic conflicts in the former Yugoslavia, this study acknowledges the social self-criticism as well as the pursuit of new ideology in the Serbian culture of the 1980s. The deepening economic crises and ethno-political upsurge following the death of the Yugoslavian dictator Josip Broz Tito (1892–1980) actively drove audiences into the theaters. According to Belgrade critic Dragan Klaić, theater “offered the stage as a forum for important public debate and as a place of collective soul searching in these trying times.”¹ Klaić explains the increase of new national drama in the mid-1980s as a critical response to deepening inflation and inadequate government subsidies.²

One of the biggest hits on the Belgrade stage at that time was Dušan Kovačević's *The Balkan Spy* (Balkanski špijun, 1982). The comedy recalls the Stalinist period of Yugoslavian communism as a surviving atrocity in the early 1980s. *The Balkan Spy* also addresses the symptoms of Yugoslavian post-communist anxiety by revealing social transformations and cultural re-orientations within the Belgrade microcosm of the 1980s.

This paper examines Kovačević's play in a cultural dialogue with Branislav Nušić's classical comedy *Suspicious Character* (Sumnjivo lice, 1888). The similarities between the two comedies involve the iconographic presentation of an average, middle-class man, who misinterprets political instructions given by a higher state institution and sets out on a ludicrous hunt for a falsely accused conspirator. The aberrant mentality and actions of

¹ Dragan Klaić, “Yugoslavia: Even Summer Theatre Carries on the Business of Politics,” *Soviet and East European Drama, Theatre, and Film* 7.2–3 (1987): 20.

² Klaić, “Obsessed with Politics: Currents in Yugoslav Drama,” *Scena English Issue* 9 (1986): 7.

Nušić's character serve as a prototype for Kovačević's protagonist, yet they are further transformed into the poignant image of a Yugoslavian postcommunist survivor. This analysis will expose the cultural meanings, which, through archetypal or realistic agencies, reinforce a model of national identity in the late twentieth century. The discussion focuses on the characteristics of the Yugoslavian "homo politicus" as manifested in *The Balkan Spy*. Finally, this study attempts to present a culturally specific function of literary tradition in constructing post-communist identity.

Kovačević-Nušić Paradigm

The exact year *Suspicious Character* was written remains questionable. It is believed that the play corresponds to Nušić's earliest works, completed between 1883 and 1888. Serbian historian Dragoljub Vlatković suggests that the first draft of the comedy might have been written in 1888 or 1889, after Nušić served a two-year prison sentence for his satires of the dynasty of Aleksandar Obrenović.³ *Suspicious Character* ridicules the paranoia about spreading antiroyalist literature as well as the police system sustaining the despotic monarchy in Serbia. The severity of Serbian domestic and foreign politics, which resulted in raging nationalism and continuous wars, delayed the presentation of *Suspicious Character*. Nušić's self-censorship also contributed to the delayed debut of the work: On 29 May 1923, almost forty years after it was written, *Suspicious Character* finally premiered at the Belgrade National Theatre.

In the plot of the comedy, Jerotije Pantić, a former police officer and a current regional superintendent in the Serbian provinces, receives a coded telegram from the Interior Minister. The document is an order to the local authorities to find and arrest a "suspicious character" believed to be carrying antimonarchical literature across the border. Startled by the political importance of the operation and enticed by the opportunity to get a promotion, Pantić becomes comically obsessed with the pursuit of the mysterious enemy but fails to notice the drama unfolding in his own home. Ironically, personal squabbles and family-like dysfunctional relationships thrive in the public office. The ludicrous clerks lead by Pantić reveal their petty, corrupt, and cowardly bureaucratic nature as they arrest and interrogate the innocent lover of the superintendent's daughter, Marica. In a mock trial, the arrested, out-of-town "criminal" is forced to make false confessions. Infuriated by her father's actions, Marica halts the farcical interrogation by revealing her lover's iden-

³ See Josip Lešić, *Sumnjivo lice Branislava Nušića* (Beograd: Zavod za udžbenike i nastavna sredstva, 1982), 23.

tity. In order to avoid family scandal and protect his political career, Pantić accepts the engagement of his daughter to the man of her choice.

The lively comedy successfully merges various genres a “comedy-of-errors” plot. Jerotije Pantić cannot hide his generic resemblance to Pantalone, the “avaricious, suspicious, amorous, and gullible” guardian of a “young lover” in *commedia dell’arte*. The plot of *Suspicious Character* relates to some of the *commedia*’s *lazzi*, yet the unique circumstances and typical Balkan character-masks place social criticism into Serbian reality. Nušić draws abundantly on local narrative traditions as well as on the poetic standards of Nikolai Gogol’s realistic theater. According to Momir Pejović, the playwright ridicules “with bursts of verbal comics the government of Serbia of that time, as well as the corruption, careerism, arrogance, laziness and stupidity among the members of the power apparatus.”⁴

Pantić is a type of domestic tyrant and immoral chameleon constructed on a reversed scale of human values. He is more of a stranger in his own family than among his comrades in the public office. Pantić’s behavior is based on his police habits of spying, opening private letters, and informing on his fellow citizens. He cherishes all dishonest means of self-promotion and embellishes them with political rhetoric, patriotic propaganda, and bureaucratic language. Although the character believes himself to have both patriarchal and administrative power, he is often manipulated at home as well as in the office. He lacks dramatic agency and finally capitulates to the higher governmental authorities and to his daughter’s will.

In the larger context of Balkan literatures, Nušić originally improvises on the themes of post-Ottoman deficiencies in creating European-like civil societies and bourgeois cultures. The social satire of the “primitive” and despotic Serbian state appealed to Yugoslavian audiences in the late twentieth century, when the caricatures of local mores were juxtaposed with a world of global economic and political standards.

The rough and preposterous characters from Nušić’s works were chosen to play an important role on the post-communist Yugoslav stage: to revive and instill cultural idiosyncrasy. The most telling example for this is the renaissance of critical studies of Nušić, in particular Serbian historian Vlatković’s *Nušić naš Šekspir* (Nušić Is Our Shakespeare, 1995) and the collection of symposium papers *Nušićevo delo i savremena jugoslovenska komediografija* (Nušić’s Work and Contemporary Yugoslav Comedy, 1989). In the mid-1980s, *Suspicious Character* was played in three major theaters in Zagreb and Belgrade, becoming “the only classic among the narrow circle of

⁴ Momir Pejović, “Yugoslav Theatres in the 1984/85 Season: Domination of Contemporary National Drama,” trans. Mladen Jovanović, *Scena English Issue* 9 (1986): 26.

the most produced plays in the [1984–85] season.”⁵ The Belgrade critic Klaić summarizes the economic and political conditions of the 1980s, as well as the social anxiety which national drama reflected:

Inflation may reach over 100 percent, troubles with the Albanian minority in Kosovo province may stir up passions, disputes about the new constitution heat up, and new scandals involving corruption and abuse of public investment funds break out daily, and yet major theatre productions continue to attract audiences....⁶

Distinguishable among the plays from that period is Kovačević’s *The Balkan Spy*. The play belongs to a large body of dramatic works which re-examine the years between 1948 and 1953, when Yugoslavian dictator Tito’s detachment from Stalinist communism could not save his country from its own dictatorial injustice. *The Balkan Spy* premiered at the Bojan Stupica Yugoslav Drama Theater in Belgrade in 1982. In the 1983–84 theatrical season, the play was running in more than forty theaters throughout the country.⁷ Petar Marjanović states that it was also the most frequently performed play of the famous Serbian dramatist.⁸ Jovan Hristić distinguishes elements typical of Kovačević’s progression of genres throughout the play: from a stock-character comedy, through grotesque, to a Kafkaesque nightmare at the end.⁹ Hristić also asserts: “If we take a good look at Kovačević’s work, we could not but notice that it represents a modern-times adaptation of *Suspicious Character*.”¹⁰ The similarities between the two comedies, according to the theater critic, come from the fact that Nušić’s comedy draws upon “situations from our collective life, which, more or less, remain the same today, and will remain for a long time in our land, nurturing intolerance, arrogance and pride of a mighty kind.”¹¹

The protagonist in *The Balkan Spy*, Ilija Čvorović, is a working-class man in his fifties, who lives on the outskirts of present-day Belgrade. His biography and mind are forever branded by his incarceration for being a Stalinist

⁵ Pejović, 25.

⁶ Klaić, “Yugoslavia,” 20.

⁷ Quoted in Dennis Barnett, *The Worlds of Dušan Kovačević: An Intersection of Dissident Texts* (unpublished dissertation, University of Washington, 1998), 265.

⁸ Petar Marjanović, “Dušan Kovačević: *The Gathering Place* (1982),” trans. Tim Bowen, *Scena English Issue* 8 (1985): 166.

⁹ Jovan Hristić, *Pozorišni referati: Pozorište, Pozorište III* (Beograd: Nolit, 1992), 127.

¹⁰ Hristić, 127.

¹¹ *Ibid.*, 128.

and a sympathizer with the Soviet model of communism. In the late 1940s and early 1950s, such political prisoners were considered not only ideological opponents, but also traitors and a “danger to national security.”¹² In the course of the play, Čvorović develops an obsessive suspicion about his tenant, Petar Jakovljević, a Serbian immigrant to France, who tries to open a legal business back in his native country. While the “foreigner” struggles with the bureaucracy in Belgrade, the old-guard communist organizes a complex technical and human network of surveillance, which destroys his relationship with the tenant, the unity of his family, and, finally, his own life. Čvorović’s obsession is triggered by a police inquiry about Jakovljević, which ignites the dogmatic thinking of the former political prisoner. Similar to Jerotije Pantić, Kovačević’s protagonist wages a war against his own daughter, who befriends the westernized businessman. Čvorović finds accomplices for his spy game in his brother and wife. Both family members are the archetypes of patriarchal faithfulness in the iconography of Balkan folklore. By exercising all means of police control and demanding blind obedience, Čvorović falls into the caste of wretched “small dictators,” fluctuating between oppression and patriarchal love. Although he carries the tragicomic mask and language of Nušić’s legendary character, Čvorović—according to Marjanović—displays the characteristics of a twentieth-century “homo politicus”:

[At] the heart of Kovačević’s play there lies a stable and not exactly rare ideological model of thought and behavior, flexibly embodied in the character of Ilija Čvorović.... The consciousness, logic and perception of a man like Ilija Čvorović are determined by the notion of a party as authority, society as the state, patriotism as xenophobia, and the world as a battleground.¹³

Čvorović lacks Pantić’s position in the political hierarchy yet he is more aggressive and has more initiative than his nineteenth-century prototype. His actions represent that postcolonial space in the Serbian core of the Balkans where the boundaries of control are reconstructed through citizens’ fear and historical misunderstanding of the outside world. Kovačević recapitulates the perception of his character in the early 1980s:

[What] was most important is that *The Balkan Spy* is a painting about human paranoia. How does the man feel who was once tortured by the police—how will he always be afraid in the future because of his

¹² Klaić, “Obsessed with Politics,” 8.

¹³ Marjanović, “Dušan Kovačević,” 166.

past. Of course, in the play there is ideology too, because in that moment, and this is very important, we believed ... that communism will never be finished during our life.¹⁴

Capturing common social feelings, Kovačević creates a character with recognizable social and political qualities. The Serbian audience unmistakably responded to that cultural idiosyncrasy, distinguishing reoccurring gestures of national psychology in the character of Ilija Čvorović. Elaborating on such a critical perception, Filip David notes that “Kovačević’s heroes do have a sterile local color, but are obsessed with power to the point of mania and are victims of a paranoia or obsession that originates in this mentality but also stems from given social circumstances.”¹⁵

The following discussion will shed light on the socio-economic picture of Yugoslavia in the 1980s, which appears in the realistic representations and historically based characters of *The Balkan Spy* as compared to the comic types in *Suspicious Character*.

Critical Reflections on Tito’s Yugoslavia in *The Balkan Spy*

Kovačević insists that his character’s schizophrenic behavior is historically motivated. In the play’s pre-story, Čvorović is called to the police station to inform on the Tenant. This event shortens the historical distance and stirs an overwhelming sense of wariness and guilt in the mind of the former political prisoner. Although the police officer claims to be collecting information about Jakovljević, the tenant, with no particular evidence against him, Čvorović has his own explanations: “I know what he means—‘collecting information’.... Did they call me on a whim? Since when are the police so interested in an honest man?”¹⁶ A reminiscence of his own persecution as a Stalinist adds to Čvorović’s self-torture:

ILIJA: [...] First I thought they called because of me. You yourself know that when you’ve done time, you’re never at peace. You think someone is always checking up on you. And to make matters worse I know that I hadn’t done anything. But I thought, with this world in such a situation.... Well, much has been written about that...¹⁷

¹⁴ Quoted in Barnett, 265–66.

¹⁵ Quoted in Marjanović, “Dušan Kovačević,” 165.

¹⁶ Dušan Kovačević, *The Balkan Spy*, trans. Dennis Barnett, unpublished manuscript, 8.

¹⁷ Kovačević, *The Balkan Spy*, 8.

With his excessive suspicion and fear, Čvorović is an atavistic figure from the dark 1940s and 1950s, a historical period characterized by savage political coteries and fratricides. Tito's militaristic establishment of the new Yugoslav state perpetuated injustice and proved that "all communist regimes are Stalinist to a greater or lesser degree..."¹⁸ The cultural psychology reflected in *The Balkan Spy* constructs an almost tangible bridge between the political crisis in the 1980s and postwar Serbia.

Though manifesting a "true" form of socialism defined by federative liberties and economic self-management, Tito's communism remained embedded in the absolute power of the Party, state, and secret police.¹⁹ According to Renata Salecl's analysis, the first phase of the Yugoslavian collapse introduced economic self-management, which nurtured the existing political bureaucracy and, therefore, could hardly be productive. Similar to the authoritative tactics in the postwar period, the situation Tito created in the last years of his rule resumed partisan conspiracy and propaganda rhetoric as seen through the eyes of political veterans, crystallized in the character of Ilija Čvorović, the facts of everyday life appeared "contrary to the way they were."²⁰ Paradoxically, the course of Yugoslavian communism in the late 1970s restored affiliations and sentiments from the 1940s, as recounted by Steven Pavlowitch:

Without compromising his country's independence, he [Tito] had entered into a close relationship with the Soviet Union. Yugoslavia's non-alignment had never been a plain refusal to align. It could even be said that it had been more of a hybrid alignment, and yet it had allowed her to act as a link between the two blocs. The need for such a link no longer existed [in the 1970s], and she was returning once again to the drabber "gray" area it had been agreed she belonged to in the later stages of the Second World War. During its last decade, Titoism had anyhow already run its course, and it had gone back on what were seen by most Yugoslavs as the genuine advances of the

¹⁸ This opinion belongs to the French socialist Jean-François Revel, quoted in Duško Doder, *The Yugoslavs* (New York: Vintage Books, 1979), 242.

¹⁹ Renata Salecl, "The Crisis of Identity and the Struggle for New Hegemony in the Former Yugoslavia," in *The Making of Political Identities*, ed. Ernesto Laclau (London and New York: Verso, 1994), 206.

²⁰ "Contrary to the way it appears" is how Čvorović interprets the inconspicuous behavior of the Tenant. The hard-core communist believes that this is how the western spy disguises his subversive activity. The phrase is also the title of Scene 7, Act II (Kovačević, *Balkan Spy*, 47).

1960s.... If the system in that last decade still appeared to solve the country's problems, it was by a mixture of magic, pretentiousness, consumerism, corruption and foreign loans.²¹

Uncertainty and fear were results of the ossified state policy in the early 1980s. Kovačević remembers: "It was determined by the government that the people should be in fear. They wanted us to feel like that."²² In the 1980s, the dubious source of fear, as most Yugoslavs were made to believe, came less from the Soviet Union and more from the West.²³ The vestiges of old class animosity played the last card in preserving the power of the communist regime. The social repercussions of the Yugoslav post-communist crisis—a period that started with the death of Tito and continued in the "national-socialism" of Milošević—shaped the perception of a new, Serbian mentality:

It is important that this mentality and this ideology emerge in a critical light in Yugoslav drama at a time when such ideas find their partisans beyond the isolated individuals whom one could easily disregard as marginal: among the impoverished working class, where hopes of upward mobility are betrayed once the children cannot find employment regardless of their education; among the thin middle class, abruptly deprived of recently developed consumer society—now practically made to disappear by the inflation ... among the members of political and managerial elites who cannot cope with the present difficulties and who suddenly realize that their nominal position ensures no longer a real control of affairs.²⁴

In his assessment, Belgrade critic Klaić clearly distinguishes the entrance of a new character on the post-Yugoslavian stage: the Everyman from the post-totalitarian/postcolonial Balkans.²⁵

²¹ Steven K. Pavlowitch, *The Improbable Survivor: Yugoslavia and Its Problems, 1918–1988* (London: C. Hurst and Company, 1988), 27.

²² Quoted in Barnett, 267.

²³ The reversal in the Yugoslav international course is noticeable in one of Kovačević's earlier plays, *Radovan III* (1973). In this comedy, the Yugoslav censors cancel an American series with an action-hero named George. Initially captivated and strongly influenced by George, Kovačević's main character, Radovan, complies with the political agenda of his country and displays an open hostility to the American icon.

²⁴ Klaić, "Obsessed with Politics," 17.

²⁵ In her book *Postcolonial Theory*, Leela Gandhi recapitulates the differences in the semantic nuances and usage of "post-colonialism" and "postcolonialism." Gandhi points out that the hyphenated word possesses a "decisive temporal marker or the decolonising process" as op-

Cultural Identity in the Post-Communist Balkans

As the previous discussion reveals, in *The Balkan Spy* Kovačević depicts an objective political environment. This environment implies a larger historical process of globalization as affecting the post-communist Balkans. The immediate economic problems in Yugoslavia—the lack of privacy, living space, jobs, and social stability—are inscribed in that context. The living conditions for the Serbian working-class in the 1980s sharpened people’s sensitivity to social inequality, hopelessness, and the country’s dependence on European corporations and markets, as noticeable in *The Balkan Spy*.

Čvorović does not dare to speak aloud about the continuous problems in socialist Yugoslavia, but in the beginning of the play, his wife Danica pours her heart out in front of the Tenant:

DANICA. ... You know how long we waited for our apartment?

Twenty years. For twenty years we were supposed to move “in the spring.” Meanwhile we lived in shacks and basements, waiting for this “spring.” The only paycheck we had was his [Ilija’s]; we had a daughter, who then became a student....

ILIJA. Danica, we have solved our problem....

DANICA. How have we solved it? We solved it when your heart went bad, and I got rheumatism. We’re in debt up to our ears over this house. We have squandered this life.... This isn’t a home, it’s a grave.

ILIJA. Danica...

DANICA. I’ve got one more thing to tell you: we may have solved the problem about our living arrangements, but our daughter is still unemployed and she graduated from dental school five years ago.... She tells me that we’re the worst in Europe for dental problems. People without teeth, others with two teeth in their mouth, yet for a dentist there’s no position, no job. It’s because we have a hundred thousand politicians....

[....]

Have you seen the prices? They’re not normal! In one month everything went up 50%.... The price of one detergent has gone up

posed to the ongoing postcolonial condition since the onset of colonial occupation, which “postcolonialism” connotes (3). The adjectives “post-colonial” / “post-communist” in this thesis will pertain to the material conditions at the colonial (political) decline, whereas “postcolonial”/“postcommunist” will refer to the analytical and discursive engagement with these conditions. For a full reference, see Leela Gandhi, *Postcolonial Theory: A Critical Introduction* (New York: Columbia U Press, 1998), 3.

four times. And you know what's worse? People are grateful to even have detergent. That it's come to this....²⁶

As this quote shows, Ilija and Danica's "proletarian" anachronism has a strong economic reason. The collapsing Yugoslav economy in the 1980s was already facing the dominance of Western Europe as the Tenant's confident business advances come to illustrate. The encounter with the capitalist West jeopardized the local community that had not yet developed "strategies for handling the relentless economic devastation which globalization wreaks on smaller economies."²⁷ As Bill Ashcroft also states, "[a] common view among theorists in the developing world is that globalization is simply re-colonization."²⁸

Čvorović's confrontation with the Western "spy" Jakovljević, as Kovačević clearly implies, is not just a way of the protagonist to impose his own ideology, but to respond to an intrusive notion of his nation's history as a continuous subjugation to Western European markets, foreign policies, and ideas. Ultimately, Čvorović displays suspiciousness not only to the "foreigner" but also to the Serbian bureaucratic government, which let "spies" and "traitors" like Jakovljević in the country. Similar examples of an alienation from the state are to be found in *Suspicious Character*. In a highly grotesque scene, the government official Pantić desperately tries to decode the secret wire from the Ministry of Internal Affairs. His incompetence as a government executive, together with the overwhelming negligence of his staff, reveal the political immaturity of post-colonial Serbia in building a new bourgeois state.

Politically detached from their despotic governments and blind to the irreversible cultural changes in their families (i.e., communities), Pantić and Čvorović merge as a symbol of postcolonial anxiety, suspiciousness, hopelessness, and profound loneliness. These sentiments are expressed in the final scenes of the comedies, where the characters face the objects of their suspicion. Branislav Nušić builds this climactic scene in the canon of comedic complications, farcical conflicts and quick, happy resolution. His character transforms from a "heroic" defeater to a foolish victim of his selfishness. Kovačević gives a different tone to the interrogation scene in *The Balkan Spy*. Though Čvorović uses a bizarre demagogic rhetoric, he is highly dramatized as a character. In a long and somber monologue, Čvorović tries to explain his

²⁶ Kovačević, *The Balkan Spy*, 15-28.

²⁷ Bill Ashcroft, *Post-Colonial Transformation* (London and New York: Routledge, 2001), 209.

²⁸ Ashcroft, 209.

political “insanity” to the captive. He undergoes a drift of emotions, displays psychological depth and, at the end, reaches a true tragic feeling. Here is a brief example of the protagonist’s speech:

ILIJA: Listen, I’m afraid you’ll provoke me, and I’ll take out my pistol and shoot you.... Understand? My whole life, I’ve been on the verge of killing someone. And what’s more, I’ve had good reason. Nobody would begrudge me. But you shouldn’t pay the price for all those who offended, humiliated, and persecuted me. Please, don’t...²⁹

Čvorović’s “spy game” does not end happily. The character has a heart attack, which makes possible the escape of his victim. With utmost strength, the small Balkan “dictator” crawls out after the fugitive under the looming sound of his barking dog.

With the practices of interrogation, torture, and humiliation—all of which serve to suppress individual identity—the compared plays impose the metaphor of *prison* as an exclusive cultural space. In this respect, Čvorović and Pantić outline a typical theatrical cast of Serbian/Yugoslav political prisoners, zealous guerrillas, patriarchal tyrants, and narrow-minded roughs, who attack the postcolonial “prison walls” only to find themselves confined in their out-of-date ideological schisms. In his commentary on *The Balkan Spy*, Slobodan Selenić voices the common perception of such historical recurrence:

[The play’s conflict] reflects not only his [Ilija’s] pathological and obsessive personality, but simply our countryman being manipulated in the characteristic way, i.e., our mentality which easily allows others to do its thinking for it and falls into the quagmire of suspicion of everybody who seems different....This Kovačević’s comedy is the tragedy of a certain mental cast which all too easily tramples underfoot the freedom of others because it long ago renounced its own freedom.³⁰

Since “suspicion” and “spying” constitute the core of totalitarian inhabitation and police-governed society, they have been manifested as perpetual national characteristics. Thus, Marjanović conclusively asserts: “[Suspicion] is one of the ominous syndromes of our century” whereas “slandering” is rated as a

²⁹ Kovačević, *The Balkan Spy*, 80.

³⁰ Quoted in Barnett, 271–72.

typical and profuse Serbian phenomenon.³¹ In his analysis of Kovačević's play, Marjanović dedicates a whole paragraph to comment on the collective trait of "informing." He substantiates historical facts with current examples of everyday life in Belgrade, reaching the conclusion: "Informing was not a rare occurrence during the occupation, in World War II, and it is continuing now."³² Apparently, "suspicion" and "spying" are also imposed in the titles of the comedies.

As the analysis of *Suspicious Character* and *The Balkan Spy* proves, the two comedies outline a larger postcolonial discourse. This discourse includes not only the dialogue of similar political contexts, transitional cultures and moral judgments, but also the "institutionalizing" opinion of the official Serbian critique, which accentuates images of national typology and historical continuity throughout the 1980s. In the cultural vacuum of post-communist Yugoslavia, political criticism and negativism could not overshadow the quest for new national identity.

In juxtaposing Nušić and Kovačević's comedies, the reader is inevitably drawn by the adjective "Balkan" which Kovačević chooses in order to underline the geopolitical orientation of his character. Čvorović feels foreign to the historically distanced West while forcefully estranged from the leftist East. The character notes: "They know what they're doing in the East, shutting down their borders, not letting somebody else's riff-raff just wander through their country."³³ According to these words, Čvorović positions himself neither in the West, nor in the more favored East. In the 1980s, such orientation became symbolic not only for the course of Yugoslavian political neutrality, but also for the place of the Balkans as a crossroads between "democratic" Europe and "despotic" Asia. Thus, the geographically and historically transitional space of the Balkans became the new cultural signifier for the liberalizing Serbian milieu. Kovačević is clear with such a choice, which he manifests in the title of his play. Kovačević also realizes the historical premise behind such cultural stereotyping, which draws on oriental images of the Ottomanized Balkans. Since the early nineteenth century, Europe has been producing beliefs and clichés as a form of a "distillation of essential ideas about the Orient—its sensuality, its tendency to despotism, its aberrant mentality, its habits of inaccuracy—into a separate and challenged coherence."³⁴

In Maria Todorova's view, the attribute of "Balkanness" helps Yugoslavian ideologies to sustain their nationalities as "pure and innocent,"

³¹ Petar Marjanović, *Srpski dramski pisci XX stoleća* (Novi Sad: Matica srpska, 1997), 280.

³² Marjanović, *Srpski dramski pisci*, 280.

³³ Kovačević, *Balkan Spy*, 34.

³⁴ Edward Said, *Orientalism* (New York: Vintage Books, 1979), 205–7.

while stigmatizing their post-communist heritage.³⁵ Though Kovačević's play suggests such a function of the geocultural marker, it also highlights the active dialogue with a literary tradition of clear Balkan origin and archetypal models. Nušić's Yugoslavia stood closer to the oriental legacies in the Balkans, as well as to the proliferation of the Balkan discourse. As a result, regional signifiers in Kovačević's play operate as a reconstructive, even mnemonic mechanism and instill a sense of unique cultural identity. For Kovačević, the relapses into Balkan clichés enhance his character's aggressive tactic of self-expression against the West but also against the rest of post-communist Europe. As Ashcroft theorizes this poetic process, "global culture becomes the object of a tactical appropriation by which the character of local identity is strengthened."³⁶

For the 1980s play, the Balkan signifier appears to play a "self-colonizing" role, yet it also "heals" from the totalitarian past. By acting as either stereotype or antistereotype, this signifier performs a historicizing and identifying function. In general, the continuous dialogue of Balkan cultures with their literary traditions throughout the 1980s and 1990s solidified the distinguishable place of the Balkan nations on the cultural map of Europe. The creative link between *Suspicious Character* and *Balkan Spy* is crucial for the Serbian public in two ways: first, it affirms certain patterns of local behavior as recurring cultural anachronisms, and second, it enriches the artistic inventiveness (especially in the comic resources) allowing for the reconstruction of traditional discourses and assertion of national identity. Ultimately, the implications in Kovačević's text reach beyond the political context of his play.

The Kovačević-Nušić paradigm cannot be interpreted as a self-stigmatization of Serbian drama or a nostalgic relapse into the national past. Quite opposite, it allows for a compressed dialogic exhibit of representations and their streaming into a synthetic and dynamic system of theatrical signs. The new metatext, "created" by Kovačević-Nušić, has the complexity of being simultaneously critical and approving, elite and democratic, repulsive and enjoyable.

³⁵ Maria Todorova, *Imagining the Balkans* (New York and Oxford: Oxford U Press, 1997), 56.

³⁶ Ashcroft, 207.

**Performative Bodies: Serbian Female Artists in
Post-Modernist Self-Identity in the Works of
Marina Abramović and Tanja Ostojić**

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In this paper I will discuss the notion of performativity as employed in the critical interpretation of performance and body art performed by female artists. I propose a model of performativity that explains the dynamic relationship of the artist within her own representations. According to this model, a painting or a performance cannot be a mere reflection of an artist's experience, but a performative action in which an artist actively performs not only her experience, but also creates her identity. A reading of specific art works as performative strategies is meant to establish them by transcending the categories of illustration, reflection, or personal testimony. To interpret these artistic operations as performative would signify that they are constituted as a dynamic cipher of the artist that functions in two ways—created by the artist, they create her identity in the performative action itself. I use as case studies the art practice of two female artists that deals with their own bodies: Marina Abramović and Tanja Ostojić. The body enters a performative act as a main site of exchange—both of the viewing powers and the construction of self-identity (fig. 1).

I want to expose the processes of exposing oneself. This particular self is not a neutral, cerebral one. It is a gendered, sexualized self that has represented the female subject over roughly the last four decades, a period that coincided with the feminist movement. This trajectory should be understood only as one possible history—a history of female response within performance art—of the category that constituted art and aesthetics through the ages, i.e., the beauty of the human body. The artists I chose represent the main protagonists of these tendencies on the Yugoslav art scene from the 1970s until the beginning of the twenty-first century.

The Body Beautiful

The terror imposed by the “Ideal” of beauty was constructed in the absence of a “real” woman. But it would be simplistic to construct a debate in such an oppositional manner—as a dichotomy of real woman versus her ideal image. The feminist contestation of images of women in cinema and advertising constructed political reaction against the oppression and instrumentalization of the female body.¹

The anger of the women’s movement in the early 1970s was directed toward objectification as a strategy of oppression by patriarchal institutions. The issue of beauty as such played a minimal part in the initial feminist debates about images of women. The notion that women must reclaim beauty as something that is their choice and their judgment—not in the eye of the beholder, but in the mind of the beauty—is characteristic of the phase that dealt with the issue of the objectification of female subjects.²

My aim in this narrative is to introduce the body, and the ways it is understood in our postcolonial, postfeminist epoch. It is also notable that the end of modernism was signified by a beauty that reemerged in light of the postcolonial and feminist critique of race and gender.³ The body that reemerged in all its dirty glory is a sexed, gestured, painted, and performed body. I will try to follow not only the discipline of art criticism, but larger discursive fields constructed around the notions of feminist aesthetics (feminine beauty), gender studies (gendered body), and psychology (body image). To make an argument for this reemergence of the unruly female body, I will use particular examples of artists’ practices. These artists exposed themselves because that was the only way to expose patriarchal oppression. I limited my choice to two artists who, in my opinion, in a uniquely distinguished way succeeded in challenging the myth of beauty by exploiting their own.

My own critical intervention follows the strategy of displacement, as French theorist Francette Pacteau puts it, “from attributes of beauty to the attribution of beauty.”⁴ The site where, I believe, this displacement is enacted

¹ See K.A. Callaghan, *Ideals of Feminine Beauty: Philosophical, Social and Cultural Dimensions*, (Westport, Conn.: Greenwood, 1994).

² For this, see Laura Mulvey’s seminal piece “Visual Pleasure and Narrative Cinema” as well as all the feminist critics at the British magazine *Screen* in the 1980s who established the institution of the “female gaze.” L. Gamman and M. Marshment, *The Female Gaze: Women as Viewers of Popular Culture*, (London: Women’s Press, 1988).

³ E. Grosz, *Volatile Bodies: Toward a Corporeal Feminism*, (Bloomington: Indiana University Press, 1994).

⁴ F. Pacteau, *The Symptom of Beauty*, (Cambridge, Mass.: Harvard, 1994).

over and over again is the body: the artist's body, and the critic's body as well. The critical practices of Marina Abramović and Tanja Ostojić helped me stage this story.

The notion of natural beauty as constructed in Western aesthetics seems to be a particularly problematic one. It needed poststructuralist thought to "naturalize" the concept of beauty by immersing it in a cultural context. The performative strategies that return the voice to beauty, challenging its muteness, turn to the culture recognizing its decisive role. I tend to read all the practices as texts within their particular cultural contexts. The discussion of cultural codes that define beauty would be a pertinent one.

Staying only within the modern period, or more precisely the twentieth-century, we can establish the notion of the appealing woman via attributes that construct her desired image: her make-up, hair-do, and "not-letting-herself-go" attitude. The construct of her "proper femininity," the hidden and disguised body of a sane, decent bourgeois woman was opposed to a disreputable prostitute or a hysterical madwoman. As a part of female demonology, the notion of hysterical nymphomaniac—or, simply put, a witch—existed as a threat to the order in the Foucauldian sense of the term. The equation made in the early 1980s that a woman's made up appearance does not correspond to her "true self" is abandoned in contemporary feminist discourse, subjectivity is seen as a floating category that is not fixed within the realm of authenticity. There is no real woman that lies hidden under this mask. Only seemingly paradoxical, this notion has, in fact, great liberating potential.

As Wendy Steiner argues in her study of beauty in twentieth-century art, *Venus in Exile*, "beauty is an unstable property because it is not a property at all. It is the name of a particular interaction between two beings, a self and an other: I find an other beautiful."⁵ The self-judging beauty in this equation is a perceiver, a conscious subject, whereas the other is merely an object. Therefore, the female, conceived as a passive, even if beautiful, other is denied its own agency. Acting to recuperate this agency, feminine subjects within feminist discourse opened up the field for beauty to be reconsidered. Beauty, perceived as the quality of the other, was given the role of a siren or a whore, and represented pleasure that cannot be controlled by the dominant self. How exactly do the rules change when the other (carrying the signifier of beauty) strikes back? I would argue that this scenario cannot be reduced to a simple tale of revenge of the monster on his master, simply because the "monster" is not created by the master. This was a fictional history of the self and the other to which feminine subjects did not contribute.

⁵ W. Steiner, *Venus in Exile: The Rejection of Beauty in Twentieth-Century Art*, (New York: Free Press, 2001).

The “feminist mobilization” allows feminine subjects to freely investigate subjectivity, masquerading it sometimes playfully and sometimes transgressively—by performing the Self. In the play of the signifiers of femininity (i.e., beauty, sexiness, appeal), it is decoded, deconstructed, and reconfigured. I interpret the performative strategies of establishing feminine subjecthood within art practice—seen as a constitutive act of liberation from doctrinal paternalistic tones.

Back to the Body

The site for the constitutional ritual of the feminine self is the body. How did this happen? The artist’s body is viscerally enacted in a way to reveal the split of the Cartesian subject. How does this relate to feminist politics? The split made visible the artificiality of notions of authenticity, ideal, and eternal values. The split left the body to act for itself. Female body artists accepted challenges and performed their identity. I want to show that the artists I discuss did not play a marginal role in the global context of the “feminist mobilization” in the 1970s, nor do they do so today. Rather, I would argue, their work proved to be in the forefront of these strategic operations of critical examinations of female identity.

Marina Abramović

In her series of performances in the early and mid-seventies Marina Abramović explored passive aggression constructing all the actions around her own rather spectacular body. In her 1974 piece, *Rhythm 0* in Studio Morra in Naples, she offered herself to the audience to do what they liked with a range of objects and her body. A text on the wall read: “There are seventy-two objects on the table that can be used on me as desired. I am the object. The objects included a gun, a bullet, an axe, a fork, a comb, a whip, a lipstick, a bottle of perfume, a rose, a candle, chains, needles, scissors...”⁶ (fig. 2). Tools for making oneself beautiful were lumped together along with weapons (fig. 3). By the end of the performance, all her clothes had been sliced off her body, she had been cut, painted, cleaned, decorated, crowned with thorns, and had the loaded gun pressed against her head. After six hours, the performance was halted by concerned spectators (fig. 4). The strategy in which the artist consciously denies herself any agency, being completely passive, has an impact when considered in the cultural climate of the early 1970s. Although not articulately feminist, this piece draws attention to the power that resides

⁶ M. Abramović, *Artist Body, Performances 1969-1998*, (Milano: Edizioni Charta, 1998), 80.

within the traditionally understood object: by objectifying herself, Abramović makes us realize that she is the only one with the power to begin the process. She wants us to treat her that way, she dictates our actions. We are engaged, but not in the role of the conductor of the performance.

Ironically, Abramović—while denying herself any freedom of action—is still the director of the spectacle. In other words, the object cannot be an object if the artist possesses the agency to willingly expose her nature as an object. Exposing the objectification, the circle is closed, the paternalistic logic of the master-slave dialectics revealed. Within the cultural context of the 1970s, the performative strategies employed by Abramović were radical, as they examined the boundaries of the power relationships of the artist's subjectivity within the art world.

Another performance by Abramović from 1975, which lasted for an hour, took place at the Charlottenburg Art Festival in Copenhagen (Fig. 5). The title was "Art must be beautiful, artist must be beautiful." The instructions read: "I brush my hair with a metal brush in my right hand and simultaneously comb my hair with a metal comb in my left hand. While doing so, I continuously repeat 'art must be beautiful, artist must be beautiful,' until I hurt my face and damage my hair."⁷ I thought of Abramović's piece while mapping out this paper. I see it as a trump card, which helps me make the argument for my own narrative—a story of how female artists exposed their vulnerability and their own artistic selves in order to challenge the institution of art and the notion of beauty. There is nothing ironic about Abramović's piece; it belongs to the corpus of the radical practices of body art in 1970s. She had a task of exposing herself. I interpret this performative strategy as a powerful, uncompromising one. The artist challenges the aesthetic canon that oppressed women for centuries, and what could be a more honest strategy for doing this than to apply it to her own body? She is caught making herself beautiful. She starts the performance by staging the absurdity of the premise—art must be beautiful and artist/herself must be beautiful. In an unstoppable crescendo of ritualized gestures the artist reaches a point at which art hurts—the premise of ideal beauty produces pain. And what makes this action compelling is the enactment of pain. But the pain is not a masochistic one; it is enacted to expose the oppression of the institution of art. The artist employs her body in pain as a medium. Again, the medium is purposely put to endure pain (to suffer for the sake of beauty), while the director does not distance herself from the event.

⁷ M. Abramović, 106.

Tanja Ostojić

Along with Marina Abramović, Tanja Ostojić's challenging performances, which were presented at major international art exhibitions such as the Venice Biennale, transcend the realm of the local.

This is the text that accompanies one of her performances:

I'll Be Your Angel, a performance created for the 49th Venice Biennale, consists of a four-day performance with the Venice Biennale Director, Mr. Harald Szeemann, as supporting 'actor.' The set is the Biennale and its pavilions' openings, cocktails, dinners, press conferences.... As Szeemann's escort and 'angel,' I have structured the work using elements of mystery, both personal and public and playing with the glossy gossip of art-world whispers. The piece is designed to provoke a questioning of existing power structures.

In using Mr. Szeemann as 'material' I am accessing his iconic stature. He is a respected and powerful personality with a 'loaded name' who can 'guarantee' a public platform for my fragile questions concerning the revalorization of human relationships within the art world.

The personal contemporary space of individuals and human relationships in and out of art circles is in crisis. How can one revitalize essential human values through art? The Venice Biennale attracts the world press, art lovers, and professionals; it seemed a natural opportunity to pose these questions here. A major cultural event, the Venice Biennale is also a global phenomenon. It is a tourist attraction, a place of a grotesque celebration of art as commodity and an intellectual soup; yet, it happens that many art works in Venice are either missed or misconstrued.⁸

Ostojić playfully incorporates female attributes of seduction and "female mysteriousness" in her performance. She is not interested, as I argue, in reenactment of the female role as a mistress/muse of the artist. Rather, she investigates her artistic identity by performing a certain stereotypical female role. Her critical reexamination is effectively staged by her performance of her (artistic) alter ego: the masquerading artist—the muse—in a lavish designer dress who mingles with the art crowd, exposes female complicity within patriarchal institutions.

⁸ The artist's statement is cited from her website: <http://www.remont.co.yu/tanjao.htm>.

In her Internet project *Looking for a Husband with an EU Passport*, Ostojić takes one step further by exposing female vulnerability in the politically and economically troubled country that Yugoslavia was in the 1990s (Fig. 6). She posted her naked photo with this text underneath: “Please send your applications to hottanja@hotmail.com. Do not hesitate to contact me with any further questions or details.”⁹ I tend to read this work as a performative action *par excellence*. The artist exposes her own position as a single, Serbian female. Ostojić exposes her bare, unwanted, second-rate ethnicity (via the representation of her naked, shaven body) in order to achieve a globally recognized status as a European citizen. That identity can be approved only if related to the “respectable” European husband.

In conclusion, I would suggest that the interpretative model of performativity poses a self-referentiality that is directed towards the interpreter herself. In the act of interpretation, which is performative itself, I establish my own meaning.

⁹ Ostojić, website.

Jelisaveta Načić: The First Serbian Female Architect

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In the entire history of architecture, few female architects are recognized by name. Jelisaveta Načić (1878–1955), the first woman architect in Serbia, is among these select few. Upon acquiring her degree in architecture from the Great School (Visoka Škola) in Belgrade in 1900, Načić worked on several municipal buildings in Belgrade and elsewhere, some of which have remained architectural landmarks in Serbia to the present day. Načić worked on the twentieth-century urban re-design for the so-called “Big Kalemegdan” in Belgrade and designed King Peter I Elementary School in Belgrade (1905–18). Jelisaveta Načić was also engaged in the design and execution of several ecclesiastical buildings, such as the churches of St. Alexander Nevsky in Belgrade (1909–30) and St. Archangel Michael above Štimlje in Kosovo (1920–22). Her design for the mausoleum of the Karadorđević dynasty at the church of St. George at Oplenac in Topola, was selected in a national competition in 1903. Načić’s résumé also includes a number of private houses and apartment buildings. Among these are the residences of Mr. Marko Marković, at 45a Gospodar Jovanova Street in Belgrade; Colonel Božidar Krstić’s residential buildings at 2 Šafarikova Street and at 3 Đure Daničića, both built in Belgrade in 1904; and the first comfortable apartments built for the working-class in the Balkans, at Radnička Street in Dorćol in Belgrade (1911), to name just a few.

Apart from a short overview of Jelisaveta Načić’s somewhat unusual private and professional life, which was presented in *Godišnjak Muzeja grada Beograda* by Milan S. Minić in 1956,¹ Načić’s architectural projects and their place within Serbian architectural development since 1900 are generally understudied and have yet to be adequately addressed by architectural historians. Without offering an extensive survey of the subject, this paper will focus on some aspects of Načić’s life that are virtually unknown to the English-speaking world. Focusing on her training and architectural opus, while shedding light on her personality, the paper will attempt to partly contextualize

¹ Milan S. Minić, “Prva Beogradjanka arhitekt—Jelisaveta Načić,” *Godišnjak Muzeja grada Beograda* III (1956): 451–57.

Jelisaveta Načić and her accomplishments within Serbian architecture of the early twentieth century.

Jelisaveta Načić was born in 1878 in Belgrade, Serbia. In 1896 she enrolled in the Technical School of the University of Belgrade, known at that time as the Great School. In 1900 she graduated with a degree in architecture as the first Serbian woman architect. She was the first woman ever to enter the Belgrade Technical School. It is worth noting that she was also among the first architects to graduate from the Great School.

Before the 1900s, artistically gifted young men who had previously earned engineering degrees in Belgrade were sent to study architecture abroad through grants from the young Serbian state; they started their careers upon their return to the homeland. The Hattısharif Decree of 1830 issued by the Ottoman *Sublime Porte* certified that internal self-government was granted to Serbia, which had been under Turkish rule for several centuries. The cultural renewal that followed the emergence of Serbia as a sovereign state in 1830 steered the country away from Turkey and its feudal political system. The political reorganization of the country, based on West European principles, influenced the development of architecture during the second half of the nineteenth century as well. Many architects were sent to study in Vienna, Karlsruhe, Zurich, and other Central European centers, where they became familiar with non-Ottoman architectural models. The first Serbian architect to work in Belgrade was Konstantin Radošević, who came to Belgrade in 1842.²

The international recognition of Serbia as an independent state at the Congress of Berlin in 1878 paved the way for the “Europeanization” of architectural models. The entire concept of Serbian architecture after the 1870s was marked by liberal cultural nationalism and the statehood development of the Kingdom of Serbia, which in turn was part of the wider European romantic movement, similar to the gothic revival in Western Europe.³ Due to an extensive and systematic study of Serbian medieval heritage dating from before the Turkish conquest (1457)—conducted by Dragutin Milutinović (1840–1900) and Mihailo Valtrović (1839–1915) under the auspices of the Serbian Learned Society (*Srpsko Učeno Društvo*) in the 1870s and 1880s—a number of architectural designs in the period from 1900 to the 1930 (especially those of ecclesiastic buildings) were based on Morava school church designs. They were also set into an urban environment in the construction that followed con-

² Branko Vujović, *Beograd u prošlosti i sadašnjosti* (Belgrade: Draganić, 1994), 54–55.

³ For specific details see Aleksander Kadijević, *Jedan vek traženja nacionalnog stila u srpskoj arhitekturi (sredina XIX—sredina XX veka)* (Belgrade: Građevinska knjiga, 1997), *passim*. Also Branislav Pantelić, “Nationalism and Architecture: The Creation of a National Style in Serbian Architecture and Its Political Implications,” *JSAH* (March 1997): 16–41.

temporary Central European patterns.⁴ The special features of these Belgrade architectural creations from the first half of the twentieth century grew in importance since they followed by no more than fifty years the first regulatory plan that would transform Belgrade from an Ottoman town into European urban environment. From 1867 to 1887 the first plan for Belgrade made after West European models was carried out by Emilijan Josimović (1823–97), a professor at the Great School and the first Serbian urban planner.⁵

There is no record of modern architectural creations by Serbian architects until the 1870s, when the first generation of Serbian-born architects returned from their studies abroad to establish their practice and educate the first generation of architects in Serbia. A number of them attained positions in the Ministry of Buildings (Ministarstvo Građevina) and in the Department of Architecture of the Great School.⁶ Therefore, at the age of 22, Jelisaveta Načić was not only the first female architect in Serbia but also one of the first architects with a degree from the Architectural Department of the University of Belgrade.

Upon graduation in 1900, Načić started her career as a draftsman in the Ministry of Buildings. Two years later she passed the required qualifying state exam and was appointed as the city architect of Belgrade. At that time, it was customary that only those who had finished obligatory military service could get a position in a state office. Since women did not serve in the army, her appointment set a precedent.⁷ Because of the extensiveness and significance of her work, Načić acquired the role of city architect for practical purposes, although this was not reflected in her title.⁸

The first project by Jelisaveta Načić was the design for the Small Kalemegdan in Belgrade after the preliminary drawings made by her former professor, Dimitrije T. Leko (1863–1914). At the same time, she got the opportunity to design the monumental staircase and fountain in the so-called “Big Kalemegdan.” The stairs on the access to the river Sava, made of green stone and done in the Baroque style, are still in existence. Unfortunately, the fence with flower vases along the main promenade executed in the Secession style did not survive World War I.⁹

⁴ Kadijević 32–35.

⁵ Vujović, *Beograd u prošlosti i sadašnjosti*, 54–55.

⁶ Zoran Manević et al. eds, *Srpska arhitektura 1900–1970* (Belgrade: Muzej savremene umetnosti, 1972), 132.

⁷ Minić, 451–57.

⁸ Ibid.

⁹ Ibid.

In 1905–06 Načić designed her masterwork—King Peter I Elementary School, which is located at 7 King Peter Street, in the vicinity of the Cathedral of St. Michael (1845) in the heart of Old Belgrade.¹⁰ The school remains one of the most important and successful examples of Serbian public architecture at the beginning of the twentieth century. It was erected east of the church, on the foundations of an older building constructed as a school in 1826.¹¹ Since 1846, the old building had served as the first Belgrade library. In 1905, after the Decree of City Hall, work on the new school building designed by Načić started. Built in the Neo-Renaissance style, the school is a two-story corner building with the main entrance turned towards the intersection and opened towards the urban fabric. The main façade is monumental, with rich plastic decoration around the arched door and windows on the first story, and with a balustrade-like roof finishing.¹² The design was done under the influence of Professor Dragutin Đorđević (1866–1933), with whom Načić studied in Belgrade.¹³ Therefore, it is not by chance that the architectural idiom of the King Peter I School is closely related to the school designs for Valjevo Gymnasium (1905) and the Third Belgrade Gymnasium (1906), done by Đorđević.¹⁴ To the best of my knowledge, there are no known explicit references to the design process and building construction of King Peter I School, but according to written reports, the first students entered the school in 1918, immediately after World War I. In 1923, the first basketball game in Belgrade took place in its schoolyard.¹⁵ The school has changed its name seven times during its history. (It was most often called King Peter I School, which was its name from 1925 until 1945, and from 1993 on.) For forty years, from 1952 to 1993, it was known as Braća Ribar Elementary School.¹⁶

Another important design by Jelisaveta Načić is the parish church St. Alexander Nevsky, known as the Dorćol Church. During the Serbian-Turkish War (1876–78), a Russian volunteer corps lead by General Michael Grigorovich Chernayev brought a mobile tent church dedicated to the Russian prince St. Alexander Nevsky. After the war, the tent church was given to the inhabitants of the Dorćol quarter in Belgrade. In 1877 a modest church dedi-

¹⁰ On the Belgrade Cathedral, see Branko Vujović, *Saborna crkva u Beogradu* (Belgrade: Narodna knjiga, 1996), *passim*.

¹¹ Vujović, *Beograd u prošlosti i sadašnjosti*, 182.

¹² *Ibid.*

¹³ Minić, 451–57.

¹⁴ Manević, 132.

¹⁵ Zorica Guzina, *Tajne Beograda* (Belgrade: Skupština grada Beograda, Sekretarijat za informisanje, 2001), 247–48.

¹⁶ *Ibid.*

cated to St. Alexander Nevsky was erected at the corner of Dušanova, Dubrovačka, and Skenderbegova Streets. Beginning in 1891 the tent was moved from one place to another¹⁷ and the municipal authorities made plans for a new, bigger church to be built. Jelisaveta Načić designed the new church at the intersection of Dušanova, Dositejeva, Francuska, Skenderbegova, and Radnička (today known as Đure Đakovića) Streets. The preparation for the building of the present church started in 1909 and construction began in 1912. However, the process of building was slow due to the Balkan Wars (1912–13) and World War I. Before the wars, only the stone skirting and the four monolithic granite piers for the main dome were erected. The church was finished in 1928–29 and consecrated in 1930.¹⁸ It follows the triconch plan with apses that are semicircular in the interior and three-sided on the exterior. Along with the typical plan, the rich architectural polychromatic façade decoration recalls late medieval churches that belong to the so-called Morava School, whose idiom has been traditionally accepted as specific to the Serbian local milieu.¹⁹

Using a similar architectural idiom, Načić designed the small church of St. Archangel Michael, built on a hill above Štimlje in Kosovo Polje. The church was built between 1920 and 1922 from Načić's designs on the foundations of an older church. Naka Spasić, the president of the Knjeginja Ljubica Association, was the patron of the church, which commemorated Serbian soldiers who had died during World War I.²⁰ Next to the church was an orphanage for girls. The church was thoroughly renovated in 1977. Unfortunately, during the war of 1999, the church was desecrated and set on fire by Kosovo Albanians, while its frescoes were destroyed in the presence of the British KFOR troops.²¹

Among eighteen participants in the national competition for the mausoleum of the Karađorđević dynasty at the church of St. George at Oplenac in Topola in 1903, Načić's design was selected by the competition committee.²²

¹⁷ From 1891 to 1894 the church was in the Cathedral, from 1894 to 1902 in St. Sava's Center, from 1902 to 1915 in a school in Dorćol, from 1915 to 1920 in the Cathedral, and from 1920 to 1930 in a school in Dorćol.

¹⁸ Vujović, *Beograd u prošlosti i sadašnjosti*, 172–73.

¹⁹ The term "L'école de Morava" was coined by Gabriel Millet, *L'ancien art serbe: Les églises* (Paris: E. de Boccard, 1919), ch. 3, 152ff. Since 1919 the term has been used in architectural history for the architectural accomplishments in both medieval and early modern Serbia, although there are recent indications that the meaning and significance of such terminology deserve revising.

²⁰ Minić, 451–57.

²¹ Kosovo—Desecrated Monuments <http://www.kosovo.com/crucified/churches/ch71.html> (Accessed 08/2002)

²² Kadijević, 73.

A requirement of the competition was that the church be designed in the so-called Serbo-Byzantine style.²³ The ultimate realization of the church according to the designs of Kosta Jovanović reveals that by the beginning of the 1900s the majority of architects in Serbia were trained to build churches according to Byzantine and Serbian prototypes and followed their structural, formal, and decorative patterns consistently, which rationalized the adopted liturgical practice. Načić's design for the mausoleum was once again executed in a manner similar to her other churches. Apart from nationalistic aspirations that buildings designed in the Morava School idiom may have raised at the threshold of the twentieth century, Vojislav Ristić was the first architectural historian who related the centralized triconch plan and circular and square forms of Morava churches to the development of urban centers,²⁴ which indeed could be an adequate answer for the urban development in Serbia at the time.²⁵ Be that as it may, a proper architectural history of the period, which should deal with issues of specific anachronisms, such as the revival of the medieval idioms in twentieth-century Serbian and Balkan architecture, still remains to be written.²⁶

Jelisaveta Načić worked on residential architecture as well. The first comfortable working-class apartments built in the Balkans were constructed for the workers of the communal service in Belgrade in 1911. These were erected in Radnička Street in Dorćol (Belgrade) and were designed by Načić.²⁷ She was also engaged in the creation of several private residences. Only one of these has survived, and it can still be seen in Belgrade—the residence of Mr. Marko Marković, the former Belgrade bookseller, built at 45a Gospodar

²³ Posed by Millet and widely accepted by subsequent scholars, the generalized concept of the “Serbo-Byzantine Style” in architecture relates to a local emulation of Constantinopolitan models by Nemanjićs and their later noblemen during the late middle ages. See Millet, *L'ancien art serbe: Les églises*. However, the term is used for later architectural idioms as well. On the competition for the church at Oplenac and its requirements, see Miodrag Jovanović, *Oplenac: Hram svetog Djordja i mauzolej Karadjordjevića* (Topola: Centar za kulturu, 1989), 25–51.

²⁴ Vojislav Ristić, *Moravska arhitektura* (Kruševac: Narodni muzej, 1996), 55–56.

²⁵ Branislav Pantelić is of the opinion that the adoption of the Morava church model was due to extreme nationalistic aspirations. However, he does not provide an adequate explanation for why churches built by Nemanjićs, the first and most honored Serbian royal lineage that could recall a national past perhaps even more effectively, were not taken as a model. See Pantelić, 16–41.

²⁶ The pioneering work by Kadrijević, *Jedan vek traženja nacionalnog stila u srpskoj arhitekturi (sredina XIX—sredina XX veka)*, just touches upon them without going into a detailed survey on the subject matter.

²⁷ Minić, 451–57.

Jovanova Street, which dates from 1904.²⁸ The residence was built in the style of neo-Renaissance classicism that appealed to the taste of the contemporary Serbian prosperous middle class. Unfortunately for architectural historians, a duplex house, the residence of Colonel Božidar Krstić at the corner of 2 Šafarikova Street and 3 Đure Daničića Street, which was also built in the classicist style, was replaced by a skyscraper in the second half of the twentieth century.²⁹

Among the buildings built by Načić that were destroyed by wars or devastated by time is the hospital for tuberculosis patients in the Vračar quarter of Belgrade. This was the first hospital of this kind erected in Serbia. A brick factory in the Prokop quarter of Belgrade was also constructed from Načić's designs. Both structures were heavily damaged during World War I.³⁰

Ambitious and extensive work by Jelisaveta Načić was interrupted by World War I. During the Austrian occupation of Serbia, Načić worked predominately on repairs of ruined buildings in Belgrade. In 1916 she was arrested by Austrian soldiers and interned in the concentration camp Nežider in Hungary. In the camp she met Luka Lukaji, an Albanian intellectual and patriot, whom she married after the liberation in 1918. They lived in Skadar shortly after World War I, but in 1919 they were expelled by Italians who occupied Albania. Finally, in 1923, as political emigrants, they settled in Dubrovnik. Lukaji died in Dubrovnik the same year. Until 1916, when she was only thirty-eight, Načić was actively engaged in the architectural scene of Belgrade and Serbia. Unfortunately, the experiences of World War I and the concentration camp, as well as her marriage, disrupted her professional work. Upon moving to Dubrovnik, she devoted her life to her husband and their child. As an architect and a patriot, she was granted a pension by the Federal People's Republic of Yugoslavia shortly before her death.³¹

Jelisaveta Načić remains noteworthy as the first Serbian female architect, even though she worked actively for only twelve years before World War I. Being trained by the architects from the generation of the 1870s, Načić belongs to the first generation of Serbian architects whose historicizing architecture turned toward a search for a national statement in Serbian architecture as well as toward contemporary architectural developments. She created a number of valuable and significant architectural works in post-Ottoman Serbia. A number of buildings from her architectural opus outlived the destruction of

²⁸ Ibid.

²⁹ Ibid.

³⁰ Ibid.

³¹ About details from the private life of Jelisaveta Načić, according to oral testimonies by her contemporaries Đura Bajalović and Joca Obradović, see Minić, 451–57.

the wars ravaging the Balkans for more than a century. Načić's work represents an important episode within modern architectural development in Serbia that establishes cultural ties with Central Europe. It certainly deserves to be studied in more detail in the future.

The Politico-Ecclesiastical Conflict Underlying the Initiative for Compiling the Gennadius Bible of 1499 and the Further History of the Church Slavonic Bible up to the Present Day

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The book *Slavic Scriptures: The Formation of the Church Slavonic Version of the Holy Bible*¹ is an important contribution to the field of biblical studies: it brings the investigation of the historical development of the Church Slavonic Bible to the Western public's attention. Henry Cooper's book synthesizes many studies over a long period of time, attempting to paint a picture of the development and establishment of the Slavonic Bible among the Orthodox Slavs, in particular the Eastern Slavs, the Russians, and the Ukrainians, on whose territory the translations of the first biblical texts appeared. However, the book is much more ambitious than its title suggests. In fact, it includes a critical scholarly survey of the eleven-century evolution of both partial and full components of the Bible in chronological order of their appearance among the Southern and Eastern Orthodox Slavs from their adoption of Christianity from Byzantium in the ninth century to the *perestroika* period in the Soviet Union in the 1980s.

Since the author of Methodius' *Vita* suggests that by 884 Methodius had completed a full translation of the Bible (except Maccabees) into Old Church Slavonic, Cooper has decided to include in his study the well-known Cyrillo-Methodian mission among the Western Slavs (Morava and Pannonia) in 863. Thus, the book consists of seven chapters: the introductory chapter treats events before Cyril and Methodius; the second and third chapters are devoted to Cyril and Methodius, respectively; chapters four and five discuss the historical and cultural situation in the first (Ohrid and Preslav) and second (Turnovo) Bulgarian empires, with special emphasis on various parts of biblical translations done or revised by the Bulgarians that increasingly conformed to Greek models; the last two chapters depict the situation in twelfth- and thirteenth-century Kievan Rus', where East Slavic manuscripts of various

¹ Henry R. Cooper, Jr., *Slavic Scriptures: The Formation of the Church Slavonic Version of the Holy Bible* (Cranbury, NJ: Associated University Press, 2003).

fragments of the biblical text were extant. Not until 1499 in Muscovy did the Gennadius Bible emerge as the first complete Church Slavonic Bible. Since the Gennadius Bible is the most important achievement in the textual criticism of Church Slavonic Bible translation, I will scrutinize the political and ecclesiastical circumstances surrounding Archbishop Gennadius' initiative to organize and accomplish this crucial theological project. The Gennadius Bible, which became the basis for all subsequent editions of the Church Slavonic Bible, is chronicled in Cooper's final chapter, including an account of the revisions and studies of the Church Slavonic Bible on the territory of Ukraine and Russia up to the present day. In my review article I will follow very closely the order and exposition of materials and problems presented in Cooper's work.

Since the author does not textually compare the oldest extant Slavic fragments from the Bible with their hypothetical Greek originals, I have deliberately avoided here a discussion of the original text from which the oldest passages were rendered into Old Church Slavonic. In particular, for the earliest period of Slavic literacy in the Balkans, the problem of determining whether Byzantine or Roman models served as the basis for translation has not been sufficiently investigated as to enable discussion of the issue with any degree of certainty. Later, however, in the period of the Second Bulgarian Empire, the processes of Byzantinization are much stronger and easier to discern than in the first centuries of the adoption of Christianity by the Southern Slavs. Therefore, it is much easier to speak about, or in some cases even to detect, Byzantine models, such as—for example—the influence of the Byzantine Hasychast movement upon South Slavic literacy (addressed below). In addition, as translation techniques are not a major concern in Cooper's book, there is no need to address this complex issue here. Furthermore, after 1100 years, controversies over the work of the Slavic apostles Cyril and Methodius are more plentiful today than they were in the nineteenth and early twentieth centuries, when the pioneering studies of the first Slavacists appeared. Many hypotheses about the apostles' work and its location are, Cooper notes, "currently under fierce discussion."² However, it is impossible to avoid discussion of Cyril and Methodius, whom their anonymous hagiographers describe as the first translators of large portions of the Scripture into Slavonic for use in daily offices and liturgy. It is therefore understandable that Cooper has devoted a chapter to each of the brothers. As I find these two chapters to be among the book's best, I will accord them, along with the chapter on the Gennadius Bible, more thorough treatment.

² Cooper, 25. From now on, page references to Cooper's book will appear in the body of the text.

While the *Life of St. Cyril* and the *Life of St. Methodius*, also known as the *Pannonian Legends*, have been the object of abundant scholarly investigations, it is not the goal of this review to parse the huge body of academic debates on the subject. After meticulously and conscientiously describing the hypotheses and assumptions advanced by various scholars, Cooper himself hypothesizes that the *Life of St. Cyril* could be “an original Slavonic work, aimed at Slavs” (51). Because the *vitae* of both Cyril and Methodius are preserved in Latin and not in Greek, one cannot say with certainty that they are “an original Slavonic work”; however, it seems clear that they were indeed “aimed at Slavs.” We have inherited the *Life of St. Cyril* through relatively late manuscripts, none of which predates the fifteenth century and most of which are from the East Slavic area. Cooper depicts the *Life* chapter by chapter, beginning with Cyril’s first foreign mission to Muslim Saracens at Samarra on the Tigris River. The core of this mission is Cyril’s disputation with the Muslims on the Holy Trinity, the divinity of Jesus, and the superiority of Byzantine ways. The second mission is the longest episode in the *Life*, describing Cyril’s journey into the Crimea and the Caucasus. On this famous mission to the Khazars and the Jewish proselytizers, Cyril learns Hebrew and Samaritan and discovers a gospel and psalter written in “Russian.” He then raises the relics of Pope St. Clement from the sea floor, ends the siege of a Christian city, fends off pagan Hungarians, and finally reaches his destination in Khazaria. At the court of the *khagan* (ruler), he engages in a philosophical-religious debate, during which he proclaims Christian views and makes use of Jewish scriptures to defeat his Jewish opponents. Following this, he is hailed by the Khazars as a teacher.

Cooper correctly underscores that, while Cyril is more reserved in his use of the New Testament, he abundantly quotes passages from the Old Testament (53). In the same way, Cyril uses the Koran to defeat the Muslims for the second time. Given the centrality of the second mission to the *Life* (it takes up half of the entire text), Cooper rightly stresses that,

Cyril’s *Life* should be read therefore as a defense of Orthodoxy: it begins with his ‘defeat’ of Patriarch John the Grammarian, the archetype of the Iconoclast heretic; it continues with the mission to the Muslims; and it culminates with the polemic against Jews... Byzantine polemics against the Jews in the ninth century represented more than the traditional anti-Semitism of the medieval church. By rehearsing the arguments *adversus Judaeos*... Byzantine writers were in fact affirming their orthodoxy against heretics such as the Iconoclasts and the Paulicians, and the correctness of Christianity against rivals such as the Muslims. (54)

Cyril's most important contribution to the Slavs, his third mission to Rastislav, the Moravan prince, is described in a fifteenth-century manuscript: "The entire ecclesiastical order (of service) was quickly (or soon) translated (or transposed), and (he) taught them the morning office, and hours, the mass, and the evening office, and the prayers after the evening office, and the sacramental service" (56). After the variety of romantic praises, uncritical readings, and interpretations of this sentence by scholars over the last 150 years, Cooper convincingly argues:

In fact neither group of manuscripts actually says that Cyril himself translated anything. The first contains a passive construction and, I would suggest, the verb itself is ambiguous, for it need not absolutely mean 'translate' but can also mean 'transpose' (in its root meaning), or 'transliterate from one alphabet to another.' With an open mind it is possible to read this sentence as a claim that already existing Slavonic translations were transposed or transliterated into the alphabet which Cyril devised. (56)

Thus, Cooper opens the possibility of a new reading of these well-known traditional passages. In truth, no one can interpret Cyril's *Life* with any degree of certainty because all these reverent details are used in sacred biographies only to prove a particular saint's sanctity. In this way, Cooper questions Cyril's most important contribution to the Slavs, his translation of the daily offices and the liturgy—in addition to portions of the Holy Scriptures—into Slavonic, the work that has been traditionally attributed to Cyril up to the present day.

Cyril's last journey to Rome is, as Cooper rightly says, "the culmination of Cyril's missionary work" and "the finale of his entire life's work," particularly in view of his returning the relics of Pope St. Clement to their original home. For this reason, the current pope, Hadrian II, and the citizens of Rome came out to meet Cyril as he approached the city. Cooper concludes this episode by saying:

Of course Slavicists have paid great attention to the mentions of Cyril's translations in this next-to-last chapter of his life. These are, however, of secondary importance from the biographer's point of view. He records, merely, that 'The pope received the Slavic books, blessed them and put them in the Church of St. Mary, which is called Phatne, and they sang the liturgy.' No further mention is made of these books, and, of course, no Slavonic texts from that period have ever been found... (60)

Cooper's new reading of the most important passages of the text of Cyril's *Life* is the most valuable aspect of his analysis in the book and the

most significant contribution to the *Pannonian Legends* scholarship. I am very supportive of the author's statement that in the final section of the *Vita*, the biographer highlights Cyril's role as an apostle of unity and reconciliation between East and West. Likewise, I fully agree with Cooper's concluding remarks and would like to quote them extensively:

[L]et us consider the possibility that Cyril's third and final mission was not merely to the Slavs of Morava but to the West as a whole. As a witness to the first serious breach between the Church of the East and the Church of the West in the Photian Schism, ... Cyril could not help but be painfully aware of the consequences of Christian dissension, not only in the face of external non-Christian enemies, whom he knew firsthand, but in internal matters as well.... Roman-Byzantine concord and like-mindedness were essential to a healthy *oikoumene* as well as to the invigorated spread of Christianity.... Cyril's deathbed prayer makes his mission of unity explicit in a highly literary form.... After all, the biographer could see Cyril's life in a way the saint himself could not have perceived it. That is, through its many details it was fulfilling in some mysterious way the divine plan, that everything conspired together to make Cyril an emissary of divine truth, holy wisdom, and Christian unity. To the Venetian Latinists, his toughest Christian opponents, he cites explicitly John 17:20–21: 'that they all may be one.' To the more sympathetic pope and Romans he simply alludes to John 17 as he lies dying. One way or another, the opponent of heresy makes the transition to being an apostle of unity in his last and most glorious undertaking... (62–63)

Unequivocally, this interpretation by Cooper allows scholars to question the chronology of the writing of Cyril's *Vita* and, perhaps, to shift the original hypothetical date of its composition from the decades after his death in 869 to a later historical period after the Great Schism in 1054, the event after which the unity of the Eastern and Western Churches became a divisive issue.

After a huge body of heavily positivistic scholarship on Slavic philology generated over the last 150 years, Cooper's interpretation of Cyril's life signals that in Slavic medieval studies the methodology of positivism has to be replaced; this includes sacred biographies or hagiographies whose biographers' goal must have been to present the saint's life in accordance with the general practices of writing hagiographic texts. Their major goals were to encourage worship in a community and to prove a saint's sanctity. Therefore, Cyril's missions among the Muslims, the Khazars, and the Jewish proselytizers, as well as the Western Slavs, must be perceived as constitutive in the social process of his sanctification and should be used neither as a source of re-

liable, historical data nor as the basis for chronicling Cyril's life. Cyril's supernatural merits depended on his highly personalized and intensive dialogue with God as well as his miraculous missions and deeds, in particular his finding the relics of Pope St. Clement and returning them to their home. All Cyril's marvelous missions and unbelievable achievements were gradually composed and inserted into the text of his *Vita* in order to praise and glorify him not only as a prominent Byzantine scholar and monk, but first and foremost as an example of the ideal Christian model, an apostle of unity between East and West. Clearly, in order to become Slavic apostles, the brothers needed their sacred biographies. In other words, the *Pannonian Legends* must have originated from the cultural and social needs of the respective medieval society (Roman, Slavic, or Byzantine) to establish its public worship and to show the external path to its holiness and sanctification.

Highly aware of the biographer's principal task of achieving the saint's sanctity, Cooper also analyzes the *Life of St. Methodius*. He addresses afresh the well-known interpretations—often controversial in Cyrilomethodiana scholarship—and correctly poses the same question all previous investigators have confronted: “What precisely did Methodius do for the Slavs of Morava and Pannonia? How are we, some eleven hundred years after the death of its subject, to understand his sacred biography?” Thus, Cooper doesn't follow the traditional account in his interpretation of the *Life of St. Methodius*, in particular the fifteenth chapter, which suggests that a full Slavonic version of the Bible was produced before Methodius' death. Since Cooper radically proposes different readings of this important passage, it would be best to quote it in English:

Then rejecting all the tumult, and placing his cares upon God, he first took two priests from among his disciples, who were excellent scribes, and translated quickly from Greek into Slavonic—in six months, beginning with the month of March to the twenty-sixth day of the month of October—all the Scriptures in full, save Maccabees. And upon finishing, he rendered due thanks and praise unto God, who grants such grace and success, and performed the elevation of the blessed Mystery, celebrating the memory of Saint Demetrius. For previously he had translated with the Philosopher only the psalter, the gospels together with the Apostolos, and selected church liturgies. And then he translated the *Nomocanon*, that is, the rule of the law, and the writings of the Fathers.³

³ Marvin Kantor and Richard S. White, trans. and eds., *The Vita of Constantine and the Vita of Methodius* (Ann Arbor: Michigan Slavic Publications, 1976), 89.

The old historiographic and positivistic way of reading this passage as a source of reliable data insists on the completeness of Methodius' translations of all the biblical books except Maccabees, the two (now three) books which brought to a close the Slavonic Old Testament. Cooper argues that there is no convincing evidence of the use of the complete Bible in Church Slavonic either among the Southern or Eastern Slavs before the end of the fifteenth century. Likewise, scholars have rightly questioned the possibility of accomplishing not only the translation of such an enormous work as the entire Bible, but also that of the *Nomocanon* and other unspecified patristic works. Thus, speaking about this problematic passage in Methodius' *Vita*, Francis Thomson points out: "[T]he passage in Methodius' *Vita* probably belongs to the realm of hagiography rather than historiography, the purpose of it being to show that the translation had been blessed by God and hence enjoyed divine sanction."⁴ In his analysis of this ambiguous passage about Methodius' translation of the entire Bible, Cooper compares it with 2 Timothy 4:1–2 and 2 Esdras 14:23–24; the latter is "a well known, frequently cited apocalyptic, apocryphal book that circulated in Europe in Latin only" (71). Perceiving these texts on a more abstract and divine level, Cooper successfully interprets them as "being linked to Scripture for the purpose of validating that Scripture: in Ezra's case in defense of Jewish apocalyptic literature, in Methodius's case in support of Scripture in Slavonic" (72). In addition, Cooper cogently discusses several points of reference to specific periods of time for the accomplishment of certain tasks and to speed-writing scribes who were required to copy and perform miraculous acts of Ezra's dictation of the Hebrew canon or Methodius' Slavonic translation of the Bible in its entirety. Thus, Cooper sums up his interpretation of the most disputable and crucial passage from the fifteenth chapter of Methodius' *Vita*:

The biographer was depicting divine sanctioning of all the biblical books in Slavonic. It is not the production of actual Slavonic translations of each biblical book by Methodius that is being described in this passage, but the divine authorization to produce them as legitimate versions of Holy Writ. Chapter 15 is the license for a full Bible in Church Slavonic, and not a description of its actual birth... (74)

All in all, Cooper's analysis reveals how little is actually said about the Bible translations in both Cyril's and Methodius' *vitae*, assuming that in the case of

⁴ Francis Thomson, "The Slavonic Translation of the Old Testament," in *Interpretation of the Bible—Interpretation der Bibel—Interprétation de la Bible—Interpretacija Svetega pisma*, ed. Jože Krašovec (Ljubljana/Sheffield: Slovenska akademija znanosti in umetnosti/Sheffield Academic Press, 1998), 605–920, esp. 641.

Cyril, he must have received translations of the Holy Scriptures from his Moravian hosts rather than having them translated himself. Since all our sources regarding the Cyrilo-Methodian mission are scarce, none of these hypotheses can be proven. Whatever this passage might have meant to Methodius' biographer, it is certain that it was included in order to glorify his deeds for the Slavs, thus paving the road to his worship and veneration as a Slavic apostle and saint.

By looking at these new readings afresh, and applying the point of view of a biographer of these sacred texts, Cooper arrives at more convincing and successful interpretations than the existing ones with regard to the important passage of the fifteenth chapter of Methodius' *Life*. Cooper's new methodological approach to reading and analyzing the text of the *Pannonian Legends* is the greatest achievement of his book. It challenges several key assumptions that have informed the scholarship on Cyril and Methodius over the past century and a half. The introduction of this new approach to analyzing Slavic sacred biographies is long overdue. This sort of "revisionism" is more than welcome in the field of Slavic philology, which was established as a discipline in the era of positivism and has never been able to liberate itself from a deeply rooted positivistic methodology.

In his further presentation of the development and history of the Church Slavonic Bible, Cooper is less radical in his analysis and does not offer as many new interpretations as he does in his readings of Cyril's and Methodius' *vitae*. The remaining section of my review article will cover the second half of Cooper's book, which describes the complex and long history of the establishment of the text of the Church Slavonic Bible among the South and Eastern Orthodox Slavs during the eleven centuries of its existence, constant use, change, and development.

In the fourth chapter of Cooper's book, the conditions for the establishment of Slavic literacy are depicted in the First Bulgarian Empire with its centers in Ohrid and Preslav. Again, the major sources regarding Slavic Scriptures—which is the major topic of Cooper's study—are the *Life of St. Clement* and the *Life of St. Naum*, the two disciples of Methodius. In these hagiographies, there is nothing mentioned in regard to Cyril's glagolitic alphabet or the production of Slavonic translations of the Scriptures. In Bulgaria, however, the situation is very different because one enters a more abundantly documented period which constitutes one of the earliest stages in the creation of some important parts of the Slavonic Bible: gospels, psalter, and apostolus. Cooper correctly defines the lack of any certainty concerning the "Ohrid School" and its production of Slavonic monuments in glagolitic, let alone which portions of the Bible in Church Slavonic might have been copied or translated. The only hypothetical statement that is less plausible in

my opinion is: “We cannot be sure that it [the Ohrid School] transmitted this script [glagolitic] westward, as far as Croatia, where it survived until comparatively recent times” (86). The numerous scholarly writings of the members of the Staroslavenski Institute Svetozar Ritig in Zagreb and other specialists in glagolitic texts on the one hand, and the investigations of the corpus of the earliest texts from the Western Balkans on the other, all strongly contradict the quoted statement, clearly indicating that Slavonic monuments in glagolitic were transmitted from west of the Balkans eastward.⁵ Since these monuments are not the subject of Cooper’s book, there is no need to dwell upon them further.

No doubt, the Preslav school represents a different tradition than the Ohrid center. After acknowledging the existence of lectionary excerpts and *tetraevangelia*, Cooper expresses some reservations with regard to the hypothesis that Preslav inherited full gospel translations. In his opinion, “a Christian community at a rudimentary stage of its development, struggling to enlarge itself through the missionizing of neighboring pagan groups, has very little need for full biblical texts” (92). However, the major reason for the lack of documentation and manuscripts from the first Bulgarian empire should be sought in the fact that Preslav fell to the Byzantines in 971, and all of Bulgaria and Macedonia were brutally occupied by Basil II. The occupation by “the Bulgar Slayer” was followed by a systematic annihilation of Slavic manuscripts in Bulgaria. In spite of all these external disasters, on the basis of the preserved copies from the Preslav bookmen or their Bulgarian successors, it is possible to say that these copies included all or parts of the following books: “Genesis, Exodus, Leviticus, Numbers, Deuteronomy, Joshua, Judges, Ruth (often grouped together by the South Slavs as an *Octateuch*), 1–4 Kingdoms, all sixteen of the prophetic books, Proverbs, Ecclesiasticus, Job, Song of Songs, Ecclesiastes, Psalms, the Gospels, Acts, and the Epistles. Missing from the list are 1–2 Chronicles, the Prayer of Manasses, 1–3 Esdras, Nehemiah, Tobit, Judith, the Wisdom of Solomon, and Revelation” (89). Of course, these biblical texts were available to the Preslav bookmen in Slavonic as well as in Greek. Although it is impossible to make any precise conclusion, because some of the evidence is of a later date, it seems safe to say that Tsar “Symeon’s bookmen probably had access to at least some of these service-oriented Slavonic Bible translations” (91).

Cooper characterizes the inter-imperial period between the collapse of the First Bulgarian Empire and the rise of the Second Bulgarian Empire, with its

⁵ Cf. the recently published study by William R. Veder, *Utrum in alterum arbitraturum erat? A Study of the Beginning of Text Transmission in Church Slavic* (Bloomington, IN: Slavica, 1999).

capital at Turnovo, as subject to the processes of strong Hellenization and monasticization and to the rise of heretical movements among the Balkan Slavs. The Orthodox response was a strong and enduring effort to Hellenize the Slavonic Bible translations and to move the Slavonic Scripture away from the vernacular toward ever closer conformity with Greek, the only true protector of Orthodoxy. The unsystematic revisions of the revived Bulgarian church and its liturgical books and Holy Writ during the reign of John Asen II (1218–41) resulted in an abundance of Slavonic versions of liturgy and Scripture. In the fourteenth century, particularly during John Alexander's reign (1331–71), there is clear evidence of Bulgaria's direct involvement with the Byzantine Hesychast movement and of its impact on Bulgaria's manuscript production and its major revision of Slavic letters, including Holy Writ. Cooper is absolutely right when he stresses that "fourteenth-century Bulgaria was the propagator and intermediary of this final flourish of Byzantine thought for the Orthodox Slavs" (106). Gregory of Sinai (1290–1346), the founder of Hesychasm (a mystical doctrine named for one of its most prominent features, silence—*hesychia* in Greek), fled from Mount Athos to live in the monastery of Paroria, which became a center of contemplative monasticism second only to Mount Athos. His greatest Bulgarian disciple was Theodosius of Turnovo (d. 1363) who around 1350 founded a monastic community at Kilifarevo, near the Bulgarian capital. Euthymius, the future patriarch of Bulgaria (1375–93), was one of Theodosius' disciples. As a consequence of the devastating Ottoman victory and the Turkish onslaught, many of Gregory of Sinai's followers left Paroria and Kilifarevo and settled in the remote areas north of the Morava region in Prince Lazar's Serbia.

There is only one sentence that requires an additional explanation: "In view of Bulgaria's weakened condition particularly vis-à-vis its aggressively aggrandizing neighbor Serbia, it seems all the more unusual, even perhaps paradoxical, that the Bulgarians should play such a crucial role in the Slavic cultural developments of their time" (106). Here, Cooper refers to the reign of Stefan Dušan (1331–55), who proclaimed himself the emperor of the Serbs and the Greeks (1345). However, there is nothing unusual or paradoxical in the fact that Dušan's Serbia, which reached its unprecedented territorial dimensions (Dušan occupied even Epirus and Thessaly in 1348), did not embrace Hesychasm. Nemanjić's Serbia (twelfth to fourteenth centuries) was subject to its own specific developmental trends, which yielded an exceptionally successful synthesis of Church Slavonic literary models and its indigenous tradition.⁶ The influence of Hesychasm in Serbia began only at the very

⁶ Cf. A. Schmaus, "Zur Frage der Kulturorientierung der Serben im Mittelalter," *Südost-Forschungen* 15 (1956): 191; St. Hafner, *Studien zur altserbischen dynastischen Historiogra-*

end of the fourteenth century after the arrival of Bulgarian Hesychast immigrants to Serbia, in particular, after the Fall of Bulgaria with the advent of Turkish occupation (1393). These immigrants introduced radical changes into the spiritual structure of Serbian monasticism: the cult of hermits and Hesychast teaching in the first decades of the fifteenth century.⁷ In addition to their special message of spiritual renewal of Christian doctrine, which included a defense of Orthodox dogmas, the Hesychasts demanded a thorough

phie. Südosteuropaische Arbeiten 62 (München, 1964); idem, *Srpski srednji vek*, trans. J. Kalić and S. Grubačić (Beograd: Zavod za udžbenike i nastavna sredstva/Vukova zadužbina/Matica srpska, 2001); Smilja Marjanović-Dušanić, *Vladarska ideologija Nemanjića: Diplomatička studija* (Beograd: SKZ, 1997); idem, *Vladarske insignije i državna simbolika u Srbiji od XIII do XV veka* (Beograd, 1994); B. Bojović, *L'idéologie monarchique dans les hagio-biographies dynastiques du moyen age serbe: Orientalia christiana analecta*, vol. 248 (1995) just to mention some of the most important works investigating specific aspects and characteristics of medieval culture in Nemanjić's Serbia. The new successful synthesis embracing all the spheres of medieval Serbian culture is far better investigated in the area of medieval Serbian art and iconography, and, more recently, in the area of Nemanjid ruling ideology and diplomacy, as well as its state symbols and insignias than in the existing analyses of literary works (except in the above quoted works of Stanislav Hafner). While these specific cultural achievements of Nemanjid Serbia are not always analyzed and presented adequately, its political and religious vacillation between Byzantium and Rome is well recognized in Slavic scholarship. Thus, in his *Byzantine Commonwealth: Eastern Europe, 500–1453* (Crestwood, N.Y.: St. Vladimir's Seminary Press, 1982), Dmitri Obolensky says: "The religious dualism shown by the coexistence of Orthodox and Roman dioceses in the country was also manifest in the ecclesiastical policy of the Serbian monarchs, most of whom, while remaining faithful to the Orthodox Church, cultivated good relations with the papacy: of the ten members of the Nemanja dynasty who ruled Serbia between c. 1168 and 1371, one was baptized by a Roman priest, one was crowned by a papal legate, one was influenced by the Catholic loyalties of his French wife, one joined the Roman Church (it is true, after his abdication), and three, without taking this final step, expressed a readiness to recognize the pope's authority...., and Stephen Dušan, who was willing to acknowledge papal supremacy in exchange for being appointed 'captain of all Christendom' against the Turks" (325). Also, recently in his article "Le due Slavie: problemi di terminologia e problemi di idée," (*Ricerche Slavistiche* XLV-XLVI (1998/99): 5–86) Sante Graciotti stresses again the political and cultural connections between the Nemanjid dynasty and the West: "Oltre ai due primi Stefani, centrale è la figura di Elena di Valois (morta in alta età nel 1314), moglie di Stefan Uroš I (1243–76) e madre di Milutin (1282–1321) e Dragutin, grande benefattrice di francescani e fondatrice di chiese cattoliche (es. a Scutari e Ulcigno), 'influyente' sotto il profilo religioso non solo sul marito, ma anche sui figli. Uroš III Dečanski successore di Milutin (1321–31) fu più che un simpatizzante con la curia romana, nella quale era considerato per varie ragioni un proprio figlio...ebbene anche Stefano Dušan era stato in precedenza in lunghe interessate trattative col papa, al quale aveva persino assicurato la sua sottomissione, se avesse avuto la carica di 'capitano di tutti i cristiani' contro i turchi" (39). "Ma questa medianita della Serbia tra Costantinopoli e Roma restava nella memoria anche dopo la conquista ottomana" (61).

⁷Milan Kašanin, *Srpska književnost u srednjem veku* (Beograd: Prosveta, 1975), chapter X, esp. 327–47.

restoration of traditional models of the Church Slavonic language and its relationship to Greek (for example, Constantine Kostenečki's *Skazanie o pismenex*, 1423–26).⁸

After the assessment of the main activities of the Hesychast movement which flourished in Bulgaria, Cooper discusses the Hesychasts' different approaches to Scripture in general and to the Scripture in Slavonic in particular. The Hesychasts' rather negative approach to Scripture can be traced back to their most prominent defender, Gregory Palamas (d. 1359) who maintains in his *Triads* (1338–41) that "the truth of Scripture is not self-explanatory, but remains an 'obscure light' until the Holy Spirit illuminates our hearts to perceive its inner meaning. By contemplation, the inner eye is purified, and we are assimilated to Christ, Who is all truth; thus the Hesychast is able to see the divine light directly ('in full daylight'), not only as mediated through the veils of Scripture" (211, note 86). Obviously, for Palamas, the light of Scripture was inferior to the light of mystical contemplation, which he compares to "the star of the morning which shines in full daylight, that is to say, to the sun" (108); "it was the mind's direct apprehension of God" (note 86). The mystical and ascetic practices of the Hesychasts were highly esteemed in Bulgaria, where their teachings were popular. One should bear in mind that this Hesychast depreciation of Scripture must have influenced the further development of the Scripture in Church Slavonic since, as already pointed out, fourteenth-century Bulgarian Hesychasm did spread to fifteenth-century Serbia, the Romanian lands, and most notably Muscovy. Cooper convincingly explains how this aspect of Hesychast teaching must have become an obstacle in the history of the Scripture in Church Slavonic:

But when God's essence was ineffable—apophatic in the vocabulary of the Hesychasts—and approachable only in transcendent ways, then words, even the words of Scripture, could be a hindrance, unless they too were apprehended not in their literal but in their spiritual sense. Words as shapes, words as icons, words as encrustations of mystical markings, words as the saints uttered them, not as we now say them, Slavonic words as close to the original Greek as they could be made, should yield mystical insights, albeit at the price of immediate understandability... (108)

Cooper also successfully analyzes the new *Typicon* (a book with outlines of religious services, tables of precedence, calendars, lectionaries, explana-

⁸See more on this in Harvey Goldblatt, *Orthography and Orthodoxy. Constantine Kostenečki's Treatise on the Letters [Skazanie izjavljeno o pismenex]: Studia historica et philological XVI*, (Firenze: Le lettere, 1987).

tions, etc.) as intimately connected with Hesychasm. In it the necessary new changes associated with the divine services were introduced, including biblical texts and their new Greek arrangements. This explains why new redactions of the Slavonic Bible texts appeared in fourteenth-century Bulgaria, especially in the school of Euthymius of Turnovo. The new redactions were intended for the new uses that the Orthodox Church's revised *Typicon* required. In this way, the previously existing redactions of biblical texts in Slavonic were multiplied, creating an unbelievable variety of Slavonic Bible manuscripts, and introducing renderings of Slavonic translations that were even closer to their Greek originals while enhancing the true doctrine of Orthodoxy. Although Cooper considers these revised biblical texts in the spirit of Hesychasm to be "a distinct contribution by Bulgarian scribes and translators to the formation of the modern Church Slavonic Bible" (112), I maintain that this is still an open question. Since the Hesychast practice of devotion and prayer together with all kinds of textual revisions in the search for the true Orthodox doctrine were the products of the most rigorous traditions of Byzantine monasticism (which Cooper admits with regard to Hesychasm on page 108), I am more inclined to interpret the Hesychast teaching and its broader ramifications as serious obstacles which must have hampered the further development of the Slavonic Bible in the direction of the establishment of its full text. This hypothesis cannot easily be proven because the external, historical events, the Fall of Constantinople in 1453, and the capitulation of the Serbian fortress of Smederevo as the last outpost of resistance against the Turks in 1459 prevented the further diffusion and development of Hesychast ideas in the Balkans during the following four hundred years of Turkish occupation.

Cooper's next two chapters, the sixth and seventh, are devoted to the Eastern Slavs, that is, to Kievan Rus' and Muscovy, and to Russia. Cooper's primary task is to illustrate how much more of the Bible in Church Slavonic was available in Kievan Rus' during its "golden age." In the eleventh century, the corpus of Eastern Slavic biblical texts included the gospel lectionaries: the *Ostromir Gospel* (1056–57) and the *Arxangel'skij Gospel* (1092); fragments of Rus'ian copies of South Slavic psalters also date from this period; a substantial selection of verses from the Wisdom of Jesus, Son of Sirach (Ecclesiasticus) was included in the ancient Rus'ian *Miscellany of 1076*, which contains fragments of other biblical translations as well; the *Uspenskij sbornik* of the twelfth century, which contains excerpts from the *Apostolus*, as well as excerpts of Job, Acts, and the Pauline epistles. From the thirteenth century these include *Revelation*, always accompanied by the commentaries of Andrew of Caesarea and always separated from the rest of the New Testament, and some Old Testament history books, mixed with noncanonical histo-

ries in popular compendia known as chronographs and the *Tolkovaja paleja* [*The Commented Old Testament*] (an *Apostolus* of 1220 with a controversial translation of the Song of Songs and the extant East Slavic manuscript of *Esther*). All these preserved copies of the various parts or fragments of the Bible testify to the fact that the East Slavs were not “mere passive recipients” of the South Slavic Bible translations. Also, extant full lectionaries (for example, the two oldest are the *Gospel of Mstislav* and the *Gospel of the Yur’ev Monastery* in Novgorod, both written in 1117–28)⁹ are particularly numerous and were designed for the offices that prayed every day of the year. In spite of all these extant manuscripts, Cooper cogently concludes that there is no evidence to support the idea that Kievan Rus’ ever had access to a full Bible (118–21).

In the fourteenth century, Moscovite Russia claimed to be the heir to Kievan Rus’, and in the fifteenth century, to Byzantium as the only free Orthodox state after the fall of Constantinople in 1453, even though the Byzantine Patriarchal See was still allowed to function by the Ottoman Turks and recognized as the acknowledged center of Orthodoxy. Muscovy adopted the state symbolism of the Byzantine Empire, but this could not have been done “without at least some implicit admission of a possible *translation imperii* to Moscow.”¹⁰ Several factors—a growing Russian political and religious nationalism, a sense of independence from the “mother” at Constantinople, and the strong opposition against submitting to the Latin West (the Council of Florence in 1439)¹¹ manifested by many members of the Eastern and Russian

⁹ L. P. Žukovskaja, “Jur’evskoe evangelie v krugu rodstvennyx pamjatnikov,” in *Issledovanija istočnikov po istorii russkogo jazyka i pis’mennosti*, L. P. Žukovskaja and N. I. Tarabasova, eds. (Moskva: Nauka, 1966), 44–76; idem, “Tipologija rukopisej dreveneruskogo polnogo aprakosa XI–XIV vv. v svjazi s lingvističeskim izučeniem ix,” in *Pamjatniki dreveneruskog jazyka i tekstologija* (Moskva: Nauka, 1968), 199–332.

¹⁰ John Meyendorff, *Byzantium and the Rise of Russia. A Study of Byzantino-Russian Relations in the Fourteenth Century* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1981), 263ff.

¹¹ A Russian delegation headed by Isidore, the Greek metropolitan of Kiev and all Russia, had attended the sessions of the Council in Florence. Isidore, “the last Constantinople-appointed prelate to Moscow, had received Grand Prince Vasili II’s permission to attend the Florentine Council under condition not to have ascribed Russian assent to any alterations in the faith” (William K. Medlin, *Moscow and East Rome. A Political Study of the Relations of Church and State in Muscovite Russia* [Geneve: Librairie E. Droz, 1952], 74–75). By order of Grand Prince Vasili II, Isidore—who had signed the agreement—“was deposed, arrested and imprisoned in a monastery; six months later he escaped abroad, perhaps with the connivance of the Russian government. Muscovy thus explicitly rejected the Union of Florence” (Obolensky, “Byzantium and Russia in the Late Middle Ages,” in *Byzantium and the Slavs* [Crestwood, NY: St. Vladimir’s Seminary Press, 1994], 181). Muscovy regarded the Union between the Greek and Latin churches in 1439 as a betrayal of the Orthodox faith by the Greeks. Therefore, the

clergy and their followers—created tense, sometimes hostile relations between the Church of Moscow, in particular, and the official Byzantine Church in Constantinople. These issues began to dominate the ecclesiastical ties between the Byzantine Church and Muscovy in the fifteenth century, culminating in the “declaration of independence” (1459), in which the Moscow Church severed its ties with Constantinople. These relations between the Eastern Orthodox Slavs and their Byzantine leaders are insufficiently elaborated not only in Cooper’s book but in Slavic scholarship at large.¹²

In his book, Cooper is more focused on the continuation of the Byzantine-Bulgarian literary practices that were now taking place only on Eastern Slavic soil; the goal of these activities was to improve Slavonic biblical texts and protect them from further textual corruption. Cooper cogently describes how Muscovy became the shelter and new home to numerous South Slavic immigrants, scholars fleeing the Turkish onslaught. Some of these Bulgarian prelates occupied important posts in their new homeland. For example, Cyprian (ca. 1330–1407) became the metropolitan of Kiev, of Lithuania in 1375, of Muscovy in 1390, and Gregory Camblak (1367/69–1419/20), was a metropolitan of Lithuania in 1415. In order to explain how these two Bulgarians came to occupy such high positions among the Eastern Slavs, Cooper correctly defines them as belonging to “the *oikumene*, the ‘Orthodox Commonwealth’ of nations and peoples under the divine leadership of the bishop of Constantinople, the ‘ecumenical patriarch’ whose servants they really were” (123). Both of them were monks and Hesychasts, who were deeply involved with the liturgical, monastic, and linguistic reforms as prescribed in the new *Typicon*, thus continuing the Orthodox renewal they had begun in Bulgaria. Cooper is also right when he states that the Byzantines and the South Slavs bequeathed to Muscovy an invigorated notion of Orthodoxy. Indeed, Cooper asserts that the Russian Church “was aggressively orthodox, meaning that heresies, including especially the ‘Latin heresy’ were its con-

Russian church synod, convoked by Vasili II, decided to reject the Union of Florence. For a general treatment of the Council of Florence, see J. Gill, *The Council of Florence* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1959). In particular, on the reaction of the Russians to the Union of Florence and of their change of attitude toward the Greeks, see I. Ševčenko, “Intellectual Repercussions of the Council of Florence,” *Church History* 24 (1955): 291–323; M. Černiavsky, “The Reception of the Council of Florence in Moscow,” (ibid.: 347–50); and O. Halecki, *From Florence to Brest* (New York & Rome: Fordham University Press & Sacrum Poloniae Millennium, 1958), 50ff; idem, *Od unii Florenckiej do unii Brzeskiej* (Lublin & Rzym: Instytut Europy Środkowo-Wschodniej: Fundacja Jana Pawła II, 1997); G. Alef, “Moscovy and the Council of Florence,” *The American Slavic and East European Review* 20 (1961): 389–401.

¹² Borys A. Gudzik, *Crisis and Reform: The Kyivan Metropolitanate, the Patriarchate of Constantinople, and the genesis of the Union of Brest* (Cambridge, MA: Distributed by Harvard University Press for the Ukrainian Research Institute, Harvard University, 1998), esp. 89102.

stant concern and target” (127). Here I note that Cooper could have more strongly emphasized the fact that a medieval frame of mind persisted in all aspects of Orthodox culture, tending to unite Orthodox peoples in opposition to Western influences. To the Eastern Orthodox Slavs, anything Western was unorthodox, Roman, and heterodoxical, if not simply heretical. The Russians welcomed teachers and Church dignitaries from among their Byzantine-Bulgarian co-religionists but not from the West.¹³ The legacy of the Hesychast movement could have strengthened the reform of Orthodoxy in the short term, but in the long term it may also have stifled its overall cultural development.

During the second quarter of the fifteenth century, Muscovy was fast evolving into a centralized, autocratic monarchy, which during the next twenty years would impose its sovereignty on the greater part of Russia:

Writing to the Novgorodians in 1468 (ten years prior to their complete submission to Ivan III), Metropolitan Philip (1464–73) rails them for their leanings to the Polish King, seeking security in a land of heretical (Latin) faith. He urges them to obey the ‘law of the Apostles and of the holy Fathers,’ warning of the fate which other heretics (the Greeks) met because of the Latin Union. Acting as a political arm of his sovereign prince, Philip inveighs upon Novgorod not to stray from the truth, the Orthodox Church (hence, the Muscovite Church), but rather to cling and to trust ‘unto the strong arm of the Orthodox and pious Sovereign, Grand Prince Ivan Vasilievich of the Russian lands and of all Russia,’...The Church’s justification of Muscovite sovereignty of Russia on religious grounds and its defense of Russia’s long Orthodox tradition on scriptural commandments became a dominant characteristic of ecclesiastical policy in Moscow.¹⁴

¹³ The attempts by quite a number of Western missionaries to work in Russia were unsuccessful. At this point it suffices to mention the mission of Antony Possevino (cf. Delius Walter, *Antonio Possevino, S.J. und Ivan Groznyj: ein Beitrag zur Geschichte der kirlichen Union und der Gegenreformation des 16 Jahrhunderts* [Stuttgart: Evangelisches Verlagswerk, 1962]; S. Polčin, *Une tentative d’Union au XVI-e siècle: La mission religieuse du Père Antoine Possevin S. J. en Moscovie, 1581–1582* [Roma: Pont. Institutum Orientalium Studiorum, 1957]; or the tragic destiny of the pan-Slavic missionary, Jurij Križanić, in the seventeenth century). See Ivan Golub, *The Slavic Vision of Juraj Križanić* (Zagreb: Croatian P.E.N. Centre, 1993); idem, *Križanić* (Zagreb: Kršćanska sadašnjost, 1987); *Juraj Križanić (1618–1683), Russophile and Ecumenic Visionary: A Symposium*, Th. Eekman and A. Kadić, eds. (The Hague-Paris: Mouton, 1976). Also cf. Olga Nedeljković, “Two Counter Reformation Views of Eastern Orthodox Slavic Culture,” in *Synthesis Philosophica* 9/1 (1990): 139–60.

¹⁴ Medlin, 76ff.

Thus, Metropolitan Philip's words to the Novgorodians clearly reveal that medieval Russia had well assimilated the political ideology of Byzantium and its doctrine of "Caesaro-papism";¹⁵ the Grand Prince of Moscow stood as the defender of the true Orthodox faith, symbolizing the new temporal head of all Orthodox Christendom.

In Cooper's book the relationship between church and state in Muscovy is perceived differently:

It [Rus'] was consciously universalist at least as far as the Orthodox *oikoumene* was concerned, so that religious nationalism and separatism in Rus' and elsewhere were kept to a minimum. It was strongly hierarchical, so that in some places the church was able to replace the destroyed state, and in others, like Muscovy, it could operate independently of state power. (127)

The antithesis between these two sets of propositions perhaps constitutes the crucial problem in any study of relations between church and state in Russia. The universalist idea of the Orthodox *oikoumene*, which Cooper correctly emphasizes, was fully assimilated by fifteenth- and sixteenth-century Muscovite Russia. It "can be traced back in direct line of ascent to the Byzantine theory of the Christian Empire, adapted from the political philosophy of Hellenism in the fourth century of our era."¹⁶ However, religious nationalism and separatism in Muscovite Russia (contrary to Cooper's view of being kept to a minimum) reached their culmination in fifteenth- and sixteenth-century Holy Russia. The doctrine of "Caesaro-papism" was embraced and powerfully implemented by Muscovite autocratic ruler-tsars (Ivan III, Basil III, Ivan IV), in their divinely ordained and universal monarchies. Nothing is further from the truth than the statement that "the church was able to replace the destroyed state, and in others, like Muscovy, it could operate independently of state power" (127). The power of Muscovite sovereigns reached unprecedented proportions: they "convoked the ecclesiastical councils, named their choice for the metropolitan chair, and possessed jurisdiction in questions of heresy. The will of the Tsar was understood as the will of God, which extended everywhere in the realm, which was his patrimony by inheritance."¹⁷

¹⁵ H. Schaeder, *Moskau das Dritte Rom* (Darmstadt: 1957), 22; Medlin, 73–152; Obolensky, "Russia's Byzantine Heritage," in *Byzantium and the Slavs*, 98ff.

¹⁶ Obolensky, "Russia's Byzantine Heritage," 79.

¹⁷ Medlin, 91. Medlin further quotes the portrait of the Muscovite Tsar given by an imperial German envoy, S. von Herberstein, who sojourned in Moscow in 1517 and in 1526 during Basil III's reign: "His [the Tsar's] authority extends equally over clerical and temporal affairs; of the life and possessions of all subjects he disposes freely and of his own will...It is recognized publicly that the Tsar's will is God's will, and that whatever the Tsar does, he acts by the

Essentially, this was the framework which was already crystallized and established at the end of the fifteenth century, after Ivan III's marriage to Zoë Paleologus in 1472 and, in particular, in 1480 when Muscovy gained its final freedom from Mongol domination, the event which contributed to Ivan III's full sovereignty over his realm.¹⁸ The growth of religious nationalism among sixteenth-century Muscovite autocrats that marked legitimation of the Muscovite claim as heir to the Byzantine state and church was exemplified in several events: Muscovite clergymen's promotion of the ideology of "Moscow the third Rome," which was given substance and form in the sixteenth-century writings of Philotheus of Pskov;¹⁹ the coronation of Ivan IV as the first Russian "Emperor" and only *Caesar—Tsar*'—in all Orthodox Christendom (1547); and finally, the elevation of the Moscow See to patriarchal rank, equal to that of the ancient Orthodox centers in the Christian East.²⁰

All of these political and ecclesiastical events shaped the ideology of Muscovite Russia; it gradually became the center of Orthodox Christendom, and Muscovites became increasingly conscious of their national heritage. Muscovite Russia came to be perceived by South Slavs and by some Orthodox groups in the Polish-Lithuanian Commonwealth as the new leader of the Orthodox world. The Byzantine Patriarchate became in a sense the "clients" of Moscow's Orthodox Tsardom; the few contacts they sought with their northern religious brothers usually aimed at securing financial or political support for their weak and threatened structures in a world controlled by Muslim powers.²¹ In the midst of the struggle to preserve their religious and national Orthodox identity, the occupied Orthodox peoples of the Balkans looked to Muscovite Russia for help. A culturally renewed and strengthened Russia became their only ally and a bulwark against the Islamic threat in sub-

will of God; therefore, he is called the steward and chamberlain of God, and so they believe (him) the executor of the divine will" (19).

¹⁸ Medlin stresses that "the Moscow princes lay claim to imperial descendancy and rank not through Zoë (called 'Sophie' in Moscow) Paleologus, but through Vladimir I, who had married Princess Anne, sister of the then reigning Byzantine emperors. Constantinople later recognized this genealogical relationship, and the official attitude of Russian tsars expressed itself unequivocally in the coronation ceremonies of the 16th century, notably that of Ivan IV in 1547" (77).

¹⁹ Schaeder, 38–49, 65–81.

²⁰ On Moscow's course to ecclesiastical independence, see F. Dvornik, *The Slavs in European History and Civilization* (New Brunswick, N.J.: Rutgers University Press, 1992), 262–65. The Russian and Hungarian translations of Dvornik's book appeared in 2001. See also the important study by Gudzik, 43–142.

²¹ Obolensky, "Byzantium and Russia in the Late Middle Ages," 179ff. See also M. V. Levchenko, *Ocherki po istorii rusko-vizantiiskikh omoshenij* (Moscow: 1956), 441ff.

sequent centuries. In the fifteenth and sixteenth centuries, Byzantium herself had been experiencing hard times: learning was neglected and the situation became culturally stagnant. There were still some scholars, however, among the Greeks, who shared the typical Eastern Orthodox animosity towards all things Western.²² The Eastern Orthodox Slavs inherited and even strengthened this attitude towards the West. In particular, as new political and ecclesiastical pressures began to mount in Muscovy, developments and efforts at reforms in the East European lands adhering to the Russian Orthodox faith reached critical proportions at this period.²³

The “crisis of Russian Byzantinism,” in the words of Georges Florovsky,²⁴ reached a new phase in its development. As already pointed out, the doctrine of “Caesaro-papism” found its full realization in the practice of Muscovite rulers. The establishment of the Muscovite theocratic state created new problems among the Russian clergy, which was divided over the

²² The Eastern Christians, especially the Byzantines, had not forgotten the ignominious occupation of their dominions by the Latin crusaders in the thirteenth century, a factor which compounded Greek religious antipathies towards Rome. Cf. “...the people of Byzantium, disgusted at the desecration of their hallowed City by men who called themselves Christians (the climax of the Fourth Crusade), finally turned away from their society and hardened their hearts to the West. If so, is not 1204 rather than 1054 the real date of the schism in the body of Christendom?” (Obolensky, “Russia’s Byzantine Heritage,” 93).

²³ N. A. Kazakova and Ja. S. Lur’e, *Antifeodfal’nye ereticheskie dvizheniia na Rusi XIV—nachala XVI veka* (Moskva/Leningrad: Akademiia nauk SSSR, 1955); Ja. S. Lur’e, *Ideologicheskaia bor’ba v russkoj publitsistike kontsa XV—nachala XVI veka* (Moskva/Leningrad: Akademiia nauk SSSR, 1960); A. I. Klivanov, *Reformatsionnye dvizheniia v Rossii v XIV—pervoi polovine XVI vv.* (Moskva: 1960), 118–36. For a brief account of this crisis, see also A. Florovskij, *Le conflit de deux traditions, la latine et la Byzantine dans la vie intellectuelle de l’Europe Orientale aux XVI—XVII siècles*, in *Zapiski naučno-izsledovatel’skago ob’edinenija (Bulletin de l’Association russe pour les recherches scientifiques à Prague)* tom. V (Old. Ser. T. X), *Section des sciences philosophiques, historiques et sociales*, No. 31 (Prague, 1937), 171–92. See also Gudzik’s extensive bibliography (427–69).

²⁴ “The Crisis of Russian Byzantinism” is the title of the first chapter in Part One of Georges Florovsky’s five-volume *Ways of Russian Theology* (Belmont, MA: Nordland Publishing, 1979), 1–32. Although I do not agree with Florovsky’s general assessment of the period that “the influence of Byzantium at this time was far less evident” (13), his expression “the crisis of Russian Byzantinism” fits well and clearly defines the crisis in relations between church and state during the reigns of Ivan III and Vasili III. The Muscovy of Ivan III is an excellent example of how the imperial tradition of Byzantium (the doctrine of “Caesaro-papism”) was transferred to fifteenth- and sixteenth-century Russia. N. Jorga has convincingly shown the extent to which the Byzantine effective inheritance was kept alive among the Orthodox Christian subjects of the Ottoman Empire. See his *Byzantium After Byzantium* (Iasi, Romania/Portland: The Center for Romanian Studies & Romanian Institute of International Studies, 2000). The original title is *Byzance après Byzance. Continuation de l’Histoire de la vie Byzantine* (Buharest: L’Institut d’études Byzantines, 1935).

relationship between church and state. Only within the framework of the extremely tense church-state relations in Muscovy during the last quarter of the fifteenth and beginning of the sixteenth century can one try to understand and interpret the versatile activities of Archbishop Gennadius Gonozov of Novgorod (1484–1504), including his vigorous fight against the heretical movement of the “Judaizers” and his important theological project, the compilation of the first complete Church Slavonic Bible in 1499. The text of the Gennadius Bible is of the utmost importance for the history of the Church Slavonic Bible: it forms the basis for all subsequent editions and revisions, and as such it should be published and adequately analyzed in the future. At this point it is important to explain how the Gennadius Bible came into existence against the backdrop of Muscovy’s political expansion and newly strengthened theocratic state.

The gradual elevation of Muscovy to theocratic tsardom of all Orthodox Christendom whose sovereign, Ivan III, secularized considerable monastic holdings in favor of his administrative, military, and technical programs of nation-building as well as with the goal of strengthening his throne. After the annexation of Novgorod in 1478, he became the owner of the Novgorod monastic communities and thus increased his state income and riches.²⁵ All these measures brought about strong opposition from the Russian clergy, which had two factions: the “possessors,” or “Josephians,”²⁶ and the “non-possessors,” or “hermits from beyond the Volga” (Nil Sorski, Paisius of Iaroslav, and Prince Vassian Patrikeev). The former defended church properties and strongly supported the church as a primary organ in the order of the Muscovite theocratic state. The latter faction was represented by more ascetic and unambitious monks who opposed the idea of material possessions belonging to the church. In addition, during the 1470s and 1480s there appeared in Novgorod another movement known as the “heresy of the Judaizers,” which even influenced some individuals in the entourage of Ivan III in Moscow.²⁷

²⁵ Joseph Wieczynski, “Archbishop Gennadius and the West: The Impact of Catholic Ideas upon the Church of Novgorod,” *Canadian-American Slavic Studies* 6 (1972): 374–89, esp. 375.

²⁶ The name “Josephians” commemorates Joseph Sanin (1440–1515), the founder and abbot of the Monastery of Volokolamsk (1470–1515). He began to fight against the alleged heretics after the council of 1490 and called their belief the “Jewish faith.” Joseph also wrote a book against the heretics, *Prosvetitel’* [*Enlightener*]. See more about Joseph in Andrei Pliguzov, “Archbishop Gennadii and the Heresy of the ‘Judaizers’,” *Harvard Ukrainian Studies* 16 (1992): 269–88, esp. 281. For an extensive account of both factions, see Kazakova, op. cit.; Lur’e, op.cit.; Klibanov, op. cit.; Medlin, op.cit.

²⁷ An extensive account of heretical movements in Muscovy and their ideological underpinnings is given in N. L. Kazakova and Ja. S. Lur’e, op. cit.; Ja. S. Lur’e, op. cit.; Klibanov, op. cit.

The importance of the “Judaizer” movement becomes clear only in the Muscovite political and ecclesiastical context. Most likely, in reality there was no actual heretical enclave but only certain predispositions for the heresy.²⁸ Quite probably the Novgorodian heretics adhered to Moscow’s point of view, which would explain why Ivan III appointed those “soul-harming archpriests” to leading positions in the Kremlin cathedrals. Thus the heretics found protection and support in Moscow.²⁹ In other words, the entire movement of the Judaizers, described in scholarship primarily on the basis of the writings of their major opponent, Archbishop Gennadius—the only extant source about the “heretics”—should be interpreted in the context of the clashes between church and state.³⁰

Cooper briefly mentions Muscovy as the new guardian of Orthodoxy and its claim to represent the “third Rome” (129). He tries to explain the factors that prompted Gennadius to collect the Slavonic Scripture. Thus, among other things, he speaks about the “heresy of the Judaizers” as the major impetus for the compilation of the Gennadius Bible in 1499. What he does not stress enough is that Gennadius Gonozov was the Moscow-appointed Archbishop of

²⁸ Pliguzov correctly remarks: “The earliest description of the heretics’ ‘crimes,’ though not an entirely reliable one, comes from the writings of Archbishop Gennadii...Scholars, like critics of the heresy, usually view the development of the Novgorodian heresy in a manner disproportionate to its historical significance. Like their predecessors, the ecclesiastical investigators, they expand the facts concerning the history of the heresy to enormous proportions. They regard each fact as laden with a specific meaning, reflecting not only a single event but an entire constellation of similar events. Each attempt to apprehend the heresy’s origin leads to a kind of hall of mirrors where each object is multiplied, so that a few facts acquire the appearance of a vast multitude, and a virtual historiographic reality is formed” (269, 272).

²⁹ “Uzhe vo vremja razvitiia ereticheskogo dvizheniia v Novgorode v 80-kh godakh obnaruzhivaetsja javnaja svjaz’ mezhdju velikoknjazheskoi vlast’ju i eres’ju. Dazhe v ‘Prosvetitele’ Iosif ne mog i ne khotel skryt’ etu svjaz’: velerechivo imenuja eretikov ‘zmijami,’ tajashchimisja ‘v skazhne,’ a Gennadija – l’vom...” Cf. Lur’e, op. cit., 138ff. or “Moskovskoe pravitel’stvo v gody vlijaniia eretika Fedora Kuritsyna odnosilos’ neprijaznenno k Genadiju. V Moskvu, nesmotrja na vazhnye povody tuda priekhat’ i na svoe polozenie glavnogo svidetelja i obvinitelja v protsesse zhidovstvujushchikh, on ne vyzyvalsja v prodolzhenie tselykh 18 let (1485–1502)” (A. D. Sedel’nikov, “Ocherki katolicheskogo vlijaniia v Novgorode v kontse XV—nachale XVI veka” in *Doklady Akademii Nauk SSSR 1929*, ser. B, no. 1: 16–19, esp. 17. Gennadius was forced to resign in 1504 because of the Moscow-Novgorod political situation and was imprisoned on a charge of treason.

³⁰ This aspect of the “Judaizers” has been neither properly understood nor treated in most of the scholarly writing by both Russian and Soviet scholars who have failed to define relations between church and state in the period when Muscovy took upon itself the role of the “third Rome” and became the self-appointed leader of the Orthodox world.

Novgorod and Pskov³¹ and a close sympathizer and disciple of Joseph Volotski who in 1487 requested the Grand Prince to take civil measures (capital punishment) against the propagators of the heresy in Novgorod. In 1488 Ivan III and Metropolitan Gerontius issued an order to Archbishop Gennadius instructing him how to refer the heretics to the civil court of the Grand Prince. In fact, Gennadius—together with Joseph Volotski—belonged to the Moscow political program of theocracy, for the civil punishment of the Novgorodian heretics (nine leaders of the heretics were condemned, banished, or tortured in 1490)³² fulfilled one of the main duties of their Orthodox prince: the defense of the Orthodox faith. However, Cooper underscores the fact that Archbishop Gennadius even borrowed some of his ideas regarding the punishment of the heretics from the Spanish Inquisition (128), which he learned about from the Holy Roman Empire's Ambassador Jörg von Turn during his visit to Novgorod.³³ It is important that Gennadius not only praised the measures of the Spanish Inquisition, but was himself willing to apply them as well. What is missing in Cooper's book is an acceptable explanation of why the Archbishop of Novgorod—a representative of the highest hierarchy of ecclesiastical authority in Muscovy—turned to the Catholic West for assistance. There is not even an attempt to explain this fact, that is especially puzzling and intriguing given that Muscovy's Orthodox leaders usually resisted ferociously any contact with the Latin West and led uphill struggles

³¹ It is true that Cooper mentions that "Gennadius had been archimandrite of the Čudov Monastery in the Kremlin before he went to Novgorod. It has been suggested that he saw there the full New Testament traditionally but erroneously attributed to Metropolitan Aleksij: it was stored in the monastery and is frequently known as the Čudovskij spisok, the 'Čudov copy.' From that he drew the idea of compiling a complete Church Slavonic Bible; so Innokentij 1990: 35 speculates" (222, note 84). Cooper gives this additional explanation quoting the article by Igumen Innokentij (Pavlov) "Slavjanskaja tradicija svjaščennogo pisanija i Ostrožskaja Biblija," in *Ostrožskaja Biblija: Sbornik statej. Institut russkogo jazyka, Meždunarodnyj komitet slavistov, slavjanskaja biblejskaja komissija*, A. A. Alekseev, ed. (Moscow: AN SSSR, 1990), 17–47. It seems to me less probable that Gennadius could have been inspired by the "Čudov copy" of the New Testament he had seen at the Čudov Monastery while archimandrite there than by his strong opposition to the "Judaizers," which must have prompted him—according to the opinion of most specialists on the period—to compile the full text of the Slavonic Bible, which he did successfully in 1499.

³² Pliguzov, 276.

³³ "In his letter Gennadii paraphrased the speeches of Jörg von Turn...The ambassador related to the archbishop a story about the king of Spain (Ferdinand the Catholic) who had 'purged' his country, presumably of the Jewish heresy. The Inquisition's troops in Spain had investigated about four thousand people, young and old, and subsequently had burned them..." (Pliguzov, 275, notes 40–42). See also A. D. Sedel'nikov, "Rasskaz 1490 g. ob inkvizitsii," in *Trudy Komissii po drevnerusskoi literature Akademii nauk SSSR*, vol. 1 (1934).

against any deviation from the purity of the Orthodox faith and its rites, ceremonies, and language. The answer to this question should shed some light on why and how Archbishop Gennadius began and carried out such an ambitious theological project as the compilation of the Gennadius Bible in 1499. Something very serious must have prompted him to establish close contacts with Western sources and to organize a circle of collaborators to work on the translation of certain parts of the Bible based on the text of the Vulgate, particularly those books that had been missing from previous Slavic translations.

The Novgorodian “heretics” considered themselves to be true Orthodox Christians who seemed to support the politics of the Grand Prince in Moscow, as already stressed, rather than the “Josephians,” or the supporters of Abbot Joseph of the Volokolamsk Monastery, and Archbishop Gennadius, who accused the heretics of adhering to Jewish teachings (“zhidovskaja mudr”stvujushche”). The writings of Archbishop Gennadius are the main source of information regarding the heretics’ transgressions. Thus, for example, in his view the heretics rejected important elements of the Orthodox faith such as the veneration of icons; they asserted that there was no evidence in the Old Testament of a future Trinity; their belief in astronomy and astrology as a guiding principle drew upon them the name of “Judaizers,” for astrology was a current practice among Jewish intellectuals of that time.³⁴ Criticizing them, Gennadius learned a lot about their teachings and expressed a special interest in their books of the Old Testament and some others. Cooper gives the entire list of the books that Archbishop Gennadius was searching for in various monasteries (128). Gennadius convened three synods to stop the “heretics.” In fact, Gennadius’ launching of these constant attacks against the teachings of the “Judaizers” should be viewed as the expression of his deep dissatisfaction with the Grand Prince’s politics and a sign of Gennadius’ vigorous opposition to the autocratic politics of Grand Prince Ivan III. Together with the other representatives of the “Josephians,” Archbishop Gennadius struggled to preserve the superiority of ecclesiastical authorities over state power. Both Archbishop Gennadius and Abbot Joseph Volotski turned to Latin sources in order to protect church interests: “Gennadius was quick to realize that the Western church had preserved its autonomy through the skillful use of theological, moral, and historical arguments then unknown in Russia, even as he knew that the sophistication of the arguments of the Judaizers could be countered only by superior ideas, which were absent from the Orthodox style of apologetics. Gennadius therefore determined to create a circle of writers and translators so familiar with Western ideas that they could obtain,

³⁴ E. Golubinskij, *Istoriia russkoi tserkvi*, Vol. II-1 (Moscow: University Press, 1900–1916), 379, 591–99.

translate, and disseminate Catholic works useful to his own church in this moment of need.”³⁵ Some of Gennadius’ collaborators were themselves monks or priests from the West who provided him, for example, with the work (translated extracts) on the Latin rite by William Durandus (1230–96) *Rationale divinatorum officiorum*. *Psalterium Beati Brunonis* was also translated to provide Gennadius with material on the Psalms that the Judaizers had possessed. Furthermore, Gennadius instructed Dmitrij Gerasimov to translate a book by the fourteenth-century Franciscan Nicholas Lyra, *De Messia eiusque adventu*. Included among other theological and polemical works was *Slovo kratko protivu tekh, izhe v veshchi sviashchennia podvizhnyia i nepodvizhnyia, s’bornyia tserkvi vstupaitsia* (Brief discourse against those who would violate the sacred movable and immovable property of the Universal Church).³⁶ The *Slovo kratko* was a defense of church property and an assertion of the clergy’s full independence, including the right to act “with the aid of the secular arm.”³⁷ Likewise, A. D. Sedel’nikov emphasizes that all these works of Latin theology and polemics were translated by foreigners from the West, summoned to Novgorod by Archbishop Gennadius to advise him on theological and philological matters. Although the Episcopal archdeacon Gerasim Popovka was officially the chief editor of the Gennadius Bible, “the translator of the biblical books from the text of the Vulgate was most likely a certain Dominican friar named Veniamin. He was a presbyter or monk of the Monastery of St. Dominic, born a Slovenian and by faith a Latin.”³⁸

Cooper does not seem to be completely sure about Gennadius’ real motivation to compile the complete text of the Bible when he says: “The sources from this time themselves do not speak of this motivation, unfortunately, although the notion of Rus’ as the new guardian of Orthodoxy, Rus’ as ‘the

³⁵ Wiczynski, 376.

³⁶ A. D. Sedel’nikov, “Ocherki katolicheskogo vlijaniia v Novgorode v kontse XV–nachale XVI veka,” 16–19; idem, “K izucheniju ‘Slova kratka’ i dejatel’nosti dominikantsa Veniamina,” IORJaS, vol. XXX.

³⁷ Speaking about the controlling theme of the *Slovo kratko*, Wiczynski cogently stresses that “Catholic attitudes toward the relation of the state to the church abound, including the idea that the secular ruler is bound by the same moral and religious laws as his subjects, the notion of the inviolability of church property, and the concept of the delimitation of secular authority in regard to the church. The author (of the *Slovo kratko*), to demonstrate the historical foundations of such claims, adduces a portion of the Catholic ultimate weapon, the Donatio of Constantine” (382).

³⁸ Sedel’nikov, op. cit.; Gerd Freidhof, “Vergleichende Sprachliche Studien zur Gennadius-Bibel (1499) und Ostroger Bibel (1580/81), die Bücher Paralipomenon, Esra, Tobias, Judith, Sapientia und Makkabäer,” *Franfurter Abhandlungen zur Slavistik* 21 (Frankfurt: Athenaum, 1972).

third Rome,' was certainly widespread. Nonetheless, in trying to find a motive for Gennadius's prodigious undertaking, we might do worse than to credit him with a desire to preserve the improvements in the textual witnesses from the preceding hundred years or so. And even if he was indifferent to the philological achievements of his predecessors, his extant letters evidence an almost morbid sensitivity to the line between heresy and Orthodoxy that could run even through the holiest of texts. Holding that line may have been a principal goal of his Bible project" (129–30). Thus, without going into the underlying motivation, the violent clashes between church and state that prompted Gennadius to compile the full text of the Bible, and a large number of his other countermeasures and strong actions against the "Judaizers," Cooper describes in detail all the members of Gennadius' circle of collaborators on the Bible project. Since the only source of the scribes' names is the colophon of the Gennadius Bible, I will not dwell upon it further. However, at the end of this list Cooper includes some other accounts of the names of Gennadius' collaborators and adds the following information: "Most accounts also include in this circle a Croatian Benedictine monk by the name of Benjamin, who allegedly 'knew Latin well,' and typically assign to him much of the blame for introducing the Vulgate and 'romanizing' ways to Gennadius project. A fresh reading of the sources, however, suggests that there may have been no Benjamin at all" (130). Cooper seems to quote primarily the results of Paul Milan Foster, Jr.'s doctoral dissertation.³⁹ To my surprise, he fails to explain both in the main text of his book and in its footnotes whether this is the same person whom Cooper defines as "a Croatian Benedictine monk" and whom all Russian and Soviet scholars, including A. Alekseev in 1995, define as "a certain Dominican, friar Veniamin" [Veniamin, monakh-dominikanets].⁴⁰

³⁹ "The Church Slavonic Translation of Maccabees in the Gennadij Bible (1499)," Ph.D. dissertation, Columbia University, 1995. However, Foster himself wrote an article on "Croatian Language Elements in the Russian Church Slavonic Translation of Maccabees in the Gennadij Bible" (*Prvi Hrvatski slavistički kongres, Zbornik radova*, vol. 1, S. Damjanović, ed. [Zagreb: Hrvatsko filološko društvo, 1995], 557–67). It is interesting that in his conclusion in Croatian, Foster says: "U kolofonu ruskog crkvenoslavenskog prijevoda II. Knjige o Makabejcima, u zbirci starozavjetnih knjiga iz sredine 16 stoljeća (Pogodin 84), čitamo da je dvije knjige o Makabejcima preveo stanoviti Veniamin, koji sam sebe naziva dominikancem i Slavenom" (567). In this article Foster defines the translator of the Gennadius Bible also as "a Croatian Dominican."

⁴⁰ Cf. A. Sobolevskij, "Perevodnaia literature Moskovskoi Rusi XIV–XVII vv.," in *Sbornik Otdeleniia Russkogo Jazyka i Slovestnosti* 74, no. 1 (1903): 254–59; I. E. Evseev, *Gennadijskaia Biblija 1499 g.* (Moscow, 1914); A. D. Sedel'nikov, "Ocherki katolicheskogo vlijaniia v Novgorode v kontse XV–nachale XVI veka," 18; A. D. Sedel'nikov, "K izucheniju 'Slova kratka' i dejatel'nosti dominikantsa Veniamina," 222–26; V. Rozov, "Hrvatski do-

However, regarding the very problematic presence of the Croatian Benedictine monk Benjamin, whom Paul Milan Foster calls a “phantom,” Coopers adds: “He [Foster] points out that the information about Benjamin is contained only in ‘Pogodin 84,’ a manuscript dated to the mid-third quarter of the sixteenth century” (224, note 104). This quotation clearly shows how difficult, perhaps even impossible, it is to analyze some important aspects related to the Bible’s translators without having a critical edition of the Gennadius Bible. It also explains why Cooper avoids discussing the problems of Latin sources in the translation of the Bible and Gennadius’ allegedly close connections with the Catholic West.⁴¹ Thus, Cooper continues to talk about the Gennadius Bible, rightly emphasizing that “The very word Bible, in Church Slavonic *Biblija*, is not attested in Rus’ before 1499. And although it is of course Greek in origin, it clearly entered Church Slavonic at that point from a non-Greek, most probably Latin, German, or Catholic Slavic source, since its Greek *beta*’s were sounded as ‘b,’ in the western tradition, and not as

minikanac Venjamin u Rusiji,” *Nastavni vjesnik* 41 (1933), 302–36; E. Denissoff, “Aux origins de l’église russe autocephale,” *Revue des Etudes slaves* 23 (1947): 66–88, esp. 78–79; Kazakova and Lur’e, *op. cit.*, 114, 142, 195, 197; Lur’e, *op. cit.*, 211, 226–28, 239, 244, 266–68, 276–82, 486–88, etc.; J. Wiczynski also calls the translator from the Vulgate “the shadowy Croatian Dominican priest, Benjamin” in his “Archbishop Gennadius and the West: The Impact of Catholic Ideas upon the Church of Novgorod,” *Canadian-American Slavic Studies* 6 (1972): 374–89; A. Alekseev, “Biblejskaia filologija v Novgorode Velikom,” in *Novgorod v kul’ture Drevnej Rusi. Materialy Chtenij po drevnerusskoj literature* (Novgorod, 16–19 maja 1995 goda), ed. V. Koshelev (Novgorod: Novgorod University, 1995), 22–33, esp. 31–32. Francis J. Thomson gives a detailed description of Archbishop Gennadius’ circle at Novgorod, and in order to avoid this confusion he simply calls Veniamin “the Western monk Benjamin,” and describes Gennadius’ circle as follows: “...the first East Slav translations from Latin into Slavonic were made by Demetrius Gerasimov, Gerasimus Popovka, Timothy Veniaminov, the Germans Bartholomaeus Ghotan and Nicolaus Bulow, and the Western monk Benjamin. Their principal achievement is the first complete translation of the Bible into Slavonic, for which they translated 1 and 2 Chronicles, Ezra, Nehemiah, Esther (the deuterocanonical 10:4 through Chapter 16), Jeremiah (1–35), 46–51), 1 and 2 Esdras, Tobit, Judith, the Wisdom of Solomon, and 1 and 2 Maccabees from the Vulgate and added Jerome’s prefaces and Nicholas of Lyra’s postscripts to the various Biblical books. For comparative purposes, they referred to the Low German translation of the Bible published by Heinrich Quentell at Cologne (ca. 1478), despite which the notion of producing a vernacular Russian version seems not to have occurred to them” (“The Corpus of Slavonic Translations Available in Muscovy. The Cause of Old Russia’s Intellectual Silence and a Contributory Factor to Muscovite Cultural Autarky,” in *Christianity and the Eastern Slavs*, vol. 1: Slavic Cultures in the Middle Ages, eds. Boris Gasparov and Olga Raevsky-Hughes (Berkeley: University of California Press, 1993), 179–214, esp. 187.

⁴¹ In footnote 105 on page 224, Cooper simply quotes Thomson who “rules out any ‘Latin conspiracy’ in the matter” (“The Slavonic Translation of the Old Testament,” 664); thus, he relies on Thomson’s judgment.

‘v,’ according to the Byzantine practice” (127). Having consulted the works of some other scholars who have investigated the text of the Gennadius Bible,⁴² Cooper has arrived at the conclusion that “when the need arose to put into Slavonic a biblical text for which they could not locate a Slavonic version, the Novgorodians [i.e., the translators of the Gennadius Bible] translated from the Latin of the Vulgate, and that quite poorly: if, for example, they were unfamiliar with Latin words, they on occasion simply transcribed them into Slavonic.”⁴³ In fact, there were many more of these words in their Latin form; the chapter numbering was also done according to the *Vulgate*, and some other features present in the text of the *Bible of 1499* were recognized as borrowings or words taken from the Vulgate.⁴⁴ The obvious and easily spotted Latinisms prompted the Eastern Slavic Church authorities to request quite a number of urgent revisions of the Church Slavonic Bible’s text in subsequent centuries, which Cooper cogently describes in his seventh and last chapter.

The second printed edition of the full text of the Slavonic Bible appeared in the territory of the Polish-Lithuanian state. This is the Ostrih Bible of 1580/81, named after the small town located in northwestern Ukraine, which

⁴² At this point Cooper quotes Francis Thomson’s opinion: “The use of the Vulgate reveals their ignorance not merely of the Greek language, but also of the Orthodox canon of Scripture as they included 2 Esdras, not found in the Septuagint, and omitted 3 and 4 Maccabees found in the Septuagint but not included in the Vulgate” (cf. Thomson, “The Corpus of Slavonic Translations Available in Moscow,” 187). Thomson has made an accurate comparison of the text of the Gennadius Bible with the texts of both the Vulgate and the Septuagint and has shown structurally that the translators of the Gennadius Bible directly consulted the text of the Vulgate in composing the Gennadius Bible.

⁴³ Here Cooper relies on the analysis of A. A. Alekseev and gives some concrete examples: Slavonic *v enigmatibus* for Latin *in aenigmatibus* (2 Chron. 9:1) and Slavonic *legati* for Latin *legati* (2 Chron. 9: 14 et passim in 1-2 Maccabees). See his “Mesto Ostrožskoj biblii v istorii slavjanskogo teksta svjaščennogo pisanija,” in A. A. Alekseev, *Ostrožskaja biblija: Sbornik statej* (Moscow: AN SSSR, Institut russjogo jazyka, Meždunarodnyj komitet slavistov, slavjanskaja biblejskaja komissija, 1990). The quoted examples are from the Ostrih Bible and, in my opinion, should not have been included here in footnote 108 to illustrate the influence of the Vulgate upon the Gennadius Bible, because Cooper has not yet introduced and discussed the Ostrih Bible, except in the case that the editors of the Ostrih Bible adopted these Latinisms directly from the Gennadius Bible, the text of which they certainly used and consulted as their major source in editing the Ostrih Bible.

⁴⁴ In his thorough analysis of certain sections of the Gennadius Bible, Thomson notes: “As has been pointed out in the section on the Gennadian Bible, the translations made from the Vulgate are not merely replete with Latinisms, with and without glosses, but teem with errors as a result of inattention being paid to Latin accident and syntax.” See his “The Translation of the Old Testament,” 771. The concrete examples and errors with regard to Latin forms are given on pp. 771–74.

was part of the Grand Duchy of Lithuania until the latter half of the sixteenth century.⁴⁵ In response to pressure from both sides—the Roman Catholics and the Protestants—as Cooper convincingly argues, “the Orthodox in Lithuania rallied to the defense of their own religious particularity” within the Polish-Lithuanian state, and the first printing edition of the full Slavonic Bible was printed in Ostrih in 1580–1 by Ivan Fedorov in 1,500–2,000 copies. The preparation of the text and the printing were funded by Prince Konstantyn Ostroz’kyi. The text was based on the Church Slavonic and Greek sources of the Bible, including the complete 1499 Bible. By and large, the Ostrih Bible faithfully follows the Gennadius Bible. On the basis of his fragment analysis, Cooper says:

Errors in Gennadius were frequently left unchanged in Ostrog, or compounded by an unsuccessful attempt to correct according to the Greek, but always with an eye to the Latin, lest the differences between Gennadius and Ostrog be too great. The Masoretic text of the Hebrew Bible was available at Ostrog, but likely not used much, if at all. But Slavic translations other than Gennadius’ probably were consulted: in 3 Maccabees, where the Ostrog translators were left to their own devices because Gennadius’s translators had not included this book in their Bible, traces of a Czech version can be found. (137)

The statement about traces of a Czech version that can be found in 3 Maccabees may suggest that the translators of the Ostrih Bible might have consulted the Czech Bible printed in 1506. Also, it should be noted (although Cooper has failed to do it) that the likely source of these Czech linguistic elements was the translation of the books in the *Bivlija Ruska* (1517–19) by the first Belorussian printer and Bible scholar Francis Skaryna (ca. 1485/90–1540/51),⁴⁶ which the translators consulted. Although he was born in the ancient Belorussian city of Polatsk, Skaryna chose to work in Prague, probably because he found there facilities not available in his native country. His sponsors were Belorussian merchants. The first book, the Psalter, appeared in 1517

⁴⁵ The Polish-Lithuanian state was officially established by the Union of Lublin in 1569. For more on the events that had preceded the Union of Lublin as well as Ruthenian religious reform, Konstantyn Ostroz’kyi’s initiative, the Ostrih circle and the printing of the *Ostrih Bible* in 1580/81, the Union of Brest, the creation of the Moscow Patriarchate, etc., see Gudziak, 43–142.

⁴⁶ In his book *Doktor Francisk Skorina, ego perevody, pečatnye izdaniia i jazyk* (St. Petersburg, 1888), P. V. Vladimirov was the first to show the dependence of Skaryna’s texts on the Czech Bible of 1506. His conclusions were confirmed later by A. Florovskij in his *Češskaia bibliia v istorii russkoi kul’ury i pis’mennosti* (Prague, 1940–46, reprint O. Sagner: Munich, 1988) and by other scholars.

and was followed by other books of the Old Testament. Altogether he produced twenty-three books in Prague; the Acts and Epistles of the Apostles was also published in 1525. It is true that Cooper briefly mentions Skaryna's collection of the Old and New Testament books (228), but he does not explain that the influence of Czech linguistic features could penetrate the text more easily through Skaryna's translation⁴⁷ rather than through consulting the much less comprehensible Czech Bible of 1506, printed Polish Bibles, or the Protestant Bible of Nicholas Radziwill, the "*Biblia Brzeska*," published in 1563, all of which are mentioned in footnote 143 but not in the main text of Cooper's book.

⁴⁷ Skaryna's *Bivlija ruska*, "vyložena na ruskyi jazyke" (written in Rus'ian language) contains quite a number of Church Slavonic linguistic features, for Church Slavonic was the only written language of the Eastern Slavs at that time. Its language should be thoroughly investigated. On the basis of the brief excerpts from Skaryna's editions available to me, I assume that Skaryna's language in *Bivlija ruska* represents the same diglossic, linguistic medium typical of all Eastern Slavs of that period (a mixture of Church Slavonic and vernacular, the so-called "prosta mova"). Anatol Klyshka notes: "It was within his [Skaryna's] intentions to publish books not only for the Grand Duchy but for neighboring Muscovy too. Skorina believed that it was his noble duty to enlighten all the Eastern Slavs 'so that our brothers in Rus', the simple folk could master the art of reading.' Francisk Skorina hoped that his Vilna editions would find the potential reader in Moscow, for they were printed in Church Slavonic. The Orthodox Church in Moscow strictly stipulated that the Bible should be solely printed in Church Slavonic...Skorina found himself between the hammer and the anvil. The Catholic Church in Vilna developed a hostile attitude to Skorina's books because they were intended for Orthodox believers. Likewise, the Orthodox Church in Moscow accused Skorina of heresy, considering his books to have a damaging effect on the flock. It was impermissible in the view of the clergy to exclude whole passages from accepted canons, to give one's own interpretation of dogmas, to quote statesmen and philosophers in the author's foreword or postface. The simplification of Church Slavonic was regarded as something on the verge of sacrilege" (*The Light Through Centuries. The 500th Anniversary of the Birth of Francisk Skorina* [Minsk: Belarus Publishers, 1990], 57, 61). The Scottish biblical scholar and linguist E. Henderson came to the conclusion that Skaryna's translation was made from the Latin Vulgate with the access to texts in other languages. (E. Henderson, *Biblical Researches and Travels in Russia* [London: 1826], 103–10, quoted from A. Nadson, "Religious Trends and Books in the Sixteenth-Century Belarus," *Solanus*, n. s., vol. 8, London, 1994, 33–52). No doubt, because of the presence of Latinisms in Skaryna's text, he must have been perceived as a threat to the conservative clergy in Moscow. Thus Klyshka correctly remarks: "However, there exist exact data referring to the fact that the Orthodox Church in Moscow was quite hostile to the visit of a descendant of Byelorussia, who intended to start publishing books in the capital. Moreover, on the orders of the Grand Duke of Moscow the prints and publications were destroyed" (57–58). Certainly, future investigation of the Slavonic Bible should take into consideration Skaryna's *Bivlija Ruska*. The word "*Bivlija*" with a "v" instead of a second "b" clearly indicates Skaryna's intentions to maximally adapt the language of his editions for the usage of all Eastern Slavs. On Francis Skaryna, see Thomson, "The Slavonic Translation of the Old Testament," 667–70.

All these Slavic translations of Scripture were available to Prince Ostroz'kyi and were circulating in the Polish-Lithuanian state at the time, presenting a real challenge to its Orthodox population. In their constant confrontation with their countrymen of Catholic and Protestant faith, the Orthodox living within the Polish-Lithuanian Commonwealth were compelled to organize their educational system, open schools and religious academies as well as printing presses, and print the full text of the Slavonic Bible in addition to other religious books. All of these important cultural and religious activities took place among the Orthodox population within the Polish-Lithuanian state much earlier than among their co-religionists in Muscovy. This difference is underscored in Cooper's book (135). Therefore, one must conclude that the Ostrih Bible was a clear product of these propitious conditions which were conducive to the establishment of its first printed edition in Church Slavonic in 1580–81. Cooper correctly states, but does not stress strongly enough, that the Ostrih Bible was the result of direct confrontation between the Orthodox population in the Polish-Lithuanian state and their Catholic and Protestant neighbors:

Renaissance impulses were manifest even in provincial Ostrog...The Ostrog Bible found no competition at all: for the next eighty years it would be the only Cyrillic-script Bible in existence. Its greatest achievement was to fix in print and disseminate a complete text of the Church Slavonic version: further development of Slavonic biblical texts through copying was no longer possible. Thereby it ended a process of some seven hundred years' duration and it established a norm that, with relatively few major changes, has endured to the present day, in other words, for another four hundred years. (135–36)

While Cooper concludes that the Church Slavonic Bible existed for centuries, he does not observe that the Eastern Orthodox Slavs had no great need for using the complete text of the Slavonic Bible during the eleven centuries of their Christian life, nor does he elaborate the opinions of some Russian scholars (though he quotes them in footnote 44 on page 220) that “[i]n Russia, the notion of the Biblical canon, distinguishing strongly between the inspired Holy Scripture and the works of the fathers, never existed,”⁴⁸ or that “[i]n the thirteenth to the sixteenth century a definitive list of the canon of the Old and New Testaments had not been established [among the Eastern Slavs].”⁴⁹

⁴⁸ George P. Fedotov, *Russian Religious Mind*, vol. I (Cambridge: Harvard University Press, 1946), 43.

⁴⁹ B. A. Semenovker, “Grečeskie spiski istinnyx i ložnyx knig i ix recepcija na Rusi,” *TODRL* 40 (1985): 226.

Likewise, the Russian Biblical scholar Ivan Evseev wrote in 1917 that “neither the Russians nor the South Slavs [referring clearly only to the Orthodox South Slavs—O.N.] have ever placed the Bible at the center of their interests, they have never ‘suffered for the Bible.’ Rather they have preferred to treat it ‘as an object of pious respect’ and not as a source of pious action.”⁵⁰

In my view, the Slavonic Bible would have never seen the light of day had vigorous clashes and strong tensions not arisen in the relationship between church and state in Muscovy during the last quarter of the fifteenth and the very beginning of the sixteenth century. In this period of growing crisis in ecclesiastical circles, under tremendous pressure from the theocratic state of Grand Prince Ivan III, the Russian Orthodox clergy, headed by Archbishop Gennadius of Novgorod and Pskov, assisted by his like-minded colleague Joseph Volotski, not only turned to the Latin West for assistance in theological and polemical literature, but also organized and carried out the compilation and translation of the first complete text of the Slavonic Scripture. The Gennadius Bible should be viewed as a direct result of Gennadius’ countermeasures in his violent struggle to protect the supreme power and authority of the Russian Church and its property from the rising theocratic state, the new Orthodox Tsardom of Muscovy—Holy Russia. Thus, in the context of direct contacts with and influences from the West, the increased interest in the Old Testament led to the idea of producing a full translation of the Slavonic Bible, an idea that was embraced by the members and collaborators of Gennadius’ circle. Likewise, the direct contact of Orthodox Slavs living in the Polish-Lithuanian state with more advanced Catholic and Protestant cultural and religious institutions prompted them to compose and print the entire text of the Slavonic Bible in Ostrih as a counterbalance to the existing Slavic Bibles in the respective Polish-Lithuanian vernaculars. The Orthodox leaders and clergy under Polish-Lithuanian rule were increasingly aware of the reforming and modernizing movements of both the Catholic and Protestant communities in the state; that awareness imposed new pressures on the traditional-minded Orthodox clergy, who sought to preserve their religious integrity. Thus, they were compelled to fashion their traditional, autocephalous forms of existence amidst a Roman Catholic polity in order to preserve their religious and national identity. The cultural awakening of Orthodox communities under Polish-Lithuanian rule found a considerable response in the Eastern Patriarchates, which showed much renewed interest in extending contacts and

⁵⁰ Ivan Evseev, “Sobor i Biblija,” in I. A. Čistovič, *Addendum*, 1917, i–viii, esp. vi, quoted in Cooper, 145–46.

cultural assistance to their co-religionists living in the Polish-Lithuanian state.⁵¹

After the unification of the Eastern Ukrainian lands with Russia in 1554, there appeared an initiative to reprint the Ostrih Bible of 1580–81. Thus, in 1663—eighty-three years after the first edition—its reprint appeared in Moscow under the name *Pervopečatnaja*, “The First Printed,” in order to reestablish Muscovite control over the Church Slavonic translation “even though the text differed little if at all from its predecessor” (147). It is worth mentioning that there were some unofficial attempts to revise the Church Slavonic Bible, or to make a new Slavonic translation, in the seventeenth century. Cooper correctly stresses that the impulse for these actions seems to have come from Kiev, which was more advanced than Muscovy in matters of education and culture. It is known that the Kievan Metropolitan Peter Mohyla prepared a fully revised translation of the Bible by the end of his life (d. 1646); however, it was not published. A few years later, monks were sent from Kiev to Moscow to assist with Bible revision (146). Novgorod Metropolitan Nikon was very supportive of this project. When he was elected patriarch in 1652, he even began introducing substantial revisions regarding church books. He and his Kievan assistants did not succeed in revising the Bible because he renounced the patriarchal throne six years later. One of Nikon’s assistants, the learned monk Epifanij Slavineckij, was commissioned by a church council in the 1670s to retranslate the entire Bible from the Greek “for it [the Church Slavonic Bible] stands quite apart from the Greek in its sense, sentences, and composition” (146). Epifanij did manage to retranslate the New Testament before he died in 1675. Cooper notes: “Although Epifanij had access to some priceless ancient manuscripts, including two *tetraevangelia* of the fourteenth century, clearly he was devoted to the primacy of the Greek text and committed to revising the Slavonic to follow the Greek as closely as possible. Thus he was willing to tolerate any deviation from

⁵¹ In addition to the “brotherhoods” (*vratchina*, later *bratstva*), the Orthodox common associations, or solidarity groupings, some of which had already emerged by the fourteenth century (see Marian Jean Rubchak, “The Cultural and Political Activities of the Lviv Stavropigiia Brotherhood and the Development of a Ukrainian National Consciousness, 1585–1632,” Ph.D. dissertation, University of Illinois at Chicago, 1988), in 1563 Polish King Sigismund II and the Lithuanian State acknowledged the civil equality of non-Catholic gentry. This measure received confirmation by later sovereigns, and it manifestly laid the legal basis for Orthodox and Protestant élites to assert their social identity and cultural aims (see O. Halecki, *op. cit.*, 155ff). The act of confirmation not only had a legal character but also included a message encouraging the Orthodox clergy under Polish-Lithuanian rule to open schools, to develop their literary resources, to establish printing shops, and to maintain the traditions of Greek Orthodoxy. In addition to Halecki, *op. cit.*, cf. Borys A. Gudziak, *op. cit.*, esp. chapters 7–10, 105–52.

Slavonic structural norms to accommodate Greek patterns. Perhaps it is for the best that his translation was stillborn” (146).

In eighteenth-century Russia, during the reign of Peter I (1672–1725), work on the Church Slavonic Bible continued. Although it is usually said that Peter I opened the window to the West, he was also concerned with revising the existing translation of the Bible. In 1712, Peter I issued an *ukase*, requiring that the Church Slavonic Bible be translated anew based on the Greek Bible. However, Peter’s involvement with the correction and production of the Church Slavonic Bible should be interpreted—as Cooper puts it—as “simply one more step in his wresting control of the church from its clergy” (149). Thus, Peter I established the first commission in 1713 to fulfill the mandate of the tsar’s *ukase*. The commission’s work ended with Peter’s death in 1725. Then his wife, Catherine I, assembled the second Bible commission in order to print the Slavonic Bible after additional verifications of the accuracy of the text vis-à-vis the Greek were made. At the time of her death in 1727, these orders had not been carried out either, and the commission was disbanded. In 1735 yet another *ukase* was issued and the third Bible commission was established. Its members considered many of these emendations not to be based on Septuagint but on a variety of translations, including the Greek Old Testament versions of Aquila, Theodotion, and Simmachus, as well as on the “papist” Vulgate and the Hebrew. As Cooper notes, the senior member of the Synod, Feofan Prokopovič—among others—was of the opinion before his death in 1736 that a fourth commission be established. This suggestion was not accepted by the Church authorities, so it did not yield any concrete results. After the unsuccessful work of the fifth commission in Moscow, the sixth Bible commission was formed. Following internal crises and disagreements among its members and under some pressure from the empress, in 1751 the members “were able to take their corrected Slavonic Bible to the printing shop of the Alexander Nevsky Monastery in St. Petersburg, where it was produced with a brief introduction by Ljaščevskij outlining the history of its compilation. In some cases they did not indicate where they had made changes from the 1663 Bible; in other cases they noted changes in the margins; but the majority of their changes they published in a separate volume” (154). The Bible was dedicated to Elizaveta Petrovna: “Six hundred copies of the ‘Elizabeth Bible’ were printed by the end of 1751, and another one thousand two hundred copies in 1752. A second edition, slightly revised, was produced by the two editors in Moscow in 1754, and issued this time in Moscow in 1756, and then again every few years after that until 1914” (154). Otherwise, the “Elizabeth Bible” finally put an end to the further development of the Church Slavonic Bible, which “stood now both fixed and authorized on its

pages forever...If it does not offer perfect clarity,” Cooper stresses, it does offer “at least stability and order” (158).

In the period between 1712 and 1751, the text of the Church Slavonic Bible underwent the most radical revisions in its long history. These changes were quantitatively very large but qualitatively not particularly important. Cooper explains that the alterations introduced into the text of the Slavonic Bible during that period were “only relatively superficial details, but not matters of profound theological or doctrinal substance” (155). Therefore, he concludes that “despite all the commissions, the Bible of 1751 does not differ in *essence* from the Bible of 1499, 1581, or 1663, nor is it such a slave of the Greek Bible, even the *Codex Alexandrinus*, that it can be called a mere translator’s pony” (155). Also, the editors of the Bible of 1751 finished work on the translation only partially completed in the Ostrih Bible of 1581. Likewise, the quarter of the Old Testament that Archbishop Gennadius had translated (most probably not directly from the Vulgate, as I have explained above, but from his model-copy of the Greek Bible produced according to the text of the Vulgate, and which the Ostrih Bible’s translator revised—but did not translate—against the Greek) was now translated anew from Greek bases (156). Specifically, the Book of Tobit was translated anew from the Greek of the *Alexandrinus*, which was not the case with the *Pervopečatnaja* and the Ostrih Bible. At the end of this survey of the development of the Church Slavonic Bible, Cooper summarizes the conclusions reached by Michael Bakker in his Ph.D. dissertation “Towards a Critical Edition of the Old Slavic New Testament: A Transparent and Heuristic Approach,”⁵² which shows that the Gennadius Bible of 1499, the Ostrih Bible of 1581, and the Elizabeth Bible of 1751 are part of one continuous tradition, but “with respect to the quality of the translation, the history of the Slavic N[ew] T[estament] version seems to be one of deterioration rather than amelioration” (158).

In his epilogue Cooper speaks about Russian and Soviet scholars involved with the scholarship concerning the Church Slavonic Bible. Ivan Evseevič Evseev was probably the most prominent biblical scholar during the first two decades of the twentieth century. He established the Commission for the Scholarly Publication of the Slavonic Bible in order to distribute the Bible to the people, to restore an Orthodox canon of biblical books in both the Church Slavonic and Synodal Russian Bibles, and finally to revise and retranslate both of these Bibles in order to remove the obscurities and errors that had penetrated them over time. In 1929 Evseev’s Commission was officially renamed the Commission for the Publication of Old Slavonic Monuments, and in 1930 it was abolished after the full consolidation of the Soviet government

⁵² University of Amsterdam, 1996.

and the implementation of Stalinist anti-religious policy. In subsequent decades of the twentieth century the investigation of biblical issues languished and was abandoned altogether in the Soviet Union. Only in 1969 was a “Bible Group” organized under the aegis of Metropolitan Nikodim at the Leningrad Theological Seminary (163). Its major goal was to revise “the Church Slavonic Bible based on a scholarly reconstruction of Cyril and Methodius’ original translations” (163). Only after the *perestroika* period of the 1980s did interest in the Slavonic and Russian Bibles resurface.

Henry Cooper’s *Slavic Scriptures: The Formation of the Church Slavonic Version of the Holy Bible* represents a useful contribution to the long and complex history of the establishment of the complete text of the Church Slavonic Bible. No other scholar has undertaken such a survey in its entirety spanning eleven centuries. Certainly, Orthodox Slavs will appreciate tremendously Cooper’s great endeavor which raises new questions regarding the text of the Slavonic Bible and stimulates new scholarly investigations of biblical texts in Church Slavonic.

BOOK REVIEWS

Dubravka Stojanović, *Srbija i demokratija 1903–1914: Istorijska studija o ‘zlatnom dobu’ srpske demokratije*. Belgrade: Udruženje za društvenu istoriju, 2003.

Reviewed by *David MacKenzie*

The May Coup of 1903, conducted by army officers, ending the Obrenović dynasty by murdering its king and queen, ended over twenty years of autocratic monarchy and subservience to Austro-Hungary. Bringing to the Serbian throne Pretender Petar Karađorđević, it inaugurated what contemporaries designated as “the new era.” King Petar I, an elderly, liberal, and tolerant man, in exile had translated John Stuart Mill’s pamphlet, “On Liberty,” into Serbian and sought after 1903 to abide by many of its liberal precepts. The change in ruler, noted Dubravka Stojanović, was viewed by many as the beginning of a true constitutional and parliamentary order and preparation for realizing external national freedom and integration into advanced Europe.

Because many Serbian historical works ended with the 1903 coup, affirms the author, many important questions remained rarely examined about this relatively rarely studied but crucial period, 1903–14. Stojanović explores and analyzes the various political views and approaches in post-Obrenović Serbia dealing with theory rather than that era’s political history. She notes that a dangerous historical myth was created by Serbs’ widespread tendency to idealize the eleven-year post-coup period as the realization of complete freedom and democracy,

The book’s initial section analyzes images about Serbia’s political institutions—Assembly, king, and government—political ideals and values, and political culture as bases for democracy’s lasting stability. The next segment analyzes the reception in Serbia of European democratic ideals derived from the great French Revolution—liberty, equality, and fraternity—and efforts to adjust them to Serbian traditions and beliefs. Examined are also the divergent views of the leading Serbian political parties—Radicals and Independent Radicals—about European ideals.

A third segment analyzes political culture in Serbia according to democratic theory. The author stresses the difference between the level of development in Serbia and western Europe preventing or hindering the

transmission of European institutions into Serbian political life. She deals with different approaches to democracy by Serbian political parties. Nonetheless, the educated Serbian elite believed democratic ideals were worth fighting for and would eventually prevail worldwide. Therefore, democracy in Serbia had a special purpose as the precondition for its survival and future development.

Dubravka Stojanović, daughter of a leading Serbian political scientist, Dr. Radoslav Stojanović, is an associate professor (*dotsent*) of history in the Faculty of Philosophy of Belgrade University and the author of several scholarly works. This volume concludes with an English language summary. Her book, intended for political scientists and intellectual historians, is not easy reading.

University of North Carolina, Greensboro

Milorad Ekmečić. *Dijalog prošlosti i sadašnjosti*. Belgrade: Službeni list, 2002, 509 pages.

Reviewed by *Jelena Milojković-Djurić*

The distinguished historian Milorad Ekmečić compiled a selection of his published and some unpublished papers for this volume entitled *Dialogue of the Past with Present*. The author explained in his "Foreword" that the title was commensurate with his belief that history presents an ongoing dialogue with the past while defining actual historical thought. It is the past that directed the chain of events. Thus, Ekmečić postulates that books, or historians themselves, do not determine historical events or the current state of affairs.

The selected papers deal with the time frame covering more than two centuries, up to the recent civil wars of 1992. Despite the broad time span, there exists an inherent coherence due to the author's predisposition to observe current events in a historical chain of long duration. Moreover, he gives credence to the notion that the Central European crusade against Bosnia still goes on, although it started in medieval times.

Several papers include, as an appendix, selected primary sources that are still not sufficiently explored by historians at large. In this respect, the paper titled *Načertanije Ilije Garašanina* (The Project of Ilija Garašanin) traces the origin of this document to the special report of the English diplomatic agent David Urquhart. Urquhart visited Serbia on two different occasions. He summed up his observations and recommendations regarding the position of Serbia in his report entitled *A Project de Memoir of the Serbian Government*.

This remarkable document appeared in the journal *Portfolio*, which was published in English and French. Ekmečić believes that this document is not sufficiently known and deserves a better understanding. Therefore, he decided to attach Urquhart's *Project de Memoir* to his own paper in order to make it available to the academic community at large. Ekmečić points to the obvious yet overlooked influence of Urquhart's *Project de Memoir* on Garašanin's own evaluations, while writing his own assessment of the current situation in Serbia. Garašanin's *Načertanije* is also appended to Ekmečić's article.

Garašanin's narrative showed almost a complete acceptance of Urquhart's evaluations. Thus, Ekmečić dubs Urquhart's *Project de Memoir* as the first version of Garašanin's *Načertanije*. Ekmečić comes to the conclusion that Garašanin's foreign policy, as well as the foreign policy pursued by the Serbian government, was in congruence with British political aspirations to uphold the desired balance of power. Urquhart's plans were aiming most of all to suppress Russian imperial ambitions in the Balkans while delineating Serbian political positions and aspirations. Ekmečić also included Urquhart's paper *Serbian Affairs* published in *The British and Foreign Review* and in *European Quarterly* in London in 1844. In this paper, Urquhart scrutinized the Serbian position within the European framework.

Two papers in this volume elucidate the Eastern Question, bringing forth new points of view. Ekmečić states that the ideas guiding the agreements reached at the Berlin Congress were influenced by the ideas of Cesare Balbo, formulated in his book *Le speranze d'Italia*. Balbo described the Eastern Question as the confrontation of Western Christianity with Asian civilization. Balbo believed that future development would not sustain the existence of small national states within the European part of the Turkish Empire. A preferable situation would be the creation of larger regional entities under the protectorate of the Great Powers. Balbo thought that both Russia and Austria had aspired, even for centuries, to influence global policies. Balbo's book *Le speranze d'Italia* was published in Paris in 1844. Interestingly enough, 1844 marked the appearance of the Serbian *Načertanije*, which charted the political aspirations of the Serbian state.

Beginning in 1866, the Western Powers considered Balbo's conception as a valid political plan of action. Moreover, Ekmečić argues that Balbo's ideological attainments guided to a great extent the Austro-Hungarian foreign ministry during its occupation and annexation of Bosnia-Herzegovina. Without Balbo's ideological program, it would be hard to understand why the Berlin Congress allowed for the occupation of Bosnia-Herzegovina. Balbo advised in his book the colonization of the European East in order to ease the overpopulation in the countries of the European West. He suggested founding German agrarian colonies in Poland, and likewise Austrian colonies in the

Balkans. These ideas and swift agrarian colonization were implemented in Bosnia-Herzegovina starting already in 1879.

Several papers deal with the rise of national movements within the European framework. The paper "National Identity, Synthetic Nations, and the Future of Democracy" presents a thorough analysis of the rise of nationalism in conjunction with the advent of modern democracy. Yet from the very beginning of the formation of sovereign national states, there existed a considerable opposition ascertaining the futility of such endeavors. Ekmečić discusses the interference of foreign powers in the internal affairs of other nations. Ekmečić stresses the danger of projecting and directing the future of small nations without the true understanding of historical circumstances, leading inevitably to a catastrophe.

The comprehensive study, "The Origins of the Revolution of 1941," points to a cogent dialogue of the past with the present. In the years after the end of World War II, the extensive research conducted by a number of historians was devoted to the revolutionary period prompted by the fascist occupation of Yugoslavia. Ekmečić deplors the fact that this meticulous research was hampered by the official interpretation of the regime attributing the organization of the uprising solely to the Communist Party.

Ekmečić points out that the 1941 uprising was not in fact organized from above by communists or by nationalists. Even before the German attack on 6 April 1941, there existed an underlying hostility and various confrontations. At the outset of the fascist occupation, Hitler and Mussolini did not have a clear concept of the new borders. Hitler considered that the Serbs and the Croats should negotiate an agreement in Rome, since Italian military authorities were charged to administer the contested provinces. Hitler himself was not sure whether the borders of the new Croatian state should be along the banks of the Drina River or perhaps the Bosna River. The Italian military authorities had designated Dubrovnik as the Serbian port on the Adriatic coast. The Italian military archives have safeguarded the documentation about the region under their control. The historian Oddone Talpo published archival materials that depicted the hardship of the population, forced conversions, and atrocities committed by the Ustaše forces spawning the uprising of 1941. All these circumstances brought about the upheaval of the local population. Ekmečić bases his conclusions on his own research of archival holdings, as well as on pertinent testimonies and other primary sources.

Ekmečić elucidates recent events in former Yugoslavia in the paper titled "The External Causes of the Civil War in Bosnia-Herzegovina of 1992," presenting another factual dialogue of the present with the past. Although the main cause of the civil war was the rise of religious nationalism, the external pressures and interventions played a major role as well. Ekmečić discusses

the proceedings of the Carnegie Commission for International Peace, and the unsuccessful interventions of NATO forces in Kosovo leading to the unfortunate bombing of Yugoslavia.

Ekmečić also scrutinizes the legacy of the notorious authoritarian regime in socialist Yugoslavia and the pernicious experimentation with the idea of synthetic nations. The growing polarization and separatism of the constituent Yugoslav republics occurred with the transition to capitalism and became an ideological basis of new societies that labeled themselves as democratic.

Ekmečić shows that the growing concern caused by the economic and political mismanagement in the country was extant already during the 1968 students' uprising. The criticism of the growing economic inequality between the general population and the politically appointed leadership was becoming apparent even then. Ekmečić includes, as an appendix, his own speech during the student unrest in Sarajevo in July of 1968. The growing economic inequality, political malaise, and the tendencies of separatism within the respective constituent republics foreshadowed the gradual disintegration of Yugoslavia.

As an added and valuable documentation, Ekmečić includes his speech at the first Congress of Intellectuals in Sarajevo on 28 March 1992, prior to the beginning of the civil war. In that speech, Ekmečić laments the dissolution of the Yugoslav dream that was in the making for some two hundred years. All that the Serbs wanted during the civil war was the preservation of the Yugoslav idea that offered a better solution for the disparate population at large. Ekmečić bemoans the ensuing consequences and the deplorable ethnic cleansing of the Serbian population in the region surrounding Mostar, testifying to the similarities with the one-time plans of the Austro-Hungarian Empire. Mostar was one of the strongest Serbian cultural centers, boasting a rich literary and artistic life prior to the Habsburg occupation and annexation of Bosnia-Herzegovina. During the war of 1992, the Serbian population were forcefully removed from their homes in Mostar and the adjacent Neretva valley.

This remarkable volume offers new insights based on thorough research and in-depth analyses of some very important historical events. It should be recommended as one of the essential books, helping a better understanding of Serbian, Balkan, and European histories.

Texas A&M University

Branko Mikašinović. *Vašingtonski intervjui*. Novi Sad: Prometej, 2004, 146 pages.

Reviewed by *Višeslav Simić*

In this visually attractive and physically concise book, Branko Mikašinović has achieved, at the turn of the millennium, a curious accumulation of information contained in interviews with some of the most prominent and influential individuals who are related to Serbian issues, either by their origin, direct emotional or professional involvement, or by their artistic inspiration.

One of the best qualities of the interviews is their readability and apparent simplicity. The incisive questions posed by Mikašinović in his capacity as a journalist for the Voice of America (VOA), seem rather obvious and even excessively direct, yet so many times journalists forget or neglect to ask them. These are exactly the characteristics of the means employed by a skillful and experienced journalist, and an analytical scholar, which provide the viewer/listener/reader with the necessary information he/she needs and expects, yet so often fails to receive from the media.

As noted by George Vid Tomashevich in his insightful preface, "It is not the job of a successful journalist to reveal his/her inner life but that of his/her interlocutor...." In this book one may enjoy, or even be shocked by glimpses of that inner life of the individuals interviewed, especially from today's perspective and a time distance, which provide certain necessary and useful references and comparisons. These interviews are additionally valuable because they were deemed important at the time they were conducted and broadcast.

In view of the Latin proverb, "Spoken words fly away but written words remain," we are lucky that the journalist who conducted these interviews is also a serious scholar who values research-ready material. Many an ordinary person might not find these interviews currently useful, but future scholars of politics, media, mass psychology and other fields certainly will.

This book also provides a list of individuals thought important at a very crucial point for one nation, and allows us to see how these people were thought to have influenced the way of thinking and acting in former Yugoslavia. One may claim that no one human being is that important, but at least some of the people interviewed in this book were believed to have been significant enough to be asked for opinion and advice. There is yet another good service this book provides—it gives us an opportunity to face our (U.S.A.) and their (Serb and others) illusions about the importance of certain individuals, both Western and Balkan.

In this book we see again the people and institutions whose words were carefully listened to by many nations in the Balkans, especially by the Serbs.

We must also remember all the other forces and powers that participated in the Balkan events at the time, not listed here but very much present behind the scene and between the lines. Once one closes this book, a number of moral questions might arise. From a distance of years and events we can now recognize how wrong so many people were, how things could have been better, and how cautious we should be in the future about getting involved and judging others. Or, how much more forceful we should have been in opposing certain people and their actions. As in the case of Serbia, past events showed us that real people suffer while many a think-tank employee enlarges his/her resume reference list in an armchair in Washington, D.C.

One encouraging matter about this collection of interviews is the realization that a good journalist and an honest person can, in spite of official political guidelines and unofficial censorship, provide his/her viewers/listeners/readers with additional information and points of view that ordinarily they would not be able to obtain. For that, Mikašinović must be additionally praised.

A minor flaw of the book may be that the interviews were not put in the context of the contemporary political and military situation in the U.S. and the Balkans. It is clear that doing so would create possibilities for claims against the author, accusing him of bias, ignorance, or even arrogance. Yet, contextualization would have helped a reader to understand many an interview better if the reasons for it had been explained. Also, some interviews lack precise dating, which, together with the fact that the material is not chronological, adds to the sense of forgivable intellectual absentmindedness.

One thing is certain: by publishing these interviews Dr. Mikašinović has performed a very valuable public service, both for Serbia and for the U.S.A.

Washington, D.C.

David Albahari. *Drugi jezik*. Belgrade: Stubovi kulture, 2003, 229 pages.

Reviewed by *Marijeta Božović*

“You cannot change location and remain unaltered as a person, but we can, and should, control the degree of that change,” warns the official at the Center for New Immigrants in the title story of David Albahari’s newest collection, *Drugi jezik* (Second Language). Most of Albahari’s grim, laconic stories concern precisely that alteration, the cumulative effect of isolation, blocked communication and encroaching meaninglessness, usually but not exclusively motivated by the rupture of immigration.

The self-described Serbian-Jewish author, who shares his current home of Calgary, Canada, with several of the collection's protagonists, previously won international acclaim for his postmodern novels and short story collections (*Zinc*, *Words are Something Else* and *Bait* were reviewed in *World Literature Today* by Radmila Gorup). Several have been translated into English, recently including the slim tome *Gotz and Meyer*, which undertakes the question of how ordinary men and women could have participated in the Holocaust (The Harvill Press, 2004).

At first glance, his most recent offering seems a stylistic departure from the previous works. *Gotz and Meyer* is written as a single paragraph; earlier short stories such as "The Great Rebellion at the Stuln Nazi Camp" consist of numbered lists, some units no longer than a sentence each, presenting a narrative naked in its selectivity and arbitrariness. In contrast, the stories of *Second Language* are deceptively straightforward and mainly realistic, prompting some to interpret the new collection as a turn away from postmodernism's stylings. In a *Dnevnik* interview, the author has protested such readings: According to Albahari, "I always stated that the postmodern writer's advantage is that he can write even the rawest realistic prose, for postmodernism—as a form above forms—makes even that possible."

Like all of Albahari's works, *Second Language* is written in Serbian: the title originates from the fact that the stories were written in the author's first language but surrounded by the second. The English language, ever-present as a theme, is kept at bay linguistically by precisely the measure of control that most of the collection's protagonists prove incapable of.

The pieces, ranging in length from one to thirty pages, concern everyday occurrences and individual lives. They stretch from the utterly ordinary—in "Čekanje" (Waiting) a woman wakes to her alarm clock and wonders for one paragraph what would happen were she not to rise—to the sudden deviation: in "Pekar, poštar i kapadžija" (The Baker, the Postman, and the Hatmaker), a man decides to murder his wife and utilize his friends' skills to get rid of the body.

In the saddening and grim title story "Second Language," Zoran from Banja Luka cannot adjust to his new Calgary life. Avoiding other Yugoslav immigrants in an attempt at assimilation and incapable of communicating with locals, the reclusive newcomer obsesses over the one woman to show him kindness, his freckled ESL teacher, "Sindi." Zoran begins to follow the young woman, breaks into her house, and ultimately physically assaults her. When the reader attempts to pinpoint where the line was crossed, the slippage seems to have begun as early as the Canadian border.

In the collection's longest story, "Učenje ćirilice" (Teaching Cyrillic), whose numbered-paragraph form recalls more typically Albaharian pieces,

the narrator labors to instill their irrelevant native language in a small group of immigrants' children. He writes, "I think that they hate me, though I try not to look at them almost at all." In the icy and silent setting, his only friend is the Native American Storm Cloud, himself a tragic and anachronistic outsider. The teacher keeps insisting on the stark Cyrillic alphabet, while Storm Cloud tells legends about the Blackfoot tribe, but neither is sure any longer of what they are trying to preserve. Eventually the stories merge: The two men tell the suddenly attentive children how a hunter, tracking birds by the side of a lake, once realized that marks in the mud could be used to convey abstract information.

Native Americans haunt the pages of *Second Language*, ghosts from another era that Albahari's newcomers are drawn to and identify with, sensing a shared tragedy. In "Indijanac na Olimpijskom trgu" (The Indian on Olympic Square), after exchanging names—"Nobody loves peace" disagrees John to Ljubomir—two drastically different men trade stories. "I am from a country that no longer exists," explains Ljubomir. "That's why you get lost so easily," John retorts, and in turn tells him about the origin of Corn, once a woman killed by her two sons.

Alongside immigration and anachronism, violence against women becomes another leitmotif in *Second Language*. Women are killed, raped, mutilated or at least deeply hated by their husbands and sons; the sovereign in "Kralj" (King) blames the Queen Mother for his lifeless existence, and even Storm Cloud shows off photos of Blackfoot women with amputated noses, the native punishment for infidelity. In "Boja očiju" (Eye Color), a one-paragraph stream-of-consciousness taking place during a rape, the narrator wonders whether she will ever see her assailant's eyes: "Maybe when he stands, I will succeed in seeing them, but they usually hurry then, avert their eyes, already think about entirely different things...."

The connecting threads between themes are solitude and lack of understanding, which motivate the constant victimization of all perceived as weaker, different or threatening. While some are victimized actively, others are merely—and arguably more cruelly—forgotten. The narrator of "Pismo" (Letter), who hasn't received mail for years, understands that there are no secrets left for him, and the bedridden narrator of the collection's last story, "Pas" (Dog), is abandoned by human and canine alike and left to die as the book ends.

As always in Albahari, a crucial concern of *Second Language* remains writing and language itself. In "Sto rečenica" (A Hundred Sentences), the author uses exactly that number to depict an apartment house. All the tenants listen and contribute to the night's unusual sounds while the man in number 9 is attacked, but due to individual insecurities and (mis)interpretations, no one

comes to their neighbor's aid. In "Milenijum" (Millennium), the narrator's wife interrupts, criticizes, and improves her husband's story while he attempts to narrate it. And finally, further erasing boundaries between fact and fiction, in "Dvojnici" (Doubles) the self-satisfied author D. A. writes a circular, postmodern short story about doubles right before encountering his own: in the last paragraph, the reader, too, "upon raising his head, will see himself in the opposite angle of the room; he has finished reading the story."

If *Second Language* lacks some of the stylistic acrobatics of Albahari's earlier writing, the stories, taken both individually and as a whole, lack none of the weight. His postmodern-cum-realistic prose buzzes with intensity, not for a moment letting us forget it as a created object while minimizing flourishes that, in this collection, have been deemed superfluous and distracting. Albahari's exploration and continued evolution prove again that he is one of the major writers of our time.

Columbia University, New York

D. Rajković. *Iza koprene mraka*. Chicago: Self-published, 2003, 144 pages.

Reviewed by *Vasa D. Mihailovich*

A prominent Serbian writer in the diaspora, D. Rajković has published his fourth book, *Iza koprene mraka* (Behind the Veil of Darkness). It contains a long novella and twenty five poems. In this sense, it differs from his previous books, which are straightforward as far as the genres are concerned. The tone and nature of this book, however, extends the author's preoccupation with the memories of the tragic past and with his loyalty to those who had traversed the same road as he did. The tumultuous events of World War II continue to absorb his attention, indicating that they were the event of his life, just as they were for many of his compatriots who shared the same views.

The novella "Behind the Veil of Darkness" deals with the unbelievably rocky road of a fellow Chetnik fighter against the Partisans, who, though very young, went through many battles as well as jails and tortures to which the victorious Partisans had subjected him. Rajković refrains from political and ideological discussions; he only uses facts as the driving force, thus bolstering the highly dramatic quality of the story. At the same time, it is not so much the artistic quality of the novella as an example of man's cruelty to man that makes this work exceptional; it is its universality. Darkness is still around us in many areas, not only in the author's memory or imagination.

The poems in the second half of the book represent the author's homage to many of his friends who suffered the same fate of exile and of breaking connections with the homeland for decades. All of them have passed away, although they are still alive in the poet's memory and in his almost spiritual attachment to them. As he says in the introductory poem to this section, "Usamljen sve više" (Alone Ever More), "I understand the silent call of the co-sufferers, / For we stood all before the same grave, / We all belong to the world of martyrs. / Both those who are dead and those alive / Traversed together the same Calvary, / To turn out after the war as culprits / And to be maligned, to everybody's shame..." It is this sense of injustice that galls the poet more than anything else. These poems, written in a traditional, beautifully rhymed style, combine the matter and form in a skillful fashion.

Because of his age, Rajković hints that this may be his swan song, although he plans to publish his articles on literature of Serbian writers in exile. It would indeed be unfortunate if he were to set aside his pen, for there are few writers who can draw the subject matter from personal experience and transform them into genuine artistic expressions.

University of North Carolina

Vasa Mihailović. *Tango*. Chapel Hill: University of North Carolina Press, 2004, 105 pages.

Reviewed by *Jelena Milojković-Djurić*

The latest collection of poems in prose by Vasa Mihailović, *Tango*, is an anthology of poems that he wrote over a number of years. The poems had been originally written in Serbian and subsequently translated into English by the author and by a number of his colleagues. Mihailović has arranged his poems in four cycles, in accordance with the underlying thematic affinity and content.

The first cycle, titled "Tango," contains poems that he wrote while musing about the ever-present visions of nature that delighted his mind and his senses. The poems reflect his heightened awareness of the subtle and ephemeral changes of nature and the constancy of inherent harmony of its sights and sounds. The second cycle, "Moonlight Sonata," presents a collection of poems depicting lyrical and nostalgic reflections, fleeting romantic encounters and remembrances. The third cycle, "Human Symphony," recalls memories often tinged with a note of sadness and contemplation, reaching back to difficult times of parting from the native soil, journeys into the

unknown, as well as an acceptance of the chosen path. The poem “Christ over the Battlefield,” remains surprisingly timeless by depicting a group of unknown soldiers involved in a deadly battle. How sad that such a confrontation persists to plague us even at the dawn of the twenty-first century. The last cycle, “Christmas in the Old Country,” shows at its best Mihailović’s poetic ability to portray the remembrances of events and personages of the historic past with restrained eloquence, sometimes consisting of no more than a few lines.

These poetic offerings point to the wide range of Mihailović’s interests and concerns about his fellow man, as well as the world at large that he observed and made his own. Although highly idiosyncratic, the collected poems in prose point to the influence of the poet Jovan Dučić. In a note to the writer of this review, Vasa Mihailović acknowledged that Dučić indeed captured his imagination since his high school days. Dučić was his favorite poet and the teacher of the poetic art, and subsequently continued to provide incentive for his poetic musings. Mihailović, a noted literary scholar, writer, and poet, established his special position within the Serbian literary scene. The restrained emotional vocabulary, the elegance and clarity of chosen words, illuminate the multitude of his intellectual, humanistic, and emotional pursuits.

Texas A&M University

Marija Bišof. *Zavodenje zvezde*. Belgrade: Sanba. 2002, 71 pages.

Reviewed by *Biljana D. Obradović*

In Marija Bišof’s (1955-) second collection of poems, entitled *The Seduction of a Star* (her first, entitled *Skin on a Power Line* [Belgrade: Čigoja, 2000] dealt with the impersonal, universal, strong voice of reason), we are struck by the concept of the book itself. The idea behind the unusual graphic design of this book lies with the author herself—the whole book including the pages is dark blue, like the sky, with silver letters, page numbers represented as stars, and in the end even includes a musical composition “I Dream Dreams” (lyrics by Laza Kostić; music by Mirosljub Arandelović Rasinski). This book of poems is comprised of three parts (nine poems each): “Avoiding the Star, the Singing of the Star Reader,” “Locating the Star,” and “Exile of the Star.” But each of the poems mirrors others. Each singing has its own little constellation and composition on the title page. The book begins with instructions to the “navigator” to use one’s imagination and read from left to right or between the poems, without an aim.

The voice of the narrator is in first person singular, and it is a woman. In the first part, the narrator explores what she believes certain “stars” are—for example the Star of Might or the Star of Love (the latter should be avoided)—“How can Pisces / charm a Scorpio /.../ when the other is always stronger, / knows how to skillfully / deceive even in stars” (14). There are also the Stars of Imagination and Music, etc. In her stellar travels Bišof intertwines myths, like that of Sheherazade or Hermes. In the second part, the poet explores stars in human body parts, like the eyes, the head, the uterus, throat, heart, even soul, and how to get rid of them. Here the poet’s imagination and creativity take her to new, unexplored paths—the surreal takes over, including a prayer for the return of a star in the eye after it was removed and has left a gaping hole.

In “Star in the Soul” she says,

If you have a star in your soul,
you don’t have it,
because there is no soul.
It doesn’t exist,
except in poems. (42)

It is hard to understand, really, what a star symbolizes in broader terms.

The star in the final and most violent part is ultimately killed and dismembered. Hidden “in the mushroom of a hydrogen bomb, /.../ in a cancer cell / in a fake kiss / in the bowels of death” (46), it is the evil star. “You must find / your evil star / so that sometime, somewhere, / perhaps, / you may find the other,” she recalls, as in the Gardens of Eden where the stars are born. Man always desires to be a star, but once he becomes one, he is no longer a man, only a star (49). You can kill a star with a mirror easily (60).

Bišof ends her book with a line about those who have lost hope. In the end she creates a new meaning of the word “star,” but also of many other things. In terms of semantics, the book is full of surprises.

Xavier University of Louisiana

Rastko Petrović. *Prepiska*. Ed. Radmila Suljagić. Belgrade: Izdanje autora, 2003, 300 pages.

Reviewed by *Mirjana N. Radovanov Matarić*

“This book waited for fourteen years to be published,” says the opening statement, written by the editor of the book, the writer Radmila Suljagić, the retired librarian of the National Library of Serbia in Belgrade. The book is a collection of letters and documents, some of them recently discovered. Since 1921, when the first book by Rastko Petrović (1898–1949) was published, until the beginning of World War II, over seventy authors wrote about him. From 1951, and his second appearance in Serbian literature, another hundred authors added to the literature on Petrović. Called the “writers’ writer,” “literary restlessness,” “the glorious rainbow between the worlds,” Petrović is, like Eluard and Crnjanski, more studied posthumously than he was during his lifetime. Ahead of his time, judged by the small and mediocre, he was misunderstood and belittled, celebrated only by the great.

Petrović’s grandfather was a successful wine merchant; and his grandmother came from an old and very prominent family from Zemun. Their son, Mita Petrović, showed an early talent in art. With no formal art education, he drew geographic maps and historical figures, and became the war artist of the Čačak brigade (1876–78), leaving early documents when there was no photography. His oldest daughter, Nadežda Petrović, inherited his talent and studied art in Munich. Out of his thirteen children, nine survived: Nadežda became a renowned Serbian artist, Rastko, the youngest, one of the greatest Serbian poets. Milica was a poet, too, Jela a musician. Ljubica studied music in Munich, Prague, and Paris. Late in life she painted as well, donating over 600 paintings to the Oncology Institute in Belgrade, and their family house for the Museum of Nadežda and Rastko Petrović. Angelia, the most beautiful of them all, wrote a letter to Leo Tolstoy, inspiring him to write *The Annexation of Bosnia and Herzegovina to Austria*. She also inspired the great sculptor Meštrović to embody her in the caryatids of the Monument to the Unknown Soldier at Avala.

“In Rastko, pain was powerful and joy enormous. He never accepted relative happiness; civilized, he never stayed indifferent; an ideological founder of surrealism, never a surrealist; a talented artist, never a painter; too free to become a Freemason; often out of his country, never an emigrant.”

Out of 103 letters in this book, twenty-nine were written by Rastko Petrović (in Serbian), the rest to him (in English, French, Italian, and Spanish). Translated into Serbian, all those letters offer information about Petrović’s personal life, numerous travels to unusual and faraway places,

friendships with great artists and writers of the world, his diplomatic work, including his last years spent in the Yugoslav Embassy in the U.S. According to the testimony of Helen Lombard, the wife of the French military attaché in Washington, D.C. (in her *Washington Waltz*, 1941), “among all embassies, the Yugoslav had a charm of something new and picturesque, in which famous Balkan hospitality was harmoniously completed with the effervescent spirit of Paris salons.” On her book given to Rastko, in 1942, she wrote the following dedication: “To Rastko Petrović, who is one of the reasons why I have such a high opinion about everything Yugoslav.” Her book is one of the rare documents of that turbulent era, especially valuable to the Serbian—otherwise scant—history of diplomacy and the outstanding intellectuals involved.

Prepiska (Correspondence) also gives us the privilege of getting to know the poet’s family in which the father, Mita Petrović, left his war manuscript (1876—and on) for his thirteen children to finish, in case he fell ill and died. Both father and mother died early, while Rastko was a teenager. Between the two Balkan wars, still a teenager, Rastko helped the wounded soldiers as a nurse. With his three sisters, he retreated across Albania with the Serbian soldiers. Many died. That mass suffering and tragedy stayed in his memory forever.

He published poetry in all the major literary magazines of his time. Major writers greeted him with enthusiasm; the critics denied him any talent. While he was studying in Paris (psychoanalysis and law), he befriended Dušan Matić, Zadkin, Pablo Picasso, Tristan Tsara, Bergson, and Apollinaire. Working on his doctoral dissertation, in Paris, he became friends with other artists of his generation: Risto Stijović, Milo Milunović, Sreten Stojanović, and Sava Šumanović. While working at the Ministry of Culture, he traveled to Africa (Egypt, Sudan, Senegal, Guinea, Sierra Leone, Liberia) and published his travelogue “Africa,” as well as a series of articles “World War in Domestic and Foreign Literature” (including references to Crnjanski, Krleža, and others). He traveled through Europe (London, Paris, Dusseldorf, Cologne, Venice), then lived in Washington, D.C. as a Yugoslav diplomat. He fell in love with the U.S. at first sight. In an enthusiastic letter to his close friend, the wife of the Serbian poet and diplomat Milan Rakić, he expresses his surprise that America is the greatest “pastoral country in the world,” and compares the landscapes to those of his native Šumadija. He praises American people for their childlike gaiety and fantastic hospitality, by which they surpassed all Europeans, including the Serbs.

Rastko Petrović was interested in art and did very successful drawings of people and landscapes. He collected other artists’ works, wrote very significant art critiques in literary magazines, signed N.I. (Not I), published “One

hour with..." (Andre Gide, Picasso, Vlamink, Šumanović, Zadkin, etc). Always interested in anthropology, during his travels he often sketched faces of the natives. Some letters show his study of Native Americans, their art and culture. His letters often illustrate his personal interest in other writers (Virginia Wolfe, Oscar Wilde), many of whom were his personal friends.

Some of Petrović's letters talk about the constraining schedule of his work as diplomat, never leaving him any time for private or artistic needs. Petrović's letters are amusing to read for their wit and sense of humor. He paints a quick, poignant sketch of American society in the prewar, World War II, and post-war eras.

The letters are of great value and interest to a variety of readers: scholars, fans, artists, and writers, and everyone else who enjoys good literature. They offer a remarkable insight into Rastko Petrović's personal interests and friendships with world famous personages, as well as a captivating portrait of an era in Serbian and world history seen through the eyes of an exceptional individual.

Santa Barbara, California

Moma Dimić. *Odlazak u Nemenikuće. Izabrani putopisi. Mladenovac: Šumadijske metafore, 2003, 316 pages.*

Reviewed by *Vasa Mihailovich*

Moma Dimić (1944-) is a leading Serbian writer today and certainly one of the most active ones in the literary life of Serbia. His literary breakthrough was his first, and best, novel, *The Long Life of Tola Manojlović* (1966), that is still reprinted today. His other novels are *Maxim of Serbia from the Home for the Aged* (1971), *A Forest Citizen* (1982), and *The Little Bird* (1989). Dimić has also published several collections of poetry and essays, and has edited several books of various contents. It must be pointed out also that he has shown extraordinary interest in Serbian diaspora writers and has helped them re-establish ties with their emotional and spiritual home.

A tireless and passionate traveler throughout the world, he is the author of seven books of travelogues. After the noted travelogues of Ljubomir Nenadović, Jovan Dučić, Miloš Crnjanski, Rastko Petrović, Isidora Sekulić, and others, this genre is experiencing a renaissance in our time. Several leading writers, Moma Dimić included, write travelogues as well, adding considerably to this genre in Serbian literature. *Odlazak u Nemenikuće. Izabrani putopisi*, as the title implies, is a collection of Dimić's best travelogues culled from those seven volumes. He has traveled to more than forty countries and, it

seems, is far from over with traveling. He travels with insatiable curiosity. However, he visits foreign places not because there are unfamiliar things and phenomena there, but because he tries to establish the uniqueness of those things and to connect them with similar ones somewhere else. What is important, he does not approach new sites with any prejudice, considering all of them to be part and parcel of the whole world.

Among places Dimić has visited are some often-visited ones such as Naples, Athens, Broadway, Dublin, Jerusalem, Shanghai, St. Peterburg, Yasnaya Poljana, even Baghdad—to name a few—but he also described his visits to less known places tourist-wise. Included are also some places in Serbia, such as Nemenikuće (a village near Belgrade), Raška, and Kosovo. It is interesting that he treats all of these places with equal attention.

Dimić's style is, for the most part, down to earth, showing his closeness to the little man as well as his preoccupation with problems of contemporary life, with all its bright and dark aspects. This has made him a very popular writer. At the same time, he often experiments with language, making bold coined words and expressing himself in a highly innovative fashion. Being a poet himself, his writing style is often imbued with lyricism and even pathos. All in all, Moma Dimić's travelogues are delightful to read while, at the same time, they contribute to our appreciation of the world he describes.

University of North Carolina, Chapel Hill

Nevena Teokarović. *Catalogue of Paintings and Drawings with an Autobiographical Sketch by Nevena Teokarović. Introduction by Srđan Marković. Commentaries by Pavle Vasić and Nikola Vučenov. Color photographs by D. Kazić and Đ. Odanović. English translation by Radica Domazetović. Belgrade: Akademija, 2000, 220 pages.*

Reviewed by *Jelena Milojković-Djurić*

This well-illustrated and well-documented volume presents the major artistic works of Nevena Teokarović to the public at large. The book chronicles her maturing as an artist while presenting her major pictorial works tracing the growth of her artistic imagination and creativity. Teokarović's personal recollections of her life's journey reflect, at the same time, the perils of the dictatorial regime of the Communist Party in the aftermath of World War II in Yugoslavia. The members of the Teokarović family have left their mark as the founders of the textile industry in Serbia. They became well-established in the period between the two world wars. After the communist takeover in 1945, the Teokarović properties were nationalized and the rightful owners were removed from their home and deprived of their family's fortune.

Nevena Teokarović, with her family, had to cope with great difficulties inflicted upon her by the communist regime. Yet she persisted in pursuing her chosen artistic path and finished her higher education in Belgrade at the Academy for Applied Arts. She elected the path of an artist because she felt that her artistic talent was a special gift bestowed on her. She recalls, with pleasure and gratitude, her former teachers at the Academy, most of all Pavle Vasić, Vinko Grdan, and Vasa Pomorišac. She singled out the influence of Vinko Grdan, whom she perceived as a person especially close to her. Another powerful experience during her formative years was the exhibit of sculptures by Henry Moore in Belgrade in 1955. She was deeply impressed by Moore's powerful vision in the presentation of human figures. In 1958, she successfully completed the graduate program at the Academy. For her master class graduation project, she designed a tapestry portraying the clash of civilizations between the Old and the New World. She portrayed the Indian warriors confronting their European conquerors. Metaphorically, her composition hinted at her own family's perilous confrontation, as the members of a defeated social class, with the new communist regime in Yugoslavia. In the course of time, her artistic career became a calling that shielded her from life's tribulations. She concedes that it always seemed to her that a painter is more like a monk, who follows his own religion and has a deep need to be alone in utter harmony with his inner self. She preferred to withdraw from public and paint, draw, and sketch in the privacy of her atelier, only

occasionally exhibiting her works. Her first one-woman exhibit took place in Belgrade in 1960 in the prestigious ULUS Gallery. Teokarović exhibited eighteen paintings that dealt with images and motives of classical mythology. She explored the manifest archetypal themes of good and evil permeating human consciousness. Human figures were featured in the center of her artistic universe and her broad application of pigment exuded a powerful vision. At the time she was twenty-seven years old. The iconic images of the classical world became dominant at that time, and continued to be present in her paintings exhibited at several collective exhibitions over the years.

Her artistic renditions often showed a tendency for intense coloration, emphasizing an impressive linear definition. In 1987 she had a retrospective exhibit of her works, presenting a selection of her earlier, as well as some recent paintings, water colors, and drawings. Portraiture gradually became an important aspect of her artistic work. She captured images of her immediate family, as well as of her students and acquaintances. Most importantly, she gradually emerged as a foremost landscape artist, choosing the exceptional geographic and historical sights of her native land. She chose water colors most often to convey the first impression that attracted her to any specific sight. Her landscapes had an airy impression as if captured from an elevated point in time and space with a delicate touch and refined hues. The general mode of these landscapes presents the contemplative and lyrical outlook of an accomplished artist projecting impressions of life's fleeting moments of beauty.

The testimonies of her former teacher Pavle Vasić, the art critic Nikola Vučenov, and in particular the studious "Introduction" to this monograph by Srđan Marković, furnish valuable interpretations of Teokarović's contribution to the world of fine arts. Her own narrative, based on recollections of her childhood and her adult life, elucidates her personal point of view about her life and her art, as well as of the social and political circumstances in Serbia. It should be noted that all mentioned texts are translated into English, thus enabling a larger readership to partake in the artistic legacy of Nevena Teokarović.

Texas A&M University

Nina Živančević. *Death of New York City, Selected Poems*. Foreword by Charles Simić. Illustrations by Enzo Cucci. New York: Cool Grove Press, 2002, 127 pages.

Reviewed by *Biljana D. Obradović*

Born in Belgrade in 1957, Nina Živančević studied in the U.S. and currently lives in Paris. She has written nine books of poems published in Serbian and English, but she is also an essayist, a fiction writer, an art critic, and a contributing editor. As Simić says in his foreword, “the voice that comes through in her [selected] poems is that of an exile, of someone who travels with eyes and ears open. The genius of her lies in her ability to make surprising connections between diverse cultures and literatures.” Radmila Lazić also says, “She is a narrative poet, who writes with an urban rhythm and uses colloquial language, with seeming simplicity, yet unexpected associations and lyrical feeling, with great wealth of themes and motifs, so rare in Serbian poetry [and] cultural and literary allusions in her poetry occur often.” “The richness and range [of these poems] that is truly rare” says Simić, unfortunately gets lost in this book due to poor copyediting, namely missing end quotes, replacing hyphens with dashes, missing punctuation, and a lack of uniformity with regard to initial letters, which are neither all capitals nor the beginning of sentences, but a mixture of the two. Also, there are awkward stanza breaks with whole stanzas appearing on the next page when one would think the poem has ended earlier—all of which confuses and distracts the reader.

The book contains five titled sections with seventy-seven poems. The poems show a great command of English for a non-native speaker. This can be seen in the internal rhymes, even though the poems are in free verse (except for one sonnet), as well as in the great word play in the poem “They Blame Me:”

because I liked to explain myself I was telling
 every ‘because,’ because
 be a cause and not a consequence
 because only a cause and not a consequence
 has a sequence
 because....

(65)

Živančević’s poems often come in named or unnamed parts, ranging from very short to several pages long, as is the title poem. She has numerous catalogue poems, and employs allusions and references to people and places all over the world. Her images are surreal, Simić-like, often surprising, as in

these lines: “You fed me with stained and broken mirrors” (“Stained,” 4). She uses striking, original similes and personification. She observes life as an artist and voices her views as a feminist and as a social critic. One can best see this in a poem entitled “If,” where she writes about “a man / Who was so stupid that he was claiming / That he was a poet—” and another with whom she lived who “Had nothing to do with ‘ars poetica,’ but who allowed / [Her] silence to grow” (9). Women whom men want to silence will turn the other way if they are brave enough, as the speaker herself does here: “Once I was so threatened for my life / That I started speaking incessantly [...] which like magic / Finally liberated my soul” (10). In “Sketches from Byzantium” she steps into the feminist mode:

It was
and definitely still is
a man’s world,
I said as I watched
[...]
hammams where the royal concubines used to live
die and make their sad intrigues,
create perverse gossips [...]
the first feminists
must have been born there where the feminine
was denied with such brutality
and cruel disrespect for anything human. (24–25)

In “Reprise Poem” she is thinking of living in the free Western world, in this case London: “I thought freedom was smoking / on a train in full swing [...] / in London, 1975. Today I see that to be free is / nothing but to wake with a smile.” However, even in the West things have changed since then “and you cannot smoke anywhere but in your / bathroom, while your son is asleep. / I used to live under a Communist regime / but they changed its name to fascism” (57).

But what will ultimately remain with the readers is Živančević’s love/hate relationship with New York and its dangers (Central Park, the subway, immigration problems) and injustices. She may have titled her book *Death of New York* much before the September 11th disaster, but the connection is poignant and striking as her poem “East Side Blues Again” says:

From the top of the World Trade Center—
now you want art! ... when
every second person is black in the New York jails

...
 you seek social justice, and then you
 think education so you can learn
 that what you earn in a day
 equals the average annual income of Ethiopia. (101)

In this book Živančević speaks for all those artists living in exile who find home away from home and have a need to speak openly and honestly.

Xavier University of Louisiana

Milivoj Srebro, ed. *Anthologie de la nouvelle serbe*. Paris: Gaia Editions, 2003. p. 412.

Reviewed by *Nina Živančević*

An anthology of Serbian short stories has recently been published by a young and ambitious French publishing house, Editions Gaia. The selection was made by Milivoj Srebro, a professor of literature at the University of Bordeaux, and it includes twenty-one Serbian authors from 1950 to 2000. For those unfamiliar with current publishing tendencies in France, this undertaking may seem a typical sampling of foreign literature, written in a language spoken in a relatively small region of the globe. For others, fewer in number, this is an exceptional literary and publishing event. Indeed, within the last two decades few books have been translated from either Serbian or Croatian and published in France where the cultural and anti-war climate has discouraged the publications of writers from ex-Yugoslavia—only a handful of publishers have had the courage to publish authors whose last names ended in *ić* or *ich*—most did not even agree to read manuscripts, and even when they published them, the reading public shied away from them. Fortunately, these times seem to be behind us now, and Srebro's anthology exemplifies the change. The collection essentially covers the challenging years of the former Yugoslav literary experience—the 1950s, 1960s, and 1970s—followed by the post-Tito era and the development which mostly embodies the postmodern experience in contemporary Serbian writing.

Srebro's introduction is informative and well written. First, he provides a historical survey of the Serbian short story from the nineteenth century until the most recent publications of contemporary authors. His is a formidable effort if we consider the fact that the short story genre is often greeted without much enthusiasm by publishers and even a part of the literary critical

establishment. The short story is often considered a minor genre, less difficult to compose or less interesting in aesthetic terms than the novel, although Srebro argues in his introduction that the opposite is true. Once he has overcome the initial resistance to the genre, the anthologist must confront the ungrateful task of making a selection in which many prominent authors will be excluded; what we have in hand is merely a small sampling of an otherwise vast and versatile literature. Patrick Besson, a French author who has reviewed this anthology for a French daily newspaper, dwelled on the fact that “he himself was hoping to find a young Serbian woman in Srebro’s selection, a girl with a tattoo and a nose-ring walking through the streets of Belgrade, but he searched in vain.” His quest raises a legitimate query about Srebro’s selection of authors as well as the essential question that we ask ourselves as we open this book: What are the features of the Serbian short story and what does it tell us in light of the most recent events in Serbia at the beginning of the twenty-first century? Srebro’s anthology only provides a partial response to these questions. However, one will notice that the collection is entitled “Serbian Short Stories” and not “Contemporary Serbian Short Stories.” A book like this does not appear every week—not even every decade—so one must try to include as much literary information in it as possible.

And yet, there is a postmodern section in the collection, devoted to such contemporary authors as David Albahari, Radoslav Petković, Svetislav Basara—in other words, the authors who were contemporaries of the horrible events of the 1990s, including the destruction of Vukovar, and who have tried to position themselves in relation to these events. One of the real assets of this anthology is Srebro’s explanation about this era of Serbian history, as well as of the political period preceding the end of Titoism, an overview that has been virtually nonexistent in any book of this sort published in Serbia or in Eastern Europe. The hammer of ideology that, according to Srebro, indirectly forged the literary creations of authors such as Alexander Tišma, Dragoslav Mihailović, Borislav Pekić, Danilo Kiš, and Milisav Savić, and which formed their strange and realistic fiction, has also served to shape, to a certain extent, the phantasmagoric and surrealist fiction of Miodrag Bulatović and Milorad Pavić. A similar effect has been left on the works of younger authors such as Vidosav Stevanović, Dragan Velikić, and Svetislav Basara. It is interesting to follow the impact that the social, ideological, and political situation in Serbia has left on their works, and here one could notice that it is almost easier to trace certain phenomena in French translation than in the works’ original language. As Shklovsky once put it, “one has to defamiliarize oneself with an object in order to see it clearer.” The translations are quite competent—Jean Desca, Maria Bezanovska, Harita Wybrands, Pascal Delpech, and Anne

Renoue (with Vladimir Andre Cheyovitch) have done an admirable job. However, most of the translations are by Alain Cappon, hired especially by Editions Gaia for this collection. This team has proven that there is still room for fine translations that read almost like the original, which is a truly difficult task when attempting to render Slavic idioms into Romance languages.

Perhaps the only serious reservation—although a large one—is the absence of women writers. Even if we set aside all recent feminist and gender theories in literature, we must still admit that Serbian literature has a number of important female writers and their work has a genuine literary value. It is astonishing that at the beginning of the 21st century one can omit such writers as Isidora Sekulić, Vida Ognjenović, Biljana Jovanović, Ljubica Arsić, and Gordana Ćirjanić, to name just a few.

Be that as it may, this anthology remains an extremely valuable book, although its contents—due to its form and nature—are inevitably based on the editor's personal literary taste. However, its subjectivity does not disturb the reader because, from beginning to end, it is drawn together by an invisible lyrical thread which binds the authors as much as their stories together, and we can only hope that such an admirable publishing enterprise will serve as a model for a future generation of publishers and anthologists in France and abroad. There was a void, an empty space on the map of world literature today, which Srebro has now begun to fill in by providing Western readers with a long-overdue access to some of the finest examples of Eastern European literary imagination.

Paris, France

Tibor Živković. *Sloveni i Romeji. Slavizacija na prostoru Srbije od VII do XI veka*. Belgrade: Istorijски institut SANU, 2000, pp. 203; with an index and bibliography of primary sources.

Reviewed by *Jelena Milojković-Djurić*

The historian Tibor Živković aims to answer several questions pertaining to the settlements of the Slavs in the Balkan peninsula. He also deals with the whereabouts of the previous Roman settlers who populated these regions before the Slavic onslaught. Furthermore, he tries to delineate the ethnic regions settled by the Slavs and the one occupied by the older Romans settlements. Finally, Živković attempts to determine the length of time needed for the slavization of the former Romans settlers.

Živković explains that he uses the term *Romeji/Romani* (Romans), in order to facilitate the exposition of his narrative. Romans enjoyed the

citizenship of the Roman Empire regardless of their ethnic identity and maternal language, Greek or Latin.

The settling of the Slavs proceeded in two stages. The first stage encompassed the years from 614 to 617, during which the Slavs crossed the present territory of Serbia and settled on the territory of ancient Macedonia, Middle Greece, Peloponnesus, and Epirus. One stream of Slavic settlers invaded the territory bordering present Bulgaria and Yugoslavia that gravitates towards West Bulgaria. During the second stage between 627 and 634, the Serbs, as the leading tribe of a broader tribal union, settled in present-day Central and Western Serbia, Montenegro, Eastern Herzegovina, and Eastern Bosnia along the central section of the Drina river. Živković concluded that the Slavic settlements did not take place before the end of the sixth century.

As a consequence, the urban population of the Illyrian provinces embarked on a protracted migratory process during the last quarter of the sixth century. They had searched for safe havens in more secure parts of the Empire, most likely in the regions of Thessalonika and Thrace. However, the urban population was less numerous compared to the Roman rural populace. The latter group took refuge in more remote areas remaining on the periphery of the Slavic onslaught. Živković concludes that a far greater number of the old Roman settlers remained in the central Balkans regions, forming a wedge between the Eastern and Western South Slavic groups. The Romans were numerous and constituted a large group of early settlers. Besides this ethnically homogenous region, there existed Roman islands oriented in the north-south direction, starting from Singidunum, Arse, Prizren, and between the Ohrid Lake and the Prespa Lake.

Živković comes to the conclusion that the settlements of the Slavs and the subsequent slavization was not an easy and simple process that began in the seventh century. At first, the settlers occupied the regions already vacated by the Romans. However, starting from the ninth century, the Romans began to return to their former regions in the fertile valleys and to the outskirts of large townships. They gradually began closer contacts with the Slavs during the eleventh century and established the ethnic borders of the Balkan peninsula that would be retained until the medieval period. In this respect, the anthropological evidence, comprising skeletal remains, provides additional clarification about the ethnicity of the Roman populace settled along the line bordering Timok-Skopje-Prizren.

Thus, the combined historical and anthropological data, in addition to the linguistic and material findings, confirm that the Slavs settled previously vacated regions during the seventh century. At first, the Slavs used the old Roman settlements and necropolises without getting into closer contact and mixing with the Romans. The migration from original Sclavonia and the

transformation of the former organizational units lasted several centuries. It is only gradually and slowly that, after a millennium of coexistence, a distinct Dinaric racial type prevailed, as well as the use of the Slavic language.

Texas A&M University

Ćorkan and the German Tightrope Walker

by
Ivo Andrić

Translated from the Serbian by John K. Cox*

The circus's arrival was quiet and innocent. While the stakes were being hammered in and the ropes stretched and tightened, no one but children gathered around the site. It was not until the next day, after they had erected the big top for the performances and a smaller tent with the rifle targets, that the circus people paraded through the center of town: a clown with white face paint and a drum, a tightrope walker whose short skirt was made of yellow silk, and the manager wearing a threadbare tailcoat and shabby boots. They had hired Sumbo the Gypsy to walk in front of them playing his *zurna*. Following behind came scores of children and Boško the policeman. Even the shopkeepers paid attention, and the women were peering through the windows of their houses.

The first few evenings passed quietly, but then the boys began gathering in the shooting gallery. They took aim at the targets and, when they hit them, little tin figures would appear: a blacksmith striking a ringing blow against an anvil, or a girl waving her handkerchief. Gradually this target practice developed into a public passion.

Avdaga Sarač—once a well-known drunkard and rowdy, but now a sedate married man—was constantly closing the door of his shop and rushing off to the rifle range. The wife of the manager, stout and wrinkled beneath her blonde wig, loaded the rifles and handed them out. Avdaga would lean over the counter and slowly draw a bead on the target. There was only one of them that he ever aimed at: the one in the middle. When he hit it, up came Leda and, pressed up against her, a swan; after the bird flapped its wings two or three times, everything dropped back out of view. When he missed, he cursed under his breath and reached impatiently for another loaded rifle. But when-

* On the basis of the original story "Ćorkan i Švabica," in *Jelena, žena koje nema: pripovetke, Sabrana dela Ive Andrića*, vol. 7 (Belgrade: Prosveta, 1976), pp. 185-201. The translator would like to thank Dr. Bogdan Rakić, Dr. David Hammond, and Ms. Angela Zambito for their advice on this translation.

ever he hit it, he took a step back in order to get a good look at the naked woman made of white sheet-metal and the swan on top of her. He muttered under his breath:

“Look how white she is, the bitch!”

And his eyes glistened like those of a man who is a connoisseur of both good rifles and beautiful women.

The passion spread and rose to a new pitch. Schoolchildren joined in, as did young bachelors and shopkeepers. Apprentices often showed up and called out to their masters, who in turn just swore absent-mindedly and chased them away. Avdaga’s apprentice got such a thrashing that he dared not enter the shooting gallery anymore; instead, he yelled from a distance:

“Master, Mullah Mujo from Okrugla is here to see you. He’s waiting at the shop.”

But his master did not even turn around; he just set his sights on Leda and the swan. And if he missed them, he would run the apprentice away and try to hit him with whatever was at hand.

“May the devil take you! And tell the man to get lost, too. What do I need to do with some old Mullah Mujo?”

And he picked up another loaded rifle.

But in the evenings, it was the tightrope walker that made the small town delirious and held all the menfolk spellbound.

In her short skirt and black stockings that stretched up to her hips, and swinging a little green umbrella, she walked across the entire circus tent on a wire up in the air, gliding forward sometimes on one foot and sometimes on both. Everyone gaped at her, slack-jawed and amazed. The lights of the tent flickered in their staring eyes. And, at the end, when she leapt into the director’s arms and disappeared behind the canvas screen, everyone was worn out—and enthralled, as if they had been stargazing. But afterwards they went out on terrifying binges, marked by all sorts of singing and brawling.

This second-rate tightrope walker in a little circus took on an ominous and mysterious grandeur in the provincial town. She filled it with turmoil, provoking whispers and tears in the homes and stirring huge, delirious desires in men’s hearts. In the minds (and even the dreams) of the wives and the older daughters, she figured constantly as a faceless, slimy, mysterious monster.

The little children were the only ones who were taken by the acrobat and the clown in this same way. They talked about them constantly and practiced their tricks on the town square: balancing sticks on their noses and giving each other resounding slaps that didn’t really hurt.

But people had been seized by a collective madness and frenzy of the sort that sometimes crops up in sleepy, isolated communities.

In the past this had already happened: the whole town, for some trivial reason or another, suddenly loses its head. Those sagging little houses, which usually look as serene as a worker at the end of the day, become a kind of hell. But this time even the quietest people, and folks who had long ago sworn off carousing, began to drink and brawl. Some of them did not come home for whole days and nights; others were brought home bloody or unconscious.

That fall the plum trees bore more fruit than they ever had before. People sold vast quantities of them and still all the wooden tubs were chock-full; plums overflowed onto the ground and spread far and wide the alcoholic aroma of fermentation. That fall a song came into vogue, too: "Oh, my necklace, my necklace, oh pure gold of mine." At the Nativity of the Virgin, more women walked up to Ćajniće, to the Mother of God, than ever before. And even the Turkish women slipped them a few coins for oil or candles, thinking it might help ward off evil spells and other troubles from the town.

The first man to see the tightrope walker and start talking about her was Ćorkan, the "one-eyed"; he was also the one who was to be involved in the most foolishness and scandal on her account.

He was the son of a Gypsy woman and an Anatolian soldier. A miserable, fatherless half-caste, Ćorkan worked as a porter and a servant and more or less functioned as the village idiot. For all the weddings and celebrations, he would get decked out in a ragged red and green outfit and a big hat with a fox-tail hanging down in back. He was a kind of master of ceremonies and would dance and drink until he passed out.

He worked for everybody, at every type of job, and it almost seemed like he never aged; this is how people remembered him, and this is how one generation passed him along to the next.

He also worked at odd jobs in the circus. He swept up and brought sawdust and water by day, and as soon as it grew dark he was the first to get drunk. With tears in his eyes he watched the dancer up on the wire, and he kept time with the music with his trembling hand. And after the performance, he kept on drinking and waiting on the prominent shopkeepers, because as long as anyone could remember he had been a constant presence whenever the village got down to serious drinking. When he was in his cups he babbled on about the dancer and boasted that he was the only one who spoke with her "in German, like some military officer." The shopkeepers put a paper hat on his head and set it on fire; they mixed gunpowder into his cigarettes; they doused him with plum brandy and beat him. It would all end in a horrible and vulgar scene.

Ćorkan was the first to burst into flames, and then the whole town caught fire. Everybody talked only about the tightrope walker. She was in every song and in every whisper.

The mayor closed the cafés and threatened to kick both the circus and the dancer out of town, but nothing seemed to work. The carousing was repeated daily, and it grew more and more rabid.

But Ćorkan's personality completely changed, as if he had been hit by some kind of calamity. He could barely bring himself to do the most basic tasks, and he moved like a sleepwalker. He forgot things easily. His songs no longer rang out in the marketplace, and neither did he dance around at the crossroads any more, like he used to do almost every day. He had spells of dizziness and he trembled in his sleep; he was dangerously elated and dwelt on the edge of a widening abyss. And from aloft he looked down on his life and the town. Love was growing inside him, and it felt like this love was making him stronger.

The dawns were accompanied by heavy dew. The shopkeepers were asleep, but Ćorkan would get up from his bed in the hay and go to work, sweeping out the shops, carrying water for the circus. One day he awoke furious and resentful at himself.

The night before he had only eaten sauerkraut, out of a barrel of brine, and he hadn't drunk much at all. And yet—how heavy and slow he felt this morning! He was barely able to put one foot in front of the other, and the ground before him seemed to be rising. His legs carried a load meant for three men. Or for ten—but even for them it would've been too much. How leaden he felt!

“And she dances on the tightrope!” And she's light as a feather and she swings her leg around up there, and she's practically flying around like one of those golden beetles that buzz through the shimmering, overheated air above pine-wood shingles. There is indeed so much to behold in this world. One can't even imagine everything that's in it. So many things! All sorts of things! Ćorkan felt thoughts like these fill his heart and expand it, as if it were inflating.

The evenings preserved for a long while the rosy glow of the autumn sun above the town. As soon as night fell and the lights came on, the drunkards revived. That's the time when the circus began. And then later, when the lanterns in front of the circus were put out and the dancer, worn out by poverty, age, and travel, fell asleep in the green circus van, everybody thronged to the tavern.

There Ćorkan poured drinks for the shopkeepers. He himself drank excessively and explained to them the meaning of love, which none of them had apparently ever known.

“This is nothing for you to laugh at! I can't read and I don't have much money, but I know it all, and I see everything. I've only been so messed up

since she got here. With her in town, I'm done for. Finished. Know what I mean?"

The old Ćorkan was nowhere to be found. Now he sat in the half-light. His head sank down onto his chest in the posture of a military commander or a man lost in contemplation. Once in a while, he would emit a quick sigh and let loose a torrent of words.

"Oh, well, what can you do? I've slaved away here harder than anybody. If I piled up all the sacks of salt, bags of grain, and pails of water that I toted around on my back, it would be enough to bury two towns like this one without a trace. But nobody knows what old Ćorkan is made of! Hey, listen, for sixteen years I toiled like a slave for Suljaga. You know, he had four sons and I raised all four of them myself. These kids were spoiled, like all rich kids, so they would climb on my back and ride around on me, kicking me in the chest. And then their father provided them with spurs and a whip so they could really go at me. So I ran around, neighing like a stallion. It was all I could do to shield my eyes with my hand so they wouldn't blind me. Oh, Lord, I don't have a single friend anywhere. If somebody's cow dies—call Ćorkan, to skin it and bury it! If a puppy comes down with rabies—come on, Ćorkan, kill it and toss it in the stream! And for years and years nobody has cleaned out as many cesspools as me."

With that, he held his head up high and spoke with bitterness and pride, like a man who had worked hard and who knew it.

"Hey, all of you guys lock up your houses at night and go to bed, but that's just when I'm heading out. I pull on those trousers, the ones I got from Sumbul when he passed away, and I take my helper with me, and all night long we carry away the gunk, barrel by barrel. The next morning, when folks come by, they still have to pinch their noses. My eyes stay red and I shake all over until I down a shot of something."

The shopkeepers laughed and slapped their sides. Ćorkan groaned. He was ever more afflicted by that painful and peevish sincerity that so often causes drunks to cry. This is because part of paradise is revealed to a drunk. But it's a part he will never enter.

That is how Ćorkan had felt ever since he was smitten by the German tightrope walker. White and airy, new vistas opened up before his eyes, and he was plagued by the need to pour out his soul to someone. He was in love, and the moment he got drunk he "looked into his heart" and saw himself "as he really was." He also saw the other Ćorkan, the one who digs ditches and graves and pits for dead animals, the one who does his daily dance in the middle of the marketplace and plays the fool for the amusement of the shopkeepers. And the tremendous contrast between the two Ćorkans caused him great pain; it was due to this gulf between them that he now sat with his head

in his hands, lost in thought. He was trying in vain to give voice to his pain. But it was bigger than anything a person can imagine, let alone express. He went on:

“But what courage I have!”

He smacked his chest loudly and his one eye grew round and roamed across all their faces.

“Your whole marketplace doesn’t have as much courage as I do. You see, the mayor issues a warning and you’re all ready to abandon her. And for a hundred *forints* you’d pillory her in public. But Ćorkan says ‘Hell, no! Over my dead body!’ I will not give her up. Not even the Emperor himself could lay a hand on her.”

He was panting with asthmatic excitement. The shopkeepers laughed a little, but they listened a bit, too.

On other evenings he lost his head completely and spoke about nothing except the tightrope walker, or else he brought up people who had died, weeping wildly as if they had passed away just yesterday.

And so the days passed as copies of one another: circus performances, shooting, the shouting of children, hidden tears inside the houses, and drinking bouts. These were wild binges that started by themselves the moment night fell and pulled everyone into their midst. The whole town drank. Some shops did not open back up at all. This went on until, early one evening, someone spread a rumor that the mayor had finally ordered the circus to get out of town within twenty-four hours.

By noon that day, Ćorkan went out into the countryside while everybody else was still asleep. Right beside the river he made a little hut out of willow branches. In the afternoon he slaughtered a lamb and placed watermelons and bottles of brandy into the water. Then he waited for the guests. The first to arrive was Avdaga Sarač.

Green plants cloaked the banks. Under the men’s feet the water gurgled. Over the course of the day the leaves on the hut had dried out, and now they rustled continuously in the wind that always picks up towards evening.

They pulled off some meat for a snack before the others arrived. Ćorkan ate, while Avdaga just nibbled; he dipped his moistened index finger into the salt and barely touched the cheese. They drank in moderation. They lit up, and then smoke streamed out of Avdaga’s moustache.

“Hey, Ćorkan! What would you do if they just gave her to you? If they said, simple as you please, ‘Here you go! She’s yours. Now do whatever you want with her!’ Huh?”

“Maybe I wouldn’t do anything.”

“What?”

“Well, I don’t think I would touch her. That’s just the way it is.”

“You’re lying, you sonofabitch. You’d grind the life out of her.”

A faint grin rested on Avdaga’s lips as he reproached Ćorkan with a slight nod of his head.

“No, I wouldn’t do that. I swear it on my life. Good grief, man.... I go to sleep every evening in Ragibeg’s hayloft and dream about her: standing up on that wire, on one leg, spreading her arms in the air while she does like this with her other leg....”

And, with this, he stopped eating and used the palm of one hand and the fingers of the other to show how the tightrope walker balanced on one leg during her performance.

“Lord have mercy! And then I wake up and feel all over the hay and knotted planks with my hands. Then sadness takes hold of me and my heart just seems to swell and swell until I fall back to sleep.”

At that point Master Stanoje and Kosta Mutapčija arrived with a few others. Sumbo had just wiped his moustache and started warming up on his *zurna* when Pašo the Butcher got there. It was he who brought the news that the circus, and the tightrope walker, had to leave town by noon the next day.

An embarrassed silence followed. Ćorkan turned green about the gills and he merely shifted his gaze from one man to the next. The shopkeepers began a new conversation, but he still couldn’t pull himself together. Something in him was quivering so fast that it deprived him of his ability to speak. It also paralyzed his memory. He felt such a sharp, visceral pain deep inside him that he neither dared to move nor was capable of doing so. And his immobilized face took on a look of mad fright. The others had to nudge him to get him to cut the meat and pour the brandy for them.

Mist formed over the stubble in the fields, and the fire burned keenly now, without smoke. Sumbo set about playing and all at once everybody started shouting in unison. Avdaga was drinking brandy out of a small Turkish coffee cup, clinking glasses with the others and emptying his own again and again.

“To your health! To your health!”

Night fell all around. No one spoke about either the tightrope walker or the mayor. Instead they struck up one new song after another. They drank rapidly and the time slipped by.

Ćorkan sat there, unresponsive. It was like he was paralyzed, and his drinking and singing were in vain. He continued to shake incessantly, and his ears were filled with the painful screeching of his own voice.

At some point the fire went out. The stars glittered up above, and the men headed back to town. They stumbled frequently and grabbed hold of the fences, which in turn wobbled and sagged and cracked. And so they made it to town. Sumbo went in front, incessantly playing his reedy, high-pitched

tunes, and behind him came the rest of them, making a great uproar. They slapped Ćorkan repeatedly on his skullcap.

Nights like this made the town feel cramped to the heavy drinkers. The stars hung big and bright in the low autumn sky, and every few minutes one of them would split off from the others and fall. The drinkers felt both distant places and great heights roaring towards them. Feeling the rush in the air and in their heads, each of them merged his own voice with the wind and the roar. These were voices now deep, altered, vigorous, and alien. With this sense of force and grandeur in mind, the town was like a lifeless plaything before their ambling stride and wide-open eyes.

The troop came to a halt and then somehow managed to file across a small wooden bridge. Their steps rang out loudly beneath them.

They then burst like a torrent into Zarija's tavern. The windows fogged up immediately. Nothing could be heard over the *zurna*, yelling, and muffled stomping. Master Stanoje, whom the whole town called Zalumac, was leading the ring dance. He was bent and gray-haired, but he danced well, placing one leg precisely in front of the other. Next to him danced cross-eyed Šaha, a tomboyish Gypsy, and then came Manguraš, Avdaga, and Hadji Šeta. Further on was Santo, the hardware dealer. The last dancer was Sarajevo Dimšo, a fop with a Hungarian hairstyle.

Vapors and dust swirled above them.

The ring dance ended and Master Stanoje directed the musicians to play to the tune of Ćorkan's broken heart. There was more howling and laughter. They downed their drinks and spilled quite a few, too.

"Aiiiee!"

"Die, Ćorkan!"

"Your German girl is leaving!"

All this grieved Ćorkan even more.

"Well, now, I thank you, Master Stanoje, for your insults this evening. After all the bread and salt we've eaten together, you have to go and offend me? So I'm thanking you. By all means!"

Tears welled up in his single eye. Everything grew bigger and more significant. It was past midnight.

Stanoje calmed Ćorkan down by talking to him soberly and condescendingly.

"Be quiet, man! We'll get her up on that wire again this very night. She'll dance, all right, even if—"

Stanoje was interrupted by a wave of shouts.

"She'll have to dance!"

"A belly-dance!"

Everything plunged into confusion. Some new men joined up with them. The whole group then came flying out of the inn as if someone had tossed them. Master Stanoje was at the head of the pack. Ćorkan staggered along next to him, saying:

“You’ve insulted me, my friend. And that hurts me right here!”

But nothing could be heard over the song, the music, and the loud calls back and forth.

In front of the town hall, little pine trees and oak branches had been driven into the ground, and lanterns hung on them. The officers had held some celebration there earlier that evening. Without a moment’s hesitation, the men ripped up the trees and branches. Master Stanoje lined the group up in rows and issued commands. They moved along like a religious procession, with each man holding a little pine tree or paper lantern in front of him. He even stuck an oak branch into Ćorkan’s hands, who tramped along oblivious to it, muttering constantly:

“So much love and friendship, and you stand there and tell me that...”

They arrived at the circus. Ćorkan discarded his branch and, with his hand, numb with cold, reached out to feel the canvas. It was still there, all of it. Some of the men were beating on the windows of the circus wagon. Others were looking for the entrance to the tent. They were all jostling each other and calling back and forth. The walls of the tent, shimmering in the gloom, swung gently.

The manager showed up with a candle. He had hastily thrown a cloak over his shoulders and now was trembling with cold and fright. The men surrounded him, waving their branches and lanterns.

“Open up!”

“Make her dance!”

“Hold on—I want to tell him!”

They were all yelling at once. Someone went off and banged with great force on the yellow sheet-metal of Mušan’s barbershop, which stood right next to the circus.

By now, Ćorkan had also forgotten his misery. He regained his courage—and his strength—and, as he climbed up onto a stack of barrels, he screamed at the manager:

“Who gives a damn about the mayor? You and he can both go to hell! She’s going to dance, and you and the mayor are going to hold some candles for light. Make some light! Hold the candles for us!”

They all cursed the mayor. Ćorkan was the most enraged one of them all. Master Stanoje was standing closest to the manager. He grabbed hold of the man’s coat and fixed his cold green eyes on him. Master Stanoje said to him, in a restrained, sober voice:

“Where is the girl that we want to dance? We have money.”

Sarajevo Dimšo joined the conversation to translate. He spoke with a bit of a foreign accent, like soldiers do, and he told the manager:

“Your girl is going to dance for us.”

“Please, please—all right! She’ll dance!”

But others pushed forward, waving their arms.

“Where is she? Bring her here!”

“The rope! The rope!”

“Put up the tightrope!”

Finally the two men agreed that the crowd would go on in and sit down while the manager went to wake up the girl. She had to get dressed.

Some of the men stumbled over the ropes and boards; they lost their balance and fell down, or caught themselves on the canvas walls of the tent. The group made it inside with difficulty, and Ćorkan, after considerable effort, lit two lamps. They all blinked and looked around at each other.

“Sit down!” shouted Stanoje.

Some of them took a seat on the benches, others on the ground. Some weren’t interested in sitting at all; they stood there waving their arms and singing. Ćorkan played the host. He was scraping the sawdust around with his foot and then trying to stamp it flat again, but he kept tripping and staggering. His shadow was inconstant, foreshortened, absurd. The others, confused by the light, blinked with intoxication.

Sumbo started up a song, but in vain, because he was constantly interrupted. Everybody demanded he play something different. Pašo the Butcher fell asleep on a thin bench made of unplanned wood. It bent under his weight. Master Stanoje was overcome by an attack of hiccups. He lowered his head, breathing heavily and sitting there as serenely as if he were in church. But from time to time he still shook all over.

The pale moments before dawn came. Bodies cool off then, and grow tired; the eyesight becomes weak, consciousness dulls, and appetites fade. Only two things can excite one’s numb and distracted consciousness: the prurient heat of thoughts about something strange and wonderful, like the body of this woman from another land up on the high wire, or the thought of anything at all that is painful, violent, or shameful.

But the manager, instead of waking up the acrobat, merely checked the lock on the wagon again. Then he headed to the police station, panting and stumbling over the cobblestones. The drunken men grew impatient. And then right at sunrise the gendarmes showed up.

On the following day news of the scandal spread. The shopkeepers were called to the mayor’s office. They returned to their shops for money and paid their heavy fines. The circus pulled up its stakes and wound up its ropes. The

town square reverberated with the sounds of trunks being nailed shut. And towards evening the tent in the middle of the green collapsed like a blister. Everything was then loaded onto carts, and at dawn the next day they set off.

Ćorkan was the only one they kept behind bars. They tied him up, and bony old Sergeant Ibrahim beat him with a vinegar-soaked ox whip. Ćorkan jerked his head at each blow, talking rapidly until he gagged. Tearfully, he implored the sergeant in his thin, high Gypsy voice: "Don't beat me! I'm not guilty. How could I even think of contradicting the mayor? What could this German tightrope walker possibly want with a Gypsy scoundrel like me?"

To each blow he responded with more and more screaming. Desperately rolling his one eye, his face was childlike: small, and covered with tears, and still sooty from the night before.

"I didn't do it... I didn't. Have mercy! I want to kiss his feet. Help me, good sir, dear Mr. Mayor! You're killing me, wretch that I am. Never again! Don't, Sergeant Ibrahim, in the name of God!"

But Sergeant Ibrahim kept beating him—steadily, horribly, frightfully. He beat him as he was ordered to do: "until you drive all the love and foolishness out of him." He beat Ćorkan long enough to deprive him of his voice; he beat him until he could not scream any more, until only frothy spit gushed from the man's lips. That's how they left him.

Afterwards, he fell into a deep, long sleep, during which he moaned and whimpered like a little puppy. Sergeant Ibrahim's children climbed up to the prison window and looked in at him. When he awoke, he found bread by his side. There was also a pot of beans, the top layer of which had congealed and was now coated with a thin film.

At dusk they released him. He dragged himself off to the hayloft and fell asleep again. Several days passed in this way. Whenever he rolled over onto the places where they had beaten him, he would let out a sob, but he didn't wake up. His bruises and welts appeared to have grown to enormous proportions and they filled the vast night. It was a night that did not permit his eyes to open, a night without ending or waking; only his coughs and swallows, occurring at regular intervals, marked its passage.

Later he began coming down, with an empty gaze, numb, unthinking and unspeaking, but only for a short time. He would go to get bread and tobacco. Otherwise he just kept sleeping, day and night. Little by little, the aches disappeared and in his sleep he felt the sweet peace that follows torment. At time he stayed awake for hours, but there were no more desires or memories left to torture him. He watched as long streaks of sunlight broke through the empty knot-holes and cracks; he noticed the way dust danced all the harder in that light whenever he moved in the hay. He felt smaller than a child.

On the eighth day Ćorkan woke up feeling light and relieved. Descending the ladder, it seemed funny to him that he was putting his feet first on one rung and then another. He was still laughing by the time he picked up cheese and a loaf of bread on credit in Suljko's shop; the debt was to be worked off later. Then, after coming down the ladder again the next day, he did not return to the hayloft. Instead, he made his way out of town.

He climbed up the hill to the old trenches and breastworks, where henbane grew now, along with low rows of wild lilac. The town was underneath him, so compact that it looked jumbled up in a heap; over it lay the huge, dark green roofs and a sheet of thin smoke. The clear light of day caressed Ćorkan; he ate, and from his belly a joyous energy spread throughout his entire body. He stuck out his chest, powerfully, and felt light and ready for anything. The sunlight hit his only eye and sparkled, as if it were playing with him. Once more he remembered:

"Oh, they all put me through hell: the German girl and the mayor and the shopkeepers and Sergeant Ibrahim. All of them. Everybody!"

Happy that it was all over, Ćorkan laughed out loud. He laughed, too, because he was happy and free. He thought about the marketplace, about work, and about life as it had been for ages and ages. Satisfied, he began making his way back.

His feet capered along by themselves. Even if he had been so inclined, he wouldn't have been able to remember the pain and all the other things that had gone before. He entered the city at a brisk pace. The town square was empty. The familiar business district opened up before him as if in welcome.

The old game repeated itself. Ćorkan walked through the market area, dancing around. He spread out his empty arms as if he were holding an invisible tamburitza. Stretching his left arm far out to the side, he strummed the fingers of his right hand playfully and tapped the buttons on his tunic as if they were the strings. Bending his knees and inclining his head first to one side and then to the other, he sang:

"Tralala! Tralala! Tweedle-dee-deedle-dee! Tralala!"

The shopkeepers leaned out of their double doors, laughed, and shouted out:

"Ah, did you sleep well, Mr. Ćorkan?"

"Has your tightrope walker written you a letter yet?"

"Every day is a holiday for a jackass!"

"Sergeant Ibrahim sends his regards!"

"You cured yourself from love, didn't you?"

But he just made little mincing steps, singing and hopping, as he had always done. He threaded his feet in and out of each other with considerable skill.

“Tralala! Tralala!... Hip, hip, hooray!”

He only half noticed that they were shouting at him, and he didn't actually see anyone. For some reason his eyes glazed over; maybe it was tears, maybe it was joy. Everything was in its place, truly and invariably in its place. There was a great ringing in his ears, and the world swayed and swam before his eyes. Extending far and wide before him was something other than the marketplace: It was the radiant ocean.

In Memoriam

David Schulthise, known as Dave Blood during his career as a bassist with one of the nation's most popular alternative punk-rock bands, the Dead Milkmen, died on March 10, 2004, in North Salem, New York. He was forty-seven. His closest friends spread his ashes on St. Vitus's Day. Before he became a musician, Blood was a Ph.D. candidate in economics at Temple University. In 1983, along with the singer Rodney Klingerman, the guitarist Joe Genaro, and the drummer Dean Sabatino, he formed the Philadelphia-based Dead Milkmen and toured the country in a converted ambulance. Their albums include *Big Lizard in My Backyard*, *Eat Your Paisley*, *Bucky Fellini*, *Beelzebubba*, *Smokin' Banana Peels*, *Metaphysical Graffiti*, *Soul Rotation*, *Not Richard but Dick*, *Chaos Rules: Live at the Trocadero*, and *Stoney's Extra Stout (Pig)*. The Milkmen became famous for hits such as "Bitchin' Camaro" and "Punk Rock Girl." In 1991 the band toured Europe and played in several cities in the former Yugoslavia, including Banjaluka and Belgrade. This was a turning point in Blood's life, and upon his return he decided to learn the Serbian language and devote his energy to the study of Serbian history and culture. He studied with me for four years at Indiana University and turned into one of the finest students that I have had in the last decade and a half. In 1998 he decided to move to Serbia permanently. He taught English in Novi Sad and wrote short stories in the manner of magical realism, dealing mostly with issues related to Serbian medieval history. Two of these have been translated into Serbian and published in literary magazines. In April 1999, Blood was forced to leave Novi Sad due to the NATO bombing. Although this move was prompted solely by his poor health and the lack of medicine, he always blamed himself for "abandoning his Serbian friends." Shortly thereafter, he was invited to give his account of the situation in Serbia on ABC, but the anchorperson cut the interview short due to Blood's unorthodox views regarding the Serbian campaign. He remained passionately interested in everything related to Serbia until the very end. The last message I received from him, a day before he died, ended with a reference to the December election there. In accordance to his last will, Dave Blood's Foundation will go to Studenica monastery, as the symbolic sign of his appreciation of St. Sava, whose icon was by his bed at the moment of his death. Dave will be deeply missed by all his friends and fans, both here and in Serbia, and by all who ever had the pleasure to meet him.

Bogdan Rakić
University of Chicago