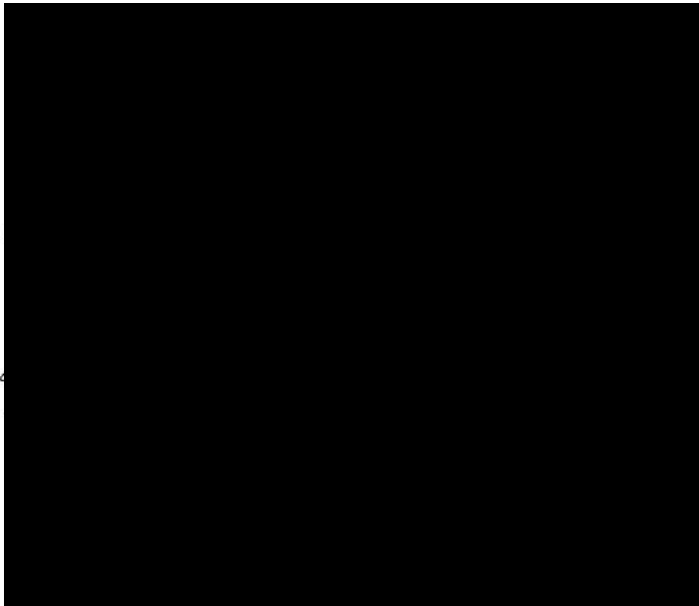


Merging Languages: A Collection of Translated Poetry Inspired by Twentieth Century Serbian Writers



Subjects:  
Creative Writing and English Literature  
Minor:  
History



Translation, the process of converting words from one language to another, is often overlooked because translators are merely messengers, people who, luckily enough, speak two or more languages and are tasked to translate some original work into another language. But translation goes beyond even the artistry of the original work because translators are able to see two distinct language worlds and merge them together, all the while preserving the magic of the original piece. Without translation, we wouldn't be able to learn about other cultures, and we wouldn't be able to see the world through different minds. I have seen firsthand just how important translation is because I am bilingual, and I have spent most of my life translating documents or news or my own work to my family and friends. I have experienced firsthand the vastness of just two languages, Serbian and English, and I've realized how crucial it is to both language groups that the two understand, respect, and collaborate with one another.

As such, this project will explore the process of translation from Serbian to English and vice versa by studying prominent twentieth century Serbian writers and analyzing what is captured or lost in the respective translations of their work. More importantly, this project explores the world of translation through the writing and translating of my own original poetry, allowing me to step inside the Serbian literary circle with my own voice and style.

The writers I've chosen to study have had long-lasting literary influence on the Serbian culture, and all remain incredibly important today. Ivo Andric was an important Serbian novelist in the twentieth century, especially after winning the Nobel Prize of Literature in 1961. His novel *Bridge on the Drina* will be examined in both languages to provide a sense of how translation works, and more specifically, what the English translation of the novel both gains and loses. This analysis will lay the groundwork for examining the works of three Serbian poets—Desanka Maksimovic, Vasko Popa, and Aleksandar Ristic. Desanka Maksimovic has written over 20

collections of poetry, and she is regarded as the leading female poet in the ex-Yugoslav literary circle. Vasko Popa is the most widely translated postwar poet, known for his distinctive style that blends old folktales with modern insight. Aleksandar Ristovic published his first book of poems in 1959, and he has since published 20 more, adding wild imagination and electrifying images to the Serbian literary world.

All three of these poets have been translated into English by Serbian-American poet Charles Simic. Simic's work will also be read, but his translations of the three named poets will guide the main part of the research portion of this project. Simic will serve as a sort of case study as a translator: how does he portray the different styles and voices of the poets he translates? It is my hope this research will allow me to access and understand the intricacies of my first and second languages, giving me the ability to translate on my own.

Once the research portion of this project is completed, I will switch focus to my own poetry. I intend to create 15-20 original poems, some of which will be written in Serbian first then translated to English, and vice versa. By doing so, I will be challenged as a bilingual writer to make my poems operate in different languages, shedding light on the beauty and universality of human nature. I have taken English Language, Creative Writing, Fiction Writing, and Poetry Writing at Capital University, all classes that have helped me become the writer I am today. Along the way, Dr. Kevin Griffith, a nationally published poet, will provide guidance both in the research and creative portions of my project. He has worked with nine Summer Scholars in the past three years, and he will be available to meet every week to discuss poetry, translation, ideas, and so on. I've wanted to do something like this for a long time, but there was never an opportunity to become closer to my roots until now. I believe, with Dr. Griffith's help, that this project will be entirely successful and satisfactory, and I cannot wait to begin.

## Bibliography

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## Dissemination Plan

This project will be submitted to the National Conference of Undergraduate Research and Capital's Symposium. In addition, the individual poems, both Serbian and English, will be submitted to various professional journals, such as *Seneca Review*, *Allegheny Review*, *Coe Review* and *Poetry Magazine*. I will also submit poems to *Mid-Atlantic Review*, a journal that publishes translations and poetry. As for my Serbian work, once the project has started, I will be looking for calls for poetry on the regional website "Konkursi Regiona," and I hope to find at least three places to submit my final poems.

## Timeline

\*Each week, I will be meeting with Dr. Griffith to discuss the reading completed and the progress I have made. After Week 3, we will be discussing my original poems, and Dr. Griffith will help with the editing process. Weeks 6 and 7 will be spent in Serbia working with an academic fluent in both languages who will simply check my translation work.

Week 1	Read Ivo Andric's <i>Bridge on the Drina</i> in Serbian and annotate. Write 300-word synopsis of main scenes, key characters, and important themes. Read Ivo Andric's novel in English and annotate. Write 300-word synopsis as well. Then, compare and analyze the translation and the original. Begin writing about the process of translation.
Week 2	Read Desanka Maksimovic's poems in Serbian and English. Study her specific influence on the literary scene, how she was perceived, and how her work was translated. Examine Charles Simic's translation and note how he preserves the essence of Desanka. Read Vasko Popa's poems, original and translated. Focus on his life and influence by gathering information about him. Examine Simic's translation and observe Popa's voice in the English version.
Week 3	Read Aleksandar Ristic's poems in both languages, and research him as well. Examine Simic's translations. Finish the majority of the translation research. Conclude the contextualization.
Week 4	Write 5 original poems in Serbian. Translate those into English.
Week 5	Write 5 original poems in English. Translate those into Serbian.
Week 6	Write 5 original poems in Serbian. Translate those into English. *Do this while in Serbia
Week 7	Write 5 original poems in English. Translate those into Serbian. *Do this while in Serbia
Week 8	Edit poems, three drafts at least.
Week 9	Edit poems. Figure out chapbook software.
Week 10	Edit the final research portion of the project. Finalize the poems and assemble them into a chapbook of sorts. Prepare to present.

## Trip

Over the course of this project, I plan on making a two-week trip to my home country. I think it is crucial to spend some time where all of my studied writers lived and wrote. I have been home many times before, but I've never been back as a student, a researcher, a potential translator. During my time there, I will meet with an academic, most likely from the University of Belgrade, who will provide guidance with my translated poetry. This mentor will give my project the credibility it needs, for not many people speak the Serbian language. I will meet with someone who is fluent in both languages to offer suggestions and criticism along the way. This trip will help my project immensely, but it will also help me become closer with my roots and my language. While there, I plan to visit the cities in which my chosen writers lived, old libraries, and museums. It is my hope this trip will uncover hidden gems within Serbia, within poetry, and within translation.