

PUBLISHING POETRY IN TRANSLATION IN THE UK: THE SLOVAK EXPERIENCE

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Abstract

British publishing of contemporary poetry in translation is largely, though not exclusively, concerned with presenting poets to a British readership for the first time: much of this readership must be 'recruited' through the reliability of a publishing "brand name."

This pattern sits inside the wider UK pattern of publishing and reading relatively small amounts of literature in translation. Nor is it readily accorded a high profile. For example, in the *Saturday Guardian*, a national broadsheet with a circulation of half a million, the "Review" (a forty-page books supplement) for 14/2/04 looked at no works in translation. These kinds of figures speak for themselves. UK book culture is notoriously monoglot: there is certainly international writing, but for historical and also linguistic reasons (the end of empire was succeeded by the empire of language) it is dominated by international writing in English: from the Indian subcontinent, Africa, the Caribbean, Australia and New Zealand, the US and Canada. Each of these regions contributes big-hitting novelists to the British publishing scene. Faced with these cultural continuities, which are daily reinforced by popular culture in the Anglophone world, it may seem almost impossible for the unfamiliar, highly characteristic and specific literary culture of a country like Slovakia, to get a hearing in the UK. The paper deals with paradoxes and dilemmas that raise from such an enterprise.

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Translators and Poets: Models of Collaboration

*the difficult curve of flight
and the first song from a throat belonging
to a bird*

Mila Haugová (2003, 41)

In a recent e-mail, the distinguished British poet, editor and translator Daniel Weissbort suggests that *Orient Express*, the journal of contemporary writing from Enlargement Europe which I edit, should give more prominence to its contributing translators.¹ Weissbort suggests their names should be taken out of italics, placed at the head of each piece, and complemented by biographical details in the appended list of contributors.

Weissbort is not only cumulatively distinguished as a poet and translator but was the founder-editor, with the poet Ted Hughes, of *Modern Poetry in Translation* (*MPT*), from which he retired only in Autumn 2003. *MPT* has characterised best practice in British publishing of poetry in translation since it was started in 1965. An irregularly appearing journal, each issue – now of around 200 pages (Weissbort 1999, 6) – is arranged as an autonomous anthology of poetry either on a theme or, more characteristically and in particular latterly, from one country, language or region. Poets are characteristically represented by a group of up to eight poems, unlike the occasionally “scatter-gun” effect of most general British poetry journals. (For example the Poetry Society’s *Poetry Review*,² or the slightly more internationalist *Poetry London* and *Poetry Wales*, can each be read as unified only by characteristic editorial taste.³)

The rigorously consistent quality of the work published in *MPT* is indicative of an editorial policy of “concentrating on the poetry and just the poetry – no critical commentary, no reviews, minimal biographical and bibliographical information top accompany the translated texts [in order] to get as much as possible into print [...] otherwise our ‘intervention’ would probably go unnoticed” (Weissbort 1999, 5). (Few poets with less than three collections are chosen to represent a literature: a single collection, however exceptional, cannot be said to yet comprise a characteristic body of work, or to exert sufficient leverage on the literary context which surrounds it to colour that context irrevocably.) In the journal not only the poems but also their translations are of high quality; always by experienced translators, they are often made by British poets. For example, the issue on *Palestinian and Israeli Poets* has (co-)translations by Sarah Maguire, Anthony Rudolf and Daniel Weissbort. Weissbort is – as was Hughes⁴ – a advocate of co-translation in which the original poet and the translator collaborate to “re-realise” a piece; or in which a poet in the “host” language, in this case English, works with a rough literal draft to produce a new piece which works in the same way as the original: in other words, *as* a poem. An *MPT* tour of younger Russian women poets in Autumn of 2002 successfully staged this “poetics of correspondence” by bringing the British (women) poets involved together with their “translatees” for bilingual readings in a variety of British literary venues.

Modern Poetry in Translation, then, sets a high and consistent standard for the publishing of poetry translated into English. It’s an authoritative model and since the New Series in 1985, the journal, which receives an annual grant from the Arts

Council of England, has been published by King's College, London. It's a robust, well-designed volume, perfect-bound with a heavy card cover and 240 pages: designed, in other words, for the repeated use of the library rather than the desultory browse of the art-club book stall.

What all this means is that Daniel Weissbort's e-mail about the profile of translators in another journal, *Orient Express*, of which he is also a supportive Editorial Board member, has something of an internal character, as of the field of British journal publication of poetry in translation talking to itself. And moreover of that field's asking itself where its own profile is, where the performance is of that bridge passage between the first subject and the second, between the native and host languages; that shift into (as the unforgiveably globalising pun has it) the dominant pitch.

This performativity is at the heart of contemporary thinking within translation studies and practice, in the Anglophone world at least. Nabokov, one of the great levers of the world of (trans-Atlantic⁵) English style, writes of translating Pushkin:

These conclusions can be generalised. I want translations with copious footnotes, footnotes reaching up like skyscrapers to the top of this or that page so as to leave only the gleam of one textual line between commentary and eternity. I want such footnotes and the absolutely literal sense, with no emasculation and no padding (Nabokov 1955, 512).

It's a wonderfully visual image of a text so "re-read by" notation and qualification as to be positively Talmudic: and there's a suggestion in Nabokov's insistence on the possibility of "literalism, literality, literal interpretation" (Nabokov 1955, 512) which paradoxically ascribes some stable, irreducible "truth" to the original text. In Nabokov's vocative poetics, the original poetic utterance, of the original language, is the unquestionable Word. The translation necessarily fails to be identical to it and can at best act upon it – and upon itself – in the somewhat postmodern revisionist fashion of what in another context Lawrence Durrell calls "The Great Inter-linear" (Durrell 1986, 391-652).

Richly textual as this all is, anyone involved in literary rather than academic publishing will blench at Nabokov's ideal text. As with expensive dentistry, after all, the point of bridgework may be to make itself invisible. Isn't what the original author of the text, the text itself and the publisher, all want simply to increase the number of readers beyond those the original text had access to? Of course the slippage into a problematising "translation think" comes with just these terms, "text," "readers," "original." For example it would be foolhardy to think of "reader" as a neutral term, identifying only one relationship to a text, a unit of consumption: critics, lazy students, browsing purchasers differ from each other in their textual requirements and interactions. A movement into homogenising these characteristics generates the same unsuccessful blur as homogenising the target text. To put it another way, it lacks clarity. As Nabokov says earlier in his essay:

I constantly find in reviews of verse translations the following kind of thing that sends me into spasms of helpless fury: "Mr (or Miss) So-and-so's translation reads smoothly." In other words, the reviewer [...] praises as "readable" an imitation only because the drudge or rhymster has substituted easy platitudes for the breathtaking intricacies of the text (Nabokov 1955, 496).

This is the admirable high moral ground of the intellectual working without financial accountability. It's also a distinguished writer on translating an already-canonised author: Nabokov's version of *Eugene Onegin* will not have to clear the ground for itself, Nabokov or Pushkin. These reputations have all already been achieved.⁶ But publishers of contemporary writing in translation must negotiate the mid-life of an emerging reputation. Entering the dark forest of contracts and permissions with those original authors and publishers – and therefore having to articulate what they're *doing to* those very concrete individuals – they must be aware of just what proposal they're transacting. It's an awareness which must lie inside the language of business plans and book-cover blurb, scouting letters and contracts, whether in euphemism or the polemic of aims and objectives. At this stage, to confuse a potential literary best-seller with a text-book would be to court both textual anonymity and financial difficulty. A mistake with a single volume may have long-term implications.

Models of Publishing Poetry in UK

British publishing of contemporary poetry in translation is largely, though not exclusively, concerned with presenting poets to a British readership for the first time: much of this readership must be "recruited" through the reliability of a publishing "brand name." This pattern sits inside the wider UK pattern of publishing and reading relatively small amounts of literature in translation. Nor is it readily accorded a high profile. For example, in the *Saturday Guardian*, a national broadsheet with a circulation of half a million, the "Review" (a forty-page books supplement) for 14/2/04⁷ looked at no works in translation. These kinds of figures speak for themselves. UK book culture is notoriously monoglot: there is certainly international writing, but for historical and also linguistic reasons (the end of empire was succeeded by the empire of language) it is dominated by international writing in English: from the Indian subcontinent, Africa, the Caribbean, Australia and New Zealand, the US and Canada. Each of these regions contributes big-hitting novelists to the British publishing scene.

Although translation grants of around £4,000 per volume are available from the Arts Council for England, for projects they judge as being of literary merit, translating a text costs more, takes more time and inserts a further stage of uncertainty or unreliability into the publishing process (the translator must meet the deadline, and with work of adequate quality) than the equivalent publication of a book written in English. It's hard for an editor without fluency in a range of languages to be sure that the text he or she is buying really "hits the spot": reporters by publishers' readers, and a track-record of publication in translation by good imprints in a number of other countries, are no substitute. But of course not all literary editors in the UK are unable to read other languages. There's a deeper problem. International literatures in English come from cultures which are geographical dispersed but culturally proximate to Britain. This is the legacy of empire but it's also kept alive in the liberal promise of the Commonwealth. For example, Commonwealth writers (a term which tends to exclude the British) not only have a dedicated annual prize, organised by the Commonwealth Foundation; they are also eligible for national prizes including the Booker Prize, the major annual UK fiction award. Recent Booker winners include the Australian Peter Carey, for *The True History of*

the Kelly Gang in 2002, and the Nigerian Ben Okri, for *The Famished Road* in 1991. These novels are publishing successes because they can command large readerships who themselves already have some relationship to the worlds they portray. A history and contemporary reality compacted of interactions between British and African, British and Australian, societies – through trade, migration, culture, even tourism – means, not mutual cultural fluency but some cultural continuum. Another way to say this is that it is not always altogether clear, nor apparently does it need to be, whether some writers are, for example, writing from the cultural entity which is the British Asian community or from the Asian subcontinent. Salman Rushdie, who so famously explored his Islamic cultural roots, is a British citizen. V.S. Naipaul, the Nobel Prize-winner writing out of the mandarin British tradition of prose stylists from Smollett to Saki, is not.

The Case of Slovakia

Faced with these cultural continuities, which are daily reinforced by popular culture in the Anglophone world,⁸ it may seem almost impossible for the unfamiliar, highly characteristic and specific literary culture of a country like Slovakia, to turn to my example, to get a hearing in the UK. And it's undoubtedly true that Cold War divisions made countries east of the Iron Curtain relatively inaccessible to British citizens until the last fifteen years. A further problem for recent publication of literatures from Central and Eastern Europe is that, until 1989, their reception in the UK was sometimes mediated through ideas of the heroic oppositional writer. From the CIA-linked *Endeavour* magazine, with its name so cheerily reminiscent of aspirational social (re)construction, to the magisterial, insightful literary journalism of *Index on Censorship*,⁹ there was a particular interest in writing from the region as a form of socio-political evidence. The contemporary narrative about impoverished writers struggling to make a living in a vertiginously consumerised marketplace is, however, neither glamorous nor unfamiliar.

One response to these difficulties is for Slovakia and its eastern neighbours to turn to each other for intra-regional translation and publication. This is a way for a literature from a small country to “borrow” critical mass without losing cultural identity. It also prevents the marginalisation which goes on when cultures are all oriented in one direction, as towards English, as if towards a cultural centre. As the new East Translates East programme run by the Soros-funded Next Page Foundation, says:

A pervasive structural feature of globalization is that flows of information tend to occur predominantly in one direction - from the rich countries of the “core” to the “periphery” of poorer countries in the East and South. Although South-South or East-East exchange of knowledge may often be of far greater social and intellectual value, economic and infrastructural factors make such exchange difficult. [...] At the same time, the EU enlargement process brings along new divisions within Eastern Europe by which the “neighbour” [may be] seen as just another competitor in the EU-accession “race.”¹⁰

A project to support intra-regional translation and publication in Central, South-Eastern Europe, Russia and the former Soviet Republics, East Translates East will give translation grants to publishers and fund the promotion of books in transla-

tion. It will also set up an information exchange network. It is currently (February 2004) appointing its committee and its first rounds of applications will close in April and September 2004. In another intra-regional project, the foremost literary journal in Slovakia (*Romboid*) joins those from Slovenia (*Apocalipsa*), and in preparation Hungary (*Jelenkor*) and Montenegro (*Ars*), in a collegiate project in which each publishes one issue annually devoted to the material from another.¹¹

Projects like these remind those of us who work in an Anglophone culture to ask ourselves whether literatures such as the Slovakian do indeed *need* access to publication in English. This is the territory of translation as a potential appropriation; the spoiled ghost of empire. Though there's one significant difference: unlike, say, the Elgin Marbles, poetry published in English is not lost to its mother-tongue.

Nevertheless, is there some scope for selling-short, for sleight of hand both in the cultural exchange of translation itself and in the second cultural exchange of publication? What is being put into circulation? Will the text which this process has generated be a literary object (I'm not talking about genre here, but about the autonomous life of the text *as a poem, piece of fiction or essay*) or a piece of anthropo-cultural evidence? We're returned to our earlier questions about translation. This time, however, there's a perhaps-surprising response from the deconstructionist of colonial discourse, Gayatri Chakravorty Spivak. Spivak, who is a native speaker of Bengali, is discussing the discursive competition between ideas (of feminisms) when she argues that:

It is more just to give access to the largest number of feminists. Therefore these texts must be made to speak English. It is more just to speak the language of the majority when through hospitality a large number of feminists give the foreign feminists the right to speak. [...] in the law of the majority that of decorum, the equitable law of democracy, or the "law" of the strongest? (Spivak 2000, 399).

Spivak's response to this problem is to argue that the texts which are to be "made to speak" in English in this way must have excellent translations: "tedious translates cannot compete with the spectacular stylistic experiments of" texts originally written with all the latitude of the host language¹². Although Spivak's use of terms such as "hospitality" may be initially uncomfortable – it seems to suggest that translated texts "visit" a culture such as English on sufferance – I'd suggest that a deeper-level, more necessary view of "hospitality," one closer to Kantian ethics (Kant 1950), is being expressed by the culture of her text. In some ways analogous to Christine Sylvester's idea of a new idea's "homesteading" a discursive space for itself (Sylvester 1994), Spivak's version of hospitality requires that the translator "surrender" themselves to the text which is to be translated in order to transmit its specificity, in the same way that they would to a friendship. The "other" text, like the "Other" person, occupies the space of meaning in the same way as the "Self" of indigenous writing.

For Spivak, then, as for Nabokov, success in translation isn't dependent on choice of text but on the way it's translated. But where Nabokov remains a Modernist, committed to preserving the perhaps-rebarbative traces of the original as a culturally-pure utterance, Spivak argues that the translated text needs to be allowed to compete in the same way, on the same ground, as local texts.

Translations in Mainstream Poetry Publishing

For a notional individual Slovak writer, this means above all trying to find a mainstream British publisher. The mainstreams of fiction and of poetry in the UK are profoundly differentiated, and so generally speaking are their publishers¹³. Nevertheless, in each field these are the publishers without whom it is almost impossible to secure critical reception, leave alone sales. It's not always easy for a foreign writer to know which imprints these are. However, UK critics, readers and booksellers do know: this is one of the ways that a large market can keep control of itself. Unlike in some other countries, in the UK self-published (vanity published) editions are broadly speaking not regarded for critical purposes as having been published. This means that if critics and readers have not heard of a publisher, as they may not have done if it is from overseas, they will ignore the book.¹⁴ It is therefore virtually pointless in publishing terms to produce a book of poetry or fiction in English from within a country like Slovakia: such a book can be little more than an information resource or an individual writer's calling card.

The view from the UK is reciprocal: a Slovak text must be susceptible to mainstream distribution. That's to say, it must be readable by the mainstream genre readership. Although there is a specialist UK readership for fiction and poetry in translation,¹⁵ it is very small: the interest of perhaps a couple of dozen specialists in the literatures of Central Europe, for example, can be counted upon. And this group is likely to include several able to read the original text without needing the translator's interventions. Our notional Slovak text in translation's primary critical reception and readership will be accustomed principally to reading English-language literatures and will probably be unable to name a single Slovak writer¹⁶ prior to picking up the book which, as a result, is unlikely to advertise its translated status on the cover. Nor is critical apparatus, except for the translation of classics, likely to be intrusively apparent.¹⁷ Daniel Weissbort is quite right to point out that *Orient Express* emphasises the provenance of its texts (its subtitle is "The best of contemporary writing from Enlargement Europe") but not their status as translations. While some of this may be an accident of design – the translators' names, which appear half-effaced in italics, were meant to be highlighted by the use of the tone – the decision not to introduce translators' biographies is dictated by the UK publishing climate of underplaying the *translatedness* of texts.

Orient Express has published three contemporary Slovak poets. The introductory double issue reprinted three poems by Milan Richter. Volume Four had a nineteen-page feature of the work of two Slovak women poets, both former editors of *Romboid*, from different generations. The feature took its title, "The Difficult Curve of Flight," from a poem by Mila Haugová (born 1942); also featured was a sequence by Stanislava Chrobáková-Repar (born 1961). The feature's title referred both to the difficulty of publishing as a Slovak woman poet, in particular in the former Czechoslovakia where Czech was the larger partner culture – Haugová was at a particular disadvantage because of regime perceptions of her family – and to the further difficulty these poems experience in being published in English. Although from different generations, both Chrobáková and Haugová have similarly hermetic, fragmented yet intensely lyrical poetics, hard to translate and without particular precedent in contemporary British poetry.¹⁸

Prima facie, then, these are difficult poets to publish in the UK. However, Slovak poetry is well-served in this context by the translation team of James and Viera Sutherland-Smith, able to bring a British sensibility to what might work in the UK market. The ten Haugová poems in *Orient Express 4* were taken from her *Scent of the Unseen*, published in parallel text in the Arc Visible Poets series (Haugova, 2003): a book they also served to publicise. Arc is an independent poetry press with an eclectic British list but with a rapidly-growing series of poetry in translation which is the only dedicated list in the UK at present. They rely on a firm of book distributors specialising in most of the independent mainstream poetry houses. They also work hard at programming reading tours and festival appearances for their authors. Haugová, who made a two-week reading tour of the UK in 2003, returns to Ireland for the Cuirt Festival 2004, one of whose themes is European Enlargement. As a poet of one of the Enlargement countries, she is – briefly, at least – topical.

Haugová is the exception, however. There are no other books by Slovak authors in print in the UK. This is not to say that Arc are the only publishers of poetry in translation. Anvil Press and Bloodaxe Books both have strong records in this area, though the books appear in their general list (Bloodaxe has had dedicated series, such as their Bloodaxe Contemporary French Poets, edited by Timothy Matthews and Michael Worton, launched with six collections in 1992). The recent trend for themed anthologies, such as Bloodaxe's *Staying Alive* (Astley 2002), extends this to a mixed content of translated and English-language poetry: this domestication is in a way the most hospitable of contexts. European Enlargement has been officially marked through literature in translation too: where *Poems on the Underground* (Benson et al 2003) produced a special poster series of poems from within the existing European Union with Foreign Office support in 2003, the Arts Council-funded *Poems in Waiting Rooms* (Alvi et al 2004) is producing a poster series of poems from the Enlargement countries in 2004. In 2003 the Foreign Office also supported a national promotional tour of the literatures of the entire Enlarged Europe.¹⁹ Slovakia was represented by *Orient Express*, as were several other countries which did not then have a single entire book published in English in the UK.

Vicious Circle of Unprofitability

Most Anglophone access to Slovak literature is through publications from within the country and in particular by the Literature Information Centre (SLOLIA), which has produced two *Albums of Slovak Writers* (living and dead), the anthology *One Hundred Years of Slovak Literature* (2000), and which publishes the *Slovak Literary Review*. These are highly reputable, in general well-translated, overviews whose stature as reliable sources of information is not reduced by their lack of access to critical or commercial outlets in the UK. There is however one other publisher of Contemporary European Poetry in English with a special interest in Slovak writing: the Canadian Modry Peter Publishers, based in Ontario, have beautifully-produced and designed editions of several Central European poets, including, among Slovaks, Ján Buzássy. Buzássy's collection is subsidised by SLOLIA: and this is one of the keys to the problems of cultural visibility faced by literatures such as the Slovakian. As John O'Brien, Publisher at the American Dalkey Archive Press, says in a recent article in *Context*, publishing literature in translation in the Anglophone world is a vicious circle of unprofitability. It's costly to publish a book in translation

partly because there aren't enough published to inform readership patterns; and there aren't enough books published to develop readers' and critics' tastes because they are simply not profitable until those patterns have changed. O'Brien says that if richer European countries such as "the Germans, Italians, Swedes, Belgians, Spaniards [...] Portuguese, Austrians, Swiss and Russians" each designated "as little as [*sic*] one million dollars annually for literary translations [...] that would result in at least forty works – perhaps as many as sixty" from each country:

And at that level of support and through marketing ingenuity made possible by that support, readership problems begin to diminish; there may never be an enormous readership for foreign literature in the United States, but five to ten thousand people starts to seem plausible, even if the books have to be given away to libraries and classrooms. And these numbers mean a total potential reading audience of two to four million a year (O'Brien 2003, 47).

If this were ever to happen, Slovak literature would plainly benefit from a shift in readers' expectations. It's unfortunate that the very European countries at greater historical and geographic remove from the UK tend to be those with the least spare public money to commit towards promoting their literatures in cultures which have (yet) to learn to take an interest in them. A more immediate and ultimately more practical solution, then, continues to be the individual publication of specific well-translated books in well-trusted imprints, whether specialist (the Arc model) or generalist (Bloodaxe Books). A cheap but effective strategy for an agency such as SLOLIA might therefore be to develop an information resource, for Slovak writers, translators and publishers, about the publishing scene in the UK and other "host" countries. Such a resource might indeed be what Mila Haugová calls "the last/beat of wings before/their release from the earth:/the difficult curve of flight" for Slovak poetry in translation.

Notes:

1. Daniel Weissbort, email correspondence with the writer, 2/2/04.
2. For sixteen years, *Poetry Review* was edited by Peter Forbes, a poet with a taste for accessible, frequently humorous and robustly concrete verse. Several of the journal's reviewers were also among the more frequent contributors of poems. In July 2002 the *Review* was taken over by a new editorial partnership with a background in more general literary publishing (Robert Potts on a national broadsheet) and academic poetics (David Herd runs the Poetry Centre at the University of Kent, Canterbury). The last five issues have published a wider range of relatively unknown poets' work than was the case hitherto: for example, the Winter 2003/4 issue, fourteen out of thirty-one contributors (including reviewers) had yet to publish a poetry collection. The proportion of pages devoted to critical work has also increased (from fifty-two out of ninety-six in the last issue edited by Forbes to eighty out of 120 pages in Winter 2003/4); and each issue now features a sequence of images or photo-essay.
3. The Autumn 2003 issue of *Poetry London* has two poems by the American Billy Collins, one by Yang Lian, the Chinese poet in exile in the US and one by Judy Benson, an American poet currently based in London; four poems translated from the French of Guy Goffette by American poet Marilyn Hacker and four from the Russian of Marina Boroditskaya by British poet Ruth Fainlight, who also has two of her own among the twenty-one poems by British poets. *Poetry London* (London) thrice yearly, 60 A4 pp.
4. "These translations were made by the poet himself [...] so as translations these are extremely literal. But they are also more, they are [the poet]'s own English poems." Ted Hughes on co-translation with Yehuda Amichai (Weissbort 1999, 11).

5. For his influence on a young British novelist of the next generation, see Amis 2001.
 6. I leave aside the analogy of translation into operatic form in Tchaikovsky's *Eugene Onegin*.
 7. To take merely the issue current at time of writing.
 8. There is no space here for a discussion of the Anglophone pressures of globalisation. Although the impact of commercially powerful American culture may be more immediate than is British history in Enlargement Europe, its effects in the UK, though radical, are nevertheless part of this wider narrative.
 9. *Index on Censorship* was founded in 1972 by Stephen Spender with the goal to protect the basic human right of free expression. For the past 31 years, *Index* has reported on censorship issues from all over the world and has added to the debates on those issues. In addition to the analysis, reportage and interviews, each *Index* contains a country by country list of free speech violations. These lists remain as extensive today as they were in the early days of *Index*.
- The list of writers who contribute to and support *Index* includes Jonathan Mirsky, Vaclav Havel, Nadine Gordimer, Salman Rushdie, Doris Lessing, Roger Kimball, Arthur Miller, A S Byatt, Yang Lian, Aung San Suu Kyi, Noam Chomsky, Julian Barnes, Ronald Dworkin, Ken Saro-Wiwa, Umberto Eco and Jack Mapanje. *Index on Censorship* is also a forum for new writers of whom the world will hear more. <www.indexonline.org>
10. "East Translates East is new program of Next Page Foundation, which builds upon the achievements of the Open Society Institute East Translates East project which to date has supported hundreds of translations between languages of Eastern Europe" (East Translates East News Release, 1).
 11. This project, launched at Vilenica 2003, Slovenia, in September of that year, had already developed on an *ad hoc* basis between *Apocalipsa* and *Romboid*.
 12. It is telling that one of the exemplars she names, Monique Wittig, writes in French: this oversight suggest some of the cultural as well as mere grammatical differences between languages. It may be harder to translate an idea which is culturally far removed from that of the host language than it is to translate from a neighbour culture, with which some exchange of ideas – and indeed, at the level of language, loan words – may have gone on. Spivak is writing about difficulties of access for Third World (her term) texts to English cultural fora: however since the problems she identifies have to do with cultural in/visibility in the destination language they may be used to read the position of smaller Central European literatures in the Anglophone world with equal clarity (Spivak 2000, 400).
 13. Although Picador and Cape both have poetry lists; so did Oxford University Press until, notoriously, the Press decided contemporary poetry was insufficiently profitable. The average print run for a poetry collection in the UK is only 400; reprinting is relatively rare.
 14. However publishers and their readers considering books published in other languages for UK translation do respond to the reputations of international publishers.
 15. Collections of literary essays are rare in the UK market.
 16. This is not an exclusively Slovak problem: they will be equally unlikely to name a Hungarian, or, unless they read poetry, Polish or Romanian writer.
 17. The critically-acclaimed translation of *Anna Karenina* (2001) in the Penguin Classics series, for example, follows house style in having the translators' notes as end- rather than foot-notes so that the narrative page remains wholly given-over to the text.
 18. Although Mebdh McGuckian has something of the same dreamlike and often childlike emotional landscape, the structure of her verse is altogether more conventionally stanzaic. Closest to Haugová is probably the way the metaphysical strains the limits of representation and of representative speech – grammar – in the work of the American woman poet Jorie Graham.
 19. "Enlarge Your Mind" was held at Borders Bookstores in London, Cambridge, Glasgow and Oxford. Each store bought in books from the promotional list and held a roadshow event.

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