

Memoirism hype: Why do Slovenian diplomats write memoirs?¹

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Abstract

Literary theory puts memoirs on the intersection between literary and semi-literary genres, which makes them specific by definition. But when we talk about memoirs of diplomats, they are even more specific, as they are often the only source describing events that took place in diplomatic intercourse. This article analyses the significance of writing memoirs as seen by diplomats through interviews with ten Slovenian diplomats. The interviewees agree that memoirs need to be written, not only to shed light on events that took place in diplomacy, but also because they can be important literary works and contribute to the spread of diplomatic terminology.

Keywords: diplomatic memoirs, Slovenian diplomacy, (semi-)literary genres, linguistic capacity.

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INTRODUCTION

Foreign policy and diplomacy are highly complex to understand and analyse. Among the many reasons for this are the extraordinary complexity of interactions among different players, of meanings and activities, as well as the impact of factors accompanying diplomacy and foreign policy, lack of insight into what is happening on the diplomatic stage, and—crucially—a serious lack of sources for analysing events relating to diplomatic and foreign-policy activities of states and other actors. It is precisely the latter which makes it hard for researchers in this field to create a clear picture of what went on in a particular diplomatic moment. The search for scientific truth is thus limited, and the results are defined by the fragments that a particular researcher can get. Furthermore, this increases the probability of bias in depiction.

Different approaches have been used in the past to address these shortcomings. The most widely accepted approach was to rely on official sources in depicting diplomatic activities. But already in the 16th century, we can see the emergence of a new source for explaining events in inter-state diplomacy—memoirs of diplomats. Among the early writings of this kind are the memoirs, or travelogue, of Baron Sigismund von Herberstein, who was born in Vipava, on Slovenian territory. As a Habsburg diplomat, he travelled to Russia twice, and published a Latin account of it in Vienna in 1549 entitled *Rerum Moscoviticarum Commentarii* (Notes on Muscovite Affairs). The book is still considered one of the first European works on the situation in the predecessor of the Russian Empire. Similarly, German diplomat and scholar Adam Olearius (1603–1671) described his experience on the travels to Russia and Persia in his book *Vermehrte Neue Beschreibung der Muscovitischen und Persischen Reyse* (1656). Olearius partly used the travelogue of his predecessor in his writing and partly revised from his perspective the foreign images as seen by Herberstein (Javor Briški 204ff). A boom of such reports from the field came in the 19th and early 20th century. Here, we will only mention three pieces of writing that have made it to the canon of diplomatic studies: Maurice de Talleyrand's *Mémoires du prince de Talleyrand* (1891), George Buchanan's *My mission to Russia and other diplomatic memories* (1923), and James Rennell Rodd's *Social and Diplomatic Memories* (1922–1925). Among Slovenian diplomats, we must also highlight Baron Josef Schwegel, who wrote his memoirs *Erinnerungen und Briefe* shortly before his death in 1914. All this leads to the question how to categorise memoirs of diplomats (and politicians engaging in diplomacy).

The question is not as easy as it may seem, since diplomatic memoirs are complex on several levels. Firstly, they can be a mix of fact and fiction. Memoirs of diplomats are first and foremost memories, and are thus tailored to the conscious and unconscious intentions of the author and particularly their intended messages.

Secondly, while this is true by definition, it is not necessarily characteristic of all diplomatic memoirs. The literary form gives diplomats the poetic licence for coupling the facts that occurred with (perceived, real or imaginary) reactions to them. As readers we cannot know for certain whether the reactions were exactly as described in memoirs. And diplomatic courtesy makes it impossible to check. Memoirs can quite easily stray from describing events as they happened and become literary fiction. Because it is impossible to tell truth from fiction from the text itself, the reader must assume that everything in memoirs is more or less true. The third dilemma in reading memoirs is their fragmented nature. Authors are free to choose the emphases and digressions in their memoirs, which means the stories can be neither coherent nor consistent, but above all not complete. This further dims the classification of diplomatic memoirs in terms of literary genre. If we add to this the fact that diplomatic memoirs can hardly be put in a single genre category—because the “subject’s clashes and splitting make it impossible to write in one pure genre” (Juvan 318)—it becomes even more difficult to define the genre of diplomatic memoirs.²

This article does not deal with categorisation of diplomatic memoirs into literary genres (Kmecl 299; Kos 121; Žigon and Udovič 93–94), but rather explores the question why diplomats write them in the first place (on implicit or explicit memoirs *cf.* Maver 17–23 and 47–57). We therefore wish to determine whether diplomats who have written memoirs find it important that memoir literature in diplomacy exists (and why), as well as their underlying motivation for writing their memoirs. Was it their inner need, or a need/inspiration that came from their environment (e.g. from the diplomatic, scientific or publishing sphere)? We will limit our analysis to memoirs of Slovenian diplomats written after 1991, because this area has been completely unexplored so far.

The article consists of three parts. The introduction is followed by a theoretical discussion on the categorisation of memoirs in terms of literary genre. This sets the framework for an empirical research involving Slovenian authors of diplomatic memoirs, which is followed by a discussion and conclusions.

DIFFICULTY OF CATEGORISING MEMOIRS INTO LITERARY GENRES

As already shown in the introduction, it is almost impossible to categorise memoirs into “pure” literary genres. Kmecl (299) claims that memoirs should be seen as a “**didactical piece of writing** of historical nature, only that the history in

2 Egerton (223) points out that memoirs (particularly by politicians; or in our case diplomats) cannot be put in a single genre because they are an example of *polygenre literature*.

it is **evaluated** very subjectively, even personally, from the author's perspective" (emphasis added). He sees memoirs as merely a record (not a literary work) defined by the author's personal views and value judgements (about what is good or bad). Similarly, Juvan (311) understands them as a subcategory of autobiography,³ where "every element is part of its own set of interpretation signs", which means that writing memoirs is mainly about interpreting facts, not listing them. The issue is clearly not simple, as different memoirs use different levels of (de)objectivisation or even subjectivisation. Žigon and Udovič (93) note about Dimitrij Rupel's *Slovenija na svetovnem prizorišču* (Slovenia on the World Stage) that the "author only partly objectivises facts and events, and his writing is often subjective and reflects personal involvement in the political and social developments presented in the book". Consequently, they believe the "text cannot be listed among classical memoirs, nor can it be categorised as a scientific discussion". Considering that it is also certainly not a literary piece, we come to the question what it actually is. The cited article does not provide an answer to this question, but it clearly shows that memoirism, particularly diplomatic memoirism, is extremely complex in itself, since it is difficult to categorise in any specific genre.

Let us take a look at two examples of Slovenian diplomatic memoirs. Franc Mikša wrote an erotic novel *Njegova ekselenca Christian Grasset* (His Excellency Christian Grasset) where he implicitly presents his diplomatic experience from his posting in Klagenfurt, Austria. The second is Milan Balažič's book *Diplomatska vojna za mejo med Slovenijo in Hrvaško* (Diplomatic War for the Border between Slovenia and Croatia), which uses the form of journal to describe the events from 5 January 2009 to 26 May 2011.⁴ Already these short descriptions show how two examples of the same genre can differ extremely in how they approach their subject matter. Regardless of this diversity, Kralj (206) finds a typical feature of memoirs in emphasised public events and 'significance' of the memoirist in them.⁵ Diplomatic activity is clearly a public aspect, but it includes a distinct level of privacy (*cf.* Arbeiter 157–174). A memoirist can therefore decide how much of this privacy they wish to reveal. Some (e.g. Zvone Dragan and Dimitrij Rupel) emphasise the private aspects of their diplomatic activity much more than others (e.g. Roman Kirn and Jožef Kunič). In the abovementioned memoirs of Balažič, there is no mention of private aspects, while in Mikša's work they can be found only indirectly.

3 Avsenik Nabergoj (100) writes that Smith and Watson listed 52 genres of writing life stories, among which they recognise three forms of autobiography (in first, second and third person), which they distinguish from memoirs.

4 At that time, Milan Balažič was a strategic advisor to Slovenian Foreign Minister Samuel Žbogar.

5 In this sense, as opposed to autobiography, public aspects have preference in memoirs over private ones. This implicitly leads to attempts to describe facts objectively, or a tendency to depict them in an unmarked way (in terms of ideology and value judgements).

The view that it is almost impossible to draw a clear line between memoirs and autobiography is also supported by Marcus (35–37), who points out that autobiography involves writing about the individual's identity, but this is also true for memoirs. However, Marcus (35) highlights another thing that is very important for our research—the question of motivation, the reasons why an individual decides to write a particular work. She believes writing memoirs to be a case of false modesty, or as she puts it, rather than having something to tell it is about finding someone to tell it to (36). It can also be about the need to raise the appearance of uniqueness (35), or dodging responsibility (e.g. *us vs me*; 37–38). Of course, there is also a chance that the memoirist wishes to evaluate their life and work by committing to the act of writing, although this does not necessarily mean self-presentation (as characteristic of autobiography) (40). This view is similar to that of Schulze (21ff), who introduced the notion of *ego documents*, which he sees as a result of an individual's need⁶ to write down their revelations and experience. But he also warns (24–25) that the main problem of memoirs are their objectivity and credibility.⁷

What are the defining factors that make a piece of writing a memoir?

1. The first factor is certainly the purpose (which is also defined by ideology; *cf.* Trupej 141–152) – why the author writes the text. Jurić Pahor (163) posits that, while autobiography relies on intro- and extrospection, a memoirist does not self-evaluate past actions but merely reflects and reconstructs them. In other words: “An autobiographic text was and is not seen primarily as fiction, but rather as a form of self-representation, which includes a duplicated actuality, and the story portrayed refers to the author's empirical life course, although it may be articulated only in segments” (Koron 11). So, the purpose of the two is different.
2. Apart from the purpose, the person in which the text is written also differs. Autobiographies usually use the first, second and third person, while memoirs combine subjective and third-person storytelling (Žigon and Udovič 85ff). This means a memoirist can choose which facts will be presented through a personal lens, and when they wish to depict the objective truth (due to facts that may be unknown to the reader). The importance of using objectivisation to depict certain elements as historical facts is also underlined by Verginella (95), who adds that memoirs⁸ allow [a historian] “new perspectives and new interpretative challenges” (97; *cf.* Lekić 102–103).

6 This need may be external (e.g. access to a typewriter, computer, paper, pen, historical events) or internal (own convictions, emotions, other inner impulses, etc.).

7 Perenič (430ff) lists as *ego documents* also personal, intimate diaries of literary authors, “since they include statements that help us better understand their perception of themselves and the world around them”.

8 She calls them autobiographical sources.

3. Of course, the writing of memoirs also requires a certain temporal distance of the memoirist from the events being described. The greater this distance, the higher the likelihood that the author will diverge from factual representation of events and focus mainly on their own interpretation thereof (Given 504). This was highlighted in his memoirs by Ernest Petrič (2019), who wrote: "My book does not describe facts, but memories. It is how I remember things."⁹ This shows that it is impossible to determine a timeline on which memoirs should be written. Nevertheless, most authors write memoirs once a certain period in their life is concluded (e.g. when they retire, change jobs or fields of work, etc.). Only rarely (e.g. in our case Dimitrij Rupel, but partly also Božo Cerar, Ernest Petrič, Franc Mikša and Milan Jazbec) do they write their memoirs while still actively engaged in the particular area that the memoirs refer to.
4. But the key difference between autobiography and memoirs is the target audience. Literary theory hardly deals with this issue.¹⁰ Nevertheless, the question of target audience is paramount, since it allows us to draw at least a soft dividing line between autobiography and memoirs. We claim that the author decides whether they will write an autobiography or memoirs. If they go for memoirs, this may be clear from the title (e.g. Petrič's *Spomini in spoznanja: diplomat, pravnik, politik—Memories and Insights: Diplomat, Lawyer, Politician*) or the preface (e.g. Grobovšek: "Who is this book for? Everyone to a certain extent. Both young and old"; Kirn: "The book was written for anyone with an interest in international relations, foreign policy, diplomacy"; Dragan: "That is why the book *V politiki in diplomaciji [In Politics and Diplomacy]* will be an interesting read for a wide array of interested readers"). If the author does not explain who the book is meant for, and 'only' focuses on the question why it was written, then they set it out as an autobiography rather than memoirs.

EMPIRICAL RESEARCH ON MEMOIRS OF SLOVENIAN DIPLOMATS

Research methods

This analysis includes all Slovenian authors who wrote memoirs related to their work in diplomacy after 1991. This cut-off year was selected because it was only

9 The importance, problems and dangers (or advantages) of adaptation, for instance in translations, are highlighted by Maček (117–125) and Žigon (153–171).

10 The importance of the reader is not analysed even in the seminal work of literary theory on autobiography edited by Alenka Koron and Andrej Leben *Avtobiografski diskurz: Teorija in praksa avtobiografije v literarni vedi, humanistiki in družboslovju* (2011).

after the break-up of Yugoslavia that Slovenian diplomacy formed. First the memoirs were classified according to the status of their members (Table 1), after which a written interview was prepared for the memoirists that are still alive. Out of the 14 interview requests sent out by e-mail on 7 April 2020, we have received 10 replies.

Table 1: List of memoirs of Slovenian diplomats since 1991

Author	Memoirs	Status
Andrej Capuder	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • <i>Pariški dnevnik: zapiski slovenskega veleposlanika v Franciji (1993–1997)</i> (Ljubljana: Družina, 1999). 	deceased (2018)
Bogdan Osolnik	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • <i>Med svetom in domovino: spomini 1945–1981</i> (Maribor: Obzorja, 1992); • <i>O slovenski državnosti</i> (Ljubljana: ZZB, 2004); • <i>Z ljubeznijo skozi surovi čas</i> (Novo mesto: Goga, 2010). 	deceased (2019)
Bojan Grobovšek	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • <i>Homo diplomaticus slovenicus</i> (Ljubljana: Cankarjeva založba, 2000); • <i>Zakaj Slovenija ni Švica</i> (Tomišelj: Alpemedia, 2014); • <i>Trst, Ljubljana, Dunaj in širni svet</i> (Ljubljana: Totaliteta, 2018). 	retired
Božo Cerar	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • <i>Diplomacija za kulisami: (dnevniški zapisi Slovencev v jugoslovanski diplomaciji od avgusta 1990 do avgusta 1991)</i> (Piran: Samozaložba, 2000); • <i>Opazovalci</i> (Ljubljana: MORS, 2011), • <i>Washingtonski zapiski</i> (Ljubljana: Modrijan, 2018). 	retired
Dimitrij Rupel	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • <i>Slovenska pot do samostojnosti in priznanja</i> (Ljubljana: Kres, 1992); • <i>Skrivnost države: [spomini na domače in zunanje zadeve 1989–1992]</i> (Ljubljana: Delo, 1992); • <i>Odčarana Slovenija: [knjiga o slovenski pomladi in jeseni]</i> (Ljubljana: Mihelač, 1993); • <i>Srečanja in razhajanja</i> (Ljubljana: Nova revija, 2001); • <i>Prevzem zgodbe o uspehu</i> (Ljubljana: Mladinska knjiga, 2004); • <i>Predsedovanje v ognju lastnih sil</i> (Ljubljana: Nova obzorja, 2009); • <i>Predsednik ali Tako, kot je bilo</i> (Ljubljana: Vale-Novak, 2009); • <i>Slovenija na svetovnem prizorišču</i> (Ljubljana: Slovenska matica, 2011); • <i>Negotovo življenje 176. članice OZN</i> (Ljubljana: Nova obzorja, 2013); • <i>Železo in žamet ali Od kulture do države: slovenska državnost in Evropska unija po koncu hladne vojne</i> (Ljubljana: Slovenska matica, 2017). 	retired, professor

Author	Memoirs	Status
Ernest Petrič	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <i>Spomini in spoznanja: Diplomat, pravnik, politik</i> (Celovec: Mohorjeva družba, 2018) 	foreign policy advisor to the President of the Republic of Slovenia
Franc Mikša	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <i>Njegova Ekselenca Christian Grasset</i> (Dob pri Domžalah: Miš, 2014). 	retired
Jože Šušmelj	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <i>Trpko sosedsvo: nekateri vidiki odnosov med sosednjima državama v obdobju 1946–2001</i> (Trst: ZTT, 2009). 	retired
Jožef Kunič	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <i>Ambasador vseh</i> (Ljubljana: Tuma, 2004); <i>Za sproščenost vseh</i> (Ljubljana: Liberalna akademija, 2006). 	retired
Karl Bonutti	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <i>Med izbiri in zgodovino</i> (Gorica: Goriška Mohorjeva družba, 2015). 	retired
Livio Jakomin	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <i>Na meji</i> (Ljubljana: Koščak, 2013). 	retired
Marko Kosin	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <i>Začetki slovenske diplomacije z Italijo: 1991–1996</i> (Ljubljana: Založba Fakultete družbene vede, 2000). 	deceased (2007)
Matjaž Šinkovec	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <i>Čakajoč Samuela: prispevki k oblikovanju slovenske zunanje politike 2008–2012 med čakanjem na osebni pogovor z ministrom za zunanje zadeve</i> (USA: Lulu, 2014); <i>The 2020 vision for the Western Balkans: the rough version</i> (USA: Lulu, 2014). 	active diplomat, Police Attaché at the embassy in Sarajevo (title Ambassador)
Milan Jazbec	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <i>Slovenec v Beogradu: 1987–1991</i> (Pohanca: Samozaložba, 2006). 	active diplomat, Ambassador to North Macedonia
Roman Kirn	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <i>V službi diplomacije</i> (Ljubljana: Modrijan, 2017). 	retired
Rudi Čacinovič	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <i>Poslanstva in poslanštva: od Rakičana do Madrida in nazaj: Madžarska, Južna Amerika, Švica, Nemčija, Španija</i> (Maribor: Obzorja, 1985); <i>Slovensko bivanje sveta: razvoj in praksa diplomacije</i> (Ljubljana: Enotnost, 1994); <i>Svet v krizi: izbor zapiskov in komentarjev</i> (Ljubljana: DZS, 2004); <i>Smeš in naključje v diplomaciji: diplomatski mozaik</i> (Ljubljana: Samozaložba, 2006). 	deceased (2008)
Vojko Volk	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <i>Od naroda do države in nazaj: pet esejev o razpadu Jugoslavije, pravici do samoodločbe, Sloveniji in njeni samostojnosti, človekovih pravicah, Kosovu</i> (Ljubljana: Samozaložba, 2012). 	active diplomat, Consul General in Trieste (title Ambassador)
Zvone Dragan	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <i>V politiki in diplomaciji</i> (Ljubljana: Modrijan, 2018). 	retired

Source: Own analysis.

The interviewees were sent six questions, and asked to answer them after careful deliberation. The questions were structured to cover the purpose, person, time of writing and audience (see theoretical section). Due to space constraints, the analysis will focus on the questions of purpose and significance of the memoirs. By focusing on the purpose of the memoirs as seen by their authors, we wish to determine in particular the main motivation for their creation. Was the author driven to write their memoirs by internal or external factors? And is it important (and for whom or why) that diplomats write memoirs?

Results and analysis

The first question to the interviewees was: "Why did you write your memoirs about your diplomatic activities?" Mostly, the interviewees said they wanted to present or analyse the events that happened to them. Two of them stressed they were driven by an inner need ("I promised it to myself and my family [...]. I was also encouraged to do so by some of my fellow diplomats and historians"; "There are several reasons. One is the inner need of humans to share something [...]"). Others stressed in particular that they wished to present certain events through reflection of a personal experience (»[...] a book with a reflection of a personal experience of the creation and maturing of Slovenian foreign policy and diplomacy could bring added value for those interested in international relations"), or that their diplomatic job put them in a unique position to see certain events up close ("I was among the first people, if not the first one, to go abroad in 1991, under special circumstances, without recognition from the receiving country [...]; "I described the outset of the formation of diplomacy as an observer and participant"; "I had been delaying writing on this topic for a long time"). However, some interviewees said they wrote memoirs mainly because they thought the events they witnessed should be presented "more objectively", since the (domestic and/or foreign) public only knew them from one perspective ("With the memoirs, I wanted to objectivise the events of the time, and set them in the context of the political developments in that period"; "In my books, I avoided personal accounts, and tried to show these events objectively"). Another interesting aspect came from two interviewees who said they wrote their memoirs/analyses to justify their role in a particular time. One interviewee said he did not write typical memoirs, but an account of the events, which is why he wrote them immediately after witnessing them. He added: "But in some corner of my mind, there was also the thought of not forgetting details, or making it easier for me to answer years later the question 'What did you do in those times?'" Another interviewee pointed out the importance of writing memoirs for the body of Slovenian memoir literature. He believes writing

memoirs is a “professional and moral duty of diplomats [...], as this enriches the nation’s identity and the national collective memory”. His answer then goes on to stress the importance of memoirs for the search for objective truth and describing events from a time you experienced as a diplomat. Finally, one of the interviewees points out as direct incentive to write his book the “decline of professionalism in Slovenian diplomacy and underestimation of the importance of having your own ambitious and proactive foreign policy in Slovenia”.¹¹

The second question for the interviewees was whether they found it important that diplomats write memoirs (and why). The logic behind the question was to establish the meaning the authors of memoirs themselves ascribe to this genre, as well as the influence of memoirs on work in diplomacy and foreign policy. The interviewees largely agreed on the importance of diplomats writing memoirs, but they differed somewhat in the reasons they provided. One interviewee said it was right for diplomats to write memoirs “if they have something interesting to tell”. Another added that writing memoirs was important for “things not to be forgotten”, but he was against publishing memoirs at any cost or as ‘photobooks’ (i.e. memoirs that mainly stress the importance of a particular actor). Several interviewees agreed that diplomatic memoirs are not meant to “glorify the ‘outstanding’ work of an individual”,¹² and one even remarked that memoirs should be interesting, which is not a given since “uninteresting people also get into diplomacy”.¹³ In general, the interviewees agreed that memoirs were a remarkably welcome tool for establishing diplomatic practice and theory, and one even said the “painstaking processes and random events that brought us forward should be better presented”. The same interviewee highlighted the role of the individual as a key creator of successful or unsuccessful diplomatic events. In this sense, one of the interviewees also stressed that “writing memoirs, particularly in languages with a small number of speakers, strengthens and expands the linguistic capacity of expressing different social realities”. Another added the aspect of memoirs contributing to the development and understanding of foreign policy, pointing out that memoirs can “raise interest, especially among young people, for Slovenian foreign policy and diplomacy”. From the perspective of

11 Bonutti (13–14) lists three reasons for writing his memoirs: “Perhaps I wanted to fill the void that was left in my life after my wife’s death. [...] Many friends and acquaintances who are at least vaguely familiar with my life path have had remarks in recent years that I had experienced so many interesting things and met so many interesting people, and that it would be good to preserve this [...]. And the third reason [...]: I have always followed the disputes dividing the Slovenian nation with a bitter taste. [...] I wish for these memoirs to shed light on my work and help understand the reasons for some of my decisions, which I always took aiming at de-escalation”.

12 One interviewee said: “We have different kinds of memories. Memoirists often put themselves and their role in the forefront. They glorify their achievements and hide their errors. Such memoirs do more harm than good for historical depiction of events.”

13 A notable remark was that diplomatic cables certainly made for a more interesting read than memoirs.

foreign policy and diplomacy, we should also mention a point made by one of the interviewees that writing memoirs was important “if social, political or economic shifts notably impacted the country of service”, while he believes memoirs to be “unnecessary if one’s diplomatic service was in normal and routine circumstances”.

DISCUSSION AND CONCLUSIONS

The analysis of the interviews has shown three common points in reasoning why Slovenian diplomats (should) write memoirs. The main position of all the interviewees is that diplomats should write memoirs because this sheds light on the events they witnessed, while also adding a personal touch to certain historical frameworks, and above all offering insight into how actors in processes and relations in diplomacy and foreign policy act and think. With respect to the personal touch in memoirs, most interviewees agree it should be there. However, memoirs should not serve to glorify the achievements of an individual or hide their errors, since this would mean distorting the historical reality this individual witnessed. Drawing from the presented theoretical framework, we can confirm that Slovenian memoirist diplomats mostly support writing memoirs, not autobiographies.

Another common point in the interviews was that memoirs are also highly valuable for the development of diplomatic theory and practice. Most interviewees either explicitly or implicitly agreed that memoirs of diplomats could contribute to better understanding and higher quality of diplomacy and foreign policy, as well as their better formulation and structuring with respect to other activities of the state in the areas of interior and foreign policy. In this context, one of the interviewees stressed that “non-ministers and non-diplomats do not have access to such quantity of information as [foreign] ministers and diplomats”. Diplomatic memoirs are also important from the perspective of diplomatic terminology and language. Therefore, we cannot speak of the specific importance of diplomats’ memoirs only in the context of diplomatic studies, and their added value should also be sought on the intersection between social and humanist sciences, including literary theory. We must not forget that some diplomats frame their memoirs as a literary works due to the sensitivity of the information presented or situations that might put someone in a difficult position (e.g. *Njegova ekscelexna Christian Grasset, Predsednik ali Tako, kot je bilo, Grenke pomaranče*).

The third finding confirmed by a majority of the interviewees is that diplomats should write memoirs from a certain temporal distance. The interviewees agreed that the relevance of memoirs is in critical evaluation of certain things, which is only possible once the events no longer cause any stir with the memoirist. On the other hand, some of the interviewees pointed out that it made sense to write soon after

events happen. This reduces the chance of the memory of the events being distorted, and at the same time allows greater analysis than after more time has passed.

In general, we can conclude that the interviewees agree memoirs are important and needed, particularly in the system of developing national diplomacy and foreign policy, because the personal experience of an individual, their view of the world and their critical evaluation of events can contribute to better understanding of and better attitude towards diplomacy and foreign policy.

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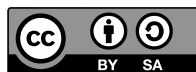
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Navdušenje nad memoaristiko: Zakaj slovenski diplomati pišejo spomine?

Memoari oz. spominska literatura je v literarni teoriji uvrščena na presek med literarnimi in polliterarnimi zvrstmi. Kot takšna je že *per definitionem* specifična. Če pa govorimo o spominih diplomatov, so ti še bolj specifični, saj so mnogokrat edini vir opisa dogodkov, ki so se v diplomatskem občevanju zgodili. Pričujoči članek, na podlagi 10 izvedenih intervjujev med slovenskimi diplomati, ki so napisali (pol)literarna dela, analizira pomen pisanja spominov, kot ga razumejo diplomati sami. Intervjuvanci se strinjajo, da je spomine pomembno pisati ne samo zaradi osvetljevanja dogodkov, ki so se zgodili v diplomaciji, ampak tudi zato, ker so spomini lahko pomembno literarno delo oz. delo, ki prispeva k uveljavljanju terminologije s področja diplomacije.

Ključne besede: diplomatski spomini, slovenska diplomacija, (pol)literarne zvrsti, jezikovna samoniklost.