Fall 2011

Review Of "Cyclops" By R. Marinković, Translated By V. Stojiljković

Sibelan E.S. Forrester
Swarthmore College, sforres1@swarthmore.edu

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phrases. The Zapolje doctor warns Kačur against “flip-flopping,” another contemporary deems Kačur a “geek,” and Cox has him using the term “goof-ball” in a conversation with his wife. Similarly, to imagine a nineteenth-century Slovene intellectual telling a friend “it is what it is” strains credulity. On the other hand, this is often the most difficult question for a translator: how should a nineteenth-century Slovene, or Russian, or Pole address twenty-first-century readers, so as to keep them engaged and determined to read on? In the main, Cox has arrived at a workable compromise overall.

Martin Kačur is a great achievement, a gift to culturally savvy, but linguistically challenged speakers of English. It has given voice to a multi-faceted Slovene writer in a world in which he was heretofore unknown. One hopes that Cox and other gifted historians and linguists will produce many more translations from Cankar and other talented East European writers in the coming years.

Brigit Farley, Washington State University—Tri-cities


This is the first translation of Ranko Marinković’s Modernist novel Kiklop [1965] into English, but it is worth the long wait. The volume emerges from the happy confluence of a new series of translations of international literature, a richly creative rendition into English by Vlada Stojiljković, and careful editorial intervention by Ellen Elias-Bursać. Marinković (1913–2001) was well known as a poet and dramatic author; Cyclops was his masterpiece, a largely autobiographical treatment of the eve of World War II, as the war raging in other parts of Europe moved inexorably closer to royal Yugoslavia.

The novel’s plot is filtered through and largely motivated by the consciousness of its protagonist, Melkior Tresić, a theater critic and intellectual born in Dalmatia but now living in Zagreb. Melkior is a Rodion Raskolnikov without the murder plot, half Leopold Bloom and half Underground Man, a flaneur who carries on mental conversations with authors he has read, constantly buttonholed and mortified by loquacious friends and strangers, preoccupied with art and sex. Melkior starves himself in hopes of evading the draft and dreads his army summons, which does not arrive until page 335. This novel’s length puts it in Russian company, and it frequently refers to Dostoevsky as well as Gogol and Tolstoy, plus other world authors from Cervantes and Shakespeare through Dickens into the novel’s present: Melkior’s brief experience of army service evokes Krleža, Hašek, and Heller. His thoughts are a tissue of literary allusions, and foreign words (Arabic, English, French, German, Latin, etc.) are sprinkled throughout the text. Melkior undergoes periods of very persuasively described madness (a camouflage of pretense, or a genuine psychological disintegration?), while other characters attempt to brainwash or manipulate him for their own mysterious purposes. The city of Zagreb, with its monuments, advertisements and popular culture, surfaces regularly from Melkior’s imagination to set the scene.

Translating Marinković’s richly ornamental, stylistically inventive text demands great linguistic virtuosity, and Stojiljković rises to the task. (Translator of numerous important works from English into Serbian, he died in 2002, one year after Marinković.) The translation comes strikingly close to the original text’s brilliance and verbal density. In some passages the translator could not convey the richness of the original, for example in this evocation of the city tram’s sounds: “Vozi, vozi... jedan tram, jedam vaj, tram-tram... vaj-vaj tram-vaj, na krovu mu lira svira vaj, a tockovi udaraju tram-tram,” with its dense onomatopoeia and the internal rhyme “lira svira,” is rendered in a more pedestrian way as “Rolling on, rolling on... one tram,

Gabriela Zapolska (1857–1921), the pseudonym of Maria Gabriela Stefania Korwin-Piotrowska, was an actress, dramatist, and short story writer. Together with Eliza Orzeszkowa, Zapolska represents the small but vigorous face of women’s writing present during the artistic movement now generally known as *Młoda Polska*. The author of some thirty performance texts, Zapolska published her first short story in 1881. Her first collection, *Akwarele* [Watercolors], appeared in 1885, but was met coldly by conservative critics. *The Morality of Mrs. Dulska* [Moralność Pani Dulskiej], Zapolska’s classic naturalist comedy written in 1906, remains the most popular of her plays and a staple of the Polish stage. In fact, the behavior of the character Pani Dulska spoke so strongly to the public that it engendered the pejorative term “dul-