



# Albatross Translation Project

## Projekt tłumaczeniowy „Albatros”

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**ABSTRACT** | The paper presents the translation concept of the Library Albatross (1921), the most significant project of today’s canonical Serbian modernists and avant-garde writers. This concept is paradigmatic within the modernist creative tendencies and programs between the two world wars. Although Library published only the translation of Poe’s *Tales of Mystery and Imagination*, the list of announced translations, the paratexts that accompany the Library’s promotional material, and the translation published, allow us to discuss specific translation strategies of Albatross. Albatross translation practice is a template for more comprehensive thinking about poetic innovations of Serbian literature after First World War. Moreover, the Albatross translation platform allows us to consider the concepts of modern/modernism, periphery/center, and world literature in Serbian culture during the twenties.

**KEYWORDS** | Library Albatross, translation, Serbian literature, literary repertoire, world literature

## Program conception of the Library Albatross

The Albatross Library was founded in 1921 in Belgrade within the publishing house Sveslovenska knjižarnica. It was edited by Stanislav Vinaver (1891—1955) and Todor Manojlović (1883—1968). Five books were published within this short-lived library: Miloš Crnjanski's (1893—1977) *Dnevnik o Čarnojeviću* (The Diary About Čarnojević), Stanislav Vinaver's *Gromobran svemira* (The Lightning Rod of Space), Rastko Petrović's (1898—1949) *Burleska gospodina Peruna boga groma* (The Burlesque of Mr Perun the God of Thunder), Josip Kulundžić's (1899—1970) *Lunar* and Poe's short stories. From a contemporary perspective, it is evident that starting from the editorial pair to the published authors, Albatross gathered the most important modernist and avant-garde authors of Serbian culture who today are canonical writers. Also, Albatross' editions today are known as the key books in the process of changing poetic paradigms after the First World War. Today, however, these books are mostly researched and interpreted within authorial opuses or certain comparatively delineated circles, such as poetics, genres, and intertextual relations.

However, the decontextualization of Albatross' books marginalizes the library within which they appeared, that is, the fact that they were part of a wider network of action and collective organization. Considering the publications in the context of the Library as a project, with a precisely designed and formulated program, allows for a more precise projection of the strategies of action and intervention of modernists and avant-garde artists in the field of literature and culture. Also, contextual consideration and historicization within a specific micro-institution of action such as a library or edition makes it possible to illuminate a network of creative practice and action that remains invisible outside of this approach. Therefore, when we look at published books contextually within the paratextual network of the Albatross Library, which establishes its program platform, we can see more clearly the range of authors' activities and practices which, outside that framework, are not sufficiently recognized as constitutive. One of those practices is translation.<sup>1</sup>

1 Stanislav Vinaver is one of the most prolific and significant Serbian (Yugoslav) translators of the 20th century. Translating from French, English, Czech, Polish, Russian and German, Vinaver translated, I cite selectively, the following works: *Gargantua and Pantagruel*, *Tristram Shandy*, *Alice's Adventures in Wonderland*, *The Adventures of Tom Sawyer*, *A Connecticut Yankee in King Arthur's Court*, *The Good Soldier Švejk*, *The Sorrows of Young Werther*, *One Thousand and One Nights*, the selected poems of Francois Villon, Alexander Block, German Romanticism etc. Ž. Svirčev has dedicated one chapter to Vinaver's translation work in the monograph on his comparative studies. Ž. Svirčev, 2017: *Vinaverova književna republika*. Beograd, Službeni glasnik, pp. 209—279.

In the paper “Albatross’ Announcement of the Storm”, Gojko Tešić precisely profiled the editorial intentions of Stanislav Vinaver and Todor Manojlović: “In both programmatic and creative terms, it was a daring project of literary production whose task was to include it in the context of the latest aspirations in European and world literature.”<sup>2</sup> In the program announcement of the Library,<sup>3</sup> which can be classified as one of the important program texts of modernist authors of the 1920s, the editors pointed out that

Its artistic ideal opens new views, vistas and generally strengthens the spiritual life in our most modern literature. Its significance for the future is already becoming historically important today. It excludes superficial entertainment and scanty didactics and provides new generations with *works of intuition*, in which

Vinaver’s translations were the subject of many debates and discussions because they radically changed many poetic and linguistic concepts of Serbian literature. Already Vinaver’s first literary translation caused a conflict with the authorities. Namely, at the age of less than fifteen, Vinaver translated Mickiewicz’s *Księgi narodu polskiego i pielgrzymstwa polskiego* and handed over the translation to the management of the literary society Pouka, of which he was a member. The management rejected his translation, noting that he no longer deceives the members. Vinaver reacted to the word in his defense, and the president of the literary society, Mihailo Miladinović, called the whole case “Jewish insolence”. Vinaver resented the insult and was expelled from the literary society. Avram Vinaver complained to the director of the Šabac high school, filing a report against Miladinović and asking for satisfaction, but at Miladinović’s request, Vinaver was sentenced to six hours in prison. Avram Vinaver also sent a complaint to the Minister of Education (enclosing his assessment of the originality of the translation), requesting that the decision on the sentence be revoked, slander, and to stand in the way of Miladinović’s antisemitism. There was no formal dismissal of this case. Kovjanic G., 1973: *Vinaverove nevolje zbog prevoda Mickjevićevih ‘Knjiga naroda poljskog’*. “Zbornik Matice srpske za slavistiku”, 4, p. 136—141.

2 G. Tešić, 2005: *Albatrosova najava bure 1921*. In: *Otkrovenje srpske avangarde*. Beograd, Čigoja štampa, p. 139—140.

3 The program announcement of the Albatross Library was printed in a double issue of the magazine *Kritika* (1921, Zagreb), which was dedicated to the Belgrade Literary Community Alpha, which included the editors of Albatross, as well as the authors who published or planned to publish within this Library. In 1921, a leaflet with the program announcement of Albatross was also distributed through *Ilustrovani list*, a popular entertainment magazine. The advertisement was printed with certain editions of the Library, as well as in the catalogue of Sveslovenska knjižarnica for 1921/1922. The catalogue was included in the advertizing material of the magazine *Srpski književni glasnik* (Serbian Literary Gazette), one of the most important literary institutions of that time. The Albatross Library’s advertizing network testifies that the editors aimed at different circles of readers, which supports the emancipatory discourse contained in the Library’s program. Also, positioned as a counter-public considering the dominant institutions of the literary field, advertizing in *Srpski književni glasnik* can support the thesis about the potentials of marginalized periodic genres (notes, advertisements, etc.) as fields of subversive, guerrilla interventions in the literary field.

the whole man and the whole soul are shown. Its program vibrates from biology to music and carries new poetic, thoughtful, dramatic, and philosophical works, as well as masterpieces of world literature, because it creates a new rhythm and a new direction in our literary life.<sup>4</sup>

The library is conceived as a broad emancipatory project that will reform various aspects of life that meet in the sphere of spirituality. The key term, which is also graphically privileged, is intuition. It is a topos of program and manifesto texts that were published immediately after the First World War, and Stanislav Vinaver was one of the key authors in the Yugoslav culture of the early twenties who promoted Bergson's philosophy. Vinaver presented Bergson's philosophy in essays and it was integrated into the linguistic experience of his poetry.

However, the Albatross Library is not just a "storm announcement". Its conception integrates the post-war creative experiences of a new generation of authors. In 1921, when the Albatross Library was founded, a collaborative network and a new poetic platform had already been formed. Dragutin Prohaska also stated that Albatross is a direct extension of the activities of the Alpha group and that it is extremely important within modern literary trends. Describing the program text, Prohaska maps the key poetic characteristics of the creative platform of the authors gathered in Albatross: intuitionism, dynamism, chaos, cosmism, expressionism.<sup>5</sup>

The proclamation of the Albatross Library intertextually builds on the program texts and articles of the authors whose works were published or were intended for publication within the Library. In addition to published authors, Ivo Andrić, Todor Manojlović, Ranko Mladenović, Sibe Miličić, Stanislav Krakov, Ivo Ćipiko, Milan Begović, Isidora Sekulić, Tin Ujević, Boško Tokin, and Svetislav Stefanović were supposed to publish their works in Albatross. However, the plans were not implemented for financial reasons. Despite that, the Albatross Library was an important fact of literary life in the minds of contemporaries. In a review of the first three books of Albatross, an unknown critic made a statement that is valid from the literary-historical aspect even today: "Each of these books on its own is a whole event in our literature, and all together they confirm a strong, dynamic, spontaneous literary movement which, after the war, embraced the whole world and in these books, in a positive artistic way, found expression in our literature".<sup>6</sup>

4 S. Vinaver, 2012: *Biblioteka Albatros. Urednici Stanislav Vinaver i Todor Manojlović*. In: G. Tešić, ed.: *Čardak ni na nebu ni na zemlji*. Beograd, Službeni glasnik, p. 32.

5 D. Prohaska, 1928: *Srbocharvátská literatura*. Praha, [s.n.], p. 128.

6 Anonim, 18.12.1921: *Biblioteka Albatros*. "Vreme", p. 2.

## Albatross translation project

The very name of the Library (and the vignette, the drawing of the albatross by Petar Dobrović) introduces us to the translation and reception horizon that the editors wanted to form. The quote attachment to Charles Baudelaire is a significant gesture of attachment to artistic traditions that were marginalized in the Serbian literary-critical discourse which had dominated before the outbreak of the First World War. The name of the Library is a kind of translation of Baudelaire into a new poetic and value framework in the Serbian literature. Todor Manojlović did the same with the text “On Poetry and Its Crisis and Renewal in the 19th Century”, which opened up the issue of the magazine *Kritika* dedicated to the Belgrade Literary Community Alpha. Manojlović’s text is a polemical response to the dominant literary-critical discourse until the First World War, which was represented by the indisputable authorities, professors of the University of Belgrade, Bogdan Popović and Jovan Skerlić.<sup>7</sup> Manojlović especially argues with the categories of moral/immoral and comprehensible/incomprehensible, within which Baudelaire’s poetry was negatively positioned.<sup>8</sup> Manojlović points out that the ideal of his generation is “the rebirth of poetry by breaking away from every doctrine, liberation from every extra-artistic, externally imposed criterion and authority, through a return to pure and spontaneous individual sensibility or intuition.”<sup>9</sup> The author concludes that the evolution “whose offspring is modern poetry, received its first great achievement with Charles Baudelaire, who has remained to this day the ideal ancestor and leader of every serious and advanced poetic movement”<sup>10</sup>

7 Their literary-critical and aesthetic profiles were successfully summed up by Vesna Matović: “Cultural pattern of an enlightened esthete in which the spiritual and social needs of the individual and society are balanced” is the basis of Bogdan Popović’s cultural program which embodies the civic ideal of smoothness, measure, clarity, and logic; more open than Popović for ideological and social, Skerlić saw literature as a part of a scientific and social program, thus opting for a dynamic model of moral and social engagement which in terms of values gave preference to rationalism, criticism, vitalism, national optimism, and health. V. Matović, 2007: *Udeo časopisa srpske moderne u stvaranju nacionalnih kulturnih obrazaca*. In: *Srpska moderna. Kulturni obrasci i književne ideje*. Beograd, Institut za književnost i umetnost, pp. 26, 27.

8 The advertizing of the Library Albatross in *Srpski književni glasnik* is especially provocative because in the first series of this magazine, which was published until the First World War (editors Popović and Skerlić), every poetic closeness to the poetics of Charles Baudelaire made by some Serbian poets, such as Sima Pandurović and Vladislav Petković Dis, was discussed within the medical discourse of pathology.

9 T. Manojlović, 1921: *O poeziji i njenoj krizi i obnovi u 19. veku*. “Kritika”, 11/12, p. 390.

10 Ibidem.

The name of the Library illustrates not only interventions for (auto)poetic purposes, but also contains broader cultural implications. It is a paratext that profiles many program aspects of the Library: attitude towards tradition, understanding of modernity, i.e. modernism, a reinterpretation of the reception of French/Western literature and culture. The experience of the First World War and the creation of the Kingdom of Serbs, Croats, and Slovenes reopened, in a sharper form, the issue of defining cultural identity. One of the most controversial places in this process was singled out by Vinaver in an essay written in the 1930s:

From the beginning of our recent literature, one basic problem has been solved, whether we like it or not: how to make our literary field Europe, in the full, deep sense of the word. The attitude towards modern Western culture among our representative writers is different: some reject it in the name of old, patriarchal values; some adopt it, but with heavy hearts, with much hesitation and stagnation; some receive it to the end, to a slavish and empty imitation.<sup>11</sup>

The collapsed spiritual vertical of European civilization, on the one hand, and the conglomeration of cultural models and influences in the newly created state (Oriental, Mediterranean, Central European, etc.), on the other, intensified the dialogue of self-determination of the cultural foundations of the emerging society. "Crucified between the onslaught of ideas about pure and personal art", wrote Milan Kašanin in 1929, "about social transformation, racial expression and the crisis of Western culture, the post-war generation is undoubtedly divided and confused, not nearly as compact and simple as the earlier generations had been. It cannot gather around unique views and work also because its representatives are different in terms of upbringing, and cultural and social environments".<sup>12</sup> One of the answers and offered attitudes towards modern Western culture was provided by the Library Albatross in its translation program.

Among the authors of masterpieces of world literature that will be brought in "new, contemporary and artistic translations", the editors announce Apollinaire, Edgar Poe, Barbe d'Orvi, Baudelaire, Wales, Whitman, Gide, Suarez, Flaubert, E.T.A. Hoffman, the authors who "stand in line with our movement and our goals".<sup>13</sup> Years later, one of the editors of the Library will testify about the mediating and poetic modeling role of the publishing project, emphasizing that its goal was to reshape the reception of European literature in the Kingdom of

11 S. Vinaver, 2012: *Pesnički modernizam*. In: G. Tešić, ed.: *Odbrana pesništva*. Beograd, Službeni glasnik, p. 13.

12 M. Kašanin, 1929: *Tri književna naraštaja*. "Letopis Matice srpske", 2, p. 165.

13 *Biblioteka Albatros. Urednici Stanislav Vinaver i Todor Manojlović...*, p. 32.

Serbs, Croats and Slovenes: “We wanted to publish in that library everything interesting in our post-war literature, as well as the best things by world writers, of course, selected according to the ‘post-war’ criteria. [...] We did not want to stay on the Sully Prudhomme, Heredia and Lanson, like our predecessors”.<sup>14</sup>

The list of authors intended for translation points to the idea of a diachronic review of European (world) literature. The ninth planned book in Albatross was *Decameron* translated by Sibe Miličić. The announcement of this book contains a short note about the work: “With its form classical and its motifs eternally modern throughout the centuries, this work by Boccaccio is published for the first time in our country in an artistic translation, full of taste, full of Boccaccio’s own spirit and style”.<sup>15</sup> In this short note, the term which was highlighted was certainly one of the key criteria for choosing works to translate — *modern*. If we follow Adrian Marin’s hint that “modern represents a framework concept, the content of which is historically determined, geographically located and specially nuanced”,<sup>16</sup> based on editors’ essays, we can conclude that poetic modernism meant for them poetic self-awareness as well as critical reflection of tradition.

Vinaver wrote that “modernists have always been with us — they are those who are not mere imitators, to convey the accepted and recommended daily fashion, but they are modern with the whole attitude, the whole vision, the whole being. [...] To be like that, they have to live modern life to a lasting end. Through them, we realize ourselves more completely and logically, not accidentally and not arbitrarily”.<sup>17</sup> *Modern* is freed from chronological fixation and implies a specific experience of reality that shapes the awareness of the epochal situation that is artistically expressed. To the question of what tradition is, Manojlović answers that it is “a feeling, an awareness of the continuity of our life [...] about our close connection to our past, whose experiences, knowledge and examples clarify and illuminate the future”.<sup>18</sup> The past is a model factor in the dialectic of innovation:

With the help of the past, we conquer, appropriate, or simply create our future, which then gradually sinks into the first one, giving it more and more content,

14 T. Manojlović, 1987: *Sećanje na književni Beograd pre četiri decenije*. In: *Osnove i razvoj moderne poezije*. Beograd, “Filip Višnjić”, p. 305.

15 *Biblioteka Albatros. Urednici Stanislav Vinaver i Todor Manojlović...*, p. 35. Renaissance culture of laughter is one of the poetic pillars of Rastko Petrović’s *Burleska gospodina Peruna boga groma*, published by the Albatross Library.

16 A. Marino, 1997: *Moderno, modernizam, modernost*. M. Dan, Z. Tomić, trans. Beograd, Narodna knjiga-Alfa, p. 48.

17 S. Vinaver, 2012: *Pesnički modernizam...*, p. 16.

18 T. Manojlović, 1997: *Tradicija i doktrina*. In: *Novi književni sajam*. Zrenjanin, Gradska narodna biblioteka, p. 16.

meaning, and prestige. Without that constant, active action of the past through the medium of our consciousness and our memory, there is no — as Bergson clearly proved — life, that is development and progress.<sup>19</sup>

Referring to his own formative horizon, Manojlović assigns to the tradition the active action of the past through the medium of consciousness and memory, the role of “conditioning fact and conductor” of evolution and renewal.<sup>20</sup> The privilege given to the literature translated by the editors of Albatross, i.e. the selection of masterpieces according to the “post-war criteria”, confirms Itamar Even-Zohar’s thesis that translated literature has an active role in shaping the literary polysystem of the target culture, by introducing a new repertoire, in the moments of turning points and crises in the polysystem,<sup>21</sup> as it was the case immediately after the First World War in Serbian/Yugoslav literature.

The first book published in Albatross, *Dnevnik o Čarnojeviću* by Miloš Crnjanski, illustrates the indicated path of literary mediation: translation, expansion of the literary repertoire, creative reception. In other words, following the chronological line, that the post-war modernists saw the publication of translated literature as one of the most fruitful micro- institutions of literary intervention, and that it was necessary to establish a collaborative network to gain access to translation/publishing policy and thus literary repertoire, confirms the example of Gustave Flaubert’s *November*. *November* was translated by Tin Ujević, one of the planned associates of the Library Albatross, it was published in 1920, and accompanied by the introduction by Miloš Crnjanski.

In the preface to Flaubert’s novel, Crnjanski emphasized the missionary role of the Contemporary Library within which the novel was published. At the time when *November* appeared in our country, they did not know about it even in the best literary circles, that is, the Contemporary Library included the book in its program before “our literary authorities became familiar with it”. “In its noble effort to give the Serbian readership first-class values of world literature and systematize the work of translated education and of nurturing readers’ taste, this the best Yugoslav library of ours, in the safe hands of its editor, gave another proof of its importance”,<sup>22</sup> concludes Crnjanski. While writing the preface to *November*, Crnjanski was aware that this translation was preparing the readership for his *Dnevnik o Čarnojeviću*, as evidenced by numerous intertextual hints about his own poetics. Finally, Crnjanski states that “*November* will be a book,

19 Ibidem, p. 17.

20 Ibidem.

21 I. Even-Zohar, 1997: *Polysystem Studies*. “Poetics Today”, 1, p. 47.

22 M. Crnjanski, 1983: *Novemar Gistava Flobera*. In: *Eseji*. Beograd, Nolit, p. 235.



which will lead to a new form of a novel in the 20th century”,<sup>23</sup> and Serbian literature did not wait long for that new form.

Crnjanski’s preface represents a prelude to understanding Flaubert’s novel, but also his own novelistic poetics, which he will confirm with an intertextual dialogue with *November* in *Dnevnik o Čarnojeviću*. It is conceivable then that in the announcement of *Dnevnik o Čarnojeviću* in the Library Albatross it was written, with an allusion to Crnjanski’s assertion on *November*, that “lyrically written, Crnjanski’s novel represents a newfound form of expression, corresponds to the modern taste of today’s literary audience”.<sup>24</sup> The translation of Flaubert’s novel was aimed at filling the vacuum, that is, the introduction of novelty into the Serbian/Yugoslav literary polysystem, and the degree of its innovation is perhaps best evidenced again by Crnjanski’s *Dnevnik o Čarnojeviću*. Namely, Crnjanski tried unsuccessfully to publish *Dnevnik* in notable magazines and publishing houses — the novel had its only edition before being included in the collected works in the Library Albatross, which was edited by Crnjanski’s literary like-minded people.

Another text, written on the occasion of the translation of Flaubert’s *November*, is an important proto text to Albatross’ translation project. It is a review “One Literary Holiday” signed by Stanislav Vinaver.<sup>25</sup> With this text, Vinaver begins a debate, which he will lead with undiminished intensity in the decades to come, with institutions (publishing, magazines, academia, reviewers, literary and linguistic commissions, etc.) that appropriate the authority in forming and maintaining monopolies in cultural (translation) policy. The text “One Literary Holiday” can be viewed as a program text of Vinaver’s translating because it contains key ideas that he will elaborate on during his decades-long translation practice. Vinaver goes beyond the traditional perception of the translator as a craftsman, that is, of translation as a mechanical process of transferring meaning from one language to another. A translator is someone who manages the encounter between his culture and the culture from which the work he is translating originated, someone who approaches the original and target culture from hermeneutical positions. It also emphasizes the importance of the untranslatable in the translation process. The untranslatable, in Vinaver’s view, crystallizes cultural differences, it opens the possibility for a dialogue between the original and the target culture, a dialogue in which differences are not sought to be erased or abolished, but in interactive communication, retaining

23 Ibidem, p. 241.

24 *Biblioteka Albatros. Urednici Stanislav Vinaver i Todor Manojlović...*, p. 33.

25 S. Vinaver, 2012: *Jedan književni praznik*. In: G. Tešić, ed.: *Videlo sveta*. Beograd, Službeni glasnik, pp. 345—347.

their distinctiveness, to generate novelty created by their intertwining or mutual reflection.

Susan Bassnett succinctly formulated the essence of contemporary translation studies, writing that “translation is not just the transfer of texts from one language into another, it is now rightly seen as a process of negotiation between texts and between cultures, a process during which all kinds of transactions take place mediated by the figure of the translator”, adding that the translator is the one who manages the mediation process through the act of creative rewriting of source texts into the target culture.<sup>26</sup> Vinaver was aware of that when he wrote “One Literary Holiday”. Even later, Vinaver did not understand translation solely in the categories of fidelity and/or equivalence, but, from his translation beginnings, he saw the hermeneutic character and far-reaching epistemological processes that imbue the translation, and whose results within the target culture are manifested in different spheres. The translator becomes a powerful agent in the modification and subversion of existing literary and cultural canons.

The first book published in the Library Albatross from the collection of world masterpieces is a collection of Poe’s short stories, *Tales of Mystery and Imagination*, translated by Svetislav Stefanović. The very advertisement for the book testifies to the poetic self-awareness, the recognition of the importance of micro-institutions of mediation — the translator and literary critic: “The deep mysteries of Edgar Allan Poe, in an excellent translation by Stefanović, our best interpreter of the great Anglo-American literature, and supplemented by an enthusiastic preface by St. Vinaver — will wave the soul of every reader. The book will be snatched up quickly because there is a lot of interest in it.”<sup>27</sup>

In the preface, Vinaver tried to interpret the “complex and strange organism” of Poe’s narrative art, but also to point out that the translation endeavor means that in the Serbian language too one can go through “something ocean-Poe-like: one love is the power to climb the paths of our language to Edgar Poe.”<sup>28</sup> Vinaver’s essay also discusses the problem of understanding (the problem of “merging horizons”, the dialogical form of understanding, said in Gadamer’s glossary) and the role of translation in interpretation, even in the life of the original literary work. Towards Poe, Vinaver went through French, Polish,<sup>29</sup>

26 S. Bassnett, 2002: *Translation Studies*. London—New York, Routledge, p. 6.

27 *Biblioteka Albatros. Urednici Stanislav Vinaver i Todor Manojlović...*, p. 34.

28 S. Vinaver, 2012: *Edgar Po*. In: G. Tešić, ed.: *Duša, zver, svet*. Beograd, Službeni glasnik, p. 282.

29 Polish is Vinaver’s first language. His parents left a significant mark on the cultural history of Serbia. His father, Avram Josif Vinaver, was born in Warsaw in 1862, and his mother Ruža (Rosa Rosenberg) in 1871. After finishing his medical studies in Kraków, Avram Vinaver came to Serbia in 1881, to Šabac, where he worked as

Russian, and German translations, and he learned English to “understand the ringing in the original” and “descend [...] into the depths of the radiant, into the bitter abysses of ecstasy”.<sup>30</sup> Reading the translations of Poe’s poems in different languages, he noticed that the translations kept some keys. The melody of Poe’s prose closes and floods the “organic nerve centres sensitive to electric buttons”. These sensitive points are not always discernible in the original — “congenial translator glimpses, senses these points, and they, in the illumination of another language, shine with a more fatal, clairvoyant radiance”.<sup>31</sup>

The translator is an interpreter, and the translation in the above lines is perceived as a commentary, a variant, even as a supplement to the original, because both languages are directed towards the same point, although in different ways. It remains uncertain in which language it delves deeper and more penetratingly into the hidden corners of Poe’s music. Vinaver’s thought evokes the old idea of reconstructing the linguistic Tower of Babel, which would lead to the original, highest speech that reaches the truth. A translation was indicated as an opportunity to surpass the incompleteness of individual languages by merging their multidirectional flows into a single one.

Vinaver’s preface to Stefanović’s translations can be seen as a segment of the author’s manifest and programmatic discourse of the 1920s. In “Manifest ekspresionističke škole” (The Manifesto of the Expressionist School, 1920), which will be included in *Gromobran svemira* published in the Albatross Library, Vinaver, breaking with the mimetic concept of depicting reality, indicated to Poe’s narrative art that describes things accurately and precisely, at the same time giving the reader the impression of the unreal, the fantastic that resists the reach of sensory cognition.<sup>32</sup> In his essay “Edgar Poe”, Vinaver continues the settings presented in the manifesto, focusing attention on Poe’s anthropological vision and the specific typological features of his characters. Edgar Allan Poe is one of the most constant references in Vinaver’s essays, and a series of texts in which

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a physician. In 1899, he brought the first X-ray machine to Serbia, and in 1905 he founded the first chess club. He spent the First World War as a physician in the Valjevo hospital. After suffering from typhus, he died in 1915 and, at his request, was buried in a common grave with the soldiers. Ruža Vinaver, a prominent pianist, received her music education in Poland, and in Belgrade, she played a notable role in music enlightenment. She was a teacher and director of the Stanković Music School. She wrote short stories, music reviews, reports and translated from Polish Przybyszewski, Żeromski, Konopnicka, Orzeszkowa, etc. She was arrested in 1942 and probably died in a German gas van in Belgrade.

30 Ibidem.

31 Ibidem, p. 81.

32 S.Vinaver, 2012: *Manifest ekspresionističke škole*. In: G. Tešić, ed.: *Čardak ni na nebu ni na zemlji*. Beograd, Službeni glasnik, p. 12.

he refers to the American author thematizes various aspects of his work, always with the same note — Poe is the precursor of the modernist creative experience.

In the 1920s, Edgar Poe was a reference in the program, literary-critical and poetic texts of many Serbian modernist and avant-garde authors. “Poe, Whitman, and Chaplin are the highest spiritual, initiators, beginnings, universal expressions. [...] They are among the few that give definite forms to modern classicism”, wrote Boško Tokin, specifying that Poe’s works are “the discovery of some mysterious connections, perhaps eerie, due to their finesse and sophistication, between things and us. [...] That is how he became the forerunner of expressionism, the forerunner of us today. He is the first creator of that modern sense of surrealism that leads us beyond grammar, formulas, rules and all possible rigid logics”.<sup>33</sup> The lyricism that directs the melody of Poe’s sentences, united with the spirit of “frightened fragile thoughts and events”, was evoked by Milan Dedinac, presenting his aesthetic experience of *Dnevnik o Čarnojeviću*.<sup>34</sup> With the paratextual signal “The Attempt of the Freest Translation”, directing the reception of the poetic fragment by *Ivicom Poovog Gavrana* (On the Edge of Poe’s Raven), the last part of the lyrical song *Prolećna elegija* (*Spring Elegy*), Rastko Petrović suggested both his proto text and the communicative model with the forerunner.<sup>35</sup>

The translation of Poe’s short stories is, accordingly, aimed at introducing a novelty, expanding the literary repertoire. Reminiscing his days of youth, Vinaver will also, in the 1950s, write about the crucial influence of Poe on modernist/avant-garde literature. Poe was not only a model for Baudelaire and the French Symbolists, but also for Vinaver’s generation of “cosmologists” who accepted Poe’s instruction that the poet must find insight into the hidden current in the universe, to linguistically realize the cosmic vision of the world, that there is something proto-poetic in beings and reality. The poet has to recognize and express that extract.<sup>36</sup> In the 1950s, Vinaver published his translations of Edgar Allan Poe’s poems.

33 B. Tokin, 1994: *U.S.A. Poe, Whitman, Chaplin*. In: G. Tešić, ed.: *Avangardni pisci kao kritičari*. Novi Sad, Beograd, Matica srpska, Institut za književnost i umetnost, p. 78.

34 M. Dedinac, 1994: „*Dnevnik o Čarnojeviću“ od Miloša Crnjanskog*. In: G. Tešić, ed.: *Avangardni pisci kao kritičari...*, p. 220.

35 R. Petrović, 1964: *Poezija*. Beograd, p. 97.

36 S. Vinaver, 2012: *Trijumf Lava Tolstoja*. In: G. Tešić, ed.: *Beogradsko ogledalo*. Beograd, Službeni glasnik, p. 209.

## Albatross' canon of world literature

The pivotal points of the program conception of the Albatross Library were the concepts of tradition and modernism, as well as the new representation of world literature in Serbian culture. Marko Juvan instructively wrote about the multitude of versions and representations of world literature:

World literature is being constantly translated and presented in manifold localized inscriptions, which are the subject of reflection and reworking in different semiospheres. To begin with, canons of world literature are plural because they exist only within particular literary fields and interactions between them: each national literature or country has its own version of the world literature canon, and any literature intertextually bases its production on different selections from global cultural heritage.<sup>37</sup>

The Library Albatross can also be seen as the foundation of innovative intertextual production, competing with the newly established, non-traditional canon of world literature. Marko Juvan also notes that “any literature or literary history sees world literature through the lenses of how they perceive their position within the global literary system”.<sup>38</sup> It was in the literary-theoretical and literary-historical (self) presentation of the canons of world literature according to the “post-war criterion” that the Albatross translation plan played a constitutive role. Translation turns out to be an important factor not only in expanding the literary repertoire and transferring aesthetic ideas, but also in the opening of new possibilities for self-understanding and repositioning one's own culture. During the early twenties, the editors of the Albatross Library wrote about the new geopoetic self-presentation of the centre and the periphery, relying on the ideology of world literature.

The search for one's own identity, which was placed at the centre by the generation of post-war modernists as well as their pre-war predecessors, did not take place in a vacuum, but in a complex network of social and cultural practices. “The constructions, projections and definitions of Europe in Serbian culture between the world wars not only interacted with national self-projections, they were created in order to re-define, re-construct, reinvent the nation via the discursive image of Europe”.<sup>39</sup> What meandered the discursive image of Europe among the group of intellectuals to which Vinaver and Manojlović

37 M. Juvan, 2011: *World Literature(s) and Peripheries*. “Acta Litteraria Comparativa”, 5, p. 282.

38 Ibidem.

39 Z. Milutinović, 2001: *Introduction*. In: *Getting over Europe: the Construction of Europe in Serbian Culture*. Amsterdam—New York, Rodopi, p. 16.

belonged between the two world wars was the idea of the unity of the continent and the equal place of their tradition and culture within it.

Mapping the poetic-ideological currents that permeate the Belgrade magazine scene after the First World War, Vinaver emphasizes their retrogradeness, which is reflected in the persistence of Europe's pre-war discourse and its spiritual verticals:

New Europe is appearing here, and the most conservative magazine in France is no longer Europe, but Two Worlds (America and Europe). European problems should have been solved in Europe while we were still in Europe. Today we are the world. And even more: the universe. Solving European spiritual problems today is the sport of historians of the past. Today, these problems have the charm of one wave in our sea, but they do not represent our totality.<sup>40</sup>

In the continuation of the text, Vinaver outlines new cultural geography: "We have already received a new voice, and that is: there are no privileged centers today, Paris, Beijing, Meccas, and Medinas, from where exclusive wisdom is sent. Voices come from everywhere, for those who have ears to hear, it has always been so, at the time of all important voices: one should have ears. We need to understand the time in which we live".<sup>41</sup> In a series of texts written in the 1920s, among the privileged topics in Vinaver's thematic catalog is the expansion of geocultural and geopoetic starting points.

Presenting new tendencies in Yugoslav literature after the First World War, Vinaver's text "Moderna jugoslovenska književnost" (Modern Yugoslav Literature, 1921) begins with the statement that the previous literature bore a narrow local character. "Chewed up Europeanism, applied to our special occasions", embodied by the work of Jovan Skerlić, who, for the needs of his nationalist-ethical program, organized a "purgatory of deviantly understood rationalist and rationalized patriotism", Vinaver points out. New literature is a reaction and not only a reaction to the poetic standardization of the past epoch, but also a new cultural pattern is proposed in whose core is the literary expression built on the stimuli of Nietzsche's and Bergson's philosophy, and embodied in the works of Ujević, Manojlović, Petrović, Crnjanski (the authors of the Library Albatross).

The basis of that program is different positioning of one's own culture and literature in relation to Europe. Instead of internalizing the position of the Other and observing both his own and the culture of the Other from his perspective, Vinaver insists that post-war modernists introduced something specific Yugo-

40 S. Vinaver, 2012: *Glasnik*. In: *Obrana pesništva...*, p. 422.

41 Ibidem, p. 423.

slav into the overall European experience, interested in difference and uniqueness. In programmatically written or intoned texts of the 1920s, Vinaver sought to affirm a universal cultural framework, thus going beyond the discourse of ethnocentrism and galicentrism, which was a common feature of the era, and which he already criticized in the eve of the First World War.

The publishing plan of Albatross included *Osnove i razvoj moderne poezije* (The Fundamentals and Development of Modern Poetry) by Todor Manojlović, a literary-scientific discourse that was supposed to “legitimize” fiction works that were published within the Library or were planned to be published. In the advertisement for the book, it was announced that “this book, with its critical intuition, breaks the crisis of criticism in our country after the war. It encompasses the evolution of European literature, as it has manifested itself in some different kinds of literature. [...] Today, when the history of literature is still being written and felt chronologically in our country, Mr Manojlović creates its internal legality and internal meaning”.<sup>42</sup> Although Manojlović’s monograph was not published within this library, the author published the text “Svetska kultura, svetska književnost” (World Culture, World Literature, 1925), with the remark that it is an excerpt from the book *Osnove i razvoj moderne poezije*. In redefining the discursive image of Europe, Manojlović thus started from the original and one of the most constant ideologues of comparative literature, the notion of *Weltliteratur*.

Giving an overview of the formations that have sought to create a common culture throughout European history, Manojlović states that Goethe gave this ideology a “synthetic formula and the right password” with his conception of world literature.<sup>43</sup> Goethe’s concept is not an objective fact, but a wish, “a cultural and educational postulate, a signpost to what should be, what is to be worked on”.<sup>44</sup> At the core of the term *Weltliteratur*, based on post-Enlightenment cosmopolitanism, Manojlović recognized the desire for pacification and cultural cooperation. He also noted that the ideology was placed with the desire to alleviate the tensions and dangers of nationalism and imperialism, as well as the economic competition in post-Napoleonic Europe. Therefore, it is not surprising that the author actualizes it at the beginning of the twenties of the last century. Emphasizing the “educational-ethical significance” of the ideology, fully aware of its multilayered nature, although ignoring its economic aspect, Manojlović sees in it an exceptional methodological potential, which,

42 *Biblioteka Albatros. Urednici Stanislav Vinaver i Todor Manojlović...*, p. 34.

43 T. Manojlović, 1987: *Svetska kultura, svetska književnost*. In: *Osnove i razvoj moderne poezije...*, pp. 7–9.

44 *Ibidem*, p. 9.

incidentally, confirms the re-actualization of the ideology of world literature in contemporary comparative studies:

It is a valuable guide for the literary historian: a guide for studying the latter as a whole, with the primary — if not exclusive — consideration of the essence, quality, and development of deeper emotional and ideological values, in which is the common core of individual, viewed externally and superficially, more or less different and disparate literatures.<sup>45</sup>

Putting it even more precisely, “Deeper, to its psychological and cultural-historical foundations, the penetrating examination of literature and the summarization of the knowledge thus acquired into great syntheses — that is the main, precisely, the only real task of literary historians”.<sup>46</sup> It is interesting and methodologically far-reaching that Manojlović puts the comparative perspective of European literature as a unique cultural and spiritual space in the task of a literary historian, rather than of a special comparatively profiled expert. Thus, in his study, he tried to bridge the traps of national literary histories which, as he points out, are not conceived according to ideological currents, epochs or movements, but according to languages and nations, geography or folklore, which are subject to “barren, but always relative” transient aesthetic principles and doctrines.<sup>47</sup> The authors that Todor Manojlović interpreted in his study were included in Albatross’ translation plan.<sup>48</sup>

45 Ibidem, p. 10.

46 Ibidem.

47 Ibidem, p. 11.

48 The connections between world literature and translation studies have become prominent over the last decade or so. David Damrosch has addressed the complex interaction between two disciplinary areas. Damrosch develops some of his most remarkable points concerning world literature and translations in the conclusion of the book *What is World Literature?* One of his points, particularly important for my research topic, is that “world literature is not a set canon of texts but a mode of reading: a form of detached engagement with worlds beyond our place and time”. By this, he means that these works should be considered as a way to connect to cultures and times other than our own. Because of this interconnection, Damrosch believes that translations are constantly being influenced by different outside forces. In the case of Albatross Library, we can state that its translation project/world literature is “an elliptical refraction of national literature” which reflects the profound shift of social, cultural, and literal paradigms after First World War. The “elipses” that phrased Albatross *world literature in translation* are the intention for the acquainted local cultural environment with modernist and Avant/Garde discourses as well as effort to overcoming internalizations of a narrative by which Serbian/Yugoslav/Balkan culture can only be European periphery. Both these aims profoundly restructured the horizons of Serbian literature. D. Damrosch, 2003: *What is World Literature?* Princeton University Press, Princeton [etc.], pp. 281—304.



Manojlović's and Vinaver's comparative perspective is primarily oppositional to the then meritorious literary-historical opinion, aimed at redefining the self-representation that this discourse implies. For the editors of the Library Albatross Serbian/Yugoslav culture was not on the periphery on the map of European literature. They did not appropriate the discourse of centralist cosmopolitanism of "big" cultures, nor did they adopt the discourse of cultural nationalism of "small" nations. The dialogue with foreign literature led not only to integration into European culture, but was also marked by a tendency to integrate different traditional trends in one's own culture. Vinaver and Manojlović tried to show that what was seen in their time as the literary periphery of Serbian culture corresponded to the center of the European literary mega-polysystem. The translation was vital in this context — translating the modernist canon of European/world literature into Serbian culture and translating Serbian modernist and avant-garde writers into the canon of Serbian and world literature.

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Žarka Svirčev

### Albatrosov prevodilački projekat

REZIME | U radu se predstavlja prevodilački koncept Biblioteke „Albatros” (1921), najznačajnijeg projekta danas kanonskih srpskih modernističkih i avangardnih pisaca. Ovaj koncept je paradigmatičan u okviru modernističkih stvaralačkih tendencija i programa

srpskih autora između dva svetska rata. Iako je u okviru „Albatrosa” objavljen samo jedan prevod, prevod Poovih *Priča tajanstva i mašte* Svetislava Stefanovića, lista najavljenih prevoda, programski tekst i paratekstovi koji prate reklamni materijal Biblioteke, te paratekstovi koji prate prevod Edgara Alana Poa, omogućavaju nam da diskutujemo o specifičnim prevodilačkim strategijama saradničke mreže „Albatrosa”. Prevodilački koncept Biblioteke Albatros podrazumevao je poetičko inoviranje srpske književnosti nakon Prvog svetskog rata i proširivanja književnog repertoara. Takođe, u okviru šireg poetičkog koncepta, Albatros je redefinisao pojmove tradicija, moderno i modernizam u ključu Bergsonove filozofije intuicije i trajanja. Naposljetku, prevodilački program Biblioteke imao je za cilj afirmaciju novog razumevanja ideologeme svetska književnost i njenog kanona na temelju avangardnog diskursa decentralizacije i ukidanja opozicije centar/periferija.

KLJUČNE REČI | Biblioteka Albatros, srpska književnost, literarni repertoar, svetska književnost

Žarka Svirčev

### Albatross Translation Project

SUMMARY | The paper presents the translation concept of the Library Albatross (1921). The Library is one of the most significant projects of Serbian modernist and avant-garde writers. The poetic program and translation strategies of the Library are paradigmatic within the modernist creative tendencies of Serbian authors between the two world wars. The list of the translations planned and the translations published, the advertizing materials and paratexts allow us to discuss the specific understanding of the translation of the Albatross collaborative network. The translation concept of the Albatross implied the poetic innovation of Serbian literature after the First World War through the expansion of the literary repertoire towards modernist and avant-garde poetics. Also, in the context of a broader esthetic concept, Albatross redefined the notions of tradition, modernity, and modernism in the key of Bergson’s philosophy of intuition and duration. Finally, the Library’s translation conception aimed to affirm a new understanding of the ideology of world literature. The new canon of Serbian and world literature is based on the avant-garde discourse of decentralization and the abolition of the center/periphery opposition.

KEYWORDS | Library Albatross, translation, Serbian literature, literary repertoire, world literature

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