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Sveučilište u Zadru

Odjel za anglistiku

Diplomski sveučilišni studij engleskog jezika i književnosti (dvopredmetni)

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Izjava o akademskoj čestitosti

Ja, **Mirna Merdić,** ovime izjavljujem da je moj **diplomski** rad pod naslovom **Translating Culture – Culture in Translation: Flour in the Veins, W, A Castle in Romagna and The Judgment of Richard Richter by Igor Štiks** rezultat mojega vlastitog rada, da se temelji na mojim istraživanjima te da se oslanja na izvore i radove navedene u bilješkama i popisu literature. Ni jedan dio mojega rada nije napisan na nedopušten način, odnosno nije prepisan iz necitiranih radova i ne krši bilo čija autorska prava.

Izjavljujem da ni jedan dio ovoga rada nije iskorišten u kojem drugom radu pri bilo kojoj drugoj visokoškolskoj, znanstvenoj, obrazovnoj ili inoj ustanovi.

Sadržaj mojega rada u potpunosti odgovara sadržaju obranjenoga i nakon obrane uređenoga rada.

Zadar, 29. siječnja 2023.

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1 Introduction

What is translation? What is world literature? Could one exist without the other? These questions can be perceived as either simple or extremely complicated. In plain words, translation is any transfer of a text from one language to another, and world literature should most likely comprise of a body of literary works from various national literatures that somehow travel between nations and languages; this leads to the conclusion that world literature could not exist without translation. Croatians who do not speak French could not debate on works of Marcel Proust, and Americans who do not understand Russian could never read Dostoyevsky if it had not been for translations; the whole academic field of comparative literature exists thanks to translators (and maybe also writers). It is generally believed that literature is an art form and that writers are artists; similarly, it is believed that painting is an art and that painters are artists, but this leads us to the problem of translators – if someone can replicate Mona Lisa absolutely perfectly, that someone will be considered a gifted artist despite the fact that the painting was not his original idea, on the other hand, if we observe literature as an art of words, those people who can produce the same piece of art by equally skillful usage of words, just in another language are not considered artists because the plot was not their original idea.

Translators have to understand the author's ideas, cultural references, emotional state, etc., and then they have to skillfully reproduce all of these in another language within another culture. When one starts to think of translation as an artistic process, one begins to understand that it is very complicated. In theory, and sadly often in practice as well, any person who understands a foreign language can translate a literary work from that foreign language into their mother tongue, and vice versa, but translations that are based solely on the understanding of words will not be works of art comparable to the original, they will not transfer the poetics,

the emotions, the culture, the humor of the original and therefore they will fail to render the original idea.

Out of all aspects that translators have to take into account when creating translations of literary works, cultural features of works could be the most complicated aspect, simply because culture is such a complex notion, defined in hundreds of different ways. When translating literary works from one language to another, translators serve as negotiators between two cultures. Culture is a rather delicate notion, every nation takes a lot of pride in its cultural traditions, and every nation's culture and tradition are unique to its historical experience. Negotiating between cultures – sometimes radically different from one another – is a challenging task as the translator, in addition to the original author's thoughts, ideas, style, etc., needs to transfer the elements of culture from one language to another. One could argue that this task can, at some point, become so challenging that it becomes questionable if it is even possible to translate culture.

Motivated by these thoughts on the complexity of the act of translation, this thesis attempts to analyze how the translation of cultural aspects of literary works functions between nations with radically different national cultures. In order to explore this, it is essential to understand what literary translation is and what culture is and how to preserve the culture of the original through translation. English translations of Igor Štiks' works, *Flour in the Veins*, *W*, *A Castle in Romagna*, and *The Judgment of Richard Richter* translated between two drastically different cultures will be used as a case study which will try to offer answers to these questions and show what (a) translation does to (a) culture.

2 Defining Translation

Every word for a thing or a concept or an activity used daily by millions of people gains numerous definitions, and different people understand the notion differently, translation is not an exception. From students of foreign languages to book publishers, people use the word translation daily, and they probably do not spend much time thinking about the meaning behind the word; for them, translation is any act of transferring meaning from one language to another. If they took a moment to think, they would probably come to the conclusion that translation can exist in many forms, from the translation of soap operas for the mass audience of FOX TV Network to the translation of Ancient Greek poems for a few interested readers. Depending on the purpose of the translation, translators might approach the task of translation differently and face different problems. One of the most complicated forms of translation is literary translation; despite the fact that many scholars tried to simplify the act and succinctly explain it, literary translation stays a highly complex battlefield, where languages, cultures, authors, translators, poetics, rhymes, and many other aspects of literary works fight for their chance of migrating from the original text to the translated text. Eugene Nida claims that "definitions of proper translating are almost as numerous and varied as the persons who have undertaken to discuss the subject" (Venuti, *The Translation Studies Reader* 145), and this appears to be an appropriate description of the somewhat impossible task of finding a single simple definition of translation.

David Bellos wrote a whole book, *Is That a Fish in Your Ear?*, on defining translation simply to picture how undefinable translation is. Through many examples Bellos showed that right or accurate or literal translation does not exist because it is not actually possible, if one decided to ask hundred competent translators to translate certain text from one language to another no two translations would be exactly the same. This arises from the differences in syntax, grammar, lexicology, etc. that exist between different languages. Bellos claims that

translation should not be observed as something that exactly transfers words from one language to another but rather as something that "provides for some community an acceptable match for an utterance made in a foreign tongue" (221). So, when one is to think about the study of translation one should not try to think about some clear or simple definition but should rather try to think about what they can learn about the purpose of translation, about the inevitable act of translation that will always occur between two languages through literature, trade, foreign politics or something else (Bellos 5-17). And namely, that will be attempted in this thesis – to understand the act of translation by observing historical changes in thinking about translation, contemporary debates about the nature of translation and its connection to different notions that affect translations, by putting a particular emphasis on the relations between translation and culture, and translation and world literature.

2.1 From Jerome Model to the Cultural Turn in Translation

Many debates on translation are started by observing the emergence of the study of translation, but to understand the act of translation, one should maybe go even a step further and notice the emergence of translation as an act itself; it is generally believed that the practice of translating emerged somewhere between Mesopotamia and Egypt, after all, these ancient cultures are also believed to be cradles of literacy. It is believed that one of the first translations was that of the *Epic of Gilgamesh*, and maybe observing the possible point of this text would also enable us to discover the purpose of its translation. The *Epic of Gilgamesh*, like many other literary works of the era, is both entertaining to its audience and also didactic, its readers or listeners can learn about the dangerous nature of tyranny and arrogance. Accordingly, one could assume that *Gilgamesh* was translated to educate and amuse readers beyond the language of the original. Therefore, this could lead to the conclusion that literature, in general, is written,

translated, and in the end, read to amuse and educate its audience, but it also leads to the thought that literature as such is a bit dangerous since in its nature it can be manipulative.

After observing the begging of the translation, the emergence of translators should be mentioned; by translating the Bible, Saint Jerome (c. 331 – c. 420 AD) set the standard for translation practices applied in the West for almost two thousand years. The so-called Jerome Model (Bassnett and Lefevere 2) of translation carries equivalence at the heart of the theory which, in the simplest possible terms, means that the point of translation is to translate the text as faithfully as possible. In the case of translating sacred texts, fidelity is achieved on the level of the word; the translator's task is to translate each word in the sequence as faithfully as possible. This kind of fidelity is achieved with the help of a dictionary, which leads to the idea that anyone with an adequate dictionary could be a translator since the job is more or less mechanical – one just has to transfer the literal meanings of the words from one language to another. While this approach was appropriate for Saint Jerome's translation of the Bible, even Jerome noted that for the purpose of translation of literary works, one should obtain fidelity on the level of sense. In the last two hundred years, scholars have come to the realization that this utmost fidelity is not appropriate for most of the texts, and not only that, but it is also not possible (Bassnett and Lefevere 2-3). Walter Benjamin addresses word-for-word fidelity; he explains that word-for-word fidelity almost always fails to render the sense of the original text because the meaning of the words in a literary text does not stop at their dictionary definition but rather carries different significances bound to context, poetics, or some other aspect of a literary text (Venuti, *The Translation Studies Reader* 80-81).

Even an older approach to the translation practice is the Horace Model. Horace argued that the translator should not be faithful to the text but to the customers, i.e., the ones paying for the translation. The translator serves as a negotiator between the text, the two languages, and the patron; this approach leads to the favoring of the privileged language and culture, in

Horace's time, it was Latin, and nowadays, it is English (Bassnett and Lefevere 3-4). Even though Horace's model was not as influential as Jerome's, it is important because Horace appears to be the first one to question the relationship between a translation and a patron and the problem of favoring a particular language. Bassnett and Lefevere claim that translations into English, namely translations from what they call "third world languages" (4), are always carried out in a way that favors English, everything foreign or everything that may confuse the average reader of the English translation is standardized to fit within the boundaries of what is familiar to English speaking community.

When observing the most influential models of translation that set the foundations for what we today know as translation theory, along with Jerome and Horace one should also mention philosopher Friedrich Schleiermacher. Schleiermacher observed works translated to German and claimed that translations should be carried out by emphasizing the alterity of the original language and culture (Venuti, *The Translation Studies Reader* 51). The reader of the translated text should always be aware of the fact that they are reading a translation and not the original based on the lexical choices found in a translated text. Schleiermacher concluded that the original is the most valuable version of the text and that all translated versions should transfer the culture and the language of the original without favoring the receiving culture or language, by doing so translators are enriching their own culture (Venuti, *The Translation Studies Reader* 62).

At the beginning of the 20th century, the rapid development of translation theory began. The most influential views of the period emerged from the trends that prevailed in Germany at the beginning of the 20th century, and these ideas were influenced by German literary and philosophical traditions, mainly Romanticism, existential phenomenology, and hermeneutics. Theorists shared the belief that "language does more than communicate, that it is constitutive in its representation of thought and reality" (Venuti, *The Translation Studies Reader* 71). Based

on these beliefs, translation was seen as a form of interpretation of the original text conducted in another language.

Walter Benjamin, on the other hand, claims that translation is a form (Venuti, *The Translation Studies Reader* 76). In order to understand that form properly, one needs to go back to the original text and determine the original's translatability. Benjamin explains that the translation should be observed as a work of art rather than as a linguistic act and argues that the translator forms an intimate relationship with the text and translates its meaning to another language. However, despite the translator's best efforts, in the end, the success of this quest will, inter alia, depends on translatability (Venuti, *The Translation Studies Reader* 82-83).

In the 1960s, Eugene Nida set the foundations for modern translation studies by developing the dynamic-equivalence theory presented in the book *Toward a Science of Translating*. Nida pointed out that "no two languages are identical" (Venuti, *The Translation Studies Reader* 141), so a completely exact translation from one language to another cannot exist. Nida argues that there are many more grades of translation than free and literal translation that are traditionally observed. According to Nida, three basic factors should be taken into account when talking about translation, "the nature of the message, the purpose or purposes of the author and, by proxy, of the translator, and the type of audience" (Venuti, *The Translation Studies Reader* 142).

The most noticeable growth of translation studies, and the change in understanding what translation is, took place in the 1980s when the field brought together works from linguistics, history, anthropology, literary study, etc. Lefevere and Bassnett called this a cultural turn in translation studies (Bassnett and Lefevere IX). Now translations are no longer studied by emphasizing linguistic aspects of a text; they are observed interdisciplinary, from

anthropological, sociological, and many other points of view, which brings us a step closer to understanding what translation entails.

In the preface to *Translation/History/Culture*, Susan Bassnett and Andre Lefevere describe translation as an act of rewriting the original (XI). The translated text is, de facto, a completely new work of art that resembles the original as much as possible. Lefevere and Bassnett argue that translation always reflects certain ideologies that enable the translation to function in a certain way in a receiving culture (Lefevere XI). In the introduction to the same book, Lefevere continues to explain that cultures are not monolithic entities; every culture is shaped by the groups in the position of power that want to influence others in different ways, so, in a way, all translations can be observed as written with the aim of cultural influence (8). According to Lefevere, translations should be studied in connection with numerous aspects and not in isolation and, according to him, some of these aspects are ideologies, patronage, hegemony, poetics, registers, etc. (Lefevere 10). Translations, as well as any written text, have the power to influence societies, to penetrate cultural boundaries and existing ideologies, and by doing so, translations shape the society of the target language.

Lefevere believes that translators do not think about the linguistic level of text; they do not think about translating as the act of transferring the meanings of words from one language to another; they think about it on two intertwined levels, first is the conceptual grid, and the other is the textual grid, both grids are the results of the process of socialization (Bassnett and Trivedi 75). Translators and writers need to face grids and need to manipulate them in a way that will convey the right message, that will be not only clear but also interesting to the reader. Another important aspect of texts produced by manipulating the grids is the construction of reality for readers by translators and writers, and thus, at this point of translation, while translating texts between two extremely different languages and cultures, many problems arise. Some concepts are unique to one culture's understanding of reality, and translators have to

make the right choices to reproduce these concepts in translated works in a way that will be graspable to the readers of the text in translation. The translator decides that the readers will either be faced with something new and unknown or that the concepts from the original will be tailored in a manner that suits the understanding of the readers of the translated text (Bassnett and Trivedi 75-94).

2.2 Current Debates on Translation

In *Translation Changes Everything*, Lawrence Venuti states that even though most scholars agree that translation is a communicative act, translation is much more than communication (11). Contemporary translation theory, based upon continental philosophical traditions, presents translation as an act of transferring both language and culture between two groups and two languages. While translating, translators always, at least up to some degree, inscribe receiving culture's ideas in the translated text, domesticating the text and assimilating it into the receiving culture. Inscription in translations always leads theorists to question the ethics of translation. Venuti argues that a translator can only partially communicate the author's original message through the translation since the readers of the translated text will never understand the source language and culture as natives do (Venuti, *Translation Changes Everything* 16). The translated message is not only communicated but it is also interpreted and reinvented. Every translation relies on the translator's interpretation of the original text, and despite the translator's effort to interpret the text objectively translator still carries personal values on the subconscious level. Venuti highlights that in the contemporary practices of translation, essential elements of the novel stay unchanged; these essential elements mostly include the plot and characters' names, everything else is subject to change (Venuti, *Translation Changes Everything* 13).

In *The Translator's Invisibility,* Venuti states that translation is "a process by which the chain of signifiers that constitutes the foreign text is replaced by a chain of signifiers in the translating language which the translator provides on the strength of an interpretation" (13). Translation can be seen as an act of transferring meaning from one language to another. Historically, this transfer was marked as faithful or free, some scholars even pointed out that some translations include linguistic errors, and these errors have the potential of influencing the receiving culture. Venuti claims that the viability of translation is built upon its connection with current cultural and social circumstances, and in that relationship, the violence of translation begins (Venuti, *The Translator's Invisibility* 14). If a translator wants to produce a translation that will be published and read, the translation has to satisfy existing beliefs, norms, values, and preexisting poetic norms of the receiving culture.

In *An Aesthetic Education in the Era of Globalization*, Gayatri Chakravorty Spivak shares similar views. Spivak adopts Klein's metaphor of translation as a continuous shuttle, the translation travels and constantly grabs things around itself (242). This grabbing happens on the outside and influences what is inside, leading to the idea that translation is the act in which the translator aims to understand outside factors, like culture or language and somehow process them within the translation. The journey of the text in translation is something that is happening in the intimate relationship between the translator and the original text. Translators rely on their knowledge of culture and representation of it. Spivak concludes that shuttling is not in the control of the subject, i.e., the translator, it happens from the inside and the outside, and it is intertwined with violence and cultural norms (243). By providing examples of her translations and her conversation with a Canadian translator of Islamic origin, Spivak shows that even though people like to think of themselves as objective, they still always subconsciously have certain respect or even love towards their mother tongue and norms that have been passed on them in their mother tongue. She explains that, in the end, despite all the violence and

uncontrollable nature of translation, translation is still inevitable because if the text says something, there will most definitely be an echo of what is said, i.e., there will be a translation (Spivak 241-256).

Venuti expands this theory further by observing the relationship between the author and the translator in *The Translator's Invisibility*. He presents the idea of translators and authors being simpatico. The term simpatico is marking the relationship between the author and the translator in which the translator finds the author not only likable or understands his thoughts, but in which the translator feels deep sympathy towards the author because in a way they share a similar identity, primarily based upon the fact that they are similar in age and share somewhat similar life experiences (Venuti, *The Translator's Invisibility* 237). Simpatico can be accomplished through similar stages in their careers, if both the author and the translator are at the beginning of their professional journey, they grow together and develop similar thinking styles, which enables the translator to translate the author's original ideas as faithfully as possible on the level of sense. However, as Venuti further explains, even though simpatico seems as something positive because by identifying with the author the translator produces fluent and transparent text, the idea is actually quite narcissistic (Venuti, *The Translator's Invisibility* 264). Translation is a process in which translators aim to find similarities between two languages and cultures but also to confront dissimilarities in the best possible way. A translator should not simply delete all the differences but find a way to signal cultural distinctiveness, so the reader understands the other culture. Yet, when the author and the translator are simpatico, the translators include their perspective in the translation instead of the author's since to them, it seems like their perspectives are the same (Venuti, *The Translator's Invisibility* 237-264).

Among many scandals of translation Venuti wrote about, he claims that the formation of cultural identities is the most scandalous aspect of the translator's task (Venuti, *The Scandals*

of Translation 67). When debating translation, many scholars are suspicious because translating always rewrites an original idea by domesticating it into the receiving culture. This process begins even before the translation itself, it starts at the phase of choosing texts for translation and ends long after the translation is finished, when readers are reading it. Like many other authors, Venuti notices that geopolitics plays a significant role in this literary exchange, translations are often done by following certain patterns that are, in fact, stereotypes about foreign cultures, sometimes rooted in nationalism, racism, religion, or some other values shared by a large community (Venuti, *The Scandals of Translation* 67). The translation observed in this manner is seen as an identity formation process, it forms two identities simultaneously, foreign identity and domestic identity, by representing foreign culture and influencing the domestic culture.

All these debates could be summed up with a very simple thought about the literary exchange between Croatian and English-speaking nations, mainly the United States of America and the United Kingdom. When works are translated from Croatian to English, translators are likely under pressure of producing a translation that will be well received as they are not coming from a position of power, Croatian literature does not hold a significant cultural capital, and they want to be accepted by a nation that is globally considered more literary influential. On the other hand, when works are translated from English to Croatian, translators are not under that kind of pressure, they are translating from great literature to a minor one, and they expect that the readers coming from minor literature will always like works coming from English.

Venuti uses the term invisibility to explain at least two phenomena, first one is what he calls the "illusionistic effect of discourse" (Venuti, *The Translator's Invisibility* 1). This effect is achieved by the translator's production of the translated text that flows naturally in the target language, the produced text does not have any peculiarities that would remind the readers that they are reading a translation. The translated text should seem like a reflection of the author's

original ideas – it should seem that the translator simply perfectly conveyed the author's original thoughts and message in another language. According to Venuti, even when the translated text is read for the purpose of translation reviews, reviewers mostly focus on fluency, ignoring many other aspects of the translation, for instance, accuracy or targeted audience (Venuti, *The Translator's Invisibility* 2). Venuti exemplified this by quoting several translation reviews of well-known fiction, and most of these reviewers use words like fluently, flows, elegantly, gracefully, that seems a bit absurd because even though fluency is a fundamental aspect of translation it cannot be by any means its only quality (Venuti, *The Translator's Invisibility* 2-4). Venuti goes a step further and investigates what kind of English is used in these praised translations that flow so gracefully, and he notices that readers and critics love modern and standard language and dislike archaic language, slang, and jargon (Venuti, *The Translator's Invisibility* 5). None of them seem interested in whether the original text was written in jargon or archaic language, they always prefer translations done in standard language.

2.3 Translation and World Literature

One cannot understand the notion of translation without analyzing the concept of world literature, given that translation enables literature to travel around the world. Even though world literature should be global, in reality, it is quite local, everything about translating literature is local, from the selection of the works that will be translated to the choice of discursive strategies used in the process of translation. International literary exchange is intertwined with different cultural, political, and all sorts of other sociological values and beliefs. According to Venuti, world literature is a hierarchical system, major national literatures with long traditions hold central positions since their tradition holds the prestigious position worldwide (Venuti, *Translation Changes Everything* 194). Countries in which national literature holds central

positions translate much less foreign literature, so for the writers coming from minor literatures it is always a special honor and an opportunity to be translated into major languages, these translations give value or credit to these minor literatures and, consequently, writers from minor literatures.

Venuti's conclusions go hand in hand with Itamar Even-Zohar's polysystem theory, developed in the 1970s, in which he explained that every national literature functions as a system, and each literary work occupies a different position within this hierarchical system (Venuti, *The Translation Studies Reader* 163). Hierarchical positions in literary polysystem are never fixed since polysystems are dynamic and one text can occupy different positions at different times. Furthermore, each literary system is a polysystem, meaning that it is a system created out of many other systems. Even-Zohar claims that literary texts need to be studied by taking into account their interaction with the other works in the literary polysystem (Venuti, *The Translation Studies Reader* 162). By observing literature in such a manner, one does not only understand its dynamic relationship with other works but also with social, cultural, and historical circumstances.

Literary works need to compete for their position within the polysystem. Even-Zohar puts particular emphasis on the translated literature, translated works within the polysystem function in relation to both other translated works and works that originated from the language into which the work is translated (Venuti, *The Translation Studies Reader* 162-163). According to Even-Zohar, translated literature can occupy two different positions within the polysystem: a peripheral position or a central position. Works that occupy a central position actively influence other works in host literature, they serve as a model for works that will be written in the host literature (Venuti, *The Translation Studies Reader* 163). Since some national literatures are considered less prestigious than others, they can be seen as minor literatures or peripheral literatures, and those are most often national literatures of small countries without long literary

tradition, and namely in such national literatures translated works gain a central position in polysystem. On the other hand, translated literature within the literary polysystems of the nations that have long and prestigious/famous/widely acclaimed literature mostly occupy a peripheral position. These works that occupy peripheral positions are translated by favoring the receiving culture and language. In such instances, as Even-Zohar goes on to say, translators tend to use well-established literary models from their own culture when translating, and translated texts are very often domesticated (Venuti, *The Translation Studies Reader* 162-168).

Even-Zohar's theory is especially applicable when analyzing translations of Croatian literature into English since Croatian literature does not hold such an influential position within the world of world literature as English literature does, and it will probably occupy a peripheral position, i.e., it will be translated to fit as smoothly as possible within the norms of host literature.

Pascale Casanova shares somewhat similar ideas to Even-Zohar's, she believes that literary works, and, consequently, their translations should not be observed in isolation but rather as a part of the body of works she refers to as the literary world (3). In *The World Republic of Letters,* Casanova aims to examine the literary world and the rules that are governing that world. Casanova points out that many authors described problems they faced while trying to gain their position in the literary world and, in her opinion, these problems arise because of the peculiar economy of the world of letters (9). She highlights that literature, something that should in its essence be a work of art, nonmaterialistic, almost spiritual, becomes very materialistic and mundane, even violent because authors have to compete with each other in order to gain their position in the literary world (Casanova 10).

Casanova goes further into describing her vision of the literary world and explains that "the world republic of letters has its mode of operation: its economy, which produces

hierarchies and various forms of violence" (11). She explains that the world economy and literary economy do not necessarily overlap, literary credit is earned through literature, a nation has to have a long literary/cultural tradition and many famous authors to gain literary credit (Casanova 11). For example, France gained its literary capital thanks to Camus, Proust, Balzac, and other widely acclaimed authors, but also since it was home to one of the most famous revolutions, it is a country well known for accepting differences and foreigners – all that enabled France to have intellectual credit acknowledged worldwide. What is more, this leads Casanova to believe that Paris could be seen as the capital of the world republic of letters; in the 19th and 20th centuries, authors who wanted to succeed moved to Paris and wrote in French (26), which also shows two other rules governing the literary world – geography and language. Some places are (at a certain time in history) more influential in the literature than others, for example, the aforementioned Paris, or Barcelona as a center of the large Spanish-speaking world, or London as a center of the English-speaking community. According to Casanova, the same is true for languages, some languages possess more credit than others (17-18), and all this leads to ideas similar to Even Zohar's – everything in the literary world coexists in a hierarchy. It should be also pointed out that while talking about Paris and the French language Casanova uses Gramsci's terminology and refers to this phenomenon as French hegemony (Casanova 36). Accordingly, one could notice similar hegemony of the English-speaking community today, it seems like literature originating from English-speaking countries holds ideological power over the literature written in minor languages, like Croatian.

Casanova argues about the position of translated works in this hierarchy (154). The literary world is a market where literature is traded among countries, and those from the periphery of the literary world (writers from smaller countries without long history or many classics) compete for their position with those in the center of the literary world that are in a way protecting their position. For the authors from literary peripheral countries, the only way

of entering the "prestigious" part of the literary world and earning a literary credit is through translation, and, the choice of what will be translated is conditioned by the economics and politics of the literary world and not solely by artistic value.

Similar to Casanova, Richard Jacquemond also writes about the economy and politics of the literary world. He claims that translation is not only a creative or intellectual process, but, since it takes place between two languages of two nations that have two cultures, what is supposed to be intellectual exchange becomes a political and economic exchange (Venuti, *Rethinking Translation* 139). Literature functions within the means of the international market, books are sold, translation rights are bought, etc., so in the end, the one with the economic hegemony also has the intellectual hegemony. After all, it would be hard to argue with the fact that in today's world everything is for sale – it is only a matter of finding the price – so there is no reason for one to believe that intellectual capital is treated differently. The result of this is great inequality that exists between national literatures. Those from small, poor countries are irrelevant compared to those from wealthy countries. According to Jacquemond, this leads to two primary directions in translating text from these peripheral countries to the languages of the most influential countries in the world, sometimes texts are exoticized, and sometimes they are naturalized, both directions lead to manipulated representations of the text (Venuti, *Rethinking Translation* 151). The choice of orientation depends on rather fixed stereotypes existing in the receiving cultures, for example, Americans like to see Moroccans as exotic, so a translator who is translating literary work from Moroccan national literature into English will probably try to please the audience and give them a piece of exoticism. On the other hand, most Americans probably do not have such a strong idea on how Maltese culture should appear, so a translator who is translating something from Maltese culture will try to please his audience by naturalizing the text with the aim of not bothering the reader with something unknown.

3. Culture in Igor Štiks' *A Castle in Romagna, W, Flour in the Veins* and *The Judgment of Richard Richter*

To analyze cultural aspects of Štiks' works one should understand what culture is depicted in Štiks' works and to what culture his works belong. Superficially observing one could simply state that Štiks started his literary career in Croatia, therefore he should be considered a Croatian author, and his works should be recognized as a part of Croatian national literature. But, if one tries to examine the culture that can be found in Štiks' works this simple statement could take a rather complicated turn, one could recognize the influence of Croatian culture in those texts, but also Bosnian, Serbian, Yugoslav, immigrant, maybe sporadically even Jewish, the list could go on and on. This could motivate one to try to understand the culture found in Štiks' works not only by examining works but also by examining the author. Štiks lived in Croatia, but he was born in Bosnia and Herzegovina, and today he lives in Belgrade, in the meantime, he lived in Chicago and Paris, so all of this builds up the complexity of Štiks' cultural belonging. Maybe one should not try to mark his belonging (and belonging of his works) by naming nations and places, maybe one could simply accept that culture can be a hybrid notion that includes numerous different elements that cannot be easily categorized under some common name.

Moreover, a similar answer to the question to what culture Štiks' works belong could be found in the article "O "piscima između": od Ive Andrića do današnjih pisaca stiješnjenih između dva (ili više) jezika i kultura" (On "in between writers": from Ivo Andrić to Contemporary Writers Squeezed between Two (or More) Languages and Cultures), in which Boris Škvorc and Nebojša Lujanović speak about the writers who exist interculturally under several identities. They are of one origin, but because of the Yugoslavian war in the 1990s, they migrated either to some other country that was a part of former Yugoslavia, or to some other part of the world, or first to other territories of former Yugoslavia and then somewhere else. As

Škvorc and Lujanović claim, it would be hard to say that these authors belong to one specific culture or national literature; instead, they categorize these writers as writers in between and they thus present hybrid identities through the usage of multiple languages. According to Škvorc and Lujanović, Igor Štiks possess many different potential identities that he presents within his texts. Because of this conglomerate of identities that can be found in his works, they believe Štiks should not be categorized within a single national literature but between them.

3.1 Yugoslav and post-Yugoslav Culture

If one wants to try to understand the culture in Štiks' *Flour in the Veins, W,* A *Castle in Romagna*, and *The Judgment of Richard Richer*, one should take into account texts written specifically about the multiculture of countries that once constituted former Yugoslavia. One of the wittiest descriptions of this culture was probably given by Semezdin Mehmedinović who once took the Sarajevo phone directory and searched for people that shared the same last name as one of the leaders of Serbian aggression in Bosnia and Herzegovina, Radovan Karadžić. Out of twenty-two Karadžićs who still lived in Sarajevo, ten declared themselves as Muslims, nine declared themselves as Serbs, and one declared himself as a Croat. Meanwhile, Radovan Karadžić built horrible war politics around him being a Serb and the leader of other Serbs (qtd. in Shapiro). This example shows how multicultural the territory of former Yugoslavia really is, and therefore talking about strictly distinctive cultures of each country or ethnicity, or religion would be quite grotesque. These people lived together for decades and through social interactions, similar life circumstances, marriages, etc., they developed a shared culture and, what is more, each of their individual cultures is incredibly similar to all other post-Yugoslav cultures.

Aleš Debeljak was a Slovenian cultural critic, poet, essayist, professor, and a citizen of Yugoslavia, even when his passport became Slovenian and for this reason his book, *Balkansko Brvno,* seems like a right source of Yugoslav culture. In *Balkansko Brvno* (The Balkan

Footbridge), Debeljak offers at the same time an objective and highly subjective view of Yugoslavia, the country he was born and raised in. Debeljak describes Yugoslavia as a political union of multinational countries (11). He compares it to the European Union, but he highlights one big difference – children that grew up in Yugoslavia built their identity believing their home was from Triglav to the Vardar, from the Danube to the Alps, from the Adriatic coast to Pannonian plains, and they were accepting all cultural practices from the mentioned region without discriminating them by giving them any other name then Yugoslav (12). Christians, Jews, and Muslims, who spoke Croatian, Serbian, Bosnian, Macedonian, Slovenian, or Montenegrin lived together unified by and in their love for Yugoslavia, brotherhood and unity, and for Tito. However, in the 1980s, people stopped being content with this identity and, under the influence of political elites, they started to fear that their national identity was being suppressed by other nations' identities. Ultimately, under the leadership of Slobodan Milošević, "the architect of Yugoslav disaster" (Debeljak 15), Yugoslavia fell apart with a loud bang. Regardless of the political circumstances connected with the existence and the fall of Yugoslavia, no one can argue that the existence of the country influenced the people who lived in it, they will always carry part of the Yugoslav culture, in the same manner, they somehow carry Ottoman culture or the culture of any other entity, country, union or kingdom that existed on this territory.

In an effort to grasp the essence of the culture that shaped the identities of those born somewhere between Vardar and Triglav in the last hundred years, Debeljak's subjective, essayistic descriptions are much more helpful than any objective facts about Yugoslavia. Debeljak describes his summers spent around the Gulf of Piran where he, with other children from all over Yugoslavia, spent his summers reading about Partisan superheroes Mirko and Slavko, watching Baltazar, drinking Cockta and eating Zdenka cheese, exchanging Životinjsko carstvo stickers (Debeljak 40). While all of this may seem a bit unrelated, it captures the essence

of the culture – superheroes were Partisans, and cartoons, drinks, and foods were of domestic production, life was made of simple joys, and probably this simple happiness is the core of Yugonostalgia.

According to Debeljak, Sarajevo was a city of different communities, numerous religions, nations, and languages, and the most prominent groups living in Sarajevo were Catholics (Croats), Muslims (Bosniaks), and Orthodox Christians (Serbs) (224). Debeljak describes their culture as urban hybridity, but in the 1990s, that hybridity was put on the line. However, heritage lives through the works of numerous local writers, for example, Semezdin Mehmedinović, Miljenko Jergović, or Igor Štiks. They are the writers of the Yugoslav Atlantis, they keep Yugoslav multiculturality alive long after Yugoslavia stopped existing.

In *Making a Nation Breaking a Nation*, Andrew Wachtel, who also happens to be the translator of one of the analyzed texts, defined the "Yugoslav nation" (1) as a community of South Slavic nations unified in a shared society despite their religious, linguistic or historical differences. Wachtel also pointed out that his book should not be understood as a book about the country Yugoslavia which existed from 1918 to the end of the 20th century (1). Wachtel rather sees Yugoslavia as a single entity created by merging language, literature, and culture and by highlighting the common heritage (39). Given that he does not observe a nation as a political entity but rather as a state of mind shared by a particular group, Wachtel believes that the collapse of Yugoslavia as a country was not a result of economic or political breakdowns, but a result of the change in its citizens' way of thinking about themselves as a group (4). On the other hand, authors of Yugoslav origin disagree, so, for example, Aleš Debeljak does not share Wachtel's thoughts on the fall of Yugoslavia. According to Debeljak, Yugoslav break and war were exclusively conditioned by politics and politicians creating new narratives with the aim of breaking the Yugoslavian nation (15-16).

With all this being said, one could draw a simple conclusion: Yugoslav and post-Yugoslav culture is a mixture of cultures, a culture found in between different nations, and therefore it is not surprising that the interpretations of this culture can be quite subjective[1]. In the case of the works that are in the focus of this thesis, we can actually discern the author's own interpretation of culture, and, therefore, in order to translate his texts, the translator needs to understand Štiks and the numerous cultural identities that influenced him.

[1] More general conclusion could be drawn as well, culuture is a fluid idea that changes over time.

4 *A Castle in Romagna, Flour in the Veins, W, The Judgment of Richard Richter* by Igor Štiks

Let's for a moment take a negative stand and assume that the original's culture is what gets lost in translation or that it gets drowned in the oceans of world literature, so what happened with Štiks' works translated into English, was their culture, i.e., the elements of culture that made them stand out, lost in translation. For this purpose, four of Igor Štiks' novels in translation will be analyzed. Štiks' debut novel *A Castle in Romagna* was translated into English by Russell Scott Valentino and Tomislav Kuzmanović, *W* and *The Judgment of Richard Richter* were translated by Ellen Elias-Bursac, and his play *Flour in the Veins* by Andrew Wachtel. The translators not only faced the problem of translating between two radically different cultures, but also the problem of translating culture that is, to a greater or lesser extent, not their own, i.e., the culture that can be unfamiliar to them in many aspects.

In his works, Igor Štiks incorporates his nomadic lifestyle and refugee experience. After being forced to leave his hometown of Sarajevo, Štiks lived in several European countries and accordingly set his novels in different European cities, interweaving cosmopolitanism and his own heritage. While it may be expected that the experiences that take place in the places such as Paris and Vienna are going to be easily accessible through translation, the parts of Štiks' novels dealing with Sarajevo or Šibenik, told from the perspective of his Bosnian and Croatian characters, can present a problem in translation due to their specificity and rootedness in the Yugoslav culture.

In an interview done for the purpose of this thesis, Štiks claims that his works bear a stamp of his own life experience (Interview). He was born in Sarajevo, then was forced to move to Croatia because of the war, where he spent his teenage years and early twenties, after which he moved around the world in order to pursue his academic career. Here it could be noted that this experience is not something unique to Štiks; many born in this region anywhere from the

beginning of the 20th century up to the 1980s faced a similar fate. Therefore, it could be said that the experience Štiks writes about can be seen as a collective experience of a large group of people that lived in Yugoslavia and shared a somewhat similar cultural identity.

A Castle in Romagna tells two parallel stories: the life story of the Italian monk who after World War II moved to Italy from Rab because of the political circumstances in Yugoslavia, and the story of Enzo Strecci, a fictional Italian renaissance poet. *W* follows the main character named Igor on his quest of discovering the secret of Valter and Vladimir which takes him from Paris to Sarajevo. *Flour in the Veins* pictures a turbulent dinner of a worn-torn family, while *The Judgment of Richard Richter* follows a self-discovery path of Richard Richter, who unearths his true identity in Sarajevo at the beginning of the war. All works have one thing in common, they tackle the experience of life in Yugoslavia.

4.1 Translation Analysis

As Zvonko Kovač puts it in *Poredbena i/ili interkulturna povijest književnosti* (Comparative and/or Intercultural History of Literature), literature functions differently in different literary communities that are formed by different circumstances. What Kovač seems to suggest is that when literary works enter communities beyond their national culture (through translation), they start to function in a different way, they are no longer uniquely bound to their source culture, and these translations now operate in the receiving culture in a completely different way, they function as works in their own right shaped by the receiving cultures and not by the authors (110-115). The goal of analyzing the translation of cultural-bound notions in Igor Štiks' works is to examine what happens with the culture when the works start to function in the international community and when the author starts to have very little influence on what will happen with the work that was once his own.

As already stated, scholars working in the field of translation studies often consider cultural aspects of the text in translation, but even though most of them approach the problem with the idea that the translation of the culture is possible, is this the case? Is maybe this sentence taken from fiction more truthful than any paper or scholarly book:

> Before you is living proof that the language of one's early days is not easily forgotten, let alone the whole world that only that language – or, better said, only the mixture of my two languages – can describe. (Štiks, *A Castle in Romagna* 10)

Maybe the worlds that are formed based on a common history, language and culture can only be described in the language (or combination of languages) they were based on. Is translation maybe a Sisyphean task that despite the translators' best efforts is always doomed to fail at least up to some degree?

4.2 Titles

Perhaps translation analysis could start by observing the translations of the titles of Igor Štiks' works: *Brašno u venama* is translated as *Flour in the Veins*, *Dvorac u Romagni* as *A Castle in Romagna*, *W* as *W*, and *Elijahova stolica* as *The Judgement of Richard Richter*. While there are no cultural problems with the first two translations, *W* and *Elijahova stolica* are somewhat problematic. *W* is easily translatable, i.e., there is no need for translation, one simply rewrites the letter w, but the problem occurs because of the fact the letter w stands for Valter and Vladimir. In English, the title of the novel does not carry any further associations, while Croatian/Bosnian/Serbian/Montenegrin and even Slovenian or Macedonian readers will instantly connect Valter and Vladimir with the best-known Partisan movie *Walter Defends Sarajevo*, based on the life of Vladimir Perić Valter. Every person that was raised in any of the formerly Yugoslav countries has heard of the movie *Walter Defends Sarajevo* as it is part of

the local culture and collective history; on the other hand, people raised in other cultures will not instantly have the same association. This strips away part of the charm of the title for the readers of the translation. Štiks himself says that this was one of the ideas behind the title of the novel, along with Tito's code name Valter (Interview), which can also be seen as a part of the culture or the shared history.

Elijahova stolica is translated as *The Judgment of Richard Richter*, and the author does not think the title should have been stripped from Jewish connotations (after all, the novel is about a Jew). Upon being asked (Interview) why the title has not been translated into English more closely, Štiks explained that everything started with the French translation of the book where the editor insisted that the book should be titled *Le serpent du destin* (Ouroboros, or Serpent of Destiny). The editor of the French translation believed that the title Elijah's Chair is too religiously marked by the obscure Jewish tradition of circumcision and that as such title would not seem attractive to the readers. At the time, Štiks was a young author and his novel being translated into French meant a lot to him, so he decided not to fight his case, despite the fact that he did not agree with the editor's attitude. Then something similar happened again with the German translation of the novel. Then came the Italian translation – the publisher decided to choose the title *Mentre Alma dorme* (While Alma is Asleep), without even consulting the author. Finally, the English translation was published and while the author thinks that the title of the English translation makes sense because it has a dual meaning that functions quite well with the plot of the novel, it is still too far from the original. The author demanded that publishers of different translations at least include "Elijah's chair" at the beginning of the novel as it is done in the English translation which begins with: "Elijah's Chair: Richard Richter's Manuscript". He then added that in Croatian the term "Elijahova stolica" does not exist (if one would want to refer to that chair in Croatian one would probably either call it Ilijina stolica or stolica za berit milu). Štiks coined it specifically for the purpose of his novel and he believes

the title is enigmatically marked (Interview). Why exactly publishers and editors had a problem with Elijah's chair stays unclear, however, if one would try to guess, the answer would probably be overly political or ideological. Nevertheless, with the aim of staying as objective as possible, this observation will end with the fact that the publishers and editors for sure had a problem which led to the loss of the original cultural aspect of the title.

4.3 Fixed Phrases, Sayings, and Exclamations

Every language has sets of fixed phrases, sayings, and exclamations that evoke specific thoughts or emotions. These parts of the texts are generally some of the most complicated ones to translate when there is no equivalent for these phrases in the target language, so the translator has to be creative in finding the best solution to bring the piece of them into the translated language. In these instances, translators often choose the path of lexical creation. Translators have to create something that will in a way fit in a target language, that will not sound too odd nor that will compromise the fluency of the whole text. What's more, these phrases can be culturally bound because they are connected with the historical experience of one nation, they have strong ideological connotations that should also somehow be included in the translated text. There are several such examples in Štiks' works, which, on occasion, lost their meaning in translation. For example, "Naprijed, omladino!" (*Brašno u venama* 29) is translated as "Let youth be served!" (*Flour in the Veins* 28), while "Doviđenja do oslobođenja" (*Dvorac u Romagni* 10) is translated into "See you when we free you" (*A Castle in Romagna* 10). While both of these translations offer good solutions regarding the sense of the saying, and even sound of the saying, since other example mimics the rhyming of the original, they do not really capture the cultural aspects found in the original. Both of these exclamations are connected with Communism – therefore with Yugoslavia, since Yugoslavia was ideologically a Communist country, and both of these exclamations are fixed and repeated in such form numerous times in

all the languages spoken across the territory of the former Yugoslavia. As Nida explains when translating, or, in this case, observing translations one should always take into account the approximate distance between two cultures (Venuti, *The Translation Studies Reader* 151-152), here a big distance exists because none of the English-speaking countries were ever Communist and they never had the need to invent phrases like these.

Furthermore, sometimes phrases do not carry any specific political meaning but rather social; for example, "ne diže ruku na žensko" (*W* 51) is translated as would never "lift a hand against a woman" (*W* 52). Sadly, Yugoslav society was shaped in such a way that men very often took pride because they would never hit a woman (while they would happily hit another man) and they took a lot of pride in it because so many men were (and still are) beating women. To understand this one has to understand the norms of this society, even if these norms are absurd, they still, for a fact, exist and are shaping a culture, and consequently the society. Even though the English language has the phrase "a wife beater", it was not used here and thus this translation fails to bring this not particularly proud moment of one culture into another. Once again, this is a decent translation, the semantic transfer is more or less complete, but it simply fails to render the same idea and evoke the same connotations. Another example of this could be "Jok, nego si ti" (*W* 83) which is translated as "Nope, it's you!" (*W* 86). This phrase (sometimes in this form, sometimes with minor changes) is widely used in the source language, and it is always said with a bit of sarcasm, and possibly in a bit annoyed manner. On the other hand, in English this sentence means little to nothing. "Idi, bre!" (*W* 35) is furthermore translated as "You're joking!" (*W* 36), and while some basic idea behind the phrase "Idi, bre" is to express disbelief in what the interlocutor is saying, it is much more than that, and it is culture-bound. In *Flour in the Veins*, "repa bez korijena" (73) is translated as "a plant without roots", while in Croatian, "repa bez korijena" is a fixed phrase, in English "a plant without roots" is not a fixed phrase, it is just a literal translation, and it does not carry the same meaning.

The color of the expression, as it was the case in all the examples listed above, as well as the subtle cultural connotations that definitely do provoke a sentiment and have a rather fixed meaning in the minds of the readers familiar with the language of the original, are simply lost in translation.

One could argue that cusses are in a way part of the culture if one simply sees culture as something naturally shared within the community of people coming from a similar background. This could be exemplified by observing Edward Said who believes that repeated communication practices are part of the culture (Said, *Culture and Imperialism* XII), or Michael Ryan who in *The Encyclopedia of Literary and Cultural Theory* argues that the manner in which some community speaks is part of their culture (XVII). The Croatian language (and all other Balkan languages) offers a very rich vocabulary of different cuss- and swearwords that are used in everyday speech. Such expressions, naturally, do exist in English but it is safe to assume that their frequency is much smaller than in Croatian, and, at least to the mind of a native Croatian speaker, they are not as creative. It seems that cusswords present a problem when works are translated from Croatian into English. For example, "O jebem ti Ameriku" (*Brašno u venama* 69) was translated as "Oh, fuck you America" (*Flour in the Veins* 68), and "zaboli kurac" (*Brašno u venama* 79) as "his dick hurts" (*Flour in the Veins* 78). While the first example simply does not convey the same idea, the second goes a step further and evokes completely different ideas than the original. While in the Croatian version it is obvious that Klement just swears, in the English version, it almost seems as if something is physically wrong with someone, as if someone is having some sort of body ache. Moreover, "stave muda na panj" (*Brašno u venama* 81) was translated as "put his balls in the fire" (*Flour in the Veins* 80), and while this can convey a similar meaning, the sentence is a common phrase in Croatian, while the English version presents a metaphor unique to the text and not something widely used. Finally, in *W*, "Pištolj, jebate! Što si se usra?" (44) was translated as "A pistol! Why are you shocked?" (44), which

results in a completely different effect as the two cusswords are entirely erased from the text. Swearwords might seem irrelevant for the books in question, especially considering their plot and message, but they do picture the books' culture as a cuss-loving culture, they are part of the characterization of the protagonists, and they carry certain emotions and humorous effects, which, unfortunately, seem to be lost for the target audience.

As it was established in the first part of this thesis, translations rely on the translator's subjective interpretation of the text, and they are always influenced (at least subconsciously) by the translator's personal values, beliefs and norms that were passed on to them through their culture. It seems like the English-speaking community finds cusswords more repulsive than Croatian speaking community, and probably influenced by that, and of course, as mentioned by the fact that exact equivalents do not exist in the target language, the translators chose to either tone down cusswords or to completely omit them as in the last examples taken from *W*, and this takes away a part of the original culture.

4.4 Family Life as Part of the Culture

Each culture has its own norms regarding family life. These norms can be anything and everything, for example, having more wives is acceptable in some parts of the world while in other parts of the world it is a completely unacceptable idea; in some parts of the world, people want a great education for their daughters while elsewhere people think that the most important factor for their daughters' bright future is a good marriage, etc. Each community/culture/nation has its unique norms, they do not have to be as extreme as polygamy, but they still form the culture of that group and are passed on to the next generations shaping their ways of seeing and understanding the world.

Culture regarding family relations and norms is especially visible in the play *Flour in the Veins* since the play revolves around a family gathering and the characters are portrayed as stereotypical Balkan family members. Nadia, Klement, Helena, and Vladimir are reminiscent of many other Balkan grandmothers, grandfathers, mothers, and fathers. At the beginning of the play, Nadia is setting the table, and while doing so, she comments: "Ma kako mi ovo izgleda?" (*Brašno u venama* 13) and "Ma nije što oni kasne, nego što ja kasnim" (*Flour in the Veins* 13). In these examples, sentences are not very informative, they carry little meaning, and they are rather here for the purpose of leaving a certain impression on the reader. Those sentences are relatively typical for worried Balkan grandmothers expecting guests. This creates a comic effect, and it could be quite difficult to transfer this effect into English. Even though dictionary meanings of these words are straightforward, and one can easily translate them into English, Andrew Wachtel translated this segment with "How does it look?" (12) and "It's not that they're late. I'm the one who's late" (12). The translator is faced with the complex task of trying to create a similar effect in the target language and it seems that in this instance Wachtel chose to translate these sentences word-for-word without taking the effect or cultural aspect into consideration. There are more examples, but the conclusion can always be the same: while nothing important for the whole sense of the text is lost in the translation, these translations still fail to transfer the original culture and humorous effect in the target language.

Furthermore, Balkan grandfathers tend to be punctual and to show their love, care, and affection in unconventional ways, so, when the guests arrive, Klement does not show excitement because his family, whom he did not see for a very long time, is there, but instead, he greets them with, "Pa gdje ste vi, bogamu!?" (*Brašno u venama* 15), which suggests he is complaining about them being late, and he follows it with a cuss. This is translated as "Oho, is it really you!?" (*Flour in the Veins* 14) which portrays Klement as a common excited grandfather instead of a typical Balkan grandfather. These stereotypes of family life are an

important factor of culture since they are often what differentiate "them" from "us" (King 43) or "us" from the "other" (Said, *Orientalism* 1), and based on these differences, the groups elaborate their identity. Even though the given example is not as strong as it would, for example, be the role of a mother in a typical American family compared to a role of a mother in a typical Qatari family, this still is a portrayal of family relations and roles within the family that are part of the one culture's identity. In a similar manner, Klement is asking his family: "I, kako ste vi, kako se snalazite!" (*Brašno u venama* 37), translated as, "So, how are you, how have you found things there?" (*Flour in the Veins* 36), and "Jeste se snašli?" (*Brašno u venama* 43) translated as, "So, have you settled back in?" (*Flour in the Veins* 42). One of the most important skills in Balkan everyday life is to "snaći se", it is one of the crucial modes of survival, however, in English, the word that would be equal to "snaći se" does not even exist. The notion of "snaći se" can be seen as something that became important through shared historical experience of people living across the former Yugoslavia. Given that these territories rarely offered stability to its citizens, people get used to often changes in political systems, to different hardships and troubles which all resulted in them seeing "snaći se" as the most important mode of survival. These little and, on the surface, unimportant words carry the spirit of the nation, i.e., the culture of the play's protagonists, and once again it should be noted that the exact equivalent of the verb does not exist in the English language, so the translator had to find the solution that will function best within the translated text and that will carry the message as similar as possible to the message found in the original text.

Another family norm found across the Balkans is that the love language of grandmothers is feeding, and they tend to be really worried if their grandchildren are not at least a bit overweight since everyone in the Balkans knows that being a bit overweight is a sign of good health. Nadia thus comments on her grandson, "Sav si se usukao" (*Brašno u venama* 69), and

while the translation, "You're all skin and bones" (*Flour in the Veins* 68) offers a fine solution, it does not convey the Balkan stereotypes that are so obvious in the original.

4.5 Languages, Vernaculars, Slang, and Multiculturalism

In all of Štiks' works, different languages, vernaculars, and slang are used in order to characterize the protagonists and to picture the multiculturalism of the region. This multiculturalism achieved on the linguistic level is almost completely lost in translation since all characters speak standard English. This can be observed in a few ways – the first one could be to remember what Venuti pointed out: readers like to read texts written in the standard variety of the English language (*The Translator's Invisibility* 5); furthermore, it could be added that this multiculturalism can be achieved only by using languages and vernaculars that are understandable to the reader of the original text: if one translated Dalmatian vernacular into, for instance, Texan English, it would make no sense. This being said, it is quite obvious that the translators find themselves in a precarious position, because it seems like there is no way of transferring the original multiculturality into the translated text.

Štiks' character that got lost in the translation is the lawyer from the novel *W*. Šupe, in the original, is a very stereotypical Dalmatian, he speaks in heavy slang, cusses a lot, has a very typical Dalmatian view of the world, all of which makes him amusing and marks him as the carrier of a particular culture that is easily understandable to the reader of the original. In the first encounter with Šupe, the reader stumbles upon a few culture-bound stereotypes: the lawyer is nervous, he smokes a lot, his client is suing his own family over a few yards of probably worthless baren land located in the hinterland, and whether someone likes it or not, all of this is (stereo)typical for Dalmatian lawyers and their clients. While in the USA one imagines lawyers as characters from the television show *Suits* – they are well dressed, well spoken,

educated, they fight major cases for multimillion-dollar companies – the Croatian reality is that most lawyers pursue their careers through fights for a few yards of barren land. What is more, Šupe is an even more typical Dalmatian man with very questionable manners and vocabulary than he is a typical Croatian lawyer. While meeting Igor, Šupe seems to be deeply content when Igor tells him that there is no need for the usage of the English language since he can speak Croatian, so Šupe says to Igor: "A ti si naš?" (*W* 23) in the translation "One of us?" (*W* 23). In Croatia the notion of being "naš" is of great importance, it connects people that have nothing in common except for being from the same area, once again it could be said that being "naš" is what differentiate "them" from "us". On the other hand, in English it carries a somewhat different meaning, while people might be happy because someone shares their cultural background, that is hardly comparable to the excitement and relief that a Croat feels upon realizing that someone is not a foreigner but one of them. This initial encounter between Šupe and Igor is filled with lexical choices that portray Šupe as a crude and very Dalmatian/Croatian man; some of the examples are: "Samo da platin čovika" (*W* 23), translated as "Let me pay the man" (*W* 23), "A di ti je kufer, jebate?!" (*W* 23) "Where's your suitcase, for God's sake?" (*W* 23), "Ja ne mogu bez duvana. Skužaj" (*W* 24) "Without tobacco I cannot live. Ah yes" (*W* 24), and lastly "Brže malo, jebate led!" (*W* 24), translated as, "Faster, faster" (*W* 24). While in the Croatian version, it is clear that this variety of speech is common for Dalmatia, in the English version, this is not the case, these literal translations carry neither cultural nor comic aspects of the original text, and they just seem as a more or less meaningful conversation. What is more, in one of these examples: "Let me pay the man" (*W* 23), not only cultural and comic aspect is lost, but also the whole meaning of the sentence and even the fluency of the text, since this phrase in English sounds odd to some speakers and means completely different thing than the original Croatian phrase to others.

Šupe tells his life story to Igor, and his whole story is in a way culturally marked. Pages 25, and 26 of the novel *W* abound with good examples of such cultural marking so it is rather difficult to limit oneself to just a few. Nevertheless, Šupe explains that his childhood and youth were good because his family was "crvena buržoazija" (*W* 25). The term "crvena bružoazija" was coined by Yugoslavian students who protested against highly ranked Communist leaders in the 1960s, and the term does not exist in any other language; consequently, the translation "Commie bourgeoisie" (*W* 25) does not mean anything, it sounds completely odd in English and quite impossible since in English Communists are traditionally opposed to the bourgeoisie, and therefore the term connected with Yugoslavian history and culture is lost in translation. Furthermore, Šupe continues to describe his college experience by saying, "Roditelji šalju lovu, jedna cura, druga cura, kapučino u Trstu i te pizdarije, pa se odužilo, jebiga… al nisam moga izdržati gori" (*W* 25). This describes the college experience of many Dalmatian children from relatively wealthy families of the time: parents sent them money they were spending wastefully, fooling around instead of studying; everyone went to Trieste as the closest city that offered a taste of Western culture Yugoslavian youth desired so much. All of this is followed by cusses and in the end, like many Dalmatians, he concludes that he could not stand life in Zagreb, which he refers to as "gori" (*W* 25). In the translation, Šupe describes this experience with the following words: "The parents dished out the cash, first one girlfriend, then the next, and off to Trieste for a cappuccino and other such nonsense, took my time I did, dammit… but I couldn't make a go of it up there" (*W* 25). While this can be a fine translation of the basic meaning of the used words, it will not evoke the same associations about college life, it especially fails to render the sense in the last part – referring to Zagreb as "gori" makes sense in Croatian and everyone understand these types of references as the country is traditionally divided into "gore" and "dolje", "gore" marking the continental part of Croatia and "dolje" marking Dalmatia. In English "up there" does not do that. By translating "gore" as "up there", the translator tried to

stay as faithful to the original as possible, but maybe substitution would be a better choice, while Croats often divide their country into "gore" and "dolje", that is not of any crucial importance here and maybe by substituting "gore" with "Zagreb" the translator would create a text that is transferring the message better to the reader of the translation. In the last part of his life story, Šupe describes his career: after college, he came back to Šibenik and set up his law practice, he was doing well because, "Čuj, kad znaš di tribaš pokucati, onda sve ide, eli" (*W* 25), i.e., "Hey, when you know which doors to knock on, everything moves along at a smart pace, am I right" (W 25). Once again both Šupe and the Croatian culture of the time are getting a bit lost in translation, while succeeding thanks to the fact that one knows which door to knock on is not a solely Croatian thing, in Šupe's life story it is obvious that he climbed up the social ladder thanks to his close-knit relationship with the leading party. If one observes this example on the lexical level, this translation is great, but the meaning is still not fully transferred. Probably the only way of understanding the sentence in its connection to the leading party is if a reader knows the history of a given nation, unfortunately, the translator's hands are pretty tied in transferring that connotation. Then came the war, and once again, thanks to his position Šupe dodged a bullet, both literally and metaphorically, he was mobilized, but he managed to sit through the war in the defense office, where he was solving (nonexistent) legal problems. While this part is, again, lexically translated decently, it just does not give the same ideas to the reader as the original. And when the war was over, Šupe had to get back on his feet within the new system; he managed it, and now he lives an untroubled life. A final example that just does not convey the spirit of Croatian culture in the same manner as the original does can be seen in the sentence: "Sad je bolje, sidin po cile dane u katastru, kopan li kopan… čija čukunbaba je ostavila koju štalu usrid kojeg kamenjara tridesetorici što živih što mrtvih nasljednika koji bi to sad tili prodat Englezima, al tako da zajebu jedan drugog! Eto, čime ti se ja bavim, čoviče moj" (*W* 25) or in the English translation: "Things are better now, I sit at the registry of deeds day in

and day out, digging away… whose great granny left which hovel in the middle of which stretch of barren rock to thirty heirs, some living, some not, who now think they'd sell it to someone from England, but only if they can stab each other in the process! There, these days that's my gig, my friend" (*W* 25-26). These examples allow us to conclude that the character of Šupe went through a lot of changes in translation and that Croatian and Dalmatian cultures were not pictured in the translation in the same manner as in the original. Even the author notices that his character went through a lot in the process of translation. Štiks says that in the original Šupe is characterized through a speech typical for the Šibenik area, which is obviously lost in the translation. Because of this loss, the author believes that in translation Šupe comes off as a maybe a bit eccentric lawyer, but most of his humorous character disappears (*Interview*). The reason behind that is not the translator's lack of skill, these changes are conditioned by the distance between two languages and cultures, and the difference in historical experience between the two nations.

Additionally, the multiculturalism of Yugoslavia presented through characters Valter and Vladimir in *W* seems to be erased in the translation. Valter is from Sarajevo and Vladimir is from Belgrade, in their dialogues, one is speaking in ijekavian dialect, typical for Bosnia and Croatia, and the other is speaking in ekavian dialect, typical for Serbia, for example, "Vidimo se posle, dušo" (*W* 34) – "See you later, darling" (*W* 35), "A šta ti radiš ovde, u ovoj furuni? Mora da ima sto stepeni" (*W* 34) – "And what are you doing here, in this furnace? It is boiling in here" (*W* 35), "Nisam baš za društvo. Htio sam čitati" (*W* 35) "I'm not much for socializing. I wanted to read" (*W* 35). In the original, the difference in their background is evident from the way they speak, while in English, they both speak the same dialect, and this difference cannot be noticed as the translator did not seem to find it necessary to introduce a feature that would at least indicate this difference between the characters. Štiks could be seen as a strong proponent of some modern version of brotherhood and unity (this can be concluded from the Interview

conducted for the purpose of this analysis as well as from many other of his interviews that can be found online or from his works), so it is interesting to analyze the manner in which he advocates his ideas. Namely, he presents the differences (in this case the difference between ijekavian and ekavian), he writes about past conflicts, all with the aim of picturing a group of people that can peacefully live close to each other because despite all differences they have a lot in common. While this stance might not be something groundbreakingly unique, it is still not that common because in the territories of former Yugoslavia people are most often either believers of the ideology that nations living in these territories are completely different from one another and should not share anything but a border or that they are one and that the fall of Yugoslavia was a terrible accident. Štiks, on the other hand, wants to create a friendly narrative that appreciates differences. Since this subject is always somehow politically marked, it is always in its essence ideological, and Štiks advocates quite an interesting ideology that can be seen as a fairly important cultural aspect of his works, so the translator's (or potentially the editor's) decision to completely erase this from the text makes a notable ideological change in narrative.

Lastly, the narrators in all the novels use different varieties of speech, for example, in *The Judgment of Richard Richter,* on page 94 narrator mentions "kazališta" and just two pages later narrator uses "pozorišne" (96), while in translation, this difference in lexical choice does not exist and both instances are simply translated with the word theater. Similarly, "svibnja" (*The Judgment of Richard Richter* 55) and "majskih" (*The Judgment of Richard Richter* 59) are both translated as May. Of course, the translator should not be harshly blamed for the loss, there was not much she could do about it since the English language simply has one word for the month of May, however, even if that was not the case and more than one word existed in the English language, it would still be very likely that the same cultural effect would not be achieved. In his interview, Igor Štiks emphasized that he uses these words interchangeably in

order to express his views on the language and his national affiliations or rather lack of them (Interview). It could be further argued that this is a vital cultural aspect of the novel since the writer so strongly advocates his belief that Croatian, Serbian, Bosnian and Montenegrin are just varieties of the same language and not different languages simply because all speakers can fully understand each other. However, Štiks does highlight that he believes that every nation has the right to call this language however they like (Interview). Štiks is such a strong advocate of this idea that he signed *Declaration on the Common Language of the Croats, Serbs, Bosniaks, and Montenegrins*. Once again, this can be seen as a part of the ideology found in the original that is lost in translation.

And the last significant loss of multiculturalism on the linguistic level could be observed in the examples of translations of Turkish expressions which traditionally fill all Yugoslav languages. Since the territory was historically under the Ottoman influence, this is part of both the history and culture of these nations. Thus, in *The Judgment of Richard Richter,* "zahvalne kalfe" (12) is translated as "grateful apprentices" (6) and "dželat" (12) as "executioner" (6), both of which are standard expressions that do not carry any connotations of multiculturalism, or the Ottoman heritage recorded in the language of the original. For the readers of the translation this could have been a moment of understanding the history of the nations they are reading about if the translator approached the translation differently.

Multiculturalism was a big part of the Yugoslav identity. As Stuart Hall claims, multiculturalism manifests itself through the simultaneous existence of the unified culture and perseverance of unique cultures of all groups that are unifying under that one multicultural identity (*Essential Essays Volume 2* 96), and exactly that is what Štiks' pictures through his characters Valter and Vladimir. They share their life experience, similar norms, but they also picture an appreciation for diversity and difference in their background through different vernaculars. Similarly, Ottoman Empire has quite a strong influence on many territories of the

former Yugoslavia, and it is an indisputable part of the collective historical experience. But in translations, this heritage, culture and common historical experience are completely omitted.

4.6 Communist Legacy

While Benjamin argued about the translatability of texts (Venuti, *Translation Studies Reader* 76), and one could similarly think about the translatability of individual expressions, especially those loaded with meaning. While texts are always translatable in some way, even when the chosen path of translation needs to be full of changes to the original, translators will still somehow create a translation, this is not the case with individual words and expressions. Words and expressions are very often untranslatable, and this is not necessarily a problem, but when these words carry cultural features, this becomes quite problematic since it actually affects the whole text. When translators come across such words and expressions, they make choices that affect the entire cultural aspect of the text, and here some big discrepancies in the meaning between the original and the translation arise.

This can be further explored by thinking about Lefevere's ideas of grids (Bassnett and Trivedi 75). Lefevere points out that the biggest problem regarding grids arises when translators are faced with concepts that exist in the source language but do not exist in the target language (Bassnett and Trivedi 76). At that point, translators make a decision on whether they will abandon the original culture or present something confusing and unfamiliar to the readers from the source culture. In all examples taken from Štiks' works, it seems that translators decided to push the original culture aside and produce something easily understandable to the target language readers.

Culture can be embodied in a single word and translations of the word "odmarališta" mentioned in most of the novels can be used as a good example. "Odmarališta" were places

where most of the non-rich Yugoslavians (the majority of the nation fell into that category) and their children spent their summers, they were owned by the state and were an affordable place for vacationing. Through decades "odmarališta" across the Adriatic coast became monuments of Tito's regime. Wachtel translates "odmarališta" with the word "leisure" (*Flour in the Veins* 28), which does not convey the same meaning – Elias Bursac translates "omladinsko odmaralište" (*W* 30) as "youth center" (*W* 30) and this solution once again does not convey the same meaning. Despite being close to the original, at least in some aspects of the transfer between the languages, neither can "youth" carry all cultural aspects of the word "omladinsko" nor can "center" carry the features of "odmaralište". Later in the text, Elias Bursac seems to change her mind and translates the same expression with "summer youth camp" (*W* 62). This evokes the notion of American summer camps which are very different from Yugoslavian "omladinsko odmaralište"; the biggest difference would be the fact that in American summer camps, nobody is singing songs about Tito. The translator seems unsure about her choice since she even offers the third version and translates "omladinsko odmaralište" as "scout camp" (*W* 96), which once again fails to render the cultural features behind the expression. In general, "omladinci" becomes "youth" in most of the translations since it is the most obvious choice. In the Croatian language the word "mladi" denotes the same thing as "youth", while the word "omladinci" denotes members of the League of Socialist Youth of Yugoslavia. This problem was better resolved in *A Castle in Romagna* where "omladinke" is translated as "young Communist" (31), and this is the only endeavor to transfer the Communist cultural aspect of the term into English. Especially when one takes the plots into the consideration, it becomes obvious that it was quite important that the "omladinci" were not simply any group of young people and that "odmarališta" were not any camps.

Most of the words connected with the Communist regime of Yugoslavia present a problem in translation, "drugovi" becomes "comrades". Even though this is fine and possibly

the only feasible translation, in English "comrade" is associated with the Socialist culture of Russia, and not Communist culture of Yugoslavia. "Radne akcije" (*W* 50) is translated as "the work brigade" (*W* 51) and "komandrika ženskog logora" (*W* 51) becomes "the woman in charge of the girl's brigade" (*W* 52). In all translations "milicija" becomes "police", but in Croatian there are two lexical entities – "milicija" and "policija" – "milicija" is connected with the Communist regime and "policija" is common police in the democratic states. The same problem is encountered with the translation of the word "armija", which is always translated as "the army" even though the army denotes the same thing as the Croatian word "vojska".

Most Communist ranks and other notions connected with the political regime of the former Yugoslavia in translation leave a reader with the impression of services familiar within democratic administrations, which is a complete strip of the culture found in the original. "Kontraobavještajna služba" (*W* 86) therefore becomes "counter-intelligence service" (*W* 88), while the translation is literal and the word is translated faithfully in a way, in Croatian "KOS" is exclusively connected with the Communist regime of Yugoslavia. "Niži oficiri" (*W* 86) become "lower-ranking officers" (*W* 88), "bezbednjaci i obaveštajci" (*W* 88) become "security officers and secret agents" (*W* 89), while "komandir milicije" (*Dvorac u Romagni* 34) is translated as "police captain" (*A Castle in Romagna* 24). The problem with these translations is that they evoke the ideas of ranks in, for example, United States Marine Corps or Naval Criminal Investigative Service and not in the Communist regime. Similarly, "vojni rok" (*W* 77) was translated as "military service" (*W* 79), which gives the idea of a voluntary service, which "vojni rok" was not. Similarly in *A Castle of Romagna* "narodnooslobodilačka borba" (21) is translated as "liberation efforts" (17), and this once again deprives the text of Communist associations since liberation efforts can be equally set in Syria, Ukraine, and Yugoslavia, while "narodnooslobodilačka borba" can be set only in the country under the Communist regime.

Another such example is Goli Otok, a barren island in Croatia and the location of an infamous political prison. Up to this day, one of the favorite catchphrases in Croatia is that someone deserved to go to Goli Otok because of this or that. What Alcatraz is for United States, Goli Otok was for Yugoslavia. In the translation of the novel *W*, Goli Otok becomes "a barren prison island" and in *The Judgment or Richard Richter,* the sentence "na Goli Otok ili u neke druga kazamate mlade vlasti" (219) becomes "to hard labor on Goli Otok or one of the other prison camps set by the fledgling government" (200). This second example could be recognized as a better translation because it actually brings infamous Goli Otok to the reader of the translation.

On the other hand, the term "Rezolucija Informbiroa", which was a critical political moment in Yugoslav history, is mentioned in more than one analyzed novel, and all of the translators seem to have thought similarly – they all added explanations: in *A Castle in Romagna,* the expression is translated as "Information Bureau's resolution? Tito's break with Stalin" (16), while in *The Judgment of Richard Richter* as "Cominform, severing relations with Tito and isolating Yugoslavia" (199). Unlike the above-mentioned examples, the translations of "Rezolucija Informbiroa" seem like successful efforts of transferring the bits of Communist politics into English translations.

By observing *Dvorac u Romagni, W,* and *Elijahova stolica* one can notice that Yugoslavia, Tito or Communism are all repeated motifs in Štiks' works, they are one of the most obvious specific cultural aspects of his works. However, when reading *A Castle in Romagna, W,* and *The Judgment of Richard Richter,* one does not get such a strong sense of the Communist regime or the Yugoslav culture influenced by Communism as the translators mostly substituted these expressions with common expressions that are used to name some notions familiar to English-speaking community. To try to think about why this is so could lead to quite a lengthy and overly political discussion, so that question will stay unanswered in this thesis.

Nevertheless, the conclusion that there is a significant loss of culture noticeable in these examples can be made.

4.7 Words That Embody the Mentality

Additionally, there are individual words that relate to Croatian or Yugoslav culture. The first example could be that in all the mentioned texts "rakija" becomes "brandy" and while this is a standard translation of the word "rakija" into English, what could be seen as problematic is that rakija is traditionally a national drink of local people and while the speakers of the English language could have learnt what is cognac or vodka, and the names of these hard liquors stayed unchanged when entering English speaking community, "rakija" could not stay "rakija" but it needed to become "brandy". Croatian people are known for their love of "polako". "Polako" is an expression that can be used in numerous situations with numerous different meanings, and while it may seem irrelevant, this one small word captures the national spirit. Unlike busy Westerners, the Balkan people love to do things slowly and calmly, from everyday interactions to work or school. The translations of this word are not problematic, the word is translated with a few English words that fit depending on the context, but the fact that this single entity in Croatian needs to be translated with a dozen of English words pictures a cultural difference between people if we observe culture as something inseparable from human life, something governing basic everyday choices. Similarly, the word "riba" (*W* 34) and the word "mala" (*W* 195) are both translated with the word girl, which captures the gist but not the subtle nuances of the expression in the original. "Vukojebina" (*Brašno u venama* 153) is translated as "the middle of no place" (*Flour in the Veins* 152), which is not the same. While "in the middle of no place", or in Croatian "usred ničega", denotes a place that is isolated, "vukojebina" is more about the state of mind, or the state of things, than a geographical location. It can be isolated, but a place does not necessarily need to be isolated to meet criteria to be a "vukojebina". All

around former Yugoslavia there are numerous "vukojebinas", and they can be seen as part of Balkan culture, these underdeveloped areas with little to do are quite typical for the whole region. Interestingly, the Americans recognized the beauty and cultural richness of the term, and the author of "Travel Words That Don't Exist in English" published in *Business Insider* expresses his grief that the English language does not have the entity for Croatian/Serbian/Bosnian word "vukojebina" since it uniquely captures the essence of some underdeveloped places. Every language has untranslatable words, and these words can be translated either by choosing a word of similar meaning or by giving a description of the word. For example, Serbian "dasa" (*W* 55) becomes "a splendid fellow" (*W* 53) and "igranka" (*W* 56) becomes "a party" (*W* 57), but the party evokes the idea of something modern and "igranka" was something organized in some sort of community center by some random state organization. Therefore, except for the fact that both are supposed to be fun social gatherings, "a party" and "igranka" have nothing in common. An opposite example of the words that cannot be translated from Croatian into English despite all translators' efforts is the word "ćifut" (*Elijahova stolica* 133), which the translator left in the translation in the unchanged form "ćifut" (*The Judgment of Richard Richter* 120) and added an explanation of the word. This decision influenced the fluency of the text, and it cannot be justified since the English language has word "kike" which literally means the exact same thing as "ćifut".

4.8 Igor Štiks in the World of World Literature

After observing the changes that occurred in the translations of Igor Štiks' works and therefore altered the cultural background of Štik's novels, in order to draw a conclusion we should go back to translation theory. This analysis was motivated by the idea that translation is an act of rewriting the original text in another language based on the translator's interpretation of it. Rather than some incredibly faithful transfer between two languages, the translator's

interpretation is a completely subjective act conditioned by their learned beliefs, norms, values, and all sorts of knowledge (all of which together can be referred to as culture). According to Eugene Nida, translation is a completely new work that resembles the original as much as possible (Venuti, *Translation Studies Reader* 141-152). According to Venuti, translation is a process of identity formation in which two separate identities are formed simultaneously (*The Scandals of Translation* 67), first being the identity of target culture that can be influenced by the translation and second being the presentation of source language cultural identity. Lastly, one could think in Jacquemond terms and say that translation is an economic and political exchange (Venuti, *Rethinking Translation* 139). What could be summed up from all these definitions is that translation is influenced by numerous outside factors; it is a subjective act of interpretation of an original work in another language and it seems that the given analysis of translations of Štik's works aligns with this idea. But if a translation is influenced by many outside factors, what factors could have influenced translations of Štiks' works?

Maybe the easiest way to begin thinking about this would be at the beginning of the process of translation, i.e., at the choice of the texts for translation. While one might argue that there are numerous criteria applied in the process of choosing the works for translation, one might take a simpler approach, publishing houses are publishing translations, publishing houses are a business, and for a business to stay afloat it needs to sell its product, so a book chosen for translations has to sell, as Casanova puts it the world of literature is a market (154). To sell a lot of copies of a book, a book has to be liked by many, and to find out what is liked by many, the publisher will most likely somehow examine what was selling well in the last few years. Since some real databases where one could see how many copies of which book were sold cannot be found, *goodreads.com* can serve as an example that will at least give us some idea, if one searches "Croatia books" on *goodreads.com* and chooses to arrange the list from most popular to least popular works, two most read and reviewed works that include "Croatia" and

"books" are *Girl at War* by Sara Nović, and *The Hired Man* by Aminatta Forna. These two books, while far from being representative, could perhaps be more than telling in terms of seeing what is in trend – these two works have two things in common, they are about the war in Croatia, and neither Sara Nović nor Aminatta Forna have ever lived in Croatia nor experienced Croatian war or culture. The recurring theme of war is what these two novels and Štiks' works have in common, but what Štiks is lacking compared to Nović and Forna is a fictional perspective of war because despite the fact that his books are fiction, Štiks actually lived through this war, it was a firsthand experience of escaping from the war-torn Sarajevo to part of Croatia that was not occupied by the Serbs. Thinking about what Horace said about being faithful to the customer/patron (Bassnett and Lefevere 3), Venuti about the audience (*The Translation Studies Reader* 142), or Lefevere about patronage (10), the translators' job could be seen as making Štiks' translation as likable or as sellable as *Girl at War* and *The Hired Man.*

Secondly, one could list several social factors that influence translation, these would be the author's personal or target nation's shared culture, norms, beliefs, politics, ideologies, prejudices, ideas about the world, etc. Once again, all of these factors could go together under the umbrella term – culture, and these factors have the biggest influence in the process of translation. The only more important thing would be the knowledge of languages, but it seems quite logical to believe that translators are fully fluent in languages from which they translate and to which they translate. While the statement that the translation of the cultural aspects of the text is most influenced by culture seems a bit absurd, it is fundamentally true. Most of these changes that can be found in the above-mentioned examples taken from Štiks' works are actually there because of the approximate distance between the two cultures, and this distance is what, according to Nida, conditions the degree of equivalence between the translation and the original (Venuti, *The Translation Studies Reader* 151-152). Since the works are translated between two cultures that are essentially completely different because of, for example, different

historical experiences, different educational systems, different religions, etc. these changes take place. The translators do not expect these kinds of cultural notions in the English language and therefore it sometimes seems like they are unable to find adequate words to refer to them. What is more, even if translators understand these notions and can adequately transfer them into English, maybe they will choose not to because, as Venuti believes, for a work to be read and liked it has to meet the standards that the audience of the target culture has in mind (*The Translator's Invisibility* 14).

Lastly, one could go back and think if perhaps simpatico could have influenced the translations of Štik's works. As Venuti mentions, simpatico presents quite a dangerous and narcissistic relationship between the author and the translator (Venuti, *The Translator's Invisibility* 237), and it can be based on many different factors, and translators can find a number of different reasons to feel like they truly understand Štiks' works basically as clearly as he does. Did maybe Wachtel or Elias Bursac got caught up in this idea and accidentally erased some of the Štiks' original ideas? No one can really give a definite answer to this question, but it is quite possible that the mentioned translators, and also all translators in general, sometimes deleted some of the original ideas through the process of translation because they got caught up in their own ideas without being aware of the fact that they are thinking about their own ideas and not Štiks'.

What can happen as the result of these influences and what has happened with the translations of *A Castle in Romagna*, *The Judgment of Richard Richter*, *W* and *Flour in the Veins*? First of all, traditionally translation can be faithful or unfaithful to the original, this faithfulness can be observed quite broadly, it can be observed at the level of sense, message, purpose, effect, etc. To comment on this, one should understand what the sense, message, purpose, or effect of the original were, but in the same way, translation is based on the strength of the translator's interpretation, therefore, such a commentary will inevitably be based on the

strength of the commentator's interpretation. Part of the message of Štiks' works would probably be the depiction of Yugoslav multiculturalism, and it seems this is the biggest loss in translation; another big loss would be the humorous effect of some culturally bound ideas that can be found in the originals that were not transferred into English. Depicted hardships of life and war sufferings are transferred clearly into English, but they leave quite a different effect on the reader when one strips them away from multiculturalism and humor. Both of these instances could be seen as a part of the cultural loss as it seems that people in Croatia and Bosnia find some comfort in depicting war with a certain amount of humor, satire, or irony compared to, for example, Americans who will probably not joke about the Vietnam war. Here one could observe a second possible result, under the above-mentioned influences the text can become domesticated through translation, or simply standardized to fit the norms of the target audience. This does not necessarily have to be an extremely violent case of purposeful erasure of the original ideas, however, by trying to produce the text that will naturally flow in English with author's best interests in mind, the translators will sometimes ignore or change the foreign or odd sounding concept, as perhaps might have been the case with the mentioned Communist ranks.

The best way of thinking about the results of ideological influences on translation is to think about it within the means of world literature. As Even-Zohar points out, the world of literature is a polysystem (Venuti, *The Translation Studies Reader* 163), and in that polysystem each work occupies a different hierarchical position. Those in the center of polysystem, the same ones that Casanova sees as the ones in the position of hegemony (36), have an influence on how those on the periphery will be treated. When works are translated from minor literature such as Croatian to major literature such as British or American, it is expected that they will be translated by favoring the major literature's norms. Most people are so used to this English language hegemony that they subconsciously translate the works from minor literature to meet

the expectations of the English-speaking canon. It would be hard to tell whether this is the reason why some cultural aspects were deleted in the translation of Štiks' works or if it happened because of some other mentioned or unmentioned influences. What one certainly can conclude from the given analysis is that significant changes have been made that were accompanied by a loss of many cultural aspects found in the original texts.

5 Conclusion

As Eugene Nida puts it, "no two languages are identical" (*The Translation Studies Reader* 141) and, we could add, no two cultures are identical. Therefore, absolutely faithful translation at any level, especially at a lexical level, let alone at the level of culture or various aspects of culture, is not possible. Since utmost fidelity is unattainable, and, as Venuti pointed out, the only element of the original literary work that will, for sure, stay unchanged is the plot (*Translation Changes Everything* 13), it is safe to conclude that translations should be observed as works in their own rights, the works that began in one culture and language but ended up as a part of another, which inevitably means they have to fit into that new environment.

The translation can always be compared to its original, but as the analyses of the translations of Igor Štiks' works have shown, the original text and translation are two separate works. Mainly because of this aspect, translation may often be the subject of foul play and is open to various kinds of manipulation, intentional and unintentional – it is a site of unjust, partial, sometimes even prejudiced favoring of languages and cultures. Original texts are often changed through translation to meet the norms of the receiving culture and satisfy the audience or the patron. Such changes of the original text in the translation are often conditioned, as Itamar Even-Zohar put it, by the place works occupy within the literary polysystem (Venuti, *The Translation Studies Reader* 163). The works from national literatures that occupy peripheral position in a given national polysystem will be subject to more changes than the works from national literatures that occupy central positions.

When studying translations of Igor Štiks' works, we can understand culture as something connected with the tradition of the region the author writes about, as something bound to places and people but also the source language – something deep in the fabric of the original text. As Aleš Debeljak wittily described it, Štiks is one of the writers of the Yugoslav

Atlantis, and it does not matter if Atlantis is Yugoslav or the one from the Ancient Greek stories, in its nature, Atlantis is mythical, it is something many wish to find, but no one can really prove its existence. In the same vein, the writers of the Yugoslav Atlantis write about a culture that maybe once existed but today no one can neither find it nor prove its existence in such a form.

The quest of grasping this culture and all its nuances as they appear in Igor Štiks' works and reinterpreting them in another language in a rightful manner is almost unachievable. The translators, not only the ones working on Igor Štiks' works, strive to do it, but the pursuit is probably doomed from the very beginning. Just like the famous dictum says: traduttore traditore, translator traitor. Many cultural references found in Igor Štiks' works got lost in translation, somewhere between different cultures and different historical experiences of the two nations engaged in the literary exchange. Multiculturalism that could be recognized in Štiks' works cannot be recognized in the same way in translations, and it could be assumed this is not specific only of Štiks' works. Different dialects, vernaculars, catchphrases, or even cusswords bound to a certain language or culture sometimes simply cannot be rightly incorporated within another language or culture. This inability to incorporate the tone found in the original into translation may lead to many losses, for example, characters can become less vibrant, the humorous effect of the original may disappear, etc. In a similar manner, titles of the novels sometimes lose some of the original references, quibbles, etc. in translation and that can result in readers of the translation having a different first impression of the work compared to the readers of the original.

Most authors[2], at least up to some degree, interweave personal experiences and knowledge in their works, sometimes that can be something very personal but sometimes these experiences and knowledge are something that is shared among members of a certain

[2] Igor Štiks being one of them

community. These values, beliefs, experiences, histories, etc. add different nuances of meaning to the literary work but often translators cannot adequately transfer them to the translated text. Sometimes losses in translation, especially losses regarding certain cultural features of the literary works, occur because there are too many differences between two cultures or two languages to transfer everything, sometimes they happen because of the translator's lack of knowledge or interest, sometimes they happen because a translator has to meet the given deadline, reasons to why losses occur are numerous; but one thing is certain, losses, especially of cultural aspects, constantly happen in translations. But, despite the difficulties that may arise in the process of translating culture, translators worldwide will continue to wage these battles and carry on in their endeavors to bring different cultures together, sometimes with more and sometimes with less success.

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7 TRANSLATING CULTURE – CULTURE IN TRANSLATION: *FLOUR IN THE VEINS, W, A CASTLE IN ROMAGNA* AND *THE JUDGMENT OF RICHARD RICHTER* BY IGOR ŠTIKS: Summary and keywords

In his works, Igor Štiks, an acclaimed Croatian writer of Bosnian origin, incorporates his nomadic lifestyle and refugee experience giving a unique sense of multiculturalism. Štiks' play *Flour in the Veins,* and novels *W, A Castle in Romagna* and *The Judgment of Richard Richter* offer depictions of different aspects of culture that can be regarded as either Croatian/Bosnian/Yugoslav or maybe simply Štiks'. Štiks' works and their translations can serve as an example of the complexity of translation that is taking place between two drastically different cultures. In this thesis, the translations of Štiks' works are analyzed along with various theories that aimed to capture the essence of translation and culture with the intention of discovering not only what translation and culture are but also how the two are connected. By observing the translation of *Flour in the Veins, W, A Castle in Romagna* and *The Judgment of Richard Richter* along with theoretical insights provided by authors such as Lawrence Venuti, Itamar Even-Zohar, Susan Bassnett, Andre Lefevere, or Aleš Debeljak, this thesis seeks to answer if culture can be translated and if it can be translated, how.

Keywords: Igor Štiks, translation theory, culture, Croatian literature, world literature

8 PREVOĐENJE KULTURE – KULTURA U PRIJEVODU: *BRAŠNO U VENAMA, W, DOVRAC U ROMAGNI I ELIJAHOVA STOLICA* IGORA ŠTIKSA: Sažetak i ključne riječi

Igor Štiks, međunarodno priznati hrvatski pisac bosanskih korijena, u svoja djela uključuje svoje nomadsko i izbjegličko iskustvo ostavljajući na čitatelja jedinstven dojam multikulturalnosti. U drami *Brašno u venama*, te romanima *W, Dvorac u Romagni* i *Elijahova stolica* Štiks oslikava različite aspekte kulture koja bi se mogla kategorizirati kao hrvatska/bosanska/jugoslavenska ili možda jednostavno Štiksova. Štiksova djela i njihovi prijevodi dobar su primjer kompleksnosti prevođenja između dviju drastično različitih kultura. U ovom radu analiziraju se Štiksova djela te brojne teorije čiji su autori pokušali otkriti bit prevođenja i kulture kako bi se otkrilo što su jezik i kultura kao i to koja je njihova poveznica. Analizirajući *Brašno u venama, W, Dvorac u Romagni* i *Elijahova stolicu* kao i teoretske ideje autora poput Lawrencea Venutija, Itamara Even-Zohara, Susan Bassnett, Andrea Lefeverea ili Aleša Debeljaka, u ovom se radu pokušava pronaći odgovor na pitanje može li se kultura prevesti i ukoliko može na koji je način to moguće?

Ključne riječi: Igor Štiks, teorija prevođenja, kultura, hrvatska književnost, svjetska književnost