

# ANNALES

*Anali za istrske in mediteranske študije*  
*Annali di Studi istriani e mediterranei*  
*Annals for Istrian and Mediterranean Studies*  
*Series Historia et Sociologia, 27, 2017, 1*





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Annals for Istrian and Mediterranean Studies**

**Series Historia et Sociologia, 27, 2017, 1**

KOPER 2017



ISSN 1408-5348

UDK 009

Letnik 27, leto 2017, številka 1

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**Tisk/Stampa/Print:**

Grafis trade d.o.o.

**Založnik/Editore/Published by:**

Zgodovinsko društvo za južno Primorsko - Koper / Società storica del Litorale - Capodistria©

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**Sedež uredništva/Sede della redazione/****Address of Editorial Board:**SI-6000 Koper/Capodistria, Garibaldijeva/Via Garibaldi 18,  
**e-mail:** annaleszdjp@gmail.com, **internet:** http://www.zdjp.si/

Redakcija te številke je bila zaključena 15. 3. 2017.

**Sofinancirajo/Supporto finanziario/****Financially supported by:**

Javna agencija za raziskovalno dejavnost Republike Slovenije (ARRS), Luka Koper, Mestna občina Koper

*Annales - Series historia et sociologia* izhaja štirikrat letno.

Maloprodajna cena tega zvezka je 11 EUR.

**Naklada/Tiratura/Circulation:**

300 izvodov/copie/copies

Revija Annales, Series historia et sociologia je vključena v naslednje podatkovne baze / La rivista Annales, Series historia et sociologia è inserita nei seguenti data base / Articles appearing in this journal are abstracted and indexed in: Thomson Reuters (USA): Arts and Humanities Citation Index (A&HCI) in/and Current Contents / Arts & Humanities; IBZ, Internationale Bibliographie der Zeitschriftenliteratur (GER); Sociological Abstracts (USA); Referativnyi Zhurnal Viniti (RUS); European Reference Index for the Humanities and Social Sciences (ERIH PLUS); Elsevier B. V.: SCOPUS (NL).

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original scientific article  
received: 2016-05-07

DOI 10.19233/ASHS.2017.07

## NORMAN MAILER IN YUGOSLAVIA

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### ABSTRACT

*Norman Mailer (1923–2007) was a prominent American author who, with his works and public criticism, reached far beyond the United States of America. By analysing Mailer's writings and newspaper articles on Mailer, this article examines the role of Norman Mailer in Yugoslavia after WWII. In 1999, Mailer wrote of the attempts by Slobodan Milošević's army to exterminate the Albanians living in Kosovo, and he also criticised President Clinton's decision not to send American ground troops into Kosovo. The role of Mailer in the literary sphere of post-war Yugoslavia was in introducing a new literary movement to Yugoslavia, i. e. literary journalism or, more precisely, new and participatory journalism.*

**Keywords:** Norman Mailer, American literature, translations, post-war Yugoslavia, history

## NORMAN MAILER IN JUGOSLAVIA

### SINTESI

*Norman Mailer (1923–2007) è stato un importante scrittore americano, le cui opere e azioni al servizio della società hanno superato i confini degli Stati Uniti d'America. Basandosi su un'analisi delle opere di Mailer e di alcuni articoli sull'autore, il seguente articolo illustra il ruolo di Mailer in Jugoslavia dopo la seconda guerra mondiale. Oltre al ruolo di Mailer, che nell'ambito della letteratura in Jugoslavia consistette soprattutto nel far conoscere il giornalismo letterario ossia nuovo e partecipativo, è da evidenziare la reazione critica dell'autore nei confronti della situazione della Serbia alla svolta del millennio. Nel 1999 Mailer scrisse riguardo i tentativi dell'esercito di Milošević di sterminare gli albanesi in Kosovo. Inoltre criticò la decisione del presidente americano Clinton di non inviare le truppe americane a Kosovo.*

**Parole chiave:** Norman Mailer, letteratura americana, traduzioni, Jugoslavia del dopoguerra, storia

## INTRODUCTION

This article is based on the content and discourse analyses of Mailer's writings and of articles on Norman Mailer published in the territory of the former Yugoslavia (the Socialist Federal Republic of Yugoslavia, which lasted until 1991). Research work in libraries and a study of the relevant existent literature have been combined with textual analyses of some of Mailer's works and their translations. In the United States and in Europe Norman Mailer is considered as one of the most significant American authors of the 20<sup>th</sup> century (Poirier, 1972; Bufithis, 1978; Wenke, 1987; Leeds, 2002; Bloom, 2003; Lennon, 2013). Also, in the former Socialist Federal Republic of Yugoslavia, Mailer has been known since at least 1955, when his first novel *The Naked and the Dead*, portraying the lives of soldiers in the Pacific during WWII, was translated as *Goli i mrtvi* into Serbo-Croatian by Dušan Čurčija. As were the majority of the new American literary names after WWII, Mailer was introduced to Yugoslav literary scenes with the war novel (Stanonik, 1988, 332–333). Further on, it will be shown that the role of Mailer in the literary sphere of the post-war Yugoslavia was mainly in introducing a new literary movement to Yugoslavia, the so-called literary journalism or, more precisely, new and participatory journalism. Potočnik Topler (2013, 79) argues that the American author of Slovene descent, Louis Adamic, already employed literary journalism techniques, but Mailer was the one who mastered them with his exquisite style. However, it should also be observed that Mailer was a well known public figure and critic of the contemporary reality of the United States and their foreign affairs. In 1999, he criticised the States' (non-)intervention in Serbia. He wrote on the attempts by Slobodan Milošević's army to exterminate the Albanians living in Kosovo, and on President Clinton's decision not to send American ground troops into Kosovo.

## YUGOSLAVIA AFTER THE SECOND WORLD WAR

For understanding the reception of the American literature and Norman Mailer in Yugoslavia after WWII, it is necessary to understand some basic characteristics of Yugoslavia's foreign affairs, and Yugoslavia's relations with the Soviet Union and the United States at the time. Obviously, the contemporary socio-political situation in the second half of the 20<sup>th</sup> century in the United States of America, and in Yugoslavia, influenced the reception of Mailer in Yugoslavia; thus, it is necessary to outline some significant historical circumstances.

The first circumstance that should be observed is that, at the end of WWII, the United States of America gained a dominant economic position in the world (Zinn, 2003, 425). According to the historian Lawrence Wittner, "the war rejuvenated American capitalism" (Zinn, 2005, 425) since there was no destruction on the States' grounds. In Yugoslavia, however, immediately after the war, the economic situation was difficult and, for the majority of the population, there was a scarcity of almost everything (Potočnik Topler, 2014, 234) as was practically the case all across Europe.

Immediately after the war, in politics, Yugoslavia tried to imitate the Soviet Union system in many areas (Pirjevec, 1987; Režek, 2005), even the first Yugoslav Constitution of 1946 did not differentiate much from the 1936 Soviet exemplary Constitution (Režek, 2005, 9). The second significant circumstance in the post-war Yugoslavia was the Tito-Stalin split. When the Yugoslav ruler Tito found himself in dispute with the Soviet Union in 1947 and 1948, he looked for protection in the West (Bekić, 1988, 45–159; Pirjevec, 2014, 763–764; Pirjevec, 2015, 259–281, 628; Ramšak, 2015, 767). According to Pirjevec, in May, 1948 (when Mailer's first novel was published in the States), it became clear in Yugoslavia that all the bridges with Stalin had been demolished – ("so s Stalinom porušeni vsi mostovi") (Pirjevec, 2015, 296). However, that was, as Pirjevec argues, not the end of Yugoslavia:

*After the exciting diplomatic contacts between the peaks of the Communist League of Yugoslavia and the Communist Party of the Soviet Union which marked the beginning of 1948, in which Kardelj played a central role next to Tito, in the following months secret correspondence occurred, in which the question was, whether the dogma of "democratic centralism", the arbiter of which was said to be Stalin, was true or not. Since Tito and his supporters claimed to have the right to their own path to socialism because of their struggle for liberation and the related revolution, Stalin banished them from the Cominform in the belief that they would collapse easily if they could be isolated economically and politically. Here begins the story which marked the European socialist movement in the coming decades. Tito did not retreat but, with the help of the West, he "stayed afloat", if we use the words of the British Foreign Minister Ernest Bevin. Moreover, he let his employees, Edvard Kardelj, Boris Kidrič, Milovan Đilas and others continue developing thoughts about the independent path to socialism (Pirjevec, 2014, 264).<sup>1</sup>*

<sup>1</sup> Translation: "Po razburljivih diplomatskih kontaktih med vrhoma KPJ in KPSZ, ki so zaznamovali začetek leta 1948 in v katerih je Kardelj poleg Tita odigral osrednjo vlogo, je prišlo v naslednjih mesecih do tajne korespondence, v kateri je bilo zastavljeno vprašanje, ali dogma "demokracijskega centralizma", katerega arbiter naj bi bil Stalin, drži ali ne. Ker so Tito in njegovi trdili, da imajo pravico zaradi svojega osvobodilnega boja in z njim povezane revolucije do lastne poti v socializem, jih je Stalin izobčil iz Informbiroja v prepričanju, da jih bo brez težav zrušil, če jih bo gospodarsko in politično osamil. Tu pa se začne zgodba, ki je dala pečat evropskemu socialističnemu gibanju v naslednjih desetletjih. Tito namreč ni klonil, ampak je s pomočjo Zahoda "ostal na površju", če uporabimo besede britanskega



The United States provided support, and were important for Yugoslavia after the Tito-Stalin split in the so-called Informbiro period. Also, later, in 1968, when the Soviets tried to put political pressure on Yugoslavia, the United States remained important (Pirjevec, 2015, 628).

It should be emphasised, however, that, since the second half of the 1950s, and especially since the year 1960, when Yugoslavia founded the Non-Aligned Movement together with Egypt and India, Yugoslavia tried to maintain independence from both superpowers, the United States and the Soviet Union and, at the same time, maintain friendly relations with both of them too (Bekić, 1988). Yugoslavia was a country with its own so-called “third path” – a system that differed from Western capitalism on the one hand, and from Soviet-bloc socialism on the other, which was also reflected in the cultural politics (Crnkovic, 2012, 8).

The 1960s was also the period when the art scene in Yugoslavia gained new opportunities, and Crnkovic describes the Yugoslav art scene as “cosmopolitan, curious, and open” (2012, 8). Tomc (2014, 306) even speaks of the americanization of the developed world. In the field of literature in Yugoslavia, this “americanization” was seen mainly in the translation politics – more American and less Russian authors were translated into the so-called Yugoslav languages (Pokorn, 2016). It needs to be emphasised that the majority of inhabitants in Yugoslavia had the opportunity to broaden their horizons and be in contact with new trends in science, culture and economy. “In Yugoslavia, the Slovenes expanded their horizons, stepped out of their underdeveloped province and began looking around the world”,<sup>2</sup> said the historian Pirjevec in an interview for the *Mladina* journal (23. 12. 2011).

#### THE RECEPTION OF THE AMERICAN POST-WAR LITERATURE IN POST-WAR YUGOSLAVIA

In Yugoslavia, after WWII and especially at the beginning of the 1950s, several works of American authors were translated into Croatian, Serbian and Slovene. In this period, American influence in Serbia (particularly in the Serbian and Yugoslav capital Belgrade), in Slovenia, and also in Bosnian Sarajevo, grew continuously. Pokorn's research<sup>3</sup> (2016) shows that, immediately after the Second World War, there was a greater interest in translations of Russian literature while, after the Tito-Stalin split in 1948, there began an increased interest in translations of literary works in English. Also, Stanovnik's research (2005) on translation politics in Slovenia in the

period between 1945 and 1965 showed similar trends, and the number of translations from English into Slovene increased after 1948.

Official politics in Belgrade, which was the centre of decision making for the whole of Yugoslavia, encouraged, and also funded, the translations of certain American authors. In foreign affairs, good relations with the United States of America were significant and, therefore, translating American authors was encouraged. Translated works were monitored in Yugoslavia and, according to Pokorn (2012, 156), even adapted. Pokorn describes the decision making on translations as follows:

*/.../ the general editors and the chair persons of the publishing councils of all major publishing houses were party members who monitored the proposed yearly lists of publications carefully. The editors then selected the translators they trusted, and the translator did their job without any direct intervention being necessary (Pokorn, 2012, 155).*

According to my knowledge, Mailer's translations into the languages of the Socialist Federal Republic of Yugoslavia were not censored. Pokorn (2012, 156), states that only children's literature was adapted in Yugoslavia, while translations of literature for adult audiences were not censored. The situation of (self-)censorship, however, was more complex – at least in Slovenia. Censorship in terms of translator's interventions in literary texts was really most typical of children's literature but, in translating the racist discourse, interventions can also be observed in the translation of works for adult readers, for example in the Slovene translation of the Margaret Mitchell's novel *Gone with the Wind* (Trupej, 2014, 94–103). Especially in the first post-war years, there were also lists of controversial literature, which the Agitprop requested not to be included in the translation programmes (Gabrič, 2008, 67) or in the programmes of theatres (Gabrič, 2010, 171–187). Poniž (2010, 190), also mentions the so-called “invisible censorship” and “self-censorship” (191–195) as characteristics of the regime, and enumerates several authors who underwent some type of censorship (i. e. Vitomil Zupan, Marjan Rožanc, Igor Torkar). Also, Dović (2010, 293) elaborates on the “invisible totalitarian censorship” and on “self-censorship” – mechanisms that were difficult to prove, but they existed. In the post-war Yugoslavia, there is one very well known example of censorship in adult literature that needs mentioning, i. e. Louis Adamic's *Eagle and the Roots*, which was published in 1952 (after

zunanjega ministra Ernesta Bevina. Še več, dovolil je svojim sodelavcem, Edvardu Kardelju, Borisu Kidriču, Milovanu Đilasu in drugim, da nadaljujejo z razvojem misli o samostojni poti v socializem.”

2 Mladina, 23. 12. 2011: Dr. Jože Pirjevec, zgodovinar. Mladina, 51, <http://www.mladina.si/107894/dr-joze-pirjevec/>. Translation: “V Jugoslaviji smo Slovenci razširili svoje obzorje, stopili iz zapečarske province in se razgledali po svetu”.

3 In the period from 1945 to 1950 there were 144 published translations from Russian and only 31 from English. After the conflict with Stalin in 1948, the trend was reversed: In a very short period from 1951 to 1955 109 translations in English appeared, and only 42 from the Russian language (Pokorn, 2016).



Adamic's death) and was forbidden in Yugoslavia, and translated into Slovene as late as in 1970 and 1981 (Žitnik, 2016). The history of censorship in Yugoslavia after the Second World War has not yet been researched fully, but was definitely complex (Režek, 2010, 9–11). In addition to that, it should be mentioned that, in the 1960s, Yugoslavia signed the Berne and the World Conventions on Copyright, and the publishing houses in Yugoslavia were allowed to keep direct contact with publishers in the West (Pokorn, 2012, 156).

As far as language politics in Yugoslavia is concerned, it needs to be taken into consideration that, after WWII, the dominant language was Serbo-Croatian, which was also taught in primary schools all over Yugoslavia, while today, differences are encouraged between Serbian, Croatian, Bosnian, and Montenegrin (in the past Montenegrin was considered a Serbian dialect). One of the objectives of the leading structures was to familiarize the Yugoslavs with American culture in general. Among the means of achieving this was supporting publishing houses and Faculty Departments. One of the leading publishing houses in the former Socialist Federal Republic of Yugoslavia specialising in foreign titles was the publisher Zora in Zagreb. In Slovenia, the leading publishers after WWII were Mladinska knjiga, Cankarjeva založba and Državna založba Slovenije (headquartered in Ljubljana, the capital of Slovenia) (Potočnik, 2016, 79), not to mention that the University of Zagreb (English Department of the Faculty of Arts) already had American Studies scholars after WWII and, in the 1950s, the University of Ljubljana was also starting to develop English and American Studies. At the Ljubljana University (at the Faculty of Arts), for the first time, lectures on American Literature were held in 1961 by the Slovene Professor of English and American literature Janez Stanonik (Bucik et al., 2009, 23). All the above-mentioned reasons and circumstances have resulted in the fact that, twenty-five years after the dissolution of the Socialist Federal Republic of Yugoslavia, there are 21 translated books by Mailer available in Croatian, Macedonian, Serbian, and Slovene (in the so-called Yugoslav languages), including different translations and retranslations.

#### THE RECEPTION OF MAILER IN POST-WAR YUGOSLAVIA

Mailer's books in the United States were published in the period when the translation politics in Yugoslavia encouraged positive discrimination towards American authors. Since Mailer was among the best-selling and most (un)popular authors in the United States of America, his works had a good predisposition for being translated into Serbo-Croatian, which was intelligible by the majority of the nations of Yugoslavia, and also into Slovene.

From today's perspective, it is obvious that Mailer, as an artist with an extraordinary career, was interesting and challenging for translating. He authored more than 40 fiction and non-fiction books, received two Pulitzer Prizes (for *The Armies of the Night* in 1969 and *The Executioner's Song* in 1980), was a member of the American Academy of Arts and Letters from 1984 until his death in 2007. Among many activities, he was engaged actively in politics (he ran for the Mayor of New York City in 1969). However, when Mailer's first novel was published in 1948, he was a married Harvard graduate with war experience and the published book *The Naked and the Dead*, which became available to the Yugoslav readers seven years after originally being published in the United States – in 1955, and to the small Slovene public in 1958 – ten years after the book's first publication in the States, which seems quite late from today's perspective, but was relatively early at the time considering the development of the means of communication.

The reception of Mailer in the Socialist Federal Republic of Yugoslavia can be divided into three phases: The first phase was in the 1950s and is characterised by the introduction of Mailer in Yugoslavia; the second phase was in the 1960s, 1970s, and 1980s – this was the golden age of translating Mailer's works into the Yugoslav languages, when the majority of Mailer's works had been translated into Serbo-Croatian and Slovene; the third phase of Mailer's reception was after the year 1990, when the Yugoslav media reported on Mailer, but the translations of Mailer's works into the Yugoslav languages were on the decrease.

According to *Cobiss.Net*, which is a Library Information System of Slovenia, Serbia, Bosnia and Herzegovina, Macedonia, Montenegro, Bulgaria and Albania, and catalogues of the national libraries of the former Yugoslav Republics, Mailer's translations into some Yugoslav languages were early. In 1955, the novel *The Naked and the Dead* was the first of Mailer's novels translated into one of the Yugoslav languages. Dušan Ćurčija translated the book as *Goli i mrtvi*, and it was published by Zora in Zagreb, Croatia. In the years 1955 and 1956, the Yugoslav newspapers and journals *Književnost*, *Republika*, and *Letopis*<sup>4</sup> reported on the first translation of the first Mailer novel in Yugoslavia at length. *The Naked and the Dead* was re-translated into Croatian in 2003 under the same title. Besides *The Naked and the Dead*, the following Mailer titles are available in Serbian and Croatian:

- *The Deer Park* (*Park jelena*, translated by Ivan Slamnig, published in 1958 in Zagreb, Croatia by Zora),
- *An American Dream* (*Američki san*, translated by Antun Šoljan, published in Zagreb, Croatia in 1967 by Matica Hrvatska),
- *Why are We in Vietnam?* (*Zašto smo u Vijetnamu?* translated by Tomislav Ladan, published in Za-

4 Data from Literary History Collection of the University of Maribor Library.

- greb in 1969 by the publisher Naprijed),
- The Armies of the Night (*Vojske noći: povijest kao roman, roman kao povijest*, translated by Gordana Bunčić, published in Zagreb in 1971 by Zora),
  - *Marilyn: A Biography* (*Marilyn: biografija*, translated by Branko Bucalo, published in Zagreb in 1974 by Prosvjeta),
  - *Essay Genius and Lust* (*Genije i požuda*, translated by Zlatko Crnković, published in Zagreb in 1980 by Prosvjeta),
  - *The Executioner's Song* (*Krvnikova pjesma 1, Krvnikova pjesma 2*, translated by Branko Bucalo, published in Zagreb in 1982 by Globus),
  - *Tough Guys Don't Dance* (*Muškarčine ne plešu*, translated by Milica Babić, published in Sarajevo in 1986 by Svjetlost; and in 2009 a new translation into Croatian was made by Milena Benini and published in Zagreb by Zagrebačka naklada),
  - *Ancient Evenings* (*Drevne večeri 1, Drevne večeri 2*, translated by Zoran Mutić, published in 1988 in Sarajevo and Ljubljana by Svjetlost),
  - *The Gospel according to the Son* (*Evangelje po sinu*, translated into Croatian by Stjepan A. Szabo, published by Izvori in Zagreb in 1997 and *Jevandlje po Sinu Božjem*, translated into Serbian by Nada Čušić, published in Belgrade in 1998 by Čigoja štampa) and
  - *The Castle in the Forest* (*Dvorac u šumi*, translated into Croatian by Saša Stančin, published by Vuković & Runjić in Zagreb in 2008 and *Zamak u šumi*, translated into Serbian by Magdalena Reljić and published in Belgrade in 2008 by Alnari).

Earlier Mailer's translations into Croatian and Serbian were prompt, never censored, and often ignored the difference between the Croatian and Serbian languages. Translators of Mailer's works were well-educated men and women of letters, often writers, critics or poets themselves. Thus, Mailer was well known in the Serbian, Croatian, and Bosnian literary environments. Mailer's first novel *The Naked and the Dead* was re-translated into Croatian in 2003 as *Goli i mrtvi* (the same title as in 1955) by Marko Maras. The novel was published by Alfa in Zagreb.

Usually, following Serbian and Croatian translations in the 1960s and 1980s, Slovene translators produced Slovene translations of the following Mailer's novels:

- *An American Dream*, *The Executioner's Song* and *Tough Guys Don't Dance*;
- *The Naked and the Dead* (*Goli i mrtvi*, translated by Boris Verbič, Ljubljana: Državna založba Slovenije, 1958);
- *An American Dream* (*Ameriški sen*, translated by Mira Mihelič, Ljubljana: Mladinska knjiga, 1966);
- *The Executioner's Song* (*Krvnikova pesem*, translated by Ana Padovan, Koper: Lipa, 1982);

and *Tough Guys Don't Dance* (*Nepremagljivi ne plešejo*, translated by Bojan Rambaher, Maribor: Založba Obzorja, 1986).

Considering the number, quality and popularity of Mailer's works this is very little, but it needs to be observed that, on the other hand, it is a respectful number considering there are only two million speakers of Slovene, and the fact that a lot of Mailer's works were available in Serbian and Croatian, which were understood by the majority of people living in Yugoslavia (Potočnik Topler, 2016, 81). However, it should be emphasised that Mailer's translations into Serbo-Croatian, Croatian, Serbian and Slovene were quite up to date. Mailer's fourth novel, *An American Dream* (1965), was translated into Slovene in 1966 by Mira Mihelič, who was the most trusted woman translator of English at the time; and Antun Šoljan, also a writer himself, translated this novel into Serbo-Croatian in 1967.

Apart from being an American author, Mailer was of interest for translating into the Yugoslav languages because he wrote about the important dilemmas of the contemporary America (he spoke of political power, the dangerous power of capital, violence, perverted sexuality, the phenomenon of Hitler, terrorism, religion, and corruption). He also pointed out continually that democracy was threatened and that individuals were also in constant danger of losing freedom and dignity in the United States. Collins (2014, 94), called him "the quintessential American chronicler and critic". Later, Mailer was challenging for translating because he was a literary journalist (this type of literature combines reporting based on facts with the narrative techniques characteristic of literature) and, more precisely, a news journalist (he reported about real-life events in complex-styled stories; this type of literary journalism emerged in the 1960s) (Potočnik Topler, 2016, 31). In the literary sphere, nowadays, Mailer is credited for introducing a new literary movement to Yugoslavia, the so-called new and participatory journalism.

The legacy of Mailer continues in the territory of the former Yugoslavia. In 2013, Mailer's first novel *The Naked and the Dead* was also translated into the Macedonian language by Kalina Janeva under the title *Goli i mrtvi* and was published in Skopje by the publishing house Makavej. Kalina Janeva (1981) belongs to the younger generation of Macedonian translators.

#### MAILER IN THE YUGOSLAV MEDIA AND MAILER ON YUGOSLAVIA

Also in post-war Yugoslavia, the media had a significant role in introducing new literary names and new novels published in Yugoslav translations (Serbo-Croatian, Croatian, Serbian, Slovene) to the wider public. Newspapers and journals in the territory of Yugoslavia reported on Mailer when his new novels were publis-

hed, when he received some prize or found himself in prison. The excesses of the author's private life and his public and political activism attracted as much attention as his literary works. In 1960, when the translation of *The Naked and the Dead* into Serbo-Croatian had been available for five years and the translation into Slovene for two years, the Slovene newspaper *Večer* (8. 12. 1960, 6) published the following short piece of news about Mailer being in prison:

*The famous American writer Norman Mailer, the author of the novel "The Naked and the Dead", was arrested a few days ago in New York. It is suspected that he stabbed his wife. Mailer's wife is lying in hospital with severe injuries. Her condition is critical. When she was transported to the hospital she first stated that she had slipped and was hurt on broken glass. Later, in the police interrogation, she changed her statement. She said that her husband attacked her and stabbed her in the chest and back. "He said nothing, he just looked at me wildly and stabbed me," said the wife.*<sup>5</sup>

Similar pieces of news – often translated from *Newsweek* or foreign press agencies – also appeared in many other newspapers across the Socialist Federal Republic of Yugoslavia. It should, by all means, be mentioned that Mailer, as a well-known author and political figure, commented on political circumstances in Yugoslavia. There is an article by Mailer which was published in 1999 – after the breakup of the Socialist Federal Republic of Yugoslavia, when the United States of America interfered in the Yugoslav War (Johnson, 1999, 932–939), but it is worth mentioning especially because, in it, Mailer commented on Milosevic's regime, stating that "Milosevic had to be one of the wildest, toughest, most treacherous, canny, tricky, ruthless, and resourceful human beings Madeleine Albright had ever encountered".<sup>6</sup>

In the same article (Washington Post, 24. 5. 1999, A25), Mailer criticised President Clinton's decision to bomb Serbia and not to send American ground troops into Kosovo:

*NATO stepped into a trap whose depth is best plumbed by the weight of the malevolent tricks Milosevic had collected in his career. Did no one anticipate that an all-out ethnic cleansing would*

*now begin immediately? Within 24 hours, columns of refugees were in motion and the houses, towns and cities of Kosovo were ablaze. "Genocide" had begun. If Clinton and NATO have done nothing else, they have certainly leached out the power of that word. The Holocaust is the foundation of its meaning, so the word should be used with caution. Cambodia gave us genocide, as did Rwanda, but ethnic cleansing, with its loss of homes, passports, town and country, its random rage and slaughter, is still not equal to the murder of millions. Ethnic cleansing is better seen as psychic genocide. For the majority who undergo its travail, the past is amputated from the present.*

During Clinton's presidency, the United States and NATO interfered in Yugoslavia in 1995 and then helped to end the war in Bosnia and Herzegovina with the Dayton Agreement (December 1995) and, in 1999, with the bombing of the Serbian Army and infrastructure (Johnson, 1999, 934–939). Zinn (2003, 643–674), argues that Clinton's presidential mandate was marked by several bad decisions because Clinton tried to redirect the attention of the American people from the internal to foreign politics. In the 1999 article (Washington Post, 24. 5. 1999, A25) Mailer, further on, commented very critically on the decisions made by the United States of America and NATO:

*Bombing, in turn, is another form of psychic genocide. Except that now it is your future which is amputated from your present. You no longer know that you have a future. Your present sense of expectation – what you will do tomorrow, or next week, next year – is as crippled as a house with one wall sheared off. What, then, have we accomplished? So, as soon as the bombing commenced, Milosevic's atrocities increased probably by 50 or 100 times over what he had perpetrated before it all began. Yet such horror was magnified further by the horror of what NATO was doing to the Serbs. The average Serb, after all, had no more to do with this war than the average Kosovan. Chaos, therefore, was being laid upon chaos, and there was no military plan for a conclusion to the war, just hopes, plus unconscionable arrogance in NATO's exposition of its good motive.*<sup>7</sup>

5 *Večer*, 8. 12. 1960, 6 (a short notice, author not given). Translation: "Znanega ameriškega pisatelja Normana Mailerja, avtorja romana 'Goli in mrtvi', so pred nekaj dnevi aretirali v New Yorku. Sumijo, da je zabodel svojo ženo. Mailerjeva žena leži s hudimi poškodbami v bolnišnici. Njeno stanje je kritično. Ko so jo prepeljali v bolnišnico, je najprej izjavila, da se ji je spodrsnilo in se je ranila na črepinjah. Pri policijskem zaslišanju pa je svojo izjavo spremenila. Izjavila je, da jo je njen mož napadel in jo zabodel v prsa in hrbet. 'Nič ni rekel, samo divje me je pogledal in me zabodel,' je izjavila žena".

6 Washington Post, 24. 5. 1999: Milosevic and Clinton, A25.

7 Washington Post, 24. 5. 1999: Milosevic and Clinton, A25.



## CONCLUSION

Depending on the socio-political situation, it can be assumed that the situation with Mailer's presence and his translations in the post-war Yugoslavia could have been completely different than it is today. After WWII, the majority of areas were controlled, or at least monitored, by the representatives of the State, including translations of American authors. Very few works by Mailer could have been translated or, perhaps, none of them, if the leading structures in Yugoslavia had encouraged and supported translations of other literature instead of American. Thus, it can be seen clearly from the Yugoslav example that the translation politics of a State plays a significant role. The fact is also that a literary work is not only a piece of artistic work, but can be given additional meanings and, thus, additional significance, depending on the reception, especially since it is known that different readings of a certain text in different cultural environments are conditioned also by different expectations. In Yugoslavia, Mailer has been present since the translations of his first novel *The Naked and the Dead*. The golden age of his reception was in the 1960s, 1970s and 1980s, but he was present – if not by his literary works, then by his critical texts or by media reporting on him – also in the 1990s, after the breakup of Yugoslavia, and during the Yugoslav Wars. Thus, his role is not only in the literary sphere of post-war Yugoslavia, where he is credited for introducing a new literary movement to Yugoslavia, the so-called literary journalism or, more precisely, new and



**Slika 1: Norman Mailer**  
(Vir: Wikipedia)

participatory journalism, but he was – as a well known public figure and world-famous author – also a critic of political circumstances during the Yugoslav Wars in the 1990s. In 1999, he criticised the States' bombing and their (non-)intervention in Serbia. He wrote on the attempts by Slobodan Milošević's army to exterminate the Albanians living in Kosovo, and on President Clinton's (according to Mailer) bad decision not to send American ground troops into Kosovo. With Mailer, considering also the themes of his works, the Yugoslav audiences were familiarized with American culture in the broadest sense.

## NORMAN MAILER V JUGOSLAVIJI

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## POVZETEK

Norman Mailer (1923–2007) je bil pomemben ameriški avtor, čigar delo in javno delovanje sta presegala meje Združenih držav Amerike. S svojim prvencem *The Naked and the Dead* (Goli in mrtvi), ki je izšel leta 1948, se je mednarodno uveljavil, novica o ameriškem obetajočem piscu pa je kmalu dosegla tudi srbski, slovenski in hrvaški književni prostor nekdanje SFRJ. V 1950-ih, 1960-ih letih in pozneje so bila nekatera Mailerjeva dela prevedena v srbsčino, hrvaščino, slovenščino in pozneje, leta 2013 še v makedonščino. Članek osvetljuje vlogo Mailerja v Jugoslaviji po drugi svetovni vojni, in sicer na osnovi analize vsebine in diskurzivne analize nekaterih Mailerjevih del in člankov o avtorju, objavljenih na območju nekdanje SFRJ. V Združenih državah Amerike je bil Mailer znana javna osebnost in kritik družbeno-aktualnih razmer v Združenih državah Amerike, tudi ameriške zunanje politike. Leta 1999 je pisal o poskusih Miloševićeve vojske iztrebiti Albance na Kosovu. Prav tako je kritiziral odločitev ameriškega predsednika Clintona, da 1999. na Kosovo ne pošlje kopenskih enot ameriške vojske. Na književnem področju povojne Jugoslavije pa je bila Mailerjeva vloga predvsem v seznanitvi z novo književno smerjo, to je literarnim oz. natančneje, novim in participatornim žurnalizmom.

**Ključne besede:** Norman Mailer, ameriška književnost, prevodi, povojna Jugoslavija, zgodovina

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