

Book Reviews

Katalin Kürtösi, editor. *Canada in Eight Tongues. Translating Canada in Central Europe/Le Canada en huit langues. Traduire le Canada en Europe central*. Brno: Masaryk University, 2012. 248 pages.

This book, edited by Katalin Kürtösi of the University of Szeged, is a collective effort of eight Central European nations' scholars. The volume contains 25 articles regarding the dissemination and reception of Canadian literature in translation in Central Europe. Scholars from Hungary, Czech Republic, Slovakia, Slovenia, Croatia, Serbia, Romania, and Bulgaria, specializing in Canadian Studies, shed light on Canada's literary and cultural output, as Kürtösi explains, in order for a "wider readership to obtain information about the presence of the Canadian imagination and knowledge and writing about that country in the Central European region" (9). Canada's official languages, English and French, unite eight languages of Central Europe. A loose historico-political periodization exposes readers to the Canadian poetry, prose, theatre, film, music, women authors, anthologies, theory, and criticism that have become part of the translated canon.

There is a general lack of representation and recognition of Canadian literature and culture globally. The reason behind this phenomenon may be found in Canada's self image, as David Staines explains in the introductory article of the volume: "Canada has never had a tradition of acknowledging itself as a cultural entity; it has never had a tradition of acknowledging its own excellence" (13). Canada's own cultural inferiority has to do with its colonial legacy whereby it sees itself as dependent or even stunted by British and American cultural influences. Writing in a "Canadian way" (Leacock in Staines 15) was considered "second-rate" (16) until not long ago, and thus "seeking external approval for their literature" (16) occupied the attention of homegrown writers and scholars while the importing of contemporary literature and culture from Britain, the US, and France, and classics in translation from elsewhere was the norm. For a Hungarian — in Canada, Hungary and around the world — the issue of national literature considered as second-rate is almost incomprehensible, since traditionally the poet, author and artist are the voice of the nation. Staines describes the development of Canadian literature and culture as it has been growing to recognize itself through a process of what I propose to grasp by the sociological concept of the 'looking-glass self'. The Ameri-

can sociologist, Charles Horton Cooley defines the 'looking-glass self' as, first, we *imagine* how we will appear to others, then we *imagine* how other people judge what we *think* we present, and lastly, we *develop* a self-concept, which is enhanced if we think that others' evaluation of us is favourable, but diminished if unfavourable. Canada sees itself through this process of imagination transferred back to it through others' eyes. The others' eyes are not of the vestiges of colonialism in this present example, but those of Central Europe, with affirming curiosity.

From Hungary, five essays by noted scholars offer a tapestry of approaches and interpretations of Canadian literature and culture. Anikó Adám engages the literature of Quebec, poignantly written in French, and she reflects on the limited diffusion of the province's output marking it as 'rare et précieuse' (61). While Quebecois plays have been making tracks on Hungarian theatre stages since the early 1990s, Adám argues for the creation of necessarily favourable conditions by publishers and literary associations in Hungary for the added propagation of Quebec's literature. The topic of Canadian plays on Hungarian stages is further discussed in Katalin Kürtösi's essay in English. Kürtösi highlights the repeated success and adaptation of Michel Tremblay's *Les Belles-Soeurs* [*Sógornők*] across the country as well as in Marosvásárhely [Targu Mures], along with the drama anthology of *Seven Stories* by Moris Panych, translated expressively by Péter Szaffkó as *Történet a hetedikén*. Canadian performances of theatre and dance companies have been leaving their imprints, and their artists are now "household names" in Hungary (Kürtösi 216). Kürtösi concludes that Canadian, especially Quebecois, plays enjoy more recognition than other genres.

The topic of translation in Hungary is discussed in two articles in the volume. Gertrúd Szamosi surveys English Canadian literature and the strategies surrounding the popularization of their translated editions for Hungarian readers. Canada's aboriginal and ethnic writers, such as Grey Owl's *The Adventures of Sajo and her Beaver People* and Duncan Pryde's *Ten Years of Eskimo Life* have enjoyed popularity in leaps and bounds, while Michael Ondaatje's *The English Patient* has gained attention mostly due to the title character who adorns a Hungarian surname. Szamosi also underlines the importance Canadian writers of Hungarian descent, whose works have been translated, such as, Anna Porter, George Jonas, Susan M. Papp, and the children's author Kati Reкаи. Following Szamosi's wide angle overview, József Szili's monograph describes his process of translating Northrop Frye's *Anatomy of Criticism*. The challenges, as Szili reveals, were grounded in the attempts of translating many of Frye's

terminologies into the Hungarian vocabulary of criticism. For example, the taken for granted term, *romance novel*, in fact demands several versions of translation in an effort to convey the same meaning in Hungarian. Frye's theories of history similarly beget difficulties for introducing new concepts in Hungarian. Lastly, Zoltán Kelemen takes a look at Leonard Cohen's poems and two novels. He emphasizes that while Hungarian audiences were already enjoying Cohen's music in the 1970s, a time of "re-copied cassette tapes, jam sessions with friends and the rare Cohen LP from the former Yugoslavia" (145), along with his concerts, although much later, and his translated songs, his poetic and novelistic achievements have been ignored. Kelemen argues that while the recent translation of *The Favourite Game* [*A kedvenc játék*] and *Beautiful Losers* [*Szépséges lúzerek*] has prompted interest, it still places the "potential Hungarian Cohen-reader... far away in space, in time and most of all, in literary appreciation," Kelemen argues (148). Overall, Hungarian scholars indicate a hope for Canadian works in translation while also paying attention to market demands.

Two articles from Czech Republic, by Don Sparling in English and by Petr Kyloušek in French, suggest that the Czech lands have a long and rich tradition of translating Canadian literature starting with Frederick Marryat's *The Settlers in Canada* from 1875. Sparling first links the two countries' cultural history by ice-hockey and reference words in Czech to such Canadian menageries as *log cabin*, *sled*, *joke*, and even *army boots*. By doing so, Sparling points to the imagery or the "mental construct" of Canada (40) in Czech people's minds, through translations. A chronological overview of translated texts takes into account May Agnes Fleming's books from the early 1900s through E. T. Seton in the interwar years, the publication of politically oriented works during the socialist regime, leading up to the present with a broad selection of texts by authors such as Susanna Moodie, Timothy Findley, and to the contemporary romantic fictions of Mary Balogh. Conversely, Kyloušek structures his discussion around two decisive periods both in Canadian and in Czech history: Quebec's Quiet Revolution and the Montreal Expo '67. Thanks to the efforts of the eminent critic, Eva Janovcová, the works of Marie-Claire Blais, Jacques Ferron, and Anne Hébert among others became available to Czech readers in translation from the late 1960s onward. The political transformations after 1989 ushered in an additional wave of French Canadian literature, and international book festivals have offered a diverse choice of Canadian literature for Czech readers.

Lucia Otrisalová and Marján Gazdík's paper assesses the presence of Canadian literature in Slovak translation. The authors trace the reasons

for the relative absence of Canadian literature in Slovakia, pointing to a lack of translation from English during the unstable political climate in that country. Further research through quantitative data collection also reveals to the scholars that the nature of the Slovakian book market may be more interested in universal rather than Canada-specific literature. The first Canadian book published after 1989 in Slovakia was Margaret Atwood's *Surfacing*. Gazdik devotes a separate essay to the reception of Atwood's books with a special attention to J. Juránova, Slovakian feminist writer and translator of many of Atwood's works. Lastly, Otrisalová discusses the most popular English Canadian novel in Slovak, Lucy Maud Montgomery's *Anne of Green Gables*. She argues that the historical and social contexts in the host country have affected both the translation and treatment of the novel during the socialist regime, whereby religious terms were removed or replaced with ideologies of the communist party in the translations. A restitution of these politically dictated discursive changes in Montgomery's work has been underway.

Only one article represents Slovenia: Jason Blake engages the reception of Alice Munro's works. Blake prefaces his discussion of Munro's translated books by suggesting the availability of Canadian literary works in Slovenian translation is on a wide spectrum. In fact, Slovenia boasts its book market by publishing translations immediately in the footsteps of the release of original works in Canada. Yet, Munro's books have surfaced only belatedly, partially due to "a sort of tokenism" (187) that advances books by Atwood and Ondaatje.

Petra Sapun Kurtin and Mirna Sindičić Sabljo from Croatia offer two studies in the volume. First, they survey Canadian literature in Croatia, exclaiming that "translations are crucial vehicles of cultural transfer" (49). To this effect, the early 20th century saw the prominence of adventure and "Native" novels (49) in translation. Following the Yugoslavian war, Croatia's independence has fostered a linguistic revival wherein contemporary Canadian literature has gained readership. In their second study, Sapun Kurtin and Sindičić Sabljo portray Canadian women authors in Croatian translation. They refer to 35 full-length books by such women authors as Cynthia J. Alexander, Anne Hébert, and Alice Munro among others. English and French short stories have also drawn a particular attention in Croatia, as Antonija Primorac explains. In her article, Primorac juxtaposes two well-received anthologies, *Antologija kanadske pripovjetke* [*An Anthology of Canadian Short Stories*] from 1991 which includes works by early to mid-20th century Canadian authors, and *Život na sjeveru - Antologija kanadske kratke priče* [*Northern Exposireu: An Anthology of*

Canadian Short Stories] from 2009. Primorac edited the latter anthology which includes the most recent Canadian short stories from English and French language sources, and it features the theme of multiculturalism.

Scholars from Serbia focus on English Canadian literature in translation with marginal reference only to Quebec authors. Milena Kostić and Ivana Vlajković assess Serbia's relations with Canadian culture through literature in the new millennium whereby Serbia seeks to find reconciliation for its own cultural identity. The authors voice their difficulty of compiling the bibliography of translated Canadian texts due to gaps not only in works involved but also in the quality of translations. Serbian is the "third most frequent language of translation with the Canada Council translation support programme," Tanja Cvetković argues in her article (149), and she offers a list of the most popular Canadian titles in Serbian translations. Through Robert Kroetsch's *The Studhorse Man*, published in 2009 by Nolit, Cvetković divulges the challenges of translation based on the cultural differences between the two nations. Linguistic difficulties and cultural differences, from "Canadianisms" to "the Canadian prairie mythical story" (151-2) prompt a kind of postmodern dynamic for Serbian readers.

Crina Bud and Moica Bottez from Romania explore Canadian fiction and theoretical texts in translation through a periodization of Romanian cultural politics. Bud, in her French article, argues that paratexts illuminate both the image and imaginary of Canada in Romania, often supplied in introductions by the editors and publishers of translations, and also in notations, or even by the particular translation of book titles, which have affected the reception of works in a given political climate. Bud draws on theoretical concepts by Northrop Frye, Marshall McLuhan, and Charles Taylor to frame her analysis and in turn self-referentially Canadianize her article. Bottez, in English, offers an overview of Canadian literature in translation starting before 1948 up to the present, emphasizing the ideological criteria in each era that gave cadence to particular Canadian works from classics to suspense books. Paying most attention to the period from the 1980s onward, Bottez illuminates a market-driven selection of Canadian books in translation with preference for sci-fi, thrillers and most recently fantasy books about vampires and werewolves. Belatedly, poems by Leonard Cohen and Malcolm Lowry are now available alongside with works by Atwood, Ondaatje, Yann Martel, Frye, and Hutcheon.

The Bulgarian scholars, Andrei Andreev and Diana Yankova, consider Canadian literature in translation over the past twenty years, and contend that there has been a "proliferation of Canadian titles on the

Bulgarian market” (27). From Montgomery’s *Anne of Green Gables* to Atwood’s, Findley’s and Ondaatje’s books the publishers in Bulgaria have been promoting Canadian literature through the International Translation Grants Program. The last two Canadian writers’ popularity is further demonstrated in two more articles from Bulgaria. Galina Avramova discusses Timothy Findley’s translated output in relation to the book market, and Madeleine Danov analyses Michael Ondaatje’s relevance in Bulgaria’s postmodernist transformations.

Canada in Eight Tongue is an erudite collection of scholarly essays discussing, analyzing and reflecting on the reception of Canadian literature and culture in translation. The representation of Canadian literature and culture in the Central European imagination, at least as it has been *interpreted* by the authors, is rich and eclectic, however, it has been fundamentally understated.

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Judit Szapor, Andrea Pető, Maura Hametz, Maria Calloni, eds. *Tradition Unchained: Jewish Intellectual Women in Central Europe 1860-2000. Twelve Biographical Essays*. Lewiston: The Edwin Mellen Press, 2012. ISBN 978-0-7734-2933-8, 460 pages.

Gerda Lerner, the mother of women’s history, born in 1920 in Germany and an escapee from Nazism who died on Jan 21, 2013 at the age of 92, was only twenty years younger than Regina Jonas, the youngest biographical subjects in the volume under review here. Lerner said that when she entered the academic world in the late sixties the study of the lives of women was not a legitimate subject for historians. She worked to establish women’s history as a respected academic field and also began to publish primary source material that would allow scholars to reconstruct the lives of women. She perceived early on that women’s history is less a separate subject than a way of thinking, a strategy by which focus on issues which traditional history has obscured. As she said in her *The Majority Finds its Past: Placing Women in History* (1979: 127-132), traditional history, written and interpreted by men, is not only male-oriented but male-defined so that it is really “men’s history,” in which women are anecdotal. That women have a history has been obscured and misunderstood. Women’s history requires a paradigm shift in which gender must be added as an analytical category of history, which allows new questions to be asked,