

# Translating Author s Style - the Case Study of "To kill a Mockingbird"

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Odjel za anglistiku

Preddiplomski sveučilišni studij engleskog jezika i književnosti (dvopredmetni)

**Marina Veverec**

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Zadar, 2017.



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Zadar, 15. rujan 2017.

## Table of contents

1. Introduction.....	1
2. <i>To Kill a Mockingbird</i> .....	2
3. Style and the Translation of Style in Literary Texts .....	8
4. Analysis of Translating Style in <i>To Kill a Mockingbird</i> .....	12
4.1. Author's Style in <i>To Kill a Mockingbird</i> .....	12
4.1.1. Narration.....	13
4.1.2. Dialogues .....	15
4.2. Translator's Style in <i>Ubiti pticu rugalicu</i> .....	18
4.2.1. Narration.....	23
4.2.2. Dialogues .....	25
5. Conclusion .....	31
6. Works Cited .....	32
7. Translating Author's Style – the Case Study of “To Kill a Mockingbird” .....	33
8. Prevođenje autorskog stila – studija slučaja „To Kill a Mockingbird“ .....	34

## 1. Introduction

Literary translation is one of the most demanding forms of translation. Unlike technical translation, where the aim is to transfer the correct information into another language, literary translation requires the transferral of emotions, the recreation of the effects that literary work has on readers. These effects are accomplished by means of authorial voice and literary style. If the author is creating a certain atmosphere that the readers can experience and “live” while reading the text then we are talking about the author’s voice, which is unique and present in each of his works. On the other hand, if the author is implicitly implying his emotions and ideas with a particular choice of linguistic entities then we are talking about style.

What makes each author and literary work unique is the style which is why a literary translator always has to have in mind that it is not important only what message the author wanted to transmit to the readers, but also how he or she wanted to transmit them. The choice of words, sentence structures, literary devices, etc. all contribute to the aesthetics of literary work, and thus a literary translator has to recognise these choices and pay attention to them when translating works of different authors.

In literary translation, the translator is a medium between the author and the reader, aiming at transmission of emotions that the original work leaves on the readers. What makes style challenging to translate is a need for thorough analysis not only of the choices made by the author, but also the meaning behind them, and even a more challenging task: to encompass the style within the target language and culture. In this final paper, I will present the issues of literary style and the translation of style, focusing on the translation of *To Kill a Mockingbird* into the Croatian language as translated by Ljiljana Šćurić.

## 2. *To Kill a Mockingbird*

Harper Lee's novel *To Kill a Mockingbird* is often regarded as her masterpiece for which she received Pulitzer Prize in 1961. The novel is often regarded as a regional novel, Bildungsroman (coming-of-age novel), and a Southern Gothic. All three labels are justified as the novel is set in American South and encompasses all aspects of that region, Jem is coming-of-age in a way that he is a little boy at the beginning, but later on adopts adult's behaviours and ways of thinking, and the eccentric character Arthur Radley serves as an element of gothic in the novel.

Apart from determining the genre of the novel, what many critics praise is Lee's narration from a child's perspective. This is accomplished by means of Jean Louise Finch, mostly referred to in the novel by her nickname Scout, the main character and the narrator, a little girl who mostly stays neutral and gives hints to the injustice she can neither understand nor process. She makes the readers question their own opinions and views of the world by putting them in the position of a child: a position in which questioning the adult's opinions leads to a final comprehension of how society affects our process of growing up and shapes our views and opinions about the world around us. Being raised by a single parent, her father Atticus, a lawyer who takes a controversial case in which he defends an African-American accused of rape, Scout has a great role model to look upon to. "Readers of the novel relive the same awakening that Atticus encourages in his children, as they are challenged to discard old, stock notions about certain character 'types'" (Durst-Johnson 137).

What Lee achieved by writing *To Kill a Mockingbird* is not only a worldwide recognition but also a special place in fighting the racial inequality in Alabama at the time. Segregation between white people and African-Americans, as one of the novel's main themes, is very visible in the novel. African-Americans were put on the margin of the society as they are put on the margin of Lee's fictional town of Maycomb. They live outside the city and are

seen as the lowest in the society, which is evident in the second part of the novel where Tom Robinson, an African-American, is convicted for raping a white woman. The realistic image of the society in Alabama in 1930s is what has made the novel quite controversial:

According to the American Library Association's Office for Intellectual Freedom, the Harper Lee novel is one of the most challenged and banned classical books. Many of these objections come from parents, school administrators or advocacy groups who contend that its racially and sexually-charged themes are inappropriate for young readers. (Downs, *PBS Newshour*)

On the trial of Tom Robinson, Lee does not hold back on the usage of 'inappropriate' terms. It is evident in such cases that her style is straightforward and without censure. Through the dialogues between her characters, register, idiolects and substandard language, she is giving us an insight into the background of characters, their complexity; how educated they are, which social group they belong to and how it affects the way society sees them. Such dialogues thus allow "the reader, through the lives of children, 'to walk around in the shoes' (as its main character says) of people who are different from ourselves" (Durst Johnson xi). The point of making the characters complex is to let the reader approach each character as an individual who is subjected to many stereotypes based on the social class or race, which was very common in 1930s Alabama. As Durst Johnson notes: "Through a realistic delineation of her characters, Harper Lee succeeded in challenging certain stereotypes, especially the image of the upper-class Southerner, the African-American, the community outsider, and the ideal 'little lady'" (137). Even though the novel deals with the issues of society at the beginning of 20<sup>th</sup> century, and is to a certain extent tied to the South of the USA, this challenge of stereotypes which are present even today in contemporary society is what makes *To Kill a Mockingbird* universal and timeless.



The four stereotypes Lee challenged are central to the importance of the book. First, the upper-class Southerner is represented by Atticus. Being a well-respected lawyer in town, it is not expected of him to defend Tom Robinson in court. People from town do not hold a high opinion of him after taking the case, threaten him, and even Scout has problems in school because other children insult Atticus. Unlike them, Atticus wants justice for Tom, regardless of his skin colour. In a way, he is aware that winning the case is impossible considering the close-mindedness of the Southern society at the time, but he challenges the stereotype by not giving up on the justice, even putting his family in danger.

Second, Lee challenges the racial stereotype by introducing Tom Robinson. Tom Robinson is an African-American who is accused of raping Mayella Ewell. What is evident in the case, and in many ways implied by the author, is that Robinson is innocent. What Lee depicts with the character of Tom Robinson is clearly the inequality of legislation towards African-Americans. This is evident even at the beginning of his testimony, when Mr. Gilmer asks him why he would run away from the “crime scene” if he really was innocent:

“Like I says before, it weren’t safe for any nigger to be in a—fix like that.”

“But you weren’t in a fix—you testified that you were resisting Miss Ewell. Were you so scared that she’d hurt you, you ran, a big buck like you?”

“No suh, I’s scared I’d be in court, just like I am now.”

“Scared of arrest, scared you’d have to face up to what you did?”

“No suh, scared I’d hafta face up to what I didn’t do.” (Lee 218-219)

The fact that Robinson was more scared of being in court than beaten or even killed by Mayella’s father clearly shows how African-Americans were treated by legislature. What the society failed to see in Robinson’s case, and was even used against him at the court, is his ability to feel empathy for another human being, a white woman in particular.

Throughout the history, African-Americans were dehumanized in literature, as it served the purpose of ideology of colonialism, by not acknowledging that they have the feature that is often parallel to the concept of “humane”. Lee challenged the long-present stereotype of dehumanized African-Americans, by giving “a portrait of the African-American as a human being: a black man who could feel pity for a poor white woman [...]” (Durst-Johnson 169). Although it seems logical to feel empathy for Mayella, the oldest daughter in the Ewell family, who takes care of other six children ever since her mother passed away, it is not recognised as something Robinson might feel. On the contrary, Bob Ewell, Mayella’s father, is an uneducated man, who often makes irrational decisions and is very clearly represented in the novel as irresponsible and insensitive: “The witness said he never thought of it, he had never called a doctor to any of his’n in his life, and if he had it would have cost him five dollars” (Lee 193). Despite the fact that Robinson is more “humane” than Bob Ewell, this is denied to him in the trial;

Mr. Gilmer smiled grimly at the jury. “You’re a mighty good fellow, it seems—did all this for not one penny?”

“Yes, suh. I felt right sorry for her, she seemed to try more’n the rest of ‘em—”

“*You* felt sorry for *her*, you felt *sorry* for her?” Mr. Gilmer seemed ready to rise to the ceiling. The witness realized his mistake and shifted uncomfortably in the chair. But the damage was done. Below us, nobody liked Tom Robinson’s answer. Mr. Gilmer paused a long time to let it sink in. (Lee 217-218)

Racial discrimination is also evident in the reaction of the white people in the court. This phenomena in society is often seen in literature as they were frequently represented as “either a lovable, shuffling child or as the incarnation of evil” (Durst-Johnson 139). By showing pity for a white woman, Robinson put himself “above” white people, for African-

Americans are stereotypically the ones that deserve white man's pity, and not the other way around.

Third, the community outsider, represented by Boo Radley, a man who decided to alienate himself from the society of Maycomb by staying inside the house for most of his life, is constantly subjected to made-up stories about him and his family. The children hear these stories from adults and think of Boo as a monster who was locked in the house by his father, after trying to kill his mother. Being provoked by Atticus who defended Tom Robinson at the court, Bob Ewell follows the children from the festival held in the school and attacks Jem and Scout. However, it is Ewell who allowed Boo Radley to break the stereotype of an outsider as a monster for he becomes a hero at the end of the book by saving children from Ewell's attempt of murder. Not only did Lee save the outsider from the negative status in society, but she also confirmed Robinson's innocence. If Ewell was capable of attacking someone as innocent as children, it is more than clear that he was capable of putting an innocent man to a death sentence only to avoid the consequence of beating up his daughter for trying to seduce an African-American.

Fourth, Scout rejects the image of the ideal 'little lady' from the very beginning of the novel. The girls were expected to be "[...] an image of pure femininity. Great stress was placed on her training to be a lady[...]"(Durst-Johnson 144). Scout plays and fights with boys, wears pants and very often swears or insults other children. Her aunt is trying to change her behaviour throughout the novel and make her fit into the ideal "little lady" image, by resenting her inappropriate language, the clothes she wears etc. This is evident when Scout describes her relationship with her aunt;

Aunt Alexandra was fanatical on the subject of my attire. I could not possibly hope to be a lady if I wore breeches; when I said I could do nothing in a dress, she said I wasn't supposed to be doing things that required pants. Aunt Alexandra's vision of my

department involved playing with small stoves, tea sets, and wearing the Add-A-Pearl necklace she gave me when I was born; furthermore, I should be a ray of sunshine in my father's lonely life. (Lee 90)

The challenge of stereotypes, portrayal of characters, the sense of right and wrong and finally the importance and implied meanings in the novel are all achieved by Lee's brilliant ability of story-telling, as claimed by many critics. Specific choice of characters and the way they act and communicate all contribute to the emotional response of the reader. Lee has written *To Kill a Mockingbird* in such a way that many things are left unsaid but are experienced by the reader due to her unique style of writing.

### 3. Style and the Translation of Style in Literary Texts

Style is, according to the simplest definition given by Wales, “the perceived distinctive manner of expression” (qtd. in Boase-Beier 4). A broader definition is given by Abrams who notes that:

[...] style is identified, in the traditional way, by the distinction between what is said and how it is said, or between the content and the form of a text [...] The content is now often denoted, however, by terms such as “information”, “message,” or “propositional meaning,” while the style is defined as variations in the presentation of this information that serve to alter its “aesthetic quality” or the reader’s emotional response. (Abrams 305)

This distinction between the content and style is necessary for the translation process, when we take into account that literary translation is concerned with recreation of the text and its content, but with an emphasis on reader’s emotional response. Stylistic features can be “phonological (patterns of speech sounds, meter, or rhyme), or syntactic (types of sentence structure), or lexical (abstract vs. concrete words, the relative frequency of nouns, verbs, adjectives), or rhetorical (the characteristic use of figurative language, imagery, and so on” (Abrams 306).

In order to analyse the style of a particular author, we have to make a distinction between features that belong to the linguistic analysis and the features that have primarily stylistic function, i.e. “features which make an actual difference in the aesthetic and other effects on a competent reader” (Abrams306). For this reason, many stylisticians, such as Geoffrey Leech and Mick Short insisted “on the need to be objective by focusing sharply on the text itself and by setting out to discover the ‘rules’ governing the process by which linguistic elements and patterns in a text accomplish their meanings and literary effects” (Abrams307). According to them, stylistics includes discourse analysis, the area of study

concerned “with the use of language in a running discourse, continued over a sequence of sentences, and involving the interaction of speaker (or writer) and auditor (or reader) in a specific situational context, and within a framework of social and cultural conventions” (Abrams 66). This approach offers a detailed analysis that enters the sphere of style which is important for the inclusion of reader in the process of constructing meaning of the work, due to its “chief aim... to explain how the characters represented in a literary work, and also the readers of that work, are constantly able to infer meanings that are not asserted or specified in a conversational interchange” (Abrams 67).

When we talk about the uniqueness of author’s style, we should mention that it is closely related to the concept of author’s voice. Author’s voice can be best explained in terms of how the author chooses to retell the story. Like style, it includes the choice of sentence length, choice of vocabulary, balance of dialogues and narration, etc. - but the main difference between the two is in the effect it is to have on the readers. Style is mainly focused on transferring the emotions and ideas of the author that he or she decided to leave implicit. On the other hand, author’s voice affects the way in which readers perceive the text as interesting, intense, scary etc. rather than having implicit meaning. It evokes a certain feeling in readers and it does not depend on one text only, but is present in all works of the same author (Vance, *Yamuses*).

Despite the fact that style is unique to the author and represents a kind of a personal manner of expression that is dependent on author’s emotions and experiences, the importance of the readers and how they are affected by the author’s style while reading his or her work should not be excluded from the discussion of style, especially when we discuss the translation of style. As each author has his own specific way of expressing his views and opinions, every reader is affected by their own background. The issue of subjectivity in both writing and reading a literary work becomes evident when we analyse it. Author projects

implicit meaning by means of style, and even though there are many factors which influence the author's choices, some of the main concepts that can help us trace the source of meaning are listed by Abrams in the following way:

Often, however, the analyst tries also to relate distinctive stylistic features to traits in an author's psyche; or to an author's characteristic ways of perceiving the world and organizing experience [...] or to the typical conceptual frame and the attitude to reality in an historical era [...] or else to semantic, aesthetic, and emotional functions and effects in a particular literary text [...]. (30)

All these features and influences are important for the literary translator due to the fact that literary translator is the reader and that the effect the work has on her or him will most likely interfere with the process of translation.

As literary translation mainly is about the translator's skill to make the right choice between linguistic entities in a given target language, we might say it makes it closely related to the style of literary text because the author of the text was choosing between linguistic entities in the same way while writing the literary work. This close relationship can make us assume that every translator has a distinctive style of translating, just as every author has a distinctive style of writing. Boase-Beier sees style central to the construction and interpretation of texts. He considers the effects of style on study of translation in three ways:

Firstly, in the actual process of translation, the way the style of the source text is viewed will affect the translator's reading of the text. Secondly, because the recreative process in the target text will also be influenced by the sorts of choices the translator makes, and style is the outcome of choice (as opposed to those aspects of language which are not open to option), the translator's own style will become part of the target text. And, thirdly, the sense of what style is will affect not only what the translator does but how the critic of translation interprets what the translator has done. (1)

Finally, what makes style important in literary translation is that stylistic function can easily be lost in the translated text if the translator is not aware of it, resulting in the loss of the reader's emotional response as achieved in the original. Deviating from the style, translator deviates from many implicit meanings that have a function of provoking a certain emotion in the reader. As it is clear that literary translation is about recreating the text in such a way that the reader's experience stays the same, and style is an important factor in creating this experience, style thus becomes central to the process of literary translation.



#### 4. Analysis of Translating Style in *To Kill a Mockingbird*

In this chapter, the focus is put on the issues in the translation of *To Kill a Mockingbird* from English into Croatian, with the special emphasis put on the translation of the author's style. Firstly, it is necessary to recognize the elements of style that the author employs in order to create a certain emotional response in the reader. Secondly, the style of translator, Liljana Šćurić, is going to be analysed in order to understand it as an attempt to solve the issues present in the differences between English language and culture, as compared to Croatian language and culture, while maintaining the original's effect on the reader.

##### 4.1. Author's Style in *To Kill a Mockingbird*

In order to analyse Lee's style in *To Kill a Mockingbird*, the two main aspects of fiction— narration and dialogues – will be studied in some detail. These two aspects are closely related in the portrayal of the characters and both contribute to the complexity of characters, but the author chose to use different manner of expression in each of those aspects. On one hand, narration is straightforward, fluent, written in Standard English, permeated with complex words and often brings to question if it really could be narrated by a six-year-old child. The dialogues, on the other hand, project the image of the narrator Scout more authentically, as Lee uses simple and colloquial language combined with dialect and substandard language for conversations between Scout and other children, or between her and adults. This is evident in the following excerpt:

If I could have explained these things to Miss Caroline, I would have saved myself some inconvenience and Miss Caroline subsequent mortification, but it was beyond my ability to explain things as well as Atticus, so I said, “You're shamin' him, Miss Caroline. Walter hasn't got a quarter at home to bring you, and you can't use any stovewood.” (Lee 24)

Lee's first person narration gives us an insight into Scout's thoughts; it is clear that Scout can understand that Walter comes from a poor family and that the way her father explained their financial situation to her is far more complex than she can explain to her teacher. The omission of final "n" in present continuous and the use of colloquial expressions such as "hasn't got a quarter at home" give Scout simple and "childlike" voice to make the reader perceive her as a child, especially when compared to the terms she used in narration, such as "subsequent mortification".

This is evident in the portrayal of other characters as well. Whenever we encounter a new character, the narrator retells what she heard about them from other sources. Scout is neutral when she describes other characters, we never know what her opinion about them is, but the author gives us a certain experience of characters throughout the dialogues by means of dialect, substandard language, register and idiolect.

#### **4.1.1. Narration**

As previously noted, *To Kill a Mockingbird* is narrated in first person, and the mentioned difference between Scouts' interior monologues, which resemble an adult's way of storytelling due to the use of a far more complex vocabulary than is expected from a child, and the dialogues which portray Scout authentically as a child, has been noted by some critics, claiming that "it is frankly and completely impossible, being told in the first person by a six-year-old girl with the prose style of a well-educated adult" (Adams, *The Atlantic*).

Although the prose style could be explained as such, Lee managed to avoid the confusion by inserting allusions that Scout is only retelling the stories. Lee made her narrator convincing as a child by not giving her a strong opinion on the issues that the narrator hears from the adults. Lee's narration style is often explained in terms of detached autobiography, i.e. the narrator is retelling the events that happened in the past from the present perspective (Munteanu, *Scribophile*). There are many instances of this, such as when Atticus tries to

explain to Scout why she should not tell her teacher Miss Caroline that she is going to read every night with him as they used to, after the teacher showed disapproval of Atticus's methods of teaching;

“I'm afraid our activities would be received with considerable disapprobation by the more learned authorities.” Jem and I were accustomed to our father's last-will-and-testament diction, and we were at all times free to interrupt Atticus for a translation when it was beyond our understanding. “Huh, sir?” (Lee 35)

We can notice that Atticus is using high register and a language that is inaccessible to children, so in the narrative part, Scout explains how she and her brother are used to his complicated language and how they often ask for explanations, contributing to Lee's portrayal of children.

Furthermore, this contrast is also evident when Scout introduces new characters, such as Boo Radley: “Inside the house lived a malevolent phantom. People said he existed, but Jem and I had never seen him. People said he went out at night when the moon was down, and peeped in windows” (Lee 9). By repeating that ‘people said’, Lee introduces the reader to not only an eccentric character, but the society of Maycomb as well. Everything that Scout thinks and knows about Radleys, is a projection of society's views on them:

The misery of that house began many years before Jem and I were born. The Radleys, welcome anywhere in town, kept to themselves, a predilection unforgivable in Maycomb. They did not go to church, Maycomb's principal recreation, but worshiped at home; Mrs. Radley seldom if ever crossed the street for a mid-morning coffee break with her neighbours, and certainly never joined a missionary circle. (Lee 9)

From this excerpt we can see that Maycomb society rejects and marginalizes people in town who deviate from the town's customs. There is a certain set of values, as in every society, that is required of people to acquire and if anyone decides not to follow this set of

values (going to mass, visiting neighbours etc.) they are alienated and children should be warned about staying away from such people in town.

Lee never explicitly notes that people from Maycomb strive for good reputation and that their main goal is to achieve and maintain a high status in society, but the reader gets the sense of that throughout the novel. One of the best examples for this is Scout's Aunt Alexandra:

Aunt Alexandra, in underlining the moral of young Sam Merriweather's suicide, said it was caused by a morbid streak in the family. Let a sixteen-year-old girl giggle in the choir and Aunty would say, "It just goes to show you, all the Penfield women are flighty." Everybody in Maycomb, it seemed, had a Streak: a Drinking Streak, a Gambling Streak, a Mean Streak, a Funny Streak. (Lee 142-143)

Such explanation, where every family has a 'streak' portrays the Maycomb society as superficial: there is no individual that can avoid the 'curse' of the family streaks. Highlighting this notion of 'streak' and generalizing people according to their heritage, makes the reader experience Maycomb townspeople as negative and unappealing, as everyone who is even slightly different and defies their customs becomes ultimately rejected and unwelcome in town.

#### **4.1.2. Dialogues**

In *To Kill a Mockingbird*, the style of dialogues serves multiple purposes. To begin with, it contributes to the authenticity of the setting as the dialogues in the novel are (mostly) written in Southern American English. Lexical units characteristic for Southern American English are used very frequently in dialogues throughout the novel, such as: his'n, yonder, recon, (he) sure is, folks, etc. The fact that these terms are mostly used by children, African-Americans and members of the lower-class, serves the purpose of deepening the readers' awareness of the differences between characters and their social status.

Dialect and colloquial language contribute to realisation of “children’s voices” and is always used in dialogues between the children:

“Hey.”

“Hey yourself,” said Jem pleasantly.

“I’m Charles Baker Harris,” he said. “I can read.”

“So what?” I said.

“I just thought you’d like to know I can read. You got anything needs readin’ I can do it...”

“How old are you,” asked Jem, “four-and-a-half?”

“Goin’ on seven.”

“Shoot no wonder, then,” said Jem, jerking his thumb at me. “Scout yonder’s been readin’ ever since she was born, and she ain’t even started to school yet. You look right puny for goin’ on seven.”

“I’m little but I’m old,” he said. (Lee 7)

Expressions such as ‘shoot no wonder’, ‘been readin’ ever since she was born’, ‘started to school’ and ‘look puny’ are typically used by the children and by using these expressions Lee gives authenticity to children characters.

Moreover, what contributes to portrayal of children in novel is the difference in their understanding of notions such as analogies according to their age. Jem is capable of making analogies as he is four years older than Scout and Dill, while the two cannot process analogies but can only understand them literally. This is evident in the following example:

“Dill, you have to think about these things,” Jem said. “Lemme think a minute... it’s sort of like making a turtle come out...”

“How’s that?” asked Dill.

“Strike a match under him.”

I told Jem if he set fire to the Radley house I was going to tell Atticus on him. (Lee 15)

Contrast between higher class (judge, Atticus) and lower class, Ewells and African-Americans is achieved with deviance from the standard language. Furthermore, as a member of higher class, Atticus does not talk in dialect and he does not employ it in everyday conversations. Unlike Atticus, Robert Ewell, belonging to the lower class, employs dialect even in the courthouse:

Just 'fore sundown. Well, I was sayin' Mayella was screamin' fit to beat Jesus—" another glance from the bench silenced Mr. Ewell.

"Yes? She was screaming?" said Mr. Gilmer.

Mr. Ewell looked confusedly at the judge. "Well, Mayella was raisin' this holy racket so I dropped m'load and run as fast as I could but I run into th' fence, but when I got distangled I run up to th' window and I seen—" Mr. Ewell's face grew scarlet. He stood up and pointed his finger at Tom Robinson. "— I seen that black nigger yonder ruttin' on my Mayella! (Lee 190)

In this example, it is not only dialect that implies Ewell's lower class in society, but also his idiolect: the use of vulgar language which is inappropriate in public places. The judge's disapproval of such language has no effect on him, even though Ewell claims he understands his warning about vulgarity in court. This portrays Ewell as uneducated and disrespectful, creating the effect on reader that Ewell is not a trustworthy character and thus contributing to Tom Robinson's innocence.

Although the language of African-Americans and lower-class characters is very similar (due to the similarity of Southern American English and African-American Vernacular English), there exist some differences in idiolect. Robinson, even though an African-American belonging to the lower class, shows more respect in the courthouse than Ewell does:

Tom Robinson swallowed again, and his eyes widened. “Somethin’ not fittin’ to say – not fittin’ for these folks’ chillun to hear –”

“What did he say, Tom? You *must* tell the jury what he said.”

Tom Robinson shut his eyes tight. “He says: ‘You goddamn whore, I’ll kill ya.’” (Lee 214-215)

By adding politeness and shame to Robinson’s character, Lee portrays him as a functioning member of society, and more than anything as an honest and humane character. As Scout notes after his testimony, “It occurred to me that in their own way, Tom Robinson’s manners were as good as Atticus’s” (Lee 215).

By means of all these elements of style, Lee is imprinting on the reader her frustration with the injustice of the society and its acceptance of stereotypes. Her style does not only serve the purpose of making the reader understand the situation in the South during the last century, but disturbs the reader with a notion of final acceptance of the situation as it is. Throughout the novel, Lee constantly hints to the reader that Tom Robinson’s innocence can be proven, where her authorial voice is playing a crucial role: she convinces the reader that there is no evidence that Tom Robinson is guilty, making no room for any other conclusion, and then shatters the reader when the final verdict is voted. These notions present the main goal of a literary translator – to recreate the anticipation and frustration caused by the injustice that Lee presents to the readers in the original.

#### **4.2. Translator’s Style in *Ubiti pticu rugalicu***

Ljiljana Šćurić, the translator of the only Croatian version of *To Kill a Mockingbird*, has translated over 20 books from English into Croatian. Some of them include well-established authors such as Stephen King (*Different Seasons*) and Ken Kesey (*One Flew Over the Cuckoo’s Nest*) along with the subject of this discussion, Lee Harper’s *To Kill a Mockingbird*. *Ubiti pticu rugalicu* was first published in 2004 by Naklada Jesenski i Turk,

forty-four years after the publication of the original. This could be due to the complexity of author's style, the dialect being a major problem for any attempt at translation. Also, to convey the emotional response of the reader, translator has to be aware of many elements in the work that are tied to the region where the novel is set. Bringing the 1930s South close to a Croatian reader is quite a challenging task in itself, and when we add Lee Harper's worldwide popularity acquired by her style, the challenge becomes even more demanding. The second edition, translated by the same translator, was published in 2014 by Šareni dućan and it will be used in this analysis.

While creating author's style is complex and requires a lot of skill in using specific linguistic entities to project 'the feeling' to the reader, translator's style becomes even more demanding due to the fact that the translator is limited by the target language and culture. What has to be studied in the analysis of translator's style is not only the translator's intervention in one particular case, but the strategies that the translator employs repeatedly. In translation, "style [...] is a matter of patterning: it involves describing preferred or recurring patterns of linguistic behaviour, rather than individual or one-off instances of intervention" (Baker 245). The most important thing in translation of style and its main purpose is the recreation of the original effect on the reader. This means that interpretation is more important than rewriting the words in the target language, and should be the main focus of the translator.

Firstly, the focus will be put on the use of footnotes, as it contributes to both narration and dialogues, and later on the discussion will be divided as in the previous chapter, separating the narration from dialogues.

It is evident that the translator had a choice between different strategies of approaching the source culture, namely footnotes, interpolation and omission (Landers 93). Even though footnotes might disturb the flow of the reading, in some cases they are inevitable. In the case of *Ubiti pticu rugalicu*, the translator uses footnotes to save the authenticity of novel's setting



and to compensate for the loss of dialect and substandard language. As the novel partly belongs to the regional novel genre, it is needless to say that the translator should maintain some of the elements (social relations, customs, language, dialect) in the target language. Some of these aspects, such as social relations, are maintained and re-established in footnotes, where the translator explains the use of address term “Miss”:

[...] osobit način oslovljavanja žena u južnom dijelu Sjedinjenih Država. Premda riječ doslovno znači “gospođica”, ondje se tako, u znak poštovanja, oslovljuju i udane žene. Oslovljavanje je dalje stupnjevano prema razini bliskosti: osobu koju manje poznajemo oslovit ćemo s Miss i prezimenom, a osobu koja nam je bliža s Miss i imenom. Ovdje bih napomenula i da je narječje američkog Juga uglavnom prevedeno književnim jezikom kojim je knjiga najvećim dijelom izvorno i napisana. (Šćurić 10)

As the translator noted, “Miss” can be used for both married and single women, but it expresses respect and closeness to the addressee. An example of a distant character to Scout is Henry Lafayette Dubose, who is always addressed with “Mrs. Dubose”. By doing this, Lee ‘marks’ the characters whose intentions and opinions do not affect children positively in their process of maturing. This is evident when Scout notes that Mrs. Dubose is the first adult that is insulting Atticus because he is defending Tom Robinson in court: “I had become almost accustomed to hearing insults aimed at Atticus. But this was the first one coming from an adult. Except for her remarks about Atticus, Mrs. Dubose’s attack was only routine” (Lee 113). By explaining the social implications of the address term “Miss” in the footnotes, and keeping it in the text without translating it, the translator stayed faithful to Lee’s style. This element makes the reader recognize society members with extensively bad intentions from the ones who contribute to evoking positive attitudes in children’s process of maturation, and it is felt in the translation as the term ‘Mrs.’ is translated, unlike the term ‘Miss’: “Već sam gotovo

navikla slušati uvrede na Atticusov račun, no ovo je bila prva od odrasle osobe. Osim napada na Atticusa, ostalo što je rekla gospođa Dubose bilo je uobičajeno” (Šćurić 104).

Furthermore, the translator did not domesticate<sup>1</sup>the novel; she kept the author’s portrayal of the Maycomb society and the injustice it projects. The only element of Lee’s style that is excluded from the translation, as noted in the previous quotation, is the dialect and substandard language which will be discussed along with other elements that contribute to the style of dialogues. However, Ljiljana Šćurić managed to keep the reader’s experience of the South by deciding not to translate expressions such as “Radley Place”, “Finch Landing” even though the equivalents can be found in Croatian language. Moreover, to make the reader aware of the intention behind the most important metaphor in the book, translator adds a footnote to explain what mockingbird represents in the American South:

Bilo bi mi draže da pucaš u limenke u stražnjem dvorištu, ali znam da ćeš gađati ptice. Pucaj u šojke koliko god hoćeš, ako ih uspiješ pogoditi, ali upamti, sramota je ubiti pticu rugalicu.

[footnote] engl. Mockingbird –ptica rugalica zapravo je vrsta drozda koji se povezuje s američkim Jugom i ondje je veoma omiljen, pa je službena ptica pet američkih država. Oponaša pjev drugih ptica. (Šćurić 92-93)

This central metaphor of the book serves as the core element in portraying the injustice that is happening in Maycomb. A tragic event in the book, the murder of innocent African American Tom Robinson, later on comes back to the metaphor which is why the translator’s explanation is necessary for the reader to experience the injustice of the act.

The feeling of frustration and tension in the reader is especially present during the questioning of Tom Robinson. Mr. Gilmer, the prosecutor in the case, is frequently using a

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<sup>1</sup>The term “domestication” was first introduced by Lawrence Venuti in his book *The Translator’s Invisibility* (1995). The term refers to a translation strategy that minimizes source language traces (expressions, names) so that the reader cannot “feel” that the work was originally written in another language.

term 'boy' to degrade Tom Robinson during the cross-examination: "Had your eye on her a long time, hadn't you, boy?"; "Then you say she's lying, boy?"; "Didn't Mr. Ewell run you off the place, boy?" (Lee 218). The translator recognized this element of Lee's style and added a footnote to present the reader with the purpose of the term: "Boy (engl.) – dječak; na američkom Jugu tako bijelci oslovljavaju crnce svih dobi" (Ščurić 194). She made a choice of translating the term as 'dečko' which creates the same effect of degradation in the Croatian language, making the reader experience this need of prosecutor to be above the suspect. The frustration that the reader feels is put into the character of Dill. Dill leaves the courtroom crying because he resents the way Mr. Gilmer treats Tom Robinson. He represents what every member of society should have felt and that someone should have acted to this sense of inequality and derogation of African Americans. He tries to explain the unfairness to Scout, but as lawyer's daughter she is used to situations where prosecutors are being inhumane towards the suspects. However, all of this is explained by yet another eccentric character that deeply understands Maycomb society, and explains to Dill how growing older makes people ignorant and resistant to injustice:

He jerked his head at Dill: "Things haven't caught up with that one's instinct yet. Let him get a little older and he won't get sick and cry. Maybe things'll strike him as being—not quite right, say, but he won't cry, not when he gets a few years on him."

"Cry about what, Mr. Raymond?" Dill's maleness was beginning to assert itself.

"Cry about the simple hell people give other people—without even thinking. Cry about the hell white people give colored folks, without even stopping to think that they're people, too." (Lee 222)

Mr. Raymond's wife is an African American, and the fact that they have 'mixed' children is unacceptable to Maycomb society. He pretends to be an alcoholic just so the society would have an explanation for his way of living. Because of his background and the

way he honestly explains to the children why he deceives the society, the reader gets a feeling that the one who has suffered from the injustice knows it much better than all of the society who blindly believe in this dehumanizing portrayal of people without bothering to know the truth about their lives, but only believing what they want to believe: legends and gossips. The translator transferred the most important notions: the suppression of emotions and ignorance that comes as people integrate themselves in society in the process of maturation, and the humanity that is often neglected to African Americans;

Glavom je pokazao Dilla. – Još mu život nije pokvario nagone. Kad bude malo stariji, neće mu pozliti I neće plakati. Možda će pomisliti da nešto nije sasvim u redu, ali neće plakati, ne za nekoliko godina.

– Plakati zbog čega, gospodine Raymond?– Dillu se počela vraćati muževnost.

– Zbog pakla u koji ljudi jedni druge guraju, a da o tome i ne razmišljaju. Zbog pakla koji bijelci priređuju crncima a da ni ne pomisle kako su I oni ljudi. (Šćurić 199)

Even though there are certain differences in the style of the author and the translator, if we compare the passages from the linguistic point of view, the most important task of a literary translator, to convey the implicit meaning to the reader, is done successfully in all examples presented.

#### **4.2.1. Narration**

As narrative part of the original is written in Standard English and is simple and straightforward, it does not represent an issue to the translator. As already noted in the previous chapter, narration serves the purpose in the novel to portray the setting and society and one of the best examples of how Lee's style contributes to the portrayal of the society and the way they talk about even the most tragic events that happen in the county is the following passage:

Maycomb was interested by the news of Tom's death for perhaps two days; two days was enough for the information to spread through the county. "Did you hear about?... No? Well, they say he was runnin' fit to beat lightnin'..." To Maycomb, Tom's death was typical. Typical of a nigger to cut and run. Typical of a nigger's mentality to have no plan, no thought for the future, just run blind first chance he saw. Funny thing, Atticus Finch might've got him off scot free, but wait—? Hell no.

You know how they are. Easy come, easy go. Just shows you, that Robinson boy was legally married, they say he kept himself clean, went to church and all that, but when it comes down to the line the veneer's mighty thin. Nigger always comes out in 'em. (Lee 265)

The repetition of the word 'typical' serves the purpose of evoking in the reader a feeling of frustration with the indifference of the Maycomb society. They do not discuss how tragic Robinson's death was, how it must be hard on his family or how the inequality of African Americans before the court consequently resulted in his death. The only purpose of their conversations is to exchange information and establish the opinion that everyone is 'labelled', either by their family or their race. The translator managed to recreate the fluency and the effect of a distant, 'typical' conversation among the members of Maycomb society:

Maycomb se bavio novošću o Tomovoj smrti koja dva dana – dva su dana bila dovoljna da se novost proširi okrugom. – Jeste li čuli?... Ne? Pa kažu da je trčao svom snagom... – Za Maycomb je Tomova smrt bila tipična. Tipično za crnca da jednostavno počne bježati. Tipično je da crnac nema plan, ne misli na budućnost, samo počne bježati čim mu se pruži prilika. Eto, Atticus Finch bi ga možda bio uspio osloboditi, ali je li on mogao čekati? Ma kakvi. Znae kakvi su oni. Kako došlo, tako prošlo. Eto, Robinson je imao zakonitu ženu, kažu da je bio uredan, odlazio u crkvu i

sve to, ali na kraju se vidjela njegova priroda. Crnac je uvijek samo crnac. (Šćurić 237)

The translator successfully recreated the imagined conversation by alternating short questions and short propositional sentences, as in the original. Even more importantly, by repeating the word “tipično” and using a strong expression at the end of the passage “crnac je uvijek samo crnac”, the translator transferred the implied meaning of superficiality and cruelty of the Maycomb’s society to the reader.

#### **4.2.2. Dialogues**

The translator decided to omit the dialect and substandard language from the dialogues. This stems from the fact that Croatian dialects are established on a regional basis and would change the reader’s experience. Being set in American South and dealing with issues that are tied to that region, to employ Croatian dialects would not have the same effect on the reader as they do in the original. As Landers argues, the translation of dialects can hardly ever function in the literary translation, even if the translator would try to use an alternative dialect that slightly deviates from the standard language the native speakers of target language would still tie a certain group of people to that form of speech (116). Accordingly, the focus will be put on other devices used to establish the characters and their qualities with only a reference to the differences that the omission of dialect has caused.

The conversations between children, when we exclude deviations from standard language, are mainly established by the use of idioms and colloquial expressions. For example, when Scout and Dill try to convince Jem to make Boo Radley come out of the house, Jem says to Dill: “Don’t blame me when he gouges your eyes out” (Lee 15). The translator found the equivalent for this expression in Croatian, maintaining the style of the author: “Nemoj mene okrivljavati kad ti iskopa oči” (Šćurić 17). Also, the translator adds colloquial expressions where the author does not use them: “I wouldn’t be too certain of that”

(Lee 25) is therefore translated as “U to se baš ne bih kladila” (Šćurić 26). As it is impossible for two languages to always have the equivalent expressions, the use of colloquial expressions whenever possible in children’s speech is a part of translator’s style with a function of representing the characters’ age authentically.

As for the part where the social differences of lower and higher class are most evident, i.e. the trial of Tom Robinson, it can be said that keeping the vulgarity of Ewell’s idiolect is enough to keep the representation of him as uneducated and unreliable character;

Bilo je to baš prije sutona. Kako rekoh, Mayella je vrištala k'o Isus na križu... –Još jedan sučev pogled ušutkao je svjedoka. – Da? Vrištala je? – rekao je gospodin Gilmer.

Gospodin Ewell zbunjeno je pogledao suca.– Pa, Mayella se tako derala da sam bacio drva i potrčao što su me noge nosile, ali sam naletio na ogradu... kad sam se otpetljao, otrčao sam do prozora i vidio... – Lice gospodina Ewella poprimilo je skrletnu boju. Ustao je i upro prstom u Toma Robinsona. – Vidio sam onog crnog crnčugu kako ruje po mojoj Mayelli! (Šćurić 171)

The translator has done this successfully; she has kept Lee’s representation of Robert Ewell without the use of a substandard language. This was done by keeping the inappropriate colloquial expressions such as “screaming fit to beat Jesus”, “ruttin’ on” and “black nigger”. It can be said that keeping Ewell’s vulgarity is enough for the reader to experience him as a negative character which in fact was the main target of choices of linguistic units made by the author. The reader can visualize the image of a repellent old farmer as he is originally represented by Lee in *To Kill a Mockingbird*. This image is increased when Ewell is opposed to Tom Robinson. Tom Robinson's hesitation to repeat Ewell’s vulgar vocabulary represents him as a more trustworthy character in the eyes of the reader:

Tom Robinson opet je progutao knedlu i razrogačio oči. – Nešto što nije pristojno ponoviti, nije pristojno pred ovim ljudima i djecom... – Što je rekao, Tom? *Moraš reći poroti što je rekao.*

Tom Robinson je stisnuo oči. – Rekao je: ‘Prokleta kurvo, ubit ću te.’ (Šćurić 192)

With phrases such as ‘progutao knedlu’ and ‘stisnuo oči’ the translator is presenting Tom as a decent man who refuses to employ vulgar language before the audience in the court. The reader can sense the suffering that Robinson is going through which thus result in evoking the empathy in the reader. Translator’s choice of using standard language in the dialogues brought Robinson slightly apart from belonging to lower-class and brought him closer to the representation of higher-class members. This makes translator’s style deviate from the author’s style, enhancing the main emotional response in the reader who feels that Robinson is the victim of his skin color. The reader of *Ubiti pticu rugalicu* does not experience the same categorization of Tom Robinson as the reader of *To Kill a Mockingbird* does. This is due to the fact that substandard languages ‘label’ the society members who employ them. In *To Kill a Mockingbird*, Robinson is marked by the use of African-American English as the lowest in the society’s hierarchy, whereas in *Ubiti pticu rugalicu*, Robinson is closer to the reader and the use of standard language deepens the empathy in the reader.

Even though the translator successfully avoided the confusion in the reader that could result from the omission of deviations from standard language in cases where the deviation is introduced in the narration, there is one case where the lack of deviation might confuse the reader. Consider the following excerpt:

She was furious, and when she was furious Calpurnia’s grammar became erratic. When in tranquility, her grammar was as good as anybody’s in Maycomb. Atticus said Calpurnia had more education than most colored folks.



When she squinted down at me the tiny lines around her eyes deepened. ‘There’s some folks who don’t eat like us,’ she whispered fiercely, ‘but you ain’t called on to contradict ‘em at the table when they don’t. That boy’s yo’ comp’ny and if he wants to eat up the table cloth you let him, you hear?’ (Lee 27)

What is problematic in this example is the first sentence where Scout explains that Calpurnia’s grammar changes when she is furious, and this is further exemplified in the dialogue where Lee clearly shows the deviation: “There’s some folks” instead of “There are some folks”; the use of “ain’t” instead of “aren’t”; omission of letters in words “them”, “your”, “company”, omission of “do” at the beginning of a question. The translator stayed consistent to her decision of employing only Standard Croatian, as can be seen in the following example:

Bila je doista srdita, a kad je bila srdita, Calpurnia više ne bi govorila književnim jezikom. Kad je bila smirena, izražavala se jednako dobro kao bilo tko u Maycombu. Atticus je rekao da je obrazovanija od većine crnaca.

Kad se sagnula i pogledala me škiljeći, produbile su joj se bore oko očiju. – Ima ljudi koji ne jedu kao mi – šapnula je oštro – ali nije tvoje da im na to ukazuješ za stolom. Taj je dječak tvoj gost i ako želi pojesti stolnjak, lijepo ćeš mu to dopustiti, jesi li me čula? (Šćurić 27-28)

It is noted in the first sentence that “when furious, Calpurnia wouldn’t talk in standard language anymore”, but the translator decided not to “show” this in the dialogue. As this is an excerpt in which the author, for the first time in the novel, indirectly implies that Calpurnia is ‘colored’, the use of African American English in the dialogue makes the reader fully aware of Calpurnia’s race, where the author’s style comes to emphasis. Lee could have simply previously noted that Calpurnia is Finches’ African American maid, but she wanted the reader to experience this by means of her speech. The translator was limited in this example by the

cultural differences between the South of the USA and Croatia, stemming from the long history of African American inhabitants in the South, while there is no history of African Americans in Croatia and thus there exists no distinctive manner of speaking.

Furthermore, it has to be noted that dialects in the Croatian Language are established on a regional basis. To use one of the existing dialects to portray the same notions that Lee portrayed with the use of substandard languages would be impossible. As noted previously, one of the possible solutions, to use an invented dialect in order to keep this important element of author's style, is discussed by Lander, where he notes:

An invented dialect, except perhaps in the hands of some James Joyce of translators, is almost certain to be both ephemeral and off-putting to all but the most forgiving and open-minded of readers.

Summing up, dialect is always tied, geographically and culturally, to a milieu that does not exist in the target-language setting. Substitution of an 'equivalent' dialect is foredoomed to failure. The best advice about trying to translate dialect: don't. (117)

Although some parts of Harper Lee's style were lost in the process of translation, such as dialect and substandard language, it cannot be said that the reader's emotional response is lost along with it, but is only in some cases lessened and in some cases enhanced to a certain extent. This, of course, stems from the differences between source and target language and culture. The translator's style highly contributed to preservation of cultural elements that would be lost if she decided to domesticate the literary work. As literary translation puts its focus primarily on the recreation of reader's experience, rather than on what is written in the literary work, it can be concluded that the translator has established the primary goal in translating author's style in *To Kill a Mockingbird*. The use of footnotes, even though not recommended in literary translation and should be avoided whenever possible, definitely maintained the setting and social relations established by Lee, with a purpose of devoting the

book to the issues of the society in American South. More importantly, the translator managed to transfer the frustration and injustice caused by the inequality of people before the law in American South, as well as the ignorance of the society towards such issues, by employing her own style, despite the fact that it sometimes deviates from the author's.

## 5. Conclusion

Literary translation is a demanding form of translation due to its focus on recreation of the text with an emphasis on reader's emotional response. As evocation of a certain emotional response in the readers represents a challenge for the authors themselves when writing a work of literature, they use many different literary devices that finally result in a recognizable style. It is thus of great importance to have style in mind in the process of literary translation, as to deviate from the style of the original author might mean a deviation from the intended emotional responses in the reader.

However, a certain extent of deviation is expected, as literary translation cannot even be discussed without the context of the differences between source and target language and culture. Accordingly, translating style means to find different means of expression that leave the same effect on the reader, i.e. an expression that evokes a feeling of sadness in source language might sound awkward when translated into the target language, while a linguistically different expression might evoke the intended feeling. Translator's style thus becomes important in recreation of the reader's experience as a medium that breaks the boundaries between source and target language and culture.

By employing different strategies with recurring pattern, translators create their own style that serves the purpose of enabling the author's style to be recognized in target language and culture by minimizing the loss of intended emotional response. This is especially evident in the case of *To Kill a Mockingbird*, Harper Lee's masterpiece that is inseparable from the American South and can be completely experienced only in terms of that region and its specific issues. The style of the translator, Ljiljana Šćurić, contributed to the transferral of reader's experience by bringing the American South closer to the reader without losing the intended emotional response of the original, thus resulting in a successful literary translation.

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## 7. Translating Author's Style – the Case Study of “To Kill a Mockingbird”

### *Abstract*

This thesis presents some of the general challenges in the field of literary translation, focusing primarily on the challenge of translating author's style. The main purpose of this paper is to investigate the effects that the author's style has on readers, and finally how translators can recreate the same reading experience in the translated work by employing their own style when the translation process is limited by the target language and culture. Accordingly, this thesis will provide a detailed analysis of Lee Harper's style in *To Kill a Mockingbird*, as compared to Ljiljana Šćurić's style in the translated work *Ubiti pticu rugalicu*.

Key words: literary translation, author's style, translator's style, Lee Harper, *To Kill a Mockingbird*, Ljiljana Šćurić, *Ubiti pticu rugalicu*

## 8. Prevođenje autorskog stila – studija slučaja „To Kill a Mockingbird“

### *Sažetak*

Ovaj završni rad predstavlja neke od glavnih izazova u polju književnog prevođenja, primarno se fokusirajući na izazov prevođenja autorskog stila. Glavni je cilj ovog rada istražiti kako autorski stil djeluje na čitatelja, i naposljetku kako prevoditelji mogu ponovno stvoriti isti doživljaj tijekom čitanja u prevedenom tekstu, koristeći se vlastitim stilom kada je proces ograničen ciljnim jezikom i kulturom. Prema tome, u ovom će radu biti prikazana detaljna analiza stila Harper Lee u *To Kill a Mockingbird* nasuprot detaljne analize stila Ljiljane Šćurić u prevedenom djelu *Ubiti pticu rugalicu*.

Ključne riječi: književno prevođenje, autorski stil, prevoditeljski stil, Lee Harper, *To Kill a Mockingbird*, Ljiljana Šćurić, *Ubiti pticu rugalicu*