

Migration, Literatures
and Translation:
Louis Adamič –
A Writer of Two
Worlds and the First
Slovenian Immigrant
Translator Into English

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Povzetek

Louis Adamič (1898-1951) velja za najvplivnejšega slovenskega izseljenskega avtorja in prvega slovenskega izseljenskega prevajalca v angleščino. K temu so nedvomno pripomogle tudi njegove politične povezave in vabilo na večerjo v Beli hiši, seveda pa tudi motivi njegovih del; pisal je namreč o pomembnih, perečih vprašanjih takratnih Združenih držav Amerike in sodobnega sveta, še posebej o priseljencih. Njegov prispevek k medkulturnim povezavam in dialogu pa ni zgolj v njegovih delih, ki obravnavajo kulturne identitete in narodnostna vprašanja, ampak tudi v njegovih prevodih kratkih zgodb iz slovenščine, hrvaščine in češčine, ki jih je objavljajl v ameriških časopisih in revijah. Analiza njegovih del, še posebej knjig *Smeh v džungli*, *Moja Amerika* in *Dinamit*, kaže, da se je trudil Američanom približati književnosti in kulture Jugoslavije ter drugih slovanskih narodov. Izpostaviti pa velja, da je zaradi idej, predstavljenih v svojih književnih delih, člankih in predavanjih, postal mednarodno prepoznaven in da strokovnjaki s področja multietničnih študij še danes preučujejo njegove ideje in koncepte o sobivanju različnih narodnosti.

Ključne besede: Louis Adamič, prevajanje, večnarodnost, medkulturni dialog, ameriške književnosti, kulturne študije

0 INTRODUCTION

Throughout history, and still today, the migration of people for various reasons is one of the important factors that characterise human destinies. Among immigrants, there are always also writers. Their literature is not only interesting from the point of view of its artistic value, but it also has an important social component, which is valuable as a source of awareness of multiculturalism and as a historical document of a certain period. Wittke (1946: 189) emphasises the importance of emigration literature with the idea that it reflects a specific time, space and society, and notes that such authors help write the history of the world (*ibid.*). According to Wittke (1946: 189), migration has become an important factor in literature as we live in the age of mobility, or in an “age of mobility and borderlessness” (Pourjafari and Vahidpour 2014: 679). Pourjafari and Vahidpour (2014: 681-686) explain that emigrant literature portrays characters who face migration in a variety of ways through their diverse narratives, with the goal of showing the social, cultural, economic and political aspects of immigrant lives in the host society. When Slovenian emigrant authors are discussed, especially those who have chosen the motivation for leaving one’s country as their main theme, Louis Adamič stands out for his efforts to show immigrants integrating successfully and create a tolerant, multicultural society. The Adamič scholars Mirko Jurak (1981: 126-135), Jerneja Petrič (1988: 409-11) and Janja Žitnik Serafin (<http://www.slovenska-biografija.si/oseba/sbi1000090/>) state that Adamič is the most successful Slovenian emigrant author. Žitnik (<http://www.slovenska-biografija.si/oseba/sbi1000090/>) supports her claim with data from the author’s biography: He wrote 20 books, some 500 articles, lectures, and so on, and he also gained his international reputation by visiting the American Presidents Roosevelt and Truman. He received many awards (including the Guggenheim scholarship in 1932), and he was also an author featured in the Book-of-the-Month Club. He received an Honorary Doctorate from the Temple University in Philadelphia in 1941, and the Yugoslavian award for Brotherhood and Unity in 1944. Among many activities, he also engaged in translation from Slavic languages into English. Famous writers like Upton Sinclair, Sinclair Lewis, Henry Louis Mencken, Sherwood Anderson and F. Scott Fitzgerald, supported and advised him. Adamič’s works, the majority of which deal with ethnic, cultural and social issues in his two homelands, Slovenia and the United States, also found their way into American literary anthologies, in which he was often presented as a “worker’s writer”. However, even today, despite the fact that Adamič is cited by the most prominent authors in the fields of Migration and Ethnic Studies, Multiculturalism and Integration of Immigrants, this Slovenian-American author is often overlooked by literary theory. That said, the following scholars have published extensively on him: Mirko Jurak, Tatjana Dumas Rodica, Jerneja Petrič, Janja Žitnik Serafin, and Dan Shiffman.

1 ABOUT THE AUTHOR

Prior to examining Adamič's work as a translator, some knowledge of the author's background is essential. Adamič wrote in his first book, *Laughing in the Jungle* (*Smeš v džungli*), that he came to the United States of America in 1913, to the land where "everything was possible" (Adamič 1932: 6). According to Müller (2015) the year given in the book is slightly incorrect, and the correct date is 28 December, 1912. At the time Adamič was only fourteen years old.

Together with hundreds of other immigrants, he first came to Ellis Island, which was, according to Vecoli (1985: 7), called the "Isle of Tears" in many languages. In *Laughing in the Jungle* Adamič described his first night in the United States as follows:

The first night in America I spent, with hundreds of other recently arrived immigrants, in an immense hall with tiers of narrow iron-and-canvas bunks, four deep. I was assigned a top bunk. Unlike most of the steerage immigrants, I had no bedding with me, and the blanket which someone threw at me was too thin to be effective against the blasts of cold air that rushed in through the open windows; so that I shivered, sleepless, all night, listening to snores and dream-monologues in perhaps a dozen different languages. (Adamič 1932: 41-42)

Adamič learned about linguistic diversity and multiculturalism as early as this first night in the United States. Perhaps this was the reason why he wrote a lot on such issues later on. On Ellis Island he was staying near a Turk, from a nation that was a traditional enemy of the Slovenian nation:

The bunk immediately beneath mine was occupied by a Turk, who slept with his turban wound around his head. He was tall, thin, dark, bearded, hollow-faced, and hook-nosed. At peace with Allah, he snored all night, producing a thin wheezing sound, which occasionally, for a moment or two, took on a deeper note. I thought how curious it was that I should be spending a night in such proximity to a Turk, for Turks were traditional enemies of Balkan peoples, including my own nation. For centuries Turks had forayed into Slovenian territory. Now here I was, trying to sleep directly above a Turk, with only a sheet of canvas between us. Soon after daybreak I heard him suddenly bestir himself. A moment later he began to mutter something in Turkish and clambered out of his bed in a hurry. He had some difficulty extricating himself, for there was not more than a foot between his and my bunk, and in his violent haste he rammed a sharp knee in the small of my back. I almost yelled out in pain. Safely on the floor, the Mohammedan began to search feverishly in a huge sack which contained his belongings, and presently pulled out a narrow, longish rug

and spread it carefully on the floor between two tiers of bunks. This done, he stretched himself several times, rising on his toes, cleared his throat, rubbed his beard, adjusted his turban, which was slightly askew; whereupon, oblivious of my wide-eyed interest, he suddenly crashed to his knees on the floor with a great thud. Next, he lifted his long arms ceilingward and began to bow toward the east, touching the carpet with his brow, the while mumbling his sun-up prayer to Allah. At first I did not know what to think of the Mussulman's doings. Then, slowly realizing what it was all about, the scene struck me as immensely funny. Sleepy and cold though I was, I had to pull the blanket over my head, lest the worshiper hear me laughing. (Adamič 1932: 42-43)

In the United States Adamič became acquainted with a whole new life, the big city of New York, where there was already a strong air of multiculturalism, and, last but not least, as he states humorously in his book, a banana:

On one of the pushcarts, besides apples and oranges, I noticed a pile of long yellow fruit. I remembered that I had seen the same fruit on stalls in Le Havre before sailing to America. "What are those?" I asked Steve. He laughed. "Bananas. Didn't you ever hear of bananas?" He bought a small bunch and handed me one. I looked at it. I smelled it. Then I bit into it, skin and all. Steve roared. "Peel it!" he cried. "Peel it! That's the skin! You greenhorn!" I blushed and peeled the banana. Then, eating it and liking it, I laughed with Steve, who offered me more bananas. (Adamič 1932: 65-66)

Despite the fact that Adamič's first book, *Laughing in the Jungle*, is subtitled *The Autobiography of an Immigrant in America*, Jerneja Petrič argues that Adamič was often inventing stories in order to draw attention to social and political issues. He exaggerated how he had forgotten his mother tongue because he was away from his family, and also took some liberties in his descriptions of his relatives after WW II, in order to show the situation in Tito's Yugoslavia in a better light than in reality (Shiffman 2005: 27). He also used similar approaches and techniques in his translations into English (Petrič 2011).

In New York, Adamič worked with the newspaper *Glas naroda*, where he soon became a journalist, and, before his seventeenth birthday, an assistant editor. In 1917, he became an American citizen (Shiffman, 29). After WW II he travelled around the United States, across Europe, South America, Hawaii and the Philippines (Adamič 1934: 3), which represented a significant part of his multicultural experience, and after this searched for work all over the States (Adamič 1931/1933: 237):

For a time, I hung around the employment agencies – the "slave market" – on Madison Street in Chicago. I got laboring jobs around Chicago which

lasted two or three weeks. My last job in the vicinity of Chicago was on a big road-building project outside of Joliet. From there I went with a couple of other workers to St. Louis, and from St. Louis to Kansas City, moving from one place to another as impulse and necessity bade me. (Adamič 1932: 189)

He describes this part of his life in the book *Dynamite* (1931):

My fellow workers were unlike the workers I encountered years later on jobs in California. Most of them were foreigners – short, squat, illiterate Italians and French Canadians, only a few of whom spoke English. I felt, successively, sorry for and disgusted with them. The bosses had them cowed. Their wages were low, but they would have worked for even less. At the end of the day they trudged home, silent, uninspiring, a heavy smell of hopelessness about them. They did not belong in America. They knew nothing of the country, nor had the ability or the desire to learn about it. They lived from day to day, from hand to mouth, driven by narrow selfishness. (Adamič 1932: 113-114)

The books *Dynamite* and *Laughing in the Jungle* made Adamič an established author in the United States. However, he was still seen as an immigrant writer of course, who was many times also called a “worker’s writer”, suggesting that his work was somehow less important or of questionable quality in relation to “real” literature.

In 1932, Adamič received a Guggenheim Scholarship for *Laughing in the Jungle*, a work in which he states:

The Dreiser-Adams conception of life and nature as a chaos – a jungle – within which man dreams and strives for law and order, longs and labors for “normalcy” (then a new word and political slogan in the United States), and simultaneously, in his blundering human way, does everything in his power – particularly in America – to prevent their realization, appealed strongly to my sense of the ridiculous; whereupon my serious spells began to grow less frequent and lighter. (Adamič 1932: 191-192)

The Guggenheim Scholarship enabled Adamič to return to Yugoslavia in 1932 and 1933. He described his trip in *The Native’s Return* (*Vrnitev v rodni kraj*). The book, (published in 1934), became a bestseller and a Book-of-the-Month of the American Book Club (Dumas Rodica 1997, Shiffman 2005). In this way, according to Shiffman (2005: 38), Adamič made important contributions to multiculturalism. With his writings on contemporary problems in America and Slovenia, and with his open support for the Yugoslav Partisan struggle, Adamič gained many friends, and also many enemies (Petrič 1981, Shiffman 2005).

Adamič wrote a lot about topics concerning immigrants and their economic situation in the United States, with the following works dealing with immigrants and immigration politics: *A Story of American Lives* (1935), *From Many Lands* (1940), *Two-Way Passage* (1941), *What's Your Name?* (1942), *A Nation of Nations* (1945) and *My America, 1928 – 1938* (1938), where he writes:

Clearly I was an American from Slovenia, or a Slovenian who came to America and became an American. By coming to the United States and becoming an American writer, I had jumped the boundaries and restrictions, the profound and elaborate pettiness, of the Old World. I was of two worlds, which met in that blizzard on the Iron Range in Minnesota, in Cleveland and elsewhere – not perfectly, but still, they met: America and Slovenia. (Adamič 1938: 137–138)

As far as identity was concerned, Adamič felt more American than Slovenian, or at least this is what he wrote when dealing with this sensitive subject:

“I am an American citizen and as such, of course, an American at least legally or technically. But I believe and hope I am an American not only legally and technically but actually. Watching other Americans in the United States who were born there, I sometimes think I am more American than a great many of them. Certainly America interests me more than it does a good many native Americans I know who happen to be there simply because they were born there. And I really like America, with all her faults (perhaps partly for her faults); and her future fascinates and intrigues me. In fact, I think I love the place. Writing, I use the American language, which is also part of my means of thinking. Once I was overheard saying something in my sleep; I spoke English. I guess I am an American, all right. And I feel I belong there. But, of course, I was born a Slovenian, here in Slovenia or Carniola; there is no denying that; and, if I may judge by the feelings I have experienced since my homecoming, I am also a Slovenian. There is my mother – she is a Slovenian woman; I am her son. ... I have never thought of this before, for in America I have been too occupied with immediate problems, too busy discovering America, wondering about her, going from place to place, earning my living, trying to become a writer; now that you ask me, I would say that I am an American of Slovenian birth; but if you like it better, you can consider me a Slovenian who went to America when he was not quite fifteen and became Americanized, became an American. It is all the same to me; personally, so far as I am aware, I have no problem on this point. There is no conflict in me between my original Slovenian blood or background and my being an American.” (Adamič 1938: 126–127)

Despite the fact that Adamič wrote in English, according to Žitnik Serafin (2009: 131), his “balance between the Slovenian and the American component part of

his cultural identity was never shaken,” and with his works, he addressed all the “major political, ideological, social and moral dilemmas of his time” (*ibid.*).

Adamič returned to his homeland twice: In 1932 for the first time, and in 1949 for the second, when he became aware of the reality of the new Yugoslavia. In his novel *The Native's Return* he called the Yugoslavian King a Dictator, and was no longer welcome in the country after this:

He was a man of the times, in the same category of strong-arm rulers with Mussolini, Hitler, Pilsudski, and the rest of the tyrants and dictators. He was a cog in the new political system of post-war Europe, helping to hold together a crumbling civilization with gangster methods. He was a figure in the dreadful European nightmare that seemed rapidly and inevitably approaching its climax – another great war, to be followed (as nearly everyone with whom I talked appeared to believe) by general upheavals of the masses. At the moment he had the whole country ‘on the spot’; he might stay in power one, two, five or ten more years; but the future was clearly and definitely against him and his kind. (Adamič 1934: 351)

Adamič's research from his second trip back to Yugoslavia evolved into a book titled *The Eagle and the Roots (Orel in korenine)*, in which he compares Yugoslavia and the United States. The book was completed by Adamič's wife (Adamič died on 4 September, 1951 in suspicious circumstances) and published in the United States in 1952. In Slovenia (at the time a part of the former Socialist Federative Republic of Yugoslavia) the book was not published until 1970.

2 ADAMIČ AS A TRANSLATOR

Adamič is considered the first Slovenian immigrant to translate into English, and thus he paved the way for other translators. He started publishing translations of Slovenian, Croatian and Bohemian short stories in 1921 (Petrič 2011). Language is clearly one of the biggest problems an (im)migrant or exiled author encounters, and Adamič was no exception. He was marked by his linguistic experience, starting to learn English as late as at the age of 14. His translations were, therefore, also a reflection of his personal linguistic circumstances, and they had, according to Petrič (2011: 59), a double function: To help him improve his English, and to help promote him as a writer. In his early years in the United States, Adamič translated quite a number of works from Slovenian into English, and one of his most important translations is *Yerney's Justice* by Ivan Cankar, the greatest Slovenian writer (New York: Vanguard Press, 1926). Adamič's translations were usually free, and even when he translated from his mother tongue (Slovenian) he frequently used the technique of adaptation (Petrič 2011: 62). His translation of

Ivan Cankar's story "Ob zori" ("At Dawn") is subtitled "Freely Translated", and as Petrič (2011:62) states, Adamič's "deficient language skills did not go by unnoticed, no matter how benevolently his translations may have been regarded". Adamič also translated Cankar's famous short story "A Cup of Coffee" in 1922, and once again, according to Pokorn (2005), there were mistakes in the target language. According to Pokorn (2005: 97), Adamič's translation is "not only linguistically weak and unusual", but also displays a specific approach to translation, which allows freely remodelling the text according to the translator's political and literary convictions.

Beside everything else, it should be emphasised that issues related to migrants, the Slavs, Slovenia and Yugoslavia represent significant elements in Adamič's literary works and translations. By translating from Slovenian and other Slavic languages, he presented the history, culture and socio-political issues of the Slavic nations to people in the United States. In addition to trying to popularise the cultures of Yugoslavia in the United States and establish intercultural dialogue, his translations also helped him master the English language (Petrič 2011).

As noted above, Adamič not only translated Slovenian authors, but also the following works of Croatian literature (Petrič 2011):

- Milan Ogrizović, "The Religion of My Boyhood", *The Living Age*, CC-CXIV (September 2, 1922) 600-605. Reprinted as "God", *Golden Book Magazine* V (June 1927), 841- 844;
- Ivan Krnic, "In the Department of Public Order", *The Living Age* CC-CXIV (July 15, 1922), 167-171. "U redarstvenom odsjeku", *Savremenik: mjesečnik društva hrvatskih književnika*, VI (November 1911), 638 – 643.;
- Mirko Jurkić, "Betwixt Two Worlds", *The Living Age* CCCXV (October 1928, 1922), 239-241. "Među dva svijeta", *Iz Završja: crte i priče iz zapadne Bosne*. Zagreb: Matica hrvatska 1917. 43-5.;
- Vladimir Nazor, "Angelo the Stonecutter", *The Living Age* CCCXXIII (November 29, 1924), 483-488. "Klesar Angelo", *Priče iz djetinjstva*, Zagreb 1924. 156-176.;
- Iso Velikanović, "The Old Fogies' Club", *The Living Age* CCCXXIV (January 31, 1925), 260-265. "Klupoderski klub", *Srijemske priče*. "Savremeni hrvatski pisci" št. 34, Zagreb, 1915. 65-75.

Adamič's choice of Croatian stories for translation into English seems to have been almost at random, and this reflects his lack of knowledge in this area (Petrič 2011: 61).

Not only did Adamič translate the works of other writers, but his own writing was also seen as interesting enough to be translated into (according to the Cobiss database) at least five languages:

- *Dinamit*, Zagreb, 1933 (Croatian);
- *Smijeh u džungli*, Zagreb, 1933, in Sarajevo, 1952 (Croatian);
- *Hemkomsten (The Native's Return)*, Stockholm, 1934 (Swedish);
- *Crisol de razas (From Many Lands)*, Buenos Aires, 1942 (Spanish);
- *Večere v Bílém domě*, Praga, 1947 (Czech);
- *Borba*, Ljubljana, 1969 (Croatian);
- *Wagasokoku yuugoslavia no hitobito (The Native's Return)*, Tokio, 1990 (Japanese).

Adamič's main translation and literary motifs were violence, immigrants and immigration politics, and political systems (Potočnik Topler 2014: 149-151). He was trying to enlighten American society with regard to certain issues concerning people living on the edge, by drawing attention to their everyday problems (poor knowledge of English, legal problems, and so on):

In the labor market, every worker competed with every other. Class solidarity was impossible, for, by the natural power of example of the man on top, and by other means of influence, the very rich imparted to the entire population a large measure of their own feelings and ideas in regard to the aims of life in America. The millionaire's estimate of the value of wealth was almost universally accepted. Essentially, the rich and the poor were dominated by the same ideas, and fired by the same feverish urges and desires. And the universal feeling about wealth naturally and necessarily developed the intense and unlimited competition which made life a bitter struggle, not with Nature to obtain shelter and subsistence, which would seem to be the normal life for man, but of man against man and class against class, in which an ever-increasing number must inevitably fail and be crushed. The rich were getting richer, and the poor poorer. (Adamič 2008: 20)

It is interesting that Adamič's descriptions from almost 90 years ago seem as if they were written today. Europe is full of immigrants in search of better lives, many of whom die on the journeys from their homes, and some countries still have not recovered from the 2008 economic crisis. There is no doubt about the recurring topicality of Adamič's main literary motifs. Aleš Debeljak (1998) sees Adamič as a writer who managed to portray the painful aspects of history in his stories, and in his review of *A Nation of Nations* (the fourth of Adamič's books that considers migration) Paul Knaplund (1946) describes the author as a

journalist, an intellectual, and an engaged propagandist for his homeland Yugoslavia, while Cooper (2003: 622) states that Adamič succeeded in incorporating “the perspective of the ‘outsider who is on the inside’” in all his works. Adamič is a writer who persistently emphasised the importance of ethnic heritage, described the role of immigrants in the economic and cultural development of the United States, and advocated for a pluralistic society, and thus he is still relevant today in terms of migration and ethnic studies, and cited by eminent authors from the fields of Multiculturalism, Integration of Immigrants and the Development of Intercultural Awareness. He believed that immigrants from Mexico, Italy, Spain, the Netherlands, France, Russia, Yugoslavia, Poland, Ireland, and elsewhere, as well as their descendants, made a significant contribution to the development of the American society, which thus has benefitted immensely due to immigrants. Today, Adamič is still relevant, and his works are often compared to those by Willa Cather (1873 – 1947), Thomas Bell (1903 – 1961), Charles Simic (b. 1938 in Belgrade), to mention just a few. Regardless of Adamič’s political beliefs and the quality of his literary works written in English, his legacy is rich and worthy of further research and evaluation.

As a writer, although often associated with the premodifiers “worker’s” and “immigrants’”, thus slightly removed from “real literature”, Louis Adamič established himself in the United States with the books *Dynamite* and *Laughing in the Jungle*. Stylistically, his works, in which he outlined the reality of the United States and examined topics such as violence, the integration of immigrants into American society, unemployment, and the struggle for survival, can be classified as part of a genre of documentary prose. He was a critic of American society in order to draw attention to certain mistakes, problems and irregularities, and to correct the practices, solutions and decisions that he considered to be wrong. Thus, in the preface to the second edition of the revised *Dynamite*, published in 1934, he wrote:

The story that I present here is, as I see it, a criticism of our American capitalist-democratic civilization, the most severe criticism, it seems to me, that anyone could write; but during the writing of the book my constant attitude toward America – this vast country with its 125,000,000 people, its immense natural wealth and great beauty, its high genius and marvelous technical equipment – was, and still is, one of love and of confidence in its ultimate future. (Adamič 1934: 2)

Violence was a topic that Adamič often wrote about. In *Dynamite: The Story of Class Violence in America* (published in 1931), he deals with labour unrest and the century-old struggle between American capital and workers from the beginning of industrialisation to the publishing of the book. Later, in *My America*, he reflects on an economic crisis, which was also a crisis of the value system and its consequences:

Economically, the most severely affected by this crisis – which, however, is much more than an economic crisis – are, of course, the ordinary, most numerous folk: the factory workers, the many kinds of unskilled laborers, and petty clerks: the anonymous mass, which some of our current “revolutionary intellectuals” think Marx had in mind when he wrote the words “proletariat” and “revolution”. But I believe that if Marx saw this “proletariat” in America today he would see precious few who might encourage him in his idea (if I understand him aright) that the impetus for the great change toward a new collectivist social order would come directly from this class. (Adamič 1938: 298).

According to Adamič’s *My America*, the main goal of doing business in the United States is making a profit, no matter what the consequences:

Business corporations, as we have them nowadays, are not social or humane institutions – not even human. They are, for the most part, impersonal, unsocial, powerful, outside the control of society. To be a successful business manager, a man must be or become dehumanized, almost inhuman, at least in his capacity as a business man. Indeed, it can scarcely be said that corporations are managed by men in any real, vital sense of the word. They are operated almost purely by policy, which in the course of years and decades – since the beginning of Big Business – has jelled into tradition, and which has scant, if any, consideration for the human element in business. Profits, profits – that is the thing! (Adamič 1938: 305)

Some of the writer’s remarks are terrifying, for example: “no one in corporate business, as it functions today, is personally or directly responsible to society or civilization” (1938: 307), but he also gives suggestions on how to make society more humane, as in, for example, *My America*:

The problem is what to do about it – not only this coming fall, but generally. I don’t believe the American people want to abolish private capitalism and go communist or entirely state-socialist or state-capitalist – not yet. I think that in the next several years, if this current excitement about making business social means anything, effort will be exerted to make business behave and act consistently for the benefit of the people. Such effort will probably result in a terrible fight, which will shake the United States to its depths. Business will oppose it. The people are liable to have a hard time deciding on just how to turn business the master into business the servant. They are apt to have extreme difficulty in doing that chiefly by political means, through laws, etc.; for business has the power to pervert politics and laws, and much experience in such perverting. Labor ---? (Adamič 1938: 308)

Adamič was also aware of the fact that the United States needed some changes: “Much is wrong with America, of course, and I suppose that in the next ten years

the whole country will go through a lot of misery” (Adamič 1934: 364). Further on he writes:

“I want America to have a chance to think and debate about the methods of progress most suited to her, and gradually – not *via* any short-cuts – to deal with her internal discords and incongruities, which are dislocating her life, throwing it out of focus” (Adamič, 1938: 662).

But despite this, he finishes *My America* with the following thoughts: “I want America to remain America” and “I want America eventually to become a work of art” (Adamič 1938: 662).

3 CONCLUSION

Often Adamič was pointing out the importance of multiculturalism in the United States: “America, during the past three hundred years, has assimilated millions of the oppressed from all over the world. /.../ We have demonstrated that men of all races, all creeds . . . can live together in peace and fellowship, and serve the best interests of all” (Adamič 1946: 123). Adamič consistently stressed the importance of ethnic heritage, and, at the same time, also argued for pluralism and a constantly evolving American society which respects diversity and, consequently, gains much from it. His contribution to the evolving sense of American multiculturalism is also represented by his translations from Slovenian and other Slavic languages, despite the fact that the translations were often of low quality, strongly adapted or incorrect. His contribution to multiculturalism actually went both ways – he presented Slavic history, culture, and socio-political issues to Americans, and American culture to Slavic nations. Despite the questionable quality of Adamič’s translations, they contributed to an awareness of multiculturalism and of the challenges faced by a multicultural society.

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