Blake, Jason

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Jason Blake
University of Ljubljana, Slovenia

Late for the Party: Alice Munro in Slovenian Translation

Abstract

Slovenia, like many countries in Central Europe, has a thriving translation culture. To provide two Canadian examples, in recent years the works of Margaret Atwood and Yann Martel appeared in Slovenian just months after they appeared in English. This alacrity gives the impression that the Slovenian publishing industry is *au courant* with Canada's leading authors. And yet Alice Munro – a perennial Nobel Prize candidate and perhaps Canada's leading author – did not appear in Slovenian until 2003; not until 2010 did she receive a book-length translation. This paper reflects a quest to uncover the reasons for Munro's "lateness". The results of the search? In Slovenia, which book or author gets translated is an eclectic mix of personal initiative, market concerns and pure chance. The paper concludes with a brief consideration of current trends in translating Canadian literature.

Résumé

La Slovénie, comme beaucoup de pays en Europe Centrale, traduit avec fécondité. Pour fournir deux exemples de la littérature canadienne, dans le passé récent les romans de Margaret Atwood et Yann Martel étaient disponibles en slovène quelques mois après leur publication en anglais. Cette rapidité de traduction peut donner l'impression que l'industrie de traduction en Slovénie est au courant avec les auteurs de premier plan au Canada. Pourtant, Alice Munro – une candidate constante pour le Prix Nobel et peut-être le plus grand écrivain canadien – n'est pas apparue en slovène jusqu'au 2003 ; en 2010 son premier livre a été traduit. Cet article cherche à découvrir les racines pour le « retard » d'Alice Munro. Les résultats ? En Slovénie, la décision de traduire et publier un livre et auteur dépend des initiatives personnelles, du marketing et de la fortune. L'article conclut avec une considération brève des tendances de la traduction de la littérature canadienne.

This paper was born of curiosity that was stoked by a simple question: why did it take so long for the Canadian short story writer Alice Munro to be translated into Slovenian? After all, Margaret Atwood, Michael Ondaatje and Leonard Cohen have long been present in Slovenia. Where was Munro, arguably Canada's leading author?

Already minimal research – namely, interviews with each of Munro's four Slovenian translators – revealed that there were no simple reasons for her lateness. There was no anti-Munro conspiracy, and there was not even an anti-short-story translation/publishing conspiracy. Collectively, and in terms of representation, the four translators and their varied answers pointed to a Slovenian translation industry that is both flourishing and chaotic in terms of choice. In Slovenia, which book or author gets translated is an eclectic mix of personal initiative, market

concerns and pure chance (as was revealed in discussions at the October 2011 "Canada in Eight Tongues" Conference, this translation scenario is not unique to Slovenia).

And so, rather than providing ***the*** reason or reasons for Alice Munro's lateness in Slovenian, this meandering paper begins with an explanation of its title, then moves on to discuss the literary translation context in Slovenia, before offering a few examples from Munro's work in translation with an eye to cultural mediation and translation strategies and, finally, looking briefly at what other Canadian books are now being translated into Slovenian.

Why "Late for the Party"?

"Late for the Party: Alice Munro in Slovenian Translation" is an allusion to the title story from Munro's 1968 collection ***Dance of the Happy Shades***, a tale about a spinster music teacher and her annual piano recital and party. The story begins glumly and the opening line is more dirge-like than dancing: "Miss Marsalles is having another party. (Out of musical integrity, or her heart's bold yearning for festivity, she never calls it a recital.)" (Munro 1996, 16). Nobody wants to go to the boring intergenerational recital – neither the girl narrator nor her classmates, and least of all the well-to-do parents who send their children to music lessons more out of habit than aesthetic or educational motivation.

As so often in Munro's fiction, the young, perceptive narrator is a wryly selective recording angel. She recalls how her mother promises Miss Marsalles that she attend the affair, how she "phones up Marg French, [...] and they commiserate for a while and promise to go together and buck each other up" (ibid., 17). Self-styled social martyrs,

> [t]hey remember the year before last when it rained and the little hall was full of raincoats piled on top of each other because there was no place to hang them up, and the umbrellas dripped puddles on the dark floor. The little girls' dresses were crushed because of the way they all had to squeeze together, and the living-room windows would not open. Last year a child had a nosebleed. (ibid.)

The seeming gravity of this list is, of course, undercut by the triviality of incident and detail it outlines; there are no bodies "piled" in the hall, only ponchos and slickers, and the floor is stained by water drops, not blood. More significantly, a crucial tone of snobbery is introduced here as the mishaps and bad luck are all but blamed on Miss Marsalles: though the mothers cannot blame the rain on her, as a home-owner it seems she is responsible for the lack of space that crushes both the little girls' dresses and the party's spirits. In years past Miss Marsalles lived in the family home in the very wealthy Rosedale area of Toronto, before her clientele and fortunes began to dwindle and she began moving into smaller and less fashionable houses. "[I]n Rosedale the annual party did not go off too badly," the reader learns, even if "[t]here was always an awkward little space before the sandwiches, because the woman they had in the kitchen was not used to parties and rather slow..." (ibid., 18). Clearly, the mothers are used to more dapper social environs.

But this year's party is slightly different: "Miss Marsalles ... has trouble keeping her eyes on the performers" as they play (ibid., 22). Naively optimistic, she "keeps looking towards the

door. Does she expect that even now some of the unexplained absentees may turn up?" (ibid.). Miss Marsalles is in fact expecting a group of special-needs children she has recently begun teaching to fill up spaces vacated by her traditional paying public. Many residents of Rosedale and other well-to-do parents have stopped sending their children to Miss Marsalles because, as the grammatically passive and handed-down explanation reads, "[p]iano lessons are not so important now as they once were; everybody knows that. Dancing is believed to be more favorable to the development of the whole child" (ibid., 17).

The children from "Greenhill School" do eventually arrive at the party, and immediately the uppity mothers' true colours are shown:

> My mother and the others are almost audible saying to themselves: ***Now, I know it is not right to be repelled by such children and I am not repelled, but nobody told me I was going to come here to listen to a procession of little – little idiots for that's what they are*** – WHAT KIND OF A PARTY IS THIS? (ibid., 24)

This passage brings us, in a roundabout way, to translation, for this sentence would lend itself brilliantly to Slovenian and surely many other Indo-European languages. There is an admirable contrast between what the narrator can read from her "mother and the others" (since "and the others" groups all the mothers into the same like-thinking and therefore unthinking herd) and the dark thoughts themselves. The 63-word, punctuation-rich sentence begins with natural, neutral observation, but then the italics usher in repression and propriety that, in turn, give way to self-righteous justification for being repelled at the Greenhill School children. The nadir is reached in the name-calling ("little idiots") and, finally, capitalized rage.

The brilliance and wit of this sentence deserves a broader audience, and if I have quoted from "The Dance of the Happy Shades" at length it is primarily to provide a taste of what Slovenians have been missing. Malice, prejudice and uppity mothers are at home in many a culture and therefore "The Dance of the Happy Shades" is a story that would easily jump cultural divides. The story is traditional in the sense that pride or snobbery is smitten and the reader's desire for justice is fulfilled. The mothers' collective comeuppance occurs when a little girl from the "special school" plays a piano transcription of Christoph Gluck's "The Dance of the Happy Shades." She plays it brilliantly. Like Alice Munro in Slovenian translation, she comes late but she sparkles.

Slovenian literary translation

The English-speaking world is dismally limited when it comes to translation. Only some three percent of the literature we can read in English was originally published in another language. Indeed, "Three Percent" is the title of a University of Rochester website that focuses on the importance of worldwide literature:

> The motivating force behind the website is the view that reading literature from other countries is vital to maintaining a vibrant book culture and to increasing the exchange of ideas among cultures.

> In this age of globalization, one of the best ways to preserve the uniqueness of cultures is through the translation and appreciation of international literary works. To remain among the world's best educated readers, English speakers must have access to the world's great literatures. It is a historical truism and will always remain the case that some of the best books ever written were written in a language other than English. ("College")

Cervantes translator Edith Grossman yet more stridently points out the broader intellectual and political consequences of having limited access to translations. Her harsh tone all but mimics speeches we have heard again and again lamenting lack of freedom in many non-Western states, though in this case the Anglo-Saxon world lags behind:

> I think it is reasonable to suggest that we can use the wide availability of and free access to translations in any society as a clear, determinative sign of vigorous, uncensored freedom of communication, an issue that deserves to be at the forefront of our political thinking. (Grossman 2010, 52)

The title of Grossman's book is ***Why Translation Matters*** – a book-length argument that would be laughably redundant in the Slovenian context. It would be redundant for two reasons: unlike most English-speaking countries, Slovenians are keenly aware of the danger of living by their literary bread alone. With some two million speakers (and only 2.2 million poets, this "nation of poets" might quip), Slovenia is among the smaller European languages. All of their canonical poets and writers gained sustenance from works published outside Slovenia. The second reason is recent history: though the Communist Yugoslavia to which Slovenia belonged was not behind the Iron Curtain, and though Josip Broz Tito's 1948 split with Joseph Stalin led to a slightly freer, more moderate form of Communism, censorship nevertheless cast its shadow over cultural life.

Slovenian writer Drago Jančar points out the dangers of assuming complete uniformity among Communist countries:

> From today's perspective, down there [i.e. in Communist Southern Europe] and in the East was a single landscape of one and the same economic, ethical, cultural and spiritual poverty. And yet things were different in Poland, and different in Czechoslovakia, different in Hungary and different in Romania, it was different in Bulgaria and different in Albania, and even in Leningrad it was not like in Moscow. (Jančar 2004, 17; my translation)

Censorship in Slovenia was slippery and unpredictable, and it also changed through the years before the fall of Yugoslavia in 1991. Certain foreign and domestic writers alike were banned, but as Jančar emphasises, Slovenian and other Yugoslav readers were somewhat freer than in nearby Communist countries. By no means an apologist for the Yugoslav regime that sentenced him to a year in jail for reading a foreign book about Tito, Jančar adds: "in bookstore windows lay books by authors such as Orwell and Solzhenitsyn, and all of Eastern Europe knew that in Yugoslavia there was freedom of a type they could only dream about" (ibid.; my translation).

Today, the translation market in Slovenia is thriving more than ever. Any best-selling author from a Western language will be translated right away, and the online version of the

monthly book magazine ***Bukla*** offers a drop-down menu of nations' literature that is available in Slovenian – from "albansko" through "mehiško" through "ukrajinsko" literature. There is, of course, also a "kanadsko" rubric.

Translations from Canadian literature fall into three rough categories. The big name authors – such as Margaret Atwood (with seven novels translated), Yann Martel (with three titles, including the original and the illustrated version of ***Life of Pi***) and Leonard Cohen (both of his novels, ***The Favourite Game*** and ***Beautiful Losers***) – are published because they do not entail a tremendous financial risk for publishers. With lesser-known names, such as youth author Richard Scrimger, who has two works available in Slovenian (***Into the Ravine*** and ***The Nose from Jupiter***), it appears that a translator discovered the work and was able to push it through to publication in Slovenian. A quirkier third category includes those rare works that have some connection, however grim or seedy, to Slovenia. Paulo Coehlo's 1998 novel ***Veronica Decides to Die*** (***Veronika Decide Morrer***), about a suicidal young woman from Ljubljana, was translated from Portuguese already in 1999 and before Coehlo had achieved true worldwide sales superstardom. Most recently, the graphic novel ***Kenk*** (a collaborative effort by Alex Jansen, Jason Gilmore, Nick Marinkovich and Richard Poplak) appeared in Slovenian translation just months after the English-language original. This is clearly because the real-life Igor Kenk and infamous Toronto bicycle thief was born in Maribor, Slovenia's second-largest city.

Munro in Slovenian

And yet, despite this vibrant book and translation culture, there was nothing by Alice Munro until 2003. That was when Marcello Potocco published his translation of Munro's "The Office" in the magazine ***Literatura***; in 2005, Maja Kraigher's translation of the story "Chance" was published in ***Sodobnost***, another literary journal. In the accompanying note to his translation, Potocco was charmingly blunt in justifying why he had translated this particular story: "Though 'The Office' does not in fact belong to the 'canon' of her best (but, unfortunately, also much longer), it is in any case one of her expressively most characteristic stories" (Potocco 2003, 159; my translation). In other words, "The Office" was chosen not least for its brevity – most of Munro's stories run to 50 pages and are thus too long for a monthly literary magazine. 2010, meanwhile, was a banner year for Munro: two books appeared in Slovenian translation – her 2001 collection ***Hateship, Friendship, Courtship, Loveship, Marriage*** and her 2009 collection ***Too Much Happiness*** (the former translated by Katja Šaponjić as ***Sovraži me, rad me ima, dvori mi, ljubezen da mož in žena sva***; the latter by Jana Ambrožič as ***Preveč sreče***). This is at least a partial rectification of a past literary injustice.

For some Munro fans it would be misguided to focus on her neglect in Slovenia as opposed to worldwide. In a glowing ***New York Times*** review of Munro's 2004 collection ***Runaway***, Jonathan Franzen harbours "some guesses at why her excellence so dismayingly exceeds her fame" outside Canada (Franzen 2004). He provides a list of both serious and lighthearted reasons for her neglect, the wittiest and liveliest being his jab at Philip Roth of ***American Pastoral*** fame and Brett Easton Ellis's ***American Psycho***: "3. She doesn't give her books grand titles like 'Canadian Pastoral' [or] 'Canadian Psycho'" (ibid.). While praising Munro's "rhetorical

restraint and her excellent ear for dialogue," Franzen notes that, alas, "her jacket photos show her smiling pleasantly, as if the reader were a friend" (ibid.). Serious writers, it seems, should be maleficent scowlers.

Concerning why Munro was so long in being translated into Slovenian, Franzen's number 6 seemed to be the key: "6. Because, worse yet, Munro is a pure short-story writer" (ibid.) Whereas critic and editor John Metcalf considers the short story "the pinnacle of artistic form," in publishing circles the short story is the forgotten little brother (Metcalf 2008). In North America, publishers allegedly deem short story collections dangerous because they do not sell as well as novels. As Stephen King, focusing on sales rather than quality of story production, argues in "What Ails the Short Story," "The American short story is alive and well. Do you like the sound of that? Me too. I only wish it were actually true" (King 2007). King argues that in terms of quality, the short story is doing well; in terms of bookstore representation it is nudged out by the "the moneymakers and rent payers" and "glamour ponies" that are for the most part "disposable" (ibid.).

There are many anecdotes about writers being pushed into producing a novel, even if they're most at home in the short story genre. Munro herself jokes about this in "Fiction" from ***Too Much Happiness***. There, a music teacher picks up a volume written by a former student:

> [the book] is a collection of short stories, not a novel. This in itself is a disappointment. It seems to diminish the book's authority, making the author seem like somebody who is just hanging on to the gates of Literature, rather than safely settled inside. (Munro 2009, 52)

Munro's self-irony and the North American short story genre woes aside, it is easy, but erroneous, to assume that the two 2010 Munro translations into Slovenian were capitalizing on her 2009 Man Booker International prize – an award that perhaps rendered Franzen's laments of Munro-neglect obsolete. In the event, Katja Šaponjić was already translating ***Hateship, Friendship, Courtship, Loveship, Marriage*** when Munro happened to win the prize, so it was not merely an opportunistic and aesthetically fortunate marketing decision. (In the case of ***Too Much Happiness***, the publisher was clearly – and fortunately for readers! – following the Prize).

Another conclusion the well-meaning Canadianist might jump to regarding translation lateness is this: because Munro writes about a small-town world and realistic people with realistically mundane problems, it is difficult to translate. In fact, this was neither a publishing nor a translation concern in Slovenia, as a recent three-page profile entitled "Alice in the Wonderland of Women's Stories" indicated. The profile, which appeared in the daily broadsheet ***Delo,*** notes Munro's "regionalism and provincial sensibility" and that though she writes about the "Svet naših babic" – the "world of our grandmothers" – this is not meant "in a pejorative sense" (Plahuta Simčič 2011; my translation). The article's sub-title reads "Alice Munro is a writer who, from a combination of female, personal and provincial, succeeded in creating world literature."

Translating Munro and translation strategies

Munro may be positively provincial in scope and speak for quintessential, small-town (if pre-multicultural) Canada in outlook and tone, but none of the Slovenian translators had any problems "Slovenifying" her work. When asked about difficulties, one answered glibly that there were none she recalled and likely none at all (Kraigher 2011). Another, "I didn't encounter problems regarding cultural translation, esp. in comparison with [Mordecai Richler's novel] ***Barney's Version***" (Potocco 2011). A third, surely having scented the interviewer's desire to problematize the cross-cultural aspect, wrote, "a couple of geographical names" (Šaponjić 2011).

Reading a work in translation inevitably means reading a guided or digested work, not merely a work that has made a linguistic and geographical journey. If, as many have hyperbolically claimed, the translator is the best reader of a work, s/he is also feeding you a personal interpretation or understanding. If a translator with too much ego stamps his or her personality on a text or even tries to improve it, there may be an outright distortion of the text. At the same time, however, the translator is entirely justified in his or her role as a cultural mediator in nudging the reader (in this case helping out the Slovenian reader with Canadian cultural or referential specifics).

Most of the time a translation will be a limiting of meaning even before cultural specifics come into play. This is for two intertwined reasons: first, because translators have to take an interpretive stance; and, second, because puns, word associations, oblique cultural references and individual word histories rarely transfer smoothly from one language to another (a hockey "puck" in Slovenian has no echoes of Shakespeare's puck; "multiculturalism" has a very different ring to it in Europe).

To provide a concrete example from Alice Munro: her story "Chance" is called "Priložnost" in Maja Kraigher's solid Slovenian translation. As fine a translation as it is, Kraigher's very title colours the reading from the outset. The Slovenian word's meaning is rather less sprightly and unpredictable than "chance" in the sense of "something that happens unpredictably without discernible human intention or observable causes" (Merriam-Webster). In other words, the reader of the story "Priložnost" expects something positive; the very title precludes the haphazard, for-better-***or***-for-worse sense of "chance" that is prominent in English. This is unfortunate because the concepts of chance and opportunity and fortune coalesce in Munro's story.

"Chance" is about a young classics scholar-turned-teacher named Juliet who meets a man on a train. Eric is married but his wife is invalid after a car accident (a rather negative instance of "chance"); Juliet goes to visit Eric on a whim of sorts ("The fact is that she never intended to get on that bus"), and finds out his wife has just died and he himself is not at home when she arrives (Munro 2005, 81). She waits in his empty house for the man to return from post-funeral activities, thinking, "Who would want to live where you have to share every part of outdoor space with hostile and marauding animals?" (ibid., 83). The story, which begins in 1965, fast-forwards some forty years and it turns out – or chances – that the two have been married for just as many years. As mentioned, through no fault of the translator, this element of surprise is lessened from the outset due to the choice of Slovenian title. The translator, faced with a paucity of meaning in the nearest Slovenian equivalent word, has to take an

interpretative stance in mediating Alice Munro's text, which in this case is not lost but merely sharpened in translation.

Choosing the right words in the right order is the translator's daily malaise, but when cultures are far apart the translator is often forced to intrude on a literary text in order to enable a cultural rapprochement or, in extreme cases, to make the text understandable to the "tourist" reader. There are three main techniques for this: "interpolation" or adding to the literary text; omission; and, ugliest and perhaps most invasive, footnoting.

As Clifford E. Landers writes in ***Literary Translation***, "judicious interpolation neither adds to or subtracts from the text; it merely makes it more accessible to the TL [i.e. "target language"] reader while respecting the unique demands of mimesis" (Landers 2001, 94). Like the interpolation "target language" in that sentence, interpolation can be as simple as adding a word or phrase to clarify a cultural concept such as a unit of currency or measurement.

Alice Munro's "Chance" begins ***in medias res***: "Halfway through June, in 1965, the term at Torrance House is over" (Munro 2005, 48). This is translated into Slovenian as: "Sreda junija 1965 je v šoli Torrance House semestra konec" (Munro/Kraigher 2005, 1082). The translator added the explanation "v šoli" ("in the school") to indicate that "Torrance House" is not an abode or home but a school. Though purists and literalists may cringe, this unobtrusive interpolation is most helpful to the reader unfamiliar with the English private school tradition along with its grandiose names. The translator opted for judicious clarity in the all-important first sentence and the reader knows from the start that "Torrance House" is an educational institution of some sort. Because Slovenians, who favour directness and honesty above all things, do not pretend that a school is anything like a home, this is a wise interpolation. In the Munro translations available in Slovenian, however, interpolation is in fact rare – showing that the cultural gap between Canada and Slovenia is narrower than one might expect.

There are few examples of omissions, the second category of intrusion, in Alice Munro translations. Kraigher, wisely, if somewhat brazenly, chopped the problematic word "galley" from the following exchange, again from "Chance." Juliet overhears a conversation on the train as she heads west to British Columbia:

> "Did you enjoy your breakfast?"
> "The eggs were runny."
> "I know." The woman commiserated. "I was thinking, I should just have barged into the kitchen and done them myself."
> "Galley. They call it a galley."
> "I thought that was on a boat." (Munro 2005, 58)

Because this use of "galley" translates literally into Slovenian as "boat-kitchen" (***ladijska kuhinja***), the translator is a victim of language. Indeed, a back-translation of word-for-word translation would be pure Laurel and Hardy dialogue:

> *"Boat-kitchen. They call it a boat-kitchen."
> *"I thought that was on a boat."

In this instance, being utterly faithful to the letter of the text would distort its spirit through humour. Crucial to the English original, it seems, is the combination of slightly broken conversation between the two travellers on the train – since the focus on runny eggs gives way to lexical pedantry ("Galley. They call it a galley.") even as the second voice sympathetically takes up the conversational thread of kvetching about eggs – and the fact that Juliet recalls this years later. In other words, the second voice takes her conversational turn, acknowledges the subject of conversation, and is all but rebuked for using the wrong word. An apparent wise-crack about "boat-kitchens" would push these subtler points out of the way through boisterousness.

The third main type of translation intrusion, footnotes, has a very bad and often earned reputation in literature because footnotes disrupt the flow of a text and thus destroy suspension of disbelief. This is why J.D. Salinger's quip about the "the aesthetic evil of a footnote" from his 1957 story "Zooey" has been quoted and re-quoted into mantra (Salinger 1961, 52). It would, however, be exaggerated to say that footnotes are ***never*** necessary for the translator of literature. Vladimir Nabokov came down firmly on the side of footnotes, and in his essay discussion of translating ***Eugene Onegin*** he stated a desire for "copious footnotes, footnotes reaching up like skyscrapers to the top of this or that page so as to leave only the gleam of one textual line between commentary and eternity. I want such footnotes and the absolutely literal sense, with no emasculation and no padding" (Nabokov 2004, 127). Notwithstanding that Salinger's irony-laden quip appears in a story – that is, a work of fiction – and that Nabokov's exaggerated desire pertains to translation practice, the two quotations work well together. Neither should be taken as gospel, and neither should be entirely forgotten.

That said, Slovenian literary translations of the past suffered from a Nabokovian glut of footnotes as avid footnoters (or, more specifically, footnote-happy editors) provided a gloss at the bottom of the page for every foreign phrase, every ***guten Tag*** or ***soupe du jour***. Thankfully, footnotes are going out of fashion, and this disappearing act can be partially seen in the Alice Munro translations into Slovenian. The two individual short story translations – of "The Office" and "Chance" – contain no explanatory notes, while the translations of ***Hateship, Friendship, Courtship, Loveship, Marriage*** and ***Too Much Happiness*** contain 11 and 7 footnotes over 340 and 401 pages respectively.

The first footnote in ***Preveč sreče*** (***Too Much Happiness***) pertains to this passage from the lead-off story "Dimensions":

> The head nurse was a starchy sort of person so [Lloyd would] call her Mrs. Bitch-out-of-Hell, instead of her name, which was Mrs. Mitchell. He said it so fast that you could barely catch on. (Munro 2009, 13)

The Slovenian translation leaves the saucy nickname in English, presumably on account of the half-rhyme that birthed it, and adds a serious-looking footnote: "Pisca-iz-pekla" (Munro/Ambrožič 2010, 20). Other footnotes in ***Too Much Happiness*** include the Slovenian for "***Ave atque vale***" and "***gentilhomme***," which the English reader unschooled in Latin and French would have to look up. In other words, the Slovenian reader is not left to his own linguistic devices, which slightly undermines the reading experience as the literary pendulum swings from diversion to education in the form of language-training.

This decision to translate every foreign phrase from ***Too Much Happiness*** is curious where German appears, namely the reference to Gustav Mahler's song-cycle ***Kindertotenlieder*** (***Songs on the Death of Children***). After all, given Slovenia's proximity to German-speaking lands, given Slovenia's millennium-long history of being ruled by the German-speaking Habsburgs, and given that the average Slovenian reader is infinitely more likely to possess a smattering of German, this lexical pedantry is bizarre. Moreover, it appears to be an editorial blight on a fine translation ("editorial" because it is often not the translator him/herself who makes the final decision about what to footnote).

Less perplexing, because they add more immediately to the understanding of the particular Munro story rather than Literary History in general, are the footnotes for word-plays and puns in both books. Here, a single example should suffice: in "Wenlock Edge", the narrator notes that she "had a mean tongue" as a child and that her nickname for her cousin Ernie Botts was "Earnest Bottom" (or, in wonderfully alliterative Slovenian, "resna rit" [Munro/Ambrožič 2010, 84]).

In addition to foreign words and puns that appear in Munro's original English, some geographical details are footnoted. In the title story of ***Hateship, Friendship, Courtship, Loveship, Marriage***, there's a reference to London – which, as any reader of Alice Munro knows, can only refer to what Western Ontarians refer to as "the real London". A rather impoverished woman is asked where she met her husband-to-be, to which she responds "The Western Fair. In London." The saleswoman she is talking to repeats the response: "'The Western Fair,' the woman said. 'In London.' She could have been saying 'The Castle Ball'" (Munro 2001, 12). London is duly footnoted as "London v Ontariu v Kanadi" (i.e. "London in Ontario in Canada") (Munro/Šaponjić 2010, 17). Superfluous for most Canadian readers, this information is surely helpful to most Slovenian readers. The translator pointed out she was "convinced the reader may get confused" (Šaponjić 2011) – and in the event it would slow down the story's flow if the Slovenian reader were to ponder how a poor woman from Southern Ontario got herself to London, England to pick up a dress.

As with the above example from "Fiction" – with the comment about a short story writer being "like somebody who is just hanging on to the gates of Literature" – here Munro again seems to be having fun. By juxtaposing "Castle Ball" with "London," the reader is invited to imagine something grander, something far more lavish than a smallish agricultural fair in southern Ontario. This association only gains in translation because, of course, especially non-Canadian readers will more readily make the jump from Ontario to England.

Conclusion – What the future holds?

To return to the original question about Munro's lateness in Slovenia, the four interviews with Munro's translators confirmed primarily that the reasons for her lateness are many and varied. And yet one translator's surprised me greatly: "the strong presence of Margaret Atwood's and Michael Ondaatje's work in [Slovenian] translation [...] overshadowed the work of other Canadian authors; this is [...] the reason why authors like M. Richler, A. Munro, R. Davies and others were overlooked" (Potocco 2011). In other words, rather than a Canadian literary

invasion, there has been a sort of tokenism at work: at best a handful of leading authors from a given country are translated.

Happily, this tokenism is changing as far as Canadian authors are concerned, and the September 2011 issue of the book monthly ***Bukla*** shows recent translations into Slovenian of Sara Gruen's ***Water for Elephants***, Yann Martel's ***Beatrice and Vergil***, Linden MacIntyre's Giller-winning ***The Bishop's Man*** and Emma Donaghue's ***Room***. The case of Martel shows that once an author's first book appears in Slovenian, others are more likely to follow – that is, ***Beatrice and Vergil*** is a Slovenian publishing follow-up to ***Life of Pi***. More interesting is the case of the lesser-known MacIntyre: if in the past the Nobel Prize and the Man Booker were the key prizes for translations, Slovenian publishers seem to be looking beyond the major prizes. As one Munro-translator pointed out, Slovenian publishers think like or follow Anglophones, and the "names we knew were those that had been successful in the UK (like e.g. Margaret Atwood)" (Kraigher 2011).

As well, the completely-neglected French-Canadian literature will soon be represented in Slovenia. As a final irony to a paper that rested, erroneously, on the assumption that Munro was ignored because she writes short stories, Suzana Koncut, a leading French-to-Slovenian literary translator, recently wrote "Mon projet sur la littérature québécoise [...] visait [...] un auteur de nouvelles..." – that is, regardless of which Quebec author was chosen, it had to be a short-story collection.

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