

LITERARY TRANSLATIONS FOSTER AN EDUCATED IMMIGRANT COMMUNITY: THE NEWSPAPER *PROSVETA* AND CZECH-AMERICAN COMPARISONS

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COBISS: 1.01

ABSTRACT

Literary Translations Foster an Educated Immigrant Community: The Newspaper *Prosveta* and Czech-American Comparisons

This article examines fiction, and in particular serialized translations, in the Slovenian-American newspaper *Prosveta* (Enlightenment) during its first decade (1916–1926) and compares it with three Czech-American newspapers in this regard. The comparisons establish—on the background of literary history and journalistic practices—the importance of fiction in immigrant newspapers at that time. The purposes of publishing translations in *Prosveta* are also considered as they relate to ethnic community building and an extension of nation-building in the United States. The newspaper is viewed as a community-building institution that featured significant reader contributions.

KEYWORDS: ethnic newspapers, literary translations, Slovenian literature, Slovenian-Americans

IZVLEČEK

Literarni prevodi spodbujajo izobraževanje skupnosti priseljencev: časopis *Prosveta* in primerjave s češko-ameriškimi časopisi

Avtor v članku preučuje leposlovje, še posebej prevedena feljtonska dela, v slovensko-ameriškem časopisu *Prosveta* v prvem desetletju njegovega izhajanja (1916–1926) in ga v tem pogledu primerja s tremi drugimi češko-ameriškimi časopisi. S primerjavami na osnovi literarne zgodovine in publicističnih praks prepoznava pomen leposlovja v časopisih priseljenjskih skupnosti tistega obdobja. Avtor obravnava tudi namene objavljanja prevodov v časopisu *Prosveta* z vidika vzpostavljanja etničnih skupnosti in izgradnje naroda v Ameriki. Časopis je bil smatran kot institucija za vzpostavljanje skupnosti, pri čemer so imeli pomembno vlogo prispevki bralcev.

KLJUČNE BESEDE: etnični časopisi, literarno prevajanje, slovenska književnost, ameriški Slovenci

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THE SLOVENIAN-AMERICAN NEWSPAPER *PROSVETA* AND BUILDING AN EDUCATED COMMUNITY

The Slovenian-American newspaper *Prosveta* was founded in 1916 as an organ of the Slovenska narodna podporna jednota (Slovene National Benefit Society or SNPJ). Based on a survey of all translations of fiction in the newspaper, four functions of literary translations are posited. They served to 1) educate the immigrant readership by providing major works of world literature (in Slovenian), 2) present a selection of Slovenian literature in the English translation that showcased what the editors saw as the best of Slovenian culture, 3) furnish information on Slovenian literature to second-generation Slovenian-Americans, and 4) provide leisure reading. In carrying out these four functions, translations contributed to forming an imagined ethnic community in the spirit of nineteenth-century nation-building enterprises (Anderson, 2006) in the crucial area of literacy and communications (Hroch, 1996: 66–67). Immigrants across the United States could imagine themselves as part of a Slovenian or Slovenian-American nation at a point in time as they read print media in Slovenian and thus engaged in cultural continuity. This function might be considered a fifth, overarching role of translations in the newspaper.

Anderson's view has been productively applied to newspapers' role in the cohesion of ethnic communities in the United States Gavrilos (2003) has tailored Anderson's insights into media's nation-building role to nations without states, as the Slovenians were, and such nations' immigrants in the United States, where their identities were often split. The newspaper *Prosveta* was at once an imagined community's fiction, in Anderson's sense, and a forum for publishing fiction. These dual roles testify to Anderson's view that the novel and newspaper, both originating in the eighteenth century and becoming mass media in the nineteenth, were means of imagining a nation (2006: 25).

An obvious tension between enlightening readers about world literature, presenting Slovenian literature in English translation, informing the children of Slovenian-American immigrants about Slovenian literature, and entertaining is that a preponderance of Slovenian works would be expected in a Slovenian-American community-building project. This article attempts to explain how translated fiction nonetheless contributed to that project by considering the mix of writers and works, which served to elevate the prestige of Slovenian letters and the cultural status of *Prosveta's* readers.

For the sake of clarity regarding *Prosveta's* contents as fiction, here is a summary of one issue from Wednesday, April 19, 1922, that does not contain *belles-lettres*. The Wednesday issues had eight pages. International and national news cover pages 1 and 4. Page 2 is devoted to "Slike iz naselbin" (community portraits). Contributors write from San Francisco, Colorado Springs, Ohio, North Carolina, and Pennsylvania, in that order. Page 3 features announcements of local SNPJ activities. Advertisements take up most of page 5, and letters to the editor are on page 6. A roster of SNPJ

lodges is found on pages 7–8. Thus, reader-contributors produce three of the eight pages (2, 3, and 6), and two pages (7–8) illustrate the scope of Slovenian-American settlements (i.e., 400 SNPJ lodges across the United States). Taken together, the issue tells a story at one point in time of the Slovenian-American community in the United States, and a substantial part is told by community members. The newspaper's contents are fictional, not in the sense that they are counterfactual, but in the sense that they relate a story about the lives and interests of Slovenian-Americans.

Whereas Wednesday issues, like the one on April 19, were longer, the issues of April 20 and April 21, 1922, were the typical four pages long. One carries serial installments of Robert Louis Stevenson's *Treasure Island* and Fyodor Dostoevsky's *The Devils* on the last page. In smaller issues, the story of the Slovenian-American community told in the sections outlined above more closely abuts *belles-lettres* in the newspaper. Below I will examine the kinds of *belles-lettres*, and in particular, translations that *Prosveta* published and explain how the newspaper attempted to educate and entertain working-class readers.

METHODOLOGY

This article is based on an examination of the literary data (authors, works, translators) in all issues of *Prosveta* from its founding in 1916 through 1926. The information below on the proportion of Slovenian works to translated works is based on this survey. For comparative purposes, all issues of the Czech-American daily *Američan* from 1916 through 1926 were examined in the same way, as were the contents of the weekly Czech-American *Americké dělnické listy* from 1918 through 1926. (I was not able to obtain issues from 1916 and 1917). A briefer period (1916–1918) of the Czech-American daily *Denní hlasatel* was also surveyed for sample corroboration of the proportion of translations in *Američan*. The purposes of the comparisons were to confirm the practice of publishing literary translations in the Slavic-American press, establish the proportion of serialized translations to primary language works, and find out whether the translations in *Prosveta* were similar to or different from those in Czech-American newspapers and thereby test the functions posited for translations in *Prosveta*.

BACKGROUND: LITERATURE AND JOURNALISM

Two strands of literary history complement Anderson's theoretical interpretation of the newspaper and the novel's roles in the modern era. The first shows the intertwined development of literature and journalism in the English-speaking world. The modern novel was in a symbiotic relationship with the practice of reporting events, be they actual or ideologically true (Davis, 1983). Charles Clark (1994) traces

newspapers' role in building a cultured community in North America. Mark Canada (2013) outlines the intersections between fiction and journalism from the 1830s to the 1870s. By the 1870s, journalists in the United States adopted literary conventions to report stories (Roggenkamp, 2013). As Matthew Rubery (2009) argues, the reverse was true as applies to Victorian novels, despite protests on the part of novelists and their suspicion of journalism, particularly late-nineteenth-century New Journalism, which Karen Roggenkamp (2005) examines for convincing examples of cross-fertilization. New Journalism favored the entertainment value of newspaper content, and major papers "narrated the news with an eye toward character, plot, setting, dialogue, dramatic pacing, and other literary elements" (Roggenkamp, 2005: viii). Doug Underwood's (2008) study of journalism and the novel in Great Britain and the United States is the most relevant to the longer, serialized works this article will highlight.

The impetus for serialized fiction in newspapers came from France, beginning with Eugène Sue's *Les mystères de Paris* (1842–1843). A tide of serialized *feuilleton* novels followed (Bachleitner, 2009), and they were matched in popularity by historical fiction and later travel literature, most prominently represented by Jules Verne (Coward, 2002: 290–292). Some Slavic émigré newspapers would tap these popular nineteenth-century works, as well as realist fiction influenced by postbellum journalistic practices in the United States.

The second strand of literary history relevant to considerations of fiction in Slavic-American newspapers deals with literature in US periodicals, a result of New Historicism. US newspapers' role as purveyors of fiction has been underestimated, partly because of historians' focus on literary magazines and the perception that fiction, especially serialized fiction in newspapers, was of inferior quality (Johanning-smeier, 2013; 2015). Hladnik (2014: 125–132) has set forth a more inclusive view of popular novels in the Slovenian and Slovenian-American press as regards their place in the national literary corpus based on a survey of 250 *feuilleton* novels from 1873 onwards; he emphasizes the interplay of original and translated works and relatively more artistic and popular prose in the context of different periodicals (Hladnik, 2014: 125–126). The practice of publishing fiction in *Prosveta* and other Slavic-American newspapers was rooted in European traditions and American journalistic practices that went back decades.

BACKGROUND: THE US JOURNALISTIC CONTEXT

Many Slavic-American newspapers originated in the golden age of US newspapers, from after the Civil War to the turn of the century. They reached their collective peak circulation during WWI when foreign language newspapers numbered over 1,300 (Douglas, 1999: 209). This increase was very large compared to the 332 foreign language papers in 1900 (North, 1902: 1058), of which, for example, 28 were Czech

and 33 Polish. By 1910, the number of foreign-language newspapers had risen to 1,159 (Nord, 2001: 228).

From a contemporaneous perspective, it seemed that the numbers of recent immigrants correlated directly with newspaper circulation. As the 1900 US census reported,

it is reasonable to conclude that publications of this character depend for support, to a large extent, upon comparatively recent arrivals, and that in general, when emigration from a country decreases, the number of publications printed in the language of that country decreases, and when immigration shows and increase the number of publications also increases (North, 1902: 1048).

Observing Czech-American readers as a librarian after WWI in Cleveland, Ledbetter (1919: 14) predicted the demise of the Czech-American press because only the old and newcomers read it. A historian of the Czech-American community later agreed that “as an ethnic agency, the press also fell victim to the attrition which accompanied the appearance of new, more Americanized generations” (Chada, 1981: 136). Generational and language tensions could be seen in the Slovenian-American *Prosveta* already in the mid-1920s when the paper introduced an English-language page. At the same time, the continuing publication of literature in Slovenian attests to the importance *Prosveta*’s editors attached to its “enlightening” role. (The editors established the English-language title *Enlightenment* in 1916, though a closer translation of the title would be “education.”)

This historical context aids an understanding of ethnic newspapers’ contents. The leading German-American paper, the *New Yorker Staats-Zeitung*, for example, resembled an English-language daily, including in its practice of serializing fiction (Douglas, 1999: 218). As the nineteenth century progressed, political reporting decreased and special interest content, including literature, increased as a proportion of US English-language newspapers’ contents (Smythe, 2003: 211). The overall impact of New Journalism during this period was to increase newspapers’, especially urban newspapers’, attention to civic matters and human-interest stories (Smythe, 2003: 71–103), providing them to readers in a lively style. In the case of *Prosveta*, these trends would be reflected in the substantial space allotted to social and cultural events in Slovenian communities across the US, as well as to Slovenian literature and translations into Slovenian. This was the journalistic context in which Slavic-American newspapers were established in the late nineteenth and early twentieth century: expanding audiences, improved cross-country communications, and more engaging content.

Introducing literary historical and journalism as context is a departure from the approach to Slavic-American newspapers found in many histories of the respective ethnic communities, which devote modest attention to the papers’ contents while highlighting their ideological tendencies (Čapek, 1920; Chada, 1981; Galush, 2006,

Klemenčič, 1995; Prpic, 1971). In this view, the newspapers were mainly instruments for communicating ideological positions rather than cultural institutions. Studies of the contents of Slavic-American periodicals are few (Christian, 1993; Jaroszyńska-Kirchmann, 2015; Kasprzak, 2011; Piątkowska-Stepaniak, 2000); several Slovenian-American newspapers are the subject of the University of Ljubljana undergraduate theses on the Wikiverza page “Leposlovje v časnikih” (Wikiverza, 2022). Research has tended to focus on ethnic organizations (e.g., Roman Catholic parishes) and their leaders, when in fact, newspapers may have performed a greater role in community building:

Ethnic newspapers form a key link in the information network of an ethnic community; thus, the survival of the group’s newspapers takes on larger significance compared to other ethnic organizations. Because both the symbolic and information roles played by ethnic newspapers are important, we believe that *ethnic* newspapers are similar to social movement organizations that advocate group solidarity (Olzak & West, 1991: 458–459).

Literary-historical and journalistic considerations refocus attention on the community of readers and away from ethnic newspapers’ political stances. Fiction in Slavic-American newspapers contributed to the imagined community’s identity through the kinds of stories readers shared and, in the case of translations, their transcultural affiliations. This process of selection was also true of other peoples in North America, as Wright (2009) has demonstrated regarding serialized fiction and nation-building in Mexico. Ethnic Slovenian(-American) selves were to be formed in the context of the fiction and “factual fiction” in *Prosveta*, to which readers contributed a good deal of news, as they did to other Slavic-American newspapers (Jaroszyńska-Kirchmann, 2013). Although translations are the primary focus here, it is important to remember the entire body of fiction in an ethnic newspaper and its other contents—the items that physically frame it in the paper. For example, as Jernej Mlekuž (2022) has shown, the discourse surrounding Kranjska klobasa in the Slovenian-American press, including in advertisements, reveals everyday practices indicative of how people experienced nationality.

COMPARISONS TO CZECH-AMERICAN NEWSPAPERS

A comparison to three other Slavic-American newspapers in 1916–1926 confirms the place of fiction and helps distinguish *Prosveta*’s practices. Two of the Czech-American newspapers I compared were in Cleveland: the daily *Američan* (1891–) and the weekly *Americké dělnické listy* (1909–). A partial comparison was made with the Czech-American *Denní hlasatel* (1891–), which was in Chicago, as was *Prosveta*. Czech newspapers in the United States were a generation senior to the Slovenian

and, given Czech-Slovenian cultural connections, possible models for *Prosveta*. The editors of Chicago ethnic newspapers were in contact with one another (Petrov, 2006: 50), as the July 11, 1916, article on “Sjezd slovanských žurnalistů” in *Denní hlasatel* attests. The purpose of the comparisons is to indicate the extent of the practice of publishing literature and, in particular, lengthy literary translations in the Slavic-American press and to examine the kinds of works editors selected.

According to the general profile distinction of being Roman Catholic- or labor-oriented, three of the newspapers—excepting *Americké dělnické listy*—were considered neutral. Categorizing newspapers’ sympathies is not always easy; for example, *Američan* was

one of the oldest and most widely distributed Czech dailies which was not affiliated to a political party. This newspaper is a very good source for the cultural life of Czechs in the United States. Its large number of subscribers as well as the editors who were well known for their radical activities ensure us that *Američan* dealt with aspects concerning the life of the working class (Hoerder & Harzig, 1987: 240).

At the same time, the paper appealed to Cleveland Roman Catholic Czechs more than the labor-oriented *Americké delnické listy* (Zentos & Marley, 2018). The Chicago *Denní hlasatel* has also been categorized as a labor newspaper (Hoerder & Harzig, 1987: 244) or simply as “free-thinking” (Jaklová, 2010: 67)—that is, not allied with the Roman Catholic Church—and politically independent (Droba, 1934: 30). According to their editorial stances, both papers are comparable to the Slovenian-American *Prosveta*, which has been described as labor-oriented, but whose readership included small businessmen and professionals. Klemenčič (1996) noted the blending of different political, cultural, and business interests in *Prosveta* and the Slovenian-American community in general. Furthermore, Majdič (2016: 29) commented that while “*Prosveta* was liberal... aside from isolated texts with an anti-clerical tone, it did not broadcast its liberalism.” With certain key exceptions (e.g., works by Upton Sinclair and Louis Adamic and a few anti-clerical works), editorial orientation seems to have moderately influenced the choice of fiction. Thus, the newspapers to which I have compared *Prosveta* resemble it by being generally liberal or free-thinking but not stridently anti-Catholic.

The comparisons also involve a geographic factor. *Američan* and *Americké dělnické listy* in Cleveland had metropolitan-area orientations. *Denní hlasatel*, like *Prosveta*, was read across the United States. Thus, the comparisons of newspapers involve two with countrywide content (*Denní hlasatel* and *Prosveta*) and two with a metropolitan-area focus. This characteristic, of course, implies two kinds of community-building: among émigré speakers of the same language and their descendants in a metropolitan area and translocal, to borrow Robert Zecker’s (2004) term. The Chicago metropolitan area, in particular, saw transnational and supra-regional (i.e., as applies to Slavic-speaking regions of the Habsburg Empire) community-building

among South Slavs (Kralj, 2012: 148–62). We will see this reflected in the selection of prose works in *Prosveta* by comparison, for example, to that in a translocal newspaper like *Denní hlasatel*. Björk (2004) makes a similar distinction in surveying two national, two regional, and one local Swedish-American newspapers for serialized fiction in 1890–1892, 1901–1903, 1909–1911, and 1921–1923.

The Czech-language *Američan* (1899–) carried serialized fiction at this time on pages 6 and 7 of each eight-page edition and on several pages of its Sunday edition. The fiction later moved to pages 4 and 5 in 1918, when during WWI, the paper was reduced to six pages. (The Sunday paper ended in the summer of 1917 because of falling subscriptions and sales.) *Američan* and *Americké dělnické listy* published few short stories compared to the Chicago *Denní hlasatel*. When the Sunday edition of *Američan* ended, short stories virtually disappeared from the paper. Besides fiction, the following took up the most space in the paper: international and local (Cleveland) news, advertisements (especially of department stores, cigarettes, securities offerings, and real estate), death notices and memorials, and ads for motion pictures. The latter, missing from *Prosveta*, indicates the newspaper's local audience. Naturally absent in *Američan* and *Americké dělnické listy*, unlike *Denní hlasatel*, was news from Czech settlements in other parts of the United States. *Americké dělnické listy* had 12 pages from 1918 through 1924, then 16 to 20 pages from 1925 through 1926. Throughout this period, two pages were devoted to fiction. Its other contents resembled that of *Američan*. Thus, serialized fiction occupied substantial portions of *Američan* and *Americké dělnické listy* in the context of political, commercial, community, and entertainment news.

Since serialized fiction predominated, we will leave aside examples of short fiction in *Američan* and *Americké dělnické listy*. From the second half of 1915 through 1926, *Američan* featured 52 authors of serialized fiction, of whom 24 (46%) were Czech. It carried translations of French, German, Italian, American, Russian, and Swedish writers, with French writers (12 or 23%) most heavily represented. Even after the Sunday edition ended and the length of the paper was reduced, there remained a balance between Czech and non-Czech works serialized side by side. Translations into Czech were generally popular literature. Typical of the Czech works in *Američan* are Karel V. Rais's *Zapadlí vlastenci*, about 1840s enlighteners in Bohemia, and *Rodiče a děti*, with its social concerns, or the psychological realism in Matěj A. Šimáček's *Lačná srdce*. There are examples of Czech historical fiction by Jan Klecanda and Josef Svátek. Surprisingly, the only American work translated is John Jacob Astor's science fiction novel, and there is no example of Czech-language fiction by an émigré writer. Equally notable is the scarcity of translations from Slavic languages other than Russian. (A collection of Slovenian Zofka Kveder's sketches was published in 1916, with the author's name given as Žofka Kvedrová-Jelovšková; it was not identified as a translation.)

This proportion of Czech writers (46%) aligns with data Björk (2004: 209) assembled on the Swedish-American press: two-thirds of the serialized novels in

national-circulation papers and a regional paper were by Swedish authors; however, only one-third were Swedish in a second regional paper. According to Björk, Swedish novels' availability and entertainment value were two important factors governing the ratio. Serialized novels were supposed to be exciting, perhaps not in accordance with editors' serious views of their newspapers, and thereby maintain reader interest and subscriptions (Björk, 2004: 212–214).

Americké dělnické listy presents a contrasting picture. From 1918 through 1926, the weekly serialized works by 19 different writers, 15 (79%) of whom were Czech. There were two works by Americans, one by a Russian, and one by Ivan Cankar. The kinds of fiction by Czech writers—historical, realist, and rural—were like that in *Američan*. Of the four translated works, only one—by an American—can be called popular literature. It is apparent that the newspaper's editors did not turn to translations as sources of entertainment.

A third sampling, from Chicago's *Denní hlasatel* during 1916–1918, mirrors publishing practices at *Američan*. The proportion of Czech writers among authors of all serialized works is 47%, and French writers are the largest non-Czech group. Historical novels are prominent in both papers. Much like *Američan*, *Denní hlasatel* did not publish translations from other Slavic languages.

The comparisons show the importance of serialized translations for providing popular literature in the Czech-American *Američan* and *Denní hlasatel*, but not *Americké dělnické listy*. Taken together, these two newspapers turned, for the most part, to French writers for mystery and crime fiction. In all three comparisons, historical fiction was clearly prevalent in serialized works, doubtless because of its nation-building role. The comparisons also show how the editors' frame of reference remained European literature, even though their papers were founded two decades earlier. Further, translations from English and French, and not from peripheral literatures, such as most Slavic ones, were preferred. The comparisons help to appreciate the formation of *Prosveta* and its editor's views of Slovenian-language and translated fiction. On the first page of the first edition (July 1, 1916), the editors described the paper's mission:

Prosveta will educate our working class in the progressive and modern spirit. There is a huge gap of ignorance, spiritual laziness and cultural backwardness among our people and a lot of work and effort will be needed to seal this gap. The sacred mission of *Prosveta* will be to endeavor to fill this gap.

Prosveta will of course provide to its readers the latest news about all important world, American and domestic events: we will pay particular attention to original news from Slovene settlements. We will bring instructional, scientific and economic discussions along with the regular articles on everyday events, original stories and translations of good, modern writers, and from time to time also humorous writings to pass the time.

Editor Ivan Molek maintained this policy until he left the paper in 1944. Serialized fiction in *Prosveta* included works translated from two other Slavic languages, two works by Slovenian-Americans, but little of the popular literature found in the two Czech papers.

FICTION IN *PROSVETA* DURING ITS FIRST DECADE, 1916–1926

During the first decade of its existence, *Prosveta* published 113 writers at least twice. The total number of works by these authors was 1,189. Forty-six writers were published eight times or more, for a total of 941 works, or 79% of the writers with multiple publications. This shows a wide diversity of writers and a concentration of the most published ones.

Thirty of the forty-six (65%) were Slovenian, seven were French, and five (all in the top ten) were Russian. The Russians included Leo Tolstoy and Anton Chekhov, as well as Arkady Averchenko, Maxim Gorky, and Mikhail Zoschenko. (The highest number of pages in the history of *Prosveta* were devoted to the Russian writer Fyodor Dostoevsky, whose novels *Crime and Punishment*, *The Devils*, and *The Brothers Karamazov* appeared in the paper before WWII.) The five Russian writers and four Slovenians in the top ten accounted for 342 of the 1,189 works by authors of two or more works or 29%. Thus, the most frequently published Slovenian and Russian writers account for almost one-third of writers published multiple times. The Slovenian Ivan Cankar is just behind Chekhov, highlighting the relationship between the Russian short story (and drama) master and the Slovenian master in the genres. The Russians Averchenko and Zoshchenko's works, as well as those by Anatole Franc, are well represented, doubtless because of their satirical depictions of middle-class life; Gorky's social realism complemented *Prosveta's* political content. Other short prose masters among the top twenty writers are Guy de Maupassant, Mark Twain, and Oscar Wilde. The hefty proportion of translations among the forty-six most published writers (35%) corresponds to the proportion of translations overall (33%) between 1916 and 1926 (Table 1). The entire mix serves to place Slovenian writers in the company of well-known foreign writers.

year	number of works	number of translations	%	number of longer works	number of translations	% translations
1916	94	14	15%	3	3	100%
1917	81	17	21%	9	1	11%
1918	36	9	25%	6	3	50%
1919	11	5	45%	4	2	50%
1920	14	5	36%	2	1	50%
1921	51	21	41%	6	4	67%

1922	57	14	25%	9	7	78%
1923	102	14	14%	4	2	50%
1924	200	91	45%	4	0	0%
1925	162	28	17%	7	0	0%
1926	228	98	43%	9	5	56%

Table 1: Proportion of translations among all literary works in *Prosveta*.

The data in Table 1 are taken from a survey of *Prosveta's* entire run, on which I cooperated with Nike Pokorn of the University of Ljubljana. Professor Miran Hladnik of the University of Ljubljana and his students' surveys of *Prosveta* aided us in correcting our results. Their work¹ includes the years 1916–1920 (Majdič, 2016). The majority of the writers published from 1916 through 1926 appeared in *Prosveta* in the following decades, many into the 1950s. An interesting exception is Josip Jurčič (1844–1881), the first Slovenian novelist, who was last published in 1924. Jurčič's case shows the editor's preference for twentieth-century and late nineteenth-century fiction (e.g., by Chekhov and Tolstoy). There seems to be a predilection for relatively younger (in their thirties or forties) writers, who were of the same generation of assistant and later chief editor Ivan Molek (b. 1882). A significant number of Slovenian writers were associated with the turn-of-the-century Moderna literary movement. Notable exceptions to generational cohesion are classics such as Alexander Dumas (b. 1802), Ivan Turgenev (b. 1818), and Emile Zola (b. 1840). These writers continued to appear throughout *Prosveta's* history.

In addition to satire, *Prosveta* favored historical fiction, social realism, rural fiction, and some lighter fare, such as humorous stories. Translations were the main source of the latter. Rural fiction might be explained by the prevalence of the genre in Slovenian literature at the time, and the primarily rural backgrounds of Slovenian immigrants in the United States.

SERIALIZED FICTION IN PROSVETA, 1916–1926

Prosveta's practice of publishing serialized fiction was established before 1916 by the newspaper's forerunner, the SNPJ's weekly *Glasiło*. Long translations, such as Walter Scott's *Kenilworth*, which, when it appeared alongside his *Ivanhoe* or Tommaso Grossi's historical novel *Marco Visconti*, took up almost two full pages of the newspaper's four. The year 1916 saw a departure from translations of historical fiction with Émile Zola's *L'Argent*, a critique of financial corruption. There were no long translations in 1917. Among extended works by Slovenian writers were Josip Jurčič's *Lepa Vida*, a historical family tragedy, and Josip Stritar's *Zorin*, a philosophical

1 Available at <https://sl.wikisource.org/wiki/Prosveta>.

travel novel, and his *Gospod Mirodolski*, a work of rural fiction. Serialized translations of historical fiction returned in 1918 and 1919 with Sienkiewicz's *With Fire and Sword* and Václav Beneš Trebizsky's historical novel *Kraljica Dagmar*. Three long Slovenian works—Anton Koder's "Luteranci" (Lutherans), a historical novella, Jakob Sket's *Milko Vogrin*, an autobiographical novel, and Josip Jurčič's *Deseti brat* (The Tenth Brother)—complement the translations. What is remarkable in *Prosveta*'s early years is the predominance of historical fiction and a relatively small number of long works of adventure, mystery, and romance, which were found in two of the Czech-American newspapers I compared.

As with fiction overall, during the remainder of the newspaper's first-decade historical novels and novels on rural life and social injustice continued to predominate, with several exceptions. No long translations appeared in 1924 or 1925, but between 1920 and 1926, *Prosveta* serialized historical novels by Sienkiewicz, the Croatian Josip Tomić Alexander, and the Czech Prokop Chocholoušek. It also published a novel by Upton Sinclair and the Czech Božena Němcová. Dostoevsky's *The Devils* was doubtless a response to the post-WWI Red Scare (it also appeared in *Američan*). The exceptions were Dumas's *Vitez rdeče hiše* (*Le Chevalier de Maison Rouge*), Robert Louis Stevenson's *Treasure Island*, and the Swede Frank Heller's mystery *Blagajna velikega vojvode* (The Grand Duke's Finances).

Overall, translations made up 50% of serialized fiction during *Prosveta*'s first decade, very close to the average in *Američan* and *Denní hlasatel*, and resemble the proportion of top-ten most translated authors of fiction (four Slovenians vs. six translated). In contrast, Slovenians comprised 65% of the 46 most frequently published authors. The number of serialized works by other Slavic writers and the relatively fewer popular literature examples distinguish *Prosveta*'s selections.

Prosveta's mission to establish the Slovenian cultural heritage in the United States is evident in the initiation of a weekly English-language page in 1926 with the promise of publishing translations from Slovenian, the first of which was Louis Adamic's English version of Ivan Cankar's *Yerney's Justice* (Hlapec Jernej in njegova pravica). This page was part of a project, as the editors explained in the May 12, 1926, issue:

The publication of this novel will be the first of a series from the Slovenian through which we intend to acquaint our readers with various types of novels, romances, and poems written by Slovene authors. We are fully aware of the fact that you have not had an opportunity to read Slovene writings in the language you would clearly understand. Therefore, we commence with a new column on our page, "Slovene Literature." In addition to the works of the various periods of Slovene literature, we will also publish short biographies and explanations. This, we hope, will be educational as well as interesting reading...

They went on to explain the serious purpose of the serialized translation they were offering:

[*Yerney's Justice*] is one of the most outstanding novels written by the Slovene novelist and poet Ivan Cankar. From the literary standpoint, *Yerney's Justice* is not a novel with intricate plots and thrilling climaxes of narrative; it is not a romance to please the reader who admires heroes in love stories. It is rather a story of most delightful description; it is a study of social differences that exist not only in the country of Slovenia.

This project, however, did not last long; translations into English faded in the next several years and disappeared by 1930.

The variety of fiction, including serialized fiction, shows an intent to make the Slovenian immigrant community aware of its heritage and, in general, elevate its cultural level. Publishing translations also followed a general Slovenian effort to situate Slovenian literature in Central European and world literature, one best evidenced by Slovenska Matica's series "Prevodi iz svetovne književnosti" (Translations from World Literature, 1904–1937). The series aimed to strengthen Slovenian literature by improving its readership, in the process demonstrating that the Slovenian language was a capable vehicle (Juvan, 2019: 228). Similarly, in 1927, *Prosveta* introduced a section entitled "Biseri iz svetovne literature" (Gems of World Literature) that offered translations from major European languages, though motivated by education and not language concerns. Authors included, for example, Balzac, Boccaccio, Chekhov, Dickens, Dostoevsky, Flaubert, Goethe, Gorky, Hauptmann, Irving, Maupassant, Poe, Shakespeare, Shelley, Swift, Tolstoy, Twain, Verne, Wilde, and Zola.

CONCLUSION

Prosveta's contents evidence the integration of literature and journalism in the United States and European press that preceded the newspaper's founding by decades. *Prosveta* pursued the goal of building an educated, primarily but not exclusively working-class émigré community across the United States. This aim was consonant with Slovenian nation-building, only shifted to North America and hyphenated to become Slovenian-American. One means to this end was the established practice in the US English-language and ethnic press of publishing fiction. Publishing fiction addressed the goals of 1) educating the readership by providing major works of world literature (in Slovenian), 2) presenting a selection of Slovenian literature in the English translation that represented the best of Slovenian culture, 3) furnishing information on Slovenian literature to second-generation Slovenian-Americans, and 4) providing leisure reading. Serialized novels constituted a large portion of the space devoted to fiction. Regarding the first and fourth goals, there were fewer novels in

popular genres, such as crime fiction, among serialized works in *Prosveta* than in two of the three Czech papers compared. *Prosveta's* short fiction included relatively more leisure reading. Reports from contributors across the United States and notices of social gatherings can also be viewed as entertainment. Serialized prose works were a major vehicle for pursuing *Prosveta's* cultural community building, more so than in its Czech-American counterparts, in which serialized works, especially translated works, tended to be leisure reading. Other parts of the newspaper, including contributions by readers, complemented the fiction section, telling the story of Slovenian-American nation-building across the United States.

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POVZETEK

LITERARNI PREVODI SPODBUJAJO IZOBRAŽEVANJE SKUPNOSTI PRISELJENCEV: ČASOPIS *PROSVETA* IN PRIMERJAVE S ČEŠKO- AMERIŠKIMI ČASOPISI

Timothy Pogačar

Avtor v članku preučuje leposlovje, še posebej prevedena feljtonska dela, v slovensko-ameriškem časopisu *Prosveta* v prvem desetletju njegovega izhajanja (1916–1926) in ga na osnovi literarnozgodovinskih in publicističnih praks primerja s tremi drugimi slovansko-ameriški časopisi. S primerjavo časopisa *Prosveta* s češkoameriški časopisi *Američan*, *Americké dělnické listy* in *Denní hlasatel* potrjuje prakso objavljanja leposlovja, obenem pa prikaže, kako je bil izbor objavljenih del v *Prosveti* podrejen poslanstvu časopisa, ki je bilo v prvi vrsti izobraževalno. Obravnavani časopisi so imeli podobne bralce, a so se razlikovali v geografskem območju vpliva. Literarna zgodovina se nanaša na povezave romanov z novinarskim pisanjem in izgradnjo naroda, pa tudi na priljubljenost žanrov, kot so feljton ter zgodovinski in kriminalni romani iz sredine devetnajstega stoletja. Ti žanri so bili v slovansko-ameriških časopisih dobro zastopani med feljtonskimi deli, zlasti med prevedenimi. Na kratko so predstavljeni trendi v novinarskem pisanju na področju imigrantskega tiska v Združenih državah Amerike, pa tudi porast tovrstnega tiska v prvih desetletjih dvajsetega stoletja, izpostavljen pa je tudi pomen prispevkov bralcev. Avtor opiše vse leposlovje, ki je bilo v tistem obdobju objavljeno v *Prosveti*, ter nato pokaže, kako je slednja v primerjavi s češkoameriški časopisi dajala prednost izobraževalni funkciji feljtonskega leposlovja pred njegovo razvedrilno funkcijo. Feljtonski romani, od katerih je bila večina prevedenih, so bili pomembno izobraževalno orodje.