

the younger readership, or whether it was only a cheap marketing trick, in order to sell as many copies of the new edition as possible — is entirely insignificant as the previously announced book burning did not in the end occur. More accurately, only a poster which announced the aforementioned media event was burned. Namely, all the unsold copies of Kvesić's book were repurchased by several big publishing companies that have their own chains of booksellers. As opposed to the American booksellers of second-hand books whose protest was interrupted by the members of the fire brigade due to the fact that the gentlemen Wayne and Leathem did not get the required permit from the city's authorities, Kvesić's event was attended by only several photo-journalists, two to three actors and the occasional, confused passer-by. The city's authorities, which were asked for a permit for this event, did not even think it necessary to respond.

And, at the end of this text, I hope that the readers will not criticise me if I say a few words in memory of my colleague and friend, journalist, nonfiction writer and university professor, and until recently the editor-in-chief of this journal, SREĆKO LIPOVČAN, who left us, after a short and severe illness. A man of classical education, a hard worker, but, first and foremost, a man who was cultured and self-sacrificing. In a time when the mass media persistently try to sell the trivial and the gutter press as culture; impose certain new, dubious values and false role models from the worthless world of entertainment, the death of a civilised and cultured man is a great loss for the nation. On such occasions we usually say: works remain! Unfortunately, *hic et nunc*, there is no guarantee that his works will not meet the same fate as Pero Kvesić's books. And, that is eloquent enough testimony to the status of literature (and culture generally) in the society in which we live. ||

### The World of Literature — A Review

## FRENCH LITERATURE IN RECENT CROATIAN TRANSLATIONS

by Ana Kapraljević

With regard to translation, things did not go so well in Croatia; at least, not when Croatia was part of the former state of Yugoslavia. Translations were rare. The job of translating is still neglected and insufficiently appreciated today. Our excellent translators, performing several jobs at the same time, hardly find the time for such a hard and pedantic job. However, for the past twenty years, the situation has truly changed. We still lack certain of the most significant world works from the fields of literary theory, linguistics, philosophy. Nevertheless, regular world production, first and foremost the best-known authors of the twenty-first century regularly arrive at the shelves of our bookshops.

Certain publishing houses and the "Programme for the Support of Publishing" of the French Embassy in Zagreb have changed the translation scene of the French language and literature. Croatian publishing houses such as "Naklada Ljevak", "Vuković & Runjić", "Fraktura", "Antibarbarus",

"Ceres" or "Demetra" are some of the most representative ones that intensively deal with translations of French authors. Certain publishing houses specialise exclusively in short stories ("Vuković & Runjić", "Fraktura"), certain specialise in linguistics ("Naklada Ljevak", "Školska knjiga"), certain others specialise in political philosophy ("Antibarbarus", "Ceres", "Meandar"), while certain ones specialise in pure philosophy and particularly in the classics of French literature ("Demetra").

The rich French literary market has indeed very much to offer, whether the writers are professors of literature who work in their free time, journalists, philosophers, or former inhabitants of the former French colonies — whose novels are a testimony to an early childhood in the African, infinite, wide-open spaces. There are also well-known titles which have achieved success in Francophone countries, and Croatian publishers have decided to capitalise on their glory. However, books that are sold best, are — most



frequently — of very poor literary value, and future generations will possibly not care about them. Thus, in this survey of French authors on the Croatian market, I am referring not to those that are much touted although such can also be found, but to those that should be read as they expand our experience and knowledge, and they also educate us in the literary sense of the word.

Only in the last year, some thirty French titles were published as part of the "Programme for the Support of Publishing". It is pleasant to notice that the French Embassy also understands that the authors who educate the readership should be promoted, which is why in the Programme — since 1996, when it was initiated — rarely can any title be found that insults the reader's taste. Among the titles published in 2008, I can notice the tendency of insisting on the authors who convey their experience from the former French colonies, or those who testify to their psychological or moral ambivalence. That Postmodernist division of authors — which was highly appreciated towards the end of the twentieth century — is now transferred from the French authors and the French language into the Croatian language, and thus into its experience. The French classical writers such as BALZAC, MONTESQUIEU, DURAS, BAUDELAIRE, VIAN are also regularly published, as well as the classical writers of the twentieth century such as QUIGNARD, BAUDRILLARD, BRETON or SARTRE — who have also found their place.

In the second half of the twentieth century and the first half of the twenty-first century, literature shows a tendency towards reconsideration of religiosity in general, while Christianity in particular. Due to the topicality of the historical and the new historical novel, most titles treat these very themes. Thus, the recipient of THE FRENCH ACADEMY'S GRAND PRIZE in 2007, VASSILIS ALEXAKIS, appears in 2008 with his novel *Poslije Krista* in Croatian (*Après Jésus Christ / After Jesus Christ*; translated by MIHAELA VEKARIĆ and published by Vuković & Runjić). In it the author — through the main characters — analyses the first Christian age and the manner in which Christ's messages have been conveyed through centuries. EDGAR MORIN is one of the authors who has constant and faithful admirers in the Croatian translation reality, therefore certain of his works have already been published (*Europska kultura i europsko barbarstvo / Culture et barbarie européennes / European Culture and Barbarism*; published by AGM, 2006;

*Izgubljena paradigma — ljudska priroda / Le paradigme perdu: la nature humaine / The Lost Paradigm: Human Nature*; published by Scarabeus, 2005; *Čovjek i smrt / L'Homme et la mort / Man and Death*; published by Scarabeus, 2005; *Misliti Europu / Penser L'Europe / To Think Europe*; published by Dureix, 1995, etc.). The journal *European Messenger* has a powerful translational production, which is why in its twelfth issue, in 2007, the text by *Henri de Lubac* entitled "Drama ateističkog humanizma" ("*Le Drame de l'humanisme athée*" / "The Drama of Atheistic Humanism") was published. The text is translated into Croatian by GORDANA V. POPOVIĆ.

Among historical themes that do not involve religion as much as they do philosophy and history, the theme of the book *Stoljeće (Le siècle / The Century*; translated into Croatian by OZREN PUPOVAC and published by Antibarbarus, 2008) can be singled out. It is an intriguing book by ALAIN BADIOU. The author analyses the meaning of a century in the history of culture and humanism. MARC BLOCH — a classical writer and always topical with his study *Apologija historije ili Zanat povjesničara (Apologie pour l'histoire; ou, métier d'historien / The Historian's Craft*; translated into Croatian by JAGODA MILINKOVIĆ and published by Srednja Europa, 2008), and the introduction by the distinguished French historiographer JACQUES LE GOFF — can also be found. GILLES LIPOVETSKY appears with his political text *Paradoksalna sreća: o gled o hiperpotrošačkom društvu (Le bonheur paradoxal: Essai sur la société d'hyperconsommation / Paradoxical Happiness: An Essay on the Hyper-Consumerist Society*; translated into Croatian by Jagoda Milinković and published by Antibarbarus, 2008).

The theme of politics is present in OLIVIER RAZAC's *Politička povijest bodljikave žice: prerija, rov, logor (Histoire politique du barbelé: la prairie, la tranchée, le camp / A Political History of the Barbed Wire: The Prairie, The Trench, The Camp*; translated into Croatian by LEONARDO KOVAČEVIĆ and published by Naklada Ljevak, 2009). Among the *pedagogic books* that treat the theme of self-help, one can find JACQUES SALOMÉ's book *Odvažno naći svoj put: vještina iskrenog komuniciranja (To Boldly Find One's Own Way: The Skill of Honest Communication*; translated into Croatian by VESNA LISIČIĆ and published by Alfa, 2008). The conviction that we may confide in ourselves, and not others, is supported by the two books by



LYDIE SALVAYRE *Običan život (La Vie commune / Ordinary Life*; translated into Croatian by SMILJKA GUŠTAK and published by Sysprint, 2008), and *U društvu sablasti (La Compagnie des spectres / The Company of Ghosts*; translated into Croatian by ANDREA GRGIĆ-MARASOVIĆ and published by Sysprint, 2008).

Certain new French women intellectuals should definitely be mentioned. They do not openly describe themselves as feminists, but — with their female writing — they pave the way for a new vision of the emancipation of women. The aforementioned authors are: NINA BOURAOUI, who writes her story from a psycho-analytical couch, with *Moje loše misli (Mes mauvaises pensées / My Impure Thoughts*; translated into Croatian by MAJA ZORICA and published by Algoritam, 2008), and CÉCILE OUMHANI whose novel *Korijeni Mandarine (Les racines du mandarinier / The Roots of the Mandarine Tree)* was translated into Croatian by MIHAELA VEKARIĆ and published by Naklada Ljevak as long ago as 2007. With her elevated poetics, the style of the latter strongly resembles that of the French Romanticism.

It is always good to return to classics, which is proved by BALZAC's novel *Ljiljan u dolu (Le Lys dans la Vallée / Lily of the Valley*; translated into Croatian by ANA BULJAN and published by Alfa, 2008), as well as BORIS VIAN's novel from 1956 *Jesen u Pekingju (L'automne à Pékin / Autumn in Peking*; translated into Croatian by MILENA BENINI and published by Knjigomat, 2008). The following intriguing titles should also be mentioned: CLAUDE LECOULTEUX's *Knjiga talismana i amuleta (Le livre*

*des talismans et des amulettes / The Book of Talismans and Amulets*; translated into Croatian by BRANKA PAUNOVIĆ and published by Scarabeus, 2009); *Alabama Song* by GILLES LEROY (translated into Croatian by ANA PRPIĆ and published by Disput, 2008), and JACQUES RANCIÈRE's *Mržnja demokracije (La haine de la démocratie / Hatred of Democracy*; translated into Croatian by Leonardo Kovačević and published by Naklada Ljevak, 2008).

Croatian translators gain experience and develop skill in the easy and flowing texts by AMÉLIE NOTHOMB, as well as in the complicated studies on evil by JEAN BAUDRILLARD. The fact remains that there is an increasing number of young translators who are developing. Thus, in the years to come we may expect the increasing number of works in one of the most prolific world literatures, the Francophone one. What we are still lacking is more translations of Canadian authors who write in Canadian French. It is sad that certain authors — whose works are not of great literary value — are slowly overflowing the market. In that respect, MICHEL HOUELLEBECQ — whose works have been mainly translated — is unavoidable.

Nevertheless, believing that Croatian translators will always search for new challenges, as VIŠNJA MACHIEDO — who has been translating for years and whose translations into Croatian could be counted by the dozens — does, and hoping that yet another devoted translator like ZLATKO CRNKOVIĆ will emerge in the future of Croatian translation, let us conclude that much has already been done.]]