Ideology in the 20th Century

Studies of literary and social discourses and practices

Edited by
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Introduction: The Crossroads of Literature and Social Praxis

Marcello Potocco, Ana Beguš, Jonatan Vinkler

When researching ideology, it would be unimaginable to disregard the work of Louis Althusser and his followers in the early 1970s. One of Althusser's central theses describes ideology as 'imaginary': ideology is the imaginary relation of an individual to the material conditions of his existence. Yet the ideological attitude is not treated merely as a possible cognition of the world, instead it is defined as inevitable consciousness, since each relation to the world is conscious and given as an imaginary relation. Ideology is the mechanism that provides the 'evidentness of meaning', i.e. an individual is given the 'evident truth' on how things are to be understood. According to Althusserians, an individual is thus presented with seemingly only one possible signification. The meaning of an utterance depends on what Michel Pêcheux calls the inter-discourse, a set of discursive formations which are themselves "imbricated with the complex of ideological formations". The signification of utterances therefore comes into being according to the position their speakers (users) assume in relation to ideological formations.

Althusserians understand ideology as constitutive for the subject's identification, and vice versa, the subject is constitutive for ideology, since ideology is in itself acting through the subject, it is an ideological interpellation of an individual as a subject. Within this conceptual frame, ideology is conceived as general ideology that supposedly permeates both the entire social system as well as each of the subject's identifications. The subject's relation to the world, his/her ability of the imaginary is uniform, and ideology becomes the only possible form of the imaginary.

However, we have to be careful in determining the relation between the imaginary and ideology, since the imaginary cannot be understood in only one possible way. It is especially important to note that the imaginary, as the primary ability of an individual to build an arbitrary link between the image and its signification, must be limited by a kind of social institution. This is why it is useful to follow Cornelius Castoriadis's explanation of the role of the imaginary in any society. Castoriadis argues that the imaginary mostly manifests as the institutionalising set of representations common to a society. It is only through such sets that a society is seamed together, as we can understand each other only by using a set of common representations. Paradoxically, ideology can be understood as an order of such institutionalising sets. The problem of meaning, i.e. the relation between the signifier and the signified, is fundamental to understanding both ideology and the role of an individual. While the imaginary—in its primary existence—is open to any possible link between the signifier (the image) and the signified, ideology, on the contrary, attempts to close this gap and establish a fixed meaning. Due to this tendency, ideology can be defined as a discourse of modernity, as discourses of modernity strive to suppress and eliminate differences and ambivalences, using rational control and action.

Althusserian definitions would therefore lead us to think that the ideological relation is given as an *a priori* relation to the world. The process of ideological interpellation achieved by means of identification produces an empty space in the inter-discursive set, and the subject necessarily fills in the empty space. A similar stance was later taken up by Michel Foucault. However, Stuart Hall emphasises that the link between the signifier and the signified can never be completely closed, and, consequently, meaning can never be totally fixed. This means that even in discourses of modernity the subject may not comply to identifying with one meaning only. Hall thus argues for the autonomy of the subject that was denied to the individual in Althusserian thought. Parallel to the interpellation provided by a discourse, there must exist the subject's response, a praxis through which "individual constitutes and recognises himself *qua* subject", "as a subject of desire". This is why Foucault was substituting the notion of discourse with the analysis of power in the structure of discourses as well as institutions. Terry Eagleton agrees and takes a step further: if the subject were but an effect of the discourse or power, there would be no reason for the ideological control of the subject and there would be no possible way to oppose an ideology.

This brings us to the crucial problem as regards ideology. If the subject is given the autonomy of response, discourse must be laden with a discursive authority to interpellate the subject. Moreover, if the subject is given the autonomy, a relation must exist not merely between the subject and discourse, but also between discourse and ideology. Diane Macdonell defines discourses as specific ranges of the use of language that "differ with the kinds of institutions and social practices in which they take shape, and with the positions of those who speak and whom they address" (Macdonell 1986, 3). In her view, a discourse is invested with meaning by ideological positions in which it takes shape, and her main argument is that "meanings are to be found only in the concrete forms of differing social and institutional practices" (Macdonell 1986, 3,110). It could be claimed that ideologies are inscribed into discourse by the intervention of power. As Terry Eagleton puts it:

> ideology marks the point at which language is bent out ... by the power interests which impinge upon it ... so that ideology becomes a set of effects internal to particular discourses themselves (Eagleton 1991, 129).

In this introduction we have chosen to follow one of the possible lines of research on ideology, wishing to bring the discourse on the concept of ideology back to where it started. This seems necessary, as the present book does not focus on the variety of theoretical approaches to the problem of ideology. While this study does not completely ignore theoretical observations, it does seem that in the past five decades the research on these issues, despite being very fruitful and diverse, has also become somewhat exhausted. This is why we have focused on case studies revealing mechanisms of literary and social representations both in a more general context (e.g. cases of national ideology) as well as within specific social contexts. The authors of particular chapters have shed light on the period after World War 2 in the countries of both the Eastern and Western Bloc, but with a special focus on the countries that were for a long time under the communist rule. This should not come as a surprise, considering that Slovenia was one of these countries.

Still, the book starts out with discussing theoretical concepts. Ana Beguš thus analyses the notions of genre, technology and remediation. The substantial nature of technology as an extension and a cultural interface creates new cultural environments. In this process, it transforms the existing genres and generates new ones. The technological environment of the text can thus be understood as a particular level between the textual and the social context which can be materially analysed. The tradition-

al discourse analysis is mainly concerned with the analysis of ideological narratives in the content and thus neglects the analysis of the technological interface as an epistemological frame that the user is unaware of because this interface is naturalised (default) in the given cultural context. An outline of the today's technological ecosystem is presented with an emphasis on vaporwave as an exemplary genre of the new media culture and its relation to traditional (printed) cultural forms.

For the purpose of his examination of how literature and art take part in the circulation of significations and representations in the construction of social reality, Tomaž Toporišič also crosses boundaries between genres. He uses novels by Winfried Georg Sebald, his wanderings between 'signs', punctuated by black and white photographs—Nicolas Bourriaud defines as emblematic of a mutation in our perception of space and time, in which history and geography operate as a cross-fertilisation, tracing out paths and weaving networks. Sebald's novels are confronted with the productions by the Bosnian-Croatian theatre director Oliver Frljić, with his disturbing, shocking performances in which he uses his own personal, wartime and political traumas to raise the universal questions about the boundaries of artistic and social freedom, individual and collective responsibility, tolerance and stereotypes. Beyond examining the contestation of subject positions, this chapter follows border-crossing figures to the shifting battlefields of today's Europe and beyond. It concentrates on the dialectics of 'art' and 'society', where fluid, incontainable subjects are constantly pushing the contours. Revising the critical consensus that contemporary art primarily engages with the real, the essay describes how theatre and fiction today navigate the complexities of the discourse as well as social realities of neo-liberalism in the age of terrorism. The paper takes a look at how art negotiates, inflects and participates in the discursive circulation of stories, idioms, controversies, testimonies, and pieces of (mis)information in the face of global uncertainties.

Vladimir Gvozden explores a more subtle level of ideology, both in fiction and society. Literary works must end, he claims, even when they deny that ending. The endings of existence (including fiction) are countless (for example, the end of childhood, schooling time, friendship, relationships, working time, reading a book). In this sense, the ending is immanent to existence as much as it is inherent to fictional narration. Of course, if there is an ending, there is a beginning, and there is time between the two. There are also events that just resemble an ending. The main thesis of Frank Kermode's *The Sense of an Ending: Studies in the Theory of Fiction* is that fiction and existence are closely related because

both of them create congruencies of origin and attempt to give meaning to life and the novel. In order to give meaning to our lives from where we actually are (always somewhere in-between), we need fictions about beginnings and about endings, fictions that unite what we perceive as a beginning and an ending, and give meaning to the intervals between them. Kermode calls these fictions *concord-fictions*. Gvozden's contribution comparatively deals with the nature of the construction of such fictions in *The Sense of An Ending* by Julian Burnes. Beside taking into account the interpretation of both the plan of expression and the plan of content, the aim of the paper is to point out the connection between the ways of dealing with the idea of the ending in contemporary literature and in rising eschatological narratives, primarily those connected with the awareness of the ending of utopia and with the pervasive politics of fear. Finally, his contribution also attempts to show, following the theme of the book, that the problem of eschatology deeply connects contemporary literary and social practices.

Gvozden points to (ideological) universalities by starting from a specific case, while Špela Virant takes the opposite route in her essay. Her starting point is the theories of radical constructivism, especially the work of Heinz von Foerster and decolonial studies as introduced by Walter Mignolo and Santiago Castro—Gómez. She continues by discussing selected excerpts from Native American literature and criticism, as they deal explicitly with this topic. While Foerster assumed the free choice of epistemology, decolonial studies discern that in certain historical circumstances this freedom is limited by ideologies. The conclusion drawn from both theories is that the epistemology of the excluded observer enables and legitimises capitalism and colonialism, which, once established, force this epistemology upon the exploited. The epistemology of the included observer/producer, as it shows up in the selected literary texts, can be read as a form of resistance against hegemonic epistemology.

Toporišič's, Gvozden's and Virant's chapters already heavily draw on specific literary cases, but all of them still integrate their selected cases in the discussion of the general concerns of ideology and epistemology. All of the other chapters in the book reject the focus on theoretical observation in favour of case studies. Marcello Potocco investigates two examples of literary relations between Canada and the United States of America. Proceeding from the historical overview of the Canadian geopolitical situation and the situation in its publishing market in the 19th and 20th centuries, Potocco defines the basis of the newly established national ideology as shown in the poetry of the so-called Confederation poets. The

foundation of their ideas was no doubt th British-Canadian cultural nationalism, but the paper focuses on the poetry of Archibald Lampman in order to show the dependence of their late-19th-century literary idiom on American ideas and the American literary market. In the topos of nature—specifically in the images of menacing nature, the northern frontier and similar—the binarism between the American source and its Canadian modification becomes inscribed in the Canadian national imaginary. The most influential imagery of the standard Canadian national myth was explicated by Northrop Frye and Margaret Atwood during the second wave of Canadian nationalism in the 1960s. During the second wave of nationalism, the denial of the continental binarism was at its peak. The reaction of the nationalist circles to the presentation of the Governor General's Award showed their explicit rebuttal of contemporary American poetry personified in George Bowering, the Award-winner, despite the fact that Allen Ginsberg's poems and Charles Olson's theory of the projective verse can be seen as co-shaping the poetry of some of Canadian nationalist poets of the period.

While Potocco only briefly notes thematological studies, which were one of the cornerstones of national ideology in Canada, Aleš Kozár's paper centres on thematology, as it compares the theme of the village in Slovenian and Czech literatures. In the last twenty-five years, the motif of the village occurred quite often in Slovenian literature, either as a space of lyrisation and poetisation, and exoticism of the other (Lainšček, Tomšič), or as a neglected, dark space without future (*Ki jo je megla prinesla*). In the Czech literature of the 1990s, the image of the village was not particularly attractive, but later writers started to find their way to this image mainly as a space distinctly connected to wild, untamed nature (Bajaja), magic traditions (Tučková), or a place of hidden ideological conflicts from the not-long-gone past (Hájíček). The village has gained considerable relevance as a space of an ideological conflict between the absolutist bad-will of totalitarianism and the village community, associated with earth, faith, and tradition.

Kozár introduces a series of chapters in which the authors present the specific Slovenian perspective on the problem of ideology. The majority of these chapters deal with the communist regime and the dissident opposition, but also with the feminist discourse within the ideology of communism. Through a comparison between Dušan Jovanović's *Military Secret* from 1983 and the play *nineteeneightyone* by Simona Semenič from 2013, Gašper Troha studies the image of the social system in Slovenian drama. He shows how drama depends on the historical moment

and the author's socio-critical stance. Even more, this image is important-ly influenced by the position of drama and theatre in contemporary so-ciety. Maja Murnik's contribution is based on the assumption that over the last decade it has no longer been possible to strictly distinguish be-tween drama and theatre, as we are now dealing with the 'no-longer-dra-ma' (Poschmann) and postdramatic theatre (Lehmann). In the crisis of representation and drama form, we are encountering heterogeneous, per-formative and open structures. They are embedded into the present-day transformed position and status of art whose modern autonomy has fall-en apart, while art has begun to appropriate other procedures and func-tions. Murnik examines several Semenič's plays as well as several politi-cally-shaped and activist examples of recent performing arts where the textual part plays a significant role. These range from simple political ag-itation plays to complex examinations of social and political issues. Varja Balžalorsky's contribution discusses the specific historical moment when woman's discourse became inscribed into the structure of the literary sys-tem, focusing on the tensions between ideology and the women's poetic discourse as shown in the poetry book *Shadow in the Heart* by Ada Škerl. Balžalorsky also sheds light on the problem of how Škerl's book was re-ceived in the literary system.

Roland Orcsik presents one of the most significant ex-Yugoslav poet-ry styles after the Second World War: ludism in the context of Hungar-ian authors from Voivodina gathered around the literary magazine 'Új Symposion' (1965–1992, Novi Sad). These poets found themselves under the pressure of the ambivalent political ideology of the SFR Yugoslavia. Hungary does not have a tradition of ludism, which was one of the sig-nificant differences between Hungarian poets in Hungary and those in Voivodina in the period after the Second World War. The study tack-les the main poetical characteristics of ludism, its South Slavic authors (Tomaž Šalamun, Iztok Geister Plamen, Ivan Slamnig, Branko Maleš, Delimir Rešicki, Vojislav Despotov, Vladimir Kopicl, Vujica Rešin Tucić etc.), and the works of Hungarian 'Symposionists' (István Domonkos, Katalin Ladik, Ottó Tolnai, Ottó Fenyvesi). Ludism has been sometimes accused of blurring borders between popular culture, subculture, and al-ternative and high culture. The paper focuses on artistic results of this method (e.g. the poetics of video montage and collage). Symposionist au-thors were accused of being 'cosmopolitans', 'anarchists' and 'nihilists' by the Voivodina officials. The art of Symposionists did not change the po-litical system of Voivodina during the period of the SFRY or later on, but it did provide an alternative space of artistic freedom.

Orscik's contribution shifts the focus from Slovenia and—in his case Yugoslavia—to the countries of the Warsaw Pact. Irma Ratiani thus presents the situation in the Georgian literary system. After World War II, political changes occurred in the Soviet Union. In 1953 Joseph Stalin, originally Georgian,—the materialised symbol of the country—died; the much-talked-about XX Assembly of the Communist Party of the Soviet Union headed by Nikita Khrushchev followed soon (1956). In Georgia, Khrushchev's speech against Stalin was followed by a serious political unrest which ended with the tragic events of March 9 1956. It is still unclear whether these resulted primarily from a political position or insulted national pride. The so-called Otteppel ('The Thaw') was established in the entire territory of the Soviet Union soon afterwards. The literary process of the period of the Ottepel yielded a quite different picture compared to the previous decades of Soviet life. In the conditions of political liberalisation, different tendencies were noticed in Georgian literary space: on the one hand the obvious nostalgia for Stalin, on the other the growth of a specific model of neo-realism and the rise of women's writing.

The second Georgian contributor Maka Elbakidze introduces the discussion of the 'meta-literary' discourse focusing on the dissident researcher of Georgian literature Viktor Nozadze. The time of creative maturity of the émigré writer and scholar Nozadze coincided with the period when the communist-ruled Georgia blocked the way for all those who could not adapt to the new political system. During his thirty-year immigrant period in France, Germany, Austria, Argentina, Chile, Brazil, Spain and finally France again, Nozadze created six monumental volumes devoted to *Vepkhistqaosani* (*The Knight in the Panther's Skin*) by Shota Rustaveli, analysing its ideology and worldview, ethical and aesthetic ideals. Like all Georgians living in emigration, Nozadze was definitely perceived as an 'enemy of the people' and, naturally, the totalitarian regime could not place him beside Soviet scholars. In the Soviet Union of the period before Perestroika, research methods in any field of science were supposed to be based on Marxist-Leninist philosophy. Nozadze could not fit into the ideological context governing Georgian science at the time when he studied Vepkhistqaosani. After becoming familiar with the existing scholarly works at his disposal, the researcher realised that Rustaveli's personality, world outlook and artistic-aesthetic thinking were all reduced by Soviet scholars to superficiality and ideology. This was especially true of interpretations of Rustaveli's religious beliefs and world outlook. Consequently, mentioning and citing Nozadze

was banned in Soviet Union, while his life passed in vain expectation of returning to his native land.

The book concludes with two Romanian authors. Andrei Terian advocates the analytical and historiographic usefulness of the concept of 'socialist modernism' in denominating and describing the paradigm that prevailed in Romanian and other Eastern European literatures between 1960/1965 and 1980. In doing so, the paper follows a three-pronged line of reasoning. Firstly, Terian provides a diachronic overview of this period with a view to unraveling the motives behind the writers and communist politicians' conviction that modernism was a trend whereby they could effectively express their interests following the fall of socialist realism. Secondly, he defines the concept of 'socialist modernism' and explains how its usefulness in characterising this period supersedes that of well-established Romanian concepts such as 'neomodernism' and 'socialist aestheticism'. Lastly, he aims to determine whether socialist modernism can be successfully integrated in a transnational modernist network (if it, for instance, aligns with the so-called 'late modernism') or if, conversely, it was limited to a local or, at most, regional level.

In the last chapter, Stefan Baghiu discusses socialist realism as mass-addressed. Socialist realism has often been perceived as a mass culture movement, but few studies have succeeded in defining its true structure as being mass-addressed. The general view of literature under socialist realism is that of standardised writing and formulaic genre. Baghiu aims to analyse the genre fiction and subgenres of fiction translated in Romania during socialist realism with a view to acquiring a more comprehensive perspective of the social purpose and functions of socialist realist literature. There were many attempts to control popular and youth novels in keeping with the ideological programme of the USSR and its entire sphere of influence. At the same time, these struggles should be opposed/connected to the development of popular fiction in Western cultures, as the two opposite cultural systems shared several important traits: if we consider that the most translated authors of fiction within the Stalinist Romanian cultural system were Alexandre Dumas, Jack London and Mark Twain, the gap between Western and Eastern popular fiction no longer seems big, while their functions may be opposite.

Genre in the Technological Remediation of Culture

Ana Beguš

Genre represents one of the fundamental concepts of any semiotic analysis. Taking into consideration its various understandings and definitions (e.g. Bakhtin 1987, Halliday and Hasan 1989, Tynyanov 2019), it can generally be defined as a textual form established by recurring communicative context; as Bakhtin's *utterance* and Benjamin's *form*.[1] Its attributes can be explicitly evident in more formulaic examples of texts, e.g. in administrative forms or invoices as examples of performative discourse; but normally its rules are more implicit, though no less binding. Genres define what one can talk about and how to do it; they already define the participant's roles in communication and therefore function as a discursive device. The functioning of the genre is always double, i.e. textual and cultural. Genres thus act as a pre-set epistemological frame for participants in communication.

One of the key factors that influence the development of genres is technology, understood not as a neutral code, but as a medium (an interface), as understood by the Toronto School of Communication. Marshall McLuhan (1961, 1982, 2001) expresses this substantive character of technology and its formative influence by saying that the medium[2] is

1   The term genre is defined and classified differently depending on the theoretical field and individual author; in the article I use it more generally in a sense that comes closest to Benjamin's 'form'. I am not interested in building a detailed classification of genres, but in understanding how technological remediation affects genre in the sense of enabling and disabling individual genres.

2   McLuhan deliberately uses the term 'medium' to emphasize its mediating nature; his definition of a medium is much broader than the meaning usually used in com-

the message; i.e. that the cultural, social (and thus necessarily linguistic) changes introduced by the new technology into the cultural environment are more cognitively and epistemologically formative than what is *mediated*, i.e. transferred through these media. "The user of the electric light—or a hammer, or a language, or a book—is the content. As such, there is a total metamorphosis of the user by the interface. It is the metamorphosis that I consider the message" (C. McLuhan et al. 1987, 397). The technological environment in which a text materializes can thus be understood as a special level of textual and social context that can be systematically analyzed.

Typical of this technological process is remediation:[3] every new technology reconfigures the existing media environment; the new technology does not displace the old one, but changes the existing technological environment so that the functions and status of the old technology or medium are merely restructured—an example of this would be the new status of movies in the age of mass television, or the changing status of journalism with the shift from print to online medium. The process of this change is, by its nature, revolutionary:

> All technology has the property of the Midas touch; whenever a society develops an extension of itself, all other functions of that society tend to be transmuted to accommodate that new form; once any new technology penetrates a society, it saturates every institution of that society. New technology is thus a revolutionizing agent (McLuhan 2019, n.p.).

However, the old culture injected by the new technology still understands itself in terms of a past paradigm—we view the future, says McLuhan, through the rearview mirror:

> People spend their lives making reasonable simulations od what has been done in the preceding age. The Renaissance man lived in the Middle Ages - mentally and imaginatively, deeply thrust through with uncritical classicism. The nineteenth century man lived in the Renaissance. We live in the

munication studies. For a substantive understanding of technology, see the works of Günther Anders, Martin Heidegger, Friedrich Kittler, Lev Manovich or Emanuele Severino (fully cited in the Works cited).

3   The concept of remediation derives from McLuhan's tetrad of media effect as a gestalt tool which examines the social processes underlying the adoption of a technology in terms of a) what the technology enhances or brings forward, b) what it makes obsolete, c) what it retrieves that had been obsolesced earlier, and d) what it reverses to when it fully saturates the environment. For more see McLuhan and Powers (1989); Bolter and Grusin (1999).

19th century. The image that we have of ourselves, collectively, in the Western world is from that period (McLuhan and Powers 1989, viii).

But in the age of rapid electronic data transfer, changes are happening so fast that the rearview mirror no longer works, so we must learn, like the artist, how to predict the future:

Humankind can no longer, thorugh fear of the unknown, expend so much energy translating everything new into something old, but must do what the artist does: develop the habit of approaching the present as a task, as an environment that needs to be discussed, analyzed, coped with so that the future may be seen more clearly (McLuhan and Powers 1989, viii).

Walter Benjamin is also aware of the substantive role of technology when he writes that "during long periods of history, the mode of human sense perception changes with humanity's entire mode of existence. The manner in which human sense perception is organized, the medium in which it is accomplished, is determined not only by nature but by historical circumstances as well" (Benjamin 1969, 222). Although Benjamin is primarily concerned with the influence of technology on art, as demonstrated by the gradual disintegration of aura in the transition from elite to popular culture, he emphasizes that the process is more general and extends far beyond the boundaries of art. In cultural terms, the decay of aura is socially determined by the fact that technical reproduction enables the ardent

desire of today's masses … to bring things closer spatially and humanly, equal to their bent toward overcoming the uniqueness of every reality by accepting, or consuming, its reproduction (Bejamin 1969).

Today, any man 'can lay claim to be recorded' the process is similar for literature as well as for film which was then still a new medium:

For centuries a small number of writers were confronted by many thousands of readers. This changed toward the end of the last century. With the increasing extension of the press, which kept placing new political, religious, scientific, professional, and local organs before the readers, an increasing number of readers became writers—at first, occasional ones. It began with the daily press opening to its readers space for 'letters to the editor.' And today there is hardly a gainfully employed European who could not, in principle, find an opportunity to publish somewhere or other comments on his work, grievances, documentary reports, or that sort of thing. Thus, the distinction between author and public is about to lose its basic

character. The difference becomes merely functional; it may vary from case to case. At any moment the reader is ready to turn into a writer. As expert, which he had to become willynilly in an extremely specialized work process, even if only in some minor respect, the reader gains access to authorship (Benjamin 1969).

Benjamin's words find its full realisation today when the technological development has resulted in general hyperproduction (printed and electronic), and has at the same time decentralized the media ecosystem and relativized its once essential filtering mechanisms. Today, the media ecosystem is highly fragmented into an almost infinite number of microinstitutions (publishers, websites, blogs, profiles on social networks, etc.) that struggle for visibility in the global culture. Consequently, we have easier access to different materials than ever before but the majority of these are poor-quality and focus more on being 'efficient' in terms of technological accessibility and user-friendliness (with an emphasis on design and (audio)visual formats, e.g. infographics).

Transformation of the technological ecosystem which creates new genres and reconfigures old ones has a direct influence on our understanding and classification of cultural content in different historical periods. Remediation thus runs along two lines: the first is quantitative in the sense of moving certain genres to the forefront and others to the background, while the second is qualitative and describes the changes in a particular genre over time, or its adaptation to new technological environment. An example of this is the already mentioned transformation of film from a popular cultural form into an artistic one with the advent of television, or more recently, the status of television in the age of ubiquitous internet which is also moving towards obsolescence and becoming only a larger screen for remote video library or as a screen for viewing online content outside of commercial subscription models, such as YouTube. Parallel to this, the user model changes, too: the new commercial model is a subscription to a 'library' (which reflects the logic of the database as the essential form of new media), but with a significant difference: if these models were once publicly owned (e.g. public libraries, public service broadcasting etc.), they are today privately owned by corporations; as such, they represent new, unprecedented forms of global monopoly which are not merely economic but concern informational hegemony (what Anders calls the oligarchic principle of technology).

As for qualitative remediation, an example would be the transformation of the genre of the novel (as a specific form of literacy) or epic poem (as a specific form of orality) over time. In this sense, the concept of reme-

diation is similar to the evolutionary understanding of literary genres of Russian formalists.[4] Yuri Tynyanov points out that the static study of literary genres as exempt from the broader cultural and social context is unproductive; similar to evaluating a cannon ball by its appearance rather than by its capacity to fly.

> An older contemporary, who has lived through one or two—if not more—literary revolutions, will point out that in his day, this or that phenomenon was not a literary fact, but has now become one; and vice versa. Literary journals and almanacs are nothing new, but only in our day have they come to be perceived as 'literary works' and 'literary facts' in their own right. Zaum has always existed, in the language of children, sectarians, etc., but only in our day has it become a literary fact. Conversely, something that is a literary fact today may tomorrow become an ordinary fact of life and disappear from literature. For us, charades and logographs are games for children, but in the age of Karamzin, with its emphasis on verbal minutiae and play with literary devices, they were a literary genre. As it turns out, it's not just the borders of literature—its periphery and frontiers—that are fluid: the center itself is fluid as well. Instead of one primordial, regular stream of succession flowing and evolving at the center of literature, with new phenomena congregating around its edges, it is these new phenomena that come to occupy the center, while what was previously in the center is in turn relegated to the periphery (Tynyanov 2019).

Art thus creates a simultaneous and homeostatic order that, with new experiences, new entries, is newly motivated and renewed, a fact also noted by Eliot:

> The existing monuments form an ideal order among themselves, which is modified by the introduction of the new (the really new) work of art among them. The existing order is complete before the new work arrives; for order to persist after the supervention of novelty, the whole existing order must be, if ever so slightly, altered; and so the relations, proportions, values of each work of art toward the whole are readjusted; and this is conformity between the old and the new (Eliot 1932, 15).

The constructive principle, as the new element in the 'literary set' that generates new genres, can be *any 'strangeness', 'error' or 'irregularity'* of

4   The similarity of approach is not surprising given that McLuhan studied literary theory with Leavis and Richards, two major representatives of New Criticism as a type of formalism. McLuhan's method of media analysis is in fact an extension of the formalist method to all cultural content, including popular culture.

the normative poetics, which often influences the literary system from the outside, and Tynyanov draws particular attention here to the system of everyday life and everyday language. What he calls everyday life contains in its extreme form all other social systems (economic, political, and certainly technological); it is a kind of polysystem, similar to Lotman's concept of semiosphere. The role of technology creating new semiotic interfaces in this process is essential. Thus, through remediation, technology is crucially affecting the relationship between elite and popular culture, mainstream and alternative culture, between entertainment and art, and, last but not least, between conformism, subversiveness and counter-culturalism in political terms, and it does so regardless of our value judgments. Therefore, analysing a particular literary or cultural phenomenon without considering its diachronic evolution and the cultural context that influenced it is meaningless—what must be analysed is the entire system, or the whole simultaneous order of art and culture.

New Genres

If the simultaneous order of art is conditioned by technological development, we may say that today we find ourselves in a state of universal ubiquity of imaginative stimuli, described by Valéry already in 1928 as home 'delivery of Sensory Reality':

> Our fine arts were developed, their types and uses were established, in times very different from the present, by men whose power of action upon things was insignificant in comparison with ours. But the amazing growth of our techniques, the adaptability and precision they have attained, the ideas and habits they are creating, make it a certainty that profound changes are impending in the ancient craft of the Beautiful. In all the arts there is a physical component which cannot be considered or treated as it used to be, which cannot remain unaffected by our modern knowledge and power. In the last twenty years neither matter nor space nor time has been what it was from time immemorial. We must expect innovations to transform the entire technique of the arts thereby affecting artistic invention itself and perhaps even bringing about an amazing change in our very notion of art. At first, no doubt, only the reproduction and transmission of works of art will be affected. It will be possible to send anywhere or to re-create anywhere a system of sensations, or more precisely a system of stimuli, provoked by some object or event in any given place. Works of art will acquire a kind of ubiquity. We shall only have to summon them and there they will be, either in their living actuality or restored from the past. They will not

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merely exist in themselves but will exist wherever someone with a certain apparatus happens to be. A work of art will cease to be anything more than a kind of source or point of origin whose benefit will be available and quite fully so, wherever we wish. Just as water, gas, and electricity are brought into our houses from far off to satisfy our needs in response to a minimal effort, so we shall be supplied with visual or auditory images, which will appear and disappear at a simple movement of the hand, hardly more than a sign. Just as we are accustomed, if not enslaved, to the various forms of energy that pour into our homes, we shall find it perfectly natural to receive the ultrarapid variations or oscillations that our sense organs gather in and integrate to form all we know. I do not know whether a philosopher has ever dreamed of a company engaged in the home delivery of Sensory Reality (Valéry 1964, 225).

In this process, print genres have been transferred to the new electronic environment as online libraries and archives, following the rearview mirror metaphor, while many new genres have also been created that are 'native' in the sense of naturally growing out of the new text economy as 'home delivery of sensory reality'. This results in further hyperproduction that becomes decentralized in terms of its structure (hyperlink environment) and increasingly globalized in content, i.e. monocultural; it represents 'more of the same'. The structure of the new technological-cultural interfaces, typified by social media, requires short forms which must be instant (they must have immediate effect in internet scrolling, surfing and browsing), ephemeral (they are immediately replaced by others and forgotten), prosumptive and multimodal. The visual code predominates over the verbal: the basic matrix of new texts is visual or audiovisual, and the verbal text is subordinated to the visual and reduced to a minimum—a slogan, a catchphrase, an 'ideogram', to use McLuhan's description.

An interesting example of such a genre is vaporwave. It is a visual and musical genre that plays with the iconography of the eighties and early nineties; one could describe it semiotically as an individual, 'isolated' emotion, expressed by the endless repetition of an audiovisual motif. Although linked to different political movements, usually to accelerationism, or interpreted as a satirical treatment of consumer capitalism and technoculture, it is more of an aideological mood music created through continuous visual and musical repetition[5] (gifs and loops) which reminds

5   See examples on YouTube such as Internet Club, Time (11newtown) and Nobody Here (sunsetcorp).

one of the repetitiveness of mantras, increasingly popular today due to their instant soothing effects. Music critic Adam Trainer describes vaporwave as background music for advertisements or announcements on a television or computer screen or answering machine.

The ideological indistinctiveness of the genre could be explained by the basic accelerationist thesis that the process of capitalist growth and development must be accelerated in order to reach the point of political and social upheaval. But vaporwave is better understood when interpreted as a reflection of the changed technological ecosystem rather than an expression of a particular political or ideological perspective in terms of traditional subcultures. In an environment of rapid information update, the epistemological position of a political or ideological standpoint characteristic of press culture becomes obsolete. In this sense, vaporwave exemplifies the post-political and post-ideological nature of modern times. Its evasiveness, unclear genre boundaries, constant hybridization, disinterested irony and unidentified authorship make it an exemplary expression of the new fluid identity generated by the internet, typical of the digital natives. It illustrates the characteristics of the new technological environment and the psychological implosion caused by electronic technologies; the 'inner trip' as illustrated by one of the users' comments:

> I hope this is the afterlife. No meaning, no substance, no consciousness, no humanity, no reincarnation, no existence, no suffering, just an endless loop of lost voice and an endless ray of color that stretches into the sky forever (Pereira 2019).

In terms of the Toronto School of communication theory, it represents a return to the principle of *mimesis*, characteristic of oral cultures. Because it is impossible to specialize (or remain specialized) a regards the electric data, as continuous global information updating prevents a fixed position, individual robotism develops as a survival strategy in the face of constant information overload. It is a process of returning to myth, and thus the failure to complete the Enlightenment project, as argued by Adorno and Horkheimer. Electronic culture is a decentralized culture with no "solid goals, objectives, or private identity" in which man does not control nature but "metamorphosizes himself into abstract information for the convenience of others" (McLuhan and Powers 1989, 98). In political terms, it is a process of retribalisation: at high speed data transfer (i.e. in a constantly updating environment), the individual becomes so closely connected with other people that he or she completely loses his or her private identity, and compensates for this loss by adopting corporate

identity as a collective tribal mask. In terms of cognitive abilities, it is a transition from the long-term attention span typical of print culture (and best exemplified by the novel) to the multi-tasking of the 'constant now' (Innis 1964). and the psychodynamic properties of the oral tradition (aggregative, redundant, close to the human world, situational, homeostatic) (Ong 1982). Obviously, the last goal of a psychologically imploded individual is critical political engagement.

The Status of Literature in the New Media Ecosystem

In such a media ecosystem, literature and writing no longer have any real influence or power. Different empirical studies, depending on comissioner and methodology, report very different findings about the status of literature, but two general trends are apparent: the already mentioned textual hyperproduction and the shortening of time devoted to reading[6] at the expense of new media practices (social networks, video watching etc.), most evident in younger generations. On the one hand, the global literary ecosystem is becoming increasingly commercialized (following the bestseller principle); non-commercial literature is published, but it is far more diffused and fragmented. There is a tendency towards mainstreamisation linked to the increasing presence of technological interfaces in our lives and parallel to the expansion of the cultural industry. On the other side of this same process, there is a growing marginalization of non-mainstream production: although it is quantitatively rising, its share in the entire ecosystem is constantly dropping, and, due to its dependence on new technological interfaces, is under constant pressure to adapt to the mainstream. In such an ecosystem, the new media literary genres (electronic literature, digital poetry), though interesting, remain marginal. Computer-generated and computer-assisted literature (for poetry see, e.g., Laird and Schwartz) are interesting phenomena as simulations of literature that call into question the myth of the author's inspiration and genius, though it is difficult to see any qualitative improvement here in terms of poetic forms or messages. The general tendency for short forms is manifested in new pseudogenres, such as the 'six-word novel' or the '140-character novel,' which can hardly be understood as a remediation of a novel, but at best an attempt to popularize literature on social networks.

6   People do not generally read less, but they read less demanding genres, thereby losing the specific cognitive ability of deepened long—term concentration required for analytical thinking. The change is broader and does not only concern literature: it is also linked to the crisis in the print—based education system, science etc.

Classical literature, with its critical function, is increasingly losing its relevance and becoming more of a preaching to (an increasingly smaller) choir and a status symbol. Milan Kundera exemplifies this in the Art of the Novel by contrasting the novel as a form of continuity as opposed to the spirit of modernity, which "reduces time to the present moment only" and erases the diachronic dimension. In such an ecosystem, says Kundera, the novel is "only one current event among many, a gesture with no tomorrow" (Kundera 1988, 27), and the blind belief that everything new must also be good only an act of the worst conformism:

> Once upon a time I too thought that the future was the only competent judge of our works and actions. Later on I understood that chasing after the future is the worst conformism of all, a craven flattery of the mighty. For the future is always mightier than the present. It will pass judgment on us, of course. And without any competence (Kundera 1988, 27).

In this sense, the novel represents a distinctive product of the culture of writing with its beginning, culmination and end; its decline is also the decline of a specific form of civilization, a specific worldview. At the same time, critical engagement is also emerging in an increasingly booming popular culture (as 'subversive affirmation', 'subversive appropriation' etc.), but only in the function of commodity and as a simulacrum, through which Benjamin's demand for politicization of art spontaneously changes, through the logic of the technological interface, into an aestheticization of politics perhaps most evident today in the phenomenon of hipsters and their 'lifestyle', which replaces the former notion of subculture (see also Babić). The Enlightenment ideal of democracy and the active citizen has thus been replaced with the new model of corporate conformism, many times falsely based on a 'spiritual' component, 'intimism' and the like.

Future Technological and Cultural Development

The process of advancement to secondary orality is not yet complete: this text, for example, completely ignores the new environments of computer games (and the associated social process of gamification) and virtual reality, which represent the new dominant cultural forms. In the case of genres more closely related to classical literature, I wanted to show the direction of the development of this technological ecosystem, in which printed literary genres, along with a specific worldview, are becoming increasingly marginalised. This, of course, does not represent the end of literary discourse, which continues to remediate into new forms that carry

with them specific cultural and epistemological models. Virtual reality, which poses interesting philosophical questions, will certainly play a key role here: it combines physics and metaphysics into the theory of consciousness as a key research field that blurs the boundaries between the sciences and arts. The metaphysics of virtual reality, in fact, highlights McLuhan's fundamental thesis that human culture has been 'cyber' and virtual ever since the invention of the wheel: technology is introducing new ontological categories. In this sense, the cultural history of mankind can be understood as a continuous process of ever more explicit virtualization—books, films or virtual reality representing only three forms of a metaphysical extension of humans beyond their biological restraints, with no real metaphysical difference between them except in the degree of colonization of human consciousness. Vaporwave could be seen in this context as a kind of naive intuition or simulation of future cultural development as a consequence of technological remediation; the 'chimerical 'reality'', which goes in the direction of McLuhan and Powers's observation that "the most important insight of the twenty-first century is that man was not designed to live at the speed of light (McLuhan and Powers 1989).

> Without the countervailing balance of natural and physical laws, the new video-related media will make man implode upon himself. As he sits in the informational control room, whether at home or at work, receiving data at enormous speeds—imagistic, sound or tactile—from all areas of the world, the results could be dangerously inflating and schizophrenic. His body will remain in one place but his mind will float out into the electronic void, being everywhere at once in the data bank ... Caught up in the hybrid energy released by video technologies, he will be presented with a chimerical "reality" that involves all his senses at a distended pitch, a condition as addictive as any known drug. The mind, as figure, sinks back into ground and drifts somewhere between dream and fantasy. Dreams have some connection to the real world because they have a frame of actual time and space (usually in real time); fantasy has no such commitment (McLuhan and Powers 1989, 97).

From a deontic point of view, the key question is whether this process is culturally a progression, as McLuhan saw it (although not uncritically),[7] or a regression, as Baudrillard described it with the notion of sim-

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7   A common misconception about McLuhan's work is that he was affirmative or celebratory of new technologies. McLuhan's private stance on new technologies was disapproving but he did not include it into his studies since he believed that moralizing

ulacra. The risk of a purely moral treatment of the relationship between culture and ideology that runs between critical utopianism and critical dystopianism or criticism of technology, is to ignore the epistemic dimension of technology (media ecology). New media create new environments of services and disservices which are never exclusively positive or negative but must be understood as a holistic system; this is precisely the point of 'understanding' them, as McLuhan insisted. In this sense, Botz-Bornstein advocates critical posthumanism, which is neither a blind enthusiasm for posthumanism nor a call for a return to traditional humanism, but 'the search for the human in the posthuman' (Botz-Bornstein 2017), based on Baudrillard's belief that simulation should never replace reality.

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about technology does not prevent its cultural and psychological effects—instead, we must understand how technologies create new service environments. For more see interview with McLuhan in Playboy, and Douglas Coupland's biography of McLuhan.

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Negotiating the Discursive Circulation of (Mis)Information in the Face of Global Uncertainties: The Fiction of W. G. Sebald and the Theatre of Oliver Frljić

Tomaž Toporišič

Literature and Theatre in the Uncertainty of 'Glocal' Societies

We live in a decade of powerful uncertainties regarding the means, goals and borders of 'glocal' societies,[1] which are being confronted by humanitarian catastrophes, terrorism and post-colonialism. In order to investigate how literature and art are included in the flow of significations and representations that build societal truth, we will use two case studies. First, the novels of Winfried Georg Sebald, with his special narrative technique of connecting the textual and the visual, words and photographs, a literary journey among signs, interrupted by black-and-white photographs. Nicolas Bourriaud perceives them as a symbol of mutation in our recognition of space and time, in which history and geography complement each other, sketch the path and weave a network. The other example is the work of Oliver Frljić, the Bosnian-Croatian theatre director who intervenes into his shocking productions after his own personal, war and political traumas, in order to ask universal questions about the borders of artistic and social freedom, individual and collective responsibility, tolerance and stereotypes.

If in his criticism of the contemporary world Sebald is implicit, then Frljić is explicit, almost even demonstrative. He is convinced that "we

1   We understand local society and glocalisation in the sense of the sociological interpretations of this concept, as it has been developed by Roland Robertson: the collision of external and homogenising processes and the local, which diversifies them (27). As well as Marko Juvan's understanding of global literature, which is also "already 'glocalised', that is, present through the network of local entries, presentations, thought perceptions and perspectives (2009, 188).

cannot stop being a part of the structural violence as long as we are living in the economic-political system that we currently have. Structural violence is inherent to neoliberalism capitalism and to its corresponding political representation. That system cannot be changed through institutions of this same system. Its institutions are not the means of change, but of maintaining the existing system" (Toporišič 2016, 4). But both artists join the special form of deconstruction of reality through a recollection of the past, which creates a special politics of prose and theatre.

Our purpose is to outline the terrain of contemporary subjectivity at 'home' as much as 'on the frontlines'. Beyond an examination of the challenging subjective positions, we will follow two artistic figures who cross the borders and inhabit the moving battlefield of today's Europe or beyond. We will attempt to understand the dialectic of art and society, within which fluid, uncontrollable subjects constantly change the contours. We will call into question the critical consensus that contemporary art principally deals with the real and try to describe how contemporary theatre and literature navigate through the complexities of the discourse and societal reality of neoliberalism in the era of terrorism. We will look at how art negotiates, how it collaborates in the discursive flow of stories, idioms, polemics, testimonies and bits of (mis)information in the confrontation with global uncertainties.

The Special Status of Culture and Art in the Contemporary World

We will begin with Marko Juvan's detection of the status of culture and art in the contemporary world as he describes in the article *The World Literary System*. When he speaks about the literary system, he understands the status of both as a complex topology in which intersect "different levels: the level of the text and the intertextual relations, the level of the transfers of objects, institutional matrices, structures and cultural practices, the infrastructural level of the transnational social networks, media, organisations and canons, and also the level of concepts, consciousness and imagination". He sees world literature as 'glocal', accessible "only through the localised archives of cultural memory and particularly through cognitive, linguistic perspectives". From those "world literature ramifies as a mycelium of variant corpora, representations and systematisations. World literature structures itself in a series of dislocated records, which are the subject of reflection and treatment in different literary systems" (Juvan 2009, 205–206). His analysis, which among others stems from Deleuze-Guattari's concept of the mycelium, can easily be

translated onto the field of contemporary performance practices and the 'performing arts system'.

But, first let us link it to the fictional system of W. G. Sebald. Sebald characteristically shapes the genre of his writing using a synthesis of a breed of minor genres: biography, autobiography, memoir, travelogue. To these minor literary genres he also adds non-literary forms: the notebook or family album, which he connects, in order to interrupt the automatic reception in the reader. At the same time, with a special form of travelling, which is bound to the combination of genres and their literary and non-literary tactics, his literature with the help of recollections of 'archetypical' traumatic images of the First and Second World Wars, he includes the flow of significations and representations which builds social reality.

In this way, he creates a singular synchronous genre, in which he is able to dialogically join to the novel—as the modernist genre *par excellence*—other genres and create an intertextual, intergenre and even intermedia cohesive structure. Characteristic of that structure is the dynamic of uptake and mutual pollination of genres on the level of the fabula as well as the *syuzhet*. In doing so, Sebald creates a type of new, often meta-genre, which breaks through the borders of the already known, as if he were to construct a larger unfinished, perhaps even impossible to finish, genre hybrid, yet in its base still always primarily narrative-fiction work, with some kind of melancholy-infused process of Balzac's contemporary epic structure, *La Comédie humaine*, which appears as a quotational fibre in the last part of Sebald's 'novel' *Austerlitz*.

The Effect of Reality and Senseless Cruelty

It seems that Sebald's procedure, which throughout is carefully plotted and structured, is one of the possible answers to the status of contemporary prose, which in her essay *The Grieving of the Soul*, dedicated to the author's prose, Susan Sontag detects as "an unproductive inadvertence of literary ambitions and simultaneously the ascendancy of the tepid, the glib and the senselessly cruel as creative fictional subjects" (Sontag 2001, 239). At this he succeeds in his 'fictions'—and their accompanying visual depiction—in driving the effect of reality and the harrowing extremity (241). Precisely that violent effect of reality is the point in Sebald's literary procedure that interests us. It's a special procedure, with the help of which achieves that fiction and 'faction' are not in opposition, but that with the help of the dialogical relationship, which is stressed among several different literary, textual and visual procedures, structures his ro-

manesque 'grievings'. As we will see in the continuation of this article, Frljić also uses similar procedures, except that it does so within a different medium, that of theatre.

In Sebald's writing, which to its advantage mixes the made up and documentation, we are (just as in, for example, his novel *The Rings of Saturn*), witness to the exchanges and transverses between the past and the present. This creates a heterochronic temporality, which enables the writer to examine and connect two central themes to one another: time and memory. For him, memory is as personal as historical. We remember only the introductory chapter of *The Rings of Saturn*, which in a fundamental and nearly unnoticeable arc moves from Suffolk in August 1992 to the hospital in 1993 and to Kafka, the memory of the narrative friends and history of art in the 17th century. Those shifts among others enable a multimodality of the novel, which alongside its textual material also also iconographic-documentary material of photography thus intertwining the heterogeneous verbal and non-verbal signs in new combinations. Bourriaud interprets that as an altermodernistic "valorising of connections, which establish between the text and images as special paths, which artists establish in multicultural landscapes, transitions, which they impose in order to connect the ways of expressing and communication" (Bourriaud 2009b, 44).[2] Thus with his literary and poetological procedures Sebald generally "shows the memory of past people and events in our lives as something that makes us afraid, that shapes the space around us" (129).

The question which arises and which we will examine along the line of Mark Richard McCulloh's book *Understanding W. G. Sebald* is as follows: can we truly interpret Sebald as "a writer who draws on his knowledge of several literatures and literary periods to create a new kind of documentary fiction that owes much" to Borges, Kafka, Bernhard, Nabokov and even Stendhal, as well as, of course, Eco and Calvino, yet he essentially differs from the postmodernist prose in that he isn't 'fictionalizing facts' but "making facts fictive by binding them so deeply into the forms of his narratives that these facts seem never to have belonged to the actual world" (McCulloh 2003, 25)?

2   On the basis of Bourriaud's theory, Alison Gibbons in the book *Routledge Companion to Experimental Literature* dedicates a special chapter to the altermodernistic prose, which according to her opinion characterises a particular attitude towards form, time and identity. The subject of its treatment is alongside the authors of the 21st century (Liam Gillick, Brian Castro, Charles Avery) exactly Sebald's specific prose.

Prose as Inner Theatre

In an interview for Dutch television in 1998, Sebald emphasised his attitude towards the past, the present and the future, which nicely reveals the ways of his perception and framing the world:

> In one sense the future does not interest me or that narrator figure at all because, knowing what I do, I fear that it can only be blighted and that, therefore, the past, horrendous though it is, with all its calamitous episodes, nevertheless seems to be some kind of refuge because at least the pain that you had there is over. It is no longer acute, it has been subdued and so the presence of the past has something very ambivalent about it. On the one hand it is burdensome, heavy, it weighs you down, on the other hand it is something that liberates you from the present constraints (Sebald, 2006, 23–24).

In his works Sebald produces a consciousness which is like "a theater that blends memory, hallucination, deceptive memory, dreams, soliloquy and the stream of immediate perceptions" (McCulloh 2003, 25). In the title of his book *Blending Facts, Fiction, Allusion, and Recall* McCulloh produces the metaphor of Sebald's prose as an inner theatre, whose owner "is at once actor, audience, and playwright" (25). This metaphor will take us to Frljić, to his theatre, which likewise creates connections of fictions and facts. Just like Sebald, Frljić also creates *une salle des pas perdus*, a space of lost steps. In this space resides the author producing signifiers that do not point to an easily found signifieds, along with the reader, whom the author entices on a journey between the signifiers and signified. The reader is enticed to a fundamental architecture of Sebald's prose (and Frljić's theatre), in which he will meet with the narrator (or narrators-actors), but the latter will not enable him either an unambiguous identification or a clear distance. Nevertheless, the meetings in the text and in the theatre are no less intense.

Sebald addresses readers who know how to read. Frljić also creates his productions for such spectators. Both of them play with the readers or the spectators, they play hide-and-seek with contemporary civilisation, which recalls the themes of history in order to speak about the present and (dependent upon the desires and projections of the reader/spectator) perhaps also of the future. Both use the principle of repetition, which just as with Italo Calvino, produces the reader's or spectator's co-responsibility for a creative reading of the text and the performance. Both destroy the

readers' or spectators' horizon of expectation, simultaneously, they play with Iser's implied reader.[3]

The Deconstruction and Ironising of the Horizon of Expectation

Both authors who are the subject of our treatment, deconstruct and ironise the horizon of expectation as an achievement of civilisation, since it is a metaphor, which they most often use as a goal of this expectation, death, its inevitability and its repetitions. This can be disruptive for readers and spectators who expect either hermeneutic or mimetic certainty, just as it can be a pleasure to the readers and spectators, to whom are close, for example, the resistance produced by interpretations of the texts of Franz Kafka or Heiner Müller.

Thus Sebald and Frljić both play with a series of theoretical and civilisation signifiers and new age mythology, for example, the death of the author and the birth of the reader, which they paratactically interpret through irony. Both have an almost 'pathologically' sharp sense of reality, which they introduce within different media and cultural-political contexts, by all means they are joined by their ability to create uncertainty and destabilise us.

Frljić in an interview before the premiere of *Our Violence and Your Violence* emphasises that uncertainty as the essence of his directorial poetics:

> I think that the greatest quality of the production *Our Violence and Your Violence* is precisely the situation in which the spectator is lacking a frame that would clearly determine in which mode the performance is operating—ironic or non—ironic. But let's remember: even Handke's *Offending the Audience* never got the right to citizenship in the institutional bourgeois repertoire, despite that being one of the key drama texts that breaks down different types of theatrical mimesis and the ideology upon which it rests. I've never set the goal for myself to become some type of moral arbitrator. I myself also participate in the manufacturing of the structural violence, which is needed for the 'normal' functioning of Europe (Toporišič 2016, 4).

3   We refer to the quality that Mateja Pezdirc Bartol put forth in regard to Iser in the article "The Role of the Reader in the Principal Literary Theory Directions of the 20th Century", when she noted the specific interaction between the work and the reader, which is interesting also in reading Sebald's prose and in watching Frljić's productions: "The expression marks active participation of the reader in the reading process, but the expression belongs neither to the text nor to the reader, but to both, since it includes the prestructure of the text and the reader's actualisation of the possible meaning" (Pezdirc Bartol 44).

In this, they are both rooted in their personal history, which to a large extent informs the reception of their works. Sebald's is centered around the World War 2 as he was born in Germany in 1944; Frljić's personal history is rooted in his teenage experience during the war in the former Yugoslavia, of a refugee from an ethnically mixed Bosnian family, but it also includes the consequences of the war. Both authors use fragmentation, in which a part takes the place of the absent whole. Their traumatised, fragmented and interrupted stories endcode a variety of discourses in a particular, authentic way, putting forward the fact that we live in a time of uncertainty, in which our memories and our psychological present are full of incomplete fragments as well as traces of memories and behaviours. The kinesthesis of our movement from contemporaneity towards the future is always interrupted by cuts, by momentary *stasis* in which fragments themselves split our spaces of living and they determinately bring us back to the traumatic past only to return once more to the unsustainable present. Just as Sebald's books intertwine the frozen photographic images with the continuosly supple memory, Frljić pictures the neck-breaking present using intensive fragments, freezing them with death, with violence.

Theatre as Learning to Watch

On various occasions Oliver Frljić emphasised that in his theatre work he primarily learned to watch. He's convinced that to see things in the correct way is already the first step towards change. At the same time Frljić understands the contradictory duality of watching, since watching is at the same time an emancipatory practice and an instrument of social control, repression and exploitation. Frljić is interested to see how far social control would go during his (and our) lifetime.

In the article *From political theatre in Yugoslav socialism to political performance in global capitalism: the case of Slovenian Mladinsko Theater* Juvan observes that "postdramatic theater moves to performance and directly treats global political contradictions that appear on the local level, including the Slovene national state; for example, the question of latent xenophobia and oppression of minorities" (Juvan 2014, 553–4). As one of the most eclectic examples of such a theatre he mentions Frljić and his production *Damned Be the Traitor of His Homeland!* which he understands as a part of the political theatre of the 21st century that

no longer recounts the great narratives of revolution. It is dedicated to small narratives and local events in which class, gender, ethnic, and other conflicts are foregrounded under the worldwide aegis of transnational capitalism (554).

The Demolishing and Renewed Restoring of Illusions

Frljić originates from Gramsci's notion of hegemony which includes a special type of consensus: a specific group shows its particular interests as interests of the society as a whole. In order to break the automatist reception in the spectators and to simultaneously point out the hegemony, Frljić persistently demolishes the spectator's horizon of expectation, even more so, he also breaks the 'comfort of the aesthetic distance' as Juvan terms it. In the monologue, in which an actor politically incorrectly treats the audience, he uses the neo-avantgarde method of Peter Handke's famous *Offending the Audience*. At the same time he builds the performance on the technique of repetitive demolitions and renewed restorations of illusions in scenes of war killings. As he himself describes it:

> Through the inflation of death, through the incessant repetition of the unrepeatable I want to emphasise the mechanism of the theatre which always remains the representation of external realities ... The repetitions of death, which occur onstage in almost regular intervals and after which the performers 'return to life', reveals the deadlock of theatrical representational mechanisms. Those fictions-manufacturing mechanism which most often remain hidden push out any type of content-thematic frame and thus remain the only visible" (Frljić n.p.).

Frljić is aware that art is merely another instrument reproducing interests and values of privileged social groups. In order to break the hidden reproducing of ideologies in the society along with their attempt to preserve the status quo, the social inequalities and faults as well as their structured violence, Frljič in his productions intentionally removes the theatre codes proclaimed by the reviewers as universal aesthetic values, but only since they are created by social classes to which the reviewers of the performances also belong. This can be interpreted as the essential shift from the political theatre of late socialism in the 1980s, as the teather of the late socialism was still creating its political content on the basis of drama and fiction:

> In the most radical forms of contemporary Slovenian political theater, which is transforming itself into performance, actors or performers no longer represent other persons (historical heroes); they rather present

themselves as actual individuals, they allegorically embody the banality of evil and the political unconsciousness. Documents, biography, or dialogues written or improvised by the actors supplant the centrality of drama (Juvan 2014, 556).

Theatre as an Attempt to Erase the Amnesia of Memory

In the productions *Damned Be the Traitor of His Homeland!*, *Our Violence and Your Violence* and *Curse*, Frljić warns that we live within a field of *transcultural business*, which persistently subjugates artistic actions into possibilities of exploitation by the trans-political, globalist lobby. It is clear to him that theatre today (just as every artistic work in the era of technical reproduction) cannot escape the socio-economic-technological supremacy, which determines its aesthetic dimension. Therefore, similar to Sebald, yet within the poetics of politicisation almost totally opposed, he fixates on the attempt to erase the general amnesia of memory, which we are witness to at the beginning of the 21st century.

Using words and actions of the actors—performers onstage, Frljić is constantly reminding us that we are watching the physical and phenomenal bodies of the perfomers, which are what they are, actors, and they remain so even in the moment of 'taking over' temporary roles. Like Handke, Frljić also shows that

> 'this stage does not represent anything ... I don't see any objects that are pretending to be other objects ... The time on the stage does not differ from the time off the stage'. With a nod to Stanislavski and the tradition of dramatic illusionism the speakers conclude: 'We don't work, as if' (Garner 1994, 153).

But at the same time Frljić is aware that a complete withdrawal from representation praxis is impossible, just as impossible or naïve as was Schechner's and actionist vision that the performative autopoietic feedback loop enables the surpassing of the logic of textual culture and referential function.

As Thomas Elsaesser notes what inhabits the fiction of Sebald's novels are "ruins—the ruins of buildings, bodies, lives" and "a symptom of something else, since coincidence and chance are just like ruins: although prevalently ruins of time not space, yet still ruins (of context, order, concept and fate)" (Elsaesser 2014, 30). In a similar way Frljić's productions are populated by corpses that testify of the acute crisis of ethics in the contemporary world. Both Sebald and Frljić use biography as one "of the ways in our culture to show the desire to redeem life, to save it (or judge

it)". And when Elsaesser points out that "what Sebald is doing in his stories—rescuing lives that would otherwise fall into oblivion—is strongly rooted in the European imagination because of the millions of lives that the Germans destroyed or ended during World War II and the Holocaust" (31), Frljić settles that Holocaust in the memory of the entire 20th century as well as into the new millennium: spanning from the war in the former Yugoslavia through the Rwandan genocide, to the entirely fresh refugee and humanitarian crisis in Syria and Europe.

Both of them inhabit their prose and theatre with half-fictional and half-authentic characters met by the readers and the audience in different places and times.

> The photographs and postcards that [Sebald] so thoughtfully mixes between the pages of his books do not illustrate the text and at the same time they do not differ from the text but invite the chance meetings and sudden discoveries which we as readers create between the text and the stage and which in this way become one more collection of punctuation marks in the flow of the reported speech (Elsaesser 2014, 34);

Frljić achieves something similar with the different tactics: by repeating gestures, as well as visual, musical and textual motifs he builds a fragmented structure which tells the stories. Sometimes these stories arise in parallel and in harmony with the word, image and sound, sometimes they counteract. Johannes Birringer interprets that process as a special type of 'ritualized semoiotics' in which

> the iconography of signs of terror is meant to provoke shock on both Right and Left ideological spectrums, thus it attacks the violence of terror and shows the radical illusions of consensus, complacency, or 'feel-good humanitarianism' (Birringer 2016, 642).

The Spectator as the Secondary Eyewitness

In the majority of his productions, Frljić uses the spectator as an eyewitness who (similar to Sebald's reader whom the narrator draws into the mysteries of the consequences of the Holocaust) through reception becomes a secondary eyewitness, someone who follows the primary eyewitness of historical events or the testimony of them.

The disturbing effect on the spectators when using such a strategy is strongest in Frljić's production *Kukavičluk* [Cowardice] which thematises the victims of the genocide in Srebrenica and the co-responsiblity for it of the Serbian theatre and the cultural community. By transforming

the audience into eyewitnesses, Frljić introduces the "responsibility for what they physically experience, that is to say, for what they register with their own eyes and ears" (Jakiša 87). In the performance Frljić introduces a form of distancing effect in which he unites the traumatic transformation of the spectator and the technique of aesthetic interruption which should in the best case produce an emancipated spectator of a Rancière kind: that is, a responsible participatory spectator of the performance. As Jakiša notes, the spectator is presented with a unique inversion of the judicial process:

> Frljić's court theater reverses the court's normal judicial process. The verdicts are pronounced at the beginning, whereas the presentation of the case and the hearing of witnesses take place afterwards, only to come to a halt at the end of the Srebrenica scene, where the reading-out of the charge takes place (89).

Using this method Frljić introduces elements of the Augusto Boal's tradition of the theatre of the oppressed, bringing an exchange of roles between the performers and the audience. He thus, so to speak, forces the audience into active participation. This approach is quite far from Sebald's manoeuvring and intentional avoiding the open politics of prose, yet despite that, the effect on the spectator is not radically different, so one cannot claim that the political range of Frljić's theatre is larger than that of Sebald's prose. Although in the different context given by the performance, Birringer also comments on this point in his notes about the production *Our Violence and Your Violence*:

> It is the loudness of the affecting that turns me off. I wonder whether current dance theatre productions pursuing a more abstract spiritual technique of ritual, more subtle tonalities, are able to dig deeper, make us listen differently. And I wonder whether their withdrawal from political sensationalism can shape other awarenesses or mobilize other creative collectivities that are not whole or united and do not share the same cynical despair or political disappointment (Birringer 2016, 642).

Nevertheless, the fact is that Frljić's just as Sebald's purpose is the deconstruction of the postcolonial discourse of the First World or Western Europe. When speaking about Frljić in her review in the *Theater Heute*, Eva Behrendt precisely observes that the director attacks the "superior taste of the Central European theatre and cultural elite and its craving for the originality and the refinement" (Behrendt 2016, 7).

Art as a Glocal Societal Spectacle and the Acute Crisis of Ethics

A specific authorial ethical engagement undoubtably joins Sebald's prose and Frljić's productions, a consciousness of how urgent it is to find a new language of art to address the 'glocal' society of the spectacle and the acute crisis of ethics. The works of both of them are characterised by the approach which Canadian reviewer Raymond Bertin exposes in the journal *Jeu, Revue du théâtre* when speaking of Frljić:

> it is a demonstration of the absurdity of war and nationalism, but simultaneously a consideration and investigation of theatre itself, of the role and the responsibility of the artist, the responsibility of everyone in the time of war and after (2012).

Both authors reflect a specific dialectics of art and society, within which fluid, uncontrollable subjects constantly change the contours. Both of them show that they can steer contemporary theatre and literature through the complexities of the discourse and social reality of neoliberalism, even more so, in the era of terrorism. Each of them, within his own medium, creates syncretic genres, enabling other genres to dialogically join prose and theatre, to create an intertextual, inter-genre and even intermedial cohesive structure. In Sebald's work this structure is implicitly, while in Frljić's performances it is explicitly political. Yet, the works of both of them are in line with what Elsaesser remarked on Sebald:

> he anticipates the other side of the medal, the dark side of Facebook, Twitter and our obsessive online lives, as these are after all the real attemps of the 21st century to rescue itself from the final recognition of our mortality". Therefore, both artists "intuitively touch the 21st century, while they write about [and direct, added by T.T.] in and for the 20thCentury.

Thus they introduce "the ultimate Facebook of the undead of its own unhappy century" (Elsaesser 2014, 35). Something that could be described with the syntagma the violent effect of reality.

Draft translation by Jana Renée Wilcoxen

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Fiction and Eschatology: The Politics of Fear in Julian Barnes' The Sense of an Ending

Vladimir Gvozden

"We have our loneliness / And our regret with which to build an eschatology". These are the final verses of the poem *The Historians Call Up Pain* by the Australian poet Peter Porter. They were used by Frank Kermode for the motto of the first chapter of his book *The Sense of Ending: Studies in the Theory of Fiction* (1966), whose title, but also certain insights, was appropriated by Julian Barnes' eponymous 2011 novel, awarded by the Man Booker Prize. Of course, no one will deny that we can always have our loneliness, even when we are losing control over our life—or just because we are losing that control. Likewise, we are often marked by regret and self-pity on the basis of which we are building the idea of the meaning of the same life that has already been extinguished from its fittings. *The Sense of an Ending* is a novelistic commentary on loneliness, regret and self-indulgence of the subject that is trying to conceive an end, or, better to say, endings of his life. It is known that the ends in the existence of each individual are numerous: we are talking about the end of childhood, youth, education, study, friendship, love relationships, working time, completing a book, a game, a journey... Simply speaking, the end is immanent to our existence. Of course, if there is an end, there is also a beginning, and there is a time between them. In fact, establishing a relationship towards the beginning and the end is our deepest need to belong to our own species. And it is not necessary for each end to be a proper end; it is just so, a metaphor, and it often happens that the end actually only looks like an end.

The discussion of the end must begin from the end of the novel because as Kermode argues in his book, all novels must have an end, even

when they deny it. Almost at the very end of Barnes' book, we find these sentences:

> You get towards the end of life—no, not life itself, but of something else: the end of any likelihood of change in that life. You are allowed a long moment of pause, time enough to ask the question: what else have I done wrong? (Barnes 2011, 142).

The important and at the same time the difficult question is: when does the end really come? An ancient Greek philosopher, Alcmaeon of Croton, whose thoughts Kermode is profoundly reviving, argues that a man was dying because he could no longer find a clue between the beginning and the end. While one is alive, he or she does so by creating a harmony between things; the subject creates, in other words, the models of the world. Kermode's main thesis is that existence and fiction are related activities because both of them create congruencies of beginnings and ends to give meaning both to life and to the novel. In order to give meaning to our lives from where we are (always somewhere in between), we need fiction about the beginnings and fictions about endings, fictions that unite the beginning and the end, and give meaning to the interval between them. Kermode calls them concord-fictions, and Julian Barnes in his novel is just examining the ways in which we build concord-fictions, which indirectly means examining the relationships between tragedy and comedy, between history and her or his story, between biography and narrative, between the mystery of transience of memory and forever missed possibilities of existence. What is, conditionally speaking, postmodern in the novel and quite characteristic of Barnes' poetics, is the continual pointing out that the narrator tells us one possible story about himself, though probably the most important one. Therefore, there are discontinuities of writing, plural interpretations of the same events, unreliable and reliable memories, conscious choices, but also unconscious ones that are later rationalized.

Moving from credulity to skepticism, the narrator, the elderly Tony Webster, uses juicy everyday speech (including cursing), recalling his life, or some episodes related to his gifted school friend, a girl he loved or thought he loved, and to one human tragedy, which actually reminds him of an episode from his schooldays, and also affects the finding of the sense (or nonsense) of his own end. The retired bureaucrat in the field of culture is divorced, has a daughter with whom she maintains regular but not excessively close relationships, returns to the turning points and the forking paths of youth—in the first part of the novel he is searching for consola-

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tion ('One'), and then he becomes upset, and as life goes on he almost gets into a state of panic because of the feeling of a missed life ('Two'). Webster repeats and contradicts himself, accumulates enough memory to create the past and 'story' in the traditional sense of the word.

The first part of the novel refers to several episodes related to Tony Webster's growing up with his friends, until the moment of separation to go to studies in the 1960s. It is important to say that the narrator immediately suggests that he tells only one possible version of the events that actually happened: "Again, I must stress that this is my reading now of what happened then. Or rather, my memory now of my reading then of what was happening at the time" (Barnes 2011, 41). What is the content of that memory? Skepticism was introduced as the principle of understanding from the first sentence, which reads: "I remember, in no particular order" (Barnes 2011, 4). As we shall find out while carefully reading the novel, Webster remembers a few scenes that have become the content of his consciousness, whether they have been experienced by him or he has been obsessively imagining them. The skeptic continues his narrative campaign by claiming that we live in time, but we fail to understand it. He had in mind the everyday time, not the speculative time of philosophy or physics: "And I'm not referring to theories about how it bends and doubles back, or may exist elsewhere in parallel versions. No, I mean ordinary, everyday time, which clocks and watches assure us passes regularly: tick-tock, click-clock. Is there anything more plausible than a second hand?" (Barnes 2011, 4).

The narrator has in mind an excerpt from Frank Kermode's book, which is worth mentioning in a more comprehensive statement:

> Let us take a very simple example, the ticking of a clock. We ask what it *says:* and we agree that it says *tick-tock*. By this fiction we humanize it, make it talk our language. Of course, it is we who provide the fictional difference between the two sounds; *tick* is our word for a physical beginning, *tock* our word for an end. ... The clock's *tick-tock* I take to be a model of what we call a plot, an organization that humanizes time by giving it form; and the interval between *tock* and *tick* represents purely successive, disorganized time of the sort that we need to humanize (Kermode 2000, 44–5).

Several pages later Kermode adds that in every plot there is an escape from synchronicity and, at least to a certain degree, deviations from the norm of 'reality' (Kermode 2000, 50). This is exactly what the narrator tells right at the beginning of the novel: the flow of time is subject to our opinions; there are earthly time and supposed human destiny. It seems

that Webster's reflections are concise and clear. What follows is a story that returns us to the storyteller's school days; the narrator is not sure about the actual events but claims that he can remain faithful to the impressions that these facts produced. He tells the story of the school as the place where it all began—so we immediately find out that something important will happen—by first evoking a trio of friends, joined by Adrian Finn, a tall, shy boy who will play the most important role in one possible, but seemingly decisive story about the life of narrator Tony Webster. The recollection of school days takes place through the evocation of history classes with a teacher called Old Joe Hunt, and history appears to be a discipline that interprets but also disciplines the past and our concepts of time. Adrian Finn, unlike other boys, has his own attitude and is deprived of skepticism that serves them as a kind of deviation from reality. He seems to be more free than the others, partially because he does not stem from a typical middle-class family like them. The three guys were meritocratic anarchists hungry of books and sex, and Adrian was someone who managed to force them to believe in the possibility of applying thoughts to life.

Why not use the word 'intellectual' that has lost its dignity and which Barnes carefully avoids? This is, then, a quartet of intellectuals who read 'dangerous' books: Alex read Russell and Wittgenstein, Adrian Camus and Nietzsche, Colin Baudelaire and Dostoyevsky, and Tony - who will later lead the existence of a typical middle-class member - George Orwell and Aldous Huxley. Of course, they are pretentious, which suits their age. Various claims are in circulation, which threaten to turn into descriptions on which the young men act: Colin, prone to anarchism, 'argued that everything was down to chance, that the world existed in a state of perpetual chaos, and only some primitive storytelling instinct, itself doubtless a hangover from religion, retrospectively imposed meaning on what might or might not have happened" (Burnes 2011, 11; similar ideas could be found in Kermode's book); Hunt, however, considered that such a criticism is a result of inevitable growing up; Adrian continually manages to outwit teacher Old Joe Hunt in history classes. (The adjective 'old' is really used ironically because the history seems to be presented as a 'mature' science, although it appears to be the doctrine of eternal immaturity and new beginnings due to its constant ideological delays, as Adrian Finn shows.)

The topic that will become key to Toni's self-understanding in the second part raises already in the first part of the novel: it is the suicide of an unobtrusive schoolmate Robson, who had become really someone be-

cause of his premature death. The reason for his suicide is rather trivial, but it well reflects the heterochrony of life in the 1960s, which will later be insisted on by the narrator—Robson's girlfriend got pregnant, and he hanged himself in the attic. A cold analysis of this event by our quartet of friends leads to important questions they can pose about themselves. There is an undeniable fact: this uninteresting and unrespectable Robson not only had a girlfriend, unlike them but also slept with her. They are cursing and wondering: "Fucking bastard! Why him and not us?" (Barnes 2011, 15). Robson was located in the kind of people produced by the middle class, and this species should not be anything superior in relation to a kind that thinks it is above others, and to which the narrator and his friends belong. In the world in which boys grow up, there is something that belongs to the tacit, but essentially present knowledge: "the genteel social Darwinism of the English middle classes always remained implicit" (Barnes 2011, 8). Immature and selfish thinking about Robson's suicide, far from any understanding of causes and consequences, are typical of youth, but also for the class affiliation of the characters. But this remains a serious problem: Barnes deals with the mistakes all of us make when understanding what is happening around us—until it becomes too late.

Thanks to the theme of sexuality and death (Eros and Thanatos), Life came in among friends, they really needed to start to live despite the paralyzing fear that "Life would not turn out to be like Literature" (Barnes 2011, 15), especially when viewed through the fate of their parents, whose place is definitely not inside the works of literature. This confuses us at first, but the novel implies that Tony Webster, who, despite his great expectations, would ultimately become similar to his parents, could only enter the novel when he came out of the Life. What are those important things in Life that have not yet happened in the lives of these British youngsters who unreasonably and naively think that Life has not yet begun? It seems the list is too familiar and close to us and, if we put aside the ironic addition of the owl as the figure of wisdom and mature science, the list supports the equal distribution of kinds of people and their expectations within a broad civilization circle to which we belong:

> love, sex, morality, friendship, happiness, suffering, betrayal, adultery, good and evil, heroes and villains, guilt and innocence, ambition, power, justice, revolution, war, fathers and sons, mothers and daughters, the individual against society, success and failure, murder, suicide, death, God. And barn owls (Barnes 2011, 15).

The relatively linear narrative of Tony Webster about his school days ends with the last history class with their teacher Old Joe Hunt, who has taught the students throughout the national history and asked them to draw certain conclusions. The question to answer is as simple as this: What is History? Tony hastily responds: "History is the lies of the victors" (Barnes 2011, 16); Colin says that it is "a raw onion sandwich", because it constantly repeats and burps; finally, Adrian Finn pronounces a sentence that echoes the other part of the novel, the second part of Webster's story: "History is that certainty produced at the point where the imperfections of memory meet the inadequacies of documentation" (Barnes 2011, 17). Finn's illustration of this kind of understanding will be Robson's suicide, which definitely suggests the importance of the dark subject of suicide. Nothing can replace the absence of Robson's testimony, as nothing will replace the lack of Adrian's. Finally, we find out that Tony Webster himself became a man who is professionally dealing with the past: he enrolled in history studies.

But there is something more important here, a far-reaching pair of opposites personalized in the characters of Tony and Adrian. Tony will get used to compromise and small ambitions (average in life, average in truth, average in morality), but he will stay alive (Barnes 2011, 94). Adrian is his antipode who practices the use of thoughts on life, becomes a great student, but, under unclear circumstances, he commits suicide to return to the story forty years later by disrupting his friend's established memories. The deep unconscious link between Adrian and Tony will be the mysterious girl Veronica and her puzzling mother. As Tony reconstructs his past and reassesses it, one event takes on the special importance: an unpleasant stay in Chislehurst in the home of Veronica's parents; as the story unfolds, we get the impression that Tony Webster symbolically ended his life during this visit when masturbating in a poky room in which he was placed. The couple, Tony and Veronica, had no sex (Barnes ironically observes, through the mouth of the narrator, that the sixties, known for sexual freedom, were sixties only for some, not for all people). In fact, their sexual intercourse happened only after the breakup, and Veronica will soon disappear from Tony's life and go with the brighter, deeper Adrian, in a seemingly repeating history, but which is not the same again. It all changes, however, when in the second part of the novel we find out that Veronica's mother died and that her last will was to leave Tony five hundred pounds and Adrian's diary.

In the first part, we find out that the narrator married, got a daughter, divorced ... Webster is a lonely retiree who, in the course of time, built

self-defense mechanisms to alleviate, and perhaps completely avoid en-counter (or collision) with the real world and its complex changes. He only maintains a relationship with his ex-wife—she is his only friend and helps him to cope with the memories of his teenage days. Why would someone care about the events that happened more than forty years ago? The answer is simple: because life stories involve more and more dying, and Tony does not become any younger. On the one hand, Tony is won-dering where the end really is and when it will arrive: whether with the arrival of death, or much earlier, at those moments-cuts when we face the inevitability of a petrified existence, that is, when we accept the fact that we cannot change anything in our lives. On the other hand, the past is not dead, and perhaps it is not even the past, because it could determine us as long as we are alive.

Though dead, Adrian Finn, the most fascinating of four friends, now enters the main story and controls the fate and self-interpretation of the narrator. Tony Webster is our contemporary Ishmael: he often speaks of himself as the survivor, and survivors, as we all know, must tell the sto-ry. Although much has already been said in the first part of the novel, the reader gets the impression that the story begins only with the second part, because everything we know, everything that is the usual cognitive role of fiction, is now challenged with the new insights into the life that Web-ster gets through the complex set of circumstances and different forms of the ending. In fact, Barnes' story becomes a form of *Vergangenheitsbewäl-tigung*, done here quite unusually on the neutral ground of remember-ing of an average subject without deeper historical experience, and which is reflected in the identification with moments when (moral) decisions could have been made but were not. Tony Webster implicitly asks himself many questions: Did he like Veronica? (During their relationship, he was very reserved.) What happened to an energetic and anarchic boy who was striving for knowledge and sexual experiences? (He has become a lonely person, deprived of intimacy.) What happened to expectations that life would be filled with passion, danger, enthusiasm, and despair? (These ex-pectations died.) What happened to his friend Adrian Finn, who fasci-nated all of them with his cleverness and peculiarity in his youth? (He committed suicide.) However, suicide is not only the end of life but also a warning to life. Tony Webster is intelligent enough to address the sys-tem: 'He took his own life', but also aware that Finn "also took charge of his own life, he took command of it, he took it in his hands—and then out of them. How few of us—we that remain—can say that we have done

the same?' (Barnes 2011, 82). Or, as he says elsewhere: "I don't envy Adrian his death, but I envy him the clarity of his life" (Barnes 2011, 98).

The first part of the novel exposes the narrator's memory almost as a lyrical poem, in a precise language, logically and convincingly, with a skillful departure from the possibility that the past can be fully restored, but also in a tone that believes in the mentally healthy relativization of existence. In the second part of the novel it all collapses: instead of the consistent memory, there are cracks that cannot be filled; instead of a compact artistic treatment, there is the disintegration of the previously told story, the cooling of the atmosphere, the victory of fragmentation, and even an unreliable narrator and his story. Barnes changes the rhythm of Tony Webster's narrative because there are points in life and writing when formal embroidering becomes a forgery. His narrative becomes a process of archiving multiplied losses, but this process is followed by the best of earlier Barnes, marked by an elegant transition from the analytical to discursive style. The optimistic wisdom of a critically oriented youth gives way to the agnosticism of mature years and suddenly forgotten minutiae become as important as life itself. At one point in the second part of the novel, Tony recalls his late adolescence, when his mind "would make itself drunk with images of adventurousness" and how in the late twenties he admitted himself that his "adventurousness had long since petered out" and that he "would never do those things adolescence had dreamt about" (Barnes 2011, 87). After that, he begins mowing the lawn, going on vacations, and actually living his enclosed life.

What does it mean to be mature? According to Tony Webster, we think we are mature when we feel secure—and we feel secure because we tend to avoid things instead of facing them. Finally, he is wondering whether the character is evolving in time, and following Kermode's points to the fact that this is surely true in the novels, but not always true in the so-called real life:

> Perhaps character resembles intelligence, except that character peaks a little later: between twenty and thirty, say. And after that, we're just stuck with what we've got. We're on our own. If so, that would explain a lot of lives, wouldn't it? And also—if this isn't too grand a word—our tragedy (Barnes 2011, 97).

Tony's tragedy is caused by a bad accumulation, a wrong bet that brings out a loss instead of gain: he avoids strong and profound ties with people because he is afraid of the end or loss. Fear of the end is worse than the end itself: during his studies, he did not fully enjoy the relationship with

Veronica, yet later she returns to the story not as the final fulfillment of existence, but as a necessary residue of restraint and reminder of failure. Testament left by Veronica's mother upsets Tony and he is trying to get in touch with Veronica and look for answers to unresolved questions. The crucial unresolved question is, of course, the question of the end, or the question of what happened to the life that seems to him to be a missed, a typical non-literary story. He is aware that his life has been missed, but Veronica—who, contrary to his ex-wife, is enigmatic—reinforces this feeling by claiming that Webster has never understood anything.

What is so specific about the thing Webster did not understand, in addition to having missed the whole Life? The great revelation refers to the fact that Adrian had a relationship with Veronica's mother, and that the young, mentally disturbed Adrian was not Veronica's son, as Tony has been hypothesizing all the time. He feels guilty because of his furious, arrogant and envious letter written after finding out that Veronica had come into relationship with Adrian. This letter drove his friend immediately into the bed of Veronica's mother, and this, ultimately, like in the case of Robson, led to his suicide. Tony feels guilty, but the issue of moral responsibility is more complex than his own experience of the whole situation. Tony wanted to hurt Adrian with a nebulous, insulting letter, but he could hardly have guessed that the sentence "If I were you, I'd check things out with Mum" (Barnes 2011, 90) would take Adrian into her bed and that she will get pregnant and his friend will commit suicide. This is the angle from which it would be possible to criticize Veronica's character, although the narrator (and, above him, Barnes), somehow fenced off the critical remarks by claiming that she is a mysterious woman. However, it seems that her anger towards Tony Webster is exaggerated, and it is possibly some kind of Barnes' irony towards the expectations that we have from the novelistic plot since her concealing of information from him does not serve anything but to extend the novel itself. Consequently, one might expect her character to become more transparent before the end of the novel, but that does not happen. She accuses Tony, but is she not partially responsible as well? Or her mother? Finally, what about Adrian's responsibility? The fact that Tony ultimately carries the burden of responsibility tells a lot about him, and not about other characters, which is consistent with his own view of himself in time—because responsibility is also a change, an indication of the development of character. It also tells something of the nature of fiction, which is something Kermode would probably say, had he not died in 2010 at the age of 91, and

had he been given an opportunity to write about Barnes' novel that appeared a year later.

Who are 'we' in the phrase 'our tragedy'? It is necessary to return to Kermode's book: namely, questions it poses are the questions of everyday life and its relationship with the grand narratives, with the deep structures that mark it, and among which the dominant vision is the one of the apocalypse. Something similar was done by Barnes, but with ironic, perhaps even sarcastic overtones. For decades, Webster accused Veronica of being unable to accept other people's feelings and develop emotions, but that applies more to him. Barnes' unreliable narrator is obscure to himself, which also affects the reader, especially the one who wants to enjoy the coherence of fiction. Psychologically speaking, Tony resembles exactly the kind of people he is afraid of, those who have only their own needs in mind. After all, he himself says that the official version of his relationship with Veronica was just the one he needed at the time. Barnes examines the peripeteia, an unexpected change in the plot, in order to force the readers to alter their expectations. As it seems, the narrator changes our expectations more than Veronica, because when we make up the fiction we encounter ourselves: at one moment, the thing X is taken for granted, X just looks inevitable to us. At some other point, X is no longer X, and in fact, it never was X! But the fact that Tony Webster self-critically admits that his knowledge of life is limited still does not mean that he does not attempt to give meaning to the end, or the ends of life and narrative, despite the feelings and opinions of other people.

The question of the end is related to the question of the meaning of life, as Kermode assures us at the beginning of his book: "It is not expected of critics as it is of poets that they should help us to make sense of our lives; they are bound only to attempt the lesser feat of making sense of the ways we try to make sense of our lives" (Kermode 2000, 3). How to know the right form of life in relation to the perspective of time? Are we living in accordance with the pattern or in line with the facts, or is a good part of the facts already a matter of patterns and kinds that we produce as members of the knowledge society? How can we reconcile ourselves with the world we live in?

> There is a necessary relation between the fictions by which we order our world and the increasing complexity of what we take to be the 'real' history of that world (Kermode 2000, 67),

records Kermode, followed by Barnes. We live in a consumer society that celebrates freedom and choices based on desire. The case of Tony Webster

clearly demonstrates that we do not choose our desires, 'we' are not free when acting on the basis of them.

'End' is the figure of one's own death, a reflection of fear, what Barnes' narrator calls 'trauma', yet not when speaking about himself, but about her former mistress Veronica. From the beginning of their relationship, he believes that she has survived the trauma, and as the novel develops, the word trauma here seems more and more likely to be one of the possible symbols of the sense of an ending, of the imagination of the end, for the awareness that the end is immanent to existence. The end, of course, is about expectations, and we project them to other people, but they are not and could not even be agents of a conscious realization of our expectations—not only fiction, human relationships are also a matter of congruence (for example, the ancient Greeks considered friends to be matter of the *Kairos*, not of our allegedly conscious choices). At some point, Kermode will say that every end is a kind of catharsis (Kermode 2000: 7), but in the case of Tony Webster, it could be argued that the ends, as forms of anti-catharsis, serve to make him existentially indifferent. The lack of rigidity in his story actually reveals the inability to live a coherent life and at the same time create a coherent fiction that would bring about a clear and understandable eschatology.

"There is accumulation. There is responsibility. And beyond these, there is unrest. There is great unrest" (Barnes 2011, 142); the last sentence of Barnes' novel marks the spirit of our time if it is acceptable at all to speak about *our* time. Great unrest has plunged into an optimistic post-war generation, and for that unrest, even their age is not an excuse since the problem goes beyond the expected disappointment of old age. Let us quote a sentence that definitely marks the growing up of our quartet of friends: "All political and social systems appeared to us corrupt, yet we declined to consider an alternative other than hedonistic chaos" (Barnes 2011, 10). How are things forty years later? 'Accumulate, accumulate', that is, according to Marx, the motto of the capitalist economy (Marx 1867, 652), but it is obvious that the state-capitalist machine based on the disposition of progress, development, and consumption is increasingly falling into an empty course, and catastrophism becomes an experience that marks us, followed by a heightened rhetoric of millenarism and apocalypse. Does such an ending have any sense? Some people will describe the present time as the age of the end of ideologies and dreams of a better world, as well as the period of decline of optimistic utopias related to science, technology, and art. Uncertainty makes it possible for anything to become important, and the future is less and less understood as a

present with more options. One possible world is, for example, the world of nihilistic consumption and a police-imposed order that would regulate the anarchy of materialistic desires. It is even possible to imagine a world whose inhabitants have gone through the temptations of the 20th century in vain. Step by step, gloomy facts and indicators are questioning our commodity-aesthetics, but also traditionally conceived culture as a means of emancipation. The fact is that for young people life seems less enchanting than for their parents' generation, and the feeling that the future could overcome the present has completely vanished. Being old is no longer just an inevitable stage of life, but a global metaphor of a tired world, inhabited by passive political subjects like Tony Webster.

Also, the novel is a critique of the contemporary rehabilitation of the idea of destiny in which the traces of the ancient idea of the apocalypse could be recognized. To make politics working means to deny the idea of destiny, and the existence of politics depends on the belief that what people do makes sense. Eschatology has suppressed the immanence of the end, the result is the discomfort in our own history and the loss of historical imagination, the transformation of history into 'a raw onion sandwich'. The uncertainty brought about by the future coincided with the tendency of romantic, aesthetic presentation of the past. This all happens because manipulation by collective memory takes place in the name of great hopes in the future: today, by reading backward, society, like an individual, such as Tony Webster as a kind of Defoe's or Swift's Everyman, perceives his own disorientation and his 'real' story as a consequence of his own hidden history. It all has to do with the widely-spread perspective that 'there is no alternative' (Furedi 2002, 169, 170).

We are locked in the sentence of Adrian Finn, uttered at the high school history class and attributed to a French named Patrick Lagrange: "History is that certainty produced at the point where the imperfections of memory meet the inadequacies of documentation" (Barnes 2011: 17). Since Patrick Lagrange does not exist, this pseudo-quotation acts as Barnes' sarcasm towards historiography and its quasi-political and false optimism about the human knowledge and neutrality of facts we produce. The historical thinking is, in the paradigm of Enlightenment, the form of consciousness directed to changing the living conditions of people—and since these conditions often change together with manipulations with imperfections of memory and the inadequacies of documentation, then one is not surprised that the future is today dominantly seen in terms of panic.

Kermode will say: "Apocalypse is a part of the modern Absurd" (2000, 123), and this is the statement that Barnes will explain in his own way. A large part of the political thought, inspired by the Enlightenment, starts from the premise of a conscious and rational individual who freely practices his or her political convictions. Nietzsche's genealogy, which secretly operates here, has long since argued that the individual performs a very small number of authentic and really independent choices. Tony Webster is a man of exhaustion and denial, which in his case results in cultural pessimism and political analphabetism. Barnes' ironical approach will keep repeating that Tony Webster has an instinct for survival and that, in fact, unlike Adrian, he survives. Barnes manages to be just towards chaotic reality, he knows very well that too much rigidity makes fiction less convincing, despite our anti-political addiction for romantic illusions. The novel creates an interactive dissonance between humanity and contingency and still tells us something, relying on some kind of a sense of responsibility, about the ways to determine the consensus between the human spirit and the things they are or what they might be. At the end of the novel, the rival versions of the same set of events coexist without final reconciliation. There are two rules of the game: 1) no fiction is necessarily above any other fiction; 2) there is always the possibility of a personal disaster. Barnes' novel does not make things clear, does not explain, does not harmonize contradictions. Fictional modeling is the cognitive operation (Schaeffer 2001, 330), and here it is fiction inside fiction at work, that is, an attempt to show through fiction the way of creating one's own 'real' life in the story, that is, once again in fiction.

Such an artistic vector of personal identity criticizes the unbearable ease of contemporary identity politics. The ethical question is: how indifferent we are to all expectations? *The Sense of an Ending* is a self-conscious philosophical novel on the subject of literature and its ways of dealing with the past, the present, and the future. This is another chance to emphasize that Tony Webster does not understand clearly that the end can happen at any moment, that the end is immanent to existence. This also has a political effect: namely, when it seems that the end is going on constantly, then we call it a crisis, the word that marked our age. At the heart of our civilization, there is a myth of a crisis, a deep and complex one that could, after reading Barnes' novel, be called a 'myth of great unrest'. Since the crisis, medically speaking, signifies a turning point in the development of a disease in which it can go either better or worse, it seems that our history can be most accurately compared with a raw onion sandwich. This, at the same time, undermines Kermode's optimism in terms of the

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final fulfilling of our life, and even the very existence of the interval between *tick* and *tock*.

Therefore, on the occasion of Barnes' novel, one can speak of the sense, but also of the nonsense of the end. This novel will embarrass those who love the illusion of the sequences and they will have to accept the mimesis of contingency. Novels, of course, have beginnings, ends, and potentiality, even if the world does not have them, but Barnes' novel manages to demonstrate how the subject finds himself disagreeable with both life and fiction—if, on the occasion of this story, it is even possible to speak of such a clear difference between them. Tony is an anti-existentialist because he wants to replace the chaos of the present with the past, just to find that this chaos has always existed. Nevertheless, the skeptic will probably remind us that the limitations of human truth enable social life. We freeze the chaos and the complexity of our world, so the question is what kind of plausible thoughts we can have. Tony Webster seems to be a sheer proof of the belief that there is a transcendent ego within ourselves, some 'I' that is separated from our physical existence because its thoughts are its prostitutes (as in the famous Diderot's statement). Is it necessary to say that the ego is defeated here because it has never found proper conjunction with the exterior?

The novel of Webster's boredom allows me to continue to bother with the question: when does the end come? It comes when the feeling of impotence becomes a normal state of being, claims Frank Furedi (2002, 145). Tony Webster cannot, no matter how much he tries, change the conditions of his mistakes; the errors themselves and their consequences cannot be changed anyway. The impression is that he retreats in all those instances where his opinion collides with what allegedly disables it. He resembles us when continues to produce meaning even when he knows that it does not exist. Barnes' novel—or more precisely the narration of Tony Webster—hence resembles Baudrillard's perfect crime:

> We cannot project more order or disorder into the world than there is. We cannot transform it more than it transforms itself. This is the weakness of our historical radicality. All the philosophies of change, the revolutionary, nihilistic, futurist utopias, all this poetics of subversion and transgression so characteristic of modernity, will appear naive when compared with the instability and natural reversibility of the world. Not only transgression, but even destruction is beyond our reach. We shall never, by an act of destruction, achieve the equivalent of the world's accidental destruction ... Excess is the world's excess, not ours. It is the world that is excessive, the world that is sovereign (Baudrillard 1996, 11).

If, as often claimed, the goal of writing is to change its object, to seduce it, to make it disappear in its own eyes, then Barnes succeeded, because life as a story (a necessary fiction) disappears in the eyes of Tony Webster, the narrator. *The Sense of an Ending* is a convincing image of the contemporary crisis of experience which Giorgio Agamben discusses in his essay *Infancy and History*, with an inevitable reference to Walter Benjamin's famous diagnosis of the 'poverty of experience': "The question of experience can be approached nowadays only with an acknowledgment that it is no longer accessible to us" (Agamben 1993, 13). Barnes cleverly raises this question immediately at the beginning, in a brief memory of his schooling: there were no more maxims and proverbs because in the background of such words there was experience as an unquestionable authority. The classes of history are a place of conflict, not a sojourn in the classroom of life. Maybe in that classroom the answer is hiding to the issue of the end, in accordance with Kermode's reading of the apocalypse as an absurdity. But the ending appears to be as long as the whole novel: although Tony Webster's story is full of aphorisms, sumptuous insights, and wise sentences, it is a fact that none of this helps him master the experience better and overcome the split between knowledge and life.

"We have our loneliness / And our regret with which to build an eschatology". Metaphors, including the metaphor of the end, affect the mind in many ways that remain unnoticed. Barnes' novel, with his mediated speech, shows how dangerous this self-oblivion is. The continuous discourse of the life after men, climate cataclysms, and economic collapses manipulate us to accept immanence and imminence (immediacy) of the worst possible end, but also relieve the hard-earned human rights more easily. Unfortunately, the contemporary power of fear does not depend on a precise assessment of the threat. We live in a period of crisis of causality, that is why many seek explanations in conspiracy theories, in some sort of excess of sense that is coherent, in contrast to the experience that is allegedly or really decaying. In his attempt to regain the meaning of the action, causality, responsibility, Tony Webster is trying to create such a conspiracy theory of his own life, which is one of the obvious manifestations of the threat of subjectivity. But everything that this historian without a career perceives is disorientation. The subject of history is also a subject in history, he or she builds its own wrong world equally inwards and outwards. The attempt to convert serious mistakes into some positive value results in their normalization. If the rise of literary fiction, as Kermode argues, "happened at a time when the revealed, authenticated account of the beginning was losing its authority" (Kermode 2000, 67), then it could be said that Barnes, in his ironic and perhaps sarcastic novel,

demonstrates that fiction and eschatology, although inconceivable without one another, are difficult to succeed in preserving the myth of possible renewal, because concord-fictions are not reliable and sufficient maps of mines set on a broad and humpy field of life. *The Sense of an Ending*, therefore, resembles the end, because the fictions are also the transversal of our fatal, probable but not actual mistakes, mistakes that should clear out and not freeze our understanding of the end.

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Epistemology, Ideology, and Literature: Radical Constructivism, Decolonial Studies, and Native American Literature

Špela Virant

In 1791 the Slovenian playwright and historian Anton Tomaž Linhart published the second volume of his history of Slovenia and other southern Slavic provinces ruled by the Austrian Habsburg Monarchy, entitled *Versuch einer Geschichte von Krain und den übrigen Ländern der südlichen Slaven Oesterreichs*. Though Linhart is best known as the first playwright writing in Slovenian, thus contributing to the development of literary language and the formation of written Slovenian literature, he wrote this historical study in German, the language of the rulers.

The target audience obviously was not only Slovenian, but his point of view was. He was trying to convey this point of view to an exterior observer and he was well aware of the difference between these two perspectives. This is especially noticeable in the chapter describing the national character. When alone, decribes Linhart, the Slovenians are affectionate and tender, they hug and kiss (1791, 212).[1] But they mistrust foreigners, especially the Germans, and hate their landlords. The foreigners on the other hand accuse them to be vengeful and deceitful (Linhart 1791, 218–219).[2] Linhart does not argue about the truth of these observations. He only changes the focus. Falsehood, guile, and termagancy may be actu-

1 "Gegen einander waren sie sehr liebreich, küßten und umarmten sich, wenn sie zusammen kammen."
2 „Ihre alten Gebräuche verbergen sie vor jedem Fremdlinge mit religiöser Sorgfalt; schwerlich wird es einem Deutschen jemal gelingen, sie in ihrem reinen wahren Lichte zu sehen. Sie hassen ihre Grundherren, die sie für ihre Unterdrükker ansehen, bis zur Unversöhnlichkeit. Man hat ihnen den Vorwurf gemacht, daß sie rachgierig sind" (Linhart 1791, 218–219).

al, he claims, but they are not natural, inborn, and substantial traits of a nation (Linhart 1791, 220).[3] They are just a way the people react to their 'destiny'. He does not explicitly explain this 'destiny', but it is clear from the context: they are dominated, oppressed by foreigners, who own their land. Linharts text draws attention to an epistemological problem. We perceive the world differently, when we are part of it or when we look at it from an exterior position. It is not only a question of perspective, of seeing an ever-identical object from different angels. The object itself changes. The behavior of the Slovenians changes, when observed by foreigners. The character of the change depends on the social and political status of the observer. The Germans perceive the behavior of the Slovenians as hateful and leery because they themselves make them act so by determining their destiny. The question of the willingness and general possibility of knowing the other does not arise at all, simply because the Slovenians hide their ways with almost 'religious diligence'. Being a playwright Linhart pays special attention to this hiding and he realizes that it is a form of resistance against colonialism, probably the only one left at that given moment.

Some decades later Friedrich Baraga (Irenaeus Frederic Baraga)—a Roman Catholic priest of Slovenian origin—published the book *Geschichte, Character, Sitten und Gebräuche der nordamerikanischen Indier* (1837), after spending seven years as a missionary in the Diocese of Cincinnati. Again, this book was written in German, but a Slovenian translation was published in the same year. In this book, it is a Slovenian who plays the part of a foreign, external observer, who describes the character of Native Americans and claims that they have more bad than good habits (cf. Baraga 2017, 35). Among the bad features, he stresses guile and vengefulness (35), i.e. the same features that the seigneurial foreigners ascribe to the Slovenians, as Linhart noticed. In this chapter as well as in the preface Baraga explains that his writing is based partly on his own experiences, partly on oral reports, and partly on 'reliable' English sources (cf. Baraga 2017, 7, 35). He gives no further information about these sources, but his explanation is nonetheless important because it suggests that he adapted the point of view of the English settlers. The accounts of his experiences are scarce and rarely different from the borrowed opinions. Though Baraga came from a country, ruled by a foreign imperial power, in relation to Native Americans he was a representative of the powerful Roman Catholic Church and the colonial European culture. Still, he had experienced, like Linhart before, that he must use foreign languages

3   "Falschheit, List, Zanksucht, sind Gebrechen ihrer Schiksale (sic!), nicht der Nation."

to gain and convey knowledge. Whatever other motives, arising from his missionary work, encouraged him to publish, after he spent two decades in America, a grammar and a dictionary of Ojibwe,[4] this experience surely somehow shaped his intellectual profile and deterred him from joining into the violent Anglicization of Native Americans.

The work *Ancient Society* (1877) by the American anthropologists Lewis Henry Morgan shows a slight change in the anthropological discourse that happened in the four decades after Baraga published his book on Native Americans. A considerable part of Morgans work that received much attention, discusses the complex structures of the Iroquois society. The discourse had become strictly scientific, objective and neutral. This alleged objectivity and neutrality is based on one single point of view, i.e. on the external observer. No changing between internal and external view—as Linhart would use—is possible, no first person narration to retell personal experiences—as Baraga would do—is allowed any more. This 'zero point epistemology' (Mignolo 2009, 159) is the bedrock of the European 'epistemological hegemony' (Castro-Gómez 2010, 287) that the authors of decolonial studies focus on in their critical inquiries. These studies, developed mostly by South American scholars, disagree with the assumption that colonialism reached its end. Instead, they unveil the means and strategies of its 'postmodern reorganization' (Castro-Gómez 2010, 282). "The coexistence of diverse ways of producing and transmitting knowledge is eliminated because now all forms of human knowledge are ordered on an epistemological scale from the traditional to the modern, from barbarism to civilization, from the community to the individual, from the orient to the occident" (Castro-Gómez 2010, 287). One such scale can be found in Morgans work. He lists the 'ethnical periods', ranking them from 'savagery', over 'barbarism', to 'civilization'. While 'savagery' and 'barbarism' are further subdivided in a 'lower' or 'older', a 'middle', and an 'upper' or 'later' period, 'civilization' stands, monolithic, for itself (Morgan 1877, 10–12). Morgan adopts a neutral position, external and objective, a 'zero point' of view. At the same time, he imposes the main criterion for the ranking of ethnical periods, defining it as the "Supremacy of Mankind over the Earth" (ix). With this, he divides men from the Earth and puts them in an oppositional and potentially hierarchical relation. The relation of the external observer to the observed

4   After the reprint of the dictionary in 1992, Anton Treuer wrote that was "probably the largest Ojibwe dictionary published to date", but had problems with the "orthography and dialect inconsistencies". Similar problems make it difficult to read Baragas writings in Slovenian today (Treuer 1995, 1003).

object (the relation of the anthropologists, who positions himself outside and above the observed people) reflects itself in the object of observation (the relation of the people, who exert supremacy over the Earth). His epistemology defines the highest 'ethnical period' and at the same time announces itself as the expression of it.

In the 20ᵗʰ century, the anthropological discourse revised this stance, but Morgans work had a great impact beyond the disciplinary boundaries. Especially Karl Marx and Friedrich Engels read it closely. Marx noted his remarks on it, but did not succeed to write a text on it anymore,[5] but Engels reacted to it with his book *The Origin of the Family, Private Property, and the State: in the Light of the Researches of Lewis H. Morgan* (1884). In the preface to the first edition, he declares his work to be

> a slight substitute for what my departed friend no longer had the time to do. But I have the critical notes which he made to his extensive extracts from Morgan, and as far as possible I reproduce them here (Engels 2000, 4).

He explains that it was "the American Indians, among whom Marx, as he often said, found the key to the understanding of our own primitive age" (Engels 36). Scholars argue whether Engels really conveyed the ideas Marx developed while reading Morgan. Some are convinced he did (cf. Herrmann 1984, 19) others take a different view. In his essay *Karl Marx and the Iroquois* the poet Franklin Rosemont states that Marx was not interested in the Iroquois out of nostalgic interest for the past but rather in search of new possible ways to social justice. Rosemont claims that Marx did not adopt

> the so-called 'unilinear' evolutionary plan usually attributed to Morgan—a plan which, after its uncritical endorsement by Engels in *The Origin of the Family,* has remained ever since a fixture of 'Marxist' orthodoxy. Evidence scattered throughout the Notebooks suggests, rather, that Marx had grown markedly skeptical of fixed categories in attempts at historical reconstruction, and that he continued to affirm the multilinear character of human social development that he had advanced as far back as the *Grundrisse* in the 1850s" (Rosemont 11).

This 'plan' is still visible in the present-day 'epistemological scale', criticized by Castro-Gómez in the quotation above. However, this is not the only reason why the scholars in the field of decolonial studies reject Marxism. Such a 'unilinear' scale can be implemented only by impos-

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5   These notes were transcribed and edited by Lawrence Krader, who published them under the title *The Ethnological Notebooks of Karl Marx* (1974).

ing, at the same time, one single point of view from which it is observed. In his works, Walter D. Mignolo calls for a radical 'delinking' from colonial epistemology, which is not possible in the frame of Marxism, because it offers only a different content, not a different logic (cf. Mignolo 2012, 90–91).[6] In his opinion, a delinked Marxism would not be Marxism any more (Mignolo 2012, 91).[7] For the decolonial studies colonialism is not just a byproduct of a certain stage of capitalism but its prerequisite, its constitutive part, the dark side of the modern age. The 'delinking' needs to happen on a deeper level than it is possible in the frame of Marxism that developed within the imperial logic. For this reason, it enables only emancipatory movements in its own realm. "The delinking starts with the disbelief and the doubt about the illusion that the imperial mind could create the liberating mind" (Mignolo 2012, 96).[8]

An ambivalent relation to Marxism is also a characteristic of certain Native American literary texts that more or less explicitly formulate a critique of colonialism and capitalism on the one hand,[9] and on the other a doubt about the belief that Marxism could be a viable alternative. This critique of capitalism and colonialism is plausible as they gave rise to the genocide in both Americas—probably the greatest genocide in human history. The poet Paula Gunn Allen identifies another cause for the genocide: "The physical and cultural genocide of American Indian tribes is and was mostly about patriarchal fear of gynocracy" (Allen 1992, 3). She states "Traditional tribal lifestyles are more often gynocratic than not and they are never patriarchal" (Allen 1992, 2). The 'fear of gynocracy' might be closely connected with the fear of anti-capitalist movements, as for Engels early communistic social structures were "the material foundation of that supremacy of the women which was general in primitive times" (Engels 2000, 27). However, these assumptions have no reliable

6   I refer to the German translation of the Spanish original *Desobediencia Epistémica* (2010), because the English text *Delinking: The Rhetoric of Modernity, the Logic of Coloniality, and the Grammar of Decoloniality* is an earlier, shorter preliminary version.

7   "In dem Augenblick, in dem der Marxismus die Entkoppelung in Erwägung zieht und sich auf sie hin entwirft, wird er kein Marxismus mehr sein." Jens Kastner and Tom Waibel on the other hand emphasize the elements of Marxism in Mignolo's work (cf. 31−35). Mignolo himself does not deny the influence of South American Marxist thought on his work, but he still clearly distances himself from it.

8   "Die Entkoppelung beginnt mit dem Unglauben und dem Zweifel an der Illusion, dass die imperiale Vernunft zugleich die befreiende Vernunft hervorbringen könnte."

9   Cf. for example the article on the work of Simon Ortiz by Dyck (2009).

proof, but they signalize that the 'delinking' should pay attention to gender specific aspects.[10]

Like for Mignolo, for the novelist Leslie Marmon Silko Marxism is caught up the European imperialistic frame of mind. In *Almanac of the Dead* (1991) she reflects on it throughout the novel with irony:

> Marx had been inspired by reading about certain Native American communal societies, though naturally as a European he had misunderstood a great deal (Silko 1992, 519).[11]

Later she concedes:

> But at least Engels and Marx had understood the earth belongs to no one. No human, individuals or corporations, no cartel of nations, could 'own' the earth; it was the earth who possessed the humans and it was the earth who disposed of them (Silko 1992, 749).

In this short passage, Silko outlines the complex conflict between Native Americans and the European settlers. Although it is a problem of colonialism, because the settlers occupied their land, it is ideological too, because it imposes the concept of land ownership, alien to their cultures. This antagonism cannot be solved by substituting private property with collective ownership. By stressing the problem of understanding, Silko refers to the specific knowledge system that underlies such a relation between humans and the earth. Eva Cherniavsky notes:

> in contrast to ethnonationalisms, and their sustaining rhetoric of cultural purity, tribal knowledges in *Alamanac of the Dead* are avowedly impure, non-organic, and non-innocent (Cherniavsky 2001, 111).

In her view, this puts the novel in opposition, or at least "in conversation with the holistic strain of Native American literary criticism, which tends to position Native American culture as the integrative other of Western epistemology's analytical protocols and its reduction of the earth's living totality to a series of inanimate component parts" (Cherniavsky 2001, 123). It is possible to agree that Silko is mocking the idea of a holistic epistemology, but there are two problems with Cherniavskys argument. First,

10   For further discussion cf. Lugones 2010.

11   Weaver, Womack and Warrior assume that Native American cultures inspired literary theory as well: "We know that Marx and Engels … quoted extensively from Lewis Henry Morgan's 1877 book about Iroquoian culture entitled *Ancient Society*. Given the huge influences of Marxism on continental literary theory, it is not impossible to imagine Native people having some bearing on the theoretical outpouring of the last four decades" (119–120).

Silko does not oppose the traditionalists and the traditional epistemology, but the ideas Euro-Americans ascribe to Native epistemology, as it is obvious in the chapter about the 'International Holistic Healers Convention' (Silko 1992, 709). Second, it is not clear what kind of epistemology Silko advocates, as it is obviously not the Western 'analytical protocols'. This problem calls for further discussion. Anyway, at this point it is possible to say that Silko evokes specific indigenous knowledge systems—or processes—that are compatible with diverse (post)modern phenomena like Marxism, ecology or hacker associations. However, the representatives of these movements in the novel are not able to comprehend the complexity of Native epistemologies, so they are just temporary allies in the fight against colonialism.

Two decades later Castro-Gómez notes the danger of such partial alliances describing how traditional knowledges today "become susceptible to appropriation by multinational corporations through patents" (Castro-Gómez, 294). Similar to the way early colonialism translated the Native relation to the earth into an 'advanced' knowledge system as land ownership, postmodern colonialism translates indigenous knowledge about nature into a system of profitable patents. This implies that the 'wrong' translation from one knowledge system to another is not a mistake but a basic element of exploitation. In the context of intracontinental colonialism the mistrustfulness of the Slovenians as described by Linhart seems justified.

The problems of a 'unilinear' epistemological scale, its formation and its consequences, are sufficiently explained, but the problem of the 'zero point epistemology' calls for more attention. The observer and the point of view are among the basic issues of the theories of radical constructivism.[12] Best known for his research in this field is Heinz von Foerster, who dealt with it in several texts. In Slovenia the cognitive scientist, Urban

12   In literary theory, radical constructivism is known as the basis of empirical study of literature and media as introduced by Siegfried J. Schmidt (cf. Hauptmeier and Schmidt 1985, 26—29). He understands literature and media as instruments for the construction of reality (cf. Schmidt 1994b, 14). The empirical studies—i. e. "empirische Plausibilisierung konstruktivistischen Denkens" (Sandbothe 2003, 9)—investigate the social and cultural conditions, that—together with biological and cognitive conditions—determine the construction of reality (cf. Schmidt 1994b, 16). In his later work, Schmidt pleads for a theory of stories and discourses (cf. Schmidt 2003, 143—152). This article goes back to the epistemological theories of radical constructivism, foregrounding the work of von Foerster, and in concentrating on stories and discourses, comes close to Schmidt's post—empirical thought.

Kordeš (2004) introduced these theories. In the following, I will outline these theories and conflate them with some aspects of decolonial studies.

Heinz von Foerster studied physics in Vienna after WW1, where he was influenced by the philosophy of the Vienna circle. After WW2 he moved to the USA and worked at the University of Illinois. One of the basic ideas he introduces in his work is the differentiation between decidable and undecidable questions. The first are decidable, because science can give a provably correct answer to them within its system. The second are undecidable, because science cannot prove the correctness or incorrectness of the possible answers. This allows for a free choice of how to answer to them (cf. Foerster 2002, 67). One undecidable question concerns epistemology, more precisely, the point of view we choose. Urban Kordeš exemplifies it with two questions: Am I a part of the world? Or: Do I stand apart of it? (cf. Kordeš 2004, 73). The observer, who chooses the second possibility, chooses the 'locus observandi' (Foerster 2002, 67, 96) that ensures him objectivity and neutrality. From this point of view he does not interfere with the observed and is himself not influenced by it. The affirmative answer to the second question means that every time I act, I change myself and at the same time I change the world (cf. Kordeš 2004, 73). Foerster, who for himself explicitly chose the participatory observation, i. e. the 'locus producendi' (Foerster 2002, 96), understood this decision as a foundation of his ethics (cf. Foerster 2002, 68). He formulated the idea that this decision is free in a privileged scientific work environment, whereas Mignolo sees the decision for an epistemology in specific historical contexts. Mignolo concludes that the external observer never was neutral, but always marked, and that the 'zero point epistemology' never was objective, because it was designed and occupied by privileged male Europeans, representatives of European colonial nations. One consequence of this is, even today, the use of languages of former colonial nations in science (cf. Mignolo 2009, 164).

Foersters differentiation of epistemologies and his proposition of a free choice between them needs the complement of decolonial studies, to be applicable in specific historical contexts. On the other hand it can help to solve some contradictions of decolonial studies. Mignolo convincingly shows that the decision for a certain epistemology is not free for everybody. In the colonial context, it is determined by the ideology of the colonizer. However, he also implies that the position of the neutral, external observer is an illusion or even a deliberate lie to hide the (exploitative) participation of the observer. From this allegedly neutral position, the colonizer thinks and works for his own good, harming others. The con-

tradiction here is that from a participatory point of view, harming others always means harming oneself as well, but the colonizer is not aware of this.

To dissolve this contradiction it is necessary to stress that the two epistemologies Foerster differentiates are not to be thought of as oppositions. The non-oppositional difference becomes manifest in the reciprocal valuation. The participatory observer sees the external observer as a legitimate part of the world who co-creates it with his way of knowing and acting. Whereas the external observer, who positions himself apart and above the world, to gain supremacy over it, sees himself rising on the epistemological scale over the participatory observer. For him the participatory observer is just an inferior part of the world that he is dominating. On implementing this hierarchy, the European colonizer, who draws borders and boundaries, can downgrade the epistemology of the indigenous people as 'savage' or 'barbarian' (as Morgan termed it). A peaceful coexistence of epistemologies, as Kordeš convincingly promotes (Kordeš 2004, 83–97) is beneficial in science, but in specific historical, economical, and political conditions, it is difficult to achieve. The epistemology of an external observer fosters and legitimates capitalism and colonialism, and they, when established, impose it on the colonialized and exploited.

When Mignolo writes about the ostensible character of the 'zero point epistemology', he is a participatory observer. From this point of view, there is no external position possible. On the other hand, the colonizer, in the case he is aware of the problem of his epistemology, cannot change it without calling into question the capitalist ideology (including colonialism and patriarchy). In an already established colonial system not even the colonizer has the freedom to choose his epistemology.

Foerster stated that the decision for an epistemology has diverse and far-reaching, direct and indirect, consequences. To describe some of them, he resorted to storytelling. In his dialogical autobiographic book *Part of the World* (*Teil der Welt*), he is not only telling stories from his life, but he also stresses the importance of stories, of narrating and the interaction with the listeners (cf. Foerster 2002: xxiii, 27, 35, 66, 98), but he never approached literary theory. So what could be the consequences for literature and literary studies? For the external observer language is a mediator between the observer and the world. The observer can use it as a tool to master the world, or he can aestheticize it and ascribe some autonomy to it. From a participatory point of view, language is part of the world and every use of language is an activity that alters the world, like every other activity (cf. Foerster 2002, 67; Kordeš 2004, 73). Another consequence of

the participatory epistemology, important for literature, is the reconceptualization of the 'I'. Foerster explains it in the concluding paragraph of the article "*Entdecken oder Erfinden*" (1998). He asks the question 'Who am I?', and answers it with a quotation, ascribed to the 'Plains Indians': "I am all the forces and objects with which I come in contact. I am the wind, the trees, and the birds, and the darkness" (cf. Foerster 1998, 87).[13]

In the poem *What my uncle Tony told my sister and me* (from the collection *Woven Stone*) the poet Simon Ortiz similarly describes the fusion of the I and the world: "Respect yourself. / Everything that is around you / is part of you" (Ortiz 1992, 47). The participation can be expressed either way: I am a part of the world and the world is part of me. Only at a first glance it might seem surprising that with the fusion the importance of the 'I' grows. To be precise, the relevance of its deeds and its responsibility for them are enhanced. The notion of responsibility is central for Foerster too. He refers to it in his descriptions of epistemology (Foerster 2002, 69), ethics (49) and love (121). With the exception of the quotation above, Foerster did not refer to the epistemologies of Native Americans, but in reading Native American literature and literary criticism it is possible, in some texts, to discern some similarities with his theories, like the emphasis on participation and responsibility for words and deeds that construct/crate the reality/world. In the following, I will foreground some of them in the search for conceivable examples of "political and epistemic de-linking" (Mignolo 2009, 159). Though the examples are chosen mostly from the canon of what is called Native American literature, this choice does not imply, in reverse, that there is one Native American literature[14] and that it can be labeled as decolonial or that there is one Native American epistemology that can be labeled as participatory; and it does not mean either that manifestations of an underlying participatory epistemology cannot be found in other literatures. They are chosen be-

13 Foerster quotes Epes Brown (Brown, Epes. 1972. *The North American Indians. A Selection of Photographs by Edward S. Curtis*. New York: Aperture); Peggy Reeves Sanday quotes the English version in *Female Power and Male Dominance: On the Origins of Sexual Inequality* ascribing it to Patty Harjo (Reeves Sanday 1981, 53).

14 *Native American literature* is an institutionalized, though contested term especially about the criteria (themes, formal features, authors) and the aims of such a classification. For brevity, I mention only two examples, published in the same year. Jace Weaver, Craig Womack, and Robert Warrior explain the necessity of "American Indian Literary Nationalism" (Weaver et al. 2006) in the fight for equal rights and cultural identity, while David Treuer explains the necessity to read these texts in the context of European and Euro—American literature as to fully acknowledge their literary quality (Treuer 2006).

cause they offer the possibility to read them as forms of resistance against 'epistemological hegemony'.

Scholars often mention the specific epistemology of Native American cultures, but it is difficult to find explanations and examples for this assertions. Eric Cheyfitz gives more information on it, referring to some other sources, and notes "'Narrative is the privileged epistemological mode of an oral culture; storytelling is the primary means of gaining and conveying knowledge",[15] and he adds that "epistemological privileging of storytelling is articulated by a range of contemporary Native writers" (Cheyfitz 2006, 66). To avoid simplifying generalization, he mentions—as an example—Leslie Marmon Silko's novel *Ceremony*, published in 1977. Indeed, in Silko's novel storytelling is not just a means of gaining and conveying preexistent knowledge, i.e. a knowledge that exists independently and is just verbalized by aesthetic speech. Storytelling produces and enacts knowledge. The medicine man Betonie depicts the creative power of storytelling in the story about a conference of witches: "Okay / go ahead / laugh if you want to / but as I tell the story / it will begin to happen" (Silko 1986, 135). Because the stories are not good *per se* and the world, created by them, is not necessarily good, they have to be told with great caution, as old medicine man Ku'oosh explains:

> "But you know, grandson, this world is fragile."
> The word he chose to express "fragile" was filled with the intricacies of a continuing process, and with a strength inherent in spider webs woven across paths through sand hills where early in the morning the sun becomes entangled in each filament of web. It took a long time to explain the fragility and intricacy because no word exists alone, and the reason for choosing each word hat to be explained with a story about why it must be said this certain way. That was the responsibility that went with being human, old Ku'oosh said, the story behind each word must be told so there could be no mistake in the meaning of what had been said; and this demanded great patience and love (Silko 1986, 35–36).

The story that begins to happen in Betonie's story about witchcraft, is the story about colonial violence and genocide, thus it is about something that actually happened as we know from history. In this context, more significant than the double framing of the story and the skillful treatment of the relation between fact and fiction is that what the story produces is nothing 'magic' like in fairy tales, but specific, violent, human re-

15   He is quoting from the unpublished article "The Trickster in Native American Oral Narrative" (2005) by Arnold Krupat.

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lationships. Storytelling—the stories and the way they are told—pray a creative part in the forming of social relations, social processes and their consequences. The priority Silko gives to relations that might form the future material basis of a society is where she clearly departs from capitalist and Marxist concepts or where the 'delinking' takes place.

In the preface to the collection Woven Stone, Simon Ortiz describes the importance of storytelling in traditional Native social structures:

> Oral tradition is inclusive; it is the actions, behavior, relationships, practices throughout the whole social, economic, and spiritual life process of people (Ortiz 1992, 7).

Cheyfitz explains that it is impossible to separate the aesthetic dimension of oral literature from the social structures it supports and creates. Herein he sees the problem of the stories translated and written down by anthropologists, without paying attention to the social context. "What is lost in translation, necessarily, is the social forms of the oral tradition—and that is pretty much everything" (Cheyfitz 2006, 69). Oral literature as a part of traditional societies used to have a creative social function that modern literature as art cannot (or refuses to) fulfill any more. Cheyfitz understands novels as Ceremony as representations of traditional social functions of oral literatures (cf. Cheyfitz 2006, 69). Though, this representation can in a certain historical context acquire new political functions in the struggle for social justice.

Traces of a participatory epistemology can be found—besides in the representation of the social functions of oral literature—in the critique of a non-reflected proliferation of texts. This critique can be found both, in Foerster's autobiographic book and in N. Scott Momaday's famous novel *House Made of Dawn* (1968). Foerster is irritated by the part of the scientific discourse he disrespectfully calls 'sokalogy' (Foerster 2002, 315–326), referring to the scandal caused by an allegedly scientific article by Alan D. Sokal published in the journal Social Text in 1996. Momaday on the other hand speaks critically about the treatment of language in "the white man's world" in general:

> In the white man's world, language, too—and the way in which the white man thinks of it—has undergone a process of change. The white man takes such things as words and literatures for granted, as indeed he must, for nothing in his world is so commonplace. On every side of him there are words by the millions, an unending succession of pamphlets and papers, letters and books, bills and bulletins, commentaries and conversations. He has diluted and multiplied the Word, and words have begun to close in upon him. He

is sated and insensitive; his regard for language—for the Word itself—as an instrument of creation has diminished nearly to the point of no return. It may be that he will perish by the Word (Momaday 1968, 95).

From the point of view of an external observer, i.e. 'locus observandi', the multiplication of words is only the multiplication of tools for mastering the existent world, regardless how useful or useless they might be. Whereas from a participatory position language can endanger the world that is created by it, if it is treated without responsibility and respect. Language is productive; therefore, it is possible to say that the place, Momaday assigns to language, is the 'locus producendi'. Momaday articulates his critique in a novel, a traditional European genre, thus multiplying the words himself; and it did not change the epistemological hegemony. However, *House Made of Dawn* was awarded the Pulitzer Prize in 1969 and it aroused the attention of the public for Native American literature. In a way, it did change the world, as it opened up the possibilities for other Native American authors to gain acceptance in the literary scene. In literary history it is therefore called 'the Native American renaissance' (Monk 2016, 137).

Another manifestation of participatory epistemology is the emulation of storytelling. It evokes the situation of oral literature, where the storyteller and the listener are both part of the world, created by their activity (or passivity). An example could be the poem *Hey, Look, the Abyss!* by Sherman Alexie, published in 2016 in the journal *The Stranger*. The poem, consisting of 36 four-lined stanzas, speaks about genocide, one of Alexie's main topics. Written in a kind of *parlando*, the theme is treated with humor and sarcasm. In the first stanza the first-person narrator identifies himself as a descendant of Native American genocide and continues to tell about a visit to Germany, especially to Dachau. It sounds that he stands somehow aloof when discussing the German and the Turkish attitude to the holocaust and the Armenian genocide. He thinks about other countries and becomes aware "That genocide is always happening somewhere / In this amusement park called Earth", but he admits in a defeatist manner, quite common when a discussion comes to global atrocities, "I'm powerless, as are all of you" (Alexie 2016). The narrator continues to relate a story of a quarrel at a dinner party caused by his remark about the Turkish policy of neglecting the Armenian genocide. He ponders the reasons of the quarrel and gradually begins to lose his aloofness. He concludes that it is not "only the epic monsters / Who commit genocide", but ordinary people: "Who are the monsters? Well, shit, it's me / And you. And you. And you. And you. And you" (Alexie 2016).

Alexie's conclusion reminds of Hannah Arendt's observations about the banality of evil, but Alexie is more radical. Hannah Arend, describing Eichmann's trial in Jerusalem, always keeps the position of a detached observer. She tries to be objective describing the persons involved and the proceedings even to the extent that she expresses concerns about the conduct of the case (cf. Arendt 2017, 91–92). This objectivity makes her report even more credible. In this way, she makes it possible for the reader to join her at the detached 'place of observation'. Whereas the narrator in Alexie's poem loses the safety of distance when looking into the abys. He stumbles down into the abyss and drags the reader along. A shift happens from the locus observandi, prevailing in the first part of the poem, to the locus producendi. The narrator changes his epistemology and realizes that he produces the world he lives in; though this has the unpleasant consequence that he realizes he produces the genocide too. The address invites the reader to share this knowledge and this way of knowing, but it does not force it upon him: the reading of a poem is or should be a free decision. The decision for a participatory epistemology is not a sentimental turning back to some imaginary holism; it means confrontation and acceptance of responsibility. Or, to paraphrase the sentence quoted by Foerster: If I am the wind and the trees, I am a part of the genocide too.

It is possible to read the traces of a participatory epistemology in contemporary Native American literature in the context of decolonial studies as radical resistance against 'epistemological hegemony'. It is radical, because it goes down into the abys of the 'imperial mind' and delink from it at its roots. In the short story *The Search Engine* Sherman Alexie introduces the character named Harlan Atwater, a fictional poet, who remarks "I believe that poetry can save the world. And shoot, that one has always been a radical thought, I guess. So maybe I am a radical, you know?" (Alexie 2012, 383).

Still open for further discussion are the questions of how to create and convey knowledge *about* literature from a decolonial and participatory position. Tzvetan Todorov reflects on specific aspects of this problem in the epilogue to his book *The Conquest of America: The Question of the Other* (1982). He does not discern between two epistemologies, but between two discourses: the narrative and the systematic. He wants to separate himself from the discursive form, the *conquerors* 'appropriated for themselves'. "I feel the need … to adhere to that narrative which proposes rather than imposes; to rediscover, within a single text, the complementarity of narrative discourse and systematic discourse" (Todorov 1984, 253). By this complementarity, he avoids submitting to the hegemo-

nial discourse and to the preclusive opposition between the two discourses; he participates in both discourses. However, is such a 'polymorphous discourse' (ibid.) still possible, four decades after he published this book? This article tries to follow Todorov's model. In analyzing literary and non-literary texts, as well as referring to theories, it is part of a systematic discourse, in connecting the results it approaches a narrative. It tries to show how different types of stories and discourses, in different times and languages, participate in the construction of social realities; while it is itself part of these discourses. Still many questions remain open. Mignolo poses a crucial one: "Was erkennen, wie begreifen und wozu?" (Mignolo 2012, 168)

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National Identification in Canada

Two Chapters from Its Anglophone Population's Relations to the United States of America

Marcello Potocco

The term 'nation' does not have a single definition in the Canadian Encyclopedia, but when referring to the common national identification, there are two opposing notions, which indicate tensions between the English- and French-speaking communities when it comes to defining their joint identity (Dunton and Couture 2011; Behiels 2011). On the one hand, their relationship has been conceived as one of "two fighting nations in the heart of a single country"; on the other hand, there is the definition of a symbiotic "bicultural national character". In search for identity, both language groups have found themselves in a typical colonial conflict, caught between the adopted old patterns and the reality of their new situation (cf. Lee 1973). Especially (though not exclusively) for the English-speaking community, the additional problem seemed to be the position which can be described as twice colonial: Canada was in a position to have to define its relations towards both Great Britain and the United States of America; in this 'triangle', the relationship towards the latter turned out to be the more challenging.

Up to the 20th century, the cultural unification on the territory of today's Canada was hindered by the absence of a common independent state (New 1991, 24 et passim.; Keith 1990, 9). The conflict between the two dominant language groups existed from the handover of colonial lands from the French to the British, but partial unification took place following the two burgeois revolutions, as both the Quebec community and Tory loyalists rejected Republican ideas (New 1991, 29). Exceptionally ambiguous was the position of the French-speaking population, who maintained the ties with the cultural tradition of their former moth-

er country despite drawing away from its political system (Stouck 1972, 9—10; cf. Moisan 1983). The failed attempt of the American invasion (1812—1814) was an additional encouragement that made a detached political affiliation with Great Britain acceptable also for the French-speaking community (cf. Lipset 1986). Thus leaning towards Great Britain could be seen as a self-defensive decision. Establishing the Dominion of Canada (the so-called Confederation) in 1867 was a factor of political protection against the United States of America,[1] which kept Dominion in the framework of the British tradition (Watt 1965, 457), although it enjoyed a limited political autonomy.[2] Quotes by the writers and the politicians engaged in the field of culture clearly express the ambiguity of the colonial situation (see Daymond and Monkman 1984): in the emerging cultural nationalism Anglo-Canadian version of nationalism prevailed, as the intellectual elite positioned Canadian culture inside the British tradition. Even more so, from time to time, the nationalism advocated the idea of Canada being a factor of revitalising the empire (Daymond and Monkman 1984). The latter is particularly evident in the rhetoric of two poems, *Canada Speaks of Britain* (1941) by Charles G. D. Roberts (1860—1943), which is actually a late example of Confederation nationalism, and *The Lazarus of Empire* (1899) by William W. Campbell (1860—1918). Both texts were addressing Canadians to actively engage in the life of the empire, Roberts' text even on the doorstep of World War II (Campbell 1899, 93; Roberts 1942, 37). Moreover, the editor of the most important among the first anthologies of Canadian poetry, *Songs of the Great Dominion* (1889), William D. Lighthall, explicitly stresses Canada's involvement in the unified British empire (Lighthall 1889, xxi—xxiii). Last but not least, a telltale example of the Britishness of Canadian nationalism before World War II, although late and specific due to its role of mobilising soldiers, is also the collection of patriotic poetry *Flying Col-*

1   Even after the Confederation was formed, the United States of America still harbored an intention to expand into the north; the success of the Canadian Confederation depended on the integration of British Columbia, which was deciding between joining the USA or the Dominion. Uncertainty also revealed itself in the Alaska border dispute, in which the United States of America turned out to be more successful, after Great Britain took a stand against the demands made by its own dominion in arbitration, and the territory was adjudged to the USA.

2   It was only when the Westminster Statute (1931) was passed that the Dominion reached real political autonomy in Commonwealth, for example with its own, independent military and external politics.

ours, where the Canadian authors tend to express through their poems a desire to participate in the empire (Roberts 1942, 6—51).

An opposite tendency could be observed in the newspaper and book publishing market, where reprints of non-Canadian authors dominated along with a strong distribution chain of foreign magazines and publishers (Parker 1976; New 1991, 34—35). In the decade after the Confederation was established—i.e. after 1880—American publishers prevailed over the British, the reason being the expansion and rise of the publishing system in the United States as well as new customs regulations. Canadian authors were thus forced into releasing their works in the American publishing market where their works were equated with romantic descriptions of nature (Keith 1990, 9; Doyle 1979). The political and publishing situation was a major factor in shaping the poetry of the first significant Canadian group of poets, the so-called Confederation Poets, who entered literary space after the establishment of the Dominion or Confederation in the eighteen-eighties. The emergence of this group is tightly related to the first wave of nationalism, especially in Roberts' poetry. His odes *Canada* and *An Ode to the Canadian Confederation* are a mixture of praising the newly-established state structure and expressions of loyalty to the mother empire, thus being a typical example of the British-Canadian nationalism; the latter is undeniable, even if—in *Canada*—Roberts attempts to include the French-speaking legacy of the Confederation with mentions of French historical figures (Roberts, Charles G. D. 1886, 2, 109—10). With his descriptions of nature, the group's other leading poet, Archibald Lampman (1861—1899), leans on the American literary tradition more evidently, but also more ambiguously than Roberts.[3]

American or Canadian? Between Similarity and Difference(s) in Text and Context, the First Take

Archibald Lampman's poetry—he published three poetry collections and the last was printed posthumously[4]—has been most frequently interpreted as romantic or postromantic, associated with Victorianism, while Canadian literary criticism identified its poetic inspirations in Keats, Shelley and Tennyson (Ball 2013, chap. Introduction). Even where similarities

3   The term Confederation Poets in the strictest sense includes, beside Roberts and Lampman, two other poets, Bliss Carman (1861—1929) and Duncan C. Scott (1862—1947).

4   Collections which were prepared for publication by Lampman himself are the following: *Among the Millet* (1888), *Lyrics of Earth* (1895) and *Alcyone and Other Poems* (1899).

with the English romantic tradition were the most obvious, for example in the poem *The Frogs*, which has often been compared to Keats' and Shelley's poetry, literary historians soon enough recognised an equally strong influence of the American tradition, namely Emerson's transcendentalism, which was first highlighted by Barrie Davies and Carl F. Klinck (Ball 2013, Introduction). The ambivalent attitude to nature in Lampman's poetry cannot be overlooked; both John Ower and Les McLeod notice alienation which erupts with the intentional adoption of the English romantic vocabulary in Lampman's poetry and the emphasised distance between the speaker's self-awareness and nature, which is not created only through rhetorical figures, but especially through semantic material (Ower 1976; McLeod 1984). Richard Arnold connected this dichotomy directly to the relationship with American transcendentalism (Arnold 1981, 33—56)— arguing that Lampman tries to follow the transcendentalist philosophy, but is not able to fully embrace it.

To illustrate Lampman's dichotomy, let us examine some relatively randomly selected, but characteristic excerpts from his texts. McLeod takes a look at Lampman's dichotomy by analysing the poem *April* from the collection *Among the Millet* (McLeod 1984; Lampman 1888, 2—4, v. 36—42):

> The old year's cloaking of brown leaves, that bind
> The forest floor-ways, plated close and true —
> The last love's labour of the autumn wind —
> Is broken with curled flower buds white and blue
> In all the matted hollows, and speared through
> With thousand serpent-spotted blades up-sprung,
> Yet bloomless, of the slender adder-tongue.

In the poem, McLeod focuses on the ambivalence of the semantic connotations of the words 'bind', which suggests a sense of connection and entrapment simultaneously, and 'plated close', which ascribes to leaves the quality of gold, but also conjures a confining sense of metal armour (McLeod 1984). What is at work here is double signification, where lexemes have two opposing connotative values—the superficial one, a kind of flaubertian *dessus,* and the deep one, a kind of *dessous*—or the superficial and deep levels of connotations are achieved through a combination of various semantic fields. On the surface level, the imagery shows the speaker's struggle to identify with nature, in compliance with the transcendentalist role models, while these connotations are simultaneously subverted at the deep level. In the sonnet *Snow* from *Lyrics of Earth*, the

surface image of tranquil and beautiful nature is expressed in the dominant semantic field of silence, associated with the falling snow, meadows, water, forests, air and earth (Lampman 1895, 45); however, identification with idyllic nature is blocked by two opposing semantic fields: the field of blurring—the forests, roads, hills and the sky are all being blurred—, and the semantic field of the snow's weight. In one of Lampman's most frequently discussed poems, *Morning on the Lièvres* from the collection *Among the Millet*, the description of calm rowing on the river is subverted with ambiguous lexemes of the bleeding brook, which the river is sucking into itself, and dead tree trunks, which bring associations of death and shipwreck (Lampman 1888, 21–22 v. 26–30; gl. Potocco 2011).

We can thus see two directions that link Lampman with the English romantic tradition, especially Keats' poetry, on the one hand, and Emerson's transcendentalist philosophy, which is supposedly the source of Lampman's tendency towards union with nature, on the other; at the same time, Lampman's poetry seems to evade this very union, which was interpreted by Canadian literary historians as specific to Lampman and the Canadian response to nature in general (Arnold 1981). Eric Ball notes that—depending on the interpreter—the same characteristics of Lampman's poetry often tend to be ascribed to the English romantic tradition and American transcendentalism simultaneously (Ball 2013, Introduction). He expresses doubts that the distinction between these two traditions is even necessary. Nonetheless, we cannot wholly support his claim due to the context of Lampman's work. Not long after Lampman's death, Canadian literary criticism recorded a dispute which was telltale as regards the dichotomy between the British-Canadian nationalism and the influence of the American literary tradition on the Canadian literary sphere. Canadian literary criticism has interpreted this dispute as a disagreement between the defenders of (post)romantic literature and the supporters of the modernist current (Djwa 1976) who congregated around Montreal's McGill University. Poet A.J.M. Smith (1902–1980) coined the term 'cosmopolitans' for this group, when the anthology *Book of Canadian Poetry* came out in 1943. This dispute can thus be understood as one between nationalist poets and anti-nationalists, although relations between them were neither simple nor unambiguous.

The defenders of the British-Canadian nationalism enjoyed the institutional support of the Canadian Writers' Association and the publication *The Canadian Bookman* (1919–1939), which was the association's bulletin between 1921 and 1923. Both the publication and the association were attacked by the magazine *The Canadian Forum* (1920–2000) due

to their ambiguous role in the literary system and allegedly naive literary nationalism between the years 1921 and 1925.[5] Between 1921 and 1923, *The Canadian Bookman* encouraged the development of Canadian literature without paying much attention to its quality, while *The Canadian Forum* showed a less unified image. Sandra Djwa characterised the magazine as the catalyst for various positions, bringing these together, and also emphasised the fact that the *Forum* wished to support Canadian literary production and even national identification, too (Djwa 1976). However, both Djwa and Kathryn Chittick claim that the magazine's editorial concept emphasised the fact that Canadian literary space should follow international trends (Chittick 1981). The founder of the magazine *First Statement* (1942–1945) John Sutherland was referring to Smith, another collaborator of *The Canadian Forum*, when stating that "a poet who is preaching politics in Auden's style is a colonialist in the same manner as one who praises Britain in a Tennysonian meter" (Daymond and Monkman 1984, 324). Sutherland's reproach is not surprising, as Djwa points out that *The Canadian Forum* did not hide the affinity to the concept of continentalism, i.e. the unification of the North American continent at least at the political level (Djwa 1976). She draws attention to columns by F. H. Underhill, whose heading—the first verse of the national anthem (*O Canada*)—already polemicises with, above all, the British-Canadian nationalism of Roberts' type (cf. Champion 2010, 80), and in which Underhill, among other things, stresses the clash between the 'theory' of Canadian anti-americanism and the praxis of voluntarily exposing oneself to American newspapers, radio programmes etc. (Djwa 1976).

This imbalance, highlighted by Underhill in *The Canadian Forum*, sheds light, from a different angle, also on the writing of Confederation Poets. Explicit assertions of opposing the United States of America could not be expected from them also due to their participation in American magazines and publishing from 1880 onwards. The possibility of opposing the United States of America was thus mostly expressed indirectly, through a declarative positioning of their newly-emerging culture inside the framework of the British empire—as in the above mentioned Roberts' or Campbell's poems—and later through cooperation

5   While it served as the bulletin of the Canadian Writers' Association, *The Canadian Bookman* could not distinguish well between at least two of its roles, as is evident from the polemics between its head editor B. K. Sandwell and the writers of *The Canadian Forum*: the role of a bulletin from the role of a cultural magazine, and the role of a critical assessor of literature from the role of the promotor of Canadian literature and its publishers (see. Chittick 1981; Mulvihill 1985).

with *The Canadian Bookman*; it is not a coincidence that two of them—beside Roberts also Duncan Campbell Scott (1862–1947)—appeared in the publication's editorial boar, right before the magazine ceased to exist. But their focus on poetry with nature motifs reveals a paradoxical position, as it suggests a dependence on the tradition that contradicts the British-Canadian nationalism after the American Revolution. Lampman is the one Confederation Poet who inscribes the American transcendentalist philosophy most ambivalently and originally into his first two poetry collections—but Louis Dudek notes that the rest of Confederation Poets, especially Bliss Carman and Roberts, "repeated their message of spontaneous joy to the point of nausea" and supplied transcendentalism in soporific quantities (Dudek 1978, 65).

The internal contradiction signalled by Confederation Poets passed into the general formulation of the Canadian attitude towards nature as the central element in the construction of the emerging national imaginary.[6] The most distinctive in this respect are definitions provided by Northrop Frye. In his 'Canadian' essays nature is given the attributes of the physical and psychological border, which triggers a response of self-isolation in a community facing it (Frye 1965, 830). Frye's concept of the frontier adopted the pattern of Frederick Jackson Turner's thesis about the American 'Western Frontier', as noted by Eli Mandel and later Gaile McGregor (Potocco 2013, 7; McGregor 2003). The concept was indeed adapted to fit the Canadian 'Northern Frontier', however, it is clear that even the Canadian national myth in its most radical form incorporates the continental binome, considering it was formed in relation to the matrix originating in the United States of America. The dichotomy of the simultaneous acceptance and denial of continentalism was hence first expressed in Canadian nationalism shortly after the creation of the Canadian Confederation and then again during the second wave of nationalism, which also included Frye's work between the nineteen-sixties and eighties.

American or Canadian? Between Similarity and Difference in Text and Context, the Second Take

Beside the nationalistically oriented Laurentian school of history, a school of political-economic history asserted itself in the nineteen-thirties in

6   The imaginary of nature in the construction of the national myth—in works of the so—called thematic criticism and Northrop Frye—asserted itself to a larger extent in E.J. Pratt's poetry (1881—1964) (prim. Potocco 2013), but Confederation Poets and their contemporaries were, with their orientation towards nature, the second cornerstone of the emerging Canadianhood.

Canada whose leading figure was Harold Innis (1894–1952) (Brandt 1997, 138–39).[7] Innis' research in national economic history, and foremostly his promotion of a liberal tradition that would depart from the models offered by both Britain and the United States of America (Watson 2006; Drache 1969) acted as the conceptual basis for the development of the Canadian system of cultural institutions, into which Innis occasionally actively interfered.

In 1951, *The Royal Commission on National Development in the Arts, Letters and Sciences* published the so-called Massey Report, which established guidelines for setting up the Canadian cultural market. The key guideline of the report appealed for the establishment of a governmental advisory body and platform for financing cultural and humanities projects, *Canada Council*. In the appeal put forth by the Massey Report, we can see a reflection of Innis' endeavours: from 1940 to 1944, Innis set up two associations in support of Canadian science which strove to form the Massey Commission, and then to establish *Canada Council* (Artibise 2011). At the same time, the ambivalences of the Massey Report, which based the Canadian cultural market on the opposition to the United States of America and only secondarily as a breakaway from the British colonising practices, can be ascribed to Innis' zone of influence, too. During the preparation of the Massey Report, Innis expressed a stronger opposition against the United States, especially against American consumerism as a factor of destabilisation affecting Canadian identity and the concept of culture in general (Ziraldo 1998, 92). This is why it comes as no surprise that he promoted the establishment of *Canada Council*. Christiana Ziraldo, quoting Paul Litto, believes that the creation of the Massey Report took place in the context of the ideas of the intellectual elite, who wished to found a new cultural nationalism on their liberal humanist ideology (Ziraldo 1998, 94). The promoters of the nationalism-related ideology included, beside Innis, from the nineteen-sixties onwards also Frye and novelist and poet Margaret Atwood (1939–).

Atwood, who became the central figure of Canadian nationalism with her later thematic criticism (Potocco 2013), belonged in the nineteen-sixties to a group of writers who were based in Toronto and whose central common denominator was precisely emphasising Canadian identity. The conceptual foundation of the second wave of literary nationalism was Innis' journalism and after 1965 Frye's topocentric concept of the Canadian imaginary, while the third impetus was George Grant's (1918–

7   Laurentian School formed as a counterweight to the then rising nationalism in Quebecois historiograpy.

1988) influential *Lament for a Nation: The Defeat of Canadian National-ism*, an essay also published in 1965. Like Innis, Grant opposed American capitalism, and this is what cemented an anti-American sentiment in the group's conceptual horizon–trying to tread the middle ground between Great Britain and the USA (Sanfilippo 1994, 21–25; Potocco 2013).

The extent to which Toronto-based writers were affected by their re-lationship towards the United States of America is indicated by the scan-dal associated with the national Governor General's literary award of 1969. Toronto, which launched Atwood, John Robert Colombo (1936), Joe Rosenblatt (1933), Gwendolyn MacEwen (1941–1987) and also Mil-ton Acorn (1923–1986), was one of the two centres of Canadian poetry production. In Vancouver, the *TISH* magazine, founded by George Bow-ering (1935), Fred Wah (1939) and Frank Davey (1940), did not attempt to conceal contacts with contemporary American currents (see e.g. New 1991, 223), namely the Beat poets, the Black Mountain school as well as Olson's theory of projective verse. Vancouver, visited by Allen Ginsberg, Robert Creeley, Robert Duncan and Charles Olson, was considered the symbol of the American influence as well as of academic and apolitical poetry (Gudgeon 1996). This is why the jury's decision in 1969 to award Bowering as the major Vancouver poet,[8] instead of choosing Acorn's book *I've Tasted My Blood*, triggered a strong response in Eastern Canada. The critics of the award aimed their critique at the American influence on Ca-nadian poetry, especially at the member of the jury who was American by birth and a Columbia University professor, Warren Tallman. "Now we hav Americans heading our English Departments, editing our literary mag-azines [and] anthologisin our young poets," was stated in the Montreal newspaper *Ingluvin* (Gudgeon 1996, 137). In Toronto, Acorn's support-ers—led by Eli Mandel (1922–1992) and Rosenblatt—presented Acorn with the alternative *Canadian Poets Award* (also known as *People's Poet Award*). As Chris Gudgeon claims: the Governor General's Award con-troversy "became an ideal symbol of both the fears and expectations of Canadian nationalists" (139). Those opposing Bowering believed that "Canadian sovereignty over Canadian literary awards is as important as Canadian sovereignty over Arctic waters", and the dispute can thus be seen as the defence of Canadian tradition and the 'Canadian idiom' (qtd. in Lemm 1999, 158).

The duality which was expressed outwardly as conflict has got a more complex side in connection to concrete texts. Acorn's poetics was part-

8   Bowering received the Governor General's Award for two poetry collections, *Rocky Mountain Foot* and *Gangs of Cosmos*.

ly shaped under the influence of the poetry of his friend and mentor Al Purdy (1918–2000). The 'folk verse', as William H. New calls the colloquial language and rhythm that he notices in Acorn as well as some other poets of the period, originates in Purdy's poetry (New 1991, 238–39). Purdy's colloquial, kinetic, free verse can be linked with the reception of Charles Bukowski's poetry, despite the fact that—or precisely due to this—Purdy made some negative remarks about the Black Mountain school and even more generally the poets included in the famous anthology by Donald Allen, *The New American Poetry* (MacKendrick 1991, 138–39). Furthermore, Acorn's free verse can also be associated directly with Olson, Ginsberg and Lawrence Ferlinghetti (Jewinski 1991, 53), which can be seen most clearly in the poem *I Shout Love* from the shortlisted collection *I've Tasted My Blood*. The poem, which is often compared to Ginsberg's *Howl*, was written in its first variant in 1958, but Acorn significantly expanded the text in 1963, two years after the publication of Ginsberg's *Howl*, as Gudgeon claims, "in a conscious effort to recreate the effect and impact' of Ginsberg's poem (Gudgeon 1996, 103). This impression is not superficial, since *I Shout Love* displays a number of characteristics in common with Ginsberg's poetics: above all, the intention to be a 'sonic', performed, spoken poem, written for a poetry happening,[9] which is related to the exploration of (the length of) verse and the breath (Jewinski 1991, 53), the use of catalogue as a verse or stanza unit, as well as anaphora, or—in Acorn's case— parallelisms as the additional foundation of the poem's rhythm.

It thus comes as no surprise that Robert Weaver, one of the Governor General's Award jury members, noted that there were many more similarities between Acorn's and Bowering's poetry as the Toronto-based poets were willing to acknowledge. "Although many writers would attempt to deny the influence of American writers during this period, the fact is that writers like [W.C. Williams, Ginsberg and Olson] inspired new directions", notes Ed Jewinski. This is especially true of Acorn, also due to the fact that there is a recognisable Canadian nationalism present in all of his poetry (Jewinski 1991, 29).

If the nationalist poets who opposed Bowering due to 'americanisation' had recognised Acorn's dialogue with Ginsberg and Olson, they would have also recognised that their symbolic figure of the national poet is related to a matrix or idiom coming from the United States. Their situation was similar to that of Confederation Poets. In such recognition, there would have been seeds of acknowledging that the continental bi-

9   Acorn recited the second version of the poem in public, in one of Toronto's parks.

nome in the form of the American/Canadian relationship was an inherent part of Canadian identification.

But this was something unimaginable at the time when the country was celebrating the Confederation's centennial.

Translated by Barbara Jurša

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Searching for the Image of the Village in the Swirl of 20ᵗʰ Century Ideological Conflicts

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The village and rural motifs have been the core of literary texts since a long time, and each period has interpreted them in its way. This is especially true of the 19ᵗʰ century when authors searched in the village motifs for traces of the ideal character of the nation or a form of the Biedermeier pastoral idyll, at times even assuming features of the sacral space (Macura 2002, 50), and later for the disturbing echoes of the new age with signs of the disintegration of the traditional value system of family life and wider community (Karel Václav Rais (1859–1926), Tereza Nováková (1853–1907), Alois (1861–1925) and Vilém Mrštík (1863–1912), Ivan Cankar (1876–1918)). Later still, in the Czech literature one can find attempts to restore this system, for example, those related to Catholic faith (Jindřich Šimon Baar (1869–1925), Jan Čep (1902–1974), Josef Knap (1900–1973), František Křelina (1903–1976)) or land (ruralists). It is also possible to find attempts to view the countryside as an exotic landscape (Ivan Olbracht (1882–1952) and his depiction of Carpathian Ruthenia in *Golet v údolí* (1937) or *Nikola Šuhaj Loupežník* (1933)) even with its archaic and patriarchal nature. It is important to note that all all of the above texts were mostly ties or clashes between an individual or community and cultural or national ideas.

However, after the political upheavals in 1948, the rural theme served to express ideological political schematization in the issues of rural socialization, the formation of agricultural cooperatives following the pattern of Soviet kolkhozes, etc., both in literature (*Dvě jara* (1952) and then the extensive two-part novel *Venkovan* (1955, 1958, revised in 1974) by Bohumil Říha (1907–1987) and others), and in the other forms of art

(films such as *Cesta ke štěstí* in 1951, decorating of public spaces, e.g. railway halls, etc.). The image of the countryside became part of the political propaganda which, in black and white, gives the reader (viewer) a pattern of both positive and negative characters, which must be properly morally supported or rejected. The perversity of these concepts and methods could only be captured later, for example, in the novels such as *Velká samota* (1960) by Ivan Kříž (1922), *Smuteční slavnost* (1967) by Eva Kantůrková (1930) or *Zelené obzory* (1960) by Jan Procházka (1929–1971), or by the famous film by Vojtěch Jasný (1925–2019), *Všichni dobří rodáci* (1968). Possible exceptions to these concepts were usually searched for in historical topics (Vladimír Körner (1939)), lyricizing experiments such as *Zlatá reneta* by František Hrubín (1910–1971). The world of the contemporary village was also the subject of significant ironizing tendencies (*Sekyra* (1966) by Ludvík Vaculík (1926–2015) or *Žert* (1967) by Milan Kundera (1929)).

Many of these positions are similar to those in the Slovenian literature. A significant change can be perceived primarily in the works by Ivan Cankar, who deprives the Slovenian countryside of previous folkloristic idealization (Janko Kersnik (1852–1897), Janez Trdina (1830–1902)) or nostalgic idyllic tendencies (Ivan Tavčar's (1851–1923) *Cvetje v jeseni* (1917)), while confronting his protagonists with the harsh social stratification of society, often also ironically targeting at its backwardness, ignorance and superstition (among others, in the novels such as *Na klancu* (1902), *Martin Kačur* (1906), see Kos 1985, 2). Features bordering on the ancient classical struggle for survival in confrontation with adversity and other circumstances characterize the short story collection *Samorastniki* (1940) by Prežihov Voranc (1893–1950)). A number of his contemporaries also devoted themselves to the rural environment, eg. Miško Kranjec (1908–1983), Ivan Potrč (1913–1993), Anton Ingolič (1907–1992), Ciril Kosmač (1910–1980) and others, so Viktor Kudělka later describes the rural theme as one of the traditional ones in the Slovenian environment (Kudělka 1973, 229).

During the 1960s and 1970s, this subject of Slovenian literature gradually disappears, so Miran Hladnik comments:

> During 1970s the presence of well known names in the genre of rural literature ended. The first-class authors said goodbye to the countryside stories. By avoiding the countryside themes the exclusive elite literary programme (without realising it) made the best service to the oficial politics concerning the peasants ... Can the contemporary writer imagine the fictious hero

of a peasant, who will not be only a medium of ecological, social and similar polemics (Hladnik 1991)?[1]

With the process of wiping the differences between life in the city and that in the village, or more precisely, in the process of bringing the village's lifestyle closer to the style and standard of life in the city, and with the simultaneous loss of rural distinctiveness, it becomes irrelevant whether the story is set in one place or another. After all, rural prose does not appear in any of the common typologies of contemporary Slovenian prose: whether those by Blanka Bošnjak (Bošnjak 2005), Alojzija Zupan Sosič (Zupan Sosič 2006) or later by Aljoša Harlamov (Harlamov 2012). This is related to the fact that a number of studies on the depiction of the city in Slovenian literature have been written over the last ten to fifteen years, culminating in the Obdobja Symposium focused on the subject of the city, while analogous studies on rural topics are rather rare in contemporary literature.

Writing About the Village After the Political Changes in 1989–1991

Nevertheless, it can be said that the rural environment can still be found in a significant part of contemporary Slovenian prose, and with a considerable success between the readers. At the same time, it is evident that the authors are trying to refrain from the traditional ways of capturing the countryside and to make it somewhat special by the use of literary tehnique. For example, in the novels by Marjan Tomšič (1939), Vlado Žabot (1958) and Feri Lainšček (1959), the image of the countryside is strongly lyricized and poeticized (*Namesto koga roža cveti*, *Oštrigéca* etc.) while bearing traces of "exoticism of marginalised Slovenian regions" (Zupan Sosič 2006, 24).

Aljoša Harlamov also notes the same when he writes about the books by Sebastijan Pregelj (1970):

Pregelj reinstitutes and recreates the traditionality, conservativeness of an old village society with the elements of fantastic literature; prophet's

1   "V sedemdesetih letih je z znanimi imeni (avtorjev) v kmečkem žanru tako rekoč konec … Prvorazredni ustvarjalci dali slovo kmečki povesti, nastalo praznino pa so po sili razmer zapolnili amaterski pisatelji. Z izogibanjem kmečki tematiki je ekskluzivistični elitni literarni program nevede naredil uradni politiki do kmetov najlepšo uslugo … Si je sodobnemu avtorju mogoče predstavljati literarno osebo kmeta, ki ne bo nujno le medij ekoloških, socialnonazorskih in podobnih polemik" (Hladnik 1991).

dreams, secret or evil omens, miracles, Christian symbols etc." (Harlamov 2012).[2]

On the other hand, it should be pointed out that there is a motive for searching for roots, a past that gives sense to the present, among others in Tomšič's story of the Alexandrian Women in the novel *Grenko morje* (2003) and the collection of short stories *Južni veter* (2006), which update this historical theme in the area of the Slovene Littoral, or the history of the Romani ethnic group in Lainšček's novel *Nedotakljivi* (2007), with his journey through time and the Balkans to present-day eastern Slovenia.

In the period following the political changes in 1991, Slovenian authors sought to capture mainly urban themes (Andrej Skubic (1967), Goran Vojnović (1980), Borut Golob (1973), Jani Virk (1962), Drago Jančar (1948) and others) while the countryside was attributed some rather Cankarian features of a neglected and backward village of 'blatni dol', often linking backwardness with the role of the Catholic Church (e.g. Feri Lainšček: *Ki jo je megla prinesla* (1993), Borut Golob: *Smreka bukev lipa križ* (2009)[3]). Lack of education and simplicity are also probably the roots of prejudices against the Romani (Lainšček's *Namesto koga roža cveti*):

> Filip Petarni was at first iritated and above all confused. He couldn't figure out why she became involved with a boy from the Romani settlement, and even more so, with a younger one. At the beginning he even asked her not to be seen in the boy's company, at least close to her home where everybody could see her (Lainšček 1991, 140–141).[4]

A less unambiguous evaluation of the role of the Church in contemporary society, and especially of the rural one, can be found in the novel *Kristalni čas* (1990) by Lojze Kovačič (1928–2004):

> So we spoke only about the life in the countryside and about the things that the peasant can obtain with his work, healthy logic, and common human

2 "[Pregelj] tradicionalnost, konzervativnost starosvetne vaške skupnosti obnavlja in prenavlja s fantastičnimi elementi; preroškimi sanjami, skrivnostnimi ali zlosutnimi znamenji, čudeži, krščansko simboliko itd."

3 "*Smreka bukev lipo križ* (2009) Boruta Goloba … v slovensko literaturs prinaša osvežujočo satiro podeželskega, vaškega in na drugi strani malomeščanskega okolja" (Harlamov 2012).

4 "Filip Petarni je bil sprva le nejevoljen in pa predvsem zmeden. Ni in ni mu šlo v glavo, čemu se je zapletla s fantom iz ciganskega naselja, ki je bil za povrh še mlajši. Najprej jo je celo le prosil, naj se vsaj doma, tudi vsem na očeh, ne druži z njim."

sense. I have a feeling he was with his character and life's example better exemplar for the neighbourhood than with his whole devotion and pastorality" (Kovačič 1990, 94).

And a bit further:

At his place there sat a young student of theology, who had been lately in the parish for praxis ... Young and ignated like a spring. Only around his lips there had always been floating this derision en masse, how it is said, nothing disposed to forgiving ... He was not clever, but through and through indoctrinated (Kovačič 1990, 95–96).[5]

A few pages earlier Kovačič describes the narrator's own experience of the church:

So for the first time in twenty years I approached to the church and from curiosity I read the first message on the door and first journals, they were selling at the table by the contribution box for the offerings near the overflooded stoup... and I almost couldn't believe myself: in front of my eyes there popped out the same words like 20, 30, 50 years ago, the same expressions that made me feel like sick already back then... the same rhythm of the invocations, the same limitation on dogma from before... as if the church in this dirty flood, which was spreading with suffering and humiliation around and around, has not found the new shine, new spiritual discovery, new human quality, it was solving so to speak an old dialectic riddle „gain from loss"... it didn't introduce the second language of communicating with people, new, fluent pastoral speach... Nothing. No renewed, vigorous view of the rules of cosmic order, the incidents of time, no Jesus's attack on wrath, hatred, envy, intolerance (Kovačič 1990, 91).[6]

5   "Govorila sva zato samo o življenju na kmetih, in tisto, kar lahko doseže kmet ob svojem delu z zdravo logiko in običajnim ljudskim razglabljanjem. On je bil se mi zdi s svojim značajem in življenjskim primerom boljši zgled soseski kot z vso pobožnostjo in pastoralo" ... "Pri njem je sedel mlad diplomiranec teologije, ki je bil od nedavna na praksi župnišču ... Mlad in zagnan kot prožina. Le okoli ust mu je plaval ves čas tisti posmeh en masse, kot se reče, nič naklonjenega odpuščanju ... Ni bil bister, ampak skoz in skoz indoktriniran."

6   "In tako sem se po dvajsetih letih prvikrat približal cerkvi in iz radovednosti prebral prvo oznanilo na njenih vratih in prve časopise, ki so jih prodajali na mizici ob puščicah za milodare zraven preplavljenih kropilnikov... in skoraj da nisem verjel samemu sebi: v oči so mi skočile iste besede kot před 20, 30, 50 leti, isti izrazi, pri katerih se mi je obračalo v želodcu že takrat... isti ritem invokacije, isto zamejenost na dogmo od nekdaj ... kakor da cerkev zasvinjani povodnji, ki jo je s trpljenjem in poniževanjem preplavljala okrog in okrog, ni našla iz svoje šibkosti moči in proniclji-

The novel *Pastorek* (2008), written by poet and novelist Jurij Hudolin (1973) which uses the perspective of the teenage son Benjamin, portrays his violent stepfather Loris, a country nouveau riche who literally terrorizes him and his mother Ingrid. The plot is set in Croatian Istria in the village of Panule, where Loris owns the restaurant in which Ingrid and Benjamin also live. The novel depicts the early 'wild' capitalism emerging in Yugoslavia during the late 1980s. In his review, Harlamov (2008) perceives it as a novel with a significant social overlap due to the critical depiction of pathological relationships among members of the newly emerging social group of entrepreneurs-upstarts, nouveaux riches. On the other hand, it is questionable to what extent Loris's individual character can be generalized. Harlamov also draws attention to a trait that, I believe, makes the novel somewhat schematic, namely, the fact that the other characters surrounding Loris, including the narrator himself, are very passive, and sometimes even look up to him with admiration and reverence for what he can procure and arrange with his semi-mafia ways. Similarly, the young man Benjamin also looks for excuses for Loris's infidelity when he becomes an unwanted witness to it.

Hudolin's Istrian village is described as a whole, a monolithic conglomerate without any features of individualization. It is narrow-mindedly, superficially moralistic, with a tendency to defend its internal principles against intrusions from the outside. In the following passage, for example, we can observe the attitude to divorce:

> No one was looking down their nose at anyone because of that in Ljubljana, but it was a crime in this village if the two who got married should break up one day. And he could feel those reproachful glances, even though he was not his mistake whatsoever. And Ingrid dunked him deep into this shit, this village he could claim to be both orthodox Islamic and Christian in the most narrow-minded sense, which it actually was (from the author's translation manuscript, AK).

At the same time, as Matej Bogataj notices in his review, the division of characters in the story is significantly black and white. On the one hand, there are the mother and the son as passive victims, on the other hand, there is the environment that Bogataj describes as a short history of vil-

> vosti, da bi prišla do novega sijaja, novega duhovnega odkritja, novega kakovostnega človeka, takorekoč rešila stari dialektični rebus 'dobiček iz izgube'… ne vpeljala drugega občevalnega jezika za ljudi, nove, tekoče pastoralne govorice… Nič. Noben prenovljen, vitalni pogled na zakone kozmičnega reda, na pripetljaje časa, noben Jezusov protiudar besu, sovraštvu, zavisti, nepotrpežljivosti."

lany, deceits, false contracts, financial currents etc. (Bogataj 2009). Even more so, the environment is full of primitivism, ignorance, mental aridity and emptiness. Reviewer Lucija Stepančič describes it as a topos of the village which equates to a madhouse of caricatures, a decadent corner, full with idiots, where the axis of relevance is the village pub (Stepančič 2008, 1462).

A similarly disdainful attitude, even more briefly expressed, can be found in the novels by Goran Vojnović *Čefurji, raus!* (2008) and *Jugoslavija moja dežela* (2013), in both it is stated with the same simile: "And you know where Slovenske Konjice are? You know where this fucking village is?", and:

> What will I do with all those Slovenian villagers? What will I do there? Should I attend the village firemen's balls, or what? I'm the čefur from Fužine. I don't give a damn about those Slovenske Konjice! (Vojnović 2008, 140).[7]

In *Jugoslavija moja dežela* we read:

> And I do not ask you, you know ... just for nothing, where you are going. I guess, I don't give a shit, go, where you wanna go ... even to Slovenske Konjice, but the difference is in the fact, if you'll go upthere, or downthere (Vojnović 2012, 21).[8]

The village of Slovenske Konjice (5,000 inhabitants) is used as a byword for secludedness, marginality expressed by the characters always with an expression of extreme contempt and with a significantly disdainful taunt.

A remarkable portrait of the village can be found in the novel *Angel pozabe* (2011) by Maja Haderlap (1967), where, inter alia, the very transformation of the old archaic patriarchal countryside, in closely tied to the land and farming on it, present in the memories of the narrator's grandmother, which is terribly affected by the war that pits neighbours against one another:

> Many survivors will leave their farms and estates. They will no longer want to look after their homesteads because they are marked by the war. They will starve the memories of war with their silence. They will be afraid of being identified as wounded losers, for what could further multiply their

7 "A ti veš, kje so Slovenske Konjice? A veš, kje je to jebeno selo?" ... "Kaj bom jst tm s tistimi seljaci slovenskimi? Kaj naj tm delam? A nej hodm na gasilske veselice al kaj? Jst sm čefur s Fužin. Ne jebem jst teh Slovenskih Konjic!"

8 "Ne vprašam te jaz, veš ... zastonj, kam greš. Mislim, boli me kurac, ti pejt, kam hočeš ... pa makar i u Slovenske Konjice, ampak je razlika v tem, a boš šel gor ali dol."

shame. They will be afraid that in a few years they will be taking to a for-
mer SA sturmbannführer, ultra-right politicians, psychiatrists and official
experts, about how persecuted they were by the Nazis. They will not want
to be subjected to delayed searches of victims by their former adversaries.
As time goes by, the sense of it all will be lost (Haderlapová, 2016, 173).

Generally speaking, *Angel pozabe* is one of the most prominent pros-
es to thematize the countryside that have recently been written by a Slo-
venian author, although it is worth noting that it was written in German
and first published in Austria.

The Czech Situation

Immediately after 1989, Czech authors of the younger and middle gen-
erations in the post-communist morass were mainly looking for topics
that were morally redeeming, value-oriented, or attempting to link their
work to the fragments of historical memory of the Czech nation. Theirs
were mainly novels that were searching for one's conscience, they were of-
ten memorial, and following Jan Lopatka's critical concept of authentic-
ity they were reflecting political and social topics (*Události* (1991) by Jan
Hanč (1916–1963), *Teorie spolehlivosti* (1994) by Ivan Diviš (1924–1999),
Paměti (1992, 1994) by Václav Černý (1905–1987), *Celý život* (1992, 1993)
by Jan Zábrana (1931–1984), etc.).

Besides these works, there existed a tendency towards a development
of colourful imaginative postmodern prose (e.g., Jiří Kratochvil (1940),
Daniela Hodrová (1946), Michal Ajvaz (1949), Jáchym Topol (1962)), of-
ten using narrative techniques of popular literature (Miloš Urban (1967),
Jan Jandourek (1965), Petr Motýl (1964)). Very soon, however, there was
an effort to emerge from postmodern relativity, absence of values and
hopelessness, by returning to the sources, to personal and family roots in
an attempt to 'belong somewhere', to seek out one's 'places with memo-
ry' (Mindeková 2009, 127). The boundary between both tendencies is *Pa-
triarchátu dávno zašlá sláva* (2003), a novel by Pavel Brycz (1968), which
is on the one hand a family saga, on the other many compositional ele-
ments and especially a play-on-words with meanings (the inclusiveness of
the names of characters and places) can be understoot as postmodern at-
tributes.

Humorous tones are used to describe the encounter of an impracti-
cal urban person with the reality of the countryside in *Venkovské povídky*
(1996) by musician and prose writer Václav Koubek (1955). The novel is a
mosaic made up of fragments of scenes from a village in which the story-

teller's family comes from a city, uninformed and unaffected by local customs (including the necessity to order bread in the store in advance to be able to actually buy it). We have the opportunity to see the picture of the modern village, but supplemented with Hrabal-like humorous situations and vivid language.

On the whole rural topics were in decline; one of the exceptions finding a wider response due to its television adaptation (in *1997* and *2001*) is *Zdivočelá země* (1991, 1997), a novel sequence by Jiří Stránský (1931–2019), which takes place in the border countryside during the occupation, World War II, post-war and post-coup years. However, Stránský's work is criticized for its reversed black-and-white perception and simple narrative procedures that shift the book rather to popular fiction.

It is only after 2000 that we can find more sophisticated images of the countryside in Czech literature, but again, mostly historicizing (e.g. Kateřina Tučková's (1980) *Žítkovské bohyně* (2012), or *Jozova Hanule* (2001) by Květa Legátová (1919–2012)). The subject also becomes pertinent in the cinema, most evidently with the movie adaptations of the novels (*Želary* (2003) directed by Ondřej Trojan, which is a version of *Jozova Hanule*, or *Habermannův mlýn* (2010) directed by Juraj Herz, where the countryside has a disturbing Körner-inspired atmosphere, based on Josef Urban's (1965) eponymous novel). But the cinema also produces original scripts on the theme, such as the feature film *Divoké včely* (2001, directed by Bohdan Sláma) or *Díra u Hanušovic* (2014, directed by Miroslav Krobot).

One of the prominent authors of contemporary Czech prose is Jiří Hájíček (1967), who in his three-volume novel (*Selský baroko* (2005), *Rybí krev* (2012), and *Dešťová hůl* (2016)) conceived several variants of views of a South Bohemian village. The narrator of the novel *Selský baroko* is Pavel, a genealogist who makes his living by building family trees, which takes him back to the 1950s, where the image of post-war forced collectivization and the destruction of rural farmers gradually emerges. In the novel *Rybí krev*, the main character, Hana, returns to her native village, now half-flooded by a dam that was built in the 1980s to make way for a nuclear power plant. She reunites with her father, brother and friends, searching for the meaning of friendship, cohesion, forgiveness. In *Dešťová hůl*, the plot revolves around fraudulent machinations with the village lands, which gradually come to light, exposing ancient bonds and wrongs.

Characters in the novel come from outside, from the city or even from abroad, where employment, desire to travel and get to know the world took them. As Radim Kopáč aptly writes in his review of the *Dešťová hůl*:

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"The city acts in the story as a representative of the present while the village as that of the past" (Kopáč 2016). The city arouses persistent unease, sense of being unfulfilled, unanchored, sometimes articulated explicitly, sometimes rather covertly. We see it once as a travel obsession, once as the protagonist's chronic insomnia with disconsolate night hours, staring into the empty white ceiling. Markéta Kittlová uses a different phrasing to characterize the conception of the village: "In *Dešťová hůl*, the world of the village is largely shifting into Zbyněk's memories, thereby becoming a lost paradise" (Kittlová 2016).

The protagonists of these novels come back some time later and are confronted with their own past, the past of their loved ones and their ancestors. This "web of human lineages is described as an inseparable part of personality, subconscious affiliation to the birthplace, from which it is impossible to free oneself, just as it is impossible to forget old wrongs" (Mindeková 2009, 130).

In her review of Hájíček's collection of short stories *Vzpomínky na jednu vesnickou tancovačku*, Kubíčková quite accurately characterizes the most common ways used to depict the village in contemporary prose:

> It is hard to find someone in Czech prose who can describe our countryside in such a realistic way without ridiculing it or exaggeratedly romanticizing it (Kubíčková 2014).

As we have seen earlier, the same goes for the Slovenian environment.

Completely disturbed relationships not only among the people within the village, but also within the families themselves, are depicted in the novel *Dědina* (2018) by Petra Dvořáková (1977). The motivational background of human acts is formed by sexuality, alcoholism, even pathological greed or chronic envy:

> The worst part is that people are envious. They're awfully envious and remember everything! Everybody still keeps giving me a hard time 'cause a farmer's daughter bought herself a shop. And they say she rakes it in on people again, as she once did. But they've already forgotten that my folks had to surrender everything to the cooperative (Dvořáková 2018, 78).

All of this completely disrupts even the most honest attempts to reconcile the family or correct relationships within the community. Here, the village appears to be a desperately emptied, valueless and non-spiritual space that cannot be cemented and uplifted, not even by attempts to revive a sort of ancient peasant myth with an attachment to the land made by the protagonists who have been given back the once-cooperative land.

The protagonists are now attempting to manage again with historical awareness of the sensitive relationship to the land and its cultivation, yet confronted with large-scale cooperatives, whose materialistic management and attitude to land and countryside has not changed a bit in the last thirty years, this attitude must be necessarily defeated, coming across as idealistic and dreamy:

At that time I had to stop being too brash, especially in the cooperative. I just watched all that havoc, keeping my trap shut. I drove a tractor on our fields as if it was somebody else's property, pouring that poisonous shit on it just to make the kolkhoz work. Many times, I remembered the pain my parents felt when they had to watch the fields, the spinneys, the land being plundered. Mom kept repeating: 'Above all, people have changed with all that. Remember, if you plough a spinney or a balk, you tear the line between the people. You destroy the old ways that have always held things together here.' And she was right. People have never acted according to their convictions, anyway. They have always envied one another here. And as the field boundaries disappeared, so did the scruples. You could see that all around you. Even after the revolution, nothing changed here. When the fields were being restituted, it was as if the farmers were stealing the purest gold from the people in the village. It was as if no one understood that the land being returned was exhausted, no one saw the amount of work to be done before it could recover a little bit. All of them suddenly forgot the harm done by their cooperatives. As if a few handfuls of money were going to make up for those broken relationships. The destroyed families. Nobody thinks about it. They're all consumed by envy here (Dvořáková, 2018, 84).

And this is not the only aspect to show that the difference between the Czech socialist village of the 1980s and the village of the second decade of the 21st century is basically not apparent; however, some nostalgia is covering the memories of bygone years:

All over again there, but the pig is smaller. Certainly not two hundred and fifty kilos. That was just Vavirek's eyes bigger than his stomach. Hardly two quintals. I've boozed enough and the Vavireks keep pouring drinks too. They are thinking of what the pig-slaughtering used to be before. 'Even with your father, it was still something. I won't forget that as long as I live,' Grandpa Vavirek pats me on the shoulders and Bohóš nods. 'They kept a pig in almost every house, the whole family got together, it was an event. Also, there used to be more snow, that was also part of the mood,' the old man recalls and takes a slug straight from the bottle. I know it almost by heart, he repeats that year after year, but I always let him talk. After all, I

remember it too. The village used to look almost like those postcards by Lada. (Dvořáková 2018, 42)

Dvořáková has the courage to confront the negative features of village people, but cannot ignore some of the general features that have changed the countryside considerably, including the much less frequent opportunities to meet and spend time in the collective, pig-slaughtering, country dance parties, celebrating holidays, Sunday church visits, all that is not taken for granted anymore, it is much less common, people are becoming withdrawn more and more, living in their home microworld, just like the people in the city against whom they define themselves.

Conclusion

In contemporary Slovenian prose, the countryside is a rather marginal motive, even from the explorational point of view. The countryside is perceived as a backward environment full of prejudices, not corresponding to the modern age of the 21st century whatsoever, let alone to be seen an alternative in economic, spiritual or lifestyle terms. Quite the opposite, leaving the countryside is usually a release for the protagonist and the beginning of a new, brighter future.

In the case of contemporary Czech prose, it can be said that it once again returns to the social level of rural prose while reflecting the local political past, inscribed in the fates of its protagonists or the history of families, generations, affected as their roots are being cut. The past with its black-and-white ideological rape of the village image is markedly reflected here. This prose then picks up the threads of 'deconstructing' interpretations of these patterns in the 1960s. Personal and family memories play an important part here as they can stand up to the mist of oblivion and period ideological distortions that overlay the sharp features of the landscape, the distinct boundaries between good and evil.

Ideological tools and motivations are changing over time. In the 1950s, it was the expropriation of the land of private farmers and the destruction of the entire social stratum of rural farmers. Later, for example, the construction of a nuclear power plant and a dam, built in the abstract, so-called public interest, regardless of the impact on the landscape, villages and their inhabitants, or, for example, the opening of coal mines and the eviction of people from areas affected by mining.

Similarly, today, images of the countryside feature various instruments of manipulation, lies, distortions of reality with the intention of gaining financial or other benefits. At the same time, however, this is not

primarily a political literature, since the story is always divided into multiple time levels that are interrelated, and it is these connections that create the roots of people, family, and determine their balance.

Here, ideologies justify the ruthlessness of power, the egoistic goals of its representatives, whether they are in a political party, government or just a municipal council. Literary works attempt to highlight these instruments and mechanisms that can manipulate public opinion, but also human pain and despair.

Translated by Radek Vantuch

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Society as Seen in Slovenian Drama during Socialist Times and Today

Gašper Troha

Slovenian drama of the second half of the 20th century was for the most part critical of its contemporary political system. It thematised its paradoxes in various ways and searched for possible solutions. In Lado Kralj's opinion, during this period the ruling genre was drama of the absurd, which, with its grotesque irony, dissected the social ideologies, the socialist utopia that was increasingly falling apart or changing into its opposite, a dystopia. The "zoolinguistic miracle play in three sets and two intervals" entitled *Military Secret*, written in 1983 by Dušan Jovanović, is an example of such a critique. Dr Medak, the chief of the zoological linguistics institute, who is "an old-school biologist. Aficionado of the mystery of the laws of nature. A fantast. Intrigued by the impossible" (Jovanović 1991, 56), speaks in it about his utopia—a project that should result in the human understanding of animal speech:

> Medak: We can't get ahead of ourselves! We can't go in head first! Attempting to directly translate animal speech into ours—this project has always stuttered, is stuttering and will always stutter!
> Strel (stoically): It will stutter for a good while, and then no more.
> Medak: For such a giant leap—in this country, the way it is—there are no conditions! No conditions outside of us, no conditions inside us: we're simply not ready! /.../
> Strel: /.../ You're only a small step away, a tiny shift from the abstract and intuitive—into the concrete, life-like and useful.
> Medak: That's what I've thought for the past twenty years. Now I believe I've exhausted all the possibilities (Jovanović 1991, 59).

In 2013, Simona Semenič wrote the play *nineteeneightyone*. Although set in the early nineteen-eighties, it jumps constantly between the years 1981 and 2013. Here, the socialist reality is presented through the eyes of three potential main characters (seven-year-old Luka; fourteen-year-old Erik; and twenty-one-year-old Boris). They're all a part of the socialist utopia. Luka is becoming a Pioneer:

> nada
> yes, just a few more hours and we'll become pioneers
> i can't wait!

> luka
> me neither!
> you know, mom took me to the house of culture do you know how beau-
> tiful it is there
> such a beautiful stage
> well, on that stage we'll recite the pioneers' oath and then we'll sing we're
> all young
> pioneers
> mom explained everything
> do you know everything by heart? the oath and the anthem? (Semenič
> 2017, 45, 46).

Erik and his friend Srečko are bursting with hormones, while Boris is home on leave from his military service and can't wait to get a job, which is still everyone's right.

> boris
> i can't wait to start working

> zmago
> yes, but you've always wanted to drive a truck and now you will
> i've never wanted to work at the motherfucking lipa
> you've arranged it all at primorje?

> boris
> yes, yes, as soon as i get out i start working
> can't wait, really (Semenič 2017, 68).

Moreover, this image of the society is constantly contrasted to the year 2013, that is, to the immediate neoliberal present, in which Luka becomes a confused member of the Slovenian Army about to leave on a peace mission to Afghanistan, Erik's friend Srečko commits suicide because he's a homosexual, and Boris is let go from his job. Socialism, which in Jovanović appears as a negative utopia, becomes in Semenič, at least at first glance, a nostalgic image of an organised and just society.

What is, then, the image of the society in both plays? Is it really diametrically different? Does it depend on the position of the author and literature in society? What is the position that Dušan Jovanović and Simona Semenič take towards society? These are the questions through which we will try to highlight the relationship between drama and the society in Slovenia of the 1980s and today.

The Society in Literature; First Example—Dušan Jovanović: *Military Secret*

"Jovanović's sarcastic idea that the orderly façade of the socialist society hides madness, chaos and the premonition of disaster very close to the surface is realised in a series of plays" (Kralj 2006, 136), among which Lado Kralj also lists *Military Secret*. Jovanović wrote it in 1983, and it was staged that same year in the Slovene Repertory Theatre in Trieste, directed by Slobodan Unkovski. It is a drama of the absurd which describes a zoolinguistics research institute, an institution in which Dr Medak and his colleagues are trying to translate animal languages into human speech. In this way, we might understand animals and mutually coexist with them. Of course the project has reached a dead end. The institute has become a poor version of a veterinary hospital or a shelter for sick animals. The institute employees have their own private interests. Gestrin wants to deflect to the West and sell his knowledge there for hard currency, Kozlevčar wants to start a business at the institute itself, slaughtering animals for meat. Then Strel, as a kind of counter-intelligence officer and soldier, enters into this mess, takes over the institute administration and introduces a state of emergency. When Medak's initial effort, his original utopian idea, as Dragan Klaić characterises it (cf. Klaić 1990, 130–33), turns into its opposite, a dystopia, Jovanović performs another absurdist somersault: Medak and six-year-old Alice succeed in their efforts. Medak crawls inside Tom (a black village tomcat) and Alice inside Meri (a white angora cat). Even more so, with the help of the animals, in this concrete case, Bogo the brown bear, they kill Strel and Medak closes with the line: "Drop your weapons, the experiment continues!" (Jovanović 1991, 118).

Although on the level of actions, the text shows totally nonsensical situations surrounding the research of animal speech, Jovanović's allusions to the society of that time are absolutely clear. The animals stage the self-management practice with a constant search for consensus that completely blocks any kind of action; they vote for the king of animals, in which only a single candidate remains—the old king the lion, who is also elected in the end, thus reflecting the party personnel politics. An interesting scene occurs with Kozlevčar the veterinarian and Francl the cleaner at the beginning of the third set, where Kozlevčar gives a precise analysis of self-management economy or 'consensual economy', while Francl, using common sense, is building their future business of selling animal flesh. The seemingly senseless dialogue is in fact a very clear critique of the consensual economy.

> Kozlevčar: The scant choice of meat in butcher shops shows that something is wrong in the stable-to-table chain.
> Francl: Sausage, salami, smoked meat, you can get those; but very little fresh.
> Kozlevčar: In the opinion of many, the most important thing now is for the federal executive council to approve the recommended higher purchase prices of livestock, and based on that, higher retail prices for meat.
> Francl: Politically, this is wrong. What will a simple self-managing peon eat? A citizen, say, of my calibre?
> Kozlevčar: The problem is that the price of corn is increasing, of feed and particularly of energy, which significantly raises the cost of husbandry. For this reason, the double pricing system is in place!
> Francl: The birth rate is dropping, hell, a man with no calories can't even screw: there must be meat, at least twice a week!
> Kozlevčar: The former was set by the federal government and should be valid by all regulation —
> Francl: I don't care, let them sort it out any old way they want to, even if by prescription!
> Kozlevčar:—while the latter was determined by the market, which at the ever growing gap between the offer and demand outright ignored the executive council decree.
> Francl: A steak gives you the power to endure this shit!
> Kozlevčar: Thus we waded into a weird situation where animal husbandry is statistically growing, but the one for the market is, of course, decreasing. The result: full stables and empty abattoirs (Jovanović 1991, 94, 95).

Dušan Jovanović is thus clearly critical of the society, or rather, the socialist system, of that time, although it seems that in the end, he's leaving some hope that the freedom of an individual could bring. When Josip Broz Tito died in the beginning of the 1980s, the question of nationalism reappeared in the former Yugoslavia. The demands for reforms were increasingly louder and in this situation, literature, and particularly drama within it, played the role of a public forum where taboos were being pulled down and alternative solutions tested. It's not surprising that Dušan Jovanović remembers this period as a period of political drama.

"It wasn't easy to get the tickets for the première and the first reprises of *Skopje* and *Brothers Karamazov*. At that time, political drama was the most commercial genre of performing arts. Because there were no democratic institutions and independent media, theatre was a substitute for democracy, a forum where truth was told more or less openly. The influence of the theatre over the audience at that time was immense" (Troha 2009, 147).

The Society in Literature; Second Example—Simona Semenič: *nineteeneightyone*

onethousandninehundredeightyone takes place in a single day thirty-seven years ago. Essentially, this is a social fresco which Simona Semenič builds through three main characters (Luka, Erik and Boris), for whom she cannot decide which one is in fact the main character, but at the same time it is important that all three of them are at the beginning of their lives.

> maybe luka isn't even our main character and is now leaving, if indeed he
> was ever standing here at all
> and maybe now enters erik, who is fourteen
> and maybe he is our main character (Semenič 2013, 2).

As a seven-year-old, Luka is about to be inducted into the Pioneers' organisation and the educational system, Erik, the fourteen-year-old adolescent is standing at the door of sexual maturity, and Boris is home on leave from his military service, entering adulthood. Their stories are set in Ajdovščina and the entire image of this world is, at first glance, utopian.

> if the place of the action were somewhere out there, somewhere out of our
> safe world, that is to say, it weren't here on stage, it would be in gregorčiče-
> va street in ajdovščina

> or, more precisely, on the corner of the gregorčičeva and the 5 may streets,
> right beside the monument to fallen soldiers which bears words glory to
> those fallen for our freedom (Semenič 2013, 3).

Thus in 1981, ethics, morality and belonging to the collective are still operational. Luka's mum deals earnestly with his theft of a *bananko*, a chocolaty sweet he picked up from the floor in the supermarket, shop assistant Jagoda gives Erik a piece of uncut glass that seems like a diamond, Boris has his dream job of a truck driver in the construction company Primorje waiting for him. Moreover, this is the time when the young and the old meet, carefree, in a smoky bar, where some play chess and others debate all sorts of things. True, this society is not entirely without its problems and personal tragedies. The text even begins with a corpse. A corpse of unknown gender, lying on the asphalt as a victim of a car crash, with a pool of blood expanding from underneath it. Luka's father, paramedic Darko, is an alcoholic who prefers spending the afternoon in the bar to going to his son's Pioneer inauguration. Boris's friend Štef will marry Boris's ex-girlfriend Jagoda, who is pregnant.

The first cracks in the social system also begin to show. It is 1981, the year whose spring saw mass protest in Kosovo, where the Albanians demanded their own republic and the recognition of the Albanians as a constitutive nation of the Socialist Federative Republic of Yugoslavia. The federal government declared a state of emergency and sent the army to confront the protesters, and the army used weapons. There were deaths. Boris was also in Kosovo, but the painful experience is only alluded to.

> zmago
> so it was fucked up down in kosovo
>
> boris
> fucked up, yes
>
> zmago
> and how long were you there
>
> boris
> a fortnight
> never mind that, i don't feel like discussing it
> better tell me what's new (Semenič 2013, 35, 36).

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But this is only a part of the narrative, which is constantly interrupted by time leaps into the future, or precisely, into 2013, when the text was written. "and then it all spins spins backward and forward, spins like in a movie ... boris is fifty-three years old and is standing in the centre of a disinfected pharmacy" (Semenič 2013, 11). The heroes of the play are found in their own future, which confuses them completely, and paints a contrast to the spectator/reader of the prosaic neoliberal capitalist of the 21st century to the former socialist society.

Luka becomes a soldier, he has two children and is getting ready to set off to a peace mission to Afghanistan. A former Pioneer, who once spoke of comradeship and unity, is now off to kill in Afghanistan.

> tiny and scrawny nana
> well, son, yes, yes, of course, you're going for the good salary, but you won't
> kill

> lanky creature
> well if he has to, he will, I googled and they kill each other, too
> right, papa

> luka
> if I have to, I will (Semenič 2013, 40).

Erik morphs from a sensitive teenager into a careerist, who has been appointed judge at the European court in Luxembourg; while Boris is left unemployed when Primorje goes bust and will become a seasonal worker in Italy, picking strawberries. As Peter Rak writes in his review of the performance at the SNT Maribor: "*onethousandninehundreteightyone* is a solid text, which treats, from a unique, markedly subjective and largely biased perspective, the perception between the allegedly almost idyllic past and the prosaic present" (Rak 2016, no pag.). This gap, which on the one hand largely idealises socialism, and on the other radicalises the criticism of the present, prompts Nika Leskovšek to reach the following diagnosis: "*onethousandninehundreteightyone* is a play about the capitulation of everything human, the decline of values, justice, ideals of freedom and love for the homeland" (Leskovšek 2017, 452).

We could thus say that Simona Semenič builds a utopia of socialism that Jovanović in *Military Secret* diagnoses and shows as an extreme dystopia. As for the period after 1990, which Jovanović might have seen as the future utopia, when the freedom of speech, mind and agency will be

realised, that is, radical reform or even the fall of socialism, it is shown in Semenič as a negative utopia or dystopia.

Literature in Society

After debating how the society is shown in both plays, let us think about the formal method of conveying this matter. It is our belief that the form is what shows the specific role of drama and theatre in the 20th and 21st centuries.

Military Secret is written as a drama of the absurd, and the form of the drama of the absurd was the way to camouflage socially critical messages, in order to stop the authorities from censoring the text and the performance.

> The authorities were not stupid and knew how to decipher them, but did not want to come across as too undemocratic, so they turned a blind eye and occasionally sent sharp messages, then called someone in for questioning or locked them up, or started a massive witch hunt and thus achieved that rebellion stopped for a while (Kralj 2006, 128).

Yet this also meant the increasing popularity of theatre and theatre authors. A special balance of relationships was thus established in which the authorities tried to control the art, but not come across as authoritarian; drama camouflages social critique with, for example, drama of the absurd, while the audience on one hand enjoys this dissident activity and on the other consolidates its belief that it lives in the most democratic socialist country (cf. Troha 2015, 153–61). As Marko Juvan says in his article about political theatre in socialism and global capitalism,

> when the Yugoslav federation started to disintegrate, Ristić advocated for Yugoslavhood and self-managing socialism, so in his performances—similar to Jovanović, Georgievski or Pipan—he did not criticise the revolution itself but rather its Stalinist deviations (Juvan 2014, 551).

We could add that the creators dissected and ironised the immediate self-managing reality, although it is true that they did not offer concrete social alternatives.

Simona Semenič uses the form of montage and disorientation of the reader/spectator with a number of time and space leaps, the origin for which, according to Nika Leskovšek (2017), is in the screenplays of popular TV series, such as *True Detective*, *Twin Peaks* and *Desperate Housewives*. This is thus the form of a no-longer-drama or post-drama text, in which the presentation of the society or its critique are realised. Yet this

criticism is no longer unanimous, because today's neoliberal society no longer has a single centre of power. Because of that, it is impossible to expect that the audience will respond with a reception similar to the one in the 1980s, when theatre was considered a social forum and was capable of establishing a congregation. What is left for drama and theatre is the question of the point of view or perception of the world.

Here, we need to make a brief digression to the views of Hans-Thies Lehmann on the politicality of post-dramatic theatre, as it seems that Simona Semenič stems from similar findings. Lehmann detects contemporary society as unsuitable for traditional political theatre, which diagnoses social problems and presents alternative social ideas.

> There are hardly any visible representatives of legal positions confronting each other as political opponents any more. What still attains an intuitable quality, by contrast, is the momentary *suspension* of normative, legal and political modes of behaviour, i.e. the plainly *non*-political terror, anarchy, madness, despair, laughter, revolt, antisocial behaviour (Lehmann 2009, 175).

This anarchy is also observable in Simona Semenič's text. The time and place of events are fractured. Socialism is idealised, but a careful reader will not miss that it is bursting at the seams. It begins with a corpse, Boris does not want to talk about the events in Kosovo, the relationships between characters are filled with tension (for example, Luka's mother Vesna and her husband Darko), disappointments (for example, Boris's Jagoda, who will marry his friend Štef). Besides, idealisation is additionally motivated with the fact that the characters are a child, a teenager and a young man who, because of their age, look into the world naively and filled with optimism.

In addition to that, the society from the beginning of the 1980s is decisively tinted with the decision of the author to sketch the neoliberal present as its contrast. The latter does not have a coherent story but is imparted merely as dream leaps into the present. In this present, characters find themselves mostly in life crises that show them in a completely different light. The initial impetus and optimism have been replaced by confusion, depression and complacence. Even more, Semenič in these leaps creates more bodies and links them to suicide as the ultimate act of despair. Srečko, Erik's youthful friend dies by suicide because of his homosexual inclinations that he cannot express in a small-town community; as does Nada, a mother of two, who was allegedly suffering from depression; as well as Zmago, Boris's friend, who did not want to work in Lipa but was even less enthusiastic about being a technological surplus.

All three characters, who are, or perhaps are not, the main characters, are heading abroad or fleeing: Luka to Afghanistan, Erik to Luxembourg and Boris to Italy.

As Lehmann says, the political stake engagement of theatre is

not in the topics, but in the forms of perception. /.../ Instead of the deceptively comforting duality of here and there, inside and outside, it can move the mutual *implication of actors and spectators in the theatrical production of images* into the centre and thus make visible the broken thread between personal experience and perception (Lehmann 2009, 185, 86).

The effect of a text such as *onethousandninehundreteightyone* is thus not so much in the rational explanation of the social reality, but in triggering emotions, taking sides on the part of the recipients. These will, of course, be different. Some will be nostalgic towards the past, others sceptical towards the presented utopia; some will be indignant regarding the present, some merely relinquent. But it would be hard to say that this fragmentary technique of dramatic writing, which incessantly moves between the characters places and moments in time, allows a distance and rational gaze. The latter basically leaves us empty-handed. The thesis seems too simple and one-sided. Peter Rak, perhaps justified, ascribes it to the youth: "after all, there would certainly be people who look with nostalgia to their young age in Stalin's Soviet Union, Hitler's Germany; Mussolini's Italy or Romania under Ceauşescu"(Rak 2016, no pag.).

But perhaps the trap is that we, as readers/spectators, have to take our own emotional position to the world described. We thus wake up from the numbness, into which usually remote images push us, which media of all sorts and forms serve us. "This is given when the spectators are confronted with the problem of having to react to what is happening in their presence, that is as soon as the safe distance is no longer given, which the aesthetic distance between stage and auditorium seemed to safeguard. (Lehmann 2009, 187).

And how does this play into a drama text that we can also simply just read? This is exactly where Marko Juvan sees the difference between political theatre of the 1980s and the contemporary 'political performance'; that the former is based on the dramatic text, in which the performances still "treated politics in the codes of mimetic presentation. They staged social problems through the relationships between characters, either historic or imaginary" (Juvan 2014, 555, 556). In the contemporary political performance the drama script is "replaced by documents, biography or dialogues written or improvised by the actors or performers" (Juvan 2014,

556). It seems that Simona Semenič manages to create similar effects with the openness of her text and its fragmentary structure. With this, she forces the reader/spectator to continuously choose, fill in the blanks and thus become the co-creator of meaning. Of course it is impossible to predict how they will complete or read the message of the text, but this is not even that important. More important is the recipients' involvement, emotional engagement, which the author nevertheless deftly navigates towards the criticism of modern society.

Conclusion

The image of society in literature is thus essentially determined with the position of literature, in our case drama, in it. When it comes to drama, this link is even stronger, as due to its close connection to the theatre, this part of literature is actually always a societal and—because of its collective reception—a social phenomenon.

It is interesting that the plays studied are diametrical opposites when presenting the society of the 1980s. To Jovanović, it appears to be a failed utopia, even more, a dystopia that might have had some possibility of existence with a meticulous implementation of the freedom of the individual. However, Jovanović also avoids the direct thematisation of social criticism, which makes his text even more convincing. It demands that the reader/spectator reads between the lines and locates the reasons for the collapse of the zoolinguistics institute (society) into the centres of power (most likely the authority with the Yugoslav People's Army and UDBA). This opening of taboo topics, however, does not bring activism and social revolt, even though the drama writing wants it, but rather a sense of freedom or participation in the fight for it.

A good three decades later, the same historic period is shown as a utopian contrast to the present. As a nostalgic image of humanism, values and the sense of personal interconnection that tints the prosaic neoliberal present with even darker hues. Yet it again seems that Simona Semenič does not want to be directly political, tendentious. Her black-and-white tableau is simply a provocation that, together with a fragmentary post-drama form leads us into a whirl of emotions and decisions, into searching for message and meaning that should activate us and allows us to think about our own position. About where we are ourselves and to where we want to continue.

And it is in this orientation that the authors are very close to each other. They both detect the mechanisms of contemporary society and demand that the reader/spectator recognises him/herself in them. Each

one in their own way and in accordance with the time in which they create.

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Contemporary Slovenian Stage-plays and the Political

Maja Murnik

Over the last decade we are witnessing a significant increase of theatre performances in Slovenia, dealing with socially engaged, political or activist issues. This applies not only to institutional playhouses (e.g. *Ubu Le Roi* directed by Jernej Lorenci, SNG Drama Ljubljana, 2016) and most notably to Slovensko mladinsko gledališče (Slovenian Youth Theatre)—but also to the NGO theatres (e.g. Maska) and their co-productions (e.g. Maska and Slovensko mladinsko gledališče; Kino Šiška and Slovensko mladinsko gledališče). Even in Slovenian drama after 2000—when intimism, prevailing in the 1990s, has ended—it can be noticed that the plays examine the social issues again, often in an engaging manner and with an emphasis on social criticism.

Postdramatic Theatre and 'No Longer Dramatic Text'

The contribution is based on the awareness that in the recent decades it has no longer made sense to distinguish strictly between drama and theatre. Namely, this relationship has undergone great changes. The traditional concept of drama has proven to be too restrictive and it is not suitable any more for a variety of changes stage-plays have undergone. In the crisis of representation, the performative dimensions of texts have come into the foreground, as texts have become Barthesian 'open texts'—i.e. hybrid, heterogeneous and performative structures which are open in terms of meaning. We are now encountering 'no longer dramatic text' ('der nicht mehr dramatische Theatertext' in Poschmann's terms as well as postdramatic theatre (Lehmann 1999) or even something beyond both

(as Pezdirc Bartol and Toporišič argue; see Pezdirc Bartol and Toporišič 2013, 98).

The term 'postdramatic theatre' has been coined and examined in detail by German theatrologist Hans-Thies Lehmann. In his *Postdramatisches Theater* (1999) he examined a series of practices, based on the neo-avant-garde tradition from the 1960s. In postdramatic theatre, the text is no longer in the centre of the performance but is only one of its elements. This novel theatre is characterized by the use of heterogeneous styles; its elements, like illusion, space, time, body and text are dismantled and then combined in a new way.

Lehmann's theory derives from the crisis of drama theatre, namely the theatre dominated by the text. Lehmann has detected the shift from the text-based theatre and culture to the new media age. Today, theatre is no longer able to compete successfully with new media like television, computers, virtual reality etc; however, new media seem to be much faster and practical. In comparison with them—argues Lehmann in 1999—the advantage and particularity of theatre lie in the fact that in theatre a performance is performed as live, enabling the audience to be its active observers. Therefore one of the significant features of postdramatic theatre is active participation of the audience which results in abolishing the traditional demarcation between the performers and the audience.

Similar heterogeneity and de-centralization can be observed in drama as well. Gerda Poschmann, for instance, introduces the term 'no longer dramatic text', arguing that in such texts several classical elements, like classical drama action, characters, structure, space and time, as well as the convention of recording the demarcation between dialogue and stage directions have been radically transformed or even abolished. Sometimes 'no longer dramatic texts' even strongly resemble screenplays or other (literary) genres, e.g. a novel or lyrics (such are the texts by Simona Semenič). The so-called epization is at stake here, examined in detail by Peter Szondi in his famous book *Theorie des modernen Dramas* in 1956 (see Szondi 1987). According to Szondi, at the end of the 19th century the process of demolishing the representational model of absolute drama (in short, Aristotelian dramaturgy) has begun. Szondi discusses new tendencies in European and American drama from 1880 onwards as examples of reconcilement with this crisis by introducing the so-called epic elements.

Today, the opposition between 'text-centrism' and 'theatre-centrism' has been surpas (Pezdirc Bartol and Toporišič 2013, 98). Based on semiotic theories Pezdirc Bartol and Toporišič argue that theatre should be read in close connection to drama and vice versa. Both text and performance

should be equally researched and interpreted but by use of new, more appropriate methods and understandings which are not dealing only with traditional categories of drama theory (like drama action, character, time etc.), or, on the other hand, of theatre studies, but with those that include and consider the changed relationship between both. Several shifts of the paradigms should be considered; one of them is a new understanding of the role of the author, deriving from Barthes's death of the author. Today, Barthesian playwright is topical again—e.g., "either as the voice of a rhapsode (Sarrazac) or as the invisible narrator and a kind of DJ of discourses and stories" (Toporišič 2015, 99). In Slovenia one such author is Simona Semenič. Other important present changes, like the crisis of the subject, the changed position of theatre etc. should be taken into consideration in today's augmented and mixed reality where theatre's role has been overtaken by faster media. All these changes inevitably impact the role and position of drama and theatre today and their relationship to the political issues, e.g. political power and range of theatre today.

Art and Theatre in the Age of Post-politics

Social and political engagement of Slovenian theatre should be firstly understood within the context of the position and function of art in contemporary society, and secondly within the context of contemporary changes of politics in terms of post-politics, yet, last but not least, it should also be understood with regard to specific attitude toward the political issues in Slovenia. Where are the locuses of (political) power today? How are they addressed by contemporary Slovenian drama and theatre? Which strategies and tactics do they use and which message do they try to convey to the audience?

In 2005 Lado Kralj wrote: "Today, theatre is simply not as a relevant institution as it used to be prior to 1991. Crucial moral and social issues are being discussed elsewhere" (Kralj 2005, 116). In 1991, when Slovenia gained independence, theatre lost its relevance. According to Kralj, it stopped perceiving and criticizing the repression of communist regime. As a result, Slovenian drama diminished both in terms of quantity and quality (Kralj 2005, 116). However, 15 years later, the situation does not seem the same. The interest in socially and politically engaged issues is in rise again, which is seen both in an increased number of new performances and on declarative level (*cf.* announcement of the new season 2018/19 in Slovensko mladinsko gledališče (SMG) with its slogan 'Me, the artist. Me, the citizen'). Social and political issues have been addressed most enthusiastically by SMG, especially after 2014 when artistic direction

has been taken by Goran Injac. But—do drama and theatre really possess such a power that they can 'discuss crucial moral and social issues', or do they just yearn for something that does not exist (any more)? Furthermore, has theatre ever possessed real political power? Or has it always been, above all, the space for discussion, rituals, addressing and reflection on issues?

Lehmann (1999), in much a similar way observes that theatre at the end of the millennium is not a place to perform the crucial social value conflicts. For Lehmann, "[i]ssues that we call 'political' have to do with social power" (Lehmann 2006, 175). The power today is organized as a web, in which even the leading political elite hardly have any real power over economico-political processes any more. Therefore, argues Lehmann, political conflicts "increasingly elude intuitive perception and cognition and consequently scenic representation" (Lehmann 2006, 175).

While in the past the power was embedded in the representatives of political elite or in the parliament parties, today the political power is diffused and scattered. In the age of parliamentary democracy and global capital the multi-national corporations in fact possess greater power than political leaders of a majority of the states.

For Lehmann, theatre today has lost almost all political functions it possessed in the history—it is not the centre of ancient *polis* any more nor national theatre whose aim was to strengthen national awareness. Lehmann believes that theatre as the site of class-specific propaganda and political self-affirmation (as it was in 1920s) is over since much more faster and widespread electronic media have overtaken it. After the fall of repressive regimes in Eastern Europe it has also lost its function of disputing and criticizing while mass media have been censored (Lehmann 1999, 450–451).

While deeply skeptical about representational political theatre, Lehmann offers an alternative: the shift to the politics of perception. He claims: "The politics of theatre is a *politics of perception*" (Lehmann 2006, 185). Lehmann believes that true political in theatre is not related to its contents or topic but is rather embedded in the forms of perception. Politics of perception is an aesthetic of responsibility—"the *mutual implication of actors and spectators in the theatrical production of images*" (Lehmann 2006, 186), which could be one of rare answers to ubiquitous spectacle and circulating simulacra. Aesthetics of responsibility, which Lehmann calls for, means to be aware of one's own embeddedness in the world, of one's own affective participation and responsibility (also: response-ability) within it.

While discussing socially and politically engaged drama and theatre, another viewpoint should be taken into consideration. In establishing the autonomy of art in the Modern age art has undergone the process of aestheticization. But in the Postmodern a relative autonomy of art has fallen apart, together with the Modern autonomies in other fields and spheres. Art has become transgressive, while it has begun to include and appropriate the functions, procedures, techniques and goals of other, previously autonomous fields (e.g., science, politics), and this is especially significant for contemporary visual, media and new media art. Such transgressive art, usually strengthened, amplified, extended and profoundly altered by (smart) technologies and in the dialogue with them, addresses and comments on the issues of extended use of technology in present society, the issues of the subject and (post)humanity, their new interactions, as well as the dilemmas and utopias of ubiquitous computation and cyborgization of society. Art today can appropriate social functions, as well—for instance, it seeks to help people coping with social and living problems by developing survival strategies in diverse fields (e.g., DIY or *do-it-yourself* practices; let us note as an example *Transborder Immigrant Tool*, a provocative mobile phone application devised by cyber group Electronic Disturbance Theater 2.0 which was intended to guide the users at illegal Mexican/US border crossing, to help them find water supplies, etc.). Contemporary art undertakes political and activist issues; it educates, warns, appeals, appropriates, hacks, creates political statements etc. The sensible has become now social and political.

Yet several decades ago Umberto Eco described the different status of an artistic product in contemporary society as 'work in movement', by which he aimed not only at its openness and indetermination in interpretative sense but also at its involvement into the circulation of new relations and functions that an artwork has begun to undertake in the society. This new receptive mode vis-à-vis the work of art "installs a new relationship between the *contemplation* and the *utilization* of a work of art" (Eco 1989, 23).

In his essay *Postmodernism, or, the Cultural Logic of Late Capitalism* Fredric Jameson discusses the painting of peasant shoes by van Gogh and Warhol's series of *Diamond Dust Shoes*. By comparing them, he introduces the notion of new depthlessness as one of the crucial features of postmodernism. Despite the fact that Jameson published his ground-breaking essay in 1984, many of his thoughts seem far-reaching and still useful. In the world of multinational capital we are dealing with new superficiality, networkability and extension of hierarchical relationships. The depth

has been replaced by a surface, more precisely, by so many surfaces. As Jameson argues,

> the dissolution of an autonomous sphere of culture is rather to be imagined in terms of an explosion: a prodigious expansion of culture throughout the social realm, to the point at which everything in our social life—from economic value and state power to practices and to the very structure of the psyche itself—can be said to have become 'cultural' in some original and yet untheorized sense.

This is quite consistent with the analyses of a society of the image or the simulacrum (Jameson 1991, 48).

Textual and Performative Tactics through their Relationship with the Political: Case Studies

The present changes in the status of an artwork as well as of the whole field of culture should be taken into consideration when reflecting on recent socially and politically engaged performances in Slovenian theatre and its stage-plays (i.e. texts that were used in performances). I have chosen examples in which the textual component is important. The issues addressed in these works range from simple political agitation plays to very complex elaborations of social and political themes. Who do these projects address and what are they trying to achieve? What are their strategies and tactics and which message do they convey?

Regarding this, one of the essential features of Slovenian performing arts is the importance of a document, around which the story is built. All the following examples start from a document. A document gives the authors an assurance of the truth, as well as an elevated moral position from which they can speak, but they take different stances toward the document.

Milohnić, for instance, compares several recent socially engaged performances in Slovenia with brutalism, the architectural style. He writes about *facti bruti*, raw or brute material (Milohnić 2018). With this notion, he aims at something similar as a document but just to a certain extent, since he explains it in a different way, emphasizing primarily the importance of pure facts that the authors of a performance want to throw to the audience in their faces.

The term 'document' seems to be more appropriate. A document can not be performed in-itself, the performers must always choose an interpretation (how to sort the so-called facts, is already the interpretation).

A document itself is never a conveyor of truth; conversely, by entering the stage its semantic openness and performativity immediately turn out.

The first example is Metamorphoses 4°: *Black Holes* by Bara Kolenc, choreographer, theatre director and philosopher (Slovensko mladinsko gledališče, première: March 2018). This is the fourth in a series of performances, with which the author aims to reflect deep controversies of contemporary society. The black hole from the title is used as a metaphor for the erosion of Western tradition of humanism when facing migration, refugee crisis and, in fact, the Muslim world with the effects of globalization. The performance focuses on the true story of a young and brilliant Algerian-French scientist Adlène Hicheur, employed in CERN in Switzerland, who was sentenced and imprisoned under the accusation of the collaboration with terrorists. He was actually e-mailing with an Al-Qaeda member as it turned out later. He was prosecuted in other parts of the world, too, and was then forced to give up his French citizenship and to move to Algeria.

The story is put on stage as an interview between the scientist and two journalists, vloggers. The interview provides us above all with the information about Hicheur's story. Being veristic and partly clumsy in terms of language and semantics, it represents the first textual level of *Black Holes*. The second one is signified by several passages of poetry, philosophy and astrophysics that interrupt the first one.

As a whole, the reality that the performance puts in front of the spectator turns out as an extremely simple, binary world. This is the world of two oppositions: the first is a simple, military and instrumental logic and diction of Western power (and of its repressive apparatuses, law system, police, politics, journalism). On the other side, we meet a package of poetry, science and philosophy. These are the record of the emotional, intellectual and cultural memory, the testimonies of humanity which the West has obviously lost but the Muslim world still possesses. It seems that this is the message of *Black Holes*: to show the binary world of evil and aggressive West against the sophisticated and sensitive Muslim East. The world of the performance is therefore distinctly black-and-white. Instead of developing and deepening the material of the true story (i.e. document) in terms of creating metaphors, allusions and new ideas or sharpening the criticism, the authors made only a shallow lamentation on the injustice of the world. As a whole, the performance is overwhelmed by its explicit moral message that clearly and simply warns the audience about the intrinsic humanity, sensitiveness and intellectual value of Muslim culture. At first, it is not clear to whom this message is pointed at. How-

ever, it rather seems that the current political struggle between the Left and the Right in Slovenia echoes in this performance, rather than the artistic intentions or a penetrating interpretation of the political controversies. A comparison with the agitation play would be appropriate. By using this notion, I aim at certain features of a part of (partisan) drama during the World War II and after it—namely, its emphasized agitation-propaganda function, black-and-white picture of the world and uniform ideology (cf. Troha 2015, 29).

The performance *The Republic of Slovenia* (anonymous authors; co-production Slovensko mladinsko gledališče and Maska Ljubljana, première: April 2016 as the celebration of 25ᵗʰ anniversary of the Slovenian independence) is based on the use of the documents, too. Its theme are 'the Depala vas affair' (an affair in 1994 with the involvement of Slovenian politician Janez Janša) and power struggles in the Slovenian state during the 1990s. The most suggestive in terms of theatricality are the variations of the Depala vas events. In the performance, the authors directly address the issue of the construction of truth by performing a (secret) document (that by definition always lacks 'something' to achieve an ultimate truth). They also raise the issue of truth and lies in politics and public speaking. When approaching the end of the performance, the question of truth and lies gradually shrinks into the question of lies and truth relating to the speaking and operating of Janez Janša until it finally culminates in condemning him and his politics of glorifying the nation. In its use of postdramatic elements, *The Republic of Slovenia* is certainly more interesting and original compared to *Black Holes*. But similarly as *Black Holes* the performance is not interested in the systemic doubt of (state) power, its institutions or authority in-itself, but rather performs the selected chapters of a specific political agenda or even agitation for a certain political party and the condemnation of a competitive one.

Simona Semenič's approach to social issues is quite different. Decentralization and de-hierarchization are the key features of her 'no longer dramatic texts'. In her works, we are dealing with hybrid, transient, 'impure' formations, with kind of 'texts in movement' that employ diverse textual tactics, not only limited to drama dialogue but also appropriated from the other literary genres, for example description, narration, metafictional techniques, poetry, bureaucratic language etc. The author has assumed the role of a narrator or a DJ of stories, images and scenes; in her texts no sharp demarcation between dialogue and stage directions exists (especially in the text *mi, evropski mrliči* [we, european corpses], 2015).

In her 'no longer dramatic texts' she researches how the society (no matter in which historical age) rules; how common people *ad infinitum* perform and preserve the unjust, absurd, patriarchal and stupid patterns of the system. The ignored, tortured, suppressed and silent women are common figures in her plays, becoming the real actresses of life. In *sedem kuharic, štirje soldati in tri sofije* [seven cooks, four soldiers and three sophias], performed in 2014, the key *dramatis personae* are three women by name Sophia (the plot is based on the fate of three real women) that in order to become an intellectual, a mathematician, a philosopher and a revolutionary, have violated the rigid patriarchal moral order and are therefore all executed.

In *mi, evropski mrliči* a tortured and suppressed woman is in the foreground, too. This is ex-partisan Milica, now dying in hospice, where she is finally able to utter a few words and can thus express her story and her humanity as well. She is the mostly silent witness and as well a figure in the spinning noise, in the infernal banquet of today's decaying Europe (this is one of the several allusions on Srečko Kosovel's poems). Milica's appearance signifies the intrusion of the corporeal, of life and living into the drive of the system and its abstract, paper values. At the end, the scene is flooded by the sewage, already leaking 25 years (as long as independent Slovenia exists), and the *dramatis personae* just continue with their inefficient, self-referential acts and speaking that do not resolve anything.

Semenič's plays lack a direct call to activism or political engagement although the pathology of Slovenian society is one of their essential topics. In *we, european corpses*, for instance, the character of announcer, a kind of mobilizer that politically agitates through the whole text, is even mocked, ironized and his action is compared with masturbation. Besides, in *seven cooks, four soldiers and three sophias*, the problems are not resolved, too, the changes are not made since every try to resist ends as the predictable inclusion in the system which always swallows everything. However, the key theme of the play *1981* (2013) are social changes but these are the changes for the worse; the text does not offer a simple recipe how to resolve the problems of transitional capitalism. Semenič shows the condition of the world in all its complexity, facing a reader/viewer with a diverse range of ethical dilemmas (Pezdirc Bartol 2017) but she does not call for a mobilization and political action.

The last example is the performance *Odilo. Obscuration. Oratorio* (author of the text: Peter Mlakar; director: Dragan Živadinov; introvision: Janez Pipan; co-production: Slovensko mladinsko gledališče and Kino Šiška; première: April 2018). As the basis the authors took the documents

about Odilo Globočnik (1904–1945), one of the important SS leaders who was involved in holocaust especially in Polish extermination camps during World War II. Globočnik was of Slovenian origin (but germanized), and this was one of the (widely unknown) facts that fascinated the authors of the performance.

Two issues are interesting concerning this performance and its message. The first one is its declarative level: the authors and the theatre emphasize that they are aware of the rise of extreme nationalism and racism in Europe. For them, Globočnik is the representative of 'absolute evil'. The aim of the project is killing Globočnik's name and preventing the resurrection of his acts (Slovensko mladinsko gledališče 2018). The performance is therefore an interesting search for the ways how to avoid installing Globočnik as the dramatic or even tragic hero and how to avoid realist, mimetic psychology. In doing this, the performance uses several techniques. One of them is ritual killing of his name as the name of the evil.

Along with this level, the spectators encounter another one, i.e. the performed level. These are the ambiguous, provocative allusions on National Socialism that can be paralleled with the age we live in (and this seems to be the authors' aim as well): for example—strange, almost grotesque preparatory moves and gestures of the performers, the obsession with strange and ridiculous rituals, the opening of the working-class question, denoting Marx as the greatest materialist of all times, the fascination on mass media, the biopolitical issues etc. This level shows the elements of hidden legacy of National Socialism in today's society, especially in the fields where many do not recognize them at all or where they see characteristically leftist or communist political issues. Here is the place of special ambiguity and peculiarity of this performance. This, non-declarative level makes the spectator also discern that in the performance the responsibility for the evil is not placed into the hands of one man—a leader; this would be a titanic understanding of history. Conversely, the authors wish to draw the spectator's attention to the *structure*: to the similarities, patterns and images that build the age almost a century ago, as well as ours, the present one.

Conclusion

Recent theories of contemporary performing arts agree that the strict division between drama (text) and theatre (performance) has no sense, since we are dealing with 'no longer dramatic text' (Poschmann) and postdramatic theatre (Lehmann). The discussion of several examples of recent

performances and stage-plays in Slovenian theatres shows that the mode and the approach to performing the socially and politically engaged issues are diverse; they range from a simple political agitation to the complex elaboration of the issues of society, power, violence and current politics. Common to all of them is the fact that the political engagement in these works is different compared to that in the past: in the age of postmodern intertwining we are not dealing with art autonomy any more and consequently not with the sublime position of expression, but we are facing art that appropriates other discourses, procedures and topics, usually in a fragmentary way. We are encountering Jameson's notions of flatness and depthlessness, as well as postmodern dispersion of power and voices. Targets of the critique are nowadays harder to define than in the past, since in the age of post-politics the bearers of power are not the representatives of political parties or the state leaders, but, above all, the multinational companies and the representatives of the capital.

One of the significant shifts in the understanding of the political in contemporary performing arts is the shift from the politics of representation to the politics of perception, as Barbara Orel recognizes it when discussint Slovenian performing arts after 1998 (Orel 2018). Within this turn, an important role is attributed to the audience or the viewer. At this point, another discussion can start—the discussion on the question of what happens when the performance is over. We can conclude that all examples discussed above continue with the tradition of bourgeois theatre and its claim for the theatre as moral institution. It seems that the aim of these performances is to show the inconsistencies in society and politics, to educate, to raise awareness; first two examples also want to influence the voters, direct them, check their loyalty. However, Semenič's writing represents an exception: she is not primarily interested in the active involvement in politics, as in survival tactics; instead of commenting the current social-political events she is oriented towards bio-politics and live embodiment. Relating this, she is very up-to-date, and with the issues she is interested in, she is close to the endeavours of the most sensitive and avant-garde media and new media art at the moment.

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Women's Poetic Discourse in the Context of Post-war Ideologies: *Senca v srcu* (*A Shade in the Hearth*) by Ada Škerl

Varja Balžalorsky Antić

As Irena Novak Popov demonstrated in the *Anthology of Slovenian women poets*, Slovenian literature has a relatively well-established tradition of poetry written by women.[1] Nevertheless, few women poets were accepted to the Slovenian canon of poetry, because it was shaped through patrilinear and patriarchal power-structures as is the case in most other national traditions. In this paper, I deal with the acceptance of women's (poetic) discursiveness[2] into the structures of the literary system in its broader context. Throughout history, the literary system mostly equated the masculine with the universal and silenced the women or, in the case of poetry, gave them the title 'our female lyric poetry', which due to accompanying valuative attributes explicitly or implicitly meant that women's poetic production was second-rate to men's. This article addresses the tensions between ideology and women's poetic discourse in the case of Ada Škerl's poetry collection *Senca v srcu*. The first tension, subversive and all-present, results from the fact that women's discourse has to directly or indirectly, consciously or unconsciously define itself in relation to the (larger) patriarchal system which defines all other systems including the socio-political, aesthetic, and ideological systems. The second tension refers to the relationship between ideology and aesthetics in the invention of new poetic paradigms. Here I tackle the question how Ada Škerl's voice was positioned in between the currents called builder's poetry and intimism as

2   I use the term as proposed by Stanislava Chrobáková Repar (2018).

well as how the initial reception of the collection defined its subsequent acceptance in the Slovenian literary canon. First, however, I describe the position of women in post-war socialist society as reflected in contemporary media, specifically in *Naša žena* (Our Woman), the central woman's journal at the time. This presentation follows the research of Marta Verginella (2006, 53–71).

During both world wars, the strong traditional division of roles between men and women was weakened and redefined. This was mostly the result of, first, fighting and, second, women occupying public roles and other important positions in the public sphere. In several Western countries, women gained voting rights, undoubtedly also due to their role in the first world war. In Slovenia, the right to vote was given to women much later, only in 1942. This meant that men lost their exclusive monopole in the public and political sphere. It was, however, also met with concerns, even between women in liberal circles (Verginella 2006, 55). Boris Kidrič, for example, stressed the complete equality between men and women as one of the most important democratic outcomes of the People's Liberation War in Yugoslavia. At the same time, however, the new government warned against feminism as a bourgeoise ideology (Verginella 2006, 55): it maintained that the goal of the egalitarian society was the equality of both genders and therefore rejected that women have a specific role in the society. The new legislation and the new legal status of women—besides the already mentioned right to vote, the marital and non-marital partnerships were equalised, maternity leave was prolonged, abortion legislation was liberalised, the percentage of women employed in the public sector increased etc. (Borovnik 1995, 21)—promised better conditions for the gender equality, especially since 'socialist women' had more formal rights than their 'capitalist' neighbours. Right after the war, the role of gender equality for socialism was discussed by political leadership and by other women in politics, especially in the journal *Naša žena*, published by the Women's Antifascist Front. Analysing the journal, Marta Verginella argued that the new political leadership promoted traditional views on women as the central imaginary for the female roles, such domestic work, family life and maternity, self-sacrifice, and self-indulgence. Some new roles such as political participation and replacing men at various occupations were added to the list. Nevertheless, a myth of maternity framed as the 'socialist maternity' replaced the image of an emancipated and professionally successful woman, which was dangerously close to the bourgeoise ideology. Gender equality achieved after the war (even if defined by a wider spectrum of rights) therefore became a formality. Wom-

en's issue was solved by a simple elimination of all inequalities in a supposedly egalitarian society, while the struggle for gender equality became one of the most important topics of the new ideology in power.

Poetry published after the second world war and up to 1950 could be interpreted as an extension of poetry of People's Liberation (Paternu 10) and as a collective vision of building a communal future. It was published primarily in various literary journals—of which the most important was *Mladinska revija* (Bajt 2016, 227)—and rarely in independent collections, only a few collections being published each year (Pibernik 1978, 87). Such poetry was the product of the dictatorship in cultural policy adopted from the soviet Zhdanovism. Liberation and war against the occupation, formation of a new social order, and agitprop pressures resulted in a stylistically poor poetry, using pompous rhetorical figures, and devoted entirely to the collective subject of the proletarian figure, moving away from individual values, and focusing primarily on the external and social aspects. In builders'poetry, called also the poetry of 'mattock and shovel' or 'shovel poetry', political and ideological pragmatism more or less dominated over all other aesthetic norms. Various poets, mostly newcomers but also those who wanted to remain poets in the new regime,[3] wrote this type of poetry. As several of them testified, the new era brought new dilemmas for the artists. Some poets, mostly established personalities, temporarily ceased writing due to various reasons (e.g. Edvard Kocbek, Jože Udovič, Cene Vipotnik), others had to overcome several difficulties before they managed to establish a new poetic and aesthetic norm (see Minatti in Pibernik 1978, 80), still others wrote two types of poetry, one "for personal use, the other for publication" (Škerl in Pibernik 1978, 91). The new builders' poetry did not reflect the real tensions between the reality (which in many created a feeling of disillusion and anxiety) and highly set social and personal ideals. It was more than obvious that Slovenian poetry reached a dead end under the pressures of social realism. Nevertheless, in the beginning of 1949 political circumstances, i.e. a conflict with the Cominform, resulted in an ever-more pronounced critique of the Soviet doctrine of social realism, some of which appeared even earlier (see Bajt 2016, 188–193). The final rejection of social realism was accepted after Miroslav Krleža's speech at the III. Congress of Yugoslav writers in 1952. Conditions for a break away from objective poetry towards personal poetics were created. The new poetry prioritised the individual subject and her/his experience of disillusion in the face of (post-)romantic duality be-

3   Such poetry was published by France Filipčič, Miha Remec, France Kosmač, Dušan Ludvik, Ivan Minatti, Lojze Krakar, as well as Tone Pavček, Kajetan Kovič and others.

tween personal ideals and the cruel reality. According to most scholarly discussions, the break with the past tradition and the beginnings of the so-called new intimism, drawing from modernity as well as romanticism, began in 1953 with the publication of a collaborative collection of poetry by Kajetan Kovič, Ciril Zlobec, Janez Menart, and Tone Pavček entitled *Pesmi štirih* (Poetry of Four).

Even before the breakthrough publication of *Pesmi štirih*, a small collection of poetry entitled *Senca v srcu* was published by then 25-years old Ada Škerl at Mladinska knjiga publishing house. Her work was indeed very different from the prevailing collectivist poetry. Škerl, recognised as a poetic talent early on, was a member of the literary circle connected to People's Youth (other members included Ivan Minatti, Ciril Zlobec, and Branko Hofman) and already published her poems in most important literary journals, for example in *Novi sveti* (New World). However, she could not foresee the reaction to the publication of her first collection, which sealed her literary fate.

Thirty-nine poems in the collection with a title, provocative for the time, express a silent but nevertheless radical subjectivism of a female subject, focusing on her intimate world. A deep personal experience in the collection does not vary between different thematic and motive frameworks as is characteristic, for example, for the above-mentioned *Pesmi štirih*, but is rather focused on one central theme, that is, the pain of love related to the feeling of death. Škerl's book is compositionally well structured and consists of three poetic sections, *Thirsty youth*, *Their love*, and *Grave candle*, creating an impression of a personal lyric diary. They outline a story of unfulfilled love of a young girl for a sick man and his death. The majority of poems (e.g. the whole first section) are narrated from the perspective of a female or a girl with feelings of an unfulfilled longing, jealousy, despair, resignation, mental exhaustion, and existential loneliness and pain, which further prevails in the last poetic section. The female narrator and her perspective are in the second section replaced by the voice and the perspective of a male, facing an inevitable death, thus creating a dialogic structure of the collection. The third section is placed in the time after the man's death. Here, the male voice appears once more, speaking from the grave and addressing the woman who then responds in the subsequent poem. The second section *Their love* hence acts as a counterweight to other two surrounding sections. Through male focalisation and narration, it presents the idyllic moment of the relationship between the object of desire of the central lyric persona and another female person, the literary space being an ideal rural environment. The Platonic love

triangle expressed in the dialogic structure of the collection,[4] is presented ambiguously since its contours are blurred through reader's assimilation of different female figures. This is the result of the reader's identification with the perspective of the implicit author who is on another discursive level assimilated to the central lyric personal and with her phantasmatic identification with another woman.

The *eros—thanatos* dynamics in *Senca v srcu* is presented with an impressionistic description of small details and with objective metaphors, at times nuanced with expressionist images. While describing psychological states, the poet dismisses the social context and uses external reality only as metaphoric and metonymic representation of the subjects' inner states. The repeating literary spaces are the foggy night streets, rooms at night that are permeated with painful silence, snowy urban and rural areas, twilight forests, and the cemetery—all these spaces are united under the title's symbol, that is, the shade. Only a small part of the collection, some of the poem in the section *Their love*, contrasts these spaces with lighter rural scenes.

Almost in the manner of Dickinson, various levels of pain are intertwined with a formal framework, consisting of iambic rhythm and consistently using alternate rhyme. This dense structure supports and emphasises the theme of the poems. A specific rhythmic and semantic capacity is gained by repetitions in the form of anaphors and geminations, becoming the prevailing sound process of the entire collection. This deepens the expression of pain towards a silent lament with occasional silent screams. Sincere, sophisticated, and disciplined lyricism is the result of the actual experience of death, which the young poet manages to recreate and rearticulate artistically. Years later, Ada Škerl wrote that this collection was the "tombstone of a man that my love formed" (Škerl 1998). The aim of this monument is not to glorify or embellish but is rather a sincere and authentic recording of the dark sides of love and the experience of rejection, redundancy, and hopelessness.

While *Senca v srcu* might compositionally seem as a paradigmatic collection of European love lyrics, the woman who acts as a central subject takes the voice and liberates herself from a hundred-years long role of the ever-silent muse. She does not only perform an inversion of the status in the gender and performative dynamics: the male who acts as an Other does not assume the role of an idealised silent 'muse' but performs

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4   Polyphony of voices on the level of poetic sections and the whole collection as well as addressing the reader are poetic devices that the poet used also in the section devoted to her mother *Mrtva žena* from the collection *Obledeli pasteli* (Faded Pastels).

the poetic role of an equivalent interlocutor and, on the level of perspectivisation, acts as an equal focalizer. This equation of different perspectives is not complemented with an attempt to reverse gender relations and their social roles, which in the collection clearly belong to the patriarchal framework. The lyric persona is consistently represented through stereotypical and patriarchal feminine attributes: she is unobtrusive, patient, merciful, self-sacrificing, devoted, and faithful even after the death of the loved one and regardless of the fact that their love was not reciprocal. Even the silent eroticism of the poems remains suppressed, modestly concealed with plant metaphors—something which we might attribute to youth and inexperience of the lyric persona. Only in the next Škerl's collection of poetry entitled *Obledeli pasteli*, the part of which is a section *Status febrilis*, does the eroticism become more direct, loose, and physical.

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Trying to classify the work of Ada Škerl according to the typology of historical development of women's writing as proposed by the gynocriticism of Elaine Showalter, I would argue it belongs to the first stage of development, that is, the phase of imitating dominant patriarchal patterns, specifically with regard to the social and gender context.[5] To a large extent, this also applies to the poetic aspect of the collection. There are no indications that Škerl's poetry would break with the tradition of the male authors (while matrilinear tradition was concealed), who represented a conscious or unconscious model for Škerl.[6] The most apparent in this regard is her appropriation of the *eros—thanatos* theme as developed by Alojz Gradnik and the related dialogic structure between the male and the female voice utilised within this theme. Nevertheless, because *Senca v srcu* articulates an authentic female experience, which clearly defines the semantic, formal, and subjective structures of the poetic discourse (even if the poetic patterns of androcentric tradition are not challenged), a deviation from Gradnik's model is apparent on both the thematic and structural level. It is hence surprising that literary historians understood Ada Škerl as an initiator of *women's writing* (Pogačnik 2001, 84). If this

5   Elaine Showalter, beginner of gynocriticism, discovered three phases of historical development of women's writing in her famous work *A Literature of Their Own* (1977). Those are: "imitations of the prevailing dominant tradition", "protest against male standards and values as well as defending the rights and values of minorities, including a demand for their autonomy", and self—discovery, "partially independent of the opposition" (see Moi 1999, 66). Irena Novak Popov (2014, 72) attemted to apply this typology to Slovenian women's poetry.

6   She mentions France Balantič, Alojz Gradnik, Dušan Ludvik (Škerl in Pibernik 1978, 89).

term is understood as a *female writer,* the claim is false because a tradition of literature written by women existed before her. Even if the term is understood in the context of the French post-structuralist feminism, i.e. as a different position of 'feminine' within the phallocentric symbolic order which allows for the subversion of this order (according to Hélène Cixous and Julia Kristeva possible also for male writers), Ada Škerl cannot be understood as the first female writer of *women's writing* according to the above analysis. Such subversion should include the dynamics of social and gender roles in the poetic discourse, which in the Slovenian poetry first appeared only in the writing of female poets of the next generation such as Saša Vegri or Svetlana Makarovič. Nevertheless, the importance and the significance of Ada Škerl's poetic discourse needs to be understood within the context of its time and poet's courageous individuality, which was reflected in her insubordination to ideologic pressure on art and in poet's decision to include only poems about love and death in her collection, leaving aside other poems—a decision motivated by both personal and artistic circumstances. Even if this decision might have resulted in collection's negative reception, the poet created a coherent work and, despite the fact that traces of her youthful writing are visible, achieved a vigorous poetic experience which is transhistorically manifested in each subsequent reading.

Reception of *Senca v srcu* was controversial and it resulted in one of the major literary scandals of the late forties of the 20th century. Not just literary critics, even those who were not explicitly dealing with literature (Škerl 1998) felt the need to judge how a young woman should write in order not to corrupt the youth and threaten the general optimist poetics. Škerl's poetry was, in fact, popular among the young readers and it was soon sold out.

Negative reviews published in the journals and newspapers were followed by several debates during which Ada Škerl had to defend her poetry and reply to critiques and complaints (Pibernik 1978, 87) as well as various public readings throughout Yugoslavia where her collection was discussed. A collection of reviews was even published in the special edition of the journal *Mladinska revija*. As the editor Ivan Potrč later testified, the publishing house Mladinska knjiga published Škerl's manuscript without sufficient editorial revision (Kovič 1992, 88), since the young poet could even face prison (Škerl 1998). Initially, the manuscript was intended to be published by the Slovenian Book Bureau (Slovenski knjižni zavod), but the editor, the poet Cene Vipotnik, informed the author that the book will be published by Mladinska knjiga. Distancing themselves

from the publication, the publishing house even added a short note to the colophon: "on the suggestion of the Youth Association of Cultural Workers (Zveza mladih kulturnih delavcev), published by Mladinska knjiga".

Even before the publication of the collection, reviewers already formed their opinion on Škerl's work based on her publications in literary journals. Škerl's poetry was mentioned already during the meeting of young writers and literates organised by Mladinska revija. In his presentation, Miško Kranjec mentioned the narrow erotic theme of her poetry (Mladinska 1948/49, 58), an objection which was further and even more violently repeated by other participants (see also Kovič 1992, 89). While reviewers admitted that Škerl was a talented poet, wrote a well-formed poetry, was courageous in her personal writing, and had a sincere and clear style (Škerl in Pibernik 90), they objected to her formalism, manners, and poetic construction (ibid.) and even proclaimed her for a 'decadent' poet (Modic in Škerl 1998). Later they also objected to the inappropriate content and too-narrow themes, saying it represents the poetics of 'I wait-I cry[7], 'tearful sentiment', 'emotionally grey monotony', 'degenerated self-love' (Hofman in Bajt 2004, 72). They wrote that Škerl "enclosed herself in a narrow circle of her own agony" and that her poetry is a "distasteful psychopathologic abuse" (Štolfa in Škerl 1998).

This negative and 'official' criticism reflected political and ideologic tensions but also, even if less explicitly, sexism. The silent eroticism of *Senca v srcu*—always connected with the expectation or experience of death and written by a woman from a female perspective—did not comply with the official 'healthy' and reproductive sexuality propagated by the governing structures and gender politics. As demonstrated above, immediately after the war, the woman (who was during the war an equal comrade and soldier) again became associated with the reproductive role, producing an image of a sacrificing mother who will raise socialist children for a new socialist society. In the last section of the collection, however, the lyric narrator expresses her love for the dead man with whom she was not even in a relationship and hence outlines a possibility that her reproductive role through a healthy and fulfilled love will never be realised. Like love, so is death represented as 'non-reproductive' because it is not a heroic death of a fallen soldier or a hostage but is completely independent of dying for higher ideals (see also Kovič 1992, 90 and Novak Popov 2003, 225). The symbol of a disease, which was the reason for death, rather points towards a decadent feeling of physical and spiritual finality which can be surpassed only by an intimate memory and not in the context of a

7   An allusion to Gradnik's poem *De profundis*.

healthy optimism with the vision of sacrificing oneself for higher and impersonal goals.

Initial critical response to the collection resulted in a long-term stigmatisation, censorship, and even artistic self-censorship of the author. Two years after the publication, the negative reception was still widespread, even in high political circles. Edvard Kardelj, for example, said the following during the fifth plenary assembly of the Central Committee of the Slovene Communist Party in February 1951:

> Let us give the people an opportunity to think and show what they can do. Afterwards, however, a hard criticism has to hit those phenomena which are negative and they have to be silenced. There is no need to silence the poor *Revček Andrejček*, but the sour poems … of Marija Žnidaršič and Ada Škerl" (in Zadravec and Grdina 174).

Until 1952, Škerl's poetry appeared in *Novi svet* with a selection of poems, but her next collection of poems entitled *Obledeli pasteli* (Shaded Pastels) in which she followed her own poetics was published only sixteen years later. This collection did not attract as much attention as the first one, mostly because it was published at a time when modernist poetry was already at its height and when readers were less interested in personal lyricism. She also lost her job at the publishing house which published her collection and became literary as well as socially marginalised. She was almost completely forgotten until the last decade of the 20th century.

In 1992, a selection of Ada Škerl's poems entitled *Temna tišina* (Dark Silence) from both previous collections as well as some previously unpublished poems was published. It was edited by Kajetan Kovič who also contributed an introductory essay. After this publication, several memoires and testimonies by Škerl and favourable articles by others (Alenka Puhar, Drago Bajt, Denis Poniž) who stressed that the poet remained forgotten were published alongside several interviews. In 2004, poets Barbara Korun, Barbara Simoniti, and Maja Vidmar organised a commemoration, an attempt at rehabilitating Škerl's poetry and a symbolic gesture by female poets rediscovering their predecessors and reframing the tradition of female writing.[8] *Senca v srcu* was never reprinted, but Mladinska knji-

8   The event was organised as part of a series of literary events called *Besedovanja*, designed by Barbara Korun and Barbara Simoniti in order to promote women poets on the peripheries of the literary memory. Such understanding of the women poets has further consequences. Erasure of women from the literary memory or their silencing, to use the expression proposed by Tillie Olsen in 1978 in her book *Silences*, results in a lack of referential figures and traditional role—models for later generations of fe-

ga is preparing a new selection of Škerl's poetry at the time of her double anniversary. In 2019, seventy years have passed since the publication of *Senca v srcu* as well as ten years since the death of Ada Škerl. The selection will be edited by Ivo Svetina, the author of a libretto of the opera *Ada* performed by the National opera and ballet of the Ljubljana Opera House in 2017.

Literary history never denied the special place *Senca v srcu* has for contemporary poetry. However, it never defined the collection as the beginning of intimism, but merely as its early forerunner. Only Denis Poniž in *Slovenska lirika 1950—2000* published in 2001 emphasised that the collection was overlooked, highlighting that it surpasses other early attempts in intimist poetry (Poniž 2001, 62). There are several reasons why the official literary history did not attribute the beginning of intimism to Škerl but to the *Pesmi štirih. Pesmi štirih* was a collaborative project and hence appeared as programmatic and figured as a manifest, especially since all four poets contributed notes about their own understanding of poetry at the beginning of their part.[9] Furthermore, in contrast to the four male poets, Ada Škerl did not express the same poetic development and created a small opus consisting of two collections and a selection of poetry (containing previously unpublished poems). A different initial reception of *Senca v srcu* would undoubtedly influence poet's consequent poetic activity and publication. A 16-years long poetic inactivity in between the first and the second collection, which was, according to Škerl the result of the initial negative reception, and the subsequent silence which was interrupted only with the publication of selected poems, all contributed to invisibility of the poet for the scholars of Slovenian literary history. It was also unfortunate that *Senca v srcu* did not appear a bit later, at a time of ideologic thaw beginning shortly after the publication. When Škerl's entrance into the world of poetry is compared to Mila Kačič, another female author who also wrote exclusively about personal experiences of love, a different reception is apparent. Kačič's *Neodposlana pisma* (Unsent Letters) published only two years after *Senca v srcu*, received primarily positive reviews which can be attributed to a difference in the time of publication, even if a small difference, which already saw changes in lit-

male poets as well as mentors who would introduce younger writers to the literary scene. This lack of consciousness about the literary tradition produced further perpetuations of the male role—models in the patrilinear discursive structures (see also Novak Popov, 2014, 59, note 3).

9   It is interesting to note a testimony by Ciril Zlobec who said that the publishing house suggested a collaborative publication due to the lack of printing paper.

erary, ideologic, and aesthetic 'taste'. In spite of all these reasons, it is undisputable that Škerl composed her poetry in an explicitly patriarchal literary system. The 'avantgarde' position of Ada Škerl would undoubtedly have a higher possibility of success if it was produced by a male author. This is further supported by the fact that the intimism of a communal male project *Pesmi štirih* is preceded by two female authors.[10] Both assumed the position on the 'female periphery' of the Slovenian literary canon while the breakthrough innovation is still contributed to male authors. It is now time that Ada Škerl and her book finally step out of shadow and are given the place they deserve.

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10 Boris Paternu (1967, 118) finds a tendence towards intimism also in Jože Šmit's collection *Srce v besedi* (A Heart in the Word) published in 1950.

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Play, Chaos and Autonomy in the Poetry of Hungarians in Voivodina (Uj Symposion)

Roland Orcsik

The Yugoslav Seal

It is hard to resist the temptation not to think about Yugoslavia and Yugoslav artistic strategies as kinds of play. Johan Huizinga wrote about the deep impact of play on culture and poetry in his well-known *Homo ludens* in 1938. He demonstrated the precedence of the concept of play to that of culture through examples from antiquity. It seems compulsory to mention Huizinga's volume in the first place when investigating the concept of play. Roger Caillois (2001, 11–36) conceptualised types of play based on this work: *agon* (contest), *alea* (luck), mimicry and *ilinx* (vertigo, ecstasy, chaos). Yugoslavia as a kind of playground contained all of these and also their opposite, which, according to Huizinga, is not seriousness but an obligation towards fulfilling a cultural function.

Huizinga connects the concept of play to freedom/volition: "First and foremost, then, all play is a voluntary activity. Play that is ordered by someone is no longer play: it could at best be but a forcible imitation of it" (1980, 8). If we project these two concepts, play and freedom, on the various periods of Tito's Yugoslavia, we may claim that they determine its history already since the foundation of the state (29. 11. 1943). On the one hand, one of the two taboos of the regime is expressed in the concept of freedom since the partisans defined the fight against fascism as 'people's liberation war'. However, representations of this 'people's liberation war' circumscribed notions of duty and moral responsibility. Freedom thus lacked the irresponsible, useless playfulness. At the same time, play is present in the construction of the country if we consider the fight and contest for the foundation of the state which preceded the development

of Tito's Yugoslav culture.[1] However, Yugoslavia was an ambivalent 'playground': its freedom was determined by the supervision and discipline of the dictatorial state apparatus, the basic idea of 'brotherhood-unity' was 'multiculturalism directed from above' (Losonc 1999, 93). The question we are interested in is whether and to what extent artistic creation (poetry) could have secured autonomy in the contradictory Yugoslav (cultural-)political sphere? To what extent could it have worked as depoliticized play and sign? Or was this politics exactly what poetry fought for by poetical means on the Yugoslav cultural battleground?

We cannot evade these questions when analysing the cultural role and possibilities of the periodical from Novi Sad called *Új Symposion* (*New Symposion,* 1965–1992). According to Beáta Thomka:

> Since the journal was launched in the last relatively harmonious period of Yugoslavia, it was furnished with the atmosphere of this cheerful, Balkan, Southern, Mediterranean 'barrack' (multilingual environment, playfulness, impulsivity, experimentation, laxity, spontaneity, healthy sense of direction, openness) (2009, 133).

The playful aesthetic of the journal is characterized by avantgarde tinkering and collage which proved to be a Yugoslav attribute:

> Since the editorial principles and the imaginative graphic design of *Új Symposion* were guided by tinkering and collage-like processes, it constantly bore traces of leisure, improvisation, variability, renewing impulses, and together with these, traces of an already bygone period (2009, 138).

Various member states competed against each other on multiple issues (*agon*); cultural contest fitted the economic one, which resulted in inspiring interactions. Zoltán Virág discovers the Symposionist discourse to be led by the principle of mixture:

> The comprehensive utilisation of the experience of *mixtura culturalis* and *mixtura lingualis,* self-presentation enhancing movement-like characteristics, compelled one to encounter regional modes of action simultaneously pertaining to different systems of culture, and several regions and subregions (2009, 19).

However, interaction as part of the play of contest was played by the rules given from above. Governmental regulations and prohibitions (1971, 1983) outlined the ideological borders of the journal's free play-

1   Huizinga interprets the foundation and practice of law as part of play from the perspective of contest. (Huizinga 1980, 76—88)

ground. Nevertheless, Symposionists were not merely passive subjects of the ambivalence of Yugoslavness but also its active creators and participants. Suffice it to consider the number of the journal's texts which used the catchwords and motifs 'Yugoslav' and 'Yugoslavia' without any accent of criticism. We must add that the creators of the journal were not merely motivated by constraints of power. To demonstrate this, it is enough to cite contemporary writings and interviews of János Bányai, István Bosnyák, László Végel, or Ottó Tolnai. Symposionist Béla Csorba interprets the self-contradictory nature of the first generation of Symposionists in the following way:

> The ideological fog from which some of them never found a way out evolved from their completely legitimate aversion towards Kádár's Hungary. From this motive, they identified freedom with Yugoslavness. You cannot do this, however, without self-mutilation. Definitely not in a communal sense. The emerging possibilities were utilised by government policy: the journal of the first generation thus became at once supported and persecuted by the self-contradictory and complicated Yugoslav system (2017, 48).

But Csorba narrows the ideological horizon of the first generation authors: in his overgeneralizing tendency, he ignores the fact that in retrospect some of them treated the question of being Yugoslav with criticism if not complete rejection (e.g. István Domonkos, Katalin Ladik, Végel, Tolnai, Tibor Várady). Furthermore, in the cited interview Csorba did not reflect critically on his own generation and ignored the fact that *Új Symposion* is inseparable from Yugoslavness, so all editorial generations were touched more or less by its ideology. In addition, any talk of 'nation' cannot be free of ideology. Nevertheless there could be no doubt that the interpretation of the concept of 'nation' as well as that of 'Yugoslavness' was directed from above, in spite of the fact that there appeared some disputes about the Yugoslav Hungarian (literary) identity in the columns of *Új Symposion* (cf. Szerbhorváth 2005, 225–237). Csorba's interview reveals the ambivalence of Yugoslavness: the contradiction of being at once supported and persecuted defined the cultural strategy of Symposionists. The texts published in the journal never questioned the basic idea of Yugoslavness. György Szerbhorváth claims the following about the Yugoslavness of Symposionists: "No matter how they criticised Stalinist practices that invaded the arts, they did not have the slightest doubt about the Yugoslav ones" (2005, 121). Just like Csorba, Szerbhorváth also ignores the fact that the Yugoslav cultural policies cannot be understood without the notion of ambivalence. Whereas a state-supported journal like *Új Sym-*

posion would have no chance of being published in the Stalinist block, in Yugoslavia the journal was possible and that would be the case even if its creators would question the idea of Yugoslavness. We should not forget that some Symposionists got involved in prohibitions and scandals (just like the New Leftist criticism of the Praxis-circle in Zagreb held the government responsible for not representing leftist values).

The question is whether aesthetic and poetic procedures might be independent from this Yugoslav cultural political game. The avantgarde, unconventional, anti-authoritarian approach towards political themes always meant a problem, for example, with regards to ethnic minorities (e.g. the much disputed writing of Sándor Rózsa) or the freedom of artistic creation and art criticism (e.g. the writings of Viktória Radics, Ottó Tolnai, Miroslav Mandić, the performances of Katalin Ladik, the poem *Orgia mechanika* by Ottó Fenyvesi, or the activity of János Sziveri).

Playing with rules established by power was not only formulated along the lines of openly political questions but also on the poetic-aesthetic level. One of the graphic designers of *Új Symposion,* Ferenc Baráth recalls:

> We had no conventional solutions in graphic design. Typography was characterized by chaos, by a mess produced by taste and playfulness. That became our self-imposed profile. The textual content determined the visual design of a particular issue. Poetry or prose: I adjusted myself to that; the text determined the suitable typography (2017, 30).

Leaving aside the issue on pornography, this practice would not have resulted in prohibitions. This does not mean, however, that it has only raised apolitical aesthetic questions or that it supported the regime's ideology. If we compare it to the self-representative imagery of Tito's regime, then the experimental, unconventional visuals of *Új Symposion* could be regarded as an alternative to the official socialist realism (cf. Dánél 2016; Faragó 2018). The fact that it was realized through state-funded support constituted the paradox. As long as the editors followed the rules defined by the government, there were no problems.

'Cosmopolitan Reservations'

Huizinga interprets poetry as more than an aesthetic phenomenon:

> The first thing we have to do to gain such an understanding is to discard the idea that poetry has only an aesthetic function or can only be explained in terms of aesthetics ... All ancient poetry is at one and the same time a

ritual, entertainment, artistry, riddle-making, doctrine, persuasion, sorcery, soothsaying, prophecy, and competition (1980, 120).

One of the main traits of poetry is thus play. For Ex-Yugoslav artists, play manifested itself as experimentation, spontaneity, unconventionality. Symposionists came under the influence of the trend called ludism elaborated by Slovenian and Croatian poets. It was not merely an influence, however, but a playful competition permeating the entire Yugoslavian art scene. Apparently, Szerbhorváth was not aware of this dimension and uttered a huge misinterpretation: "Symposionists, roughly speaking, were sometimes the imitators of imitators. They were wearing current Western gears even after Yugoslavians themselves wore them off" (1980, 120). For one, 'current Western gears' fertilized Hungarian culture in a number of cases; it is enough to recall the turn-of-the-century Hungarian journal *Nyugat (West)* and its authors. The struggle to catch up with developed Western cultures has been a Hungarian issue since the foundation of the state (at that time, the ideological background and motivation was Christianity and not Europe-discourse, yet the process of Europeanization started there and then). Symposionist authors did not simply imitate Western European and American styles and trends, which they became familiar with through the Southern Slavic filter, but in a number of cases they created works in par with them in the spirit of Yugoslavian competition. If Szerbhorváth's aim was to analyse the development of Symposionist literature from an educational psychological point of view, he might have considered the fact that imitation was not necessarily a negative phenomenon but rather an integral part of the learning and creative process.[2] During that time Hungary followed a much more closed cultural policy, and the tradition of Vojvodinian literature was not strong and open enough, so it was only natural that the reception of the literatures of Yugoslavian nations provided a path towards contemporary world literature and art.

Some Symposionists broke loose from the confines of their provincial minority experience by re-evaluating it from a higher perspective rather than by negating it. They did not merely consume the Western European and American art as a trend but defined it as the horizon and context of their own art. Naturally, not all Symposionist authors achieved the same artistic level. Those who stood out received Serbian and Hun-

2   The idea of imitation as a process of learning originates from Plato (cf. the dialogue *Republic*). As for the educational psychological point of view see the essays by Pálffy Katalin Keményné (2002, 189—196) and Tamás Vekerdy (2016, 133).

garian literary prizes (e.g. Katalin Ladik, László Végel, Ottó Tolnai) and found success also in Poland and Western Europe. Surely their international reception was not as widespread as the Hungarian one, but it is not insignificant. On a sidenote, some authors (István Koncz, Pál Böndör) still have not been recognised as relevant in Hungary.

Returning to the trend of ludism: it is not clear when it started. There is no ludist manifesto as in the case of avantgarde '-isms'. Huizinga's claim that play is the basis of poetry makes it even more difficult to determine the beginnings of ludism. In the case of Yugoslav ludism, avantgarde and neo-avantgarde will be the guidelines. Croatian literary critic Dubravka Oraić differentiated between five types of ludism (1996, 99):

1. *semiotic ludism:* the play with the artistic sign. It has two variants:
   a.) inner: the play with the relation between signifier and signified (e.g. pun)
   b.) outer: e.g. theatrical performance of a text
2. *metaludism*: play with the play (e.g. the textual play with the word 'play' in Khlebnikov's work)
3. *autoludism*: play with one's own text (intertextuality with self-quotations)
4. *interludism*: play with various signs (all kinds of intertextualism and intermedialism)
5. *ontoludism*: play with reality, or the creation of artistic reality

If we take a comprehensive look at the history of Yugoslav poetry, we find that all the above mentioned types can be detected in the works of avantgarde authors. The term 'ludism', however, was initially coined by Croatian literary historians to describe the poetry of Ivan Slamnig from the 1950s. His reception is loaded with the label 'play' (Donat 2004, 7). The same is true of the poetry of Josip Sever, who used Khlebnikovian 'zaum'-plays (Bagić 1994, 23–98); he was another Croatian poet of great influence, who inspired the development and orgy of the Croatian ludist poetry of the 1970s and 1980s, especially among the authors of the journal *Quorum*. Zvonimir Mrkonjić defines ludism thus (in relation to lettrism):

> play with structures of sounds, the creation of sound formations or sonic neologisms from the dissolutions of the conventional forms of words. According to a later interpretation, originating from Slovenian poetry, ludism is concerned with the verbal visualization of objective relations following

the practice of the OHO group (for example some poems from the collections *Comets, comets* by Zvonko Maković and *Tekst* by Branko Maleš) (2008).

All of this indicates that ludism that spread after World War II is a tradition subverted by the historical avantgarde and that it built up its playful poetic constructions from the ruins of conventions. Ludist poems are condensations of semantic chaos: poetic plays with remnants of semanto- and iconoclasm. Poetic discourse is frequently moved rather by catachresis than by conventional tropic figures. In a number of cases, this play can be found in the works of neo-avantgarde conceptualism and lettrism. Ludist poems are not narrative; from the perspective of conventional hermeneutics they seem to be hermetic, inconceivable, nonsense, discarding reading strategies aimed at understanding. Ludist works are characterized by humour, irony, absurdity, grotesque, non-hierarchical mixtures of cultural registers via intertextual and intermedial quotations, and playful subject-destructions. According to Serbian poet and theoretician Dubravka Đurić

> radical poets research the space of the paper sheet, and conceive text as the score of verbal performance. They look for the possibilities of language using processes discovered in other media. They mix genres creating multigeneric effects and thus transcend divisions between different artistic branches. They question the bourgeois norms of society, harshly criticize the l'art pour l'art principle and elitist aesthetics of poetry. Their artistic activity is provocative and pervading political, ethical and aesthetic questions (2004, 81).

This radical poetic practice does not only relate to the avantgarde but also to *A Throw of Dice…* (1897) by symbolist Mallarmé. According to its Hungarian translator, Gyula Tellér, this poem is untranslatable, but this quality makes it paradoxically spellbinding:

> Finally there is the sound material of language, the key sentence's alexandrine imbalanced with a thirteenth syllable modelling accidentality, thousands and thousands possibilities of playing with sound, rhythm and tone. Hardly or non-translatable language-bound singularities … 'Blanks' between articulate sentences or clauses are tightly bound to the linguistic material, they organize the lines and associations of thought, now slowing, then accelerating, enhancing, distancing via symmetric positions, now opposing, then linking. They behave like the content-organizing categories of a visual syntax. Mallarmé has found a new form, a third possibility besides free verse and prose verse that tried to overcome the outbreathed alexan-

drine: the visual poem that enlists typography and the containing visual field among its formal poetic elements (Mallarmé 1985, 54–55).

A Throw of Dice... is the first realization of 'pure poetry' as defined by Mallarmé's disciple Paul Valéry. When Ottó Tolnai refers to 'pure poetry', this is his source.

It is not by chance either that one of the defining figures of Vojvodinian Serbian poetry, performance and postpunk, Slobodan Tišma referred to the enigmatic masterpiece of Mallarmé on a number of occasions. Tišma's poem *Vrt kao to* (*Garden as It Is*, 1977) is based on *A Throw of Dice...* (the motif of a dice/cube recurs in several earlier poems by the author that can also be linked to Kazimir Malevich's black square). According to Miško Šuvaković,

> the poem of the late nineteen-sixties is still a symbolic body dragged out by Tišma from the vortex of modernist questions concerning the boundaries of language (for Mallarmé, it is the sound of accidental language searching for its own tone, for Rilke it is the discrete tone of the inner sound of time and space, for Wittgenstein these are questions related to language and its beyond, which language grabs and then drops) (1997, 96).

In the case of the poem *Vrt kao to,* Tišma is concerned with decomposing, preventing, problematising the linguistic subject.

Backgrounds differ elsewhere. In the Slovenian member state, the first 'concrete poems' by Aleš Kermauner, Franci Zagoričnik and Tomaž Šalamun were published in 1965 in the university journal *Tribuna*, and were based on the avantgarde constructivist tradition (the konses of Srečko Kosovel). Soon afterwards, the poetic, artistic and performing group OHO was founded (Franci Zagoričnik, Iztok Geister Plamen, Marko Pogačnik, Matjaž Hanžek, Milenko Matanović and Vojin Kovač-Chubby) and turned out to be a source of inspiration also for Croatian and Serbian authors and artists (in Vojvodinian context: the groups KÔD, E), Januar, Februar, Bosch+Bosch and others were inspired by the Slovenian initiative).[3] According to Croatian literary historian Branimir Bošnjak, radical experiments with language and visual imagery were realized in their most consequent form in the Slovenian scene (n.d., 160). Slovenian theoretician Taras Kemauner called these experiments reisms (6–7). Dubravka Đurić coined the term 'cosmopolitan reservation' for the neo-avantgarde Yugoslav artistic phenomena:

3   About the ludism of the Slovenian group OHO, see Igor Zabel's essay *Uloga igre u delu OHO* (1996, 355—362).

It was not the revision and re-actualization of the avantgarde between the World Wars, but rather an authentic existentialist response to the ideological, cultural and artistic requirements of the nineteen-fifties and sixties (2004, 91).

When we look at the experimentation of Symposionist poetry with ludism, reism, conceptualism, lettrism, it turns out that it not merely had aesthetic aspects, but also took social-political and existential risks. Symposionists first reckoned with the 'frog-' and 'church tower-' perspective of the Vojvodinian Hungarian poetry. Then came their ambivalent play with the Vojvodinian state apparatus. In this way the ludist chaos-forms of Symposionist poetry constituted an attempt at creating a space of personal autonomy from the political and the existential scale.

Nikola Dedić claims that this radical experimentation is an attribute of 'neo-avantgarde textualism' (2008, 595–602). Serbian reception does not differentiate between 'neo-avantgarde textualism' and 'Vojvodinian textualism' (Šuvaković 1997) on a national/ethnic basis. However, due to the language barrier, Serbs are familiar only with those Yugoslav authors whose works have been translated to either Serbian or Croatian. Šuvaković uses the epithet 'Vojvodinian' since, in contrast to the fragmented, critical 'Vojvodinian textualism', the criticism and poetry in Belgrade were more conventional, with verism, i.e. narrative types of poetry, coming to the fore. Bálint Szombathy (1991, 91–100) defines antecedents of 'neo-avantgarde textualism' and conceptualism as the verbo-voco-visual poetry in the Serbian tradition (authors surrounding zenithist and surrealist Dragan Aleksić and Ljubomir Micić). The notion of 'textualism' might be extended to Symposionist poetry, too, and then we can talk about 'Symposionist textualism' and linguistic-visual fireworks (which in the case of Katalin Ladik were enriched by phonic experiments).

Old News?

In the nineteen-nineties, young Slovenian, Croatian and Serbian poets were not much fascinated with ludism. The play of poetry was not exhausted, however, only its means of expression were transformed. In Hungarian literature, ludism appeared more or less idiosyncratically only in the individual poetics of some Symposionist authors. There is no such thing as pure ludist Symposionist poetry. There exist as many ludisms as the number of Southern Slavic poets who have used ludist strategies in their poetics. Ludism is a principle, a parasitic poetics rather than an au-

tonomous 'ism' with a clear manifesto. In accordance with neo-avant-garde, ludism pluralized the space of literature.

Poetic experiments do not permeate the deep layers of society. They remain on the margins of conventions. This means that the freedom resulting from poetic play is always a marginal, subcultural phenomenon. Social changes might define the playgrounds of poetry, but causation in the other direction is much less likely. Avantgarde artistic trends strove for social change, determining the utopia of the 'new' through far leftist or far rightist political movements. In the Yugoslav example, Symposionist poetry did not radically change the traditions of Vojvodinian Hungarian politics. Symposionist poetry created an alternative, critical politics through poetic means—a yet unfinished experiment of the freedom of the 'poetically dwelling' man; an experiment and play still waiting for future experimenting players.

Translated from Hungarian by Zoltán Lengyel and revised by Barbara Jurša

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From War to Peace:
The Literary Life of Georgia after the Second World War

Irma Ratiani

Georgian literature before the Second World War was by no means flourishing. As a result of the political purges of the 1930s conducted by Soviet government, the leading Georgian writers were eliminated. Georgian Modernism and the Georgian Avant-Garde, which had found itself in antagonism with the ideological principles of the Soviet dictatorship from the outset, ceased to exist.[1] This current of literature that rejected Socialist Realism was based on the progressive Western spirit and modernist philosophy (intuitivism, Freudianism, pragmatism, and neo-positivism). However, the traditional synthesis of national values with Western tendencies was particularly observable in the establishment of the idea of Georgian renewal, which was the sign of a desire to change reality. Accompanied by literature with the status of a bearer of culture, new interpretations of national identity became "associated with awareness of the national cultural image against the background of the inevitable process

[1] Georgian Modernism and the Georgian Avant-Garde as two literary styles or variants were formed in the first half of the twentieth century, during the modernist period. With its depth and subjectivism, the openness of its thinking, and the transgression of stylistic boundaries, Georgian Modernism constituted a threat to the Soviet ideological system, but according to Bela Tsipuria the Georgian Avant-Garde created no less a threat to Soviet cultural policy, despite the fact that it rejected the entire system of spiritual problems and existential relations (Tsipuria, 2010). Georgian Modernism and the Georgian Avant-Garde, as forms of anti-Soviet discourse, expressed the anti-Soviet pathos of artists distinguished by their free ideological position. For more details, see also Bela Tsipuria and Gaga Lomidze (Tsipuria, 2010, Lomidze, 2016a, and Lomidze 2016b).

of Europeanization—in order to acquire a strong position with regard to European culture" (Tsipuria 2010, 11). These ideas were intractable for Soviet ideologists. With the help of the aggressive efforts of the authorities, a "new Soviet canon emerged to replace the universal one" (Ratiani 2015, 161). The Soviet literary canon soon replaced the national one, and Georgian literature was distanced from Western European literary space.

During the Second World War, the generalized Soviet mental correlate of *Homo sovieticus* was finally formed: the 'Great Patriotic War' served as a prop of the dictatorship. The concept 'I' had long since been replaced by the concept 'We,' which was the most significant achievement of the policy of equality and collectivism declared in the Soviet Union. During the war, the speech of Soviet journalism proved to be the most successful functional and stylistic implementation of Soviet discourse. Social and political journalism proceeding from its genre specificity fully fit the process of the ideology; however, in a discourse of this type two different layers can be distinguished:

a) The official press as a manifestation of the position of Soviet ideologues; this included the leading newspapers (*Pravda, Izvestia, Komunisti*, etc.) as well as journals in which popular and scholarly articles were controlled, and radio reports (one need only recall the well-known timbre and dramatic texts of Yuri Levitan, a Soviet radio announcer during the Second World War);[2] and
b) Artistically refined patriotic texts of authoritative writers expressing sincere support for the overall ethnic problem.

In contrast to these two layers, epistolary texts (i.e., writers' personal records and private correspondence) were one of the rare examples in which the split was felt between the official stance and the real situation. Owing to the experience of general physical threat, from 1941 to 1945 anti-Soviet discourse, which was well shaped in the 1930s, was present only in the underground, and it also acquired a relatively fragmentary character. Even a desire to single out the identities of Soviet peoples was regarded as treason: the wartime film directors were forced to introduce a multiethnic gallery of characters into their films, which further intensified the pathos of universal consolidation and harmonious coexistence, much more significant than national self-determination. Invocations of the common social threat and consolidation further refuted the necessity

2   Yuri Levitan was the primary Soviet radio announcer during and after the Second World War. He announced all major international events from the 1940s to the 1960s.

of determining identities: the acute issue of ethnic identity fell into oblivion for a long period.

Moreover, the dictatorship distorted the interpretation of the texts by classic Georgian writers. During the war, one can observe that the process of returning to the works of classic nineteenth-century Georgian writers such as Ilia Chavchavadze (1837–1907), Akaki Tsereteli (1840–1915), Aleksandre Qazbegi (1848–1893), and Vazha–Pshavela (1861–1915) was neglected against the background of post-revolutionary passions, and, when they were used as a reference, they were reinterpreted against the grain of new revolutionary thought. This was a deliberate ideological maneuver: Soviet criticism 'diligently' rewrote the strategies of romantic, realist, and even modernist classical texts that had previously served as a cultural-literary reference for Georgian national identity, and it reduced the issue of ethnic identity to the level of education. This spirit immediately spread to visual art (theatre, cinema, and painting), resulting in narrative patterns that were 'modernized' according to the Soviet pattern in both literary texts and visual art. Films such as *Otaraant Qvrivi* (Otar's Widow) and *Glakhis Naambobi* (The Story of a Beggar) are perfect examples of this reduction. Both examples are especially noteworthy because both movies are adaptations of texts written by the aforementioned Chavchavadze, a representative of critical realism. However, even when visual art did not draw on the preceding literary text, during the Second World War Soviet power was assisted by scriptwriters and playwrights that devoted special attention to the heroism of the Soviet people, or entertained audiences with light naive comedies.

Against this background, it was obvious that every step against the flow was punished severely. In 1942 the young but already well-known writer Kote Khimshiashvili was shot for participating in an anti-Soviet conspiracy. Twenty promising Georgians were shot along with him. The incident is known as the Samanelebi Case. At the beginning of the Second World War, an anti-Soviet underground organization called Samani was established; the organization brought together young nationalists and its aim was to overthrow the Soviet regime and to restore the independence of Georgia and private property in Georgia.

The Second World War gave rise to young authors and poets such as Lado Asatiani (1917–1943), Alexandre Sajaia (1916–1944), and Mirza Gelovani (1917–1944). All of them died before the end of the Second World War. Their verses were mostly dedicated to their motherland or beloved Tbilisi, to friendship, or to love and beauty. Their poetry thus changed the point of view of the lyrical narrator from the distant and often pa-

thetic address adopted in Soviet poetry of the time to an intimate conversation with the reader. Viewed from this perspective, this was a new phenomenon, in a way comparable to the epistolary texts and their anti-Soviet (i.e., anti-official) stance, despite the fact that Asatiani's, Sajaia's and Gelovani's poetry, in fact, merges styles from the nineteenth century; namely, both realism and romanticism. Their mixture therefore complements the poetry of an older generation that was still present, especially in Galaktion Tabidze (1891–1959) and Giorgi Leonidze (1900–1966).

After the war, the political changes occurred in the Soviet Union. The guns fell silent, and in 1953 Joseph Stalin—the incarnate symbol of the country—died. Soon the much-talked-about Twentieth Assembly of the Communist Party of the Soviet Union followed (1956). In a speech by the leader of the Communist Party, Nikita Khrushchev, the following was declared:

> Comrades, we must decisively abolish the cult of the individual, once and for all; we must draw the proper conclusions concerning both ideological-theoretical and practical work.
>
> It is necessary for this purpose:
>
> First, in a Bolshevik manner to condemn and to eradicate the cult of the individual as alien to Marxism–Leninism and not consonant with the principles of party leadership and the norms of party life, and to inexorably fight all attempts at bringing back this practice in one form or another.
>
> To return to and actually practice in all our ideological work the most important theses of Marxist–Leninist science about the people as the creator of history and as the creator of all material and spiritual good of humanity, about the decisive role of the Marxist party in the revolutionary fight for the transformation of society, about the victory of communism.
>
> In this connection we will be forced to do much work in order to critically examine from the Marxist–Leninist viewpoint and to correct the widespread erroneous views connected with the cult of the individual in the spheres of history, philosophy, economics, and other sciences, as well as in literature and the fine arts ...
>
> Second, to systematically and consistently continue the work done by the party's central committee during the last years, work characterized by minute observation in all party organizations, from the bottom to the top, of the Leninist principles of party leadership, characterized, above all, by the main principle of collective leadership ...
>
> Third, to completely restore the Leninist principles of Soviet socialist democracy, expressed in the constitution of the Soviet Union, to fight willfulness of individuals abusing their power (XX syezd KPSS 2018, 3–5).

This was a modification of the Soviet regime, stressing Stalin's political and personal despotism.

Social and Cultural Reaction to the Political Transfiguration of Soviet Government

In Georgia the Twentieth Assembly of the Communist Party was followed by serious political unrest that resulted in several casualties in the events of March 9th, 1956. It is still unclear whether the unrest spread from a clear political position, or if it was a demonstration of insulted national pride.

Criticism of Stalin's cult had gained unexpected dimensions. Khrushchev substantially emphasized Stalin's nationality, although it was widely known that Georgia was terribly affected by political repressions. Georgians perceived Khrushchev's speech as insult to the Georgian nation, inasmuch as Stalin was a native Georgian, and starting on March 3rd, 1956 protest marches began in Tbilisi, organized by Georgian students. On March 7th the number of participants in the protest rallies exceeded several thousand. Slogans concerning Georgia's independence also emerged. Some young poets publicly read newly composed poems dedicated to Stalin, emphasizing his best national characteristics. In a strange way, Stalin's name was linked with the idea of Georgian independence. Meanwhile, the situation was getting out of hand, and the government decided to use force against the demonstrators. On the night of March 9th, the Soviet Army killed more than 150 young people and drowned more of them. The exact number of dead is still unknown. According to various sources, the number of casualties ranged from one hundred to one thousand people (Verulava). Soon after, Zviad Gamsakhurdia (1939–1993)[3] and Merab Kostava (1939–1989), members of the illegal anti-Soviet group, protested against the Soviet regime. On December 15th, 1956, the Security Committee detained all the members of the illegal group. It is possible to characterize the March 1956 events as the first open rebellion against the Soviet regime in Georgia: in the early 1960s this energy was transformed into the Georgian dissident movement, led in particular by Gamsakhurdia, Kostava, Zurab Chavchavadze (1953–1989), and Giorgi Tchanturia (1959–1994).

3   Gamsakhurdia was the first president of Georgia (1991–1993), elected after its political independence.

Soon after, in the mid-1950s, the Khrushchev Thaw (Russian: *Ottepel*)[4] began throughout the Soviet Union; the sound of guns was replaced by influence from the West.

The literary processes during the Thaw also present quite a different picture compared to the previous decades of Soviet life. Under liberalization, various tendencies can be noticed: on the one hand, authors following Soviet ideology felt the need to reevaluate their own texts (which in individual cases even led to tragic results), and on the other hand, after an interval of almost thirty years, the influence of Western literary trends grew markedly. The literary life of the Soviet countries, including Georgia, moved to a qualitatively new stage. Against the background of the painful experience of intellectual terror, repressions, fighting, controversies, and fear under the Communist regime, even a slight parting of the Iron Curtain had a significant influence on the cultural and literary life of this artificially constructed country. Whereas the world beyond the Iron Curtain found its way into the homes of Soviet leaders in the form of Marlboro cigarettes and other imported wares, literature was given the opportunity to 'glance' at Western trends and conceptions. Inside the Soviet Union, the influence of Western literary tendencies increased openly, invading Soviet territory with Hemingway themes,[5] as well as with Neo-Realistic experiments, accompanied by romantic dreams of friendship, sincerity, refined relations, and a desire for freedom (Ratiani 2015, 176).

The questions to be answered are as follows: How much did Soviet Neo-Realism, as developed in the literatures of Soviet countries, resemble Italian and, in general, European Neo-Realism? How strictly was reality reflected in it? Was the contrasting play of realistic chiaroscuro perceptible?

Discussion about Neo-Realism in the Soviet Union was started in the 1920s by Yevgeny Zamyatin. In doing so, he tried to establish his own

4   Khrushchev's Thaw refers to the relative liberalization of the USSR's internal policy (de-Stalinization) and external policy (based on the principle of peaceful coexistence) in the late 1950s and in the first half of the 1960s. The term arose in association with Ilya Ehrenburg's 1954 novel *Ottepel* (The Thaw). However, the party leadership and Khrushchev himself condemned the new trends in literature and art, declaring them to be a "perversion" of Soviet reality, formalism, and imitation of the bourgeois culture of the West (Orlov et al. 2012, 376–377). At the end of 1960s, the Thaw was exhausted.

5   The first book by Hemingway published in the Soviet Union (in 1935) was *The Sun also Rises*; soon after, other works of his were translated.

style of literary experiments. Interpretation of the term by Zamyatin was based on the reconciliation of the aesthetics of Realism with the aesthetics of Romanticism and Modernism, and especially with the aesthetics of Surrealism.[6] Despite the fact that the majority of Russian scholars still recognize the term Neo-Realism in the way it was established by Zamyatin and although they admit its effectiveness for Russian literature of the 1920s, it seems that the definition of the term, based only on an aesthetic criterion, was insufficient to become more widespread. This was possible only later, when Neo-Realism became connected with a concrete political phenomenon: the Second World War and the life of the postwar community.

It is widely known that Italian and European Neo-Realism in cinema and literature reflected the difficult living conditions of ordinary people from the political and social viewpoint in post-fascist European society. Special significance was given to worthy behavior and proper life principles. Against this background, great attention was attached to details and nuances, which facilitated identifying the narrated story with the realism of life after the Second World War, and at first glance simple life values became important: the humanism, morality, kindness, and sincerity of human relationships (cf. Pacifici 1956; Chiaromonte 1953). Soviet Neo-Realism was an interesting variant of European Neo-Realism (Ratiani 2018, 177): Soviet power, unlike defeated fascism, was modified, but still continued to exist. It was a reality that offered to restore and observe the 'Leninist principles' within society, thereby hindering one of the main principles of Neo-Realism: realization of the just uprising of an individual against ideological violence and moral humiliation. Nevertheless, in the literary model of Neo-Realism, Soviet writers intuitively observed the perspective of the encounter of postwar Soviet literature with the literatures of the non-Soviet European countries. An adaptation of the Western model was nevertheless needed. Soviet Neo-Realism moved away from political themes and was shaped into thoughtful literature distanced from ideology, which was imbued with anticipation and the feeling of freedom, rather than searching for and analyzing its real results.[7] Distance from ideology gave it an opportunity to exist, where-

6   Zamyatin's concept of Neo-Realism was manifested in lectures and articles from 1918 to the 1920s: "Sovremennaja russkaja literatura" (Modern Russian Literature), "O sintetizme" (Syntheticism), "O literature, revoljutsii i entropii" (Literature, Revolution, and Entropy), "Ob jazike" (Language), and so on.

7   A clear example is the fact that the events in Georgia on March 9th, 1956 in fact did not find adequate reflection in Georgian literature and produced only a dull echo in a few texts.

as the change of the engine of the ideological machine allowed it to orient itself toward human problems and to react to actual deep, often unhealed wounds. Perhaps, this is the charm of Neo-Realism, which, unlike the classical Realism of the nineteenth century, is able to exist with almost equal effectiveness under the conditions of dissimilar political and social systems.

If one accepts the definition above, it is possible to define Guram Rcheulishvili (1934–1960), Archil Sulakauri (1927–1997), and Erlom Akhvlediani (1933–2012) as the main representatives of Georgian Neo-Realist prose at the end of the 1950s. Their work can be regarded as a successful attempt to return from the isolation of Soviet literature to the international literary process, accomplished after slightly less than thirty years from the destruction of Georgian Modernism. Guram Rcheulishvili's prose is proof of the fundamental changes of literary subjects and style, by means of which the writer completely disowns the cultural-stylistic model of *Homo sovieticus* and is directed toward conceptual, emotional, and representational freedom. His legacy includes numerous brilliant stories and novellas, such as *Bizia kotes shemodgoma* (Uncle Kote's Autumn), *Sikvaruli martis tveshi* (Love in March), *Neli tango* (The Slow Tango), and *Alaverdoba*, which in a realistic manner of vision and laconic style of narration depict postwar cities and people that feel sadness and pain, tackle everyday monotony and small problems, adhere to high moral principles and civil values, and at the same time are full of love, nostalgia, and an insatiable desire to support one another. For Rcheulishvili the world is built on the Neo-Realistic play of chiaroscuro. It should be noted that, despite introducing a new narrative strategy, Rcheulishvili does not reject the characteristics of Georgian classical narrative, manifested in the traditionally conceived reflection of the Georgian character and anguish. Instead, his works harmoniously combine the classical narrative with the modern narrative technique (see Tsereteli 1961; Asatiani 2002; Jaliashvili 2014). In the opinion of Georgian literary history, despite his early death Rcheulishvili thus became of the most influential authors in modern Georgian literature.

The first stories by Archil Sulakauri—*Talghebi napirisken miistsrapian* (*Waves Strive for the Shore*), *Tsqaldidoba* (The Flood), *Mtredebi* (Pigeons), and *Bichi da dzaghli* (A Boy and a Dog)—are also filled with the Neo-Realistic mood. Despite the vicinity of the war, people are gradually returning to leading a normal life and, along with this, to the world of human feelings, frozen in the cold of the war, or perhaps thawed by the postwar tears: feelings of love, expectations, excitement, and hopes. Howev-

er, somewhere, as a necessary texture, there is always a memory—an open wound, trace, or grief that cannot be cured by time. A contemporary of Guram Rcheulishvili and Archil Sulakauri, Erlom Akhvlediani is also oriented toward the Western literary standard. The writer boldly leads the Georgian reader, still having the Soviet mentality, into the unusual and deep layers of imagination. Later Erlom Akhvlediani's book *Vano da Niko* (Vano and Niko), which shattered the stereotypes of the worldview, acquired a landmark importance for the history of Georgian literature (Ratiani 2018, 178).

Nodar Dumbadze (1928–1984) also began his literary career within the Neo-Realistic mood, although later he resorted to the format of other literary schools as well. In 1960 the writer's Neo-Realistic novel *Me, Bebia, Iliko da Ilarioni* (I, Grandmother, Iliko, and Ilarion) created a furor. This, at first glance, inoffensive, humorous text, narrating of the life of a Georgian village during and after the Second World War and of kind, often naive adventures of its inhabitants, is tinged with great human sadness. Laughter is again a protective mask; behind the mask the profound sadness of people and their unsolved problems are covered: the parentless existence of a little boy (a result of the war), pain and emptiness, and the inability and incapability of people to prevent the tragedy of the war. Behind the sad laughter the author demands answers to global questions: Why is war necessary? Why wars are waged? Why do people die in wars? What kind of imprint does a war leave on the life of a new generation? Nodar Dumbadze's humor mixed with sadness successfully moved into several other of his texts as well; for example, into his next novel *Me vkhedav mzes* (I See the Sun).

The literary model of Soviet Neo-Realism could be considered one of the main markers of current and future challenges in the literary life of Georgia.

Establishment of Modern Georgian Literature

The main landmark of the metamorphosis of the time and its concepts as well as that of the boundary of the decades (the 1950s and 1960s) is a history of a death. In 1959 a significant stage of the history of Georgian poetry of the twentieth century, distinguished by the fatal clash of Soviet dictatorship and genuine poetry, ended in a tragedy. Galaktion Tabidze, who had a negative attitude toward Soviet power from the outset, committed suicide. Discussing one of Tabidze's poems, Teimuraz Doiashvili notes:

The poem *1920*, written a few days before Sovietization, might have proved dangerous for the poet. Despite its intimate-lyrical character, the poem evidently contains a negative characterization of the new, post-revolutionary time: we are dealing not with a time of renewal—the great revolution that should have brought the desired freedom to the people, but a 'horrible time'—an 'ignorant century', when the 'curse of the time' on behalf of social equality destroys people physically and spiritually (Doiashvili 2012, 110–111).

Galaktion Tabidze's suicide divided not only the period, but also the history of Georgian literature. Georgian poetry and literary taste of the subsequent period, distinguished by large-scale thematic and stylistic transformations, was built either in harmony with or in opposition to Tabidze's poetry. Exactly in this syncope, or gap in time, the outlines of modern Georgian literature assumed shape. At the beginning of the 1960s, Georgian literature, having already passed through the stages of acute opposition with the ideological regime, struggle, liquidation, and renewal, was looking toward new horizons. Although the regime was still strong, literature was ready itself for a reconstruction.

Every literary period is a result of a certain preliminary, often long, cultural preparation. Hence, the history of contemporary Georgian literature should be counted from the end of the 1950s and the first half of the 1960s, the period when Georgian literature was largely affected by thematic and stylistic innovations of landmark importance. However, the literature of the second half of the twentieth century, despite its different format, is closely intertwined not only with the Georgian literature of the first half of the same century, but also with the Georgian literary tradition of the previous periods. Georgian poets of the new wave were in close contact with remarkable, still living and active Georgian poets of the older generation—Giorgi Leonidze (1900–1966) and Simon Chiqovani (1902–1966)—as well as with representatives of Georgian classical poetry. I share the viewpoint according to which

> literature of the twentieth century is a manifestation of a single 'long line' of heredity, where the traditions are traced back not only to the immediate predecessors, not only 'beyond the generations' (e.g., beyond the generation of 'fathers' to the generation of 'grandfathers'), but often to the deep historical layers of culture (this became a stimulus for discovery of intertextuality as a phenomenon) ... *Heredity lines, vectors of artistic interrelation* not only extend and go to the depth of the centuries, to the origin of culture, but are also divided. Division and branches of culture and its roots are

manifested in the fact that the European literature of the twentieth century is traced back not only to its own European traditions (medieval cultural tradition in novels by Umberto Eco), but also to African traditions (Picasso's cubism) and Oriental traditions (stories by Fazil Iscander) (Borev 2001, 461–462).

The Soviet machinery was also unable to oppose this tendency, the more so after the war, when even ordinary soldiers were given the opportunity to see European countries (many of them did not even return to the Soviet Union). The tendency of 'heredity' and 'division' little by little emerged in the already modified Soviet literary area. Coherence not only with Georgian, but also with non-Georgian, world literary, and cultural tradition is revealed by Georgian literature of the second half of the twentieth century, which gradually opened the circle formed by the regime, transforming it first into a spiral, and then into an open construction, in order to finally achieve freedom.

One of the outcomes of those processes was the rise of women's writing. The first important author of women's writing is Ana Kalandadze (1924–2008), who went through quite a thorny experience of relations with Soviet power. In addition to the fact that her poetic voice was distinguished by the innovativeness and progressiveness that were topical for the new period, the appearance of a talented female poet in the poetic arena, where women's literature was in a marginal position, also had a significant gender loading. The work of Ana Kalandadze became one the earliest manifestations of the liberation of poetic discourse from Soviet political influence. By means of emotional, pensive verse, based on minimalist manner, Kalandadze's poetry bears an organic resemblance to the visions of contemporary Western female poets. However, in Kalandadze's poetry a woman's vision is elegantly intertwined with the traditional Georgian model of national consciousness—that is, with the system of Georgian historical, mythological, and cultural archetypes—due to which her poetry retains the form of an original poetic model (Ratiani 183). At the beginning of the 1960s and later in the 1960s and into the 1970s, the history of contemporary Georgian poetry—in the form of liberalized poetic discourse—consists of young poets such as Shota Chantladze, Otar Chiladze, Tamaz Chiladze, Mukhran Machavariani, Murman Lebanidze, Givi Gegechkori, Shota Nishnianidze, Archil Sulakauri, Tariel Chanturia, Vakhtang Javakhadze, Mikheil Kvlividze, Jansugh Charkviani, Emzar Kvitashvili, Rezo Amashukeli, and Moris Potskhishvili. This is an incomplete list of the poets of the 1960s in whose poetic texts the influence of Western literary fashion is clearly observ-

able. The free poetic style increased, but at the same time it organically merged with the traditional Georgian poetic spirit. Patriotic and even anti-ideological themes were also manifested. The best example of this is a poetical cycle by Mukhran Machavariani (1929–2010) dedicated to the Georgian conspiracy in 1832.[8] "Is Georgian a language only? / No, it is Georgian's Religion! / God! / Fate!" declares Mukhran Machavariani to manifest that a sense of national identity, national values, and dignity still remained in the Soviet Republic of Georgia.

The works of young poets were published in leading newspapers and magazines; they published poetry collections and offered Georgian readers various poetic visions and rhymes, and semantic and formal innovations. However, this relatively free, pro-Western model of discourse, equally established in Georgian poetry and prose, proved to be a result of the brief political Thaw. Starting in the 1970s the Thaw became dangerous, and the instinct of banning foreign influences was again reactivated—the aggression of the Soviet government intensified toward any innovation, which, on the one hand, acquired an extremely artificial character, and on the other, violated the elementary norms of communication. As a result, writers as some of the most qualified users of information were suffering from a lack of information. This period held in a political grip gained the status of a period of stagnation, and Georgian literature patiently started searching for alternative means of representation.

Translated by Irene Kujtsia.

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8   In 1832, Georgian nobles united against Russian Tsarism, but the conspiracy was betrayed and all the members of the conspiracy were punished by the Russian emperor.

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The Forbidden Homeland: Viktor Nozadze's Scholarly Activity from the Soviet Ideological Viewpoint

Maka Elbakidze

"Every Georgian abroad is a representative of his nation" (Nozadze, 1958): these are the words of the Georgian emigre writer and scholar Viktor Nozadze (1893–1975), who was doomed to live in exile.[1] His creative maturity coincided with the period when the authorities in Georgia, which came under Communist rule in 1921, blocked the way for all that could not adapt to the new political system. The path of his dramatic life covers a fairly wide geographical area: France, Germany, Austria, Argentina, Chile, Brazil, Spain, and finally again France. During his thirty years of wanderings, completely alone without financial support, he created six monumental volumes devoted to the main issues in *The Knight in the Panther's Skin* (Georgian: *Vepkhistqaosani*), a medieval romance by Shota Rustaveli.[2]

2   *The Knight in the Panther's Skin* is a medieval romance (1187–1207) by Shota Rustaveli, who is believed to have been Queen Tamar's (1189–1210) royal treasurer. The plot of the romance unfolds through an Oriental-type framework adapted to Georgian conditions. The social relations of late medieval Georgia described in *The Knight in the Panther's Skin*, called self-and-master relations, are similar to vassalage in medieval feudal Europe. The supreme master of the country is the king (Rostevan in Arabia and Saridan in India). The king has many serfs or vassals; that is, noble feudal lords (Avtandil, an army commander of Arabia, and Tariel, the prince of the seventh Kingdom of India), who are obliged to respect, obey, and faithfully serve their

"Those Who Are Not with Us Are Against Us"

Viktor Nozadze received his tertiary education at the University of Moscow. His years as a student during the 1910s coincided with an intensification of the revolutionary spirit at leading Russian universities, active participation of students in illegal activities, persecution of 'unreliable persons,' and clashes with the police. It is clear that Nozadze was actively involved in all these processes because he returned in Georgia with the first wave of the February Revolution of 1917. The proclamation of the Democratic Republic of Georgia in 1918 found him in Tbilisi. Like all leftist Georgians, he welcomed this historical and political event. Nozadze was one of sixty-nine students that the government of Georgia sent abroad to receive their education. The objective of the new government was clear and well-defined. To launch the country's management structure at the necessary level, intelligent young professionals were needed, educated at European universities and imbued with progressive ideas. They were expected to use what they learned in Europe to develop and advance the Democratic Republic of Georgia. This goal was well understood by all sixty-nine envoys. From England, Nozadze wrote to his compatriot, the painter Shalva Kikodze: "We are the first persons sent to Europe; we do not belong to ourselves. We belong to Georgia, and woe to those that return empty and fail to bring anything to the native country" (Sharadze 2004, 38).

However, the Independent Republic of Georgia existed for only three years; on February 25th, 1921, the Soviet army occupied Georgia and Soviet rule was established. The communist regime announced a special ideological struggle against the Georgians that had gone abroad for their education or worked there. Those that managed to return to their homeland and escape the purges of the 1920s were reminded of their 'dubious past' during the 1930s and accused of counter-revolutionary activities,

> master. Correspondingly, the human ideal described in the romance is the ideal of a knight (heroic and romantic). Rustaveli's characters have all the features of an ideal man (beauty, generosity, modesty, military virtues, and so forth), of which wisdom and intellect are of major importance, and they do all they can to help their friends, eradicate injustice, and achieve their top ideal in this world: love, which is ultimately equal to the victory of good over evil. The characters in *The Knight in the Panther's Skin* achieve their goals relying on their own mental and physical potential and untamable aspiration toward victory. All of this is motivated by love and guided by faith in God and fate. This vision of human potential goes beyond the mediaeval method for resolving this problem and rises to the level of Renaissance thinking.

spying, and political indifference; they were shot or sent to the gulag.[3] Those that had emigrated were deprived of the right of choice: their emigration, which was deemed by many of them to be temporary, turned into a permanent situation after the Second World War.

Years of Emigration

Before the Second World War, Viktor Nozadze lived in Paris and was engaged in journalism. He published articles in Georgian emigrant periodicals, the newspaper *Tetri Giorgi*, and the journals *Kartlosi*, *Mamuli*, and *Kavkasioni*. These publications played a very important role in preserving the national and mental identity of Georgian emigres. After Germany declared war on the Soviet Union, Georgian emigrants naively believed that, in the case of victory, Germany would carry out the policy of the First World War, and they therefore saw Nazi Germany as an instrument for restoration of the independence of Georgia, which had been extinguished by the Bolsheviks. However, the so-called Great Patriotic War ended in the victory of the Soviet Union; Soviet Georgia was a member of the 'single brotherly family' actively engaged in building the socialist future, and the Georgian emigration lost hope of returning. Some of the emigres attempted to dispel their nostalgia by means of publishing and scholarship, one of them being Nozadze, who avoided the postwar tensions in South America, where he engaged in scholarly work and started systematically studying Shota Rustaveli's *The Knight in the Panther's Skin* and its connection with world culture. His work made it easier for later researchers to determine the place of Georgian literature—and, specifically, *The Knight in the Panther's Skin*—in the context of world civilization. Nozadze started his study (or, in his own words, 'scrutiny') of *The Knight in the Panther's Skin* during his Berlin period at the end of the Second World War, but the book publication of his work only became possible in South America.

    The outcome of Viktor Nozadze's long-term research can be summarized as follows: in the development of world culture, the Georgian nation was not a supplier, but a receiver. It has to be added that, following the views of Richard Reitzenstein and Otto von Wesendonk, Nozadze imagined the nation as an organism, which is why his remarks were not only applied to literary processes. Reitzenstein believed that in observing the development of a nation one should not seek originality or even a unique identity, but ability and power by means of which the nation

3   Viktor Nozadze's brother, the futurist poet Paliko Nozadze, was shot in 1937.

adopts, processes, and perfects the culture received (Reitzenstein 1927, 19). On the other hand, while studying the influence of Persian culture on Georgian literature, Von Wesendonk noted that a national culture is regarded as more developed if it adopts and processes more foreign elements from other cultures (Wesendonk 1926, 250). According to Nozadze, the acceptance and transfer of cultural patterns and their processing in one's own national consciousness are not characteristic of all nations: if the Georgian nation was a follower of world culture, it was a result of its high national capability, and this is especially true of *The Knight in the Panther's Skin* (Nozadze 2009, 75–76).

Inspired by this idea, Nozadze devoted a number of fundamental works to *The Knight in the Panther's Skin*, and he reviewed its ideology, worldview, and ethical and aesthetic ideals. However, his works were completely unknown to Georgian scholars until the 1950s because Nozadze, like all Georgians living in emigration, was labeled an 'enemy of the people'. Nozadze's book *The Language of Colors in The Knight in the Panther's Skin (Georgian: Vepkhistqaosnis pertametqveleba), published in Buenos Aires, was discovered by* the librarian Vakhtang Salukvadze at Moscow's Lenin Public Library when he was sorting literature received from abroad. Salukvadze informed Revaz Baramidze of his find (Kharazishvili 2009, 140), and several Georgian scholars became familiar with the book and were amazed by its depth of research, topicality, and scale. They also observed that the content of the book was not politically contaminated. In his memoirs, Revaz Baramidze shares with readers the impression produced on him by *The Language of Colors in The Knight in the Panther's Skin:*

> I was carried away by the book, by the abundant material studied by the scholar and the depth and large scale of his research. The scholar has discovered the rare regularity in the use of colors by Rustaveli: every color in The Knight in the Panther's Skin has a logical function, and by perceiving them we understand the mood of the characters as well as the general situation. Namely, when light, sunny colors predominate in the work, author speaks about the characters of great spirituality, whereas when harsh, dark colors occur in the work, evil powers appear on the scene. I would also like to note here that this book is written at a high professional level and there are no political digressions or anti-Soviet positions in it (R. Baramidze 2004, 30).

Revaz Baramidze also recalls that he introduced a synopsis of the book to academy member Korneli Kekelidze, one of the founders of Tbilisi State University, who was fascinated by the profound and noteworthy observa-

tions of the emigrant scholar, and offered that Revaz Baramidze should deliver a presentation at the session of Tbilisi State University Council to familiarize his colleagues with the contents of *The Language of Colors in The Knight in the Panther's Skin.*

However, the situation changed in 1963, after the publication of Nozadze's next book, *The Theology of The Knight in the Panther's Skin* (Georgian: *Vepkhistqaosnis ghvtismetqveleba*). Under the supervision of Glavlit,[4] censorship was exercised over printed matter and references to material present in the list of 'politically harmful literature' were suppressed. Repression was especially relentless for emigrants' books, and works by Viktor Nozadze were included on the list. Thus, the renowned scholar Gaioz Imedashvili was heavily criticized for "trying to revive the names of forgotten researchers of Rustaveli (N. Zhordania, V. Nozadze, S. Dolakidze)" in his research on *The Knight in the Panther's Skin* and for "failing to pay due attention to native scholars" (A.Baramidze 1969, 122). The Georgian emigrant and well-known writer Akaki Papava, on the other hand, demonstrates how the repression affected the existence of the emigrants. In the journal *Kavkasioni*, he wrote:

> The emigrant living abroad is absolutely helpless. He does not even have an opportunity to apply to any research institute or any of its researchers, or to write to any scholar and ask to send one or another excerpt ... Every such attempt will end in deathly silence, and will very likely cause great troubles for the addressee (Nozadze 1966, 141).

The same idea is expressed in private letters of Viktor Nozadze: "I might have written to you concerning other issues as well, but I would not like you to find yourself in an awkward situation because of me"; "Due to this reason, I have ceased communication with many persons for fear that my letters may harm someone". In his memoirs, Aleksandre Baramidze also touches on this issue and notes: "I suspect that his letters failed to reach

4   Glavlit (the General Directorate for the Protection of State Secrets in the Press under the Council of Ministers of the USSR) was established in 1966 at the Council of Ministers of the Soviet Union. Glavlit units existed in the cities of all fifteen Soviet republics. As a successor of the Main Administration for Literary and Publishing Affairs under the People's Commissariat of Education of the RSFSR (established in 1922), Glavlit was in charge of the list of "politically harmful" literature that was sent to libraries and bookstores. When an order on banning a book or an author was issued, this literature was kept in the "special collection" or was destroyed. It was also prohibited to refer to the works of such authors in references and citations.

me. I know that journal *Kavkasioni* sent to me was seized" (Kharazish-vili 2004, 143).

Literary criticism was therefore under the strict directives of the regime and its Marxist–Leninist philosophy. In the introduction to *Volume I: Old Literature* of the six-volume edition of *The History of Georgian Literature*, one reads:

> The present volume one of *The History of Georgian Literature* is based on new literary materials discovered in recent years; whereas the approach must change toward texts that have been known for a long time, they must be analyzed once again on the basis of historical decrees of the Central Committee of the All-Union Communist Party according to the new approaches stated in these decrees. At present, on the basis of the instructions of the Party, the need for critical development of the cultural and literary heritage of the past is noted categorically and definitely (Leonidze 1960, 6).

There existed other methodological approaches to Georgian literature. They are to be found in the works of Shalva Nutsubidze (1888–1969: *Rustaveli and the Oriental Renaissance*, 1947; *Work of Rustaveli*, 1958) and Mose Gogiberidze (1897–1949: *Origins of Rustaveli's Worldview*, 1937; *The Concept of the Supreme Being in The Knight in the Panther's Skin*, 1941). Both of them were educated in Germany, at the universities of Leipzig and Berlin, and were acquainted with the evolutionary, psychological, and sociological criticism of the time. On the basis of this kind of criticism, they argued with Marxist scholarship, but they fell victim to political repression in the 1940s. Gogiberidze was arrested on the charge of being an agent of the Third Reich and died in the Aktobe (Russian: *Aktyubinsk*) gulag.

As can be seen, Nozadze's role in Georgian literary criticism is not easy to determine, not only because he was an emigrant but mainly due to his opposition to the ideological context governing Georgian scholarship of the time. The main locus of his opposition, that of Rustaveli's world outlook and religious beliefs, is seen precisely in *The Theology of The Knight in the Panther's Skin*. In this work, Nozadze openly contests the ideological view of Soviet scholarship, and thus the change in the reception of his works in Soviet-Georgian literary criticism should mainly be attributed to this fact.

The Theology of The Knight in the Panther's Skin by Viktor Nozadze

In the first half of the twentieth century, the issue of Rustaveli's world outlook in particular acquired significance among researchers in Rustave-

li studies. In his romance, Rustaveli is quite reserved regarding religious issues, and the ritual side of Christianity is not emphasized. Although it is clear that the protagonists of the poem are religious, the name of their deity is never made explicit. Consequently, there hardly remained any historically known religious system in Asia Minor that the author of *The Knight in the Panther's Skin* was not declared to be an adherent and representative of. In the first half of the twentieth century, many pseudo-scholarly theories were created concerning the religious belief and worldview of Rustaveli. Noteworthy among these are the theory of Mohammedanism of Rustaveli argued by Nikolas Marr in his study *The Georgian Poem The Knight in the Panther's Skin* by Shota Rustaveli and a *New Cultural and Historical Problem* (1917); the theory of Manichaeism stressed by Pavle Ingoroqva in the book *Rustveliana*, published in 1926; the theory of Solarism (Pavle Ingoroqva), which was very popular in the years of the First All-Union Congress of Soviet Writers (1934) and the First Anniversary of Rustaveli (1937); and linking the poet's worldview with Safavid philosophy, advocated by Iustine Abuladze (1914). There were also attempts at a pantheistic interpretation of Rustaveli's world outlook (by Ivane Javakhishvili and Shalva Khidasheli). These theories had one purpose: to deny the traditional and fundamental thesis regarding the Christian faith of Rustaveli, the foundation for which was laid as early as in 1721, when Georgian King Vakhtang VI (1675–1737) published *The Knight in the Panther's Skin*. This was the first time that *The Knight in the Panther's Skin* was printed by a publishing house, and in his commentaries on the poem Vakhtang VI offered a scholarly substantiated viewpoint on its author's Christian belief. Vakhtang VI proposed a religious-mystical explanation of the main motif of *The Knight in the Panther's Skin*, love, and the entire contents of the romance. Hence, he viewed *The Knight in the Panther's Skin* simultaneously as an 'ecclesiastical' and 'secular' work, and by means of allegorism sought the divine meaning in the romance. According to his explanation, *The Knight in the Panther's Skin* is secular in its plot, whereas in its meaning it is ecclesiastical (by means of demonstration of love between a woman and man, the work expresses a human being's worship of and reverence for God)—thus, Stanza 32, in which the suffering, shedding of tears, and wandering over the fields by a man in love is interpreted by Vakhtang VI in the following way:[5] "If a man is cry-

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5   Stanza 32 reads: "If the lover cries and weeps for his love, tears are the lover's due. / Solitude suits him, the roaming of plains and forests suits him, too. / When he's by himself, his thought should be of how to worship anew. / But when a lover is in the world, he should hide his love from view" (Rustaveli, 2015, 15).

ing for Christ, exactly for His sake he wanders and prefers solitude. And it is better, when among other people, neither to appropriate the love for Christ nor boast of His love hypocritically" (Rustaveli 1975, 301).

The tradition of a Christian reading of *The Knight in the Panther's Skin*, which continued even under the severe pressure of Soviet ideology, was most clearly revealed in finding intertextual relations of *The Knight in the Panther's Skin* with the Bible. Research on intertextual relations with Bible was put forward in works by Korneli Kekelidze (1879–1962), Kalistrate Tsintsadze,[6] Viktor Nozadze, Solomon Iordanishvili (1898–1953), and Akaki Gatserelia (1910–1996). Thus, by 1936 the issue of Shota Rustaveli's Christian world outlook was already well grounded, but the ideological policy of the regime held it back for three decades, and during those years the issue was repeatedly concealed. The apologists of this idea, Korneli Kekelidze and a small circle of his adherents, had to overcome numerous struggles. For example, Solomon Iordanishvili's work *The Search for the Christian Trace in The Knight in the Panther's Skin* was written in 1916, but its publication only became possible in 1990. Korneli Kekelidze, who had received a tertiary religious education, was also forced to create the artificial term 'Biblical Christianism' and, in contrast to his view, to write:

> Speaking about Biblical Christianism, the following circumstance should be borne in mind. Rustaveli fully rests on the first source of Christianity, the Bible, the 'Holy Scripture'; in this regard he is a representative of so-called Biblical Christianism. Dogmatic-ecclesiastical Christianity, which originated on the basis of the scholastic-mystical mental acrobatics of ecumenical councils and subsequent periods, is strange to him; all the ballast that merged with Christianity afterwards, over the centuries, against which the forerunners of the Reformation boldly raised their voice for the first time in the fifteenth century in western Europe, is also alien to him. In this we should look for the reason for the fact that if, in the subsequent centuries, a certain circle persecuted him on religious grounds, it persecuted him not because he was not generally Christian, but because he was not a follower and admirer of dogmatic Christianity (Kekelidze 1981, 204).

Kekelidze was well aware that the term 'Biblical Christianism' was artificial and ambiguous, which is why he indicated in brackets that "this was a term of a relatively new period.' It is absolutely inconceivable for the scholar, who at the same time was a clergyman, to refer to the writings of the founders of Christian dogmatics and theology as 'ballast.' It is obvi-

6   Kalistrate Tsintsadze (1866–1952) was Catholicos-Patriarch of Georgia.

ous that the author, who was one of the first Georgian scholars to consistently formulate the theory of the Christian worldview of Rustaveli, was instructed to present the author of *The Knight in the Panther's Skin* as a Christian whose worldview was based only on the *Bible* and who rejected Church dogmatics.

Nozadze, living in exile, was free from Soviet ideological pressure and he was among the rare scholars that grounded the concept of Rustaveli's Christian world outlook from the philosophical and theological viewpoint. He made the following critical remark concerning the position of Soviet scholars in issue 11 of the journal *Kavkasioni*, fully dedicated to the eight-hundredth anniversary of Shota Rustaveli's birth:

> Rustaveli is praised as an advocate of atheistic ideas. He is glorified as a pantheist and materialist. He is lauded as a standard-bearer of democracy ... He is praised and glorified as a person expelled and persecuted by the Georgian church. Incense is burned to him especially because he, as it were, "is consonant with the contemporaneity", the Communist period. And this is obscenity, indecency, folly (Nozadze 1966, 109).

Unlike his Soviet colleagues, Nozadze had a quite different approach to research. In his opinion, to study the theological philosophy of *The Knight in the Panther's Skin* one needs thorough knowledge of Christian theology, but it is also necessary to study each analyzable phrase, symbol, or metaphor thoroughly. Although this proves to be a difficult task for any researcher, without such a basis it is inconceivable to understand and interpret the contents of the text (Nozadze, 1963, 40–42). Hence, Nozadze approached to the study of Rustaveli in the context of various philosophical and religious teachings. However, with his focus on the main objective-thematic motifs of *The Knight in the Panther's Skin* (concepts of good and evil, love and Providence, and the physical world and the otherwordly), as well as terms and phrases (the names of the Supreme Being used by Rustaveli and aesthetics of light), Nozadze shows that Rustaveli's worldview is based on Christian theology rather than on religious or philosophical teachings such as Platonism, Neoplatonism, Zoroastrianism, Mithraism, Gnosticism, Sufism, Pantheism, and Manicheism. Unlike his Soviet colleagues, Nozadze studied these issues using comparative and hermeneutical methods. In the analysis of theological issues, when it was related to Rustaveli's interpretation of the biblical passages, his research was based on the views of Gregory of Nyssa, Saint Augustine of Hippo, Athanasius the Great, Gregory of Nazianzus, and Dionysius the Areopagite.

To show but a few parallels, I draw on Nozadze's interpretation of Stanza 842 of *The Knight in the Panther's Skin*. In the text, one reads:

> He said, "Divine sun, said to be the image of the Sunny Night,
> Image of the Three-in-One, Timeless Time, Everlasting in might,
> Whom the heavenly bodies obey to the second, as is right,
> Turn not away, I pray, till she and I have each other in sight" (Rustaveli 2015, 183).

Nozadze resorts to the view of the holy fathers concerning the similarity of the Holy Trinity and the sun. Thus, according to Nozadze (Nozadze 1966, 95–96), Saint Basil the Great (330–379) proposes the following analogy in explaining the mystery of the Trinity: "And One is Three, who is Divinity, as three suns set one into another, one radiation of light"; furthermore Saint Gregory of Nazianzus (330–391) declares: "Light is the divine light ... This is one and the same Divinity with three hypostases, as three suns, totally unified, radiate only one and the same light ... We must worship the Trinity in one and the One". Saint Athanasius (295–373) also defines the binding of the Trinity in terms of sun: "The Trinity is one sun and its light ... The Father is brilliance, the Son light, the Holy Spirit enlightening power"; and Saint John Chrysostom (344–407) refers to a sunlight image in describing the relation of the Father and the Son: "The Son (Jesus) is inalienable from the Father, as light from the sun".

The main idea of *The Knight in the Panther's Skin* is the victory of good over evil, which is expressed by several aphorisms: "Why would he, who created good, create evil by its side?" (Rustaveli 2015, 35); "Evil is defeated by Good. Good will forever be our aid" (Rustaveli 290); "God creates only good; He lets no evil in the world arrive" (Rustaveli 318). In the romance, the source of this idea is named: "Dionysus, the wise"; that is, Dionysius the Areopagite. Nozadze draws a direct parallel between the quoted aphorisms of *The Knight in the Panther's Skin* and the teaching of Dionysius the Areopagite, who states: "Every essence derives from graciousness: good is the basis of every essence, whereas evil is nonexistent" (Nozadze 1963, 179).

The study of the issue from this viewpoint led Nozadze to conclude that in *The Knight in the Panther's Skin* God is the 'Creator of the Universe,' 'the Providence'; in short, he is the almighty God (Nozadze 1963, 624–625), and thus Rustaveli's Supreme Being refers to the God of the Christian religion and that is why Rustaveli's world outlook has nothing in common with atheism, pantheism, pantheist materialism, or any 'isms'

(Nozadze 1963, 626). Nozadze firmly adheres to the opinion that all other views ascribed to *The Knight in the Panther's Skin* are to be considered errors and can be explained by a lack of understanding of the theology of *The Knight in the Panther's Skin* and, moreover, by its deliberate distortion (Nozadze 1963, 596).

This and other works by Viktor Nozadze that failed to reach not only the general public but even the narrow circle of Rustavi specialists were well known at the Ideological Department of the Central Committee of Georgia. The position of the Soviet officials was clear and unequivocal: the standard reaction was to leave any differing point of view without a response or to be limited to short but aggressive remarks. Thus, in the article "Glorious Path of Georgian Soviet Scholarship" in the newspaper *Zarya Vostoka* signed by the Chairman of the Presidium of the Georgian Academy of Sciences Niko Muskhelishvili, Nozadze was incidentally mentioned as a "maliciously breathing scholar" (Kharazishvili 2009, 147).

In 1966, the eight-hundredth anniversary of the birth of Rustaveli was celebrated in Georgia. It was held under the aegis of UNESCO, and therefore preparations for the event began not only in Georgia, but also throughout the entire Soviet Union. The All-Union Governmental Anniversary Committee was approved, which was responsible for organizing and holding the anniversary events. The Central Committee of the Georgian Communist Party and the Government of the Republic passed a resolution that was entered by the World Peace Council in the work of its congress. The chairman of the Georgian Writers' Union, Irakli Abashidze, noted:

> These are the days when we are standing face to face with the high thought of the entire civilized world and before the eyes of this world summarize the entire eight-hundred-year-old history of Georgian culture. During these days, Georgian literature and art will be a new discovery for many visitors, having arrived from distant corners of the world[7] (Abashidze, 1969).

Elsewhere he wrote: "During the anniversary of Rustaveli, the Georgian people will face the high culture of the civilized world and will make a report on how they have lived from the times of Rustaveli until the present day" (Abashidze 1966, 9). It should be noted that by this period (after appointment of Leonid Brezhnev as general secretary of the Central Committee of the Communist Party in 1966), the 'Thaw' of Khrushchev's times was in fact over, but it was impossible for Soviet officials to

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[7]   Rustaveli's anniversary in Georgia was attended by more than one hundred foreign guests, including scholars, writers, and translators.

limit at one stroke the freedom obtained to a certain extent from 1953 to 1965 (Šubin 2008, 143). This explains the 'thawing' of Georgian officials towards Viktor Nozadze, who was officially invited to attend the jubilee celebrations in Tbilisi. The wish of Georgian officials to enable "Georgia to appear before the civilized world in a worthy manner" would to a certain extent be realized by an emigrant scholar attending the anniversary, one whose name had passed beyond the boundaries of the narrow circle of Georgian emigration by that time and attracted the attention of foreign Kartvelian scholars.[8] However, Nozadze refused to go to Georgia. Apart from the more banal reasons, such as the telegram invitation being written in Russian, his categorical refusal to arrive in Georgia should be explained by his ideological and worldview conflict with the Soviet regime. In his article *Dante—Rustaveli* Nozadze distanced himself from the 'official Soviet' viewpoint of the Rustaveli phenomenon, quoting an extensive passage from the anniversary address of Givi Javakhishvili, chairman of the Georgian SSR Council of Ministers:

> The Georgian people note with profound gratitude that the anniversary of Rustaveli is one more clear demonstration of the untiring care of the Communist Party and the Soviet Government for the further development and flourishing of the culture of the peoples of our country. This significant nationwide event will enable us to present to the entire world not only the greatness of Rustaveli, but also the grandiose changes and success attained by the Georgian people in the sphere of national culture during the years of Soviet rule (Javakhishvili 1966).

Thus it is only after Nozadze's death, in the Perestroika years and in particular in post-Soviet Georgia, that one can speak of a significant change in the reception of Nozadze's work in Georgian literary criticism. In this regard, opening of the 'special collections' of the National Library of Georgia was significant, as a result of which access was provided for Georgian scholars to 'prohibited literature', including Viktor Nozadze's works concerning *The Knight in the Panther's Skin*. As regards his writings, which mainly appeared in emigrant periodicals, these were preserved to-

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8   In this regard, the publication of the English-language scholarly journal *Georgica* (1935–1937) in London and the French-language journal *Revue de Kartvélologie* (1957–1984) in Paris was significant, in which works of Georgian authors (including Viktor Nozadze) were published alongside works of William Edward David Allen, Edward Denison Ross, John F. Baddeley, Carl Ferdinand Friedrich Lehmann-Haupt, David Marshall Lang, Robert Horne Stevenson, Gérard Garitte, and others, which facilitated internationalization of studies by Georgian scholars (Khintibidze 2003, 55).

gether with the private letters in Viktor Nozadze's archive in Paris, willed by the scholar to his brother Giorgi Nozadze.

As early as 1989, Guram Sharadze took an interest in the fate of this archive, and with the assistance of the Georgian emigrants Mamia Berishvili and Karlo Inasaridze he succeeded in fully transferring the archive to Georgia in December 1996. Sharadze also founded the Emigration Museum (Viktor Nozadze's archive is currently kept at this museum) and the Department of Georgian Emigrant Literature (Shota Rustaveli Institute of Georgian Literature), which laid the foundation for research and publication of Viktor Nozadze's scholarly legacy. In 2004, at the initiative of the Viktor Nozadze Society (established in 2004) and Sharadze, the publication of Viktor Nozadze's works in ten volumes began. The publication will include six books devoted to *The Knight in the Panther's Skin*, as well as hitherto unknown historical-philological and journalistic works on Rustaveli; essays, studies, and reviews, scattered throughout emigrant journals and newspapers; and epistolary heritage. At present, three volumes have been published. When commenting on this effort, Revaz Baramidze evaluated Nozadze's work as follows:

Reading the works of Viktor Nozadze, one is impressed not only by the scale of his knowledge and profoundness of thought, but also by the fact that he was able to write such extensive material in such a limited time and circumstances. However, this may be easy to understand if one bears in mind the fanatic love the emigrant torn from his homeland had for Rustaveli. This love endowed him with energy, on the basis of which this treasure of Rustaveli studies was created (R. Baramidze 2004, 34).

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The Functions of Socialist Realism: Translation of Genre Fiction in Communist Romania

Ștefan Baghiu

Socialist realism has often been perceived as a mass culture movement, but few studies have succeeded in defining its true structure as being mass-addressed. The general view on literature under socialist realism is that of standardized writing and formulaic genre. This paper aims to analyze the genre fiction and subgenres of fiction translated in Romania during socialist realism with a view to acquiring a more comprehensive perspective of the social purpose and functions of socialist realist literature. There have been many attempts to control popular and youth novels in keeping with the ideological program of the USSR and its entire sphere of influence. At the same time, these struggles should be opposed/connected to the development of popular fiction in Western cultures, as the two opposite cultural systems show several significant similarities: if we consider that the most translated authors of fiction within the Stalinist Romanian cultural system were Alexandre Dumas, Jack London and Mark Twain, the gap between Western and Eastern popular fiction no longer seems so great, while their functions may still be opposite.

Socialist realism is not entirely made of realism.[1] In fact, over the last several decades, literary studies have shown that socialist realism is not even related to realism. Katerina Clark's 1981 *The Soviet Novel* or Greg Carleton's 1994 seminal essay *Genre in Socialist Realism* have demonstrated how socialist realist fiction was undermined by its mythological representation of figures or by annulling the fictional pact through the

exaggeration of truth lying at the core of the narrative world. This is, in a way, why Soviet dissident critic Andrei Sinyavsky (Abram Tertz) stated in his *On Socialist Realism*, as early as 1959, that socialist realism is a 'loathsome literary salad' (Tertz 1960, 91). In other words, socialist realism on the one hand hyperbolized characters, transforming them into mythological figures and, on the other hand, sold fiction as undisputed reality and truth. The latter strategy broke all the imaginable conventions of mimetic projections, as any socialist realist representation claimed to constitute rather than duplicate the truth. In Katerina Clark's words, "fictional, historical, and actual experience were homogenized insofar as they all tended to be refracted through the lens of myth to form one of the archetypal patterns" (1981, 40). Greg Carleton underlined the effects of this principle put forward by Clark and showed convincingly that literary genres lost their specificity during socialist realism precisely as a result of the abolishment of genre peculiarities. As the distance between fiction and non-fiction became unnoticeable, reading conventions were destined to follow the same path: "[s]ubordinating concerns for genre to the reification of topoi ensures that the constitution of textual function occurs at an antecedent and higher axis than genre per se" (1994, 1004).

But socialist realism in literature does not comprise socialist realist literature only. Those analyses have largely grounded their arguments on the literary corpus of the official literature of the party, commissioned in the Soviet Union bureaus and written to fit the strict criteria initially formulated in 1932 and actively in force since 1934, when a unique mode of representation was adopted. In communist Romania after 1946, and officially after 1948, this high role inside the cultural field was reserved for the "truly faithful, or those whom the truly faithful had given this privilege to" (Goldiş 2011, 17). A paradoxical guideline for creativity, socialist realism was, in fact, a slaughterhouse for literature of the past and present. It is possible to claim that no other ideology has set such direct goals in reorganizing world literature and the bourgeois literary canon as the Soviet state-planned culture. While modern literatures in Europe have established their canonical figures through what Franco Moretti has called 'blind canon makers' (2000, 210), the Soviet Union and the annexed Eastern European cultures after World War II did anything but that. However, the process of selection and production of literature should not be seen only against this one-way negotiation of literary space alone; the general taste of the masses and the international scene undoubtedly also played a crucial role, no matter how convincingly Boris Groys argues the opposite by stating that "socialist realism was

not created by the masses but was formulated in their name by well-educated and experienced elites" (1992, 9). As recent studies show, "the decision as to which Soviet authors were canonized was determined not only by Stalin but also through the popularity of these authors among Soviet readers and fellow writers" (Safiullina 2012, 559–560), i.e. by what Evgeny Dobrenko has called 'the power-masses' (1997, 135), a hybrid between political power and tastes of the reading public. "In sharp contrast," Nailya Safiullina continues, "in the canonization of foreign authors, political considerations dominated entirely".

My thesis is that for the postwar cultural logic, socialist realism itself was in fact one of the most important managers of global genre literature and one of the most diverse literary phenomena, in terms of subgenres, through translation and Soviet production. A fact not very often debated or, in the Romanian case, totally neglected up until recently, but one that is crucial for understanding the cultural production in Eastern Europe during the Cold War.

World Genre Fiction in Romanian Translation during Stalinism

Stalinism's relationship with world literature has always been difficult to describe. This is, on the one hand, due to the necessary assumption of a selection paradox: while annexed cultures are starting to translate literatures of faraway countries with no precedent in their translation process, such as African, Asian, and South American literatures (Baghiu 2018), the political agenda limits the possibilities of translation to a very small number of authors and titles. In 1946, a decree published in *Adevărul vremii* [The Truth of Our Time] set the parameters of translated literature in Romania by presenting an account of world fiction published in the Soviet Union. The subchapter "Literatura străină în URSS" [Foreign Literature in the USSR] provided a list of authors officially authorized by socialist realism. This list restricted a lot the possibilities of translation, but featured many a foreign writer of French, English, and American literatures, among which were primary Jules Verne, Victor Hugo, Guy de Maupassant, Emile Zola, Henri Barbusse, Romain Rolland, Paul Lafargue, Anatole France, Honoré de Balzac, Prosper Mérimée, Gustave Flaubert, Jack London, Mark Twain, Upton Sinclair, Seton Thomson, Charles Roberts, O. Henry, John Steinbeck, James Fenimore Cooper, Edgar Allan Poe, H. G. Wells, Rudyard Kipling, Charles Dickens, Jonathan Swift, William Shakespeare, John Galsworthy, Daniel Defoe, Jerome K. Jerome, Walter Scott, Joseph Conrad, Robert Louis Stevenson etc. (Simion et al. 2010–2018 I, 203).

Although varying in narrative style and subgenre, these authors were selected either due to their declarations of enthusiasm for communism and Stalin, or due to the manner in which their literature could be likened to socialist ideology. Hence, among the authors accepted by socialist realism, there were many authors whose works were not based on realism at all. The internationalist mission of socialist realism was as dogmatic as it was impure, and engaged in a constant pursuit not to dissolve the impurities within its system, but transform them into assimilable components, in a true "tendency towards homogenization" (Goldiş 2018b, 88). A process of incorporation that was also visible in the communist states of Eastern Europe, applied this time to their own literatures, which were struggling to establish their local socialist literary canon. A good example in this regard is the debate over Ion Creangă, one of the most important Romanian nineteenth-century fiction writers. His alleged class struggle was put forward by socialist realist critic Al. N. Trestieni in 1946, who argued that his children's prose, drawing on folktales and fantasy, has depicted "under the guise of fantasy ... genuine exploiter typologies" (Simion et al. 2010–2018 V 186).

This kind of argument was used to align every possible genre fiction and consumption literature with socialist realism standards, encompassing a range of European and American classics of detective, adventure, SF and fantasy novels. The inherent escapism of those subgenres was largely ignored by the Soviet translation programs despite their natural incompatibility with strict, rigid, and formulaic literature. As Mihai Iovănel notes, referring to Stalinist Romania, "limiting the genres and, in turn, Western competition, allowed for genres such as detective novels to thrive considerably in comparison to the pre-communist tradition" (2014, 165). Which is quite controversial considering Evgeny Dobrenko's suggestion that inside socialist realism "science fiction is 'nonsense'" (1997, 154).

The list published in *Adevărul vremii* features different authors of genre fiction, covering adventure novels, dystopian fiction, military Science-Fiction, horror stories and space exploration novels. And it also brought forward authors of children's literature, this genre too being quite diverse. This is the reason why I find it important to place more emphasis on the functions of literature within socialist realism, a matter Gary Saul Morson stressed in his brilliant 1979 essay *Socialist Realism and Literary Theory*. It is crucial to understand that literature, despite the very precise ideological purpose the Soviet culture attributed to it (Tucker 1974), never actually fulfilled only one function.

Yet observations such as these only arise when certain quantitative facts are brought to light, for example, the fact that Jules Verne is the most translated author in Romania during the period of socialist realism. He also happens to be the most translated author in Romania of all times (Ursa 2018) and the second most translated author in the world according to *Index Translationum*. However, during Romanian socialist realism, which conventionally started in 1948 and dissolved in 1964, he was as translated as Maxim Gorki or Feodor Gladkov, the pioneers and most notable figures of Soviet culture. How did socialist realism handle such diverse authors in its struggle to legitimate the Soviet proletarian fiction? Second, how were H.G. Wells or Jack London translated and what social functions did their novels fulfill? It would be quite unprofessional to believe that they had no impact whatsoever on socialist realism, since theorists like Bourdieu (1993, 64) and later on Andrew Millner (2011, 396) have convincingly shown the important position genre literature occupies in the French and, to some extent, also the world literary field, at once close to autonomy and stretching for heteronomy. The question should be further directed toward the presence of unnoticed writers of genre fiction inside socialist realism: in what ways were the novels of Ivan Yefremov, Vladimir Obruchev or Alexander Belyaev imported to Eastern Europe during communism, considering that Darko Suvin argued that the "Soviet SF of the 1920s had … established a tradition ranging sociologically from facile subliterature to some of the most interesting works of 'highbrow' fiction" (1979, 262)?

To contextualize the topic and illustrate the proportions of the phenomenon, I have put together a graph of all novels translated in Romania between 1944 and 1989 (Baghiu 2018). Exhaustive as it is, it contains a large number of genre fiction works, in different unidentified proportions; there is no possible way of identifying exact numbers, since a quantitative analysis of the corpus in order to establish a genre pattern has not been put forward of late. The most important instruments in this area were only created in 2011 by the Stanford Literary Lab (Moretti 2017) and imply computational analysis. But Soviet literature studies have always been tempted to rely in their research on the novels deeply entrenched in formulaic socialist realism, neglecting, to use Jordan Y. Smith's concept, these translationscapes of Soviet cultures.
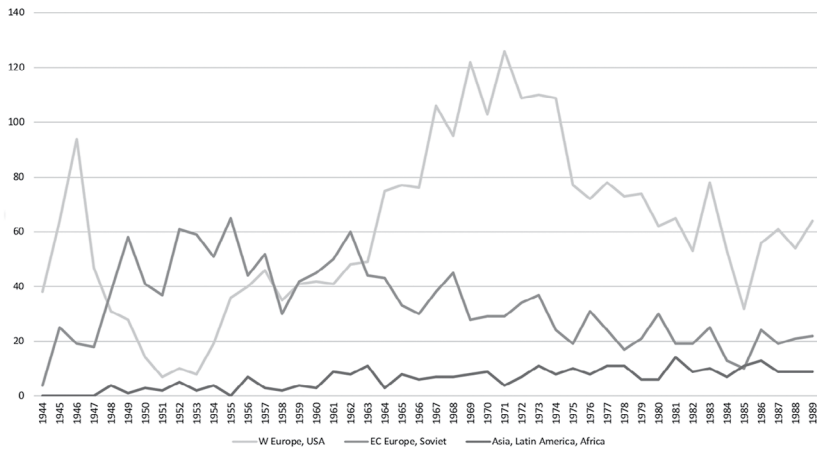
The General Timeline of Translation of Novels in Communist Romania (1944–1989)

Genre Fiction in Romania: from 'Subliterature' to Functional Literature

In 1848, only three novels were rendered in Romanian: *Istoria unui mort. Povestită de el însuși* (unidentified original title) by Alexandre Dumas–père, *Speronare* (part III, part I–II had already been published in 1846) and the more famous *Călătoriile lui Guliver în țări îndepărtate* [*Gulliver's Travels*] by Jonathan Swift. The latter would not be commented in literary magazines until 1879, in a translated article by French critic H. Taine. Most of the translated literature from the mid-nineteenth century was, in fact, genre fiction, specifically adventure novels and sensationalist literature. In 1849, only two novels were translated, one by Alexandre Dumas–père and the other by Mme Célarier. During the 1850s, translated fiction was genre fiction with the exception of Chateaubriand and Balzac, and hence it appears that from 1840 to 1860 the most important authors translated were Alexandre Dumas–père, Eugène Sue, George Sand, and Harriet Beecher Stowe, with the last two often presented as sentimental novel authors (Cohen 2002, 106). By 1880, they would be joined by authors such as Victor Hugo and Goethe, alongside James Fenimore Cooper, Jules Verne, and Xavier de Montépin. After 1880, the translations of fiction in Romania became more and more diverse, indicating institutional modernization, which coincided with what is believed to be the end of the 'critical spirit in Romanian culture" ['spiritul critic în cultura română"], a phrase Garabet Ibrăileanu coined in 1909 which implicates that a true analytical stage had only been reached in Romania in 1880. In

a way, the so-called 'critical spirit', which represents the rampaging criticism stage in the Romanian culture (1840–1880), ended with a maturation that implied moving away from literature for consumption and genre fiction due to a new desire to create literature that would portray the 'national trait' better (Terian 2013, 6) through the assimilation of highbrow oeuvres.

Although publishing houses continued to sell translations of sensationalist novels (especially French and American), those were never commented on and had little impact within the world of cultural elites. For this reason, Alexandre Dumas–père, Jules Verne, and Eugène Sue have always been seen in a condescending or pejorative light in Romanian culture. In the twentieth century, and especially during the interwar period, a large number of genre fiction works was translated for commercial purposes, but the high expectations and superiority complexes of the literary system, doubled by the emergence of the Romanian nationalistic movements and the rising modernist trend, rendered them practically invisible, barring the reading public. Nationalistic movements tried to raise taxes on any translation, so that national literature would prevail (Goldiş 2018a, 101), and modernists neglected genre fiction since they focused more on highbrow literature.

Starting with 1944, Romanian culture faced the problem of organizing all these trends, and the distinction between high fiction and popular fiction had to be completely revised because of the transversal problem of judging fiction as either valid or invalid on ideological grounds. Even if popular fiction as represented by sensationalist novels was seen as a capitalist product, driven by consumerism, the political agenda was nonetheless compelled to recover some of those 'capitalist editorial enterprises' because of the importance of some of those popular fiction writers for the communist party. In *Scânteia* [The Spark], the most important magazine in Romania after World War II, this struggle shows itself in the following words:

> Against the rise in the profitability of literary works produced by Romanian authors, editors multiplied and thrived. It is true, however, that only a mean share of these writers benefited from this increase in the circulation figures: some of great caliber such as Mihail Sadoveanu, and some producers of ready-mades for the use of disoriented youth (12 October 1944).

As a result, by reconsidering the authors close to the party and through the interventionist dimension literature had in the socialist education, socialist realism revisited the need for genre fiction.

Soviet Genre Fiction vs. World Genre Fiction in Translation

It is easily observable in *Graph 1* that the Soviet Union's confidence in Russian literature had a significant impact on the countries it occupied after the year 1946. What Nailya Safiullina calls 'the myth of soviet literature' (2012, 562–567), which was put forward in the early 1920s and which gained momentum in the socialist realism of the 1930s, emerged in the states annexed by the Soviet Union after World War II alongside socialist realism, eclipsing all other national literatures. An account given by a Saint Petersburg-based professor reveals this 'myth of soviet literature' as encapsulating a common belief among Soviet authorities that Russian literature was "the best in the world and … a model for literatures worldwide' (Safiullina 2012, 563). Yet, for this to be accepted as an undisputed fact, external legitimation was necessary, and it came from authors such as Romain Rolland, Henri Barbusse, André Malraux, Heinrich Mann, and André Gide, or through genre fiction by authors such as Jack London and H.G. Wells. Indeed, as Safiullina notes, this legitimation of Russian literature through foreign works proved useful to the selected contemporary authors, albeit in a very short run. This was due to the fact that their level of popularity among the readership in the Soviet Union had never been high. Nor had they come close to destabilizing the positions of the already canonized Victor Hugo and Jules Verne with the Russian literary hierarchy. This popularity among readers which had risen prior to the establishment of socialist realism as a 'shadow canon' (Damrosch 2006, 45), was also a by-product of socialism's reliance on popular culture.

The Pragmatic Function of Children's and Young Adult Literature

Among the Soviet authors translated between 1948 and 1965, some are genre fiction writers par excellence. In 1951, Dan Petrașincu's "Literatura Fantasticului" [The Literature of Fantasy] appeared following the translation of several SF novels, in particular I.A. Yefremov's *Corăbii astrale* [*Stellar Ships*]. Over the next few years, novels would be published such as V.A. Obruchev's *Țara lui Sannikov* [*Sannikov Land*] and *Plutonia*, translated in 1955 and 1956 respectively, A. Belyaev's *Omul amfibie* [*The Amphibian Man*] and *Ariel*, published in 1958 and 1959, accompanied by the authors ranking high in the socialist realist hierarchy such as Aleksey Tolstoy's *Aaelita*, issued in 1958. In 1962, works such as H.G. Wells's *Insula doctorului Moreau* [*The Island of Doctor Moreau*] and *Mașina timpului* [*The Time Machine*] were also translated, his *Oameni ca zeii* [*Men Like Gods*] closely following in 1964. Ray Bradbury's *451' Fahrenheit* and

Stanislaw Lem's *Astronauţii* [*The Astronauts*] were published at around the same time, in 1963 and 1964 respectively. By and large, these books were published under the imprint of important Romanian state publishing houses, either as part of the wider Soviet literature promotion campaign carried out via *Cartea Rusă* [The Russian Book], or later by the publishing house targeted at the younger audience, *Editura Tineretului* [Youth Publishing House], which was also granted the rights to print and distribute subgenre fiction. During the period of socialist realism, dystopian, military SF, horror, and space exploration genre fiction novels were translated in Romania, since one of the foremost objectives of the Soviet translation program was to introduce young readers to the ideological agenda. For this reason, a large number of socialist realist canonical authors were presented as genre fiction authors. Thus, classical Soviet propaganda novels ended up being advertised as literature for children and youth, which points to an almost overt acknowledgment of the obsolescence of socialist realism itself. Writers such as Alexander Fadeyev, Veniamin Kaverin, Boris Polevoi and Aleksey Tolstoy, published in the late 1940s under the imprint of *Cartea Rusă*, were reissued in the 1950s and 1960s by *Editura Tineretului*, alongside genre fiction and children's literature authors. Notable mentions of writers in *Editura Tineretului,* who were marketed as writers of Bildungsroman, historical novels, SF or adventure novels, include Feodor Gladkov and Nikolai Ostrovsky with their *Childhood Story* and *Born in Storm*.

In his 1951 *Flacăra* article on the role SF literature plays in the communist society, Dan Petraşincu legitimated the genre by identifying an educational function it was supposed to fulfill, a mission which, he argued, lay at its very core:

> We need science-fiction [and] adventure literature to instill the love for science in youth, to elicit their interest in research and gaining insight into life and natural phenomena, to stimulate their boldness, to educate their heroic spirit, while providing them with a broad perspective on the future (Simion 2010–2018 II, 35).

His wooden language aside, Petraşincu, the translator of Victor Hugo and one of the most fervent supporters of genre fiction in the Stalinist period, relegated to obscurity soon afterwards, did nonetheless make an important point for contemporary decoding: for socialist realism, concerned as it was with contributing to a socialist future, SF literature was, first and foremost, a form of cultivating a pragmatic interest in science. A recurrent theme of the Stalinist cultural discourse, the obses-

sion with 'science' – manifested mainly as a thirst for knowledge at the expense of speculation and metaphysics –, was extended to include literature too through the integratory dimension of SF. In 1955, upon the publication of the Romanian science-fiction novel *Drumul printre aștri* [The Road Through the Stars], written by M. Ștefan and Radu Nor, a letter was received by the editor of *Scânteia tineretului* [*Youth's Spark*], in which a Sibiu technical school principal exhibited a similar rhetorical obsession with the education of younger generations: "By the end of the book, the young adult will have acquired a series of thorough and helpful scientific concepts, and will therefore feel more capable of pursuing bold and useful endeavors, his will to overcome hurdles will be greater, and his inquisitive spirit will become sharper" (Simion 2010–2018 VI 277).

The official discourse of the period's literary institutions and the mainstream press in particular, always insisted on highlighting this role of SF literature. Moreover, socialist realism persistently defended the genre, arguing that

> there has been talk of 'the place' of science-fiction literature to discuss whether it qualifies as 'true' literature; asking whether it belongs to the 'technically' inclined authors or to the 'literary endowed' technicians means artificially narrowing down the frontiers of literature. It is advisable to have more quality science-fiction novels, for they can elicit interest in technology, inventions and daring research (Simion 2010–2018 VI 358).

However, fascination with science is hardly a peculiarity of socialist realism. In his discussion on the reception of H.G. Wells, Gary Westphal notes, in connection to *The Time Machine*, that within six months of its publication, many laudatory letters were sent to the editor of *Amazing Stories*, yet none of those discussing it at length referred to its literariness:

> while there were some general words of praise or criticism directed at Wells, and a few brief compliments for *The Time Machine*, the only three letters with substantive commentary on the novel ... focused on purely technical issues (131).

Socialist realism did nothing but capitalize on this function, incorporating it into its wider program whereby any form of art was to serve as an instrument in the advancement of science, a concept subjected to much trivialization in that period. As Mihai Iovănel states:

> socialist realism, in a manner similar to its predecessor, Marxism, was based on a secular scientific foundation, and took much interest in positive disciplines such as physics, astronomy, and medicine, which serve as basis for

science-fiction literature. Incorporated into the program and supported by the system, including through the then-highly popular 'Colecția Povestiri științifico-fantastice,' [The Science-fiction Stories Series], SF was one of the most efficient instruments for promotion of science and ideological education of the 1950s (Iovănel 2014, 165–166).

Conclusions

Despite clouding genre differences in the essentialist view on the role of literature (Carleton 1994), socialist realism was also built on translations of genre fiction, a fact most often neglected in socialist realism studies. While creating an artificial dominant canon, as Sinyavsky shows, in a way similar to how highbrow literature builds itself as the dominant canon in modernist cultures, socialist realism often attributed to this elitist literature the same role that popular fiction and genre fiction enjoyed, seeking to market them both as mass-oriented culture. While homogenizing ideologies and genres of the local novelistic production, socialist realism diversified through translations. It is for this reason that the analysis of functions of genre literature within socialist realism plays an important role in mapping the development of fiction in Eastern European cultures. In Gleb Tsipursky's words, "the party-state intended state-sponsored popular culture to help build a socialist, alternative version of modernity" (2016, 221). This alternate modernity could only be construed by reevaluating modernity's highbrow expectation itself, and the lowering of the literary bar may be perceived as reduction of literature to pragmatic functions, divorced from any abstract aspiration and any magnanimous attitude. Socialist realism was unrestrained by highbrow aspirations, and the high Soviet canon was projected as mass addressed, too. Since the Soviet propaganda literature has proved to be more obsolescent than genre literature, we should assume that socialist realism helped genre fiction more than it changed highbrow literature. This is how socialist realism created an 'alternate modernity' in literature (Tsipursky 2016), pleading, in fact, for a 'non-modernity' (Brennan 2017, 274) – one that was as eclectic as its antithetical projection, and even diverse in terms of subgenres, since it always aimed to prove that its ideology pre-exists the diversity of topoi.

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Socialist Modernism as Compromise: A Study of the Romanian Literary System

Andrei Terian

The study of post-Stalinist literature produced in Eastern Europe under the communist regime is one of the primary challenges of contemporary cultural historiography. This is due to the researchers' tendency to overextend the neighbouring trends to include this period as a means of compensating for lack of terminology needed to plausibly chart this ambiguous period, no longer dominated by a unique 'method of creation', but not yet marked by total freedom of expression. In doing so, they either transfer onto late communism concepts that define a polycentric, relatively autonomous literary system—e.g. 'counterculture,' 'critique of ideology'—or continue to deploy the instruments priorly devised to analyse Stalinism, which, given the new state of affairs, are deemed relatively soft—e.g. 'socialist realism,' 'party literature,' etc. The main issue with these approaches is that they draw on the simplistic understanding of the subject matter, which, in turn, renders them incapable of accounting for the peculiarities of this literary epoch. Late communism is not an ordinary intermediary stage, i.e. a blend between communism and capitalism and/or between totalitarianism and democracy, but a new cultural and political hybrid that requires an equally new critical framework.

In this essay, it is precisely this conceptual toolbox, hereinafter referred to as 'socialist modernism,' that I aim to put forward for the literary paradigm prevailing in Romania—and most certainly other areas too—between 1960/1965 and 1980. In advancing this new concept, my argument follows a tripartite approach. Firstly, I provide a diachronic perspective of the period, at the end of which I explain why—in the aftermath of the fall of socialist realism—post-Stalinist Romanian writ-

ers and politicians regarded modernism as a cultural trend whereby they could successfully advance their interests. Then I define the concept of 'socialist modernism' and demonstrate in what ways its historiographic usefulness is superior to that of 'neomodernism' and 'socialist aestheticism,' two Romanian concepts commonly used thus far in reference to this period. Lastly, I focus on assessing whether socialist modernism can be integrated in the transnational scheme of modernism (for instance, if it aligns with the so-called 'late modernism') or if it qualifies as a mere local or, at most, regional phenomenon.

From Socialist Realism to Socialist Modernism

To adequately understand the role of socialist modernism in Romanian literature, a brief overview of the history of modernism in Romania is in order. Both the term 'modernism' and the cultural phenomenon it designates were introduced into Romanian culture sometime around 1900, when traditionalist movements dominated the literary field (see Terian 2014, 18). Following a two-decade marginal position within the Romanian literary system, modernism went on to dominate the 1920s, mainly as a result of extensive advocacy on the part of the then most prominent Romanian literary critic Eugen Lovinescu (1881–1943), who included it in a wider discussion on cultural interactions and transfers known as the theory of 'synchronism' (Dumitru 2016). Although modernism would come to pervade the Romanian literary thought for the next quarter of a century, its popularity had its limits in the sense that modernism was more readily accepted in poetry than prose and that it was attributed a formal rather than an ideological dimension (Terian 2014, 20–27).

After 1948, following the imposition of communism, modernism was systematically rejected in Romania due to its association with the decadent bourgeois capitalism. Over the coming years, an increasing number of works produced by influential modernist writers were blacklisted and, in turn, socialist realism rose to become the dominant literary paradigm in Romania. Nonetheless, in 1964/1965, a significant shift in the policy of the Romanian communist regime, commonly labeled the 'thaw' or 'liberalisation,' would be witnessed. This turn, apart from leading to the abrupt disappearance of socialist realism from the Romanian cultural scene, allowed for a revival—at least in part—of modernism. A cursory browsing through *Cronologia vieții literare românești* (The Chronology of Romanian Literary Life) is enough to trace this process: the entries for the 1960s feature a surprisingly large number of references to either 'modernism' or 'modernist': 3 mentions in 1963; 5 in 1964; 13 in 1965; 41

in 1966; 71 in 1967; 56 in 1968; 40 in 1969 (Simion et al. 2010–2018, X–XV).

However, unlike socialist realism, whose content, function and value were (relatively) clear and (theoretically) indisputable—since the Party itself imposed them—, modernism fueled numerous contradictory debates in the latter part of the 1960s. It was often reiterated to saturation that 'modern' and 'modernity' must not be misinterpreted as referring to 'modernism,' yet it was widely accepted that they share some similarities; that modernism was an obsolete literary movement, which had reached its climax in the interwar period, yet not a single critic went on to mention any more recent trends; that the 'modern'–'modernism' doublet is but a pole of the dichotomy at whose other extreme lies another such conceptual pair, 'tradition' – 'traditionalism,' etc. To avoid any confusions or exaggerations, several of the most notable works devoted to the modern(ist) novel and poetry were translated in the second half of 1960s, and Romanian theorists strove to draw a clearer distinction between 'modern,' 'modernism,' and 'modernity' (Marino 1969). However, rather than clarifying the terminology, these attempts promoted even more vivid discussions around these concepts. This comes as no surprise, since in the early years of this debate, when the earlier condemnation of the modernist movement was still fresh in the collective memory, hardly any Romanian critic dared to explicitly point out this paradigm shift, although their works appeared to reflect that all their peers acknowledged, if not even overtly supported, it.

Yet despite this conceptual fuzziness, modernism gradually rose to become not only a legitimate literary movement of the late 1960s, but also a criterion of novelty and value within the Romanian literary field. A telltale example in this regard is Nicolae Manolescu's 1968 *Metamorfozele poeziei* [The Metamorphoses of Poetry], an essay that served as a turning point in the canonisation of Romanian postwar modernism. Manolescu's attempt to chart the "intrinsic ... history"[1] (1968, 5) of Romanian poetry rests on three implicit premises: (a) modern poetry is the only 'valid' Romanian poetry; (b) all major trends in Romanian poetry are, in fact, variations of modernism; and (c) the poetry movements that halted the modernist evolution of Romanian poetry are mere anomalies. These three arguments were arranged along the following line of reasoning: firstly, the Romanian critic argues that the only poetry having a history is the poetry that exhibits a sense of 'self-awareness' (13); and, since modern poetry is 'self-aware and self-made' (1968, 15), the history of Ro-

1   Unless indicated otherwise, all translations are mine.

manian poetry cannot but coincide with that of modern Romanian poetry. The critic goes on to explain how, in the history of Romanian poetry, only modernism is a 'sentiment' (1968, 26) and a 'state of mind' (1968, 43), while the other '-isms' are 'programmes' or 'styles'—in other words, mere variants of modernism: "[m]odernism, which is elsewhere a negation of symbolism ... carries here its own torch without interruption" (1968, 19); "traditionalism is but a form of modernism ... It is a trend of modern poetry" (1968, 26); "the modernist period also coincided with programmatic orientations; the avant-garde was one of them" (1968, 44). Manolescu continues by denouncing—admittedly in euphemistic terms—the 'lapses' of Romanian poetry during socialist realism:

> A decade—in which poetry appears to have forgotten, through a peculiar form of amnesia, its traditions, returning to forms of times past and attempting to curiously revive them, while ignoring what it had organically evolved into and pretending to be what it was not or what it could not be (1968, 129).

Thus, upon the emergence from socialist realism, modernism was the only authentic and valuable option for Romanian literature—or, at least, that is what transpires from Manolescu's historical overview.

But what exactly lured Romanian critics to modernism, when, in theory, they could have adopted and supported any of the movements and ideologies of the literary past? Why didn't they promote 'realism' in a slightly less ideological form? Or perhaps 'classicism,' which still embodied the peak of literary art for many aestheticians of the last century? To answer these questions, we may be tempted to consider various circumstantial explanations: modernism was the dominant movement in Romania prior to the imposition of communism; modernism was still the leading trend in the Western artistic circles of the early 1960s; or, more evidently: given the virulence with which it was condemned a mere decade earlier, modernism appeared as the absolute antonym of socialist realism. However, such explanations fail to account for the core of the problem. For if we were to consider, along Fredric Jameson's lines, that "the ideology of modernism as such ... is first and foremost that which posits the autonomy of the aesthetic" (2002, 161), then it would be evident that postwar modernism provided Romanian writers with precisely that which socialist realism denied them: the superficial right of not subordinating aesthetics to ideology and, consequently, the promise of freedom (Goldiş 2011, 122–125). A simple promise that, despite being broken time and again in the decades to come, was nonetheless an incomparably bet-

ter alternative to the non-negotiable state of servitude imposed by socialist realism.

Now what about the communist regime? What was the benefit for it in this concession? According to Jameson, what accounts for—and also defines—the postwar revival of modernism is that, "in a situation in which modernisation, socialism, industrialisation ... Prometheianism, and the 'rape of nature' generally, have been discredited, you can still suggest that the so-called underdeveloped countries might want to look forward to simple 'modernity' itself" (2002, 8). In other words, this resurgence of modernism provided Romanian communism with a new—and perhaps the last—chance to sustain the myth of progress, which World War II and the Stalinist years severely compromised. And an abstract benefit such as this would also bring along another, more practical bonus, since, as Ernst Robert Curtius and Hans Robert Jauss note, any duel between the 'Ancients' and the 'Moderns' is indicative of a conflict between generations.[2] This appears to be the case with the first battle between the 'Ancients' and the 'Moderns,' which marked the 12th century, as well as the famous *querelle* of the 17th century and the 20th-century confrontations. In the context of the post-1965 Romanian communist regime, socialist modernism became a strategy for politically legitimising the substitution of the 'old school' with the 'new guard' by invoking the superiority of the 'new' art—socialist modernism—over the 'old'—socialist realism. Nonetheless, since writers still celebrated the emancipation from the previous '-ism' and the Party held onto the previous decade's belief that modernism was a fervent enemy of socialism, socialist modernism could not be theorised or promoted as such. In this context, the concept of 'generation' proved an invaluable resource to both the political regime and literary criticism: thus, socialist modernism could target a wider audience under the metonymic expression the 'generation of the 1960s', and the evolution of the entire Romanian life during the communist period could be conceptualised in terms of sequences of generations, which camouflaged and minimised the otherwise thorny issue of movements and ideologies (the so-called '-isms').

2   The opposition of generations is one of the conflicts of all tempestuous periods, whether they are under the sign of a new spring flowering or of an autumnal decline. In the history of letters it appears as the battle of the "moderns" against the ancients – until the moderns themselves have become old classics". (Curtius 2013, 98) See also the definition given by Jauss: "a literary trope dating back to antiquity and returning repeatedly in the generational revolt of the young" (2005, 331).

The Content and Limits of Socialist Modernism

Therefore, socialist modernism was the outcome of a mutually advanta-geous compromise between the writers' elite—which gained the promise of aesthetic autonomy—and the new Party apparatus—which could at-tribute its rise to power to a progressive move occasioned by a passing of the torch between generations. Nonetheless, two questions persist: first, how modernist—and, implicitly, how socialist—is socialist modernism? Second, what precisely makes this concept superior to other concepts put forward to describe this paradigm?

A partial answer to the first question is that Romanian socialist mod-ernism, in poetry and prose, involves first and foremost a programmatic divorce from 'reality,' which in the socialist-realist sense of the word im-plies the immediate, recordable, and contingent actuality. In poetry, this imperative allowed for the smooth revival of the interwar modernism, yet—*pace* Ion Pop (2018, 19–20)—in a highly purified form. Thus, in so-cialist modernist poets' imaginary universe, it is the generic 'I,' the proto-typical or archetypal exponent of human nature, located in an indefinite spatio-temporality, that articulates a prophetic and sapiential discourse of its own idiosyncratic language abounding in metaphors and symbols. As for the 'socialist' dimension of the formula, it is particularly notice-able in the existence of taboo topics such as the social-political area—which the majority of poets avoided lest they should relapse to socialist realism—, the religious area—a by-product of the communist regime's campaign for atheism—, and sexuality—considered incompatible with what was then labeled 'socialist ethics.'

More difficult to chart typologically is prose fiction, whose very tra-dition and conventions revolve around immediate reality and the mun-dane. Yet here too, the 'modernist' element of the discourse lies with the obstinate reluctance to tackle the topic and the genre which the repre-sentatives of the communist regime relentlessly pleaded for: the so-called 'present-day novel.' As an alternative to this, the generation of the 1960s put forward, unlike in the case of poetry, a cluster of formulae that share a common ground in their attempt to distort raw reality: the novel of the 'obsessive decade'—which exposed the abuses committed by the 1950s communist regime—, the retro novel—which went further along the his-torical thread, to the interwar period—, the novel of 'imaginary geogra-phies,' the parabolic novel—in which reality is obscured by symbols and myths—, and the textualist novel—built on the more recent framework of the French *Nouveau Roman*. In fact, Eugen Negrici notes that this pe-riod was marked decisively by two opposing tendencies: "the quest for

truth" and "the quest for literality" (2002, 160). What the critic fails to note, however, is that these two quests are bound by a relation of reverse proportionality: the more a work strives to be 'literary,' the less representative it is of its period and the more it distances itself from the norms of the regime.

At any rate, I believe that the peculiarities of Romanian literature under the communist regime discussed thus far are best subsumed under the concept of 'socialist modernism.' Not only does the term successfully portray the ambivalence of the literature and period wherein it originates—'no longer tyranny, not yet freedom'—, but it also allows for the paradigm to be aligned with a trend that pervaded arts around the same time, as the term was originally deployed in former Yugoslavia in reference to architecture (see Denegri 2003; Šuvaković 2009; Šuvaković 2014) and has since come to be widely used in the music and film criticism of the Soviet bloc countries as diverse as the German Democratic Republic (Westgate 2002, 18–58) and Kyrgyzstan (Tlostanova 2018, 92–96).

To be honest, the two other concepts used to denote Romanian post-Stalinist literature are equally well-represented in the international critical terminology. 'Neo-modernism,' for instance, was introduced in the mid-1960s by Frank Kermode who opposed it to 'palaeo-modernism' (1968, 73) and defined it as a series of "marginal developments of older modernism" (1968, 88), primarily the neo-avant-garde, the cult of the arbitrary, the abolition of established forms, humour, and anarchist nihilism. In Romania, the term 'neomodernism' was first circumstantially deployed by Nicolae Manolescu (1987, 227), and then systematically by Ion Bogdan Lefter (1997, 115–136). Surprisingly enough, neither of the two Romanian critics mentioned Kermode, although it is highly likely that at least the latter read it at some point. What is even more curious, despite his using the prefix 'neo-,' Lefter did not attribute any sort of innovation to this paradigm; for him, it was but "a cultural *replay*" (2012a, 237) or an 'anachronism' stemming from a 'counter-evolutionary movement': "They [writers] move forward by going backwards. The discoveries they make are nothing more than re-discoveries" (2012b, 118).

At least to some extent, Lefter's stance is justifiable, as in the case of a postmodernist who revisits modernism. Yet, instead of deploring it unanimously, it is more constructive to note that neomodernism applies innovation *within an already existing paradigm*, employing "an arsenal of tried and true techniques" to this end (Jameson 2002, 166). In fact, Lefter's successors have made the necessary emendations, pointing out that postwar modernist poets were not mere imitators of their interwar coun-

terparts (Pop 2018, 26–27). However, the topic of discussion here are not the poets, but the paradigm, which apparently has not undergone any substantial changes. How legitimate is it, then, to attach a prefix synonymous with novelty in front of the name of a trend that, at most, aspires to restore the interwar *status quo*? On the other hand, the issue with the concept is not this prefix, but the absence of an identifiable determiner. If 'socialist modernism' points vividly to its origins and circumstances of manifestation, 'neomodernism' suggests that the paradigm emerged in a 'neutral' cultural environment similar to that of Western Europe. Lefter appears to believe that this was actually the case, since he argues that neomodernism was "imposed … not by the artificial propaganda of the political regime, but by the alleged 'organic' metabolism of our own national historical culture" (2012b, 118). Yet, as previously shown, socialist modernism is just as '(un)natural' as socialist realism. What helps us distinguish between them is not *whether* the Party meddled in the two movements, but rather *how much* it interfered in their affairs. Therefore, to perpetuate the use of the ingenuous 'neomodernism' in reference to this period would equate to a mystification of a large portion of postwar Romanian literature.

 'Socialist aestheticism,' the other concept frequently deployed in relation to the Eastern European literatures of the 1960s and 1970s, was put forth in 1963 by Serbian critic and theorist Sveta Lukić to designate the "stage in the development of literatures of socialist countries when they liberate themselves from socialist realism" (1972, xvi). Lukić also highlights the ambivalent nature of this paradigm, whereby, on the one hand, the writers are exempt from serving any longer as agents of the communist propaganda, and on the other, their access to socially relevant topics is thereby restricted. It is worth mentioning that Lukić attributes the advent of socialist aestheticism to a compromise, in that, unlike in the USSR, "in Yugoslavia, society, through its politicians, ideologues and official artists, reaches an agreement with creators on what not to do" (1972, 107). In Romania, the phrase 'socialist aestheticism' was first used in 2004 by Mircea Martin, who makes no mention of the Serbian critic, yet deploys the term to describe this paradigm along much the same lines: he too perceives it to be a successor of socialist realism, he too credits the negotiations between the Party and the writers with its emergence, he too portrays it as a reversal of relations between aesthetics and ideology:

> This is to say neither that the communist ideology was no longer dominant, nor that the ideological surveillance of the national culture and literature ceased. The thematic areas broadened, however, the majority of the

blacklisted authors were re-published and—most importantly—the artistic stakes had gradually taken precedence over the ideological stakes (or conditions). From a tolerated, marginal benchmark, the aesthetic criterion evolved to become a central, primordial yardstick (Martin 2004, 18).

In comparison to neomodernism, socialist aestheticism evidently evokes the specificity of the socio-political circumstances that led to the emergence, structure, and function of the new paradigm more effectively. And if this is the case, what does this term lack? The problem lies in the vagueness of the noun: it is clear that it is in no way related to *fin de siècle* aestheticism, and that, in fact, 'aestheticism' here refers to any literary work that has an aesthetic/ artistic/ non-propagandistic end. Yet, as previously shown, the Romanian literary criticism of the 1960s and 1970s did not canonise all literary works, reserving this privilege for the works that followed the characteristic patterns of modernist poetics. Secondly, this is not only a matter of form, but also ideology: specifically, the ideology of progress and of the succession of generations that lies at the very heart of the definition of modernism, of which aestheticism makes no mention. Finally, the adoption of 'socialist aestheticism' is tantamount to equating the period between 1960/1965 and 1989 with a relatively homogenous literary phase in the history of Romanian literature, which, as Cosmin Borza aptly notes (2015, 539), overlooks the main event of this period: the shift from modernism to postmodernism, which originated around 1980. Another noteworthy argument in this regard is that Serbian criticism and historiography, from which the concept of 'socialist aestheticism' originated, has gradually replaced the term with 'socialist modernism,' a descriptive tool far more precise and adequate.

Socialist Modernism as Late Modernism

Yet, the dissociations made above leave the following question open: if socialist modernism cannot be reduced to Western postwar modernism, does this imply that the two trends do not share any similarity? In addressing this question, I compare, in what follows, socialist modernism with what came to be known in Western literary criticism as 'late modernism.' And if thus far I sought to provide a detailed account of the former, what is in order now is the discussion of the latter.

It should first be noted that late modernism, in much the same fashion as socialist modernism, is riddled with contradictory interpretations, regarding not only the characteristics of the phenomenon, but also its range of influence. To avoid futile arguments, I shall make it clear from the very

beginning that, by 'late modernism,' I refer to the literary paradigm of the post-World War II era that spans between 1945 and 1965/1970 and in which originate authors such as Ezra Pound—with *The Pisan Cantos*—, William Carlos Williams—with *Paterson*—, Charles Olson, Paul Celan, J.W. Prynne, Samuel Beckett—with *Malone Dies*—, John Barth—with *The Floating Opera*—, Thomas Pynchon—with *V.*—, Alejo Carpentier— with his first novels— and most of the representatives of the French *Nouveau Roman*—Alain Robbe-Grillet, Michel Butor, Claude Simon, etc. In short, my understanding of the term 'late modernism' is closer to that of Anthony Mellors, who limits it to the postwar period, rather than Tyrus Miller, who associates it with the interwar years.

Second, I find it fit to indicate the scope of my comparison: it does not, in any way, seek to provide artificial symmetrical oppositions the likes of West *vs.* East or First World *vs.* Second World. In fact, that would be an exercise in futility, as, unlike Kermode's neomodernism, late modernism is not limited to what was then known as the First World, being witnessed in Third World countries such as Brazil too (Coutinho 2007, 762). On the other hand, it is also true that late modernism cannot be construed outside a three-world model: "Late modernism is a product of Cold War, but in all kinds of complicated ways" (Jameson 2002, 165). Consequently, what I hope to achieve through this comparison is to assess the extent to which socialist modernism qualifies not as an alternate model, but as a specific form of late modernism.

Lastly, it should be noted that my typological model draws mainly on Mellors' set of characteristics, with a few additions from Jameson, Kermode and Brian McHale. Thus, the relation between the two paradigms appears as follows:[3]

3   Being fully aware that an appropriate circumscription of late modernism exceeds the scope of a single article—not to mention a single endnote—, I will nevertheless try to preclude some of the confusions which might occur in the understanding of this concept:

1)   As the successor of high, i.e. first, interwar modernism—illustrated by authors such as T.S. Eliot, Gottfried Benn, Paul Valéry, Federico García Lorca, Virginia Woolf, James Joyce, Thomas Mann, Bertold Brecht, Eugene O'Neill, etc.—, the late modernism at times continues along the same lines as, at other times radicalises, but then again also opposes its precursor. My model of seven characteristics attempts to reflect this ambivalent character of the newer paradigm as compared to the older one.

2)   As with high modernism, the characteristics of late modernism are more evident in poetry than in prose; therefore, I will dwell solely on this form.

Late modernism	Socialist modernism
1. Undertheorised	1. Undertheorised
2. Aesthetic autonomism (as opposed to the politics of high modernism)	2. Aesthetic autonomism (as opposed to the ideology of socialist realism)
3. Transcendence, myth, Hermeticism (in contrast to capitalist commodification)	3. Transcendence, myth, Hermeticism (in contrast to communist materialism)
4. Organic community as an alternative to institutionalised collectivity	4. Individualism as alternative to institutionalised collectivity
5. Neo-avant-garde	5. 'Classicisation' of high modernism
6. Obsolescence and exhaustion	6. Inaugural feeling
7. Critique of the capitalist establishment	7. Integrated in the communist cultural system

It is evident from the comparison above that, of the seven sets of characteristics whereby I aimed to describe the two paradigms, the first three (1–3) coincide almost perfectly, although they sometimes apply to different reference points. Yet, notwithstanding the extreme doctrine they oppose to or the attempt toward homogenisation they strive to distance themselves from, both (non-socialist) late modernism and socialist mod-

3) The characteristics of late modernism can manifest in different ways and at different levels of the literary work. There are, of course, significant differences between Carpentier's manner of suggesting myth and transcendence as diffuse presences in his *real maravilloso*, Barth's implicit plea for a necessary 'beyond' through a *reductio ad absurdum* of nihilistic thought in *The Floating Opera*, and Pynchon's still Joycean perpetuation of the mythical quest pattern in his *V*. However, these are no more than 'stylistic' differences coexisting within the framework of the same paradigm, and they do not challenge the mentioned writers' adherence to late modernism. Even when considering the case of the French *nouveau romanciers*, who are seemingly poles apart from our model, we encounter an unquestionable fascination with myth—expressed either by the dissolution of narrative into a "mythical nebula" (De Toffoli 265), as is the case with Simon, or, as with Robbe-Grillet's *The Erasers*, by the articulation of the narrative itself according to a Lévi-Straussian *dualist pattern of* the "structure of myth" (Britton 71–75).

ernism ultimately take *the same form*, although their *functions differ.* This also applies, to some extent, to criterion (4), where two *similar forms* fulfill *the same function*. However, it is equally arguable that feature (4) is closer to features (5–6), which take *different forms* to fulfill *the same function*—namely that of perpetuating the modernist rhetoric—, than to features (1–3), which deploy the same form to serve different functions. The most problematic characteristic is feature (7), which may appear as either an instance of absolute divergence—opposition to *vs.* an incorporation within a system—or perfect correspondence—the critique of capitalism—, depending on the side of the debate one stands on.

To clarify such ambiguities, the term of comparison must first be disambiguated. Where does the specificity of modernism lie: in its *form* or its *function*—i.e. its ideology? Much to the dismay of many, my answer to this question is quite simple: in both or, to be precise, in neither of the two, since modernism is, at least in my Jamesonian view, a '*logic*,' an association, that is, between form and function, which in the case of late modernism connects the ideology of aesthetics—and implicitly, the critique of capitalism—to a particular set of rhetorical devices. Yet capitalism is anything but a homogenous phenomenon and its famous "combined and uneven development" has compelled modernism to seek out various means of survival. It is for this reason that, in its attempt to adapt to certain conditions, modernism sometimes abandons forms, while, at other times, it discards functions. In all these cases, however, we do not deal with alternative forms of modernism: it is not modernism itself that changes, since it sacrifices *some of* its forms and/or *some of* its functions precisely *to save its 'logic.'* Thus, I believe that, as long as late modernism and socialist modernism share a common 'logic' in spite of their understandable fluctuations in form and function, socialist modernism can be seen as a variant of late modernism.

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Povzetek

Pri raziskovanju ideologije je skoraj nemogoče spregledati teoretski okvir za analizo ideoloških praks. Od zgodnjih 70. let 20. stoletja, ko se je z ideologijo začel sistematično ukvarjati Louis Althusser in njegov krog somišljenikov, lahko ideologijo razložimo kot mehanizem, ki zagotavlja »samoumevnost smislov«, pri čemer bistveno vlogo v ideoloških odnosih odigra pozicija (moči), ki jo govorci (uporabniki) zavzemajo v odnosu do ideoloških formacij. Ideologija skuša zapreti vrzel med prosto povezljivostjo označevalcev in na njenem mestu vzpostaviti točno določen smisel. Potlačitev in odprava razlik in ambivalenc je pogosto razumljena kot temeljna lastnost diskurzov moderne zato Claude Lefort pravilno ugotavlja, da lahko ideologijo definiramo kot red družbenega imaginarnega, ki je značilen za diskurze moderne, obenem pa v temelju odvisen od pozicije moči, ki jo v družbenih odnosih akumulirajo deležniki. Prav o teh odnosih in o poziciji moči spregovarja pričujoča knjiga.

Večina prispevkov se izogiba teoretski analizi ideologije, skladno s prepričanjem, da je bila ta v veliki meri že izčrpana. Dve izjemi sta predvsem prispevka Ane Beguš in Špele Virant. Ana Beguš s povezovanjem žanra, tehnologije in remediacije tradicionalno analizo ideoloških narativov v vsebini razširja na analizo tehnološkega vmesnika kot epistemološkega okvirja. Ker tehnologija deluje substancialno, kot ekstenzija ali kulturni vmesnik ustvarja lastno okolje, in v tem procesu preoblikuje obstoječe ter generira nove žanre. Tehnološko okolje, v katerem se pojavlja besedilo, tako lahko razumemo kot posebno raven ali vidik konteksta med besedilnim in družbenim kontekstom, ki ga lahko materialno analiziramo. Tradicionalna diskurzivna analiza se večinoma ukvarja z analizo

ideoloških narativov v vsebini, zapostavlja pa analizo tehnološkega vmesnika kot epistemološkega okvirja, ki se ga uporabnik ne zaveda, ker je v danem časovno—prostorskem kontekstu privzet. V poglavju skuša orisati današnji medijski ekosistem, pri čemer podrobneje analizira vaporwave kot eksemplaričen primer žanra novomedijske kulture v razmerju do. tradicionalnih (tiskanih) kulturnih form.

Epistemologija je tudi eden od okvirjev v prispevku Špele Virant. Prispevek se teoretsko opira na teorije radikalnega konstruktivizma, predvsem na dela Heinza von Foersterja, ter na dekolonialne študije, kakor so jih razvili Walter Mignolo, Santiago Castro—Gómez in drugi. Literarni primeri so izbrani iz del sodobne književnosti severnoameriških staroselcev, ker prav njihova literarna in literarnovedna dela najbolj nazorno tematizirajo tu obravnavano problematiko. Osrednja teza izhaja z ene strani iz konstruktivistične predpostavke o svobodni izbiri epistemologije in z druge strani iz ugotovitve dekolonialnih študij, da je ta svoboda ideološko omejena v konkretnih zgodovinskih okoliščinah. Povezava obeh teorij omogoča sklep, da epistemologija zunanjega opazovalca spodbuja in legitimira kapitalizem in kolonializem, ta pa ga, ko sta vzpostavljena, vsiljujeta podrejenim in izkoriščanim. Epistemologijo udeleženosti, kakor se kaže v izbranih literarnih primerih, lahko v tem kontekstu razumemo kot obliko upora proti hegemonialni epistemologiji.

Vmes med prispevkoma Ane Beguš in Špele Virant monografija prinaša še dva prispevka, ki združujeta študijo primera in splošnejšo refleksijo o ideologiji. Prispevek Tomaža Toporišiča raziskuje, kako se književnost in umetnost vključujeta v pretok signifikacij in reprezentacij, ki gradijo družbeno resničnost. Pri tem obravnava dva zgleda, ki pripadata temeljito različnim žanrom. Prvi zgled so hibridni romani Winfreda Georga Sebalda z beganjem med znaki, ki ga prekinjajo črno—bele fotografije kot simbol mutacije v našem zaznavanju prostora in časa, v katerem se zgodovina in geografija medsebojno oplajata, izrisujeta poti in pleteta mreže. Drugi primer je delo Oliverja Frljića, bosansko—hrvaškega gledališkega režiserja, ki v svojih šokantnih predstavah obdeluje osebne, vojne ter politične travme, da bi lahko zastavljal univerzalna vprašanja o mejah umetniške in družbene svobode, odgovornosti posameznika in skupnosti, strpnosti in stereotipih. Zasledovali bomo njune figure, ki prestopajo meje in naseljujejo premična bojišča današnje Evrope ali širšega sveta. Poskušali bomo razumeti dialektiko umetnosti in družbe, znotraj katere fluidni, neobvladljivi subjekti nenehno spreminjajo obrise. Kritiški konsenz o tem, da se sodobna umetnost prvenstveno ukvarja z realnim, bomo postavili pod vprašaj ter poskušali opisati, kako sodobno gledali-

šče in književnost krmarita po kompleksnosti diskurza in družbene resničnosti neoliberalizma v dobi terorizma, pa tudi kako se umetnost pogaja, kako modulira in sodeluje v diskurzivnem pretoku zgodb, idiomov, polemik, pričevanj in delčkov (dez)informacij pri soočanju z globalnimi negotovostmi.

Vladimir Gvozden pa prinaša refleksijo o strahu pred koncem. Literarna dela se morajo končati, tudi če to zanikajo, zatrjuje Gvozden. A tudi koncev bivanja je, tako kot koncev fikcije, nešteto. Obema je konec skupen. Gvozden se nasloni na tezo Franka Kermodeja *Smisel koncev* in z uporabo njenega instrumentarija bere istoimenski roman Juliana Barnesa. V prispevku skuša pokazati povezavo med tem, kako vprašanje konca obravnava sodobna književnost, in vznikom eshatoloških narativ, ki so povezane z zavedanjem o koncu utopij ter z vseobsegajočimi politikami strahu.

Marcello Potocco podaja zgodovinski zaris odnosov angleško in francosko govorečih kanadskih skupnosti do Združenih držav Amerike. Ameriška ekspanzionistična politika je v 19. stoletju kljub ustanovitvi avtonomne politične tvorbe spodbujala politično in kulturno povezavo Kanade z Veliko Britanijo; kanadski literarni nacionalizem se zato ni odpovedoval izražanju odvisnosti od britanskega imperija. Toda participacija na ameriškem založniškem trgu ter stiki z ameriško literaturo so se zrcalili tudi v prevzemanju literarnih vzorcev. Prispevek se osredinja na dva primera recepcije ameriške literature. Najprej ob primeru konfederacijskih pesnikov pokaže, da je kljub deklarativnemu izražanju zvestobe britanskemu imperiju v njihovem odnosu do narave prisotna sled ameriškega transcendentalizma, ki se najbolj dvoumno pokaže v poeziji Archibalda Lampmana. Tudi prek odnosa konfederacijskih pesnikov do narave pa se kontinentalni binom, torej odvisnost samoopredelitve kanadske identitete od Združenih držav Amerike, prenese v kanadski nacionalni mit, kot ga najdemo v delih Nortropa Fryja. Drugi val nacionalizma, ki mu pripadata tudi Frye in Margaret Atwood, neposredno kaže na zamolčevanje odnosnic z Združenimi državami Amerike. Leta 1969 je v nacionalističnih krogih v Torontu prišlo do eksplicitnega zavračanja ameriške sočasne poezije, čeprav so tudi v poeziji nekaterih izmed njih zaznavne vzporednice z Olsonovo teorijo projektivnega verza in z Ginsbergovo poezijo.

Aleš Kozár naadljuje s kombinacijo tematologije in ideologije. Obravnava tematizacijo podeželja v slovenski in češki literaturi, še zlasti v obdobju po drugi svetovni vojni. V zadnjih petindvajsetih letih se je topos podeželja v slovenski literaturi pojavljal sorazmerno pogosto, bodisi je šlo za prostor lirizacije in poetizacije eksotičnosti drugega, bodisi za videnje

podeželja kot zapostavljenega, temačnega prostora brez prihodnosti. V češki literaturi je bila vas predvsem v 90. letih kot motiv skoraj nezanimiva, šele kasneje so avtorji podeželje izrabili kot prostor, povezan z divjo, neukročeno naravo, kot prostor magičnih tradicij ali pa kot topos skritih ideoloških konfliktov iz nedavne preteklosti. Podeželje je pridobilo aktualnost tudi kot prostor ključnega ideološkega konflikta med absolutistično zlovoljo totalitarizma in vaško skupnostjo, ki so jo povezovali zemlja, vera in tradicija.

Prispevek Gašperja Trohe ob primerjavi Vojaške skrivnosti Dušana Jovanovića iz l. 1983 in drame tisočdevetstoenainosemdeset Simone Semenič iz. l. 2013 raziskuje podobo družbenega sistema v slovenski dramatiki. Pokaže, kako je slednja odvisna od zgodovinskega trenutka in avtorjeve družbeno-kritične drže. Še več, na to podobo v veliki meri vpliva položaj dramatike in gledališča v sodobni družbi. Tudi prispevek Maje Murnik se ukvarja z dramsko formo in izhaja iz zavedanja, da v zadnjih desetletjih ni več smiselno strogo ločevati med dramatiko in gledališčem, kajti opraviti imamo z "ne več dramo" (Poschmann) in z ne več gledališčem oz. s postdramskim gledališčem (Lehmann). V krizi reprezentacije in dramske forme se srečujemo s heterogenimi, performativnimi in pomensko odprtimi strukturami. Umeščajo se v današnji spremenjeni položaj umetnosti, katere moderna avtonomija je razpadla, umetnost pa je pričela privzemati druge postopke in funkcije. Medtem ko se Troha osredinja na Simono Semenič, Maja Murnik v luči njihove družbene angažiranosti in političnosti analizira "ne več drame" Simone Semenič ter nekaj primerov nedavnih družbenoangažiranih uprizoritev v slovenskem gledališču, v katerih ima tekstovni del pomembno vlogo (Metamorfoze 4: Črne luknje B. Kolenc, Republika Slovenija in Odilo. Zatemnitev. Oratorij D. Živadinova). Prispevek Varje Balžalorsky pa obravnava določen moment vpisa ženske (pesniške) diskurzivnosti v strukture literarnega sistema in si ogleda nekaj tenzij med ideologijo in ženskim pesemskim diskurzom na primeru zbirke Ade Škerl Senca v srcu in njene recepcije.

Vsi trije prispevki obravnavajo izključno slovenski literarni sistem, nanj pa se navezuje tudi prispevek Rolanda Orcsika, ki predstavi ludizem kot eno najpomembnejših jugoslovanskih pesniških smeri po drugi svetovni vojni, in sicer v kontekstu madžarskih avtorjev v Vojvodini, ki pišejo za literarno revijo "Új Symposion" (Novi Sad) in ki so bili pod vplivom ambivalentne politične ideologije SFRJ. Na Madžarskem ludizem ni obstajal, kar predstavlja razliko med madžarskimi pesniki na Madžarskem in v Vojvodini, pripišemo pa jo lahko drugačni (blažji) ideološki realnosti v SFRJ. Avtor opiše najpomembnejše poetske značilnosti

ludizma, ki so mu pogosto očitali, da briše mejo med popularno kulturo, subkulturami in alternativno in visoko kulturo, njegove južnoslovanske predstavnike (Tomaž Šalamun, Iztok Geister Plamen, Ivan Slamnig, Branko Maleš, Delimir Rešicki, Vojislav Despotov, Vladimir Kopicl, Vujica Rešin Tucić itd.) ter dela madžarskih avtorjev (István Domonkos, Katalin Ladik, Ottó Tolnai, Ottó Fenyvesi).

Sledijo prispevki, ki se osredinjajo na druge države, v katerih je prevladovala socialistična ideologija. Najprej Irma Ratiani predstavi gruzijsko situacijo. Po smrti Stalina leta 1953 in destalinizaciji svojetske zveze leta 1956 je v Gruziji prišlo do velikih političnih nemirov, sledilo pa je obdobje politične in kulturne otoplitve. Tudi v literarnih procesih je v obdobju otoplitve prišlo do precej drugačne podobe literarnih del, na eni strani je bila še vidna nostalgija po Stalinu, na drugi strani razcvet neo-realizma in še kasneje razcvet literature žensk. Maka Elbakidze se prav tako osredotoča na delovanje sovjetske ideologije v Gruziji. Predstavi opozicionalna diskurza sovjetske ideologije in literarno-raziskovalnega dela gruzijskega disidenta Viktorja Nozadzeja. Nozadze je v času tridesetletne emigracije ustvaril šest knjig, v katerih je raziskoval srednjeveško romanco Vitez v panterjevi koži Shote Rustavelija. Raziskoval je predvsem njegov etični, idejni in estetski nazor, pri tem pa v nasprotju s sovjetskimi ideologi poudarjal krščanske prvine pesnitve. Prav zato je bil v Gruziji označen za nesprejemljivega, predvsem med znanstveniki.

Andrei Terian in Stefan Baghiu zaključujeta knjigo z obravnavo romunske literature v času socializma. Terian prispevek zastavi nekoliko širšše, saj obravnava izraz socialistični modernizem, natančneje njegovo uporabnost za označevanje literarne paradigme, ki se je v letih med 1960/1965 in 1980 uveljavila v romunski in v drugih vzhodnoevropskih književnostih. Zato najprej podaja pregled navedenega obdobja, posebej pa raziskuje vzroke, spričo katerih so pisatelji in komunistični oblastniki modernizem pojmovali kot razvojno smer, s pomočjo katere so lahko uspešno izrazili svoja zanimanja v obdobju, ko se je pričel umikati socialistični realizem. V drugem delu prispevka opredeljuje idejo socialističnega modernizma in analizira njeno uporabnost za označbo omenjenega obdobja, predvsem dokazuje, zakaj je pojem uporabnejši od drugih, podobnih izrazov, ki so bili doslej v uporabi v Romuniji, kot so neomodernizem ali socialistični esteticizem. Nazadnje prispevek razširi v raziskavo, ali je ideja socialističnega modernizma omejena na rabo v okviru nacionalne, v najboljšem primeru regionalne ravni, ali pa jo je mogoče uspešno povezati v nadnacionalno mrežo modernizma, in sicer tako, da ga primerjamo s t.im. poznim modernizmom.

Baghiu pa na drugi strani raziskuje socialistični realizem, in sicer v okviru pojmovanja, da gre za pojav množične kulture. Splošni pogled na literaturo pod socialističnim realizmom je, da gre za standardizirano pisanje in formulaičen žanr. Baghiu v prispevku skuša analizirati žanrsko literaturo in literarne podžanre, prevajane v Romuniji v obdobju socialističnega realizma, da bi pridobil bolj celosten vpogled v družbeni cilj in funkcije literature socialističnega realizma. Skladno z ideološkim programom Sovjetske zveze in njenega območja vpliva je prihajalo do številnih poskusov nadzora nad popularnimi in mladinskimi romani. Hkrati bi morala biti ta prizadevanja povezana z razvojem popularne literature v zahodnih kulturah, saj si ta dva nasprotna si kulturna sistema delita številne pomembne podobnosti. Zlasti če upoštevamo, da so bili najbolj prevajani literarni avtorji v stalinističnem romunskem kulturnem sistemu Alexandre Dumas, Jack London in Mark Twain, se vrzel med zahodno in vzhodno popularno literaturo ne zdi tako široka, četudi so njune funkcije v obeh prostorih različne.

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Reviews

Znanstvena monografija *Ideology in the 20ᵗʰ Century: Studies oj Literary and Social Discourses and Practices* postavlja raziskovalno vprašanje o odnosu med literaturo in ideologijo, ki je ključno za eno osrednjih sodobnih literarnovednih smeri. V tej tradiciji so bila osnovna spoznanja francoskih teoretikov (Althusser, Pecheux, Macherey, Balibar, Foucault) nadgrajena zlasti v Veliki Britaniji in Združenih državah (Eagleton, Thomson, MacDonell, Hall), marsikaj pa so prispevali tudi slovenski lacanovci. Kljub temu je bila obravnava vprašanj ideološkega diskurza v literaturi v slovenskem prostoru doslej razmeroma šibka. Prav tako v slovenski prevodni tradiciji, ki ji sicer ne manjka prevodov francoskih klasikov teorije ideologije, pogrešamo na primer Thomsonove in Eagletonove klasike.

Zato velja pozdraviti dejstvo, da v slovenskem prostoru dobivamo izvirno monografsko publikacijo, ki se v prvi vrsti posveča prav vprašanjem ideologije v literarnih diskurzih. Knjiga prinaša primere, ki segajo vse od Severne Amerike do Varšavskega pakta, osredinja pa se predvsem se na Slovenijo oziroma bivšo Jugoslavijo. Nekatera poglavja se posvečajo ideologiji znotraj ene same nacionalne entitete oziroma njene literature (Potocco, Balžalorsky, Troha, Murnik): z izjemo Potocca gre za slovensko nacijo, medtem ko se ostala poglavja osredinjajo na patriarhalni ideološki diskurz (Balžalorsky) oziroma na vprašanje možnosti družbene kritike v dramskem besedilu (Troha, Murnik). Večina poglavij pa je primerjalnih, saj obravnavajo več (nacionalnih) entitet oziroma držav hkrati. Pri tem poglavji M. Elbakidze in I. Ratiani v ospredje postavljata gruzijsko

nacionalno književnost, a ne brez primerjave s sovjetskimi diskurzi. Romunska avtorja pa raziskujeta recepcijo evropskega tipa modernizma v romunskem (in nasploh socialističnem) tipu modernizma (Terian) oziroma recepcijo zahodne žanrske literature v romunskih prevodih (Baghiu).

Monografija se osredinja na 20. stoletje, a ne zanemarja kontinuitete ideoloških diskurzov, ki na eni strani segajo v 19. stoletje (Potocco), na drugi pa se nadaljujejo v 21. stoletje (Troha, Murnik, Toporišič). Tako knjigi uspe sklenjen zaris kontinuitete ideoloških diskurzov na širokem geografskem področju, ki pa prihodnjemu delu pušča obravnave Azije, Afrike in Južne Amerike ter s tem (z delno izjemo poglavij Š. Virant in Potocca) problematiko postkolonialnih študij. Subvencioniranje monografije zaradi vsega navedenega toplo priporočam.

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Jernej Habjan

II

Monografija *Ideology in the 20th Century: Studies oj Literary and Social Discourses and Practices* se uvršča v kontinuum obravnav ideologije, ki je v pretežno parcialnih raziskavah prisoten tudi v Sloveniji. Slovenski doprinos se ponavadi ponaša z enim glavnih ideologov, ki svoj status v veliki meri dolguje fenomenu znanstvene pop kulture, posebej osredotočene na lacanovstvo – Slavojem Žižkom.

Pričujoča monografija se lacanovstvu popolnoma izogne, za kar ima vsaj en pomemben razlog. Namesto s teoretiziranjem (čeprav je tudi to deloma prisotno v knjigi) se ukvarja s konkretnimi primeri, in skoraj izključno s takimi, kjer si s psihoanalizo pač ni mogoče pomagati. V resnici si človek skoraj ne more predstavljati psihoanaliziranja stalinovskega terorja, ki je imel povsem konkretne posledice. Dobro jih pokažeta oba prispevka iz Gruzije. Prvi, poglavje Make Elbakidze, ki se ukvarja z usodo gruzijskega oporečnika, nič krivega in dolžnega, Viktorja Nozadzeja, zraven pa imenitno pokaže tudi, kako je mogoče v imenu ideološke represije na besedilo navleči vse možne religije, le tiste najbolj očitne, namreč krščanstva, ne. Drugi, poglavje Irme Ratiani pa sicer pokaže čudno shizofrenijo Gruzijcev v odnosu do Stalinove detronizacije po smrti, hkrati pa čudovito ponazarja, da je imel ideološki teror lahko še bolj brutalne posledice, ki so šle vse tja do samomora: in postane »smrt enega človeka« ključna prelomnica v celem literarnem dogajanju neke dežele.

Poglavja so v poglavitni meri osredinjena na prikaz represije komunističnega režima. Občasno prikažejo tudi nenavadno relativno svobodo

literature v njem, bolj natančno, v bivši Jugoslaviji: Roland Orcsik tako analizira delovanje vojvodinskih madžarskih pesnikov v reviji Uj Symposium ter njihovih povezav s preostalimi deli Jugoslavije. Bolj pogost pa je izkaz komunistične represije. Ob obeh Gruzinkah tudi poglavja o romunski literaturi kažejo na izobličenost literarnega prostora. Andrei Terian pokaže, kako je ideologija socialističnega realizma deformirala sprejem poznega zahodnjaškega modernizma in kreirala nekaj, kar Terian imenuje »socialistični modernizem«, to je pojem, ki ga je po verjetno upravičenem mnenju avtorja mogoče uporabiti tudi v ostalih literaturah južno- in srednjeevropskega socializma, vključno s slovensko. Stefan Baghiu pa pokaže, kako je socialistična represija vplivala na sprejem prevodne, resda (ali pa še toliko pomembneje) žanrske literature.

V luči tega je nekoliko nenavadno, da se slovenski avtorji poglavij izogibajo vprašanjem komunistične preteklosti, razen Gašperja Trohe, ki pa vprašanje dvomljivega jugonostalgičnega odnosa drame Simone Semenič do socializma pripelje v trditev, da drama s svojo odprto in dramo razformirajočo strukturo vsakega gledalca posebej prisili, da sam zavzame stališče do časa jugoslovanskega komunizma. Varja Balžalorsky se sicer ukvarja s tipičnim represivnim delovanjem do poezije Ade Škerl, a z vidika femnističnih teorij. Maja Murnik in Tomaž Toporišič se ukvarjata z najsodobnejšo dramsko produkcijo, pri čemer slednji le-to (zopet) postavi v kontekst raztreščene oziroma dopolnjujoče se forme, kjer kot sporočilo delujejo tudi neliterarni elementi, tako kot v prozi Sebalda. Marcello Potocco se v skladu s svojim raziskovalnim interesom sploh umakne iz raziskave slovenskega, se pa ukvarja z vprašanjem nacionalne ideologije, le da v Kanadi. V severno Ameriko slednjič poseže tudi Špela Virant, ki pokaže na Marxovo dvomljivo sprejetje podob o indijancih.

Monografijo toplo priporočam za objavo ter za pridobitev subvencije.

Igor Grdina

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