
Multilingual Literature, Translation, and Crnjanski's *Роман о Лондону* (A Novel about London)

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Recommended Citation

Francuski, Biljana Djorić "Multilingual Literature, Translation, and Crnjanski's *Роман о Лондону* (A Novel about London)." *CLCWeb: Comparative Literature and Culture* 15.7 (2013): <<https://doi.org/10.7771/1481-4374.2383>>

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Volume 15 Issue 7 (December 2013) Article 9
Biljana Djorić Francuski,
"Multilingual Literature, Translation, and
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<<http://docs.lib.purdue.edu/clcweb/vol15/iss7/9>>

Contents of **CLCWeb: Comparative Literature and Culture 15.7 (2013)**
Special Issue **New Work in Comparative Literature in Europe.**
Ed. Marina Grishakova, Lucia Boldrini, and Matthew Reynolds
<<http://docs.lib.purdue.edu/clcweb/vol15/iss7/>>

Abstract: In her article "Multilingual Literature, Translation, and Crnjanski's Роман о Лондону (A Novel about London)" Biljana Djorić Francuski discusses aspects of the translation of multilingual texts. Although *xenisms* (words in foreign languages) can often be translated and yet preserved as a part of code mixing, it is difficult to transpose what are known as nonce loans. A further obstacle arises when the author of the multilingual text is such an artist of subtle allusion that the dominant language is pervaded with words and phrases transferred from other languages so that they gain meanings which differ from the expected ones. Djorić Francuski illustrates such instances through the example of the multilingual novel *Роман о Лондону* (A Novel about London) by Miloš Crnjanski.

Biljana DJORIĆ FRANCUSKI

Multilingual Literature, Translation, and Crnjanski's *Роман о Лондону* (A Novel about London)

Miloš Crnjanski (1893-1977) was born in Banat, a multi-ethnic region of the Austro-Hungarian empire, and he grew up in Temesvár (today Timișoara) with deep Serbian national and cultural sentiments. Crnjanski's literary career started with the publication of a collection of his anti-war poems entitled *Лирика Итаке* (Lyrics of Ithaca) and the play *Маска* (Mask), both in 1918. Later on, he became known for his novels — *Дневник о Чарнојевићу* (1921) (The Diary of Čarnojević), *Сеобе* (1929, 1962) (Migrations), and *Роман о Лондону* (1971) (A Novel about London) — and for his three-volume memoirs *Ембахаве* (1969-1970) (Embassies). Almost all of his works are about Serbian national history, which he manages to represent in a poetic way. Along with the Nobel Prize in Literature laureate Ivo Andrić, he was among the first modernists in Serbian literature. In 1920, he published the poem "Суматра" ("Sumatra") which gave the name to the literary movement Sumatraism, a concept of cosmic harmony, and an essay entitled "Објашњење 'Суматре'" ("The Explanation of 'Sumatra'") that represents the manifesto of Serbian modernism (see, e.g., Norris, "Introduction" vii). In a later phase of his career Crnjanski was a leading figure of postmodern Serbian literature.

The horrors of the world wars influenced Crnjanski's life and writing: with World War I he lost his youthful illusions and started writing in order to find a new sense of life, and after World War II he became an expatriate and had to look for a sense of life all over again. Having worked as a teacher and then as a journalist upon his graduation, Crnjanski entered diplomatic service and was appointed as the cultural attaché to several embassies of the then Yugoslavia in Berlin, Lisbon, and Rome, where he was serving when World War II started. Because of the outbreak of war, he fled from Rome and joined the exiled Yugoslav government in London, where he lived until he and his wife Vida — born Ružić — returned to Belgrade in 1965. In 1971, Crnjanski published *Роман о Лондону* (A Novel about London), his last and one of his most noteworthy novels. The following year, he was awarded one of the most prestigious Serbian literary prizes for the novel, the prize of the Belgrade-based *NIN* weekly, presented every year for literary achievements, and that was the crown of his prolific career as a writer.

The most important topic of Crnjanski's oeuvre is the homesickness of his protagonists and their struggle to reach the native land, similar to Ulysses's journey back home, and this is alluded to in the titles of particular works, such as *Лирика Итаке* (Lyrics of Ithaca). This is also the destiny of the main protagonists in A Novel about London — prince Nikolaj Rodionovic Rjepnin and his wife Nadja — Russian emigrants who live in London and can barely make ends meet. There are many similarities between their condition and the life of Crnjanski and his wife Vida in the same city, also in exile. David A. Norris underlines that the financial circumstances of the Serbian couple "were frequently desperate. Vida worked from home as a seamstress, and Crnjanski was unable to find long-term employment. He took a series of menial jobs, as a book-keeper in a shoe shop and as a porter delivering books to the wealthy homes of London" ("Introduction" ix). We can draw the following parallels between the two couples: neither Rjepnin nor Crnjanski could find a decent or at least a permanent job, both their wives worked as seamstresses and sold the rag dolls they made at home to department stores, whereas their husbands were forced to accept unskilled jobs, which was demeaning for any person who had previously had such a high position in society: Rjepnin was an aristocrat and Crnjanski used to be a diplomat and was a known writer. Work as a shoe shop clerk and accountant is important because it gave the title to the only excerpt of A Novel about London written in English: "London and the Shoemakers." The only difference between Crnjanski and his protagonist is that the author eventually returns home, while Rjepnin commits suicide, because for him "Death is the only alternative for the being-in-time which he has adopted outside history and the present" (Norris, *The Novels* 139). Nonetheless, despite these similarities and another significant fact — that Crnjanski himself is the main protagonist in two out of three English versions of the above-mentioned excerpt entitled "London and the Shoemakers," one of which is even written as a first-person narrative — Crnjanski would not admit that his Novel about London is an autobiography: "The novel should, in no

way, be taken as a biography ... It does include some of my experiences, but one should in no way believe that I had previously experienced each of these events on my own skin. In the same way as the author of crime novels does not participate in revolver duels that he describes — my life is not behind the plot of *A Novel about London*" ("Roman, naime, nikako ne treba primiti kao biografski ... U njemu ima nešto od mojih iskustava, ali nikako ne treba verovati kako sam svaku dogodovštinu prethodno morao osetiti na svojoj koži. Kao što ni autor kriminalističkih romana ne učestvuje u revolveraškim dvobojima koje opisuje — tako ni iza fabule *Romana o Londonu* ne stoji moj život" [Crnjanski qtd. in Popović <http://novosti.rs/dodatni_sadrzaj/clanci.119.html:278902-Akademija---ne-hvala>; unless indicated otherwise, all translations are mine]).

In both the third version of the English excerpt "London and the Shoemakers" (Crnjanski 2006 edition 701-92) and in *A Novel about London* itself, which was finally written in Serbian in its entirety, the main character is no longer Crnjanski, but Prince Rjepnin. Asked why he wrote a novel about Russian post-war emigrants and not the Serbian ones, Crnjanski said: "Our émigrés would not be a worthwhile topic for a writer. They are divided, pathetic, pitiable. They are very tragic, but not suitable for a novel. Things are different regarding the Russian émigrés. They are present in life in a different way. And therefore worthy of a writer's attention" ("Naša emigracija ne bi bila zahvalna tema za pisca. Podeljena je, jadna, sažaljenja dostojna. Ona je vrlo tragična, ali nije za roman. Sa ruskom emigracijom je drugačije. Ona je na drugi način prisutna u životu. I, zato, vredna piščeve pažnje" [Crnjanski qtd. in Popović <http://novosti.rs/dodatni_sadrzaj/clanci.119.html:278902-Akademija---ne-hvala>]). My opinion is, however, that an entirely different reason lies behind Crnjanski's decision to switch to a Russian protagonist, a reason which is significant for the fact that he stopped writing *A Novel about London* in English and also for another fact, namely that the novel has never been translated to English.

Crnjanski focused on the destiny of people who live far away from home in a foreign culture: "novels with the international theme — such as Henry James' *The Ambassadors* or E.M. Forster's *A Passage to India* — usually explore the drama of human misunderstandings owing to different horizons of cultural expectations" (Koljević 75). In *A Novel about London* he deals with this theme as well and thus reflects the alienation of displaced persons, emigrants surrounded by people belonging not only to another, foreign culture, but also by people belonging to other cultures, emigrants in the same way as they themselves are. In order to highlight this cosmopolitan, multinational milieu, Crnjanski placed his Russian protagonists in a strange world in which Serbian is spoken as a meta-language and it becomes obvious to the reader well before the end of the novel that there is not a single Serbian character in the whole novel, although it is composed almost entirely in the Serbian language. Neither do the main protagonists encounter any Serbs nor come upon anything Serbian at all during the whole duration of the plot. What makes the novel even more peculiar is the fact that the typescript of the novel is in Cyrillic, although the Cyrillic and Latin alphabets were in almost equal use in Serbia.

The novel belongs to what can be called multilingual or heterolingual literature, which is characterized by language diversity — in this case, brimming with words and phrases from languages other than Serbian. The use of Cyrillic lettering is important in the novel because this makes the words from these other languages stand out as most of them are written in the Latin alphabet and they are sometimes further emphasized by the use of italics. Heterolingualism or textual multilingualism "refers to the use of foreign languages or social, regional, and historical language varieties in literary texts" (Meylaerts 4). Heterolingualism is used in *A Novel about London* to reflect the multicultural context of life in post-war London with each of the represented languages serving a certain purpose. English words and phrases are, of course, used as parts of the language of the local population to create a typically British atmosphere and as "aberrations which reflect the fate of an exile in linguistic terms" (Koljević 82). Russian is mostly in use when Russian emigrants talk among themselves — when they "struggle for a definition of self" (Norris, *The Novels* 140), as well as in internal monologues of the main protagonist burdened "by his fear of losing his sense of national identity as a Russian living in London" (Norris, *The Novels* 129) or as the expression of "his desire for a return to the past" (Norris, *The Novels* 140). The example of mingling these two languages with Serbian demonstrates that in such hybrid literary texts, heterolingualism has several historically conditioned dimensions of which the social and the psychological ones reflected in the usage of English and Russian are the most

important. Besides these two, Crnjanski often introduced words and phrases imported from other languages too, mostly French, which was at that time the *lingua franca* of the aristocracy, the educated strata, and also the language of fashion. However, there are also utterances from further languages which have no other function in the novel than to serve the objective of exoticizing the text.

For the purposes of my study it is not necessary to make a distinction between borrowing, code mixing, code switching, and interference, although there are some important differences between the four categories. In brief, borrowing regards loanwords already established in a certain standard language, interference occurs when two languages involuntary overlap, and code mixing is "a type of insertional code switching, where a constituent from language A is embedded into an utterance in language B, and where language B is clearly the dominant language" (Van Dulm 9-10). Without going into lengthy explanations of the differences, it suffices to clarify that while in code mixing shorter discourse elements — often just a single word — are alternated, code switching involves the alternation of longer elements from different languages. In a discussion of the Italian-Canadian writer Nino Ricci, code switching is defined as related to translation because "it represents an attempt to translate, resolve and negotiate a linguistic and cultural conflict experienced by second generation Italian immigrants, between the Italian values taught at home and the Canadian values taught through formal education. By constantly hinting at these contrasting Italian and Canadian cultural perspectives, code switching can signal shifts in focalisation and voice" (Baldo 7). What is most important regarding the use of English in A Novel about London is that the protagonists of the novel "normally do not switch or mix codes in the way true bilinguals do. There are hardly any long conversations conducted solely in English. When English is used in the text, it is usually a very short sentence, a simple phrase or a single word" (Čubrović and Djorić-Francuski 38-39). However, since this statement also refers to the use of other foreign languages in the novel, it is clear that this is a case of code mixing and not code switching. In the light of these theoretical arguments, let us now look at examples of short utterances from different languages — the so-called *xenisms* — mixed into A Novel about London.

Words in foreign languages stand out especially when they are written in the Latin alphabet. In contrast, Russian loanwords are in Cyrillic like Serbian. For the Serbian text, however, Crnjanski had a choice between the Latin and Cyrillic alphabets, so he obviously had a reason why he selected the latter, although he wrote most of the Serbian version of A Novel about London while he was still living in that city surrounded by the English language and its Latin script. All the examples cited here are taken from the 2004 edition of A Novel about London and my English translation of the original text is given in brackets thereafter (some of these translations have appeared in Čubrović and Djorić-Francuski). The following colors are used for *xenisms* of different origin: red for English, green for Russian, blue for French, violet for other languages, and yellow for Serbian when *xenisms* are translated by Crnjanski either before or after the original given in another language, as well as for translation of these Serbian words and phrases into English.

English *xenisms*. Most of the foreign words and phrases are from English, the language spoken in the country to which the main protagonists of the novel have emigrated. The English *xenisms* mostly represent greetings and introductions, as well as phatic expressions which serve as conversation openers in British small talk, wittily called by Kate Fox "grooming-talk," starting with "greeting-talk" and usually going on to the typical "weather-speak." According to Fox, the purpose of these expressions — which she names "facilitators" — is to overcome certain handicaps such as reserve, social inhibition, embarrassment, awkwardness and some other difficulties supposedly encountered by the British when they speak in the presence of others (36-37). On the other hand, besides small talk there are many culture-specific items called culture-bound words. These culture words are sometimes considered to be untranslatable because there is no "relevant situational feature" (Bassnett 38) in the target culture, in this case the culture of the dominant language, Serbian: "The source-language word may express a concept which is totally unknown in the target culture" (Baker 21) and in such cases it is hard to find the right substitute. Here are examples of culture-specific lexemes:

"Зову их 'радници са белом крагном.' *White collar workers*" (14) ("They are called '*white collar workers*.' *White collar workers*")

"Ту је и идеално створење Лондона, човек у мелону: *Billy Brown, of London town* — Лондонац Били Браун" (75) ("The ideal resident of London is also there, a man wearing a bowler hat: *Billy Brown, of London town* — Londoner Billy Brown")

"Цела Енглеска чека тај дан поласка на одмор, први понедељак, августа месеца, који се назива 'празник банака.' *Bank Holiday*. Тог дана не раде чак ни банке. То је највећи празник у години" (233) ("All people in England wait for that day, when their holidays commence, the first Monday, in the month of August, which is called 'the holiday of banks.' *Bank Holiday*. On that day, even the banks are closed. That is the biggest holiday of the year")

Small talk:

"Енглези им, уосталом, стално понављају, да им је жао. *So sorry*" (95) ("The English, by the way, repeat all the time, *that they are sorry. So sorry*")

"Па не само то, него додају и, кад узму место другог: *хвала, Thank you*" (127) ("And not only that, but they also add, when somebody stands up so that they can take a seat: *thanks, Thank you*")

"Шта могу да учиним за вас? *What can I do for you?*" (131) ("What can I do for you? *What can I do for you?*")

"Одлазе и кажу 'добру ноћ.' *Good night*" (167) ("They are leaving and saying, 'good night.' *Good night*")

"*Nice day, Mary*" — каже тој жени кад киша не пада. А кад киша пада, она понавља, свако јутро: '*A good old English day, Mister Sheepin*'" (173) ("'*Nice day, Mary*' — he says to her when it is not raining. When it is raining, though, this is what she repeats every morning: '*A good old English day, Mister Sheepin*'")

"Како сте, Џорџ? — *George, how are you?*" (173) ("How are you, George? — *George, how are you?*")

"па му одговара, хладно, енглески, подругљиво: '*How d'you do*'" (262) ("and then answers him, coldly, in an English-like manner, mockingly: '*How d'you do*'")

"Пољубите ме за лаку ноћ — *Kiss me good night*" (446) ("Kiss me for good night — *Kiss me good night*")

Russian *xenisms*. Russian words are never written in the original spelling, but transliterated phonetically, contrary to English and French loanwords which are either impeccably spelt *xenisms* or are transliterated. It can only be assumed that by transliterating Russian words Crnjanski aimed at establishing the connection between himself and his Russian protagonist, as well as between the protagonist and the reader, since that connection in both these directions was ruptured by his switching from the first two autobiographical versions of "London and the Shoemakers" — that is, the ones in which Crnjanski himself was the main protagonist, the first one written in the first person and the second one in the third person. The identification of Crnjanski with his protagonist is thus re-established and reinforced implicitly at the same time as it is abandoned and denied explicitly. Besides this, the connection between language and identity is reaffirmed by Crnjanski's choice of the Cyrillic script over Latin for the Serbian text, which helped him to blur the difference between the transliterated loanwords from Russian written in Cyrillic and the rest of the text in Serbian on the condition that it was written in Cyrillic as well. Above all, in this way Serbian and Russian are together opposed to other languages (or even cultures) from which many loanwords are imported as *xenisms* written in the Latin script and without transliteration. Here are some examples:

"То је био разлог и, што је он ишао у Русију. А разуме се, и Рускиње, и *красиваја рускаја песња*. 'Енглеска је само дивље острво.' '*Англија дикиј острв*,' — рече" (442) ("That was the reason why he went to Russia. And, of course, the Russian girls also, as well as *красиваја рускаја песња*. '*England is only a wild island*.' '*Англија дикиј острв*' — he said")

"Шкотска је,' рече Шкот, '*сиромашна земља у Европи*' — '*бједнаја страна в Европе*.' — Шкоти су зато радо одлазили и у бескрајну Русију. '*Ми харашо знајем вашу земљу*'" (443) ("Scotland is,' the Scotsman said, '*a poor country in Europe*' — '*бједнаја страна в Европе*.' — That is why Scots were glad to leave, even if they went to boundless Russia. '*Ми харашо знајем вашу земљу*'")

French *xenisms*. Like English *xenisms*, those taken from French are sometimes spelt in the original, even with the correct accent marks, while others are transliterated phonetically. The novel is also full of French phrases which represent the well-known symbols of the French Revolution such as: "*Alons enfants de la patrie!*" (375), "*Vive l'empereur*" (613), "*Soldats droit au coeur!*" (634, 652), and "*A bas la Révolution*" (666). The following examples are those borrowed from French without changes, while I discuss the transliterated ones below.

"Није знао да је то — *Madame Janine, — gérante* у тој радњи" (144) ("He did not know that was — *Madame Janine, — gérante* of that store")

"*Divine. Une jambe divine. Un embauchoir divin.*' Божанска! Божанска нога! Божански модел!" (180) ("*Divine. Une jambe divine. Un embauchoir divin.*' '*Divine! A divine leg! A divine model!*'")

"сад има малу фабрику, женског рубља, оног, што га Французи зову '*soutien gorge*,' а Енглези '*bra*'" (430)
("now she has a small factory of women's underwear, the one that the French call '*soutien gorge*' and the English '*bra*'")

"А кад му Рјепнин, на крају, даде малу напојницу и додаде, нехотице: '*Merci*' — берберин је помислио: Француз! Растали су се врло љубазно. И берберин је рекао исто тако, предајући га каси: '*Merci! Adieu!*'" (463)
("But when Rjepnin, in the end, gave him a small tip and added, unconsciously: '*Merci*' — the barber thought: A Frenchman! They parted very kindly. And the barber also said, having accompanied him to the cashier's: '*Merci! Adieu!*'")

Although *xenisms* from other languages can also be found in A Novel about London, they are rare and, unlike those from English or Russian, are usually left without any translation or explanation, which demonstrates their purely exoticizing function in the middle of the Serbian Cyrillic text. Here are some examples:

Italian: "Доле, у пролазу, Зуки, са чајником у руци, поздравио га је, али, талијански, што иначе никад није радио. '*Buon giorno*'" (451) ("Downstairs, in the hall, Zuki, with a teapot in his hand, greeted him, but, in Italian, something he had otherwise never done. '*Buon giorno*'")

Latin: "*Legio patria nostra*" (662) ("The Legion is our Fatherland" is the motto of the *Légion Etrangère*.)

Portuguese: "А затим, и неку, португалску песмицу. '*Fado, fado*'" (279) ("And then another, Portuguese song. '*Fado, fado*'")

Scottish Gaelic: "Макнилима не остаде ништа, сем њихових ситних и чупавих ждребади и њиховог ратног поклеча: *у смрт или победу! Buadh ne Bas!*" (627) ("The MacNeils had nothing left, apart from their tiny and hairy yearlings and their war cry: *to death or to victory! Buadh ne Bas!*")

Spanish: "Затим је узвикнуо: 'Госпође и господо, идемо у Шпанију. *Olè, olè*'" (278) ("Then he cried out: 'Ladies and gentlemen, let's go to Spain. *Olè, olè*'")

With regard to the above Scottish family motto, it is different both in the original — "Buaidh no bas" — and in its translation "To Conquer or Die," but Crnjanski may have had a reason for putting symbolically death first and victory after.

Mixed codes. Interesting examples are those in which foreign languages are mixed sometimes with and sometimes without Serbian wording between them. In addition to the above-quoted sentence about women's underwear which contains both French and English words for the same article of clothing, but not the Serbian one — "сад има малу фабрику, женског рубља, оног, што га Французи зову '*soutien gorge*,' а Енглези '*bra*'") — here are two more examples in which French and Russian are mixed: "*Au revoir, prince! Гдје капитан? Ваши красније и бјелије рози красиви. Он всегда љубезен! До свиданја!*" (218) and "*La grande armée* је сада *rosijska armija*, иако је црвена" (675) ("*La grande armée* is now *rosijska armija*, although it is red"). Neither the first example, in which a French sentence is followed by four Russian ones, nor the second one, with a French-Serbian-Russian-Serbian sequence within the same sentence, contains any translation of *xenisms* to Serbian.

xenisms with and without translation. Crnjanski employed *xenisms* in three different ways: 1) by translating them into Serbian before writing them in the foreign language after which even additional information may follow (as it did in the case of "Bank Holiday" which was both translated and explained), for example: "Шта могу да учиним за вас? *What can I do for you?*" 2) by translating them to Serbian after writing them in the foreign language: "*Divine. Une jambe divine. Un embauchoir divin.*" "Божанска! Божанска нога! Божански модел!" and 3) by leaving them without translation, thus at times confusing the Serbian reader who does not speak that foreign language, although such *xenisms* used by Crnjanski are usually internationally known. This is most often the case with Russian words and phrases, which can be vaguely understood even by Serbian readers who did not learn that language: "То је био разлог и, што је он ишао у Русију. А разуме се, и Рускиње, и *красиваја рускаја песња*" ("That was the reason why he went to Russia. And, of course, the Russian girls also, as well as *красиваја рускаја песња*").

Although A Novel about London is not translated into English, an excerpt from the novel written in English — "London and the Shoemakers" — is kept in the Foundation of Miloš Crnjanski in the National Library of Serbia. The archive consists of nine parts: manuscripts, correspondence, documents, photos and postcards, press clippings, personal library, miscellaneous items, works of other authors, and legacy of other family members. Among these, the most important section is the one containing Crnjanski's manuscripts, where the greatest part is occupied by his memoirs. However, there are also some interesting documents and letters, such as the one written to the British ambassador in Belgrade

in 1966 upon Crnjanski's return to Serbia in which the writer informs the ambassador about his decision to renounce British citizenship because he decided to stay in Yugoslavia. Crnjanski also expresses his thanks for the hospitality he enjoyed in Britain, where he lived for twenty-five years. Of course, Crnjanski is being ironic, since "His experience in England was most unhappy. He was suspected by the British authorities for his connections with Mussolini's government. He was met and questioned on his arrival" (Norris, "Introduction" ix) and this hostile behaviour by the British authorities lasted during his entire stay in London.

Another portion of the manuscripts, although not as large as Crnjanski's memoirs, deserves greater attention because it is the only manuscript in English, the above-mentioned "London and the Shoemakers." Crnjanski typed this title on one of the pages of the excerpt, while on another one he typed the title A Novel about London (2006 edition 683-84) and this is why in this article I use that translation of the novel's title from Serbian to English. It is hard to say whether Crnjanski wrote the manuscript in English or translated it himself: the only certain thing is that it came from his pen and typewriter, because the manuscript includes a total of two hundred and ten pages written by hand and fifteen pages typed. Surprisingly, not all of these pages belong to a single text nor do they even make up a single plot: there are certain repetitions of the same scenes, so the manuscript can be divided into nine fragments which belong to three separate variants.

It is difficult to decode Crnjanski's handwriting and this is what he said himself about the version of the novel written in Serbian: "I myself retyped A Novel about London five or six times. You may guess how tiring that was for me. My handwriting is so terrible that even God could not decipher it: that is why I am forced to do it all on my own" ("Roman o Londonu sam svojom rukom prekucao pet-šest puta. Možete misliti koliko me je to zamorilo. Rukopis mi je takav da ga ni bog-otac ne može dešifrovati: zato sam prinuđen da sve radim sam" [Crnjanski qtd. in Popović <http://novosti.rs/dodatni_sadržaj/clanci.119.html:278902-Akademija---ne-hvala>]). Several editors conducted work to prepare these manuscripts for publication within the frame of Crnjanski's complete works published in 2006. The excerpts written by Crnjanski in English were included in volume 12, following the integral version of the Serbian text of *Роман о Лондону*. The separate appendix with the three English variants in the 2006 edition also contains numerous comments and explanations, as well as the analysis of mistakes made by Crnjanski in either writing this text in English or translating it from Serbian to English (683-98). The editors managed to single out the above-mentioned three different groups of excerpts on the basis of their content and their literary features. The distinguishing factor was the answer to the following question: who plays the role of the main protagonist in the novel? However, there were also many other key details such as the degree of lexical and grammatical accuracy which helped the editors make decisions about the order and precise content of the versions. It is believed that the first variant to be written in English was the one that Crnjanski wrote in the first person and in which the role of the main character is narrated by himself. In the version which he wrote next he remained the main protagonist, but the narrative is in the third person. And finally, in the chronologically third variant, the hero is no longer the Serbian writer himself, but the Russian Prince Rjepnin. Because of this fact, as well as the correspondence of many points between this version and the Serbian text of A Novel about London, the editors of the 2006 book believe that Crnjanski first wrote this variant in English and only afterwards translated it into Serbian (685).

What is important is the fact that Crnjanski first introduced himself as the central protagonist of the novel, since it has been proved that the English text was written before the one in the Serbian language as "he was working on the English version of this novel in London in 1946 and 1947" (Koljević 76). Only later did he decide on another protagonist for the novel, not a Serbian diplomat, but a Russian aristocrat. This is relevant for the enigmatic layout of the novel eventually written in Serbian and it suggests the reason why there is no English translation of the novel. Namely, had the novel been about a Serbian protagonist, its text would not have been an adequate playground for Crnjanski, who was a polyglot, because in that case he could have painted only the life and conditions of a small number of Serbian emigrants in London. Having selected a Russian aristocrat as his main character, Crnjanski gained a chance to show that he was multilingual speaking eight foreign languages: English, French, German, Hungarian, Italian, Portuguese, Spanish, and Russian. Not only was he able to make his characters mingle English words and phrases in their conversations, he could

also employ numerous Russian *xenisms* under the pretext of his protagonist's longing for his past and homeland and thus either thinking in Russian or talking to his compatriots in their native language. This would not have been the same had his main character been a Serb or had the novel been written in English. There are therefore various possible reasons why English readers cannot read Crnjanski's Novel about London although it has been translated into as many as eight foreign languages: Czech, French, Hungarian, Macedonian, Romanian, Polish, Russian, and Slovenian. The first and foremost reason is of course that "The use of code switching in literature is difficult to reproduce in translation" (Baldo 7). Talking about the ways in which multilingual texts are translated in Western Europe, Rainier Grutman emphasizes that "An additional complication arises when the target language actually is the embedded foreign language of the source text" (160) which is exactly the case in A Novel about London. And there is another equally important reason, which is that his "poetic style makes Crnjanski's works difficult to translate, and none of his major works has appeared in English" (Norris, "Introduction" xi) apart from the first volume of the novel *Migrations* published in 1994 (see Tsernianski).

The third reason, regarding another element of heterolingualism, is that while it is possible to translate the elements which stand out — *xenisms* — in the same way as many other heterolingual texts have been translated by using adequate translation methods, it would be next to impossible to translate nonce loanwords, also called "ad hoc borrowings" (see Van Dulm 10) especially if they are integrated in Serbian both syntactically and morphologically. There are plenty of such borrowings, which Crnjanski did not mark with italics, as he did instead with *xenisms*. For example, "Lexemes like *skona* equivalent to Eng. *scone* (430), *paker*, equivalent to Eng. *packer* (487), *overol* for Eng. *overall*, or *skeko* for *scarecrow* (92) are only some of the transliterated English lexemes found in the *Novel*. They are also morphologically adapted when necessary and used in their plural forms or in the appropriate case forms, according to the rules operating in the grammar of Serbian" (Čubrović, "Cultural" 158). In the Serbian sentence "Neki pakeri te knjige — obučeni u plave overole — pakuju" (487) ("Some packers in their blue overalls pack those books") the noun *pakeri* is in the plural and *overole* is in the plural with the case marker (Čubrović, "Cultural" 158).

As to Crnjanski's motive in employing so many nonce loanwords, there are different possible explanations for different cases: most of these words must have pointed to the prestige of the people who use them, for instance *bekon* (51) = bacon when compared to the Serbian *slanina*, *dukesa* (91) = duchess instead of *kneginja*, or *džeket* (271) = jacket for which the Serbian word is *jakna*, and may have signalled the assimilation of the protagonist who uses these borrowings in the new environment. The above-mentioned example of the word *pakeri* shows that the emigrants — being forced to accept some demeaning jobs in places where they mostly speak in English — are also starting to use English vocabulary even when they speak between themselves (see Čubrović, "The Interplay" 154-55). The occurrence of nonce loanwords is not limited to English since there are also many such from French although a much smaller number than in English and in proportion to the overall number of French and English lexemes used in A Novel about London. As usual with nonce loanwords, they are mostly nouns: *kurtoazija* (153) = *courtoisie*; *infamija* (167) = *infamie*; *metresa* (171) = *maîtresse*; *butelja* (175) = *bouteille*; *tomat* (182) = *tomate*; *biciklet* (654) = *bicyclette*; but there are even a few verbs such as: *ružirati* (175) = *rougir* and *giljotinirati* (120) = *guillotiner*.

An even greater challenge for a possible future translator of A Novel about London into English results from the fact that "the most significant echoes of this international Babel are found when trains begin to 'run' in Serbo-Croat ('vozovi trče'), or when a literal translation of an English idiom is based on a misunderstanding: Rjepnin is afraid again and again that he and Nadja will actually end up 'u oluku' ('in the gutter')" (Koljević 82). Such examples abound. They come from English: "white collar workers" is translated into Serbian as *radnici sa belom kragnom* (14). The tea-blender becomes *mešač čaja* (91), a morning coat is *jutarnje odelo* (535), and Indian summer is *indijsko leto* (423)" (Čubrović, "Cultural" 158). And they come from French too: the Serbian word *godišnjica* (178) is used to translate the French word *anniversaire*, which means both birthday (which it should have been in this example) and *anniversary* (how it was incorrectly translated), while the French word *histoires* is used in Serbian as *istorije* (305) = histories, although in this case it means *priče* = stories. It is obvious that these and many other examples demonstrate "the linguistic alienation within the general

framework of the international theme, as Crnjanski has come to experience it in life and visualise it in the form of art" (Koljević 82).

In conclusion, I look at what Crnjanski's art looks like in the Serbian version of A Novel about London and what it would have looked like had it been translated into English. In the sentence "*Nice day, Mary*" — каже тој жени кад киша не пада. А кад киша пада, она понавља, свако јутро: '*A good old English day, Mister Sheepin.*' У њеном се гласу осећа, да би желела, да му каже нешто боље, нешто лепше, нежно" (173), the intertwined elements of Serbian and foreign cultures would be entirely lost in an English translation: "'Nice day, Mary' — he tells that woman when it's not raining. When it's raining, she repeats, every morning: 'A good old English day, Mister Sheepin.' In her voice, it can be felt that she would have liked to tell him something better, nicer, gentler." A similar loss would occur in translating "*What a nice day, Mister White.*" Каже то и кад пада киша, напољу. Вратар га, свако јутро, посматра зачуђено, па одговара исто тако љубазно: '*Indeed, Sir*' into the much less interesting "'What a nice day, Mister White.' He says the same thing even when it's raining outside. The doorman looks at him, every morning, in amazement, and replies in the similar kind of fashion: 'Indeed, Sir'." It is evident that Crnjanski's ingenious play with the English language in *Роман о Лондону* relies on the contrast between Serbian and English and would be lost in a translation of this heterolingual text to English alone.

Note: Research for the above article was funded by *National, Regional, European and Global Framework of Social Crises, and Contemporary Serbian Literature and Culture* financed by the Ministry of Education and Science of Serbia (2011–2014 Project No. 178018).

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