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The Aspects of French Literature in the Belgrade Journal *Delo* 1894–1915

Abstract: In the late nineteenth and early twentieth centuries, the press in Serbia underwent a substantial change and began to reflect cultural trends in society. *Delo*, defined as a magazine for science, literature and social life, attracted a wide circle of contributors, intellectuals with different outlooks and views. Its editors and contributors, mostly educated and trained in European cultural centres, contributed to the creation of a climate conducive to the modernization of Serbian culture. This paper focuses on the role of French cultural and literary trends launched in the *Delo*, whose editors and contributors closely followed the leading French journals, translating and publishing the texts they deemed important for Serbia's cultural development. French literature offered guidelines and models to the realist and naturalist movements, subsequently also to modernist and avant-garde tendencies in Serbian literature. The start of the journal in 1894 is associated with the Radical Party, but the Radical ideological influence on the journal was not as strong as might be expected. Choosing science, literature and social life as the journal's areas of interest the founders and editors demonstrated their commitment to modernizing the young Serbian state and society by way of culture.

Keywords: *Delo* journal, Serbia, French culture and literature, Radical Party, Realism, Modernism, avant-garde, Serbian culture, modernization of Serbia

At the turn of the nineteenth and twentieth centuries, France was an indisputable and worldwide synonym for culture, as most readily seen from the example of Serbian society, engaged in building a modern state at the time. An abundance of scholarly works have been devoted to relations between France and Serbia in the nineteenth and twentieth centuries and to French influences on Serbian society.¹ And yet, some pieces of the mosaic

¹ Franco-Serbian relations have been an unavoidable subject of numerous monographs, papers and edited volumes, to mention but Lj. Aleksić-Pejković, *Odnosi Srbije sa Francuskom i Engleskom: 1903–1914* [Serbia's Relations with France and England 1903–1914] (Belgrade 1965); M. Vojvodić, *Srbija u međunarodnim odnosima krajem XIX i početkom XX veka* [Serbia in International Relations in the Late 19th and Early 20th Centuries] (Belgrade 1988); Č. Popov, *Francuska i Srbija: 1871–1878* [France and Serbia: 1871–1878] (Belgrade 1974); D. T. Bataković, "Evropski poredak i srpsko pitanje: francuska perspektiva" [European order and the Serbian issue: the French perspective], in *Evropa i Srbi* (Belgrade 1996); M. Pavlović, *U dvostrukom ogledalu: francusko-srpske kulturne i književne veze* [In a Double Mirror: Franco-Serbian Cultural and Literary Ties] (Belgrade 1996); D. T. Bataković, "Francuski uticaji u Srbiji 1835–1914.

are still missing. This paper is an attempt to add a small piece to the mosaic of historical knowledge about relations between the two states, two cultures and two nations. Literature has been chosen as a sphere where influences on the culture of an environment or a society as a rule leave a more lasting mark, and the aspects of French literature are looked at from the perspective of the journal *Delo*, the personages and oeuvres of its contributors and editors, its editorial policy and literary pieces published in it.

Delo, list za nauku, književnost i društveni život (*Delo*, Magazine for Science, Literature and Social Life) was launched at the beginning of 1894 by a group of people close to the Radical Party,² the leading protagonist of political and social life in Serbia at the time. There were two interruptions to its publication: from 1899 to 1902, and from 1914 to 1915.³ During the second publication run, between 1902 and 1915, the *Delo* sought to maintain the balance against the famed *Srpski književni glasnik* (The Ser-

Četiri generacije parizlija” [French influences in Serbia 1835–1914. Four Generations of Parisians], *Zbornik Matice srpske za istoriju* 56 (1997), 73–95; *Medjunarodni naučni skup srpsko-francuski odnosi 1904–2004* [Serbo-French Relations 1904–2004] (Belgrade 2004); Lj. Glumac-Tomović, *Francuski klasičari kod nas* [French Classicists in Serbia] (Belgrade 2005)

² *Narodna radikalna stranka* (National Radical Party) was founded on 21 January 1881 when its political programme was published in the party newspaper *Samouprava* (Self-Government). Its motto: “Intra-national welfare and freedom, external state independence and liberation, and unification of other parts of the Serbian nation” summed up the most important objectives of the programme. Constitutional reform; strengthening of the legislative power of the Assembly; simplified administration, the abolition of counties and the introduction of local self-government in districts and municipalities; progressive taxation; a people’s army; general, compulsory and free education; support to the as yet unliberated Serbs; laws on the freedom of the press, public assembly and association, personal and property safety, those were the goals aspired for by the Radicals led by Nikola Pašić, one of the most important political figures in the history of modern Serbia. In the 1890s, the Radicals began to split over the issue of fight against the Obrenović dynasty, which led to a final rift in 1901. An accord between the Radicals and the Progressivists, brokered by King Alexander Obrenović, and the April Constitution of 1901 marked the final split between the older and younger wings. The younger wing formed the Independent Radical Party, announcing a return to the original tenets of Radicalism in its programme published in the newly-founded party newspaper *Odjek* (Echo) in 1902. In the leadership of the Independents were Ljuba Živković, Ljuba Stojanović and Ljuba Davidović. Besides their political careers, most Radical leaders were well-known and recognized in their respective professions and, as such, had an impact not only on political, but also on social, economic and cultural developments in Serbia.

³ The first interruption was caused by the assassination of King Milan on St John’s Day in 1899. The second break was shorter and resulted from the state of war and the temporary relocation of the editorial office from Belgrade to Niš.

bian Literary Herald).⁴ It had no specific programme, which resulted in its tolerant attitude towards and open cooperation with the exponents of different political beliefs. With such an attitude, the group rallied around the *Delo* encouraged the acceptance of pluralistic tenets of modern culture.⁵ The *Delo* frequently changed editors and contributors, which led to changes in its conception and contents.⁶ The position of editor-in-chief was mainly held by Radical leaders and Belgrade's Great School (since 1905 University) professors, namely the political and cultural elite of Serbia. The magazine attracted a wide circle of contributors: scholars, poets, writers, critics, theoreticians and politicians — intellectuals with different outlooks and views.⁷ Even if their collaboration with the *Delo* throughout the twenty years of its publication was not continuous, these notable figures of Serbian culture and history left an indelible mark in the journal.⁸ They were the driving force

⁴ *Srpski književni glasnik* was launched in 1901 and its first series ran until 1914. A group of young intellectuals, mostly educated in France, rallied around the journal with the aim of modernizing Serbian culture based on a clearly defined literary programme. Among the editors and contributors were distinguished figures of Serbian science and culture, most of whom had been educated abroad: the Popović brothers (Bogdan and Pavle), Jovan Skerlić, Jaša Prodanović, Slobodan Jovanović, Milan Grol etc.

⁵ Cf. *Istorija srpskog naroda*, vol. VI-2 [The History of the Serbian Nation] (Belgrade 2000), 405.

⁶ In the period between 1894 and 1915, 74 volumes of the *Delo* journal were printed. Over the same period, the *Delo* had as many as seven editors.

⁷ The founders, editors and contributors to the magazine were intellectuals with different outlooks and views such as: Ilija Vukićević, Milovan Milovanović, Bogdan Popović, Stojan Protić, Dragoljub Pavlović, Mihailo Vujić, Rista Odavić, Jovan Skerlić, Sima Matavulj, Janko Veselinović, Svetolik Ranković, Branislav Nušić, Radoje Domanović, Isidora Sekulić, Sima Pandurović, Vladislav Petković Dis and others.

⁸ The *Delo*'s editors and contributors were such notable figures of Serbian history as Stojan Protić (1857–1923) and Mihailo Vujić (1853–1913). Protić was a member and ideologist of the Radical Party. He graduated from the Faculty of Philosophy (Department of History and Philology) in Belgrade. Protić was a contributor to political magazines, a contributor and editor of the newspaper *Samoupravna* from 1882, and the founder of the newspaper *Odjek* (Echo) in 1884. He was elected member of Parliament in 1887, Secretary of the Great Constituent Committee in 1888, Head Of Department in the Ministry of Internal Affairs from 1889, provisional Mayor of Belgrade in 1903, Director of the National Library in 1900, Minister of Internal Affairs (1903–1905, 1906–1907, 1912–1914) and Minister of Internal Affairs Representative (1910–1911), Minister of Finance (1909–1912, 1917–1918). He served as Prime Minister in the first Government of the Kingdom of Serbs, Croats and Slovenes between 1918 and 1919, and again in 1920. Protić published a large number of works in the field of history and politics, to mention but *Albanski problem i Srbija i Austro-Ugarska*, *Srbi i Bugari u Balkanskom ratu*, *Tajna konvencija između Srbije i Austro-Ugarske*. Mihailo Vujić graduated from the Faculty of Philosophy in Belgrade and pursued economic studies in Germany.

behind new cultural and intellectual trends in the Serbian environment. The most important for the topic of this paper are cultural and literary currents and the diffusion of French influence launched on the pages of the *Delo*.

One of the requirements in an analysis of the aspects of French literature in the *Delo* is to establish the extent of French literary presence in a journal dominated by Radicals, who are known to have been dedicated Russophiles.⁹ On the whole, the *Delo*, with its liberal attitude towards different literary trends and styles, contributed to the development of new and diversified trends in Serbian literature and culture.¹⁰ It should be borne in mind that personal preferences and literary judgements of the journal's editors and contributors had a bearing on the selection of literary works published. Contributors to the journal closely followed French literature and acquainted the Serbian readership with current cultural developments almost concurrently with those in any other major European city. Leafing through the journal, one can notice that French topics and works occupied a more prominent place when its editors or close collaborators were French-educated, such as Ilija Vukićević, Bogdan Popović and Milovan Milovanović.¹¹ In addition, it should be stressed that political circumstances,

Vujić was professor at the Great School in Belgrade (1879–1887) and member of the Royal Serbian Academy. As a member of the Radical Party, he served as Minister of Finance (1887, 1888, 1889–1891, 1893, 1893–1894, 1896–1897), Minister of Foreign Affairs (1901) and Prime Minister of the Kingdom of Serbia (1901). Vujić published a large number of works in the field of economics and politics.

⁹ The *Delo* provides sufficient material for exploring the ties between political radicalism and literary realism. It testifies to the fact that the bond between literature and politics in the sphere of periodicals, so typical of the nineteenth century, was not completely severed even in the early twentieth century, cf. D. Mladenović, "Delo na raskršću vekova i epoha" [The *Delo* at the crossroads of centuries and epochs], *Bibliotekar* 1–3 (Belgrade 1986), 64.

¹⁰ Z. Petković, "Engleske teme u Srpskom književnom glasniku i Delu do 1914" [English topics in the *Srpski književni glasnik* and the *Delo* until 1914], in *Tradicionalno i moderno u srpskim časopisima 1894–1914* (Novi Sad–Belgrade 1992), 352.

¹¹ Milovan Milovanović (1863–1912) was the first Serb to receive a doctoral degree in law in Paris. He graduated from Paris Law School in 1884 and received his doctoral degree from the same university in 1888 with the thesis *Les Traités de garantie au XIX^e siècle* (Paris 1888). At the age of twenty-five, he was elected professor at Belgrade University and drafted Serbia's liberal Constitution of 1888. He served as Undersecretary for Foreign Affairs (1890) and Minister of Justice (1896), but was dismissed in 1897. In 1899 as a result of the government's repression against Radical Party members, he was sentenced in absentia to two years in prison. He was reinstated in 1900 and, as Minister of Economy, took part in drafting the new Constitution in 1901. Milovanović represented Serbia at the second Hague Conference in 1907. He steered Serbia's foreign policy (Foreign Minister 1908–1912) through the crisis following the annexation of

i.e. international relations, Franco-Serbian in particular, had implications for the intensity of cultural exchange. Therefore, there are two aspects to the presence of French literature in the *Delo*. One is direct and involves all French works translated and published in the journal. The other is indirect and comprises all Serbian literary authors who published their pieces in the *Delo* and whose literary outlooks developed and crystallized on the model of French writers.

The first translation of a French author appeared in the *Delo* in 1895.¹² The *Delo* editors, members of Serbian intellectual circles, selected Lemaître, a contributor to two French journals they were well familiar with, as the first French writer to be published in their journal. The editorial staff of the *Delo* regularly kept track of the *Revue bleue*, *Journal des débats* and *Revue des deux mondes*, and occasionally published translations of some articles, thus accomplishing the mission of broadening cultural horizons in Serbia. The *Delo* also closely followed the emergence of new journals, French in particular, and notified the readers accordingly.¹³ Towards the end of that year (1895), the *Delo* began to publish Guy de Maupassant, who was soon to become the most translated French writer in the journal,¹⁴ and whose style and subject matter made a powerful impression on Serbian realists. In 1897, the *Delo* published his *Le gueux* translated by Jovan Skerlić, the jour-

Bosnia-Herzegovina by Austria-Hungary in 1908, and succeeded in raising the question of Serbian national unification without provoking a war with Austria-Hungary. Despite his preference for close relations with Russia, he initiated negotiations that led to a trade agreement with Austria-Hungary (1910). In July 1911 he was appointed Prime Minister, while retaining the foreign affairs portfolio. The fact that he negotiated the first Serbo-Bulgarian alliance makes him one of the chief founders of the Balkan Alliance of 1912, even though he died before a more substantial alliance was concluded. Milovanović's major works include: *Naša ustavna reforma* [Our Constitutional Reform] (Belgrade 1888); *Srbi i Hrvati* [Serbs and Croats] (Belgrade 1895); *Srbi i Bugari* [Serbs and Bulgarians] (Belgrade 1898); *Jedan ili dva doma* [One or Two Chambers] (Belgrade 1901). See his biography by D. Djordjević, *Milovan Milovanović* (Belgrade: Prosevtva, 1962).

¹² Jules Lemaître's story *L'ainée* in *Delo*, Vol. 7 (1895).

¹³ In 1902, the editorial board recommended the freshly started French literary journal *Minerve*, which shows that they kept abreast of contemporary literary developments and conveyed such information to the Serbian public.

¹⁴ Maupassant's *Il* and *Le suicide* appeared in the *Delo*, Vol. 8 (1895), and his book *Mademoiselle Fifi* was translated and released the following year in Vol. 10 (1896). The journal continued to publish and translate Maupassant even during the second publication run. His short story *Fort comme la mort* was published in 1906 (*Delo*, Vol. 38) and *Le tomb* six years later (*Delo*, Vol. 62 (1912)). See M. Savković, *Bibliographie des réalistes français dans la littérature serbocroate* (Paris 1935) and *L'Influence du réalisme français dans le roman serbocroate* (Paris 1935), 211–221.

nal's young French-educated contributor and future great Serbian literary critic.¹⁵ Although quite brief, Skerlić's collaboration with the *Delo* included several important texts, notably "Poslednji roman Dodeov. O romanu Kućni hranitelj Alfonsa Dodea" (Daudet's last novel. On the novel *Soutien de famille* by Alphons Daudet) and "Pogled na današnju francusku književnost" (An overview of present-day French literature).¹⁶ Both texts point to the presence, familiarity with and understanding of French literature in Serbian society.¹⁷ The editors and contributors of the *Delo* were interested in other French authors as well.¹⁸ They describe Alphonse Daudet as a widely-read author, and suggest that the creativity of this realist and representative of the novel of manners and observations has influenced Serbian writers.¹⁹ Later on, an extensive review of Daudet's *Nabob* published in the journal empha-

¹⁵ Jovan Skerlić (1877–1914), a Serbian literary historian and critic. Having graduated in French language and literature and literary theory from Belgrade's Great School in 1899, he continued his studies abroad: in 1899–1901, he studied in Lausanne and Paris, where he received his doctoral degree. Skerlić's doctoral thesis "French Public Opinion in Political and Social Poetry between 1830 and 1848" garnered vast interest among the academic community. He started his teaching career in a Belgrade grammar school, but was soon appointed assistant professor of French language and literature and literary theory at the Great School in Belgrade. During the 1903/4 academic year, he completed advanced training in Munich and Paris and on return, devoted himself to teaching at the newly-established University of Belgrade (1905). Jovan Skerlić can be described as the spiritual leader of the educated Socialist youth given his collaboration with the journals *Zanatlijski Glasnik* (Artisan Herald) and *Socijaldemokratija* (Social Democracy). After joining the Independent Radicals, Skerlić was editor of the left-faction newspaper *Dnevni List* (Daily Newspaper). In 1912, he was elected MP for Kragujevac County. Apart from his notable work in the field of literary criticism and literary history, he also authored two short stories dealing with Belgrade life, and did translations of V. Hugo. Skerlić contributed to the *Delo* during its first publication run. Later on he was a long-standing contributor and editor of the *Srpski književni glasnik* (with Pavle Popović in 1905–1907 and thereafter on his own). Skerlić's major works include: *Francuski romantičari i srpska narodna poezija* [French Romanticists and Serbian Folk Poetry]; *Istorijski pregled srpske štampe* [A Historical Overview of the Serbian Press] and *Istorija nove srpske književnosti* [The History of New Serbian Literature]. As a critic, Skerlić was a French school follower giving precedence to intrinsic value over perfection of form and expression.

¹⁶ *Delo*, Vol. 18 (1898) and Vol. 23 (1902).

¹⁷ See M. Begić, *Jovan Skerlić et la critique littéraire en Serbie* (Paris: Institut d'Etudes slaves, 1963) and by the same author, *Jovan Skerlić, čovek i delo* (Belgrade: Prosveta, 1966).

¹⁸ Savković, *L'Influence du réalisme français*.

¹⁹ *Delo*, Vol. 17 (1898), 536.

sizes that Serbian writers indeed have models to follow.²⁰ At the beginning of the twentieth century, the *Delo* publishes the text “Viktor Igo i renesans francuski” (Victor Hugo and the French Renaissance) to commemorate the hundredth anniversary of Hugo’s birth. It seems that the Serbian elite, if we are to judge by its representatives contributing to the *Delo*, considered Hugo as being “a man who embodies the ideal of his century and the need for social justice and political freedom, [and] is, at the same time, a popular representative and a great poet”.²¹ Hugo believed in the mission of writers and the role of the intellectual elite among the people, and it is precisely these and similar views that the young Serbian intelligentsia identified with.²² In 1902, the contributors to the *Delo*, mainly Radicals or politically close to the Radicals, oppressed by the authoritarian Obrenović regime, profoundly shared Hugo’s belief that scientists, artists, philosophers and poets, rather than generals and rulers, were the great and brave of humankind. The Serbian Radicals were aware that during Hugo’s exile an entire political generation led by Gambetta and Ferry imbibed *Les peines* “as the strong and bitter wine of their regained liberty”.²³ No wonder then that Hugo was seen as “the greatest” representative of the French spirit.²⁴

French literature lost its supremacy in the journal in 1908, which may be attributed to the Francophiles’ weakening influence, particularly in view of the fact that the editor of the journal became German-educated Dragoljub Pavlović.²⁵ It should be borne in mind, however, that the An-

²⁰ *Delo*, Vol. 38 (1906), 268–269.

²¹ *Delo*, Vol. 23 (1902), 76.

²² Savković, *L’Influence du réalisme français*, 23.

²³ *Ibid.*, 78.

²⁴ *Ibid.*, 80.

²⁵ Dragoljub Draža Pavlović (1866–1920) graduated from the History and Philology Department of the Great School in Belgrade in 1888. In Vienna in 1891/2, he studied the secondary education system. He became a teacher at the Teacher Training School in Belgrade in 1893, but left for Germany later that year to pursue his studies, first in Freiburg (Baden) and then in Tübingen, where in 1897 he defended his doctoral thesis “O borbi za nacionalitet ugarskih Srba 1848–1849” [On the Hungarian Serbs’ Struggle for National Rights 1848–1849]. He was appointed associate professor of modern history at the Faculty of Philosophy of the Great School in 1897, and full professor in 1901. With the growth of the Great School into Belgrade University in 1905, he was appointed one of the initial eight full professors and Chair of General History. He was elected a member of the Royal Serbian Academy (corresponding in 1905, full in 1920). He pursued his political career under the wing of the Radical Party acting as the Main Committee Secretary, a MP, Vice-chairman of the Independent Radicals Club (1916), and first President of the National Assembly of the Kingdom of Serbs, Croats and Slovenes (1919). Pavlović was one of the first professors of general history and he spe-

nexation Crisis was at its peak and that literary topics in the journal were naturally pushed into the background.²⁶ In the course of the following year, 1909, Denis Diderot's essay *Le neveu de Rameau* was published in a serial form. Upon the appearance of the first part, Grgur Branković, probably the most responsible for its publication, wrote that its author's realism "often grows into austere naturalism fraught with lechery and debauchery, into the type of naturalism that was to be championed by Zola and Guy de Maupassant in the latter part of the following century".²⁷ It was the work of Diderot, Zola and Maupassant that was to exert a crucial influence on Serbian realists and naturalists, some of whom published their works in the *Delo*. Addressing French themes, a contributor to the *Delo*, Grgur Berić, published his study "Francuski duh u književnosti" (The French spirit in literature).²⁸ Seeking to define what the French spirit is and what its features are, Berić concludes that such spirits "will always go beyond the narrow confines of their time and nationality, while remaining the best all-time representatives of their race and their time. They have inspired men to higher ideals and purposes, and that is what makes them great."²⁹ These words show perhaps most vividly how enthralled the people rallied around the *Delo* were by the high achievements of French culture. In 1912, the *Delo* began to publish a translation of Paul Bourget's novel *Les mensonges*.³⁰ During that period, the *Delo*'s editor and contributor was a Francophile, Rista Odavić, initiator of trends in Serbian literary and theatrical life.³¹ In 1913, apart from Bourget, the journal also published the novel *Thais* by Anatole France.³² The *Delo*

cialized in the history of Europe and the history of South-Slavic lands and the Serbian nation under foreign rule. The most important works of this erudite scholar include: *Ujedinjenje Nemačke* [German Unification]; *Ličnost u istoriji* [Personality in History], *Delo* (1897); *Istorizam i racionalizam* [Historicism and Rationalism], *Delo* (1898); *Kultura i ratovi* [Culture and Wars], *Letopis Matice srpske* (1901) and *Leopold Ranke. Istoriografska skica* [Leopold von Ranke: A Historiographic Sketch], *Delo* (1895).

²⁶ In the course of 1908 the *Delo* published René Pinon's *La crise balkanique*, and *Congrès de Berlin* by Gabriel Hanotaux, former French Foreign Minister and professor at Paris University. Apart from that, most of the journal's coverage was devoted to *Political Overview: Delo*, Vols. 47 and 48 (1908).

²⁷ *Delo*, Vol. 50 (1909), 283.

²⁸ *Delo*, Vol. 53 (1909).

²⁹ *Ibid.*, 41.

³⁰ *Delo*, Vol. 62 (1912).

³¹ Rista Odavić (1870–1932), professor, translator, playwright for the National Theatre in Belgrade and Director of State Archives; he was also founder and editor of the *Delo* and *Nova Iskra* (New Spark).

³² *Delo*, Vol. 66 (1913).

paid great attention to literary criticism and the appearance of a translation of Karl Becker's *On the Evolution of Contemporary French Criticism* made a great contribution to literature in Serbia. Becker largely addresses the clash between methodic criticism and talent criticism, the oeuvre of Hippolyte Taine and the crisis of French criticism after his death, topics which elicited a great deal of interest from Serbian critics, too.³³ Paul Bourget's study on Charles Baudelaire, Jacques Cezanne's "Cimetière" and Alfred de Musset's "Nuits de mai" published by the *Delo* in 1914 seemed harbingers of the difficult times lying ahead. No wonder then that most of the journal in the wartime period was devoted to war poetry, primarily that of the Allied countries i.e. French.

The first issue of the first volume of the *Delo* brought a study on Beaumarchais by the young Bogdan Popović (1863–1944),³⁴ which was instrumental in ushering Serbian essayist literature into a new era and in developing the so-called *Belgrade style*.³⁵ With the publication of this study, the *Delo* certainly sought to symbolically reinforce the positions of the French-educated Popović and his follower Jovan Skerlić, himself a contributor to the *Delo* during the first publication period. The publication of Bogdan Popović's texts and his influence on the editorial policy of the journal were particularly intensive in the course of the initial two years. In his "Introductory Lecture on the History of World Literature" (*Uvodno predavanje iz istorije svetske književnosti*), besides a brief historical overview of Serbian philology, Popović laid down the guidelines for the development of Serbian literature and literary scholarship.³⁶ He argued that "one of the main virtues of fine literature is in developing this universal and multifaceted, moral and aesthetic sympathy in human souls"; moreover, literature

³³ *Delo*, Vol. 67 (1913).

³⁴ "Behind the hitherto unimaginable diversity and pliancy of phrase, original turns, stylistic refinement and, at times, evident endeavour to establish direct communication with the reader, lay the writer's scrupulous work and, even more, his fine French education. In his programmatic writings, Popović suggested the emulation of more advanced models as critically important: 'Foreign literature is what Serbian literature needs most,'" *Istorija srpskog naroda* VI-2, 263.

³⁵ "The flourishing period of the Belgrade style was also the period of the most powerful French influence on the Serbian literary language. An enthusiasm for French culture and French democracy, French books, strong political ties, and many young people educated in France or in the French-speaking part of Switzerland, contributed to the adoption of the ideal of crystal clarity and seemingly casual elegance characteristic of the best-written products of the French spirit, and to the import of a multitude of French words into the Serbian language", *Istorija srpskog naroda* VI-2, 265. See also M. Savković, *La Littérature yougoslave moderne* (Belgrade 1936), 179.

³⁶ *Delo*, Vol. 2 (1894), 103.

may also contribute to the development and diffusion of ideas, so that “not only its ideas and contents, but also its wittiness, make it increasingly more suitable for being used as a powerful educational means [...] such an influence of literature is observable in most historical and social movements in recent times”.³⁷ Relying on the insights gained during his schooling abroad, Popović encouraged the emergence of a new trend in Serbian literary criticism. Even this study by Bogdan Popović makes it clear that through his work the Serbian science of literature and language was to reach European standards.³⁸ Important for Popović’s work in the *Delo* is his text “Radovan Košutić: Causes of the revival of literary criticism. A study in French literature review” (*Radovan Košutić: Uzroci preporodaju književne kritike. Studija iz francuske književnosti*).³⁹ Popović harshly criticizes Košutić as a *clown* and his work as having “no merit whatsoever”.⁴⁰ The article brilliantly demonstrates Popović’s knowledge of French literature, taking a closer look at Hippolyte Taine, Descartes, Racine and Molière, authors widely read and discussed by the young Serbian elite. On the occasion of the death of Alexandre Dumas *fiils*, Bogdan Popović wrote an obituary describing Dumas as “the greatest French, and probably European, dramatist of the century“, which is indicative of the repute Dumas enjoyed in Serbia.⁴¹ Popović particularly dwelled on Dumas’ *La Dame aux camélias* and *La question aux femmes*. It cannot be known with certainty whether the *Delo* wrote about Dumas and reviewed Dumas’ texts and plays at the insistence of Bogdan Popović or such a policy was jointly adopted by the editorial board. It is certain, however, that the editors and contributors, especially prior to the first interruption to its publication, were all educated under the influence of French models. This primarily goes for Svetislav Simić, the *Delo*’s conceptual originator, Ilija Vukićević, its first editor, and the diplomat Milovan Milovanović, one of its subsequent editors. Bogdan Popović’s work, especially that connected with the *Srpski književni glasnik* and his *Anthology* of modern Serbian lyric poetry published in 1911, were an unquestionable and great contribution to

³⁷ Bogdan Popović particularly highlights the example of France, or more precisely, the magnitude of Rousseau’s contribution to the transformation of Europe or “how helpful literature was to the French Revolution”, *ibid.*, 109–110.

³⁸ “As early as the end of the nineteenth century, new winds began to blow in Serbian literary criticism, bringing the spirit of analytical positivism, faith in the power of artistic individualism and high standard of universality of aesthetic impact”, *Istorija srpskog naroda* VI-2, 333–334.

³⁹ Savković, *Bibliographie des réalistes français*, 114.

⁴⁰ *Delo*, Vol. 5 (1895), 134.

⁴¹ *Delo*, Vol. 8 (1986), 329.

Serbian literature and literary criticism.⁴² Therefore, the *Delo* may be said to have had in its ranks a critic whose intellectual outlook conformed to the standards of modern European civilization, and who was clearly and profoundly engrossed in French cultural trends. The publication of Popović's "Beaumarchais" marked a turning-point, paving the way for the restoration of Serbian literary language and literary style on the model of the vivid, elegant, logical and flexible French phrase, thus revealing the true possibilities and tendencies of Serbian expression.⁴³

The first editor of the *Delo*, also French-educated Ilija Vukićević (1866–1899), explicitly advised the reading public to "read Hugo".⁴⁴ Vukićević edited only the first volume of the journal, after which he left for Geneva to continue his studies. The obituary of Ilija Vukićević published in the *Delo* in 1899 makes reference to the former editor's keen interest in French language and literature: "the latest literary trends in France encouraged him to try his hand at the new forms of poetic short stories. That is how a whole series came into being of fairy tales which had much in common with our folk tales, while being inspired by modern French poetry."⁴⁵ Vukićević created a genre that was to become a distinguishing mark of modern twentieth-century prose: the literary fairy tale.⁴⁶ The realist approach to the world in general and the realist style, manifest in the work of Vukićević and other Serbian realists, resulted from the adoption of new European models in Serbian literature. Cervantes, Lermontov, Gogol, Turgenev, Goncharov, Tolstoy were translated into Serbian as early as the 1850s and 1860s. In the 1860s, besides Russian writers, French authors such as Hugo, George Sand, Mérimée, Dumas *filis*, Zola, Maupassant and Daudet also began to be translated,⁴⁷ finding their way to the Serbian readership, expanding their literary horizons and acquainting them with the contem-

⁴² Popović's "Anthology" was an announcement and application of theoretical positivist and empirical principles of aesthetic criticism on the one hand, and setting of new aesthetic standards of poetic beauty, on the other. It was accepted as the highest achievement of sober taste", *Istorija srpskog naroda* VI-2, 334.

⁴³ *Ibid.*, 480.

⁴⁴ *Delo*, Vol. 1 (1894), 56.

⁴⁵ *Delo*, Vol. 21 (1899), VII.

⁴⁶ Vukićević's short story *Priča o selu Vrećima i Simi Srupici* published in the *Delo* (Vols. 5–7) in 1895 occupied a prominent place in the new genre.

⁴⁷ "Les traduction de Victor Hugo, de Daudet, de Zola et de Maupassant, celles de Gogolj, de Tourguéniev, pour ne citer que ceux-là, fournissent à la littérature yougoslave de grandes modèles", Savković, *La Littérature yougoslave moderne*, 100.

porary styles of realism and naturalism.⁴⁸ Vukićević, Svetolik Ranković and Janko Veselinović introduced elements of folklore, ethnography, the common people's worldview and folk storytelling.⁴⁹ It should be noted, however, that Veselinović's literary models were Russian rather than French.⁵⁰ The work of Vukićević, Matavulj and Ranković played a significant role in Serbian prose attaining the heights of the finest realist literature.⁵¹ In terms of style, their models were Turgenev's descriptions of nature, Tolstoy's psychological analysis, Maupassant's interior descriptions, and Daudet's poeticization and imagination.

With the appearance of a rival magazine, *Srpski književni glasnik*, in 1901, the *Delo* was left without some major figures of the domestic literary scene, but it nevertheless published Radoje Domanović, Bora Stanković, Petar Kočić, Veljko Petrović and Isidora Sekulić. The literary production of the late nineteenth and early twentieth centuries witnessed some major changes, primarily as a result of changed literary models. Gogol and his contemporaries gave way to Turgenev, Tolstoy, Dostoyevsky and Chekhov, the dominance of Russian and German literature dwindled before the models found in French (Zola, Maupassant and Daudet), English (Dickens) and Scandinavian literatures (Ibsen). The *Delo* kept abreast of those trends. Realist poetry gave way to that of parnassists, impressionists and symbolists. Borisav Stanković, Petar Kočić and Milutin Uskoković became the champions of twentieth-century modern Serbian literature. Jovan Skerlić, editor of the *Glasnik*, sought to curb the pessimistic strain of modernism in Serbian literature, even to reduce it to the level of subculture. During 1909 and 1910, the *Delo* and *Glasnik* published the opposing literary opinions and views of the two editorial boards. Sima Pandurović, Vladislav Petković Dis and Isidora Sekulić, heralds of the new strain, were met with Skerlić's adverse criticism, which was the reason that some of their works were pub-

⁴⁸ The works of Janko Veselinović, Simo Matavulj, Svetolik Ranković, Svetozar Ćorović, Branislav Nušić, Radoje Domanović, and those of Bora Stanković, Veljko Petrović, Sima Pandurović, Isidora Sekulić, Vladislav Petković Dis and other distinguished Serbian authors, were printed during the first and second publication periods of the *Delo* respectively. See *Istorija srpskog naroda* VI-2, 301, and *Delo*, Vols. 1-74 (Belgrade and Niš, 1894-1899, 1902-1915).

⁴⁹ Svetolik Ranković caused "the Serbian prose of the late nineteenth century to move towards disintegration of realism and to display all elements of *fin-de-siècle* literature." In 1895, the *Delo* published "Propast, scena iz školskog života" [Failure: a school scene], *Istorija srpskog naroda* VI-2, 302.

⁵⁰ *Ibid.*, 295-297. In 1896, the *Delo* published Veselinović's novel *Hayduk Stanko*, a Rousseauian idealistic portrayal of the Serbian countryside and rural life.

⁵¹ With "intensified psychological motivation, refined novelistic composition, and artistic expression in terms of style", *Istorija srpskog naroda* VI-2, 302.

lished by the *Delo*.⁵² In that way, the *Delo*, that is its editors and contributors, introduced European trends in prose and poetry to Serbian culture.

Of all the abovementioned Serbian authors who published their works in the *Delo*, the strongest influence of French models is observable in Simo Matavulj (1852–1908).⁵³ We learn from his *Notes* that he read the *Temps* and *Revue de deux mondes*,⁵⁴ but his two-month stay in Paris in the autumn of 1882 was most important for deepening his ties with French literature. According to his *Notes*, his roaming through Paris evoked literary associations with famous French authors such as Hugo and Zola,⁵⁵ he was introduced to Anatole France by his long-standing acquaintance Étienne Lamy,⁵⁶ and as he himself put it: “My visit to Paris, apart from other benefits that I had, influenced my literary taste and style more than any other experience I have had over the years.”⁵⁷ Matavulj visited France two more times:

⁵² In the late nineteenth and early twentieth centuries, Sima Pandurović published the following literary pieces: “S večeri” [In the evening] and “Biserne oči” [Pearly eyes], while Božidar Purić published “Prolećne varijacije” [Spring Variations], *Delo*, Vol. 56 (1910); the *Delo* published the works of Vojislav Ilić, whose poetry initially emulated post-romantic, parnassist tendencies and methods, and turning to the world of symbolist forebodings, visions and restlessness in the early 1890s. Vojislav Ilić endowed Serbian lyric poetry with European form or, more precisely, introduced it to the modern European trends and contributed to its artistic perfection. This course set by Ilić’s poetry was maintained by Serbian symbolists: Jovan Dučić, Milan Rakić, Vladislav Petrović Dis and Sima Pandurović. The *Delo* also published “Nirvana” by Vladislav Petković Dis. In this period, the *Delo* published Milutin Bojić’s poems “Kroz vekove” [Through Centurie], “Avet” [Spectre] and “Majka” [Mother], early works of the author of the famous “Plava grobnica” [Blue Tomb] and initiator of modern dramatic poetry in the early twentieth century. Radoje Domanović excelled in the realm of allegoric and satirical story. See *Istorija srpskog naroda* VI-2, 302.

⁵³ As a young teacher in the village of Islam, in Ravni Kotari, Matavulj became acquainted with the work of many French writers, and was taught French by Count Ilija Janković, a “Voltairean and Russophile”. It was then that Matavulj began to read Rousseau, Voltaire, Fénelon, Bossuet, Chateaubriand, Lamartine, Hugo, George Sand, Dumas, and even Flaubert. The *Delo*, which published a number of Maupassant’s works, pointed to the French writer’s influence on Matavulj on more than one occasion during the twentieth century. The mid 1890s were the most prolific period of Matavulj’s cooperation with the journal: short stories “Snaga bez očiju” [Eyeless strength], Vol. 1 (1894); “Frontaševa ljubav” [Soldier’s Love], Vol. 7 (1895); “Djukan Skakavac”, Vol. 9 (1896). For more, see G. Eror, *Simo Matavulj i francuska književnost* [Simo Matavulj and French Literature] (Belgrade 1974).

⁵⁴ Eror, *Simo Matavulj*, 7.

⁵⁵ S. Matavulj, *Beleške jednog pisca* [A Writer’s Notes], vol. 4 of *Collected Works* (Belgrade 1953–1956), 162.

⁵⁶ “That evening Matavulj, if he is to be believed, was a great success, making Anatole France roar with laughter”, G. Eror, *Simo Matavulj*, 8.

⁵⁷ Matavulj, *Beleške jednog pisca*, 166.

Paris in 1900, at the time of the Universal Exhibition, and Nice in 1903, when he wrote an article for *Le Figaro*. In his articles and essays, he mentions or assesses a number of French authors, which speaks both of his erudition and of these authors' literary influence.⁵⁸ As expected from a realist, Matavulj closely followed the work of his contemporaries, primarily French realist novelists and story writers.⁵⁹ It cannot be said with certainty whether and to what extent Matavulj, being a realist, encouraged the publication of Maupassant in the *Delo*, but he was certainly pleased to see his own works published in a journal that brought Maupassant. Matavulj learned storytelling techniques from the best European models, primarily Maupassant, introducing the reader into the heart of the story with brief and powerful strokes, and depicting simple but memorable events, often with anecdotal elements.⁶⁰ It should also be noted that he was no less interested in the work of yet another French author, Zola.⁶¹ Besides, his work was connected with that of Prosper Mérimée and Alexandre Dumas *fils*. Just as Maupassant was published in the *Delo* almost concurrently with Matavulj, so Dumas' plays were staged at the same time, constituting the backbone of the repertoire of the National Theatre in Belgrade.⁶²

In the first year of its publication, the *Delo* paid attention to the French plays and playwrights staged by the National Theatre in Belgrade. The twenty-fifth anniversary of the National Theatre in 1894 prompted the *Delo* to comment on the work of the theatre, acknowledging and commending the fact that Sardou's *Patrie* was included in the celebratory repertoire.⁶³ In the course of the same year, the *Delo* brought reviews of two works by

⁵⁸ Matavulj makes mention of the following authors: Racine, Molière, Bossuet, Rousseau, Voltaire, Chateaubriand, Hugo, Lamartine, Vigny, Musset, Bonnaville, George Sand, Dumas, Daudet, Moréas, Flaubert, France, Maupassant, the Goncourt brothers, Zola, Bourget, Balzac, Vauguillet, Sue, de Kock, Sardou, Mirabeau, Eror, *Simo Matavulj*, 10.

⁵⁹ In 1893, he translated Maupassant's travelogue *Sur l'eau*, and the following year both his and Maupassant's works appeared in the *Delo*. Matavulj also translated a part of Zola's novel *La Réve*, with the famous writer's permission, and published it in the *Glas Crnogoraca* in 1888. Of Molière's works, he translated *Le bourgeois genti homme* and *Le misanthrope*. Cf. Savković, *Bibliographie des réalistes français*, 115, and Eror, *Simo Matavulj*, 12–13.

⁶⁰ *Istorija srpskog naroda* VI-2, 314.

⁶¹ In 1894, the *Delo* published Matavulj's article "O Zolinom poreklu" [On Zola's origin]. The influence of Émile Zola and his movement on Matavulj is reflected mainly in his inclination to naturalist *tranches de la vie* and portray the seamier side of bourgeois life. Eror, *Simo Matavulj*, 47.

⁶² Savković, *L'Influence du réalisme français*, 360–379.

⁶³ "Sardou's magnificent drama *Patrie* (translated from Czech!) was performed on the third day. The beauty and grandeur of this play makes it quite appropriate for celebra-

Dumas, *père* and *fils*: *Henri III et sa Cour* and *La dame aux camélias*. The journal's theatre critic M. K. Dragutinović, pointing to the significance of both for furthering and innovating the art of drama, underlined that "as a play, *La dame aux camélias* is very important because it has set French dramatic art on a fresh course: moderate realism, which has gradually prevailed on the modern stage."⁶⁴ In the journal's first two years, its editors and contributors closely followed Dumas' work, and not only literary, as shown by the text in which Dumas put forth his views on the position of women in society. Beside Dumas, another favourite of the theatre lovers found its place in the *Delo*: the famous French dramatist Jean Racine and his play *Phaedra*. The *Delo*'s critic described Racine's *Phaedra* as "so profound and so powerful that hardly any poet has ever taken such a deep look into the human innermost soul and shed so much light on passion as Racine in his *Phaedra*."⁶⁵ The *Delo* also carried the reviews of *Frou-Frou*, a comedy by Meilhac and Halévy, and Febré's drama *Jeanne d'Arc*.⁶⁶ In its ninth volume, the *Delo* published Albert Malet's "Srpsko pozorište i francuska dela" [Serbian Theatre and French Works].⁶⁷ Giving credit to the former French students for translating French plays, Malet concludes that "the Serbian audience prefers French works to any other translations."⁶⁸ Apart from Dumas and Racine, the *Delo* devoted much attention to Victor Sardou.⁶⁹ In a number of issues, it brought the statistics for the National Theatre in Belgrade, which reflect-

tory performance, and it is very good that this patriotic and powerful play has been included in the celebratory programme", *Delo*, Vol. 4 (1894).

⁶⁴ *Delo*, Vol. 1 (1894), 422. The *Delo* extensively wrote about Dumas *fils* on the occasion of his death. Bogdan Popović, a French-educated literary critic and professor, wrote his obituary. In addition to this brief overview of the oeuvre of Alexandre Dumas *père*, the *Delo* printed his letter to Maria Shelga Levy: "La question aux femmes". *Delo*, Vol. 8 (1895), 283–286.

⁶⁵ *Delo*, Vol. 1 (1894), 191. Jean Racine plays were not often staged in Serbia, and before the First World War only *Phaedra* was staged in Belgrade. Cf. Glumac Tomović, *Francuski klasičari*, 124.

⁶⁶ *Delo*, Vols. 2–3 (1894).

⁶⁷ The article was taken from *La Revue bleue* of 7 September 1895. King Alexander Obrenović's former professor, Albert Malet, wrote quite commendably about the Serbian theatre, which, despite lack of funds, managed to keep up with Europe, primarily with the famous French scene. According to Malet, French plays accounted for one-third of the repertoire of the National Theatre in Belgrade, which testifies to a tremendous influence of French culture on Serbian society. *Delo*, Vol. 9 (1896), 473–479.

⁶⁸ *Delo*, Vol. 9 (1896), 478.

⁶⁹ *Delo*, Vol. 14 (1897), 546–552.

ed the Serbian audience's great interest in French works.⁷⁰ The profound and lasting influence of French literary works and plays on cultural life in Serbia became evident in the early twentieth century. The abovementioned authors and their works opened the way for the French cultural influence on the public scene in Serbia. Along with them, distinguished authors of other literatures stirred the Balkan backwaters and made the public aware of international trends.

In the late nineteenth and early twentieth centuries, the press underwent a substantial change, becoming a reflection of cultural trends in society. With the interior of the country becoming increasingly aware of the significance of the written word, Belgrade ceased being the only literary-minded public. Moreover, the reading public became choosier and their interest shifted from politics to everyday life, culture, science. The editors of journals sought to encourage their readers' interest in reading books and in reflection, thereby fostering the process of civilizational progress. The Serbian journals of that period, the *Delo* included, mirrored their time and current circumstances.⁷¹ As the *Delo* emerged in the interval between two other important literary journals, *Otadžbina* (Fatherland) and *Srpski književni glasnik*, its role in Serbian culture was at its strongest during its first publication run, from 1894 to 1899. And, although its importance declined with the appearance of the *Glasnik* in 1901, its openness to different views and perspectives, as shown by the analysis of the presence of French literature on its pages, introduced a pluralism of ideas and a wide range of foreign models to the Serbian cultural scene. The editors and contributors to the *Delo*, mostly educated and trained in major European centres, contributed to the creation of a climate conducive to the modernization of Serbian culture and its "opening to European trends".⁷²

⁷⁰ The *Delo's* review of the theatrical season 1911/2 states that of 110 productions forty were original and thirty-nine were French performed ninety-three times; there were nine German plays performed twenty-five times, six English plays performed twenty-two times, five Italian plays performed six times, four Danish plays performed eleven times, and three Russian plays performed twenty times. There were also one Italian, one Greek and one Hungarian play. The French plays obviously accounted for more than one-half of the theatre's repertoire. Moreover, the financial data show that the productions of French plays were best attended. *Delo*, Vol. 66 (1913).

⁷¹ "As journals form part of popular culture and as they communicate and are intended for communication with a large number of people, it is interesting to look into the interaction between all participants in literary communication — the author, the text, the intermediaries and the reading public", S. Peković, "Model časopisa na početku veka" [Journal model at the beginning of the century], in *Tradicionalno i moderno u srpskim časopisima*, 9.

⁷² Petković, "Engleske teme", 348.

As noted above, the *Delo* did not lay down an explicit programme, but an implicit one is clearly observable: to further Serbian culture. France and her cultural values were seen as a model and basis on which to build and improve the cultural climate in Serbia as a prerequisite for the state to move forwards. The start of the journal is associated with the Radical Party, i.e. its younger wing. And yet, a Radical ideological influence on the journal was not as strong as might be expected. Its editorial policy was largely shaped by individuals, the journal's editors and contributors, and its content often depended on their personal preferences. Choosing science, literature and social life as the journal's areas of interest, the founders and editors demonstrated their commitment to modernizing the young Serbian state and society by way of culture. Seeking to make progress, the editors and contributors turned to the leading cultural centres of the time. Their goal may sometimes seem vague and obscure, but the reason is the absence of a clear-cut programme and the frequently changing editors and contributors. It was these changes, however, that enabled the presence in the journal of different, even diametrically opposed, views.

As for the *Delo's* literary policy, it showed a tendency observable in other literary journals of the time: to show Serbian literature "the ways it should follow".⁷³ French culture and literature became an unavoidable instrument in pursuing that goal. Russian literature was an equally strong presence on its pages. Of all foreign literatures, these two prevailed in the journal, which in a way shows how the Russo-French political rapprochement, viewed in an idealized manner in Serbia, became reflected in the cultural pursuits of Serbian society. It is obvious that the proportion of French literature in the *Delo* was greater when its contributors were intellectuals educated in France.⁷⁴ Under the editorship of Ilija Vukićević and Milovan Milovanović, the latter being known as "the Balkans' greatest European", French influence was more marked than under the editorship of Stojan Protić and Dragoljub Pavlović. These stronger French influences were reflected primarily in the number of contributions by French authors or in the number of references to the French state and society made by domestic authors. That French culture was highly appreciated by Serbian intellectuals is suggested by the fact that the journal announced the publication of new French literary works each time the subscription fee was to be increased.⁷⁵

⁷³ Peković, "Model časopisa na početku veka", 11.

⁷⁴ The most important role in disseminating the influence of French culture, ideas and habits in Serbia was played by the so-called "Parisians", Serbian intellectuals educated in France from 1841. Upon their return to Serbia, these young and educated men usually assumed high and influential positions. See Bataković, "Četiri generacije parizlija".

⁷⁵ *Delo*, Vols. 1-74.

Analysis of the journal's content reveals the presence of almost all recognized French authors, both contemporary and past. Molière, Dumas *filis*, Racine and Sardou dominated not only the stage of Serbian theatres, but also the pages of the *Delo*. The distinguished literary critics Lemaitre, Sainte-Beuve and Taine were unavoidably referred to in the domestic authors' contributions to the *Delo*, such as those of Svetislav Simić and Bogdan Popović. Their original work opened the way to new ideas and movements and to the advance of Serbian literature. During the first publication run, when Bogdan Popović, Svetislav Simić, Jovan Skerlić and Mihailo Vujić were contributors, though very briefly and in few issues, the French spirit and contemporary trends featured quite prominently. The *Delo* lost the majority of its contributors to the *Glasnik* in the early twentieth century, but it did not lose all cultural influence, its French aspect in particular. The French spirit and contemporary trends were rather prominent. After Popović and Simić, French topics in the *Delo* were dealt with by Nikola S. Petrović and Grgur Berić. The latter published his study "The French Spirit in Literature", which provided an overview of French literature from *La chanson de Roland*, Rabelais, Calvin and Ronsard to Molière and Racine, and further on to the literature of the "age of philosophy and revolution". The number of French literary topics during the second publication run is smaller, but it should be remembered that in Serbia, under the threat of war from the beginning of the 1900s, political themes naturally took precedence; but even in that situation, the *Delo* published several works by French authors, in the spirit of establishing closer relations with France. Among the most important was the translation of Denis Diderot's *Le neveu de Rameau*. Together with Zola and Maupassant, Diderot's literary work decisively influenced the shaping of Serbian literary trends and the formation of the Serbian greatest literary figures. French literature offered guidelines and models to the realist and naturalist movements, subsequently also to modernist and avant-garde tendencies in Serbian literature. Moreover, the journal's editors and contributors closely followed the then leading French journals, such as *Revue bleue*, *Journal des débats* and *Revue des deux mondes*, translating and publishing the texts they deemed important for Serbia's cultural development. This is yet another proof of the great effort the group rallied around the *Delo* put into keeping abreast of cultural trends and pursuits in Europe and the world.⁷⁶

The French written word in the *Delo* fulfilled its purpose, and the French spirit inherent in French literature was finding its way to the Serbian elites both indirectly and directly. Of course, Serbian intellectuals were

⁷⁶ "Delo, fondée par un groupe d'hommes de lettres qui appartenaient au parti radical, a réussi par son contenu littéraire, scientifique et sociologique à avoir vraiment le caractère des grands revues européennes", Savković, *Bibliographie des réalistes français*, 129–130.

interested in other literatures as well, such as Russian and German, but they may be said to have been imbued by the French spirit. The cultural influence of France enriched Serbian culture and inspired it to attain new artistic heights. Aware that “what you have read remains in you even after you put the book down; the impression lasts, just as a chord played on the harp resounds and vibrates even after you ceased plucking its strings,”⁷⁷ the group rallied around the *Delo* chose the field of culture to begin their mission of modernizing Serbia, a field where the results can only be achieved through painstaking effort, but where the effect is the most powerful and most lasting.

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⁷⁷ *Delo*, Vol. 2 (1894), 108.

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