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Only *Crime and Punishment* Survived! Adapting East European World Literature from *Classics Illustrated* to Russ Kick's *The Graphic Canon*

Comics and world literature

Central in this article is the cultural phenomenon of adapting world literature into comics, two terms which both have proved to be hard to define. Since this has an impact on the way(s) in which they could ‘meet’, I first briefly define what I understand, in what follows, as comics and what as world literature.

As in most comics-related studies, I consider *comics* as a medium – not a genre* – in which at least two images are presented in a deliberate sequential way (cf. McCloud 1994: 9).** *World literature* then, often a bit of a catch-all term, is mostly understood in one of the following three ways:

1) as a term which points to ‘all the literature *of the world*’, with an emphasis on the last word and its ‘globality’, thus also containing the literatures of virtually unknown peoples in their often very peripheral languages;

2) as a quality label, indicating the ‘best’ – however one measures this – literature of the world and all times; or

3) (more or less) in the sense of Goethe (who in 1827 successfully introduced the then already-existing term *Weltliteratur*), as a transnational phenomenon, a ‘cosmopolitan’ reading and appreciating of each other’s, thus mutually influential, literatures.***

This article on comics adaptations of East European literature actually builds on all three of these meanings of world literature. A Khoi or Inuit comics adaptation of a Kashubian or Cherkess literary work (meaning 1) could certainly be included in my ‘corpus’, if they would just exist. As soon as they choose to adapt literary works, however, comics authors are likely to pick out broadly known, ‘canonical’ works (meaning 2),****

* As Monika Schmitz-Emans does in her recommendable book chapter ‘Graphic Narrative as World Literature’ (2013: 385).

** This implies that Russ Kick’s *The Graphic Canon* (cf. *infra*) also contains adaptations that are, in my opinion, not comics, such as Ali J’s adaptation of Hawthorne’s *The Scarlet Letter*, consisting of *only one* image, or James Uhler’s *imageless* adaptation of Rilke’s *Letters to a Young Poet* (in Kick 2012b :187 and 2013: 309-320 respectively). This does not mean, by the way, that they are not graphic, as Kick’s title indicates.

*** Goethe considered the time he lived in, with all its modernization processes, to be the “era of world literature” (Schmitz-Emans 2013: 388, on whom I based this division of world literature’s three meanings).

**** Gert Meesters (2003: 523-524) rightly points to the fact that nowadays, regardless of its quality, the publication of a comics adaptation of a classic is often an event in itself, allowing literary critics to write once more about old(er) literary works. Understandably, too, such adaptations are more warmly welcomed by literary publishers than other comics (graphic novels).

hence why, as far as concerns Eastern Europe, mostly Russian literary works – by far the best known outside Eastern Europe – have been adapted. With reference to the Goethean sense of the term (meaning 3), finally, an adaptation will of course have a more transnational, cosmopolitan character when it adapts an, in my case, East European classic or other literary work into a *non*-East European comic book or other graphic narrative, e.g., a French *bande dessinée*, an American comic or a Japanese manga.

Comics as world literature

So far, I dealt with comics and world literature respectively. Now, I devote a few lines to comics *as* world literature.* Although used rather infrequently, there exists a term ‘world comics’ which because of its referring to all comics ‘of the world’ could be linked to meaning 1 of ‘world literature’. Some former communist states in Eastern Europe, for instance, especially Yugoslavia and to a certain extent Hungary,** had a fruitful comics tradition, but its products would only be included into ‘world comics’ if one would understand this as a term indeed indicating all the comics of the planet. According to Roger Sabin, in the nineties, ‘world comics’, when used in Britain or the US “invariably mean[t] [...] comics from [Western] Europe and Japan”,*** but the geographical range in Tim Pilcher and Brad Brooks’ *The Essential Guide to World Comics* (2005) shows that this has changed now. This richly illustrated *Guide* also contains chapters on Latin-American, North and East European, African, Indian and Oceanian comics. Yet, the study objects of the booming discipline of comics studies still mainly belong to the Anglo-Saxon, continental West European (predominantly Franco-Belgian) or Japanese tradition.

When we take the quality criterion (meaning 2) into account, however, we cannot but recognize that there are only a few comic books / graphic novels which have really managed to become world literature. In 2005 Alan Moore and Dave Gibbons’ *Watchmen* (1986-1987) reached *Time* magazine’s ‘All-Time 100 Greatest Novels (published in English between 1923 and 2005)’ list,**** and we could say that works such as Art Spiegelman’s Holocaust-themed *Maus* (1980-1991)***** and Marjane Satrapi’s *Persepolis* (2000-2003), on her youth and life in Iran, have gained canonical status, too.

As regards meaning 3 of ‘world literature’, the question remains whether it is worthwhile to think about comics as world literature in the Goethean sense. Although Goethe was enthusiastic about the work of the Swiss comics pioneer Rodolphe Töpffer (cf. Willems 2009: 233-235), whom he knew personally, he most likely could not have imagined

* Though from different angles, Jan Baetens (2012) and Ion Manolescu (2011) have also broached this topic.

** During communism, Hungary in particular boasted a tradition of comics adaptations (cf. Govaerts 2011: 28). My modest contribution, though, focuses on works adapted into English-language comics. Another ‘national’ adaptation tradition which will not be taken into account here is the Japanese (the fairly recent *Manga de Dokuha* series contains several adaptations of East European classics, among which no less than four by Dostoevskii).

*** Sabin (1993: 183), where the term is spelled as one word: “worldcomics”.

**** Charlotte Cabbage shows how this was a watershed moment for the study of popular culture (2010: 70).

***** Rather strangely, *Maus* reached *Time*’s ‘All-Time 100 Nonfiction Books’ (published in English in the same timespan), but this list, admittedly, contains other fictionalized works, too.

that this art form would once become a medium of world literature itself. This being said, comics which transfer a great work of literature across national borders to a new audience are pretty much in line with the cosmopolitan spirit of Goethe's *Weltliteratur* concept. And this brings us to the phenomenon of comics adaptations.

The long-standing practice of adapting the classics into comics: changing intentions and goals

The practice of adapting the classics of world literature into comics is at least ninety years old. The 1920s already saw several serialized comics adaptations of classics such as Johann Wyss' *Swiss Family Robinson* and Robert Louis Stevenson's *Treasure Island*, but it was Albert Lewis Kanter (1897-1973) who came up, in the early 1940s, with the idea of "self-contained abridgments of individual titles in the comic-book format" (Jones 2011: 11). The result of this 'American dream' was the *Classic Comics* series, which ran from 1941 until 1947, the year in which the name was changed to *Classics Illustrated*. In this article, I only take into account the so-called 'first run' of the series, until 1971. Being a strong product name, *Classics Illustrated* would return as (or in) the title of similar later series of comics adaptations, but when people (whether or not nostalgically, cf. Kick 2012b: xi) speak about *Classics Illustrated*, normally the first run is meant.*

In the heyday of *Classics Illustrated* the first goal of these adaptations was to make the works of the literary canon available to school-age children. In the last decades, many comics or 'graphic novels' still keep opening up the classics, albeit that the audience of more recent adaptations is not at all limited to children, quite the contrary. What is more, these contemporary adaptations are often (far) more than pure condensations, and now and then they draw almost as much attention to the specific 'language' and codes of their medium as to the classics they interpret. Since people nowadays spend lesser time reading (literature), adapted classics, at least in the West, are not only used for anticipating, but also for *replacing* the reading of the original work.

This may well have been one of the implied basic assumptions of Russ Kick's recent *The Graphic Canon: The World's Great Literature as Comics and Visuals* (2012-2013), a project which resulted in three volumes of some five hundred pages each. Together they present, in chronological order, adaptations of 190 literary works: from the Mesopotamian *Epic of Gilgamesh* (ca. 2100 BC) to David Foster Wallace's *American Infinite Jest* (1996). Just like was the case with *Classics Illustrated*, the initiative was American and the intended reading public, of course, first of all Anglophone. Proportionally, however, compared with the *Classics Illustrated* issues, a lot more *non-Anglophone* works have been adapted for Kick's *Graphic Canon*, and the "anthologist" (as Kick calls himself, 2012a: 1) also managed to involve some comics artists from outside the Anglophone world (Belgium, Brazil, Italy, South Korea and Sweden). Not completely unlike the *Classics Illustrated* issues, which on their last pages featured educational information on

* For a detailed history of the series, focusing on the first run, see Jones (2011).

the biography of the author of the adapted work and/or its historical context,* each volume of *The Graphic Canon* has a 'Further Reading' section.** Apart from that, however, all adaptations are preceded by an impassioned one-page introduction – not always by Kick himself – to orient especially those readers who have not yet read the original. Another significant difference lies in the fact that the artists in *The Graphic Canon* get far more attention than in *Classics Illustrated*, which did not always mention their name (on how this evolved, cf. Jones 2011: 284). After the 'Further Reading' section, each of Kick's volumes reserves some pages for the bio-bibliographies of the contributing artists. This is obviously in line with the changed intentions and goals of the practice of adapting the classics into comics: these adaptations are no longer merely about the original literary works, they are now also about the comics medium itself. This is how Kick puts it at the end of his 'Editor's Introduction to Volume 1':

“And this is the main point of *The Graphic Canon*. You could look at it as an educational tool, and I hope it does get used that way. You could say that it will lead people to read the original works of literature; that would make me happy. But, at its heart, this titanic, multi-volume anthology is a self-contained artistic/literary work, an end in itself” (Kick 2012a: 1).

Between the glory days of *Classics Illustrated* and the appearance of *The Graphic Canon* many other comics adaptations of the classics, especially in the last decade, have been published (cf. also n. 6). It is not only for reasons of space that I limit myself here to the two 'series' mentioned in my title: I think they simply represent the best examples for a discussion about comics and world literature. The link with meaning 2 of world literature (cf. supra) is obvious, meaning 1 to a certain extent is touched upon in *The Graphic Canon* through the adaptations of Chinese, Japanese and other Asian works that are relatively unknown in the West. A worthwhile way to test the applicability of meaning 3, for its part, is to look at whether or how transnational – or 'translingual' – circulation is involved. The just-mentioned English-language adaptations of works from East Asia undeniably make the latter circulate transnationally, and one could say that every translation of a *Classics Illustrated* issue or of *The Graphic Canon* volumes themselves as a matter of fact adds to their transnationality. *Classics Illustrated* exists in 26 languages (and in 36 countries; Jones 2011: 9), while *The Graphic Canon* has already been (partially) translated into French, German (the subtitle interestingly being “Weltliteratur als Graphic Novel”) and Polish.

* The issues could also contain contents which had nothing to do with the adapted classic. A case in point is Rudolph Palais' *Crime and Punishment* adaptation for *Classics Illustrated* (cf. infra), which on the last pages contains a Dostoevskii biography and a two-page story about the United States' star-spangled banner. Katy Sosnak suggests that this “patriotic filler” should be linked to the ideological aims of the adapters (2013: 164-165).

** By Liz Byer in volume 1 (Kick 2012a: 486-493) and Jordyn Ostroff in volumes 2 and 3 (Kick 2012b: 484-491; 2013: 545-554).

Which East European works have been adapted?

In spite of Albert Kanter's (and several of his collaborators') East European descent,* only three out of the 169 (American) issues of *Classics Illustrated's* first run are adaptations of East European literary works: Fedor Dostoevskii's *Crime and Punishment* (#89, 1951; artist Rudolph Palais), Nobel Prize-winning Henryk Sienkiewicz' *With Fire and Sword* (#146, 1958; artist George Woodbridge) and Nikolai Gogol's *Taras Bulba* (published as *The Cossack Chief*, #164, 1961; artist Sidney Miller). Aleksandr Pushkin's *The Queen of Spades* (1962, UK #157) and Lev Tolstoi's *Master and Man* (1963, UK #159), however, only appeared in the British series.** An adaptation of another work by Tolstoi, *The Siege of Sevastopol* was scheduled (US #171), but only the script was completed (Jones 2011: 238).

A look at the list of adapted East European works in Russ Kick's volumes teaches us that only one of them already featured in *Classics Illustrated*. Indeed, only Dostoevskii's *Crime and Punishment* (2012b: 358-367; artist Kako) 'survived'. Kick's second volume, devoted to nineteenth-century classics, also contains an adaptation of Tolstoi's *Anna Karenina* (2012b: 404-414; artist Ellen Lindner). Volume 3, covering the twentieth century, presents adaptations of Maksim Gorkii's (*The Mother* (2013: 66-73; artist Stephanie McMillan), one novella and two short stories by Franz Kafka: *The Metamorphosis* (2013: 108-110; artist Robert Sikoryak; cf. n. 16), 'The Top' and 'Give it up' (2013: 196-204; artist Peter Kuper), Vladimir Nabokov's *Lolita* (2013: 418-428; artist Sally Madden) and finally Mikhail Bulgakov's *The Master and Margarita* (2013: 467-477; artists Andrzej Klimowski and Danusia Schejbal). As we all know, the 'East-Europeanness' of Kafka's oeuvre, and of Nabokov's *Lolita*, are debatable: both authors were born Eastern Europeans – a German-speaking Jew from Austro-Hungarian Prague and a Russian from Saint Petersburg – but the adapted works did not (originally) appear in an East European language (in German and English respectively).*** Evidently, we do not need to dwell on this here. Suffice it to say that Kafka's works are classified, in the list "Country/Area of Origin", under "Austria-Hungary", and *Lolita* under "Russia & the Soviet Union" (Kick 2013: 564).

* Kanter was the eldest child of a Russian-Jewish couple who had fled to the US in 1904; see Jones (2011: 9), who further on emphasizes that, throughout the decades, there were several other (children of) East European immigrants among the artists and other collaborators of *Classics Illustrated* (2011: 64, 76, 235).

** For the British *Classics Illustrated* list, see Jones' Appendix J (2011: 349-352), which unfortunately does not mention the comics artists. Although Jones (2011: 278-279) mentions *Classics Illustrated's* Joint European Series (JES, 1956-1976), his often detailed monograph does not feature a list of its 230 issues. Out of these 230, sixty-seven (according to the Comixology website; <https://www.comixology.com/Classics-Illustrated-Joint-European-Series/comics-series/35212?ref=Y29taWMvdmlldy9kZXNrdG9wL2JyZWFKY3J1bWJz> – accessed 12 Nov. 2015) were not originally published in English; by now they all are, among which no less than five 'East European' adaptations: *The Wandering Horseman* (Nikolai Leskov; JES #14), *Hadji Murad the Tartar Traitor* (Lev Tolstoi JES #16), *The House of the Dead* (Dostoevskii; JES #24), *The Seven That Were Hanged* (Leonid Andreev; JES #26) and *A Terrible Revenge* (Gogol; JES #67).

*** Actually, the same goes for Polish-born Joseph Conrad's *Heart of Darkness*, whose adaptation (by Matt Kish, 2013: 2-12) opens volume 3 (for Kick's reasons not to include it in volume 2 – *Heart of Darkness* already started to appear in the 19th century – see his introduction to volume 3; 2013: xii). Very few people, however, would consider *Heart of Darkness* a Polish novel(la). Work by Conrad had already been adapted for *Classics Illustrated* (cf. Jones 2011: 185-186), but not *Heart of Darkness*.

All of these adaptations were especially created for Kick's anthology, except that of *The Master and Margarita* and the three Kafka adaptations (cf. Kick 2013: 562), while these three, together with that of *Lolita*, are the only four that adapted the *whole* work. This was of course far easier for Kafka's short source texts than for Nabokov's long novel.*

In overview:

Classics Illustrated (1951-1963)

- Dostoevskii's *Crime and Punishment*
- Sienkiewicz's *With Fire and Sword*
- Gogol's *Taras Bulba (The Cossack Chief)*
- Pushkin's *The Queen of Spades*
- Tolstoi's *Master and Man*
-

The Graphic Canon (2012-2013)

- Dostoevskii's *Crime and Punishment*
- Tolstoi's *Anna Karenina*
- Gorkii's *Mother*
- Kafka's *The Metamorphosis*, 'The Top' and 'Give it up'
- Nabokov's *Lolita*
- Bulgakov's *The Master and Margarita*

Have times changed?

Even without examining the comics themselves, a quick comparison of the latter with the former list** already offers us a lot to comment on. It is clear that there could have been no place for a so-called morally disputable work such as *Lolita* (1955) – even if it had been older – on the *Classics Illustrated* list. The same goes for Gorkii's *Mother* (1906), but here the reason would be that the novel and its author would have been considered far too 'communist' (too 'Soviet') during the Cold War period in which all these *Classics Illustrated* issues were published. There never seems to have been any plan to adapt *Anna Karenina* among the *Classics Illustrated* collaborators. Although it soon became a classic, by a worldwide renowned writer – certainly also in the US (cf. Wentz 2006) –, the heroine was undoubtedly too frivolous and her way of life far too immoral. What is more, *Classics Illustrated* tended to focus on so-called 'boy's books' (cf. Jones 2011:135-136), thus with enough place for adventure and fighting, the 'good' defeating the 'bad' etc., hence adaptations of Sienkiewicz' *With Fire and Sword* and Gogol's *Taras Bulba*.

* For more than twenty years, there have been 'anthologies' with one-page comics adaptations (mostly) intended to represent literary classics *in their entirety*, but this 'subgenre' – in contrast with Kick's approach – is largely parodic (cf. Schmitz-Emans 2012: 273-286). Among the 'East European' cases mentioned above, only Sikoryak's *Metamorphosis* adaptation (1st publ. in *Raw* 2/2, 1990), with Charles Schulz's Charlie Brown as Gregor Samsa, has parodic overtones.

** It is important to note that *The Graphic Canon* did not specifically intend to complement *Classics Illustrated* (although one might think that after reading Kick's second paragraph on 2012b: xii).

Technically, *The Master and Margarita*, with its notoriously complicated publication history (publ. only in 1966-1967, although its author had died already in 1940) was simply too recent to be adapted by *Classics Illustrated*. Even without that, there certainly would have been problems with the often grotesque style of Bulgakov's Soviet satire. The majority of the adapted works in the *Classics Illustrated* series were realist or romantic, and resulted in comics that could be drawn (more or less) realistically. Works like *The Master and Margarita*, with its chaotic plot, or those of Kafka were too outlandish, their tone too unrealistic or absurd, or – as is the case with 'The Top' and 'Give it up' – much too short. How could one acceptably adapt such works for an audience of, first of all, school children? In one word, too "unsettling" (cf. Kick 2013: 196) works were unlikely to get a chance in *Classics Illustrated*. And if they got it, the more unsettling aspects were removed, as was the case in Rudolph Palais' *Crime and Punishment* adaptation (see Sosnak 2013: 167-169), in which the key character of Sonia Marmeladova did not even figure.

Over more than sixty years, times have changed enormously, also as regards the reactions on both adaptation projects. Let us look first at the critique with which *Classics Illustrated* had to deal. Already from the first issues onwards, the series (then still *Classic Comics*), was disapproved of for various reasons:*

- a) the (cover) artwork of several issues was deemed inferior and/or too violent;
- b) the adaptations purportedly kept the pupils away from the original – that is, in our 'East European' case, the translated – literary works; and
- c) certain issues were considered to "not accurately" (Sylvia 2013: 46) represent the original classics.

With respect to (a), inferior artwork is a problem of all times, but opinions of course change in time about what exactly is inferior (and why). Sure, not all of the 190 adaptations for *The Graphic Canon* reach the same level in terms of artwork, but this is highly subjective. The question of 'too violent?', for its part, directly relates to the intended reading public. Nowadays the depiction of violence should definitely not be such a problem as it was during the heyday of the Comics Code (effective in 1954). Concerning 'inappropriate' contents and the reading public, Calvin Reid quotes (and paraphrases) Russ Kick:

"While he would like to see the book in schools, the classics are often filled with fairly raunchy sex and the adaptations in the *Graphic Canon* are 'untamed and uncensored. It's not toned down for school libraries.' Kick said he's 'wary of looking at comics as a teaching tool – as remedial reading. The goal is for it to be an end in itself, a beautiful artistic literary work'" (Reid 2012).

These last two sentences have brought us to reason (b) and, in fact, do not fully correspond with Kick's above-quoted hope that *The Graphic Canon* will also be used "as an educational tool" (2012a: 1). In any case, it is clear that, here too, things have radically changed. Kick seems to realize that one lifetime is not enough to read all those great books

* Susan Sylvia (2013) offers a short overview, which I reduce here to three reasons.

in the original form, albeit in translation. Therefore, an edited work like his, with all those adaptations and short introductions, is very welcome to teach young and old a great deal about the canon of world literature, but Kick does not refrain from repeating that for him (in contrast to Kanter) this was *not* a priority. And this is probably why the stimulating introductions in Kick's volumes often teach us more about the original classics than the comics adapting them, for sometimes these can only be appreciated – as is the case with the Dostoevskii and Nabokov adaptations – by readers familiar with the original.

Reason (c), finally, addresses what has very long been the 'hot potato' in discussions about adaptations, irrespective of the medium chosen by the adapter(s). Today, however, at least in the West, the public tends to be more willing to accept adaptations which are not so "accurate", and adapting (comics) artists themselves seem to be more aware than ever that they can avoid the traditional 'fidelity criticism' (cf. Hutcheon 2006: 6-7) all the more easily by not sticking too close to the original. Hence, understandably, in the reviews of *The Graphic Canon*, none of the points of critique addressed to *Classics Illustrated* are made.*

Yet, Kick did impose clear restrictions regarding 'fidelity':

"I asked the artists to stay true to the source material – no setting it in the future, no creating new adventures for characters, etc. Longer works would of course be represented by excerpts or extreme abridgements [cf. supra]. But within that framework, they were given carte blanche. Any approach, any medium,** any style. I wasn't interested in a workman-like, note-by-note transcription of the original work. The adaptations are true collaborations between the original authors/poets and the artists." (Kick 2012a: 1)

In this last sentence, Kick exaggerates somewhat. If an artist has to remain "true to the source material", perhaps 'collaboration', as between equal partners, is not the right term to use. Sure, given the artists' "free reign" (2013: xii) on the visual plane, the opening for giving the adaptation personal touches is far bigger than in the *Classics Illustrated* series. Still, the fact that Kick's restrictions hardly left any space for parodying the original may be considered a missed opportunity. Such competition or emulation*** with the literary authors would definitely work best for (only) the most widely known exponents of world literature – thus not really for Gorkii's *The Mother*, but all the more for Dostoevskii's *Crime and Punishment*. Consequently, there are various paths to walk for adapters of (East European) literary works.

How and what to adapt in the future?

The only way for comics adaptations to enter the gallery of world literature in the qualitative sense (meaning 2; cf. supra) would of course be to create something great and

* Reading the (online) reviews, one cannot but conclude that Kick's volumes received general acclaim, see, e.g., Weatherwax (2012) for *The New York Times*. For a few negative notes, however, see Smart (2013) for *The Guardian*.

** I suppose, Kick here points to the 'material' used for the adaptations, e.g., photos, collage, paint, etc.

*** Cf. Schmitz-Emans's use, in this respect, of the Italian (Renaissance) term "Paragone" (2012: 300).

original enough to be world-class.* As I suggested, this could be aimed at by a competitive dialogue or emulation with the adapted work that *would* allow serious changes in plot, characters, setting, etc. That parodying can produce an original and fresh look has been proven by the curious, but heavily criticised *Anna Karenina by Leo Tolstoy* (2000), an adaptation in Russian and English at the same time (thus using two alphabets in the captions and speech balloons) by Katia Metelitsa, Valerii Kachaev and Igor Sapozhkov, in which Anna and the other characters have been restaged in the year 2000 and behave like so-called New Russians. Critics in Russia missed the point: it was actually not Tolstoy's classic that was the 'victim' of this adaptation – do not all parodies in one way or other pay tribute to the original? Instead, it was the lifestyle of the rich New Russians that was actually ridiculed (cf. Alaniz 2010: 165-173). In daring adaptations like this, the comics medium can truly show how self-confident it is.

I repeat, this would only work well for the true classics, while Eastern Europe, just like every region in the world, boasts a lot more literary works that are worth to be known abroad and (thus) to be adapted into comics. For those adaptations, restrictions such as those imposed by Kick are more appropriate, not in order to produce comics with 'world literature potential' themselves, but to help increase the world literature potential of lesser-known literary works.

It is clear from the above-presented lists that Russian authors strongly dominate the scene, Sienkiewicz (Polish) and Kafka (Austro-Hungarian) being the only non-Russians. Evidently, this is no surprise, Russian literature unquestionably is the biggest of the region, and especially the works of the realist giants rank worldwide among the most canonical ever. Dostoevskii and Tolstoy are the only ones whose works have been adapted in both *Classics Illustrated* and *The Graphic Canon*, of the former, as we saw, even one and the same work: *Crime and Punishment*.** This 'surviving' surely says something about the lasting canonical status of this novel, but – as we discussed – many other factors played a role in the selection process before being included into *Classics Illustrated*. And *not* being included did obviously not automatically imply non-canonicity.

Is it not up to artists with a familiarity with, or fondness of, one or more East European literatures to think about adaptations of the works (from as many national traditions as possible) that inspire them? Last year, Ukraine saw the first of two parts of Ivan Franko's *A Hero Against His Own Will* (1904), on the revolution year 1848 in Lviv (Lemberg), by Ukrainian-French adapter Cyril Horiszny (Kyrylo Horishnyi) and Romanian artist Mihai Timošenco (Mikhail Tymoshenko). For the time being, the adaptation only exists in Ukrainian, but if the authors succeed in their plan to have it translated into French,*** it would become more *transnational* than what it is now: a Ukrainian work adapted into a Ukrainian

* Currently, no (more or less) true adaptation seems to have reached such a status. Naturally, some adaptations are better known among comics/literature fans/critics than others. All in all, it is certainly telling that the first edited scholarly volume that was entirely devoted to comics adaptations does not contain a single 'Slavonic' case study. It contains, admittedly, one 'East European' case study: Martha Kuhlman's chapter (2015) on adaptations of Kafka's *Metamorphosis*.

** For more comics adaptations of *Crime and Punishment*, see Makoveeva (2013) and, again, Sosnak (2013).

*** I met both of them in Brussels at the Fête de la BD/Stripfeest ('Comic Strip Festival', 5 Sept. 2015). Horiszny's reaction, when I asked him what he would think of a Russian translation of his adaptation, was positive.

comic book. The renown of Franko, undeniably one of the greatest Ukrainian writers, and of Ukrainian literature in general, could certainly benefit from such a translation.

A step further would be to adapt East European works by virtually *non-canonical* authors (or works), as has been done by Pascal Rabaté, who rewardingly adapted Aleksei Nikolaevich Tolstói's satirical novel *Ibikus* (1924) in a French four-volume graphic novel (1998-2001). Rabaté's adaptation has already been translated into Dutch, Italian, Japanese, Polish and Spanish. Being a Russian-literature (and comics) fan, I must admit that it was thanks to Rabaté that I discovered this fairly unknown Russian novel by Aleksei N. Tolstói.

To conclude, whereas in the *Classics Illustrated* adaptations the comics medium was highly subservient to the 'sacred' classics of world literature, *The Graphic Canon* has demonstrated that world literature can serve the comics medium too. With regard to Eastern Europe, an even more mutually beneficial marriage between comics and world literature (in as many meanings of the term as possible), than the one 'celebrated' by Russ Kick, would produce:

- (more) daring comics adaptations of the most widely known East European (hence mainly Russian) classics (à la Metelitsa, Kachaev and Sapozhkov 2000);
- (more) comics adaptations of lesser-known, non-canonical works (à la Rabaté 1998-2001);
- (more) comics adaptations of works from non-Russian, so-called 'minor' East European literatures (à la Tymoshenko and Horishnyi 2014); and, of course,
 - translations of all these, as well as
 - (more) translations of already existing comics adaptations of East European classics.*

Most of these adaptations could be one-shots, but just as well, an enterprising editor (with an eye for potential canonical works) could make an anthology from (parts of) them. Russ Kick's attractive format would be simply ideal for such an initiative.

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* Here, I think for example about Dieter Jüdt's German 1995 adaptation of Bruno Schulz's Polish *Cinnamon Shops* (*The Street of Crocodiles*), or Lionel Tran, Ambre and Valérie Berge's French 2004 adaptation of Bohumil Hrabal's Czech *Too Loud a Solitude* (cf. De Dobbeleer and De Bruyn 2013, on the grotesqueness of both adaptations). Except for a Czech translation of the latter, both adaptations remained untranslated.

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მიშელ დე დობელეერი (ბელგია)

მხოლოდ დანაშაული და სასჯელი გადარჩა! აღმოსავლეთ ევროპული მსოფლიო ლიტერატურის ადაპტირება „ილუსტრირებული კლასიკიდან“ რუს კიკის „გრაფიკულ კანონამდე“

რეზიუმე

საკვანძო სიტყვები: მსოფლიო ლიტერატურა, კომიქსები, აღმოსავლეთ ევროპული ლიტერატურა, რუსული ლიტერატურა.

მსოფლიო ლიტერატურის კლასიკური ნაწარმოებების კომიქსებად გადაკეთების პრაქტიკა სულ ცოტა ცხრა წელს ითვლის. როდესაც კლასიკური ნაწარმოებების ილუსტრირება დაიწყო, თავდაპირველი მიზანი იყო ის, რომ კანონის ნამუშევრები გასაგები ყოფილიყო სკოლის მოსწავლეებისთვის. დღესდღეობით კომიქსები კვლავაც „უბრუნდებიან“ კლასიკას, მაგრამ არა მხოლოდ მოსწავლეებისთვის, არამედ – ზრდასრულებისთვისაც. თანამედროვე ადაპტაციები როგორც წესი უფრო მეტია, ვიდრე წმინდა კონდენსაციები და ჩვეულებრივ თავიანთი სუბსტრატის სპეციფიკურ „ენას“ დიდ ყურადღებას უთმობენ. ეს საქმიანობა თავდაპირველად კომიქსებს (ადაპტაციებს) აკავშირებს ტერმინ „მსოფლიო ლიტერატურასთან“ მის სხვადასხვა მნიშვნელობებში. შემდეგ კი ფოკუსირებას ახდენს აღმოსავლეთ-ევროპული მხატვრული ლიტერატურის თავისებურებების ადაპტაციებზე და კლასიკურ ილუსტრირებულ სერიებზე. დაბოლოს, ნაშრომში წარმოდგენილია რეკომენდაციები, თუ რომელი აღმოსავლეთ-ევროპული ქვეყნების ნაწარმოებები „იმსახურებენ“ (და რა სახით) ადაპტირებას მომავალში.