

/ University of Maribor, Faculty of Electrical Engineering and Computer Science, Maribor, Slovenia

Conference report: "Mihail Lermontov in a Global Discourse"

The conference *Mihail Lermontov in a Global Discourse* was organized by the Department of Translation Studies, Faculty of Arts (University of Maribor) in cooperation with the Russian Cultural Centre, Ruski Dom from 5th to 6th of March 2015 at the University of Maribor. The event brought together experts from Slovenia, Serbia, Russia, the Czech Republic, Croatia and Slovakia.

Tatiana Ivanovna Jurčenko, Deputy Director of the National Museum of M. J. Lermontov in Piatigorsk, Russia, held a plenary lecture entitled: *The story of the obscure translation of M. J. Lermontov's poem "Vyhožu odin ja on dorogu" by Siegfried von Vegesack*, which was followed by presentations of papers that covered different themes in Lermontov's works with a special focus on translating and perception of Lermontov's work in Europe. The participants were Marko Jesenšek, Blaž Podlesnik, Alenka Jensterle Doležal, Anna Jakovljević Radunović, Natalia Kaloh Vid, Eva Dekanova, Jasmina Voivodić, Željka Čelić, Kristian Lewis, Ivana Peruško, Miha Javornik, and Katja Bakija. The conference also included a student session, featuring students of the Master of Translation Studies program, including Ana Marić, Nina Šimanovič, Pia Pogorelčnik, Mojca Kolar, and Tadeja Tement.

Discussions at the symposium demonstrated a strong interest in the famous Russian Romantic poet who lived a tragic life and influenced the entire period of Russian Romanticism as well as the future development of Russian literature. Most contributions focused on what were less explored dimensions of Lermontov's drama and prose such as topographical dimensions in the novel *A Hero of Our Time*, an analysis of Lermontov's works from the Orthodox perspective, a comparison of Lermontov's female characters with Vladimir Odoyevsky's and the contemporary staging of Lermontov's best known play *Masquerade*, highlighting new perspectives on translating Lermontov's work into European languages as well as the connection of Lermontov's literary heritage to other forms of art, such as film, photography and illustration.

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During the first part of the conference, the papers on various aspects of translating Lermontov's poetry and prose were presented. Thus, Marko Jesenšek's paper (University of Maribor) focused on a comparative analysis of Slovenian translations of Lermontov's famous poem *The Sail* translated by Kette, Mencinger, Župančič, Klopčič and Baebler. The author outlined that the Slovenian translators succeeded in transferring most of Lermontov's poetic features, i.e. antithesis, epithets, comparisons, rhetorical questions, exclamations and impersonations into Slovenian, conveying the romantic message of the poem to Slovenian readers.

Blaž Podlesnik's paper (University of Ljubljana) also focused on the challenges of translating, exploring Slovene translations of Lermontov's Junker poems. Podlesnik analyzed the translation solutions that Anton Zebra chose in his translation of the poem *Holiday*, offering a basis for discussing essential questions of contemporary translations of classic poetry, such as the role of the verse in modern translations of poems that are over a century old, as well as problems of translating works that are embedded in the framework of traditionally classical poetry, while "playing" with this framework.

Željka Čelić and Kristian Lewis from the University of Zagreb have prepared a comprehensive linguistic and cultural analysis of Croatian translations of the novel *A Hero of Our Time*. When comparing translations by M. Bogdanović (1918, 1947) and Z. Crnkovič (1974, 2012), the authors analyzed the level of translation equivalence, adequacy, functionality and linguistic value. The results of their analysis revealed the need to update the translation.

Alenka Jensterle Doležal from Charles University in Prague presented a paper on the perception of Lermontov's writing in the Czech Republic. Her contribution focused on the history of translating Lermontov's works into Czech, starting from the Romantic period. According to Jensterle Doležal, some of the best translations were made at the end of the century, but most works were translated on the 100th anniversary of Lermontov's death, during the time before and after the Second World War.

The presentation by students of the Master of Translation Studies program, Mojca Kolar, Pia

Pogorelčnik and Tadeja Tement from the University of Maribor, focused on the challenges faced when translating the chapter *Bela* of the novel *A Hero of Our Time*, which includes numerous culturally-specific elements from Russian, Caucasian and Turkish cultures. The discussion covered the importance of transferring culture in literary translation and popular strategies for translating culturally specific elements.

The next contribution by Master of Translation Studies students Nina Šimanovič and Ana Marič focused on a similar topic. Their presentation analyzed the challenges of translating poetry and was based on their own experience of translating an extract from the long poem *Demon*.

Jasmina Vojvodić from the University of Zagreb analyzed the geographical aspects of the novel *A Hero of Our Time*, based on the topography of the novel, focusing on semantic units/pairs such as the good and the evil, heaven and earth, above and below, the poet and the crowd, or the East and the West.

Miha Javornik from the University of Ljubljana shared an interesting point when presenting the parallels between Lermontov's life story and his poetic work. The final conclusion of the discussion was that Lermontov eventually abandoned the abstract romantic cliché about demonic ambivalence and followed the idea of the world ruled by evil, which changes people into demonic creatures. The author also noted that Lermontov presented himself as a demon in many of his poems, drama and prose.

A presentation by Katja Bakija from the University of Dubrovnik focused on the analysis of the premier of the play *Masquerade* in Rijeka, directed by Slovenian director Vito Taufer, outlining the role, significance and interpretation of classic dramatic works in the context of contemporary theater.

Anne Jakovljević Radunović from the University of Belgrade prepared a contribution that brought forward many interesting points about comparing the cycle, images and motifs in Lermontov's work, dedicated to V. A. Lopukhina, with the structure, images and motifs of the cycle *Domači pogovori* by V. F. Odoyevsky. The author paid special attention to the issues surrounding women's emancipa-

tion, marriage for money and the subordinated positions of women.

Ivana Peruško from the University of Zagreb focused on a detailed semiotic analysis of the cinematic heritage of one of the most controversial heroes of Russian literature of the XIXth century – Pechorin. The author recognized that heritage in the depiction of the main character of the movie *Brother* (1997) by A. Balabanov. Peruško noted parallels between Pechorin, who represented the tragic post-decabrist generation of the 1930s, and Danilo Bagrov, who embodied the post-Soviet period of the 1990s.

Natalia Kaloh Vid from the University of Maribor spoke about the connection between Lermontov's work and fine arts. She compared the impact of the most powerful images of the demon in Russian literature and culture - Lermontov's poem *Demon* with illustrations by M. Vrubl to accompany the poem.

The presentations were followed by a group discussion that highlighted a number of issues connected to updating literary translations and perceptions of Lermontov's work in Europe.

The organizers also prepared a number of social events, including the conference dinner and opening of an art exhibition by Nika Lopert entitled *Lermontov: translated by brush*, which featured illustrations to accompany Lermontov's poems.

In 2015, the symposium *Mikhail Lermontov in global discourse* was the only event at the European universities solely devoted to the great Russian poet. All presentations from the symposium were published in the multilingual scientific monograph *Творчество М. Ю. Лермонтова: Мотивы, темы, переводы*, issued by the international book series *Zora*.

Pleasant memories and new friendships encouraged the organizers to think about similar events in the future devoted to various aspects of Russian literature.

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