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Leonard Cohen and Alice Munro in Croatia

Mirna Sindičić Sabljo and Petra Sapun Kurtin

Abstract

The first translations of several short stories by Alice Munro were published in Croatia in the 1990s but it was only after 2011 that her actual books were translated. Receipt of the Nobel Prize in Literature further boosted the author's already substantial reputation in Croatia. Munro's success has run parallel to that of the short story in general in contemporary Croatian literature. Leonard Cohen, on the other hand, has been known to the audience in Croatia since the late 1960s, primarily for his music, but more recently also for his literary texts, most of which, beginning in the 1980s, have been translated into Croatian. By analyzing a diverse bibliography of mostly literary reviews and critical writings on Cohen and Munro in the Croatian media from the early 1990s, this article explores the arguments justifying the translation of their texts into Croatian. The approach employed is descriptive, giving a diachronic overview of their critical reception in Croatia.

Résumé

Les premières traductions de quelques contes d'Alice Munro ont été publiées en Croatie au cours des années 1990, mais, ce n'était qu'après 2011 que ses livres intégraux ont été traduits. L'attribution du prix Nobel en octobre 2013 a davantage augmenté son réputation en Croatie.. La réception positive de Munro en Croatie coïncide temporellement avec le succès du genre du conte et de la nouvelle dans la littérature croate contemporaine. Le nom de Leonard Cohen est connu en Croatie depuis la fin des années 1960, grâce à sa carrière musicale. Récemment, il est devenu connu aussi à cause de ses œuvres littéraires. En analysant les articles écrits sur Munro et Cohen en Croatie depuis 1990, cet article essayera de trouver les arguments qui ont justifié les initiatives pour traduire leurs textes littéraires en langue croate. L'approche descriptive sera utilisé et un aperçu diachronique de leur réception en Croatie présenté.



The aim of this article is to explore the dynamics of cultural exchange between Croatian and Canadian culture from 1991 until the present by analyzing the general and critical reception of Leonard Cohen and Alice Munro. The study will involve analysis and summaries of reviews, books, articles, interviews and online sources regarding the critical reception of Leonard Cohen's and Alice Munro's work, by taking into account the literary and historical context of the particular period when the translations were published. The approach to the analysis will be descriptive, providing a diachronic overview of their reception in Croatia and pointing out different aspects of its manifestation. The work will draw on a diverse bibliography of mostly literary reviews, which testify to the intensity of the reception of both Alice Munro and Leonard Cohen in Croatia and the enduring presence of their works within the Croatian cultural context.

Leonard Cohen in Croatia

Croatian readers only had a few opportunities to come to know Cohen's poetry in Croatian translation during the 1970s and 1980s,¹ when Luko Paljetak's translation of "The Only Tourist in Havana Turns His Thoughts Homeward" was published in the literary magazine *Mogućnosti* (1972/7), and eleven poems, translated by Branka Komenski and Zdenka Novački, were published in the magazine *Dubrovnik* (1974/3). In 1981, Darko Glavan, a prominent music critic, translated eight of Cohen's poems and published them in the literary magazine *Off* (1981/4). Glavan wrote a short introductory text in which he presents Cohen as an artist who was an esteemed writer before becoming a musician. He considers *Beautiful Losers* to be a literary masterpiece and points out that rock music is only one of the forms of artistic expression Cohen uses (Glavan 1981).

More extensive interest in Cohen's *œuvre littéraire* occurred at the end of the 1990s. In the course of the past twenty years, most of his texts have been translated and published in Croatia for the first time. First among them was *Beautiful Losers* in 1998, translated 32 years after it came out in Canada. The translation made by Miloš Đurđević was published by the publishing house Feral Tribune from Split. The translation was accompanied by a very short biographical note and a list of Cohen's complete discography.

With the new century, Leonard Cohen finds his place in two dictionaries of foreign authors in which he is presented as a Canadian poet, novelist and songwriter whose main sources of influence were Greek and Hasidic mythologies (Detoni-Dujmić 2001,

1) There is no mention of Leonard Cohen or Alice Munro in a substantial 1976 volume devoted to Celtic, English and North American literatures that appeared as part of a series on the history of world literature.



225; 2005, 230–31). The literary and cultural magazine *15 dana* devoted its entire third issue in 2004 to Cohen's literary work, on the occasion of his seventieth birthday. The issue brings together various articles on Cohen, two of which were written in Croatian by Tomislav Šakić, while the others were translated from English.² The texts published in *15 dana* have played an important role in presenting Cohen's literature to the Croatian audience since they provided useful information as well as profound analyses of his work. The following year, two Croatian literary magazines published translations of several selected poems by Leonard Cohen. *Poezija* published thirteen poems selected and translated by Damir Šodan (2005/1–2, 133–136)³ and *Oris* published Dinko Telečan's translations, side by side with the original texts in English, of "Only One Thing," "I Wrote for Love," "Puppets," "Gravity," "On the Path for C. C." and "Why I Love France" (34 (2005), 188–193). During that same year Cohen's second novel, *The Favorite Game* (1963), was translated and published for the first time in Croatia. The novel was translated by Goran Vujasinović and published in the award-winning series "Na tragu klasika" [In the footsteps of the classics],⁴ published by Disput and edited by acclaimed editor Irena Lukšić, whose enduring interest in Cohen is explored later in this article. The Canada Council for the Arts subsidized the translation. The translation was accompanied by an extensive note on the author written by Tomislav Šakić that explains Cohen's literary work within the contexts of Canadian literature and points out that his novels are considered canonical works of literary postmodernism (Šakić 2005). Šakić, considered the preeminent Croatian expert on Cohen's writing, offers an instructive insight into Cohen's literary career as well as an analysis of *The Favorite Game*. The publication of this novel was received positively by literary critics and reviewers, who stress that *The Favorite Game* was translated almost forty years after it was first published. The novel is often compared to James Joyce's *A Portrait of the Artist as a Young Man* and is perceived as a postmodernist novel (Jurišić). The second edition of Miloš Đurđević's translation of *Beautiful Losers* was published in 2011 by the distinguished publishing house Šareni dućan from Koprivnica. In his afterword to the novel, Denis Leskovar presents Cohen as the bard of Canadian literature. Leskovar offers an analysis of *Beautiful Losers* but focuses also on his music career (Leskovar 2011).

2) Among them are: Stephen Scobie's "Ten Reasons to Celebrate His Birthday"; Cohen's "My life in arts" (from *Death of a Lady's Man*); Ira Nadel's foreword to the second edition of *Various Positions*; Scobie's introductory talk at the opening of the Conference on Leonard Cohen in Red Deer College in 1993; Robert de Young's text from *Intricate Preparations*; and a fragment from Cohen's novel *Beautiful Losers*.

3) Published poems: "Queen Victoria and Me", "I Have Two Bars of Soap", "A Cross Didn't Fall on Me", "The Reason I Write", "The Escape", "The Only Poem", "I Am Dying", "My Room", "The Road to Larissa", "It's My Turn", "Paris Models", "Marita" and "The Photograph".

4) The series "In the footsteps of the classics" features numerous widely known authors such as George Sand, Witold Gombrowicz, Hervé Guibert, Sam Shepard, Victor Pelevin, Alfred Jarry, Gajto Gazdanov, Pier Paolo Pasolini, and J. M. G. Le Clézio.



Damir Šodan, a translator who had previously published his translations of several poems by Cohen in the literary magazine *Poezija*, translated the complete *Book of Longing* immediately after its publication in 2006; it was published by V.B.Z. in Zagreb in 2007.⁵ Šodan had been an aficionado of Cohen's music for years, which influenced his decision to translate his poetry. He considers Cohen to be the biggest poet among rock musicians (Kekez 2010). Šodan admits that translating Cohen's poetry was not an easy task. He even contacted Cohen directly, exchanging several e-mails with the author, who helped him translate the verses he was having difficulties with.⁶

The interest in Cohen's poetry and prose continued to grow. In 2010, the Zagreb publishing house Vuković&Runjić, known for small print runs of quality titles (including Margaret Atwood's *Penelopiad*), published Maja Tančik's translation of the *Book of Mercy*, twenty-six years after the book of poetry was first published in Canada. This translation was welcomed by literary critics, but it still remained mainly perceived as a book written by a famous songwriter and musician (Dolenc 2010).⁷ The poems Tančik translated were included in a collection of Cohen's selected verse from 1956 to 2006 published by Vuković&Runjić in 2015 on the occasion of Cohen's 80th birthday. This is the best and most comprehensive selection of Cohen's poems in Croatian. The editor and main translator, Damir Šodan, who considers Cohen to be one of the most important artists of the 20th century ("Najbolji"), chose poems from all of Cohen's books of poetry: 19 poems from *Let Us Compare Mythologies*, 28 poems from *The Spice-Box of Earth*, 46 from *Flowers for Hitler*, 29 from *Parasites of Heaven*, 18 from the *Selected Poems 1956–1968*, 79 from *The Energy of Slaves*, 52 from *Death of a Lady's Man*, 50 from *Book of Mercy* and 61 from *Book of Longing*. The translated poems were accompanied by his complete discography and bibliography as well as notes prepared and edited by Tomislav Šakić. This collection gives an overview of his career in poetry, from his beginnings in Montréal while still a student at McGill to the songs written by Cohen as a Buddhist monk living in Mount Baldy near Los Angeles. The reviews of the book were extremely positive; Cohen is viewed as one of the best poets in Canadian literature and a possible candidate for the Nobel Prize in Literature (Krmpotić 2016). This honour of a singer-songwriter winning the Nobel eventually went to Bob Dylan in 2016, whom Cohen is often compared to by international and Croatian critics in terms of relevance, and some even responded to the news by claim-

5) Damir Šodan works as a translator at the International Court of Justice in The Hague. He is a poet and playwright. Šodan has also translated texts by several leading contemporary American authors, and co-edited the translation of *Beautiful Losers*.

6) Šodan got in touch with Cohen through Tomislav Šakić, who was one of the webmasters of Leonard Cohen's official website: www.leonardcohenfiles.com. Cohen's thank-you note on his help was printed in the Croatian translation of *Book of Longing* (*Knjiga čežnje*, 238).

7) A view reflected in the enthusiastic reception given to Cohen on his two visits to Croatia (Zagreb in 2010 and Pula in 2013) during his sold-out 2008–2013 world tour.



ing that Cohen would have been a more deserving choice for a Nobel laureate (McCoey 2016; Vukušić 2016; Paljetak 2016). The news of Dylan's winning the award came only weeks before Leonard Cohen passed away in November 2016.

The considerable popularity of Leonard Cohen's music was the main reason why translations of two biographies of him were published in Croatia. Ira Nadel's *Various Positions. A Life of Leonard Cohen* was published in 2007 and then again in 2010 (translation of Nadel's second, enlarged edition of Cohen's biography). In his afterword, Tomislav Šakić points out that this biography (which was authorized by Cohen) was very important because it placed Cohen's work within a larger cultural and literary context. He considers Cohen to be one of the most important poets in world literature and one of the most important songwriters in the world (Šakić 2010, 329). Reviews of Nadel's biography were positive as well (Bajsić 2013; Nikolić 2008). They clearly reveal Cohen as a major Canadian writer. Nadel's biography is a welcome project because it gives insight into Cohen's creative processes and into the period when he was struggling as a writer who was praised by the academic critics but unknown to the general readership. The second biography, written by Tim Footman (*Leonard Cohen – Hallelujah: A New Biography*), was translated by Vida Živković and published only one year after the first English edition in 2009.

By 2015, both Cohen's novels had been translated into the Croatian language as well as the complete versions of *Book of Mercy* and *Book of Longing* and a selection of poems from his entire poetry output published so far. It could be concluded that Leonard Cohen did not gain the status of a prominent literary figure in Croatia until the 21st century, decades after his global literary debut.

The death of Leonard Cohen in 2016 resonated highly in Croatia. Reactions to his death were published in all major newspapers and magazines, both in print and in digital format. Most of the articles focused on his musical career, only occasionally mentioning his literary career (Dragaš). At times they compared him to James Joyce and Ernest Hemingway (Matošin 2016). Croatian critics also recognized Cohen as one of the most important poets and musicians in the world, comparing him to Bob Dylan (Štoos, Leskovar). They point out that it was his literary career that separated Cohen from the other major figures in the world of rock music and songwriting.

Besides his critical and academic reception, Cohen's presence in Croatian cultural context could be seen in the productive reception as well. Two examples stand out: Ibrica Jusić's album *Hazarder: A Tribute to Leonard Cohen* (1999)⁸ and Irena Lukšić's short prose narrative entitled *Očajnički sluteći Cohena* [Desperately sensing Cohen]. In it, the first person narrator recounts her voyage to North America in search of a long lost

8) The songs included on the album are "Minute prologue," "So long Marianne," "A singer must die," "Bird on the wire," "The stranger song," "Stories of the street," "Suzanne," "If it be your will," "You know who I am," "Dance me to the end of love," "Who by fire," "Take this waltz."



love from youth who is supposed to be a musician in Cohen's band. The narrator wanders around Montréal, Niagara Falls and New York trying to find him. She sets out on a journey guided by the longing for her popular cultural idols, among them Leonard Cohen. The text is full of quotes and pseudo-quotes from Cohen's songs. The narrator admires Cohen, knows everything about him and his work, and perceives Canada mainly as the homeland of Cohen (Lukšić 2013).

Finally, the perception and influence of Leonard Cohen in Croatia, especially in the late 20th century, was often tied to that of one of the most relevant Croatian singer-songwriters and a household name throughout the Balkans, Arsen Dedić (1938–2015), Cohen's contemporary and admirer. Both were among the first recipients of the prestigious Italian Premio Tenco award (Cohen in 1978, Dedić in 1982; subsequent winners included Tom Waits, Joni Mitchell, Nick Cave and Patti Smith). Dedić regularly performed Cohen's songs, and recorded several covers of his songs translated and adapted by the poet Nikica Petrak (Ivanjek).

Alice Munro in Croatia

Even though Alice Munro is a well-known figure in Canadian literature, her texts had not been translated into the Croatian language until the 1990s. The first translations of her short stories were published in various literary anthologies: "The Stone in the Field" in Gorjup and Lovrinčević's 1991 anthology of Canadian short stories; "Wild Swans" and "The Beggar Maid" in a 2001 anthology of literature in English (eds. Štiks and Koruga); and "The Jack Randa Hotel" in a second anthology of Canadian short stories in English from 2009 (ed. Primorac). Gorjup and Lovrinčević's anthology offers an overview of the Canadian short story written in English during the second half of the 20th century. Besides Alice Munro's short story, it brings together texts written by Morley Callaghan, Ethel Wilson, Sinclair Ross, Hugh Garner, Mavis Gallant, Hugh Hood, Margaret Laurence, Margaret Atwood, W. P. Kinsella, Jack Hodgins, Matt Cohen, bp Nichol, George Bowering, Timothy Findley and Leon Rooke. Munro is presented as a postmodernist writer, recipient of the Governor-General's Award and the Canadian Booksellers Association Libris award (1991, 251–252). Štiks and Koruga's anthology brings together short stories published in various English-speaking countries. Munro is one of the five Canadian authors included in the volume.⁹ Antonija Primorac's anthology focuses on the last twenty years and includes short stories written by David Bezmozgis, M. G. Vassanji, Rohinton Mistry, Dionne Brand, Margaret Atwood, Sheila Heti, Timothy Findley, Yann Martel, Alistair MacLeod,

9) Besides Munro's, the anthology includes short stories by four other Canadian writers: Margaret Atwood, Rohinton Mistry, Leon Rooke and Guy Vanderhaeghe.



Wayne Johnston, Jessica Grant, Lisa Moore, Guy Vanderhaeghe, Carol Shields, Zsuzsi Gartner and Douglas Coupland.

Even though occasional translations of her texts were only present in literary anthologies, Alice Munro's name can be found in two dictionaries of foreign writers that appeared at the beginning of the 21st century, where she is introduced as a writer of short stories, capable of depicting the depth of emotional life of ordinary people, placing the action in rural Ontario and focusing on female protagonists (Gračan 2001, 2005).

Alice Munro's full short story collections started to be published in Croatia in the second decade of the 21st century. All five translations of Alice Munro's books in Croatia were introduced by OceanMore, a small publishing house specialized in more highbrow authors like Virginie Despentes, Karl Ove Knausgård, László Krasznórhorkai, Nancy Huston, Sándor Márai and Elfriede Jelinek. All Munro translations received financial aid from the Croatian Ministry of Culture as well as from the Canada Council International Translation Program, which subsidizes the publication of Canadian works in foreign languages abroad. The first translation was published two years after Alice Munro had been awarded the 2009 International Man Booker Prize: *Hateship, Friendship, Courtship, Loveship, Marriage*. This was followed by *Too Much Happiness* (2012), *Dear Life* (2013), *Open Secrets* (2014) and *Lives of Girls and Women* (2016). All five books were translated by Maja Šoljan, distinguished as a professional translator since 1980, who has so far translated numerous authors such as Aldous Huxley, Irwin Shaw, George Orwell, Philip Roth, Nadine Gordimer, Anita Desai and Haruki Murakami.¹⁰ The translated texts were not followed by extensive biographical notes, nor by a foreword or afterword; also, as is often the case with new translations into Croatian, the marketing strategy was to print fragments from reviews published in prestigious American journals such as the *San Francisco Chronicle*, *Houston Chronicle*, *The Wall Street Journal*, *The New York Times*, *Los Angeles Times Book Review*, *Chicago Tribune* and *Vogue* on the book covers. In those quotes Munro was compared to Tolstoy, Chekhov and Henry James. Her books were advertised as being written by the winner of the Man Booker International. It is interesting to note that in 2009, the year Munro was awarded the Booker, among its international jury was the famed Croatian author Dubravka Ugrešić. The success of Munro's translations was immediate. *Hateship, Friendship, Courtship, Loveship, Marriage* won the highest Croatian literary award, "Kiklop," for the best foreign fiction translation in 2011 and *Too Much Happiness* won the same award in 2013. Maja Šoljan received two prestigious awards for her translation of *Hateship, Friendship, Courtship, Loveship, Marriage*: a "Kiklop" for translators and the Josip Tabak Award issued by the Croatian Society of Literary Translators. Reviews of Munro's books in the Croatian press have been positive and full of praise. There are

10) We sincerely thank Mrs. Maja Šoljan for all the useful information she provided us with.



numerous articles acclaiming her work and her presence in Croatian culture, comparing her to the masters of the short story genre (Chekhov, Henry James, and Raymond Carver). Munro is considered to be the best contemporary writer of short stories and is metonymically identified with the genre itself. She has been especially praised for her portraits of women characters and the ability to depict the secrets that every family has.¹¹ Munro's short stories are perceived as examples of how even in that genre a complex literary world could be shaped. Reviews point out that each and every story by Munro is a separate world, each character complex and unique, and each ambience real and unrepeatable (Luketić 2012). Munro is mainly viewed as an author who narrates lives of women and focuses her attention on women characters and their everyday life.

It is worth noting that the first translations of Munro's books appeared in Croatia before she was awarded the Nobel Prize in literature in 2013. She was the first Canadian to earn that prize and the thirteenth woman among more than a hundred award winners. All the major Croatian newspapers and news portals reported on her winning the Nobel Prize in an affirmative tone.¹² The award was welcomed for several reasons. Primarily, because Alice Munro is a writer who has worked almost exclusively within the short story form. The short story had long stood in the shadow of the novel so the award was considered an important symbolic appreciation of the genre, Munro as its representative, as well as of the author herself. Munro was praised because she has helped focus critical and popular attention on a genre that was never as popular or as prestigious as the novel.

The Nobel garnered a renewed public interest in her work and in the short story genre, so OceanMore continued publishing second editions of existing translations and new translations of her books. Munro's 1971 collection of linked stories *Lives of Girls and Women* is well received by the Croatian readers and often lent out from public libraries. It is also interesting to note that OceanMore has also published translations of two other contemporary Nobel-Prize-winning female authors, Herta Müller and Elfriede Jelinek. OceanMore was founded in 1998 and specializes in bringing out contemporary foreign writers who are a "little bit elitist and controversial," according to the founder and editor Gordana Farkaš Sfeci, who is especially proud of her editions of the three women Nobel-winning writers. She considers them to be "the crown of her work," since the Nobel Prize is the only literary prize that matters to Croatian readers (Farkaš Sfeci; Dugandžija).

The book covers of Munro's two books published after the Nobel Prize feature snippets from reviews by Croatian literary critics such as Katarina Luketić, Dragan Jurak,

11) See: Korbar 2013; Jurak 2013; Jurak 2014; Derk 2014; Luketić 2017; Ilić 2017; Alajbegović 2017.

12) On 10 October 2013 the news was published in *Jutarnji list*, *Slobodna Dalmacija*, *Novi list* and *voxfeminae.net*. See also Krtalić Muiesan 2013, Pavičić 2013.



Robert Perišić and Tanja Tolić. This shift from international towards Croatian reviews reveals that she has become a well-known author in Croatian literary circles and that there is no need to use the authority of reviewers from *The New York Times* or *Los Angeles Times Book Review* to affirm her relevance. The message from the review segment on the book cover of *Dear Life* is that Alice Munro's works are real masterpieces of our era.

Alice Munro published 14 books in the period between 1968 and 2012. So far only five of them have been translated into the Croatian language: *Lives of Girls and Women* (thirty-seven years after its first publication), *Open Secrets* (twenty years later), *Hate-ship, Friendship, Courtship, Loveship, Marriage* (after ten years), *Too Much Happiness* (after three years) and *Dear Life* (only one year after the book was first published in Canada). *Dance of the Happy Shades*, *Something I've Been Meaning To Tell You*, *Who Do You Think You Are?*, *The Moons of Jupiter*, *The Progress of Love*, *Friend of My Youth*, *The Love of a Good Woman*, *Runaway*, and *The View from Castle Rock* are still waiting to be translated into Croatian. It is a general practice for publishing rights of authors represented by an agent that the publisher who was the first to introduce an author to a new market and is in good standing has the opportunity to buy any subsequent rights for that same author before they are offered to other publishers, so OceanMore currently remains the sole publisher of Munro's translations in Croatia. Depending on the policy of the rights agency representing a particular author, after an author has won a substantial award such as the Nobel, the local publisher is often required to commit to buying the rights for all existing books by the author in question. This practice is unfortunately not always financially viable for publishers focusing on markets as small as that of the readers of Croatian, partly because of the higher costs of rights and other publishing costs, which makes the Nobel, or any other literary award, not as relevant a factor when it comes to picking an author for translation,¹³ unless as a carefully considered marketing strategy. In the case of Munro, OceanMore might have negotiated a more lenient publishing plan, considering their purchase of rights before her Nobel Prize.

The interest in Munro's books and the outstanding appreciation of her work can be explained by the popularity of the short story, a dominant genre in Croatian literature from the mid-1980s until the beginning of the 21st century. Its steady rise began thanks to the literary magazine *Quorum*¹⁴ and was fostered later on by the Festival of Alternative Literature (FAK). The success of the genre was further encouraged by the publication of a great many anthologies, not only of Croatian but also (in translation) of German, Norwegian, Slovene, Polish, Hungarian, Italian, French, Austrian,

13) Personal communication with publishers, editors and literary agents.

14) The most esteemed Croatian writers of the 1980s (Z. Radaković, S. Habjan, S. Karuza, E. Budiša, N. Petković, D. Miloš, M. Valent, E. Popović, S. Tomaš, etc.) have published their short stories in *Quorum*.



Australian and Serbian short stories, as well as by the launching of the Festival of the European Short Story in 2002, featuring guest performances and readings by numerous international authors, accompanied by Croatian translations of their works.

Conclusion

As elsewhere in the world, Leonard Cohen had been perceived in Croatia exclusively as a musician and songwriter for a long time. His literary texts, especially poetry, started to attract the attention of Croatian translators during the 1980s, when he was already a well-known and admired songwriter. However, it was not until the last fifteen years that he became recognized in Croatia as a literary figure. He is often placed in the same category as other musician/writers: Bob Dylan, Jim Morrison, Nick Cave, Patti Smith and Ry Cooder. Nowadays, Leonard Cohen is one of the few Canadian authors whose major texts have been translated into the Croatian language. Undoubtedly, the initiative to translate his works appeared after he became a well-known singer and songwriter in Europe. In the reviews analyzed for the purpose of this article, Leonard Cohen is mainly perceived as an artist of sadness, loneliness and melancholy (see also Šakić 2004). He is seen as an artist who struggled with depression throughout his life, who found comfort in religion and numerous love affairs with his muses. Reviews and articles point out that his music is more appreciated in Europe than in the rest of the world, that he has been considered a classic of Canadian literature for a long time now, that he looks more like a professor of literature or existentialist philosopher than a rock musician, and that he is often compared to Bob Dylan. It is interesting to note that Cohen's literary work so far has not attracted academic analysis in Croatia. While his work has been extensively discussed in English-speaking countries, only two articles have been written on his work in Croatia (Šakić 2004; 2006). Among those who contributed greatly to Cohen's reception in Croatia are the translator Damir Šodan and especially Tomislav Šakić.

The first translated text by Alice Munro (a short story) was published in Croatia twenty-three years after the publication of her first book, *Dance of the Happy Shades*, in Canada. Then, beginning twenty years later, within a short period of only five years five of her books were translated and published in Croatia, all by the same translator and publishing house. The reviews were unanimously positive, welcoming translations of an author who is regarded as a contemporary classic. Several strategies were used at first to introduce Munro's work to Croatian readers. Firstly, she was compared to the classics of the short story (Chekhov, James); secondly, she was presented as a literary award-winning writer; and lastly, quotes from reviews from major literary magazines were used to affirm that she already had a consid-



erable reputation in Canada and the USA. Munro is identified, as was established from reviews and articles about her work, as a master of the short story genre who writes on marriage, divorce, aging, women's difficulties in professional life, parenthood, relationships between children and parents. Munro's success has run parallel to the success of the short story in Croatia. Her books and the winning of the Nobel Prize were especially welcomed by Croatian authors proficient in the short story genre such as Miljenko Jergović, Jurica Pavičić and Robert Perišić. The parallelism between the success of the short story and the rising appreciation of Alice Munro's fiction in Croatia is not coincidental. It is worth noting that Munro's reputation as an international prize-winning short story writer reached Croatia before she received the Nobel Prize in 2013 and that it does not fall far behind Margaret Atwood's esteem among Croatians. And finally, in favor of her positive reception among readers, since the translation of her full collections of short stories into Croatian, Munro's books have been routinely and repeatedly included as book-club and reading group selections in public libraries throughout Croatia.

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