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The Impact of Canadian Literature in Slovenia since 1990

Tomaž Onič, Tjaša Mohar and Michelle Gadpaille

Abstract

In 2010, the CEACS began to catalogue literary works connected to Canada by either authorship or setting that had been translated into eight Central European languages, Slovene among them. According to the collected data, six Canadian authors have been represented in Slovene with four or more publications in the period between 1990 and 2015: Margaret Atwood, Leonard Cohen, Yann Martel, Alice Munro, Lucy Maud Montgomery and Michael Ondaatje. While Munro and Cohen are the focus of a separate article in this publication, this article turns its attention to works by Atwood, Ondaatje, Martel and Montgomery.

Résumé

En 2010, l'AECEC a commencé à référencer les œuvres littéraires écrites par des auteurs canadiens (ainsi que celles produites par des écrivains non Canadiens mais situées au Canada) et qui ont été traduites en au moins une parmi huit langues de l'Europe Centrale, y compris le slovène. Selon les informations recueillies, six auteurs canadiens ont eu quatre publications, ou plus, de traduites en slovène entre 1990 et 2015. Ce sont Margaret Atwood, Leonard Cohen, Yann Martel, Alice Munro, Lucy Maud Montgomery et Michael Ondaatje. Cet article se concentre uniquement sur les œuvres d'Atwood, Ondaatje, Martel et Montgomery, puisque Munro et Cohen font l'objet d'un texte leur étant spécifiquement consacré.



Judging by the number of Canadian literary works that have been thus far translated into Slovene, Canadian literature has in general been underrepresented in the Slovene literary and cultural space. This is not because it lacks quality, but for other, complex reasons that will not be discussed here. This paper focuses on the reception of literature written by Canadian authors in Slovenia since 1990, in order to determine the impact that Canadian literature has had on the Slovene cultural scene. In line with the general concept and guidelines of the “Canada Consumed” project, the selection of writers discussed in this paper is limited to quality authors of fiction and poetry who are widely recognized and who have had four or more editions of their works translated into Slovene in the last 25 years. Authors who fall into this category are few; these are contemporary authors with an international profile, such as Margaret Atwood, Michael Ondaatje, Yann Martel, Alice Munro and Leonard Cohen, as well as Lucy Maud Montgomery, who published her books in the first half of the 20th century. The latter stands out as an interesting case, since her works appeared in Slovene only 90 years later.

While a separate paper deals with the Slovene impact of the Nobel Prize winner Alice Munro and of the recently deceased Leonard Cohen, this paper analyses the reception of works by the other four authors. There are other representative Canadian authors who did not make it onto this list. This may be because they were translated before 1990 – for instance, Ernest Thompson Seton, with fourteen publications in Slovene between 1925 and 1973. Or because their writing falls outside the scope of fiction: Henri Nouwen is one of the most widely published Canadian writers in Slovenia, with fifteen translations between 1992 and 2015, but his field is Christian spiritual prose. Or because they represent a more popular genre: the hugely successful children’s book series *Franklin*, by Paulette Bourgeois (and Sharon Jennings), for example, has seen 26 translations. In the following subdivisions, an analytical survey of the reception in Slovenia of works by Atwood, Ondaatje, Martel and Lucy Maud Montgomery will be presented.

Margaret Atwood: *The Handmaid’s Tale*

Among the four Canadian writers who meet our requirements, Atwood is represented with the most publications in Slovene as well as with the greatest variety: six book titles have been translated since 1990, two of which have appeared in more than one edition. The first translation of Atwood into Slovene was the novel *Lady Oracle* (*Preročišče*, 1987); however, it is not included in this research since it was published before 1990. All other translations have been included, as they were published in 1990 or later. The list is the following. *The*



Handmaid's Tale (*Deklina zgodba*) was first translated in 1990, and in 2017 two new editions appeared, one of these in the more affordable “Žepnice” (pocket editions) series. *Surfacing* (*Na površje*) was published in Slovene in 2003; *Oryx and Crake* (*Zadnji človek*) in 2004 and again in 2005; *The Penelopiad* (*Penelopina preja: mit o Penelopi in Odiseju*) in 2005; *The Blind Assassin* (*Slepi morilec*) in 2010; and *The Year of the Flood* (*Leto potopa*) in 2012.

With three Slovene editions, wide availability through a considerable number of copies in libraries, as well as extensive media coverage in the form of reviews and other information, *The Handmaid's Tale* can justly be counted as Atwood's novel with the widest reception scope in Slovenia. Moreover, the 2017 television series with the same title received many reports in the literary and general sections of public newspapers and other media. This is partly because of the intriguing dystopian story, which is reflected in the book's global popularity, and partly because of the 1990 movie (with Faye Dunaway and Robert Duvall), which was released almost simultaneously with the first Slovene translation of the novel.

In the article “*The Handmaid's Tale* – TV series more cruel than the book,”¹ Deja Crnović (2017) reports on a public debate that took place on 9 November 2017 at the Vodnik Home.² The moderator, Nadina Štefančič, interviewed the Slovene film director Varja Močnik about the most recent (2017) screen adaptation of Atwood's famous novel. In the announcement of this event on Facebook, the organizers list several awards the series received in the US and denote it as the most influential series of the year, referring also to the protests in the Texas Senate earlier in 2017, to which it had contributed. Atwood's novel crosses the borders of many genres; it has been adapted for the radio (radio play), for stage (drama, opera and ballet) and for cinema and television (films and – in 2017 – TV). An outstanding film was produced in 1990, directed by Volker Schlöndorff with a screenplay by Harold Pinter; however, the current television series is even more powerful. Močnik observes that the changes introduced by the series, which render this version in many ways harsher than the novel itself, are congruent with the contemporary *Zeitgeist*. She finds the TV protagonist stronger than the one in the novel and goes on to comment that the new Offred has become what the world needs now: a strong woman who “slowly moves into the position of a leader, inspiring others for the fight.” In this context, Močnik also asserts that recently, quality screenplays have begun to move from Hollywood to television, together with top directors and actors, which is also true for *The Handmaid's Tale*.

1) All quotations from articles published in Slovene translated by Tomaž Onič.

2) The house in which the Slovene poet, translator, journalist and editor Valentin Vodnik (1758–1819) was born has been turned into a cultural heritage site that regularly hosts literary and other cultural events. It is located in central Ljubljana.



In the context of Atwood's dystopia, the discussion could not avoid the recent Hollywood sexual scandals, which Močnik condemns, adding that the mere success of *The Handmaid's Tale* does not mean "the world has been saved." Močnik draws attention to many contemporary analogies, including an interesting Slovene one, by comparing the discourse of the Aunts in the series with that of the female activist Angelca Likovič, who recently made an unsuccessful bid for the Presidency of Slovenia. Močnik concludes this negative parallel by saying that it is important to be vocal and visible when protesting, to show the hesitant population they are not alone.

Frequent comparisons of the novel's dystopian regime and the USA under the presidency of Donald Trump also occur in the Slovene media. Among the most prominent references is Sebastijan Kopušar's (2017) article "Reality Surpassed the Fantastic," published in the major Slovene daily *Delo*.

In the article "Donald Trump has a Positive Influence on Book Sales," published in *Delo*, Jožica Grgič (2017) offers a detailed analytical insight into several dystopian novels, most prominently *The Handmaid's Tale*, and draws attention to the rise in popularity of these novels. She supports her claim from the article's title with the Amazon statistics for bestselling titles, finding that *The Handmaid's Tale* and *1984* both appeared at the top of the sales list for novels. Grgič also briefly reviews facts about Atwood and her work, then moves on to *The Handmaid's Tale*, concentrating on the subordinate role of women in the novel.

In a relatively long article (two pages, 2500 words) published in the Saturday supplement of the *Delo* newspaper, Irena Štaudohar (2017) first sums up the plot of the novel in considerable detail, explaining its symbolic references and drawing parallels with current American society in the Trump era. She also provides information about the 2017 television series of *The Handmaid's Tale* and finally passes on to some details of and anecdotes about Atwood's life and work. The article contains very little personal opinion or critical evaluation of the author; however, her appreciative style and the prominence of its publication project a positive view of the novel and the writer. Nevertheless, Atwood's novel serves in Slovenia more as a vehicle for understanding the contemporary United States than as a lens through which to view Canada.

Atwood: Other translations and international awards

Besides the three Slovene editions of *The Handmaid's Tale*, the translation of *The Blind Assassin* also received multiple reviews in the Slovene media following its 2010 publication. The likely reason for this is the novel's receipt of several important international awards and nominations, most distinctly the Man Booker Prize in 2000. Surprisingly, however, the Slovene translation appeared a full ten years after the



book's first publication and the reception of these awards. In the intervening period, three other translations of Atwood's works were published: *Surfacing* (2003), *Oryx and Crake* (2004 and 2005) and *The Penelopiad* (2005).

The Blind Assassin was accounted for in the February 2011 issue of *Bukla*, a Slovene monthly magazine that reviews new domestic and translated works on the Slovene fiction and non-fiction book market. In addition, it was briefly reviewed in *Playboy*, on the web sites of several libraries, in *Mladina* by Matej Bogataj (2011), and on a number of private, sometimes anonymous blogs. The reviews are mainly appreciative; they praise the complexity of the work, the multiple layers of the plot and Atwood's refined style. Most of them briefly skim selected portions of the storyline, stressing the fragmentary nature of the novel's structure. They mostly do not reveal the ending or the complete plot but conveniently imply that by providing a few arbitrary snippets, they are imitating the style of the novel.

On the blog called *Šumenje knjižnih listov* [The rustle of book leaves], an anonymous author (Anon. 2011), referring to *The Blind Assassin*, expresses mild criticism of Atwood's long descriptive passages outlining the elderly narrator's daily routine – but suggests that the purpose could lie in conveying the feeling of monotony to the reader. Furthermore, the author is critical of the inclusion of newspaper articles, and the predictability of the ending. The blogger rounds up with praise of both novelist and novel and recommends the latter to readers of his blog.

In another blog, Franc Štiglic (2016) provides advice for the reader, referring to the Slovene translation of *The Year of the Flood*: “If the incorrect use of genitive or supine and bending the rules ... throw you off the track, avoid Učila [the publisher: T.O.] and get hold of the original.” Učila International published three translations of Atwood's novels (*Oryx and Crake*, *The Blind Assassin* and *The Year of the Flood*); in Slovene publishing and literary circles it has the reputation of not allocating sufficient funds for final language editing. Demanding readers of literary texts are therefore frequently dissatisfied with the quality of the language. The level of quality seems to depend entirely on the translator and his/her ability and engagement. In the same blog entry, Štiglic also expresses his lack of appreciation for the title translation, whereby *Oryx and Crake* became *Zadnji človek* (literally, the last (hu)man).

In addition to reviews of individual translations, the Slovene printed and electronic media also report on various prizes and literary awards that Atwood received recently. Most of these accounts list earlier awards, occasionally including the concomitant grants, provide information on Atwood's life and work, and are usually accompanied by her photograph. On 6 August 2017, the Slovene National Radio and Television website reported on *The Handmaid's Tale* series receiving the Television Critics Association award, and eight Emmy awards on 18 September of the same year. The article specifically points out that Atwood attended the ceremony.



On 13 June 2017, *Delo* and the Slovene National Radio and Television website reported on Atwood's having received the Peace Prize of the German Book Trade, which is awarded each year at the Frankfurt Book Fair. On 16 October 2017, an article on the same website reported that Atwood came to Frankfurt to receive the prize and summarized her commentary on the political context to which *The Handmaid's Tale*, the novel as well as the 2017 series, has increasing relevance.

On 18 October 2017, *Delo* reported on Atwood's receiving the Franz Kafka Prize, awarded and co-sponsored since 2001 by the Franz Kafka Society and the city of Prague. The article lists Atwood's other works and awards, as well as previous recipients of the Kafka Prize, which places her in the company of Murakami, Pinter, Havel and others.

“First a room of one's own, then a literature of one's own”

In an article titled “First a Room of One's Own, then a Literature of One's Own” in *Delo*, Valentina Plahuta Simšič (2014) writes about the world's most influential female writers, who are daring and engaged, on the one hand, and commercially successful, on the other. She lists several Nobel Prize winners and other “powerful female voices”; among just over a dozen names (such as Gordimer, Jelinek, Morrison, Müller, Allende and Oates), two are Canadian: Munro and Atwood. The article is more an overview of names, with brief summary descriptions of the authors' works, and not so much a critical evaluation. The phrases referring to Alice Munro and Margaret Atwood epitomize their presence in the Slovene cultural space and their influence on it: Munro is described by phrases such as “not involved with the political and social friction in her homeland,” “not a feminist writer,” and “from a combination of female-private-provincial, she managed to create world literature,” while Atwood is denoted as “the most famous Canadian writer,” “writing engaged literature, critical of the world and modern society,” and an author who has “thematized the position of women in society.” These labels generally accord with the findings by Mohar and Gadpaille in the research on Munro and Cohen conducted within the Canada Consumed project (see “Alice Munro and Leonard Cohen: Ambassadors of Canadian Culture in Slovenia,” pp. 223–240 in this publication) and support their thesis that Munro is not (yet) present in the Slovene cultural space to the same extent as Atwood; she is more hermetic, thus less influential and less recognizable at this point than Atwood.



Lucy Maud Montgomery and the *Anne* phenomenon

Montgomery was included in the *Canada Consumed* project by virtue of the series of young adult novels related to *Anne of Green Gables*. At first glance, *Anne* seems a curious phenomenon in the Slovene context. Firstly, none of the books from the series were translated into Slovene until 1998, which is fully 90 years after Montgomery published the first book in this series (*Anne of Green Gables*, 1908), although the novel along with its sequels was an immediate success and soon reached readers worldwide. Secondly, all but two Slovene translations from the *Anne* series were published between 1998 and 2001, i.e., in the course of four years. Apart from two editions that were reissued as electronic books in 2016, no other Montgomery translations into Slovene were ever published. This long gap between the publication of the originals and the Slovene translations, and then a sudden condensed appearance of a considerable number of translations seems specific to Slovenia at first; however, a look at the CEACS Translation Research Project database shows that, with the exception of the then Czechoslovakia, with 19 translations between 1959 and 1991, none of the other countries included in the project (Bulgaria, Croatia, Hungary, Romania and Serbia) had a translation of *Anne* before 1992. Moreover, the complete database contains practically nothing by Montgomery but books from the *Anne* series, with only minor exceptions.

Interestingly, two publishers, Karantanija and Mohorjeva družba, brought out *Anne of Green Gables* simultaneously, engaging two different translators, which is unusual for the relatively small Slovene book market. According to information from Mohorjeva družba, obtained in a telephone conversation with one of the editors, this was sheer coincidence. This publisher decided to commission the translation, following a proposal by Irma Marinčič Ožbalt, a Slovene translator who had moved to Canada a few years earlier. Ožbalt cooperated with Mohorjeva as a translator on several other book projects. Apart from a few stories she authored, she translated Farley Mowat's *The Snow Walker*.³

Mohorjeva published the Slovene translation of *Anne of Green Gables* in 1998 and of *Anne of Avonlea* in 2000 as volumes I and II under the common title of the first original book: *Ana z Zelene domačije*. Illustrations in pencil by Božidar Strman – Mišo were added to the second volume. Karantanija, on the other hand, issued the first book using the character's last name in the translation title (*Anne Shirley*), while the second novel *Anne of Avonlea* kept the title with only a slight adaptation of the place name (*Anne iz Avonleje*). The only translation that translates the protagonist's name as Ana is the first one by Mohorjeva; in all subsequent publications she remains Anne.

3) Information obtained in a telephone conversation between Tadeja Petrovčič Jerina (editor at Mohorjeva družba), and Tjaša Mohar on 10 January 2018.



In 2000 and 2001, five more novels from the series appeared in Slovene: *Anne of the Island*, *Anne of Ingleside*, *Anne of Windy Poplars*, *Anne's House of Dreams*, and *Rainbow Valley* (*Anne z otoka*, *Anne in domače ognjišče*, *Anne in hiša pri vihravih vrbah*, *Annina sanjska hiša* and *Mavrična dolina*). All were published by Karantanija.

In 2016, the Slovene publisher Genija issued two of the titles from the series in an electronic form: *Anne in Domače ognjišče* and *Mavrična dolina* (*Anne of Ingleside* and *The Rainbow Valley*). Blanka Jarni, the editor at Genija, confirmed in a telephone conversation that they chose *Anne* because of the popularity of the series and the expiration of copyright. They used the electronic medium because it is more amenable to young readers, and the expenses for publishing an e-book are lower and thus more affordable in the ever more difficult general situation in the publishing business. Jarni also assumes that copyright may have been the main reason for the long delay in commissioning the Slovene translations. To the question why they chose these two particular books from the *Anne* series, Jarni answered that the decision was based on agreement with the translators, who held the rights to the translation.⁴

In addition to the translated books, *Anne* has also been present in the Slovene context in various other forms. Several TV series from the *Anne* collection (*Anne of Green Gables*, 1985, and *Anne of Avonlea*, 1990) were accessible to the Slovene audience in the 1980s and 1990s. Moreover, in 2013 the world famous Slovene choir Carmina Slovenica prepared a music-stage project entitled *ANA*, based on motifs from *Anne of Green Gables*, in Maribor.⁵ *Anne* is also frequently mentioned in various articles related to literature. Eva Mahkovic (2016) uses the series to make her case in defence of sequels (in general), which are often criticised for not meeting the level of the original work – or at least the expectations of the audience or readership. Another article that brings up a reference to *Anne* is a photo-essay about Canada on the occasion of its 150th anniversary published in the local Maribor daily *Večer*. Its author, Tanja Hohenc (2017), compares the protagonist to Pippi Longstocking, another popular character from children's literature, who is considerably more prominent in the Slovene context. Astrid Lindgren's Pippi (Pika Nogavička in Slovene) has given her name to the largest Slovene children's festival, a weeklong annual event that started in 1990; called the Pika Festival [Pika's festival], it takes place in the Slovene town of Velenje. Despite the 90-year delay with which *Anne* entered the Slovene bookstores and libraries, it seems that this series with its charming and sympathetic protagonist, rural setting and growing-up theme has become integrated into the Slovene soul, the way *The Handmaid's Tale* or *Life of Pi* never has.

4) Information obtained in a telephone conversation between Blanka Jarni (editor at Genija) and Tomaž Onič on 10 January 2018.

5) Information about the project can be found at the Carmina Slovenica website: <https://www.carmina-slovenica.si/en/news-archive/ana-anna/>.



Michael Ondaatje's *The Cat's Table*

Four titles by Michael Ondaatje have thus far been published in Slovene translation. The first was *The English Patient*, appearing in 1998, six years after the publication of the original (1992) and two years after the release of Minghella's movie (1996). The same translation was reprinted eight years later (2006). In 2002, the translation of *The Collected Works of Billy the Kid: Left-handed Poems* was published, as well as the translation of the novel *Anil's Ghost*. While the former was originally published in 1970 and thus appeared in Slovene with a three-decade delay, *Anil's Ghost* was translated only two years after the publication of the original. Ondaatje's most recent novel, *The Cat's Table*, was translated into Slovene in 2015 and is currently the most recent translation of this author into Slovene.

Compared to the previous translations of Ondaatje's novels, *The Cat's Table* received the most attention from the Slovene media. The reason for this is probably the fact that in 2015, when the Slovene translation of this 2011 novel was published, Ondaatje was already an established global author and the recipient of acclaimed international awards. In the Slovene context, this is usually a guarantee of media coverage. This hypothesis is supported by the observation that nearly all the articles referring to the Slovene translation of *The Cat's Table* mention its author's rich prize-winning history and compare him to other great names in Canadian literature, particularly Atwood and Munro. In addition, Ondaatje is usually introduced as "the author of *The English Patient*," which is frequently granted two or three sentences, including that it is a Booker Prize-winning novel. The successful 1996 film adaptation of *The English Patient* is also frequently mentioned and praised, and sometimes discussed in detail.

In the article "Michael Ondaatje: *Mačja miza*" [Michael Ondaatje: *The Cat's Table*], published on the literary website *Koridor+*, its author Jerica Šemerl Harmel (2015) generously presents the newly published Slovene translation; however, apart from considerable praise for Ondaatje's literary mastery, she includes practically no opinion on any aspect of the novel, its writing style or the translation. She does, however, draw several parallels between the protagonist of the novel and its author, thus bringing to light several autobiographical features of the plot. She also ventures into the symbolic and allegorical dimensions of the novel, while analysing aspects that preserve British and Canadian literary traditions. Similarly, Matej Bogataj's (2015) review in *Mladina* presents the novel from various perspectives. Bogataj offers several insights into the plot as well as potential interpretations. He also draws attention to the interesting combination of the elements of fiction, fantasy and crime in the novel, which he denotes as reminiscent of the writing style of Agatha Christie and/or Jane Austen. In the closing paragraph, Bogataj positions Ondaatje in the highest circles of Canadian authors (back to back with Atwood and



Munro) and praises the novel as a supreme artistic creation. Similar issues were addressed in the weekly radio show that presents news about the Slovene book market (translations as well as original Slovene publications), where it was again Matej Bogataj (2016) who dealt with the novel. Apart from a brief review of the plot and setting and a brief character analysis, the reviewer comments on the popularity and relevance of the novel's themes and motifs, e.g., social empathy, and the rejection of colonial and aristocratic principles. The comparison to Christie and Austen appears once again, in the claim that *The Cat's Table* follows the colonial tradition of the Victorian novel, and that it can be categorized as a sea voyage novel. Valentina Plahuta Simčič's (2015) review of *The Cat's Table* appeared in the *Delo* newspaper, in the "Book of the Week" section. Plahuta Simčič begins with details from the author's biography that are relevant for the plot of the novel and continues with an introduction to the plot – both these features can be found in most articles included in this research. She concludes by saying that Ondaatje "has structured the novel elegantly and has interwoven the individual characters and fragmented life stories into a whole with great ease." Moreover, she denotes his writing as "lyrical, auditory and rich, a true luxury that is worth diving into."

Ondaatje's other novels and poetry collections

Bernard Nežmah's review of *Anil's Ghost*, published in April 2003 in *Mladina*, is almost exclusively a content summary. The only exception is the last sentence, in which the author compliments the text by calling it "more than a novel" (Nežmah 2003). Similarly, in a considerably shorter article on a review website maintained by the Slovene general libraries to suggest good reads to their users, Barbara Kužnik (2015) outlines the plot, while commenting on the composition of the novel and the writing style. She mentions the fragmentary structure and the retrospective technique of uncovering relevant information for the reader. She also acknowledges Ondaatje's earlier Booker Prize and cites a sample paragraph from the novel.

The translation of *The Collected Works of Billy the Kid: Left-handed Poems* into Slovene was also published in 2003. The reviewers' response was similar to that concerning the other translations, only more scarce in terms of the number and length of the reviews. These mainly summarize the plot, but also praise Ondaatje's ability in taking the legend of a Wild West hero "from a more popular and superficial level of immortality to a new level, one that is more human and considerably more charismatic" (Rugelj, 2002). Several of Ondaatje's poems from earlier collections have also trickled into Slovene. In 2002, a number appeared in the *Sodobnost* journal in Marcello Potocco's translation, among them "The Cinnamon Peeler" (Ondaatje 2002).



The introductory presentation of the author in *Sodobnost* lists some of his novels and mentions other titles of his poems and collections.

The Slovene translation of arguably the most famous of Ondaatje's novels, *The English Patient*, appeared in two editions (1998 and 2006). The few reviews available online were published in 2006, after the second edition. The review published on the National Radio and Television website mainly summarizes the plot, and in the final paragraph praises the movie. The review appearing in *Bukla* speaks almost exclusively about the movie. Surprisingly, despite its global fame, *The English Patient* did not get as much attention among Slovene reviewers as other Ondaatje works or Canadian works in general. One reason could be that at the time of publication of *The English Patient*, Ondaatje's fame in the Slovene literary space had not yet been established, while nowadays one can hardly imagine that any new piece of fiction by this author would go unnoticed by reviewers.

Yann Martel

Within the limits of the Canada Consumed project, the novelist Yann Martel constitutes a particular case. Only two of his works exist in Slovene translation: *Life of Pi* and *Beatrice and Vergil*, of which the former is available in four editions or reprints (2004, 2005, 2009, 2012) and the latter in one (2011). Since the Canada Consumed project includes authors with a minimum of four published books in each individual language, and since each re-print or new edition counts as a new publication, Martel meets the formal criteria and is thus included in the project, although only two distinct titles have appeared in Slovene. There are only a few reviews of these in the Slovene media. The library website *Dobreknjige.si* contains a brief invitation to read the novel along with an excerpt (Rozina 2015);⁶ the Slovene television website published a long and detailed summary of the plot (M.T. 2006); and *Delo* reported that Mladinska knjiga had issued a series of audio books, among which was *Life of Pi* (Anon. 2005).

The most recent Slovene edition of *Life of Pi* appeared in 2012, the same year the successful movie based on the novel was released. As in similar situations, the movie had a favourable influence on the popularization of the novel, since movie reviews frequently mention the novel, its author, the 2002 Booker Prize, and sometimes the Slovene translation. Movie reviews mainly consist of the plot and style analyses, they mention the true story behind the novel, but hardly ever add an opinion on the work. In the article appearing in *Mladina*, Štefančič Jr. (2012) intertwines plot analysis with biblical comparisons, while the article published on the SiolNet. website ("Pijevo

6) It is likely that the review was posted in 2004 when the translation of the novel was published; however, the site allows changes. 2015 is probably the year of the most recent change.



Življenje: Life of Pi (2012) reports on background trivia and on how the movie was accepted by the press in other (mostly English-speaking) countries.

Conclusion

Apart from surveying the representative and most frequently translated Canadian authors and reviews of their works in Slovenia, this paper also sought to include an illustrative selection of media reports, comments and events that have contributed to shaping the impact of Canadian culture in Slovenia. Based on these reviews and media presentations, it can be concluded that Canada and its literature (in all forms) have left a considerable imprint on Slovene territory; however, there is still room for development. In comparison to the impact of other English-speaking cultures, in particular American (mostly through film and television), Canadian culture occupies a deprived position: Canadian literature is frequently overwhelmed by American productivity, occasionally even mistaken for American, or simply not recognized as Canadian but considered as good literature that should be read – without a national seal. This is, of course, not true for some of the most prominent representatives of Canadian literature, such as Atwood, Ondaatje, Munro and Cohen, who have all built reputations embellished by the Canadian flag.

Another issue worth mentioning – although it does not come as a surprise in the Slovene context – is that the reviews of Slovene translations are rarely opinionated, or even more rarely, critical. They usually sum up the plot, provide information about the author, his/her previous works and awards, occasionally add a piece of trivia, and only rarely provide a personal attitude or a critical account of the reviewed piece. This is also true of the reviews analysed for this study: they often fall into the category of blurbs or teasers. Thus, it seems that there is no popular literary critique in Slovenia, at least when it comes to translations. This might be related to general translation policy in Slovenia, which seems chaotic, as Blake (2012) has discovered in his studies of Slovene translation and publishing policy. It seems that the choice of books for translation into Slovene is more a matter of coincidence, personal preference (of an editor or a translator), and international recommendation (e.g. literary awards) than the result of a well-considered plan by individual publishing houses.



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