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Faulkner, Фолкнер, Folkner, Fokner:  
A Case-study of Slavic-Anglophone Translatability

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# Faulkner, Фолкнер, Folkner, Fokner: A Case-study of Slavic-Anglophone

## Translatability

The more demarcation, the better, but benevolent demarcation.  
Without border disputes. Cooperation.

Mikhail Bakhtin, "From Notes Made in 1970-71"

### *On Creolized Spaces*

“Does Vladimir Kyrilytch sound very American to you?” (*The Mansion*, 473) Of course it does not. And, let me hasten to add: it should not, even though the character in question belongs to the second generation of Russian emigration in the U.S., and he is, effectively, an American. But the question implies something more than the critique of xenophobia, a dynamics whose particular intensity Faulkner correctly identifies in those who have recently acquired a new cultural identity; it is also more than a mere Cold War debunking; and, it implies even more than a culturally responsible underscoring of the ethnic heterogeneity of the U.S. itself, as argued by Randy Boyagoda at the William Faulkner Society panel at MLA a few years ago (MLA 2002). The question, here I will argue, deals primarily with *language*, with its structural and auratic—thence communicative—properties; through the mediation of these features, the question also concerns naming, identity and cultural identity distinctions, and the set of issues related to their translatability: appropriation and announcement (does it sound American?). It is with this critical cluster in mind that I open my reflections on the cultural translatability of Faulkner’s work into Slavic languages and cultures with the following reversal-question: “Da li ti Viljem Fokner stvarno zvuči slovenski?” (“Does

William Faulkner sound very Slavic to you?”). This question will inform my traversing over a few interrelated fields: the domain of the politics of translation and reception of Faulkner’s work, the activity of translation as a physical act of rendition of Faulkner’s words into a Slavic language, and thereby the act of encoding of the multiple culturally embedded discourses into a novel discourse or a series of discourses;<sup>1</sup> from these observations I will draw some conclusions on translatability as a cultural practice which engages the previous two domains and much more.

This voyage has to start with a compass correction, though. Western scholars interested in the cultural translation of Faulkner’s world (Southern/American/Anglophone) into Slavic sphere customarily limit their scope of enquiry to the translation and critical assessment of the writer’s work in Russia. This is a prevalent, if highly questionable, tendency in the scholarship dealing with Anglophone-Slavic relations in general. But this preponderance of an abstractly homogenized Russia in the discussion of Faulkner’s translatability into Slavic cultures is particularly lamentable, for a number of reasons. First, this approach relies on and unwittingly perpetuates a hegemonizing perception which holds that all Slavic cultures are inevitably derivative of or subsidiary to Russian culture. This scholarly dynamics is an inadvertent result of not only a long tradition and strategic practice of the study of Russian culture, but also of a too easy extension of the Orientalist taxonomy of the centre and the periphery to the Slavic space. It seems that Western scholars have to be constantly reminded of what Ewa Thompson emphasizes in her recent discussion of Russian

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<sup>1</sup> In my use the concept of “discourse” implies: the concrete linguistic aspects of oral, written or otherwise signalled word exchange; its content; its use; its cultural construction; and its historical function as the corroborator of cultural identity and the guardian of memory traces for each cultural group. This is much in alliance with Joel Sherzer’s exhaustive definition of discourse as “the broadest and most comprehensive level of linguistic form, content, and use [...]; the locus of language-culture relationship [...]; an embodiment, a filter, a creator and recreator, and a transmitter of culture” (Sherzer 306), and Seidel’s perception that “[d]iscourse is a site of struggle [...] a semantic space in which social meanings are produced and challenged” (Seidel 44). As such, discourse encompasses the realms of living culture, its re-production and production in a work of art, reception within that culture and outside that culture, and all the instruments of these processes—books/prints, translations, critical reviews.

cultural imperialism and colonialism: while it had no smaller culturally imperialist ambitions than the Western nations customarily assessed in postcolonial critique, “Russia lacked [...] the firm philosophical base [... and...] the authority that comes from having produced a culture that could win a measure of approval among colonized peoples” (Thompson 21-22); thus other Slavic nations continued to develop their cultures and their cultural (and translational) choices relatively independently even under the harshest imperialist conditions, such as those of the Soviet period. Finally, cultural interpretation based on the Russian-Anglophone dichotomy most frequently obliterates the actual heterogeneity of Russian culture itself. For all the unifying ideologems in power, this cultural and linguistic diversity was particularly pronounced in the period of the existence of the Soviet Union, a period which is of particular interest for Faulkner scholars.

Simplified oppositions yield simplified results, we should remember. Thus this plea for a more nuanced understanding of what constitutes “Slavic” cultural space should also caution comparative scholars (and, surprisingly, some Faulkner scholars as well) against the unwitting simplification of Faulkner’s own cultural position as an a) Anglophone, or b) (more narrowly) American, or c) (even more narrowly) Southern writer; and this is part and parcel of what still—despite Edouard Glissant’s knightly attempt to chart a “creolized” South—sometimes informs Faulkner scholarship and, in particular, teaching practice: namely, the arrogation to the cultural position-space from which Faulkner was writing a set of dichotomized cultural categories, the physical and metaphysical absolutes that, in an essentializing interpretative move, we tend to see as the epitomes of the Deep South. What I would like to suggest here is that our interpretation of Faulkner-beyond-the U.S. has to be diversified on the both sides of intercultural quandary: if attentiveness to Faulkner’s borderlands (geographical, cultural, stylistic, psychological) and the divided identity and conceptual aberrance of the American South are interpretative necessities, as suggested by

Richard Gray, Barbara Ladd and others, then the same dynamics should pertain to our interpretation of cultural contexts into which Faulkner's work was translated. Only a critical attention appreciative of the regional, sub-regional, and personal vicissitudes, would allow us to acknowledge that there are few cultural and narrative correlatives between Southern writing and Slavic literatures and yet to pose intriguing questions such as: Why was the first—and still one of the rare—radio-drama rendition of *The Sound and the Fury* aired in Yugoslavia (Radio-Zagreb, Yugoslavia, 1969-70)? What did emphatic translation of Faulkner's work in Czech in the years between 1965 and 1968 have to do with the "Prague Spring"? (Beneš 101). How did Faulkner's repeated praise of Henryk Sienkiewicz's work influence the re-discovery of national writing in Poland (Faulkner "An Introduction for The Sound and the Fury," SF 227, 232; Cowley 115; Hoffman and Vickery 348)? Reversely, if we want to discuss the extent, modi, and circumstances under which Slavic writers such as Dostoevsky, Sienkiewicz, and Turgenev have influenced Faulkner's regional, historical, and universal view of the human condition, we have to envision a similarly "creolized," composite space in Slavic borderlands. Such a perspective tremendously diversifies and thus fruitfully complicates the contact-zone between Faulkner and "Slavic Faulkner," a point to which I will return later.

But this methodological debate against the forceful homogenization of cultural spaces would be only tangential here, were it not for one particular circumstance, not irrelevant for our understanding of Faulkner's reception outside the U.S.: the vast majority of Faulkner's texts have been introduced into Slavic cultural sphere through a translation and critical assessment in a Slavic language other than Russian. This situation was emphatic in the case of Faulkner's "experimental" texts, those which resisted easy cultural appropriation.

## *History of Translation*

It is true that the first text by Faulkner ever to be translated in a Slavic language, the story “That Evening Sun,” appeared in Russian: it was published in 1934 in a surprising “ideological amiss” of Soviet publishers, the anthology *American Twentieth Century Short Story* (Moscow: Khudozhestvenaja Literatura, 1934).<sup>2</sup> But it took more than two decades for a Faulkner book to appear in Russia: the first collection of his short stories in Russian, entitled *Seven Stories*, was published in 1958, and the publication involved great loopholes and multiple strategies on the part of not only the Cold War diplomacy but also Faulkner literary fans in Russia. In the light of this fact, Faulkner’s quixotic refusal to visit the Soviet Union on the occasion of the publication of this edition (*SL* 413) seems either short-sighted or remarkably perceptive. For, American Cold War politics aside, there was indeed no place for Faulkner as a complex, *complete* writer in the Soviet Union of the 1950s and even throughout the 1960s. While three Faulkner’s novels would be translated into Russian in the following decade (*The Mansion* [1961]; *The Hamlet* [1964]; and *The Town* [1965] [Fowler et al. 212-3]), Faulkner was ideologically-cum-formally profiled in the Soviet Union. As Madina Tlostanova notices, Faulkner’s work characteristically bifurcated in Soviet reception into writings that could fit into the dominant ideological scheme and the rigid limits of socio-realist literary and theoretical discourse (and therefore they could be translated and interpreted) and the experimental books that were not to be discussed, translated, or even mentioned openly (Tlostanova 31). One can find no better corroboration of the thesis about the radically *political* implication of Faulkner’s narrative experiments than the fact that *As I*

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<sup>2</sup> While the word about Faulkner’s experimental fiction had reached the Soviet scholars by that time, it had left no significant, or positive trace (one markedly myopic review of *The Sound and the Fury* can be traced; V. Ivasheva’s “The Sound and the Fury: Literature of Decay and Putridity,” published in *Literaturnaja Gazeta* [Literary Gazette] [11 September 1933]). V. Ivasheva’s text highlights the “bourgeois decay” of Faulkner’s art (qtd. in Tlostanova 30).

*Lay Dying* was published in Russian for the first time in 1990. *The Sound and the Fury*, the text which will serve as my case-study in the following discussion, appeared in Russian only in 1973, but it was followed by instantaneous critical praise (Tlostanova 31). Nevertheless, once created, the distorted—or at least unorthodox—image of Faulkner’s artistic achievement has been hard to deconstruct in Russia. Tlostanova emphasizes that, even today, an average educated reader in Russia knows Faulkner much better for the Snopes trilogy (published in the 1960s in the highly popular series The Library of World Literature) than for his short stories or the books such as *The Sound and the Fury* or *As I Lay Dying*.

But Faulkner’s experimental works (as well as his writings in general) appeared much earlier and at a larger scope in “minor” Slavic languages and cultures, from which the originals and even translations would be sometimes smuggled into the Soviet Union as its ultimately closed recipient. Thus the routes of translation and critical assessments of Faulkner’s work in comparative Slavic space had been developed prior to the Russian “discovery” of Faulkner. This situation was, of course, related to the political and cultural history of the region. Specifically, the dynamics of translation was informed by two interlinked factors: the inner geo-cultural division of the region into “dominant,” “peripheral,” and seemingly “peripheral” cultural agents, a constellation that was refigured in the late 1940s (cf. Thompson, Maria Todorova); and, the variables of political and cultural openness of Slavic countries to Western cultural products. One concrete historical event repositioned the recipient-dynamics in Slavic cultural space; it deserves a mention here, for it informs my choice of the Slavic translation to be discussed here.<sup>3</sup> During 1947 friction developed between the Soviet Union and Yugoslavia, a seemingly minor player in the new

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<sup>3</sup> This paper is part of a project which examines the cultural appropriation and misappropriation of Faulkner’s fiction in a wider comparative Slavic space, which includes the discussion of the translation of Faulkner into Russian/Soviet, Czech, Slovakian, Polish, and the cultural and linguistic varieties of former Yugoslavia.

Soviet-imperialist figuration of the East and Central Europe.<sup>4</sup> The friction resulted in overt conflict and eventual split between the Soviet Union and Yugoslavia, and its major consequence was the strengthening of economic and military links between Yugoslavia and the West. Even though the relations between Yugoslavia and the U.S. were at a low ebb at the time (due to the recent shooting down of a U.S. plane which had strayed over Yugoslav territory), the past and present contentions were mended with the emergence of shared political interests, and the U.S. became the major provider of economic, military, and educational aid to Yugoslavia for the next decade. This situation galvanized the U.S.-Yugoslavia cultural exchange. While the thorough knowledge of Russian language and literature had been an intellectual prerequisite in the immediate aftermath of the Second World War, now the major symbolic capital was the knowledge of English and, in particular, the familiarity with American culture, literature and the arts. This telling shift in allegiance entailed the swift translation, scholarly assessment, and inclusion in the general curriculum of all the major works of American literature. As a rule, the works of American literature would be first translated into the major language of the new Yugoslavia—Serbo-Croatian—and, that in one or both of the Serbo-Croatian dialect variants, “ekavica” (spoken in Serbia) and “ijekavica” (spoken in Croatia, Bosnia, and Montenegro) and its two alphabets, Latin and Cyrillic; usually, albeit not exclusively, these works would be only subsequently translated into the languages of smaller nations, Slovenian and Macedonian (Faulkner’s writings were sometimes an exception in that they would be first translated into Slovenian).

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<sup>4</sup> The disagreement concerned the following sensitive areas: economic self-sufficiency of Yugoslavia (promoted by the Yugoslav Five Year Plan); military organization of the Yugoslav army; foreign policies (the Yugoslav-Bulgarian plans of a Balkan federation); and history-writing (the achievements of the Yugoslav partisans in the process of the liberation of Yugoslav lands were downplayed in the Soviet accounts, and the Yugoslavs remembered too clearly that the very involvement of the Red Army in the liberation of the country carried with itself a heavy historical burden of rape, murder and looting). See Singleton 220-226.



The story “That Will Be Fine” was the first Faulkner’s text to be translated into Serbo-Croatian; it appeared in a collection of short stories published in Zagreb in 1941,<sup>5</sup> but at least two scholarly assessments preceded this translation (1937 and 1939, respectively), one of which compared Faulkner, a bit indiscriminately, with Aeschylus and Shakespeare.<sup>6</sup> But a more comprehensive reception occurred only after 1948 and it was noticeably animated by the events surrounding the awarding of the 1949/1950 Nobel Prize: “A Rose for Emily” and “That Evening Sun” were translated and published in, first, two journals (1951), and, then, two books dedicated to contemporary American short fiction (1952); both were also featured in a collection of Faulkner’s short stories (1953). *Light in August* was the first novel by Faulkner to enter Yugoslav cultural space: Slovenian translation of the novel was published in 1952. *Light in August*, *Intruder in the Dust*, and *Sanctuary* were translated into Serbo-Croatian and published successively (in this order, but by different publishers) in 1953, the first in “ijekavica” and the other two in “ekavica;” they were followed by “Knight’s Gambit” and “The Bear” in 1954. “A Rose for Emily” and “Dry September” were published in a separate book accompanied by a lengthy study of Faulkner’s technique (A. Šoljan). The next novel to be translated was *The Sound and the Fury*. Unsurprisingly, the novel generated much critical and translation-related fervour. The first edition of the novel in Serbo-Croatian, “ijekavica” dialect, Latin alphabet, appeared in 1958, translated by the Croat Stjepan Krešić. Spirits were still high when, in 1961, another translation of the same novel appeared, this time done in “ekavica” and published both in Cyrillic and Latin; the translator was the Serb Božidar Marković. While the multiple translations were not entirely uncommon in former Yugoslavia, they would rarely occur within such a short time-span. The need for a new

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<sup>5</sup> William Faulkner, “To će biti prekrasno” [“That Will Be Fine”], *Novele [Novellas]*, Prijevodi iz svjetske književnosti, 3 (Zagreb, 1941). See Eror 131 n. 2.

<sup>6</sup> P. M. “An Account of the Situation in the U.S. and the Recent American Literature,” *Serbian Literary Herald* I (1937): 76-80; E. Kazmer, “The Panorama of Contemporary American Literature,” *XX Century* II [1939]: 211-226.

translation was evident, and was related more to the perceived limitations of the first rendition than the requirement of existence of an “ekavica” version. But at least two further translations of the novel into Serbo-Croatian were to come in the following decades (the 1970s and 1980s). By 1970 all Faulkner’s novels have been translated into Serbo-Croatian, together with almost all stories, interviews, and essays, the achievement that is still to be equalled in other East European languages. The Collected Works in translation appeared in 1977.

It is easy to notice that Faulkner’s translation-reception trajectory in Yugoslavia was different from that in the Soviet Union. The following comparative summary is telling: by the time Faulkner’s *The Sound and the Fury* was first translated into Russian (1973), it had already gone through two different translations into Serbo-Croatian and done into Slovenian; it had been turned into a play and a radio-drama; it had been featured in the University curriculum and taught (if not read) in the unified high school curriculum of Yugoslavia; and it had been intertextually engaged in a number of indigenous literary texts. In just a decade (1950 to 1960), more than 200 articles and books dedicated to Faulkner appeared in Yugoslavia, many of them treating *The Sound and the Fury*. In contradistinction to the critical reception of Faulkner’s work in the Eastern bloc, Yugoslav scholarly accounts were characterized by marked interest in the questions of technique. Faulkner’s style was examined in a variety of ways and at great length, each article, book, or series of articles also critically assessing the achievements of Yugoslav translations of Faulkner’s work. The favoured topic of the 1950s Yugoslav criticism was the stream of consciousness and the indebtedness of Faulkner’s symbolic-associative textual procedures to naturalist tradition; the 1960s brought about an awareness of the complexity of dialogic structure in Faulkner’s writings and the research focused on what was perceived as Faulkner’s search for the *mot juste*; the 1970s saw the first assessments of polyphonic structuring of Faulkner’s texts

(coincident with the Yugoslav early reception of Mikhail Bakhtin's theories); and the scholarship of the 1980s placed emphasis—in tune with the Western assessments—on the questions of gender, cultural, and racial identity, but assessed from a markedly formalist/close reading perspective. This pre-eminence of the “experimental Faulkner” in Yugoslav publishing and scholarship was due to political factors, this time domestic. Like all other Slavic countries, Yugoslav lands had gone through a period of vibrant modernist activities in the 1920s and the 1930s. But Yugoslav modernist “rebels” remained vocal in the post-war period, indeed they frequently found themselves in comfortable political and artistic positions in their “new Yugoslavia.” Once a margin, they now dictated the cultural taste of the politically reorganized country, in a way which was clearly corroborative of the political and cultural distancing from the *sots-realist* art and literature of the Soviet Union: formal experimentation was cherished and highly valued. But when the Yugoslav proponents of “new realism” and those of “modernism” clashed in a number of literary debates in the 1960s, Faulkner's name was frequently invoked by both sides.

Another phenomenon in Yugoslav scholarship is worth noticing here, for it fruitfully illuminates Faulkner's cultural translatability into Slavic space. Uninhibited by the burdensome “imperialist” need to evaluate Faulkner in its own cultural terms and in relation to its own writers (such as we may detect in the uneasy attempts to compare Faulkner and Sholokhov in the Soviet scholarship of the 1970s [see Tlostanova 31]), Yugoslav literary criticism usually perceived Faulkner as a writer of regional vision, torn between segregational practices and assimilationist policies which had nothing to do with Tito's Yugoslavia (the political short-sightedness of this perception was to be discovered only too late!). Thus the cultural rapport with Faulkner's text was seen as naturally difficult, and possible only when it involved the relegation of readers' attention to the level of individual psychology, a sphere where the universal topics of human ordeal, loss, split, inconsistency, and temporal impasse

could be examined and then thrown back and re-interpreted in the regional setting.<sup>7</sup> (While this critical approach has its evident limitations, one may argue that this is still one of the most effective ways to approach Faulkner from an entirely different cultural setting.) This is not to say that Faulkner's work was assessed negatively in Yugoslav reading—on the contrary. But for a country for which racism happened “somewhere else,” and where an awareness of the comparable structure of ethnic conflict was deliberately obscured in even the most profound accounts of Faulkner's work, the writer could only be perceived as an intimate foreigner—one who talks about what we intimately strive to address but prefer not to deal with or recognize in our vicinity. “An intimate foreigner:” this compound character, I suggest, may help us understand not only Faulkner's reception in Eastern Europe, but also some general dynamics of cultural translatability.

The Yugoslav “translation” of Faulkner is particularly significant because, due to its political and geo-cultural strategic positioning—bordering the Western countries such as Italy and Austria, and the Eastern bloc states such as Bulgaria Romania, and Hungary; assuming a non-aligned political and cultural position between the two blocs—Yugoslavia served as a conduit for the reception of Western products in general (from jeans to literature) and Faulkner's work in particular, in Eastern Europe. The early translations of Faulkner's fiction into Serbo-Croatian and Slovenian played an exceptionally important role in the dissemination of Faulkner's work in Eastern and Central Europe. Accordingly, the translation of Faulkner's *The Sound and the Fury* into Serbo-Croatian will serve as a case-study in the following section, a study which aims to indicate some general problems arising in the translation of Faulkner's work into Slavic languages—and yet avoid the forceful homogenization of Slavic space.

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<sup>7</sup> A curious exception presents the perceptive review of *The Sound and the Fury* by the scholar and later writer Danilo Kiš (Kiš 1959). In the social background of the novel Kiš recognizes the split between the grounding “European” and overlaid “Southern” response to racial interrelating, a topic which would be picked up with such success in Glissant's *Faulkner, Mississippi* some forty years later (Glissant 2000 [1996]).

So let us attend here to the question with which we have commenced this enquiry:  
how does Faulkner’s text sound in Serbo-Croatian?

*Language and its Vicissitudes: Faulkner in Serbo-Croatian*

In this comparative translation exercise I will use a set of familiar and easy-to-locate sentences, taken from the beginning of each section of *The Sound and the Fury*. These sentences/narrative moves are understood to be particularly adequate for such a practice because they inaugurate each of the four discourses employed in the novel. The translation into Serbo-Croatian used for this purpose is Božidar Marković’s “ekavica” translation (1961), which is usually seen as a rendition slightly superior to the earlier, “ijekavica” translation by Stjepan Krešić (1958). In 1977 the novel was translated again in “ijakevica” Serbo-Croatian by Nada Šoljan.

**Study One: April Seventh, 1928**

1.1	Through the fence, between the curling flower spaces, I could see them hitting.
1.1t	Kroz ogradu, između isprepletanih vreža, mogao sam da ih vidim kako udaraju loptu.
1.2	They were coming toward where the flag was and I went along the fence.
1.2t	Išli su prema zastavici, a ja sam pošao duž ograde.
1.3	“Listen at you, now.” Luster said. “Aint you something, thirty three years old, going on that way. After I done went all the way to town to buy you that cake.” (all quotes, <i>SF</i> 3)
1.3t	“Vidiš, molim te.” kazao je Laster. “Zar je to lepo, imaš trideset i tri godine, a tako se ponašaš! I pošto sam išao čak do varoši da ti kupim taj kolač.” (all quotes, <i>Buka i bes</i> 57)

This series of sentences discloses a curious blend of correspondence and incongruence between the original and its rendition in Serbo-Croatian—as, after all, every translation is bound to reveal. These variants result from the translator’s choice as much as from the linguistic properties of Serbo-Croatian. Some of them are of particular importance, as they reconfigure Benjy’s discourse and the reader’s interpretation of his perception.

1.1-1t Due to the difference in the formation of grammar tenses, the translation is much longer than the original (even though the translation is curtailed by the non-existence of articles in Serbo-Croatian and other Slavic languages). Here I will leave aside the appropriateness of the choice of words, which, in this particular translation, is flawed—e.g. “curling” is rendered “isprepleteno,” literally “interwoven,” certainly not the word Benjy would use—because this aspect is, in all contexts, the result of translator’s personal verbal preferences. Instead I will focus on those aspects of the translation that were necessitated by some intrinsic characteristics of Slavic languages. In translation, the first sentence of Faulkner’s novel contains the implied object of hitting (“ball”—“lopta,” Acc. “loptu;” also inserted in the translations into Slovenian, Russian, and Polish), and object which is conspicuously absent in the original sentence. For Faulkner, the absence of the word “ball” is not a mere contrivance to postpone the narrative assembling of the chronotope; it is also an early marker of Benjy’s limited verbal capacity, which introduces Benjy’s world as a container of more or less constrained linguistic patterns rather than a system of playful symbolic associations. One important effect of the activity of translation should be noted here. Contrary to the scholarly consensus about Benjy’s discourse—that it is somehow based on a perception prior to or attendant to the formation of consciousness-as-language/order (see, for one, Kartiganer 8-12)—the “Slavic Benjy,” by virtue of being “translated,” seems to master sentences and meanings much more skilfully, adding the correct objects in syntactic

gaps, and using the appropriate tenses and inflections of verbs. This is due to the nature of Slavic languages as heavily dependent on the conjugation of verbs and the case-declensions of nouns and adjectives. Within the Slavic linguistic context, then, the child's language habitually displays errors in the conjugation and inflection of words, but the first symptom of limited linguistic and perceptual capacities is usually the adherence to some patterned phrases which have correct verb-case relation on the level of clause but are markedly displaced when put in the larger whole, i.e., sentence. Benjy's discourse in these introductory sentences (as well as later in the novel) displays none of these features, as the translator was torn between the demand for accuracy (which would be to mimic Faulkner's rendition of an idiot's talk) and linguistic possibilities of the recipient language. The use of past tense is, likewise, highly restricted with the Slavic-language speakers of limited verbal and perceptual capacities, since the generation of a sentence in any of the past tenses consumes much mental and verbal energy (cf. "I could see them"—"mogao sam da ih vidim"). The translator's decision to remain true to the writer's strategic use of the past tense renders Benjy's talk and his temporal perception more advanced and more coherent in Serbo-Croatian than in the original text.

1.2-2t The translation of this sentence is shorter, mainly due to the fact that "where the flag was" had to be rendered as simply "flag" ["zastava," dim. "zastavica"]; the choice was a good one, for, while "where the flag was" aptly captures a slow sharpening of the focus in children and those with limited perceptual abilities in English, the potential cumbersome rendition "tamo gde je bila zastavica" in Serbo-Croatian (and this would sound verisimilar in other Slavic languages) would imply the expenditure of much (apparently non-existent) mental energy. But I would like to draw attention to another deviation of the original text in translation. The translator uses a diminutive form of the word "flag"—"zastavica" [lit. "a little flag"]—as it is semantically appropriate here. Slavic languages display a strong predisposition for using diminutives in everyday speech, a tendency which is infrequent in

English. Nowhere is that more pronounced than in Russian, where there is almost no sentence without a diminutive, and where many syntactic constructions utilize the diminutives of diminutives. Hence, in Russian translation, the introductory paragraph excerpted above contains more than ten diminutives. The use of diminutives is, of course, strongly linked to the perception of the world or the sense of place—one of the key topics of Faulkner's *The Sound and the Fury*. While this theme deserves a lengthier discussion, let me indicate here only the most conspicuous effects of this “diminutive-work:” as a consequence of the prolific use of diminutives, particular physical and cultural objects in the novel lose their grandeur and become more intimate in translation; in turn, these “small” fictional objects augment the narrative space, that is, the world; the latter becomes even greater, more ominous, and sometimes more abstract than in the original text.

1.3-3t The translation of Luster's speech is a prime example of the uncanny clashes between Slavic and Southern (and, here, specifically, African American Southern) discourses. The translator did his best to preserve the regional-subcultural colour of African American speech. For this purpose, he used a Serbian regional dialect (rural speech). This sociolect bears marks of a world imbued with oral storytelling; the descriptive and proverbial features of this discourse contribute to the excellent rendition of Dilsey's speech later in the novel. Yet, this Slavic counterpart is also exhaustive and precise, in contrast to the semantics of gap which characterizes the southern African-American dialect; the conversation in Serbian rural dialect unfolds monologically (i.e., through a series of monologues that may or may not end with a question) rather than dialogically. While this is partly also the characteristics of the speech of Faulkner's African-American characters, the pulse of exchange in the original is much more vibrant, as semantic gaps incite responsive actions. The translator, most unfortunately, attempts to make up for this difference in tempo by introducing an alterative punctuation throughout (here, an exclamation mark instead of a period). Only partly in tune



with the requirements of the idiom, the translation also shifts the sensory apparatus implied in Luster’s “listen at you, no” into “vidiš, molim te” [lit. “see, please” or “see, for goodness sake...”], and, as final marker of the translator’s resistance to experimentation, the ungrammatical expression “done went” is levelled into a grammatical one. A criticism potentially based on the translation of this paragraph runs the risk of erroneous conclusions about the modality and complexity of Luster’s speech, and the Southern African American sociolect in the novel in general.

### Study Two: June Second, 1910

2.1	When the shadow of the sash appeared on the curtains it was between seven and eight o’clock and then I was in time again, hearing the watch.
2.1t	Kada se senka od prozorskog okna pojavila na zavesama, bilo je između sedam i osam časova i onda sam ponovo počeo misliti na vreme, i slušao sam sat.
2.2	It was Grandfather’s and when Father gave it to me he said I give you the mausoleum of all hope and desire; it’s rather excruciating-ly apt that you will use it to gain the reducto absurdum of all human experience which can fit your individual needs no better than it fitted his or his father’s. (48)
2.2t	To je bio dedin sat i kad mi ga je otac davao rekao mi je, predajem ti grobnicu svake nade i želje; bolno je ali sasvim verovatno da ćeš zahvaljujući njemu doći do svesti o ništavilosti sveg što je ljudsko i da on tvoje lične potrebe neće zadovoljiti nimalo bolje no što je zadovoljio potrebe tvog oca i tvog dede. (127)

2.1-1t Apart from a wrongly handled rendition of the crucial phrase “I was in time again,” this sentence curiously lacks a modal differentiation from Benjy’s speech, so that the comparable images (and Benjy’s and Quentin’s comparable visual-perceptive positions) of

“fence, between the curling flower spaces” and “the shadow of the sash” on the curtains come to prominence. The unnecessary omission of the present participle renders Serbo-Croatian version of the same sentence slower-paced.

2.2-2t This is one of the most ineptly translated sentences in Serbo-Croatian edition of the novel, showcasing in particular the translator’s reluctance to engage with resistance discourse. The rendition misses a number of points relevant for the interpretation and, specifically, cultural interpretation of the novel. The nouns “grandfather” and “father” are given in lower case (this is consistent in this translation and many other Slavic translations). While this is a regular (and valid) practice in the translation of many Anglophone novels, it is particularly detrimental for the understanding of the issue of patrilineage in Faulkner’s novel. The translator has also decided to obliterate the traces of Father’s speech—thus the unusual hyphen in “excruciating-ly” is omitted and the phrase “excruciatingly apt” is translated by “bolno je ali sasvim verovatno” [lit. “it is painful but pretty probable”]; furthermore, the ironic undertones attendant to Father’s corruption of the Latin phrase *reduction ad absurdum* vanish in an elaborate, poetic attempt to translate both English context and Latin phrase itself: “svesti o ništavilosti sveg što je ljudsko” [lit. “of the awareness of the nothingness of everything human;” mark, also, the poetic elision of “svega” into “sveg”]. The ventriloquistic, cross-temporal, “loophole” discourse (as Bakhtin would have it) is elevated into a grandiose, homophonic litany in translation. The latter may give an accurate picture of Father’s—and Faulkner’s—dismay at chronological time, but it occludes the different temporal planes and focal positions implied (the son, the father [and the grandfather]), as well as the ironic relation between them. My work with the translations of Faulkner’s *The Sound and the Fury* into other Slavic languages invariably reveals the preponderance of an elevated tragic mode which hardly gives justice to the cultural and modal vibrancy of Faulkner’s text (especially when Faulkner tries to render the distinction between conversational and literary

discourse minimal). Yet, this almost universal tragic mode—which frequently takes form of long narratives about suffering and absurdity—seems to be characteristic of Slavic speech genres.

As anthropologists, sociologists and linguists agree, every society has its own system of speech genres which informs the production as well as challenging of cultural meanings and values in the given society (see, among others, Hymes, Seidel). We may add that this system of discursive genres by necessity influences literary production—literary production thus facilitates both the confirmation/reinforcement of prevalent discursive genres in a given society, and the fabrication of resistance genres (one such resistance genre may be recognized in modernist experimentation). Nancy Ries has recently argued that the paradigmatic Russian discursive genres (i.e. those modes of communication which follow generic patterns and deploy a distinct and repetitive stock of symbolic referents) in the period of Perestroika were the “expressions of hopelessness and despair” (Ries 18). With some level of adjustment, this insight can be applied not only to the Russian language in general, but also to many, if not all, other Slavic languages; the prominence of lament-like modes of communication can easily be detected in almost all Slavic languages, and this mode is particularly prominent in Serbo-Croatian written genres. Melodramatic and elevated, such genres “[rehearse] an ideology about the natural or inescapable dichotomies between high and low, rich and poor, powerful and powerless” (Ries 19). Thus the deployment of the tone of such genres may be seen as particularly apt (if semantically questionable) in the translation of the texts or portions of texts that engage universal existential problems, such as absurdity of human endeavour in the face of death, the conflict between chronological and private time, or, indeed, the issue of racial intermingling and transgenerational guilt.

### Study Three: April Sixth, 1928

3.1	Once a bitch always a bitch, what I say.
3.1t	Jednom kučka, zauvek kučka, kažem.
3.2	I says you're unlucky if her playing out of school is all that worries you. (113)
3.2t	Tvrđim da si srećna ako je njeno bežanje od škole sve što te zabrinjava. (231)

3.1-1t Jason's invasive appropriation of discursive space finds a good correlative in Serbo-Croatian, as the translation engages the shared mythic-symbolic (and misogynist) modality of the term "bitch" ("kučka") and the rare opportunity to utilize to good effect the frequent omission of verbs in Serbo-Croatian. However, Marković unnecessarily decelerates and pacifies Jason's discourse by the introduction of literary punctuation (comma between the two juxtaposed clauses).

3.2-2t Jason's section is generally well-translated throughout indubitably because of the modal proximity between this discourse and the frequently emphatic and assertive modes of Serbo-Croatian communication. This section is fluid, energetic, and helpfully gesticulative in translation. Yet, in keeping with his general intention of "making Faulkner" more "literary," the translator chooses not to inflect Jason's speech, and the ungrammatical "I says" is rendered through a grammatically correct "Tvrđim" [lit. "I assert"], although one could easily find correlatives in Serbo-Croatian, given that this language, like all Slavic languages, is based on verb conjugation. But one general linguistic trend interferes with the accurate translation of the mode of this section: the tendency of Slavic languages to omit the subject of the sentence. Jason's section is saturated with the word "I" (and "eye") in English, but Slavic languages do not tolerate such prominence of personal pronouns in the subject-position. This narrative strategy poignantly and comically underscores Jason's attempts to reinforce a coherent monological perspective, and it is only to be regretted that none of the consulted

translations makes Jason’s “I-s” as visible as they are in English. Enfeebled by the syntactic withdrawal of the subject, Slavic renditions of Jason’s section nevertheless show great inventiveness in devising alternative strategies to render the character’s self-centredness; one should understand Marković’s tactical use of “assertive” verbs in this light.

#### **Study Four: April Eight, 1928**

4.1	The day dawned bleak and chill, a moving wall of grey light out of the northeast which, instead of dissolving into moisture, seemed to disintegrate into minute and venomous particles, like dust that, when Dilsey opened the door of the cabin and emerged, needled laterally into her flesh, precipitating not so much a moisture as a substance partaking of the quality of thin, not quite congealed oil.
4.1t	Dan se rađao turoban i hladan. Pokretni zid sive svetlosti sa severoistoka koji, umesto da se razide u izmaglicu, kao da se raspadao u majušne i otrovne čestice, slične prašini, kad je Dilsi otvorila vrata od svoje kućice i pojavila se na pragu, i koje kao da su joj se postrance zabadale u lice, podsećajući ne toliko na izmaglicu koliko na sićušna zrnca, ne sasvim stisnutog ulja.

4.1-1t The markedly “written” sentence which announces the presence of the omniscient narrator’s perspective in the fourth section of the novel finds an appropriate, if unusual, rendition in Serbo-Croatian. The translator separates the first clause from the rest of the sentence, in effect semantically separating “day” from “a moving wall of grey light,” but the remainder runs smoothly and poetically (even though with a few unwarranted diminutives). The effortless progression through Faulkner’s convoluted sentence is due to the syntactic

flexibility of Serbo-Croatian. This flexibility—which is common to all Slavic languages—results from the developed system of cases: there are no fewer than seven cases in Serbo-Croatian, and they effect a complex declension of nouns, adjectives, personal pronouns and personal adjectives. The system of cases makes Slavic languages malleable, generative and manipulable: the subject and the object may trade places without any disturbance in meaning, and there are at least three different ways in which each sentence can be structured (this goes for sentences with three constituents; the more constituents, the more, virtually inexhaustible, ways to structure the sentence). Thus Slavic cultures place special value on linguistic play and innovation. This condition has a curious consequence for Faulkner's text: as a rule, Faulkner's syntactic bravados in *The Sound and the Fury* are translated with remarkable precision and poetic force, but they are "felt" less intensely in Slavic translation than when one reads the text in English. The effect of Faulkner's free-floating sentences is diminished. In particular, Faulkner's syntactic experiments with focalization are most frequently muted in the generally easy shift of perspectives in Slavic sentences, even when translators do their best to preserve the experimental character of the original sentence, as is the case with Marković here. In turn, Faulkner sometimes gains in poetic and lyric qualities—where it is welcome as much as where it is not needed.

In sum, this close inspection has revealed a number of problems in the translation of Faulkner's artistic language and his discursive and cultural experience into Serbo-Croatian discursive-cultural space. The variegations and "losses" are occasioned by differences in syntax (the fixed sentence-structure of English versus the free sentence-structure of Slavic languages), lexical habits (the frequent use of diminutives in Slavic languages), grammar (Slavic systems of declension and conjugation are far more complex than Anglophone, i.e., Germanic ones), and the general linguistic behaviour (the prominence of active semantic structures in Slavic languages, the elision of the subject, etc.). Unsurprisingly, however, the

greatest problems are evidenced in the translation of regional dialects and sociolects. Faulkner's concerted effort to "transcribe" the experience of American South for his readers (his pervasive use of localisms, dialect variants, expletives and paraseantic aspects of language, as well as the different social, cultural and intertextual echoes that permeate the novel) almost disappears in translation. A semantic deficit is always involved in translating Faulkner's vision of the South into another cultural space, precisely because much of that vision is hidden *within* language itself; the recipient Slavic culture will inevitably have a restricted access to the Southern language-made-culture. In the face of such (seemingly?) insurmountable adversities, Marković's distinctive choice not to temper with literary language at all is understandable—even though Faulkner's formal innovation is curtailed in the process, too.

At the same time, we have found that some discursive genres and tonalities which are used hazardingly are more than adequate for the translation of local discourse/experience; that there is sometimes a "mismatching" which productively illuminates both texts (the original and the translation) and—both cultures. This is the case with some aspects of the Serbian rural discourse used for the rendition of African-American speech in the novel. This discourse, suffused with the sense of immediacy and familiarity which the traces of orally transmitted material impart on the text, is particularly appropriate for the translation of African-American oral culture into Slavic terms. However, the same discourse has been found poor in the rendition of the dialogic properties of the southern African-American dialect.

*Alterations of Frames: From Translation to Cultural Translation*

When read in parallax, a literary work and its translation evince an intricate fusion of semantic parity and disparity.<sup>8</sup> But semantic problems are also problems of space, of its cultural-symbolic significance, and its translation into other spaces—discursively and imaginatively greater, smaller, hotter, colder. Thus semantic dis-parity is both part and the actual embodiment of the simultaneous cultural translatability and untranslatability of texts; Translation abides in the interstices of what we can compare/share interculturally and what we cannot: the interstices which glorify, if anything, the unmanageability and complexity of the world. Their content is thus both shared and distinct: the topics such as human realization through a loss (historical and personal) wherever the loss may occur, or the sultry, or sun-drenched uniqueness of Faulkner's South and the windy-frosting distinctiveness of Dostoevsky's Petersburg.

In his seminal essay "On Translatability," Wolfgang Iser closely links the activities of language translation and culture translation and proposes that each act of translation implies an interaction in which the difference existing have to be acted out (Iser 13); such an interrelation presupposes that a "foreign culture is not simply subsumed under one's own frame of reference; instead, the very frame is subjected to alterations in order to accommodate what does not fit" (Iser 5). The result is variegation in the recipient culture, but also the reconfiguration of the transmitting culture. Faulkner-puritans may bemoan the losses in translation which we have detected above, but these are welcome losses, if we are to believe Iser: they are markers of a productive refiguration of the recipient culture by Faulkner's narrative itself, and also those of the text's "domestic" work.

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<sup>8</sup> But, for a powerful account of the intrinsic value of disparity in translation, see Walter Benjamin's seminal "The Task of the Translator."



The losses in translation function as necessary demarcations between cultures and, as we shall see soon, within cultures. Indeed, there is something to be learned from Mikhail Bakhtin's insistence on remaining "outside," "different," "distinct" and yet engaging with cultural interaction. This "culturologist's" assessment of interrelation (mark "culturology" as a science emblematic of Slavic scholarly space!) is grounded in uneasiness with conflation and homogenization that characterize much of our contemporary multicultural thought and translational practices:

There exists a very strong, but one-sided and thus untrustworthy, idea that in order better to understand a foreign culture, one must enter into it, forgetting one's own, and view the world through the eyes of this foreign culture. . . . Of course, a certain entry as a living being into a foreign culture . . . is a necessary part of the process of understanding it; but if this were the only aspect, it would be merely duplication and would not entail anything new or enriching. *Creative understanding* does not renounce itself, its own place in time, its own culture; and it forgets nothing. After all, a person cannot actually see or make sense of even his own exterior appearance as whole, no mirrors or photographs will help him, only others can see and understand his authentic exterior, thanks to their spatial outsideness and thanks to the fact that they are *others*. . . . In the realm of culture, outsideness is the most powerful lever of understanding. (Bakhtin 6-7)

Caryl Emerson is correct when she interprets Bakhtin's culturology as premised on a series of separatist prerequisites: "outsideness, boundaries, *noncoincidence*, and a love for difference are the first [Bakhtin's] prerequisites for creatively understanding another person or another culture—and for being creatively understood by them" (Emerson 111). Bakhtin's model of exotopic intercultural relation is, however, premised upon the existence of genuine inquisitiveness about the other, and about the difference itself (111). To activate this

curiosity—the major lever of creative intercultural understanding—one has first to establish a system of differences.<sup>9</sup> Importantly for my project, Bakhtin’s thought on transcultural encounters is analogous to his “ethnography” of speech genres and, furthermore, to his theory of the speech act: all of these theories postulate that we can understand the other only from an exotopic, “outside” position, but also that the other can understand itself only in interaction with this estranged perspective of exotopic observers. In all its variants, this model presupposes an irretrievable boundary/differentiation which must be both confirmed and respected: Faulkner’s South shares neither discursive and literary genres nor cultural experience with the diverse Slavic cultures, and we are best advised—at least according to Bakhtin—*not* to conceive of them in a universalist, “the same humanity” perspective. While an amount of shared perspective is necessary—as the lever of our emotional attachment to literary works from different cultures—it carries with itself the danger of obliteration (as a rule, the obliteration of those aspects of the work which do not conform to our homogenized vision of a foreign or our own culture). Yet, the active encounter of these two cultures—their *transculturation*—can serve both cultural spaces in their attempts to understand themselves and further to develop their respective cultural products.

This transcultural encounter takes place in an artistic, ideologically shaped contact zone—zone of translation—which is a site that hosts understanding and creative interrelating as much as conflict and coercion.<sup>10</sup> The contact zone between Faulkner’s “South” and Slavic

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<sup>9</sup> While this may be seen as contradicting the common perception of Bakhtin as a dialogical thinker, it presents, I would argue, no real cancelling of Bakhtin’s concept of dialogue. Rather, it invites us to rethink the notion of intercultural dialogue itself as an activity that does not only respect the difference but also recognizes that without difference there would be no encounter whatsoever.

<sup>10</sup> According to Mary Louise Pratt, the contact zone is “the space of colonial encounters, the space in which peoples geographically and historically separated come into contact with each other and establish ongoing relations, usually involving conditions of coercion, radical inequality, and intractable conflict.” The “*transculturation*” in such zones, then, marks the ways in which “subordinated or marginalized groups select and invent from materials transmitted to them by a dominant or metropolitan culture” (Pratt 6). Here I utilize Pratt’s conceptualization, but I importantly modify the concept of the “contact-zone” itself so as to account for the encounters of cultures which are not necessarily subject to imperialist relationship, indeed those whose encounters occur only in the abstract (and yet social) realm of translation.

cultural space(s) is most fruitfully explored, I suggest, if we take as the premise that each of the involved cultures is inherently heterogeneous, and that at multiple levels. In this way, the interpretation of the contact zone is productively complicated, too: rather than the supportive site for bidirectional or, worse, unidirectional translation, the Southern/Slavic contact zone becomes a complex system of interactions between mutually inquisitive cultures where multifarious identificatory dynamics intersect, clash or meet, at various points and altitudes; the dynamics which make us always comprehensive of both incommensurability (foreignness) and association (intimacy) between our different spaces. The thus envisioned zone of Southern U.S.—Slavic cultural translation would become what both Iser and Homi Bhabha hope an ideal contact zone to be—an “interstitial passage between fixed identifications,” opening up “the possibility of a cultural hybridity that entertains difference without an assumed or imposed hierarchy” (Bhabha 4).

To access all the reflections and refractions implied in an intercultural exchange of cultures as distant as the Deep South and the Slavic North may be difficult, but it is not impossible, as I have demonstrated elsewhere.<sup>11</sup> Yet, what is the use of such an exploration for Faulkner studies? I should like to close this paper with a further gloss on Iser’s notion on translatability. According to Iser, the question of translatability is vital for understanding both encounters *between* cultures and interactions *within* cultures (Iser 5), cohesive or separational, amicable or coercive. I suggest that the examination of the translatability of Faulkner’s text into distant languages and cultures may help us understand the historical and present position of Faulkner’s text within American society itself, its function as a point of fissure in the interactive field of diverse communities and clashing and coexistent cultural planes.

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<sup>11</sup> Sanja Bahun, “The Value of the Oblique (Notes on Relational Funhouses, Historical Occlusions, and Serbian Surrealism),” in *The Avant-garde and the Margin: New Territories of Modernism* (Cambridge Scholars Press, 2006).

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