

ACTA NEOPHILOLOGICA

38. 1-2 (2005)

Ljubljana

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SOME ADDITIONAL NOTES ON SHAKESPEARE

His great tragedies from a Slovene perspective

Mirko Jurak

For Maja, Anja and Hana

Abstract

In the first chapter of this study the author stresses the importance of literature and Shakespeare's plays for our age. Although the enigma of Shakespeare's life still concerns many scholars it is relevant only as far as the solutions of some biographical details from Shakespeare's life influence the interpretation of his plays. In the section on feminism the focus of the author's attention is the changed role of women in the present day society as compared to previous centuries. In the final part of the article the role of the main female characters in Shakespeare's great tragedies is discussed. The author suggests that so far their importance has been underestimated and that Shakespeare left some of them open to different interpretations. *Hamlet* is definitely one of the most popular Shakespeare's plays in Slovenia and in addition to "classical" interpretations of this drama we have seen during the past two decades a number of experimental productions, done by both Slovene and foreign theatrical companies. In Appendix (1) the title of this paper is briefly discussed and the author's work on Shakespeare is sketched; Appendix (2) presents a rap song on *Hamlet* written in English by a Slovene author. The song was used in the Glej Experimental Theatre production (*Hamlet/Packard*, Ljubljana, 1992).

INTRODUCTION

In the present article I deal with some topics which have been of particular interest to me during the past few years. The subject matter of my study includes the period of the last twenty years and I have tried to see it from my own point of view (as a theatre goer and critic) as well as from that of the Slovene reading public and theatre audiences. The main issues discussed in the article are the following:

- Does literature still matter in the modern world of computer technology and globalization? Why Shakespeare?
- The enigma of Shakespeare's life - particularly with regard to his plays
- Modern feminism in theory and in artistic practice (Erica Jong, Margaret Atwood). The role of women in Elizabethan England.
- The function of female characters in Shakespeare's great tragedies:
 - *Hamlet*: - Gertrude, Ophelia

- Theatrical experiments with *Hamlet* in Slovenia (during the last two decades)
- Some recent visits of foreign companies performing *Hamlet* in Slovenia
- *Othello*: Desdemona
- *King Lear*: Goneril and Regan, Cordelia
- *Macbeth*: Lady Macbeth
- Conclusion
- Appendix 1: The explanation of the title of my paper and a brief sketch of my work on Shakespeare and on his plays
- Appendix 2: "Hamlet Rap" (taken from the performance *Hamlett/Packard*, performed by the Glej Experimental Theatre in Ljubljana, on 3 April 1992)

The sources for the accompanying notes are not mentioned again in the final bibliography, but they will hopefully also provide - besides the list of Works Used - some useful information related to problems mentioned in the text. I chose to present the innovations related to Shakespeare's *Hamlet*, because it is certainly the most popular among Shakespeare's plays produced in Slovenia and because this play still catches the greatest attention of our theatre directors and theatre-public, and often of foreign producers too. The rap song on *Hamlet* shows both the limitations and novelties visible in such experimental performances. Briefly, I have tried to open in the article some questions which have bothered me, and I let readers draw their own conclusions on these issues.

DOES LITERATURE MATTER? WHY SHAKESPEARE?

In September 2004 the European Society for the Study of English organized a conference in Zaragoza, Spain, at which one of the panels was entitled "Why Shakespeare?" Although the initial statement announcing the panel ran as follows: "Whether we like it or not, Shakespeare remains an international icon,"¹ the abstract then continues with a number of questions regarding this statement which suggests that Shakespeare's importance as "the world's greatest dramatist (or psychologist, or moralist or poet) has been questioned by recent "cultural materialists" so that this concept of greatness "no longer seems explanatory".

This kind of uncertainty - not only about Shakespeare but generally about the canon of literature - is not new and similar questions have been raised before. For example, Gary Taylor in his book *Reinventing Shakespeare* (1998) asks the question whether Shakespeare should not be treated mainly as a mere technician of the English language. In addition he is sceptical about the ethical value of Shakespeare's role of an influential playwright in the Elizabethan society because the dramatist might even be seen as a real conservative, one who helped the existing regime to remain in power and who prevented the occurrence of social and political revolution in England. Taylor

¹ Catherine Belsey. »Panels. Why Shakespeare?«. *The European English Messenger* XII. 2 (2003): 14.

also suggests that since the nineteenth century Shakespeare is the author who has been most often used by the monarchy and the British government as an adjunct of empire to help it annex half of the Globe. It is understandable that such dubious statements have been met with many counter attacks not only by English critics and literary historians, but also world-wide. Most critics still believe in Shakespeare's literary greatness, which cannot be diminished by such provocative questions and statements. In the 1990s the deconstruction of literary works became fashionable and the question arises whether the attempts to demolish Shakespeare may not really expose the imaginative inadequacy of Shakespeare's critics as well as their own self conceit.²

It is well known that Shakespeare was greatly admired by many English as well as foreign writers, as e.g. Samuel Johnson, Laurence Sterne, the Early and the Late romantics, Charles Dickens, Virginia Woolf, Robert Graves, W. H. Auden, Iris Murdoch, and others. On the Continent he was acclaimed as a great dramatist – among others - by J. W. Goethe, August Friedrich Schiller, Alexander S. Pushkin etc., as well as by many philosophers, e.g. by G. W. F. Hegel, F. Nietzsche, M. Heidegger etc. Let me mention here that Shakespeare has also been greatly admired by many Slovene authors, among others by the greatest Slovene poet France Prešeren (1800-1849), who specifically mentions the Bard and two of his characters (Romeo and Juliet) in his poems (Moravec 43-139). Shakespeare is also "connected" with the greatest Slovene prose writer Ivan Cankar (1876-1918), who was among the first Slovene translators of Shakespeare and who translated Shakespeare's *Hamlet* into Slovene in 1899. From a historical perspective it is also interesting to note that one of the first Slovene dramatists, Anton Tomaž Linhart (1756-1795), even wrote a play following Shakespeare's concept of dramatic writing (*Miss Jenny Love*, printed in Augsburg, Germany, in 1780). It is of no less importance that Linhart strongly objected to adaptations of Shakespeare's plays (e.g. the substitution of a tragic end with a happy ending) that were quite common in that time. Prešeren and Cankar are the greatest names among Slovene authors who admired Shakespeare until the beginning of the twentieth century, but there are many other Slovene authors and critics who also wrote highly about Shakespeare's plays and/or tried their hand at translating them. Since the beginning of the twentieth century hardly a year goes by in which a new translation of one of Shakespeare's plays does not appear, not to speak about theatrical performances of his plays, which form the core programme of all Slovene professional theatres.

Let us ask ourselves the question referred to in the title of this chapter: should Shakespeare's plays be still read today? One must admit that the habit of reading works of fiction was on the decline already in the twentieth century and that questions regarding the importance of fiction for average readers have also been asked by many European critics and artists. Thus, for example, Rüdiger Ahrens and Laurenz Volkmann point out in the Introduction to their collection of essays *Why Literature Matters* (1996) that although the title "lacks the question mark, it does not lose its interrogative quality. It attempts to ask the reader for a justification of literature in a world of materialistic addictions" (Ahrens 1). The contributors to this collection of essays advocate the view that in modern times the importance of literature for spiritual quality

² See e.g. Peter Conrad, »Bringing down the Bard,« *The Observer* 21 Jan 1990: 25.

of man's life has not been diminished, but that the reading habits are threatened today more than ever before. Among contributors to this collection of essays who provide persuasive argumentation *for* reading literature is the literary theoretician Wolfgang Iser. He stresses in his essay that literature is cultural capital which helps to establish people their own identity; it also forms a "subversive noise" in our complacent, technologically oriented world, and it enlarges our experience (13-21). Rüdiger Ahrens asserts that literature provides "some common ground" which has to exist among individuals in all societies. Its aesthetic, intracultural as well intercultural functions are particularly valuable, because literature represents a fictional extension of reality, of the "human mind and heart" (61). Ahrens also refers in his essay to Terry Eagleton who sees the value of literature in its influence upon any human perception of reality, because its aesthetic quality makes accessible "the whole region of human perception and sensation, in contrast to the more rarified domain of conceptual thought" (51). In the multicultural world, asserts Theo D'haen in his essay "American Identities and Postcolonial Theories" (183-96), literary authors form a dialectical relationship between the minority and the majority, not only in a particular society but also between nations and races, they create an open dialogue which transcends ethnic and national boundaries. D'haen believes that therefore nowadays "a de-essentialized canon" of literary works *can* be accepted by many readers throughout the world. As we can see these views strongly support the value of literature for our society. It is evident that Shakespeare's plays definitely embody most positive features mentioned in these essays and therefore they are still generally acceptable and recognized as ranking among the greatest artistic and spiritual achievements throughout the world, which is also due to their high communicative value. Shakespeare's plays are often said to present the universality of the Renaissance, humanistic view of truth and beauty, which many people still share today, although a number of basic, primarily artistic foundations have been changed.

On the other hand there exist today a number of external circumstances which have a negative influence on the position of "serious literature", published in a book form, in the age of electronic reproduction. Among reasons for the contemporary decline of interest in literature a well-known German critic, Sigrid Löffler, asserts, that in modern times literature has become demythologized and market oriented, and wholly dependent on media propaganda (Löffler 99-114). What used to be read and studied as "serious literature" has been replaced by fiction dealing primarily with love romances, "historical" biographies and crime fiction. The culture of reading has been in decline for decades and it has been replaced to a large extent by mass media (television, films, and internet).

The list of film directors who have successfully transplanted Shakespeare's plays on film is very long. Let me mention only some of the better-known ones: Orson Welles, Roman Polanski, Peter Brook, Franco Zeffirelli, Rodney Bennett, Akira Kurosawa, Grigori Kozintsev, John Madden, Kenneth Branagh, Michael Almereyda, Al Pacino etc. This is an excellent and still not much explored field of new interpretations of Shakespeare's plays. Nowadays "cinemas" are often our own sitting-rooms, although by not going to see a play in the theatre we are definitely robbed of a direct experience with actors as well as the communal spirit provided by the audience.

In Germany, for example, until the middle of the twentieth century the reading of fiction was an important part of man's education as well as of his free-time activities, but nowadays it has been pushed down in this scale to the tenth place. According to Löffler an average reading time of people in Germany is between 15-20 minutes daily, whereas the Germans listen to the radio for an hour and watch the television for two and a half hours daily (Löffler 108). In 1997 the magazine *Newsweek* published an article stating that Shakespeare is likely to survive in the United States only with the help of Hollywood, because Shakespeare's plays are no longer on the reading list of some American universities.³ In England teachers in secondary schools even suggested that they should boycott tests, because they discovered that pupils could get more than half of the points necessary to pass the final exam even without reading one complete work written by Shakespeare.⁴ A survey done in schools in England shows that pupils no longer read literature for enjoyment, they only read what they are obliged to read in order to get high grades.⁵ The conclusion can undoubtedly be that most damage is already done at schools where pupils should become accustomed to reading fiction and not just to read works prescribed by the syllabus. Besides, sometimes teachers use fiction simply in order to practice grammar without paying any attention to the artistic value of the the text.

The situation in Slovenia and in other European countries is probably very much the same as it is in England. The education authorities (together with their advisers from the university!) practice the same policy, according to which the pragmatic approach to learning – and to literature – prevails. Therefore it is sheer pretence, if the educational advisers “naively” ask the reading public what our schools and parents (!) have done to improve the functional literacy and reading ability in Slovenia and if they complain that the motivation for reading in Slovenia has decreased.⁶ If teachers of foreign languages (and literatures) in our secondary schools are strongly advised that they should not allow pupils to read extracts (individual scenes) from longer works of fiction (e.g. novels, plays), because “such passages have no characteristics of literature and diminish the value of literature” and besides “they are harmful” (*sic!*) for readers (*ib.*), the easiest way for pupils (and teachers) is to obtain summaries of works prescribed and – as in England – obtain a high enough number of points to pass the final examination. It is the “points”, which are important and not reading habits, or a broader intellectual power or emotional experience which pupils should get at school. The greatest professional and moral responsibility for this situation obviously lies on such “advisers”!⁷ There is no professional or scholarly evidence for the above mentioned conclusions regarding read-

³ Anon. *Delo (Newsweek)* 17 Mar. 1997: 9. – (Some of the articles printed in the main Slovene newspaper *Delo* are translations - or sometimes shortened versions - of articles which had been published in foreign press, newspapers, magazines etc.).

⁴ Anon. *Delo (The Guardian)* 10 Mar. 2003: 12.

⁵ Anon. *Delo (The Independent)* 26 Oct. 2005: 15.

⁶ See e.g. Aleš Čakš, »Samo učitelji ne zmorejo vsega,« *Delo* 7 Sept. 2005: 3; Aleš Čakš, »Kako naj šola razvija širšo pismenost,« *Delo* 7 Sept. 2005: 13; Aleš Čakš, »Motivacija za branje upada,« *Delo* 19 Sept. 2005: 11 etc.

⁷ As regards the teaching of English and American literature at our secondary schools there is no doubt that this responsibility lies with the chief advisor for this subject, who is at the same time (what an irony!) the President of the Slovene Reading Society.

ing short scenes from long prose works (or drama), particularly when we speak about teaching foreign literature to pupils in secondary schools in which English is not their mother tongue but who have learned English for eight (or even more) years. It is better that pupils read extracts than if they do not read at all. For how it is then possible that leading publishing houses in England and in America still publish anthologies of English and American literature in which some selections (extracts) from novels or long epic poems are also given, even though the mother tongue of these readers is English? Our pupils, who learn English for eight (or even more years) and who master it fairly well, should be given a chance to get to know about the main cultural achievements – including literature – of English speaking nations (in English) before they finish their secondary schooling. Unfortunately now even students who decide to study English at the university begin their studies with a very small experience in reading literature.⁸ The so-called “modern” approach to teaching literature(s) in secondary schools is obviously a massive failure, something which has done serious damage in education to thousands of our secondary school graduates; the European Sycoraxes prefer to educate future Calibans rather than follow Prospero to aspire for the magic world of Ariel. Yes, our pupils may know enough English to lead them to a brave new technological, computarized world, but they are not led at school to experience and appreciate the world of imagination, higher levels of spirituality, emotional enjoyment of fiction. Our pupils are “brainwashed” by the present school programmes (including teaching of foreign literatures), they are not offered enough possibility and encouragement to be interested in reading works of art, which would also help them form their own ethical and moral principles, understand better other nations or gain empathy for emotional problems of other people. Until the moral and professional responsibility of teachers who advocate such programmes is established, and until these programmes are changed, we cannot expect young generations to improve either their functional literacy or their habits of reading. Shakespeare’s works may really become an obsolete reminiscence of past times. The introduction of new ways in teaching literatures in secondary schools should be based on aims which would include high aesthetic standards and not just an average skill in reading ability. Novelty for the sake of novelty in secondary schools is often connected with self-promotion of teachers and (university) advisers (and whatever other benefits it may bring) and not with broader humanistic education and its ideals,

⁸ On 11 October 2005, I asked our second year (sophomore) students studying English language and literature at the Department of English, Faculty of Arts, University of Ljubljana, Slovenia, to answer an anonymous questionnaire about their reading of Shakespeare’s plays in the secondary school. The total number of answers was 101 (100%). Only 11 students (10.89%) read a play in English while still attending the secondary school; 81 (81.19%) read a play in Slovene; 71 (70.29%) read some extracts from one of Shakespeare’s plays (either in Slovene or in English); 91 (90.09%) saw the production of one of Shakespeare’s plays either in the theatre, or in the cinema or on the television. The results are not good, particularly if we consider the fact that among students who decided to take English as their university study only (10.89%) had read a play in English before entering the university; secondly, that reading a play in English was not planned (or at least suggested) although pupils had learned English for 8 years (in elementary and secondary schools); thirdly, all (!) of our secondary pupils were supposed to read at least one play written by Shakespeare (in Slovene) as a part of their regular programme, but (according to their answers) only 80.19% read it. This brings us to the conclusion that our secondary school pupils can pass the final exam (like pupils in England) without reading one of Shakespeare’s plays or even without reading some scenes from them.

which should be one of the basic contents in language and literary courses during the final two years of secondary schooling.

There are, in spite of the above, also some hopeful signs for the advancement of drama and its social relevance today. We know that plays are fully realized only when they are staged (or at least filmed). This point distinguishes drama from other literary genres (although film versions of novels, which have also become popular during the past few decades, are – in my view – also the sign that there is a shortage of new, well-written plays). The presentation of a play in the theatre provides the theatre public with a direct, immediate physical and sensual experience. When seeing a play written by Shakespeare on the stage the audience is provided with an experience which is far more concrete and specific than when the play is only read. In Europe the theatre has been a popular art for centuries, and nowadays other, modern visual media, are also used for the advancement of drama. The audience is attracted to a theatrical performance not only due to its story, its character portrayals, dialogues, moral and intellectual issues raised in plays but because it is often also the result of the application of other arts used in theatrical performances (as e.g. music, choreography, mimics) and new technical means (the modern stage equipment, which makes possible new scenic designs, lighting etc.). However, in plays in which the word is still of a major importance its combination with other artistic fields is much more relevant than new technical achievements, although – generally speaking - all of these elements can provide the new totality of the audience's theatrical experience.

Plays treating serious subject are also staged in order to fulfil their socio-cultural function: "good" plays are not only pure entertainment but they also provide information, a kind of documentation of man's personal and social life, through which theatre-goers as individuals try to establish their own personal identity. Plays – or rather their theatrical productions - are often emotionally and philosophically disturbing, particularly when they aim to produce references to a contemporary situation, contemporary themes and problems, or are even adapted to them. In order to "provide something new" theatre and film directors sometimes reduce (or change) Shakespeare's text to such the extent that it is hardly recognizable. In such cases the production should be clearly announced as an adaptation of a play written by Shakespeare. Nevertheless, performances of Shakespeare's plays, in which the text is not essentially altered, are in Slovenia still very well attended and they prove that his plays as well as the dramatic genre are still relevant today.

THE ENIGMA OF SHAKESPEARE'S LIFE - PARTICULARLY WITH REGARD TO HIS PLAYS

Shakespeare's great tragedies were written between 1600 and 1606. They include his most famous plays: *Hamlet* (1600-01), *Othello* (1604), *King Lear* (1605), and *Macbeth* (1606). The dramatist created these plays between 1596 and 1606, when he also wrote *Romeo and Juliet* (1595-96) and *Julius Caesar* (1598-1600). This was a rather turbulent period, not only in Shakespeare's private life but also in English society as a whole. Among Shakespeare's personal tragic events, which happened to him during these years,

are often mentioned the death of his son Hamnet (in 1596) and that of his father John (in 1601). In the Elizabethan society this was the time of great political unrest: these were the final years of the reign of powerful and whimsical Queen Elizabeth (1558-1603). The unsuccessful attempt to shorten her rule which was prepared by her former lover, the Earl of Essex, ended with his surrender and his execution in 1601.

A new interpretation about Shakespeare's life in this decade was recently provided by two works written by Hildegard Hammerschmidt – Hummel, *Die verborgene Existenz des William Shakespeare* (2001), and by her study *William Shakespeare: Seine Zeit – Sein Leben – Sein Werk* (2003). She argues that the Earl of Essex was a close friend of Shakespeare and that his death must have deeply influenced Shakespeare. Hummel also assumes that the Earl of Essex was a prototype for Shakespeare's creation of Hamlet. The role of the Earl of Southampton, who also joined Essex's unsuccessful rebellion of February 1601, should also be mentioned here. He was condemned to death by "the Virgin Queen" but the sentence was later changed to life imprisonment. Southampton, who was most probably Shakespeare's literary patron and to whom Shakespeare is alleged to have dedicated his poems *Venus and Adonis* (1593) and *Lucrece* (1594), was released from prison after Queen Elizabeth's death, on the accession of King James I, in 1603. Shakespeare may himself have played a minor role in the above mentioned political uprising for his company produced on the day before the rising his play *Richard II*, possibly with the intention to influence the people of London to join the Earl of Essex.

Queen Elizabeth I ordered in her proclamation (16 May 1559) that licensers of plays should not allow plays with religious matter to be performed. Criticism of the existing (Protestant) religion was forbidden throughout Shakespeare's life, whereas criticism of the Catholicism, was allowed. Hildegard Hammerschmidt - Hummel tries to prove in her studies that Shakespeare was influenced in his religious views by his father's forbidden "old (Catholic) faith".⁹ She argues that the Catholic religion also prevailed in teaching at the Grammar School in Stratford, which Shakespeare attended. His father apparently objected to dogmatic Protestantism and as a result of his opposition to the new religion he was fined several times.

Another researcher, Clare Asquith (*Shadowplay*, 2005), also believes that Catholicism played an important role in Elizabethan England when royal subjects had to make a choice, "to follow their monarch or their God". Asquith thinks that due to its authoritarian rule England became a police state fearing threats from abroad and plotters at home. This seems to the author a good enough reason for Shakespeare - who loved his country and who was supported by dissident Catholic aristocrats - to react upon this political situation by a "coded" manner of writing, in which the plots of his plays, his characters and themes could be interpreted on different levels. "The coded layer" of topicality in his plays would be understood by the audiences, but it could be deniable by the playwright, due to his use of linguistic subtlety and complexity of discourse.

⁹ See also: David N. Beauregard and Dennis Taylor, *Shakespeare and the Culture of Christianity* (New York: Fordham UP, 2004). - We should not forget Guy Fawkes, who led the Gunpowder Plot of Nov. 5, 1605, the conspiracy to assassinate King James I and the members of Parliament in retaliation for the increased severity of personal laws against Roman Catholics. These circumstances are possibly referred to by Gloucester in *King Lear* (1.2) and the Porter in *Macbeth* (2.3).

An astounding surmise in Hammerschmidt - Hummel's studies is her suggestion that Shakespeare spent his "lost seven youthful years" (usually referred to the period between 1584, when Shakespeare left Stratford, and 1592, when he reappears in London as a rising actor and about which very little has been known until now) at Collegium Anglicum at Reims, where he got his theological, historical and legal education. Besides, she assumes, during this period Shakespeare must have travelled widely in France and in Italy. The journeys could have provided him with knowledge about these countries as well as with fictional material about them, which he then so vividly presented in his plays. Even in 1964 the question about Shakespeare's "lost years" was still open to rather vague suggestions, for example, "During these lost years of Shakespeare's life he may have been an usher at a country school, a tutor in a noble household, a soldier in the Low Countries or a strolling player, learning his craft."¹⁰ Such speculations do not answer the question how Shakespeare obtained his wide knowledge, not to speak about the implications regarding the philosophical or religious interpretations of his plays. On the other hand, this new biographical investigation proves that it is still possible that this kind of research can yield new biographical and historical knowledge about Shakespeare and about his work. It is also interesting to note that these two authors completely disagree with the suggestion made by some historians, namely that the playwright might be regarded as a strong supporter of reactionary tendencies of English government. Such views, which have been briefly mentioned above, if they are generally accepted, will bring about new possibilities of interpretations regarding Shakespeare's plays, but the surmise regarding Shakespeare's religious views and their influence on his plays undoubtedly requires additional investigations.

The authorship of Shakespeare's plays is a topic, which is nowadays only seldom dealt with by serious scholars, but which is particularly liked by journalists who are less concerned about the historical truthfulness of their information than about the shock such a "discovery" might bring to the reading public. Doubts about Shakespeare's authorship of his plays are generally profitably used by newspapers and magazines with a wide circulation. It is true that during the past few centuries different names have been suggested as possible authors of Shakespeare's plays: as for example, Christopher Marlowe, sir Walter Raleigh, Robert Cecil Burgley, the earl of Derby, Edward de Vere, the earl of Oxford, Francis Bacon, Roger Manners, Henry Neville and even Queen Elizabeth.¹¹ Scepticism

¹⁰ J. L. Lyons and the Earl of Harewood, »Introduction« (Stratford-upon-Avon: n.p., 1964: 62).

¹¹ See, for example: Michael Wood, *In Search of Shakespeare* (New York: Basic Books, 2004); Brenda James and William Rubinstein, *The Truth Will Out* (Harlow: Longman, 2005).

- Sir Derek Jacobi, who also performed in the film version of *Hamlet* in the main role, presented the question surrounding the authorship of Shakespeare's plays on a video recording (*The Shakespeare Conspiracy*, Insight Media, New York, 2000), in which Edward de Vere is the frontman for W. Shakespeare. (Derek Jacobi performed in the role of Hamlet at the Ljubljana Summer Festival, 18 July 1973, when the Prospect Theatre (London) visited Ljubljana. The play was directed by T. Robertson, who changed the order of scenes and also omitted some scenes in the play.

- Among a number of articles published on Shakespeare's life in various newspapers and magazines in Slovenia let me mention only a few, e.g.: Radovan Kozmos, »Je bil Shakespeare krinka,« *Delo* 29 Aug. 1989: 9; Lindsay Griffiths, »Je bil Shakespeare le književni prevarant,« *Republika* 23 Aug. 1995: 12; Elvira Miše, »Biti ali ne biti William,« *Mag* 12 Oct. 2005:66-7, etc.

about Shakespeare's authorship of his plays has also been supported by some artists (who themselves did not do any research either on Shakespeare's biography, or on his works, or on the Elizabethan times). Their main argument for their doubt is usually a large number and thematic variety of Shakespeare's plays, which – according to their opinion - could not have been written by a little known actor, who left school at the age of thirteen, who apparently never left England and about whose private life very little is known. Among these sceptics were also Mark Twain, Henry James, Oscar Wilde, L. N. Tolstoy, and some other authors. Even if these speculations were to prove true we should not forget that we admire Shakespeare because of his works and that they should be our greatest concern, whereas biographical, social, historical and other data are of secondary importance, they are relevant only as much as we can thus obtain a more reliable explanation of his texts.

Doubts about the authorship of Shakespeare's plays often appear in yellow press during the summer time when other social and cultural activities are not as vivid as during the rest of the year. Nowadays when all kinds of media are widely available, this kind of "alarming news" (which mostly originates in England and sometimes in America), soon appears in mass media throughout the world. Such speculations are made easier when we take into account that Shakespeare saw none of his plays through the press and that those plays printed during his lifetime often appeared in different versions in quarto editions. Besides, we do not know for sure how Shakespeare's text was actually spoken on the stage when the play was produced, although we do know that the stress, the rhythm of the sentence and other phonetic elements greatly contribute to our understanding of the play. Each new edition of a play written by Shakespeare therefore creates difficult problems for editors and also for scholars. During the past few decades a number of publishing houses have published their own editions of Shakespeare's plays (e.g. the Oxford, the New Arden, the Tudor, the Signet, the Penguin, the Riverside, the Cambridge edition etc.).¹² If Shakespeare himself altered the text of the play (e.g. it has been suggested that the 1604 Quarto edition of *Hamlet* represents the play as it was first composed and that the 1623 Folio edition offers a theatrical version of the text), should the editors then choose the latter version? In 1986 even Shakespeare's bust in the church at Stratford was x-rayed owing to reports that it may contain some of Shakespeare's manuscripts, although the rumour proved false.¹³ If we compare the text in the above mentioned editions we see that individual passages in them vary and that the interpretations of plays depend to a large extent on the editor's interpretation of individual sintagms or sentences. Therefore it is the reader (or the theatre director) who must decide which edition he finds more reliable and more persuasive.

Sometimes Shakespeare's fame is even used for other, non-artistic purposes. In an article published in a popular magazine in Slovenia the journalist discussed the authorship of Shakespeare's plays; however, he concluded the article with a polemical view about the statement, which had been made by the then arch-bishop of Slovenia, Franc Rode.¹⁴ The archbishop mentioned in passing in one of his interviews his opin-

¹² See e.g.: Peter Ackroyd, »New Road to the Globe by Way of Bodley,« (Book review. *The Complete Works by William Shakespeare*. Ed. Stanley Wells and Gary Taylor, Oxford: OUP, 1986), *The Times* 30 Oct. 1986: 45.

¹³ John Bayley, »Shakespeare in the Head,« *The Guardian* 31 Oct. 1986: 35.

¹⁴ Marcel Štefančič, jr., »Zakaj Rode ne mara Cankarja,« *Mladina* 7 Oct. 1997: 54-7.

ion that the work of one of the greatest Slovene prose writers and dramatists, Ivan Cankar (who was politically left-wing oriented) could not be compared with that of Shakespeare. Although Rode probably had in mind only the literary value of both authors his statement was described by a number of journalists as extremely conservative, and inappropriate. We can thus see that Shakespeare sometimes enters our daily life through the back door, by way of cultural and national politics or other fields of social life.

In England the end of the sixteenth and the beginning of the seventeenth century was "the period of transition" in which new ideas about man and his role in society began to be spread. There were a number of changes in philosophical, political and religious views on life in the country: the importance of an individual was hailed, and a new view regarding man's position in society and in the universe began to be spread. The "new sciences", which were no longer based on medieval scholasticism but on ratio and scientific argumentation, were the result of the Baconian and Cartesian philosophical systems. These changes were not only noted and referred to in Shakespeare's plays, but they were also mentioned by other important men of letters. So, for example, the best Metaphysical poet, John Donne (1571-1631), stresses in his poems the idea that every individual is of equal worth and that the position of each human being is the only relevant thing in life. He says, "Princes do but play us" ("The Sunne Rising"), and "The new philosophy calls all in doubt"; "Tis all in pieces, all coherence gone" ("Anatomie of the World"). These views had to spread widely before a new social and political system was established with the restoration of the monarchy in 1660.

The rise of Puritanism, which appeared already around 1564, the year of Shakespeare's birth, was founded on the idea that the Reformation in England was too weak. In London, where the first regular theatres had been in existence since 1576 (the Theatre, the Curtain, the Blackfriars etc.), the Puritan opposition was the strongest and the Puritans even objected to performances of plays at universities. They believed that only such plays should be performed which have an educational value. The Puritans (as e.g. the clergymen John Northbrooke, Phillip Stubbes and minor playwrights like Stephen Gosson, Anthony Munday) attacked in their pamphlets playwrights and actors, blaming them for immorality of plays they produced. Although in this initial period, the theatres were defended by the Queen, by the court and by the dramatists, these attacks were only subdued for a period of time, until 1642, when the new Republican government under the leadership of Oliver Cromwell was formed, and the theatres were closed. In this period the established moral and social values were questioned, old beliefs and accepted ethical norms were rejected, but new ethical principles were not yet formed.

MODERN FEMINISM IN THEORY AND IN ARTISTIC PRACTICE (ERICA JONG AND MARGARET ATWOOD). THE ROLE OF WOMEN IN ELIZABETHAN ENGLAND

This first mentioned topic has been dealt with in the second half of the twentieth century more often than ever before. The number of "female studies" is long, not to

speak about individual articles which regularly appear in periodicals devoted to this question. This paper only intends to point out some of the new approaches which may shed light on the specific issues of human relations and which will express my point regarding these relations in Shakespeare's great tragedies.

Through the centuries the relationship between men and women in everyday life – but also in the works of art – has mostly been in favour of men. This is well exemplified in a statement by Françoise Thébaud, who writes in the "Introduction" to the collection of essays entitled *A History of Women in the West* (1994) that "history was for a long time the history of men, presented as typical of human race" (Thébaud 4). Writers also mainly saw the world from the male perspective whereas female writers were often neglected and they were a priori thought to be of lesser artistic importance than men. This opinion was definitely changed during the second half of the twentieth century when the works of female authors began to be studied more thoroughly and the female voice has been more clearly heard. Thébaud believes that women and their contribution to the arts and life generally should not be studied in isolation, but together with men, in the actual context in which it appears. She stresses:

Relations between men and women are an important dimension of history. These relations are not a natural fact but a social construct, and they are constantly being redefined. This redefinition is at once an effect and a cause of the social dynamic. Hence relations between the sexes are a useful category of analysis, on a par with other categories more familiar to historians, such as relations between classes, races, nations, and generations. Like any new way of looking at the past, this change of perspective yields new knowledge. It may even lead to rewriting history in such a way as to take account of a wider range of human experience than earlier approaches allowed for. (Thébaud 4)

Another modern critic who had discussed the consequences of the fact that women were for hundreds of years denied an equal position with men, is Nancy Huston, whose article "The Matrix of War: Mothers and Heroes" appeared in a collection of essays *The Female Body in Western Culture* (1985). According to Huston, women have never been allowed to preside in matters which are considered "sacred" by society (e.g. religion, war etc.). Both in real life and in literature women were not considered equal partners to men, because, as she asserts, the contact of women with the male body was for them

a source of permanent defeat, by virtue of the metaphor which likens the penis to a deadly weapon. Virginity is seen as an invisible armor, and the hymen as the shield designed to protect both the body and the soul of the young girl. Once it has been pierced, once she has succumbed to this first paradigmatic wound, all other wounds become possible. (Huston 129)

This thesis regarding the denial of equal status of men and women is supported by the physical difference between male and female body. In human history men were considered as fighters to whom women were subdued. Men became heroes (kings, princes, warriors) whereas women were supposed to be at home and their main duty

was to bear children. But recent history shows that this is no longer true. For example, during the Second World War women also joined the partisans and their reputation as warriors was very much in high esteem (however, some of them have been known as rather cruel, too). But generally speaking, women are still mostly victims of war, they are raped, tortured and killed. During the war in former Yugoslavia in the 1990s such cruelties happened on all sides, but when a Croatian journalist and writer, Slavenka Drakulić, openly expressed this thought, she was labelled by some journalists as “the witch of the year”.¹⁵ How long will it take for men, in battle, to treat women and children with respect, as human beings who bear the greatest responsibility for the continuation of the human race; or will they still be treated – as in Shakespeare’s tragedies – as innocent victims? But should we nevertheless make a distinction also among the females with regard to their morality?

Sigmund Freud interpreted male – female relations on the basis of sexuality: according to him the sexuality of men is shown in their aggression, in their tendency to dominate, so that the aggressive side of man’s libido – his biological significance – and not his emotional side (as e.g. in courtship, love) is shown (Freud 38-39). In Freud’s view man’s knowledge that the woman does not have penis, can often cause his permanent underestimation of the other sex (Freud 74).

The French psychoanalyst Jacques Lacan, expresses in his lectures on *Hamlet* (1959) his view that in male – female relations women were also forced into their submissive role by men because men controlled the language and culture. Lacan believes that in history men denied females their desires and when men got tired of their “female mirror” they began to look for another “object” instead of examining their own misreading of human beings. Lacan points out that most of Shakespeare’s tragic heroes feel at ease in the combat (even Hamlet, who is essentially a thinker, a man of meditation, enjoys his duel with Laertes). Since ancient times, when the Greek philosopher Heraclitus stated “War is the mother of all things”, man’s substitution for motherhood was fighting, war, wounds, bloodshed. Violence was a matrix of societies in which men had a decisive role. Females were considered as human beings who are not equal to men and – according to Lacan – such division is still present in Shakespeare’s plays.

Until the Renaissance period the Biblical story of how God first created man after his own image and only later on made Eve out of one of Adam’s ribs, supported the supposed “religious” point of view of life according to which women were given a secondary place when compared with men. In Elizabethan England the power and the authority of father (man) was still recognized as a part of the social order. Women, on the other hand, had powerful roles within their families, especially with regard to the upbringing of children, but the power they had outside the family was rather limited by the rules of inheritance and social tradition, as well as by the laws of the state and the church. Women did not have many rights on their own, and even when they got married the husband took over his wife’s possession unless some special arrangement was made. However, as regards their behaviour

¹⁵ Patricija Maličev, interview with Slavenka Drakulić, »Slovenci še vedno mislijo, da je Balkan nekje daleč«, *Delo*, sobotna priloga, 31 July 2004. 34.

and their character, something worse happened: when they realized their subservient position some of them tried to make it more bearable by becoming (at least apparently) more servile, cloying, sweet (e.g. Goneril and Regan behave at first in such a manner towards their father), and this was sometimes then taken for granted as the best kind of women's behaviour, as a sign of their femininity, whereas in reality they did not wish to be dominated either by their father, husband or lover. Even if they showed true love to their male partners (as e.g. Desdemona's love of Othello), such emotions could have been misinterpreted and degraded as is the case with Iago in *Othello*.

For centuries the social duality resulted in subservient position of women in society and the idea of equal rights was only begun to be seriously dealt with women's movement, although some female writers have rejected its political or even their one-sided approach. One of the possible solutions to the complicated nature of this relationship is implied in a linguistic solution made by Jane Gallop (5). She points out in her study that the difference between genders has often been reduced in society to the question of equal rights and/or of equal power. Gallop suggests that a strict distinction should be made between the penis and the phallos, which erases such preconceived ideas of man as a master, winner in the battle of sexes, according to which women were automatically degraded. Gallop says: "The penis is what men have and women do not; the phalus is the attribute of power which never men or women have" (*ibid.*).

Let us also have a brief look at the male-female relations from the point of view of two modern, well known female prose writers (so far, there are no great female dramatists), Erica Jong and Margaret Atwood. They frequently refer to these relations, both directly, in their works, and indirectly, as critics or authors expressing their views. In Erica Jong's most known and best-selling novel *Fear of Flying* (1973) her heroine, Isadora Wing, who symbolically represents the author, thinks, that the phallic syndrom is the ultimate and most unjust sexist weapon, which can in real life be easily discarded, because it may be questioned by men's sexual potency. However, if women begin to believe that they should start playing masculine role (which they rightly condemn), they soon realize that "There is something very sad about this" (Jong 108-09).

When Erica Jong wrote this novel she believed that "the word could change the world", as she writes a quarter of a century later in her forward to the 1989 edition of the novel. But now she also realizes that this is a very long and uneasy process. "When outspoken women are no longer silenced with ridicule, we will know we have achieved something like equality" (Jong X). At the age of twenty-three her heroine, Isadora Wing, tries together with her friend Pia to assume the supposedly male's role of a conqueror in sexual battles, "principally to boast to each other about the number of scalps on our belts" (Jong 108-09), they find such life disappointing, full of disillusionment and they realize that their decision was mistake. The author's obvious conclusion is that the same moral rules apply to men and women, and if women transgress basic ethical norms they are punished just as men would be. If we read Shakespeare's plays closely, we realize that the "feminist" criticism of this playwright does not profit anything if Shakespeare is presented either as a protofeminist, when critics try to assert that he presents in his works the Renaissance cultural emancipation of

women, or if he is considered as a patriarchal bard, who cannot subvert patriarchal structures and spreads cultural ideology through the submission of women (Vendramin 75-91). What is more, such criticism seems to be particularly one-sided, extreme, and – in my view – it does not reflect the true nature of Shakespeare's plays.

There is no doubt that women, including female artists, have been neglected equal rights in social and cultural spheres of life for many centuries. Erica Jong's narrator finds the reason for it in ancient history when – with the exception of Sappho – most women writers were too timid and not free enough to succeed in writing. Some of them felt "incomplete" without a man, as e.g. Simone de Beauvoir (without Jean Paul Sartre), Lillian Hellman (without Dashiell Hammett). Others, like Emily Dickinson, the Brontës, Virginia Woolf, Carson McCullers, Flannery O'Connor, Sylvia Plath etc., were shy, timid and schizoid; although they were good novelists they had much less success than their contemporary male authors (Jong 109-110). Jong's advice to women novelists if they wish to be successful, is concerned primarily with their personality. But she also admits that there are some functions which have been "reserved" for women (as e.g. to bear children), and that these functions have a strong impact on women's psyche. It does seem to be important that females preserve characteristics which make them individuals, and which are often referred to in everyday speech as signs of "femininity". Even if we agree upon some "common female features or values", like a mother's emotional care for children, we need not accept the supposition that these features already represent a part of an exclusivist ideology, as suggested by Vendramin (42). Accepting "femininity" does not imply the inequality of genders in social, cultural, political and other spheres of life, it does not mean that different norms, values should be formed, depending on whether it is a matter of being male or female. The ethical standards for women cannot be different from those applied for men. Shakespeare's greatness lies in the fact that he presented both his male and female characters as equal: morally corrupt, evil female characters (like Lady Macbeth, Goneril and Regan etc.) face the same kind of fate as their male partners.

Another great modern writer, Margaret Atwood, has stated a number of times that she does not consider herself as an advocate of feminism, but that she wishes to be treated simply as "a writer". It is true that the heroines of her novels are mainly women, but male readers of her works nevertheless also experience identification with the world she presents, because her novels are written with the artistic completeness of all her characters. She stressed in a recently given interview to a Slovene journalist that she wished to discover in her works "the roots of evil", regardless of the fact whether it is caused by men or women.¹⁶ In her most recently published novel, *Penelopiad. The Myth of Penelope and Odysseus* (2005), the historical and social difference between genders is an important element of the story. As in a number of her previously published novels Margaret Atwood also uses in this novel the female narrator, Penelope (and not Odysseus like Homer), so that her heroine can express her experiences of time and feelings con-

¹⁶ Igor Bratož, interview with Margaret Atwood, »Mit je načrt za akcijo, ni zgolj zgodba«, *Delo*, 26 Oct. 2005. 9. - In June 1984 I met Margaret Atwood at a conference on Canadian literature at Tulbingerkogel nr. Vienna. Her high opinion of Canadian female authors can be seen in the fact that out of ten writers of fiction whom she had recommended to be included in the syllabus for our students, four of them were female authors.

nected with her loneliness caused by her waiting. Atwood's story is full of women characters that are an essential part of the novel (this is unlike most stories Shakespeare used in his plays). Her women often embody human beings who have been unjustly treated; this results in the disharmony of society, which is the main mover of Atwood's story and, generally, in life too. What used to be a myth about a hero is now treated as a reinterpretation of this myth from a female point of view.

Some words should also be said about the legal side of women's rights. It was only in 1948 that women were "officially" recognized as man's equals and that discrimination of women was forbidden by the declaration of human rights accepted by the United Nations. But nothing much had happened immediately after this date so that in 1966 the United Nations were obliged to accept another declaration in which it was clearly stated that any kind of discrimination of women was unlawful. Almost three decades later, in 1993, this question was once again on the agenda of discussions organized by the United Nations in Vienna. A document was then passed in which the rights of women are simply included in the human rights. According to this resolution men and women are to be considered equal and therefore no special legal provisions for women were any longer thought to be necessary.

Different generations of theatre-goers have experienced different approaches regarding main existential questions, which are dealt with in Shakespeare's plays. However, the role of female characters as presented in Shakespeare's plays has often been noticeably neglected by critics and literary historians. This is particularly true of his great tragedies, which are extremely well written from a dramaturgic, theatrical point of view, and which deal with human nature, both male and female, which has changed very little – if at all – during the past few centuries. Shakespeare's great tragedies are all named after male heroes who bear – or at least seem to bear – the main dramatic function provided by the plot, the dialogues and the theme of the play. Nevertheless we surmise that his female characters are just as important as his male characters. Shakespeare created them in such a way that even minor characters are round and persuasive as human beings (a good example is, e.g. the Nurse in *Romeo and Juliet*). I shall try to prove in my article that the portrayal of women in his mature tragedies ranges between the playwright's idealization and his demonization of women.

During the past few decades many articles have been written in which the authors give explanations concerning the role of women in society from historical perspective. Some of these studies try to explain the reasons why women in the past – generally speaking – did not occupy the same social position as men; others deal with this topic theoretically, regarding the difference between the genders, as well as consequences which inequality between men and women had in life and in the mimesis of life, in the arts. It has been stated that the nature of man has not really changed much in the history of modern civilization, but on the other hand it is a truism that male-female *social relations* have changed a lot since Shakespeare's time, particularly during the twentieth century. There is no doubt that the cleft between the sexes has become (at least in Europe) much smaller than it used to be in the past when the role of women in society was less important, less apparent and less obvious than that of men. Their role in society and in private life was much underestimated and therefore it is not surprising that they were paid less attention also in the arts (there are a number

of exceptions, particularly in poetry). Not only in Elizabethan England but also later on women were not expected to travel as much as men, or to receive the same kind of education and employment. In works of art, which were mainly written by men, the authors generally allotted to female characters much less opportunity for discourse than to male characters, although some of Shakespeare's plays, particularly his comedies, prove an exception to this rule. Nevertheless, during the past three centuries, many excellent portraits of women have been drawn in English literature, particularly in the English novel, by both, male and female writers. In the Elizabethan period William Shakespeare created some profoundly delineated female characters (particularly in his great tragedies). They show us that ethical and moral norms of women characters in his plays have a great influence not only on men in these plays, as individuals, but also on society as a whole.

In British history of the second half of the sixteenth century we cannot overlook the fact that two women had a very important position in its society. The first one is Queen Elizabeth I, who led – for this period – an unusually long life (1533-1603). She succeeded to the throne already in 1558 and ruled England until her death. Queen Elizabeth was accepted in the kingdom rather enthusiastically, for she was a successful ruler who brought prosperity to England. She was also an ardent patron of the arts, especially of the theatre. Her wishes to create the welfare state were answered happily by the citizens and she quickly managed to control both the Parliament and common people. She was a wise and cunning woman, who had many suitors; but – as is generally considered by historians – she found them to be too dangerous for her independent rule either in political or religious matters. Those men, whom she believed to be too ambitious, were sent to prison in the Tower and they were often also executed there – even if they were her former lovers.

The second important woman in the second half of the sixteenth century was Mary Stuart, the Queen of Scotland, who was a Catholic. She was Elizabeth's cousin, by blood she was of Tudor origin, and was by some people considered to be the true heiress of the English throne. Her personal fate was rather tragic and she was politically in disagreement with Elizabeth who was strongly against the idea that after her death England would be ruled by a Catholic queen. The relationship between Elizabeth and Mary was rather complicated, coloured also with jealousy and ambition. When Mary was finally forced to flee to England due to her love affairs and apparent collaboration in the murder of her husband, Elizabeth put Mary into prison but postponed her decision to decapitate her until 1587, when Mary got entangled in a fictitious plot involving the murder of Queen Elizabeth. Mary's son, James, who knew that if Queen Elizabeth had no children – what seemed very likely by that time – he would become the king, did not show much affection for his mother either and James VI of Scotland, really became the King of England (known as James I, after Queen Elizabeth's death in January 1603). Elizabeth is said to have had a very vivid love life even when she was getting old and her favours were also addressed to the young Earl of Essex, mentioned earlier in this study. However, after the rising, she had him executed. Both of these most prominent women of the period were deeply involved in Britain's political, military, and religious activities. Some critics say that their life stories sound as if they were historical legends, which were often used as sources for

the plays written by Shakespeare and his contemporaries. Queen Elizabeth obviously had a more lucky and socially more influential life than her cousin Mary; she was undoubtedly - for women of her age - the symbol of the age and its unsurpassed female icon.

THE FUNCTION OF FEMALE CHARACTERS IN SHAKESPEARE'S GREAT TRAGEDIES

Hamlet: Gertrude, Ophelia

In the Middle Ages, people were still largely under the impact of the doctrine that man was a depraved creature since Adam's fall, allowed to exist by God in order to make man able to decide about his actions freely, but still under the auspices of God's providence. However, in the sixteenth and in the beginning of the seventeenth century the individuality of each human being and a complete responsibility for man's actions began to be stressed. The Elizabethan playwrights created their characters in agreement with their views, namely that man was subject to natural laws and to Christian ethical norms. It was assumed that there should be universal order and that evil was not a normal state of man. The distinction between the universal and the particular became one of the basic characteristics in literature too, and Shakespeare was no doubt well aware of this issue. Therefore he created characters who generally possessed morally and intellectually positive and negative features, but who complied with the accepted norms in different degrees, or even not at all. In the earlier literary tradition (e.g. in the morality plays), characters were often presented in a one-sided way, as either good or bad. Another feature, which is also typical of the Renaissance literature, is "an appeal to optimism, good feeling, and delight in concord" (Harbage 171). But - as it is also in life - Shakespeare's characters, including his female characters, differ a lot regarding their intellectual and moral qualities: some of the female characters even seem to be "too good", they are almost angelic beings (often referred to by an Italian sintagm *donna angelicata*). However, there is also another extreme of females to be found in his great tragedies: these are women who at some point of their life seem to be almost completely overwhelmed by their *delight* in doing evil. What is more, whereas Shakespeare's male characters often openly recognize and repent their evil doing, their faults, some of the female characters - when they are deeply sunk in their immoral actions - are not prepared to do this; they do not repent and admit their faults, but they rather accept their "fate", their self-destruction.

In Shakespeare's first great tragedy, *Hamlet* (probably written in 1600-1601 and first performed in 1602) there are two outstanding female characters: Hamlet's mother, Gertrude, and Hamlet's ill-fated bride, Ophelia. The plot of the play is probably based on an earlier Elizabethan play, which has not been preserved and which was possibly written by Thomas Kyd in 1594. Shakespeare had another possible source for this play, François de Belleforest's prose work *Histoires Tragique* (1576). The central motif may even stem from a very old saga, which was incorporated into a Latin work *Gesta Danorum*, written by a Danish poet and historian Saxo Grammaticus (c. 1150-

c. 1206). This story contains all the basic elements of Shakespeare's *Hamlet*, but there are also some differences between the old story and Shakespeare's treatment. So, for example, in the medieval saga the old King is killed by his brother in front of the whole court, whereas Claudius kills Hamlet's father in secret. This approach undoubtedly makes Shakespeare's version sound more like a modern thriller. The question of Claudius's involvement in the death of his brother is made more questionable until Hamlet becomes persuaded of his uncle's guilt in the famous Mouse-trap scene. In the above-mentioned saga Hamlet's mother is openly on her son's side, whereas in Shakespeare's play her attitude to both men changes during the play. This shows us that although Shakespeare had a number of sources at his disposal, but his interpretation of characters and their motives is far more intricate and complex.

In Shakespeare's *Hamlet* the hero has a very complicated relationship with his mother Gertrude, who married in less than two month's time after the death of her husband, old Hamlet, his brother, Claudius. Shakespeare does not indicate in the play whether Gertrude was in any way, directly or indirectly implicated in the murder of her first husband, however, it is relevant that such a marriage was against religious and social norms of the time. When her (new) husband mentions to her that his principle secretary, Polonius, has told him that he has found the source of Hamlet's distemper, she says: "I doubt it is no other but the main, / His father's death and our o'erhasty marriage." (2.2.56-7).¹⁷ Hamlet is definitely shocked by his father's death and his mother's hasty marriage, but what puzzles him even more is the fact that the Ghost of his dead father – to whom Hamlet refers to as his "prophetic soul" (1.5.41) - tells him that he did not die a natural death, but that the real cause was a "foul and most unnatural murder" (1.5.25). However, some of the Ghost's sayings in his monologue make possible different interpretations. So, for example, he says that he "could a tale unfold whose lightest word / Would harrow up thy /i.e. Hamlet/' soul" (1.5.15). It is not clear why the Ghost uses the conditional "I could a tale unfold", although a few moments later he *does* tell Hamlet how the murder had actually occurred (1.5.42-92). Is there more to be told, possibly about the Queen? Further on, the Ghost's wish that the Queen should be spared revenge is not clarified. Is it because of the old Hamlet's love for her, or maybe because she was not involved in the murder and the old Hamlet thus expresses his surprise that she married his brother so soon after his death, or, because he wants to torment Gertrude even more by letting her remain alive and suffer? It seems that the old Hamlet did not notice her lust before, while they were still married, or, maybe he even could not satisfy her sensual desires because of his age? The Ghost now calls Gertrude "most seeming-virtuous queen" (1.5.46), what can be interpreted as if her behaviour, the relationship between them was not sincere or even that she had emotionally (and sexually?) betrayed him while he was still alive. It is obvious that both the dead King and his brother, Claudius, had the same desires: the Ghost tells Hamlet that he was "Of life, of crown, of queen at once dispatched" (1.5.75) and in the famous prayer scene (3.3) Claudius doubts that God will pardon him his deeds even though he asks God to forgive him "his foul murder" (3.3.52),

¹⁷ References to acts, scenes and lines are made to the following edition: John Dover Wilson, ed. *The Works of Shakespeare*. Cambridge: CUP, 1968.

because he wants to preserve "My crown, mine own ambition, and my queen" (3.3.55). This is the first time in the play that Claudius openly confesses his guilt and that Hamlet can overhear his uncle's admission of his crime but he does not wish to revenge the death of his father at that moment when Claudius is praying, repenting his sins, whereas his father had no such opportunity before his sudden death.

The audience hears already during the first Hamlet's soliloquy how he accuses his mother to have less morality than "a beast", which "would have mourned longer" (1.2.151). The Ghost also mentions how his brother - the same image of a beast is used for him ("that adulterate beast") had won the Queen: "O wicked wit and gifts, that have the power / So to seduce; won to his shameful lust / The will of my most seeming-virtuous queen" (1.5.44-6). This statement indicates that Claudius had attempted to "win" the Queen over to his side even before the death of the old King. But we do not learn from the play how Gertrude had responded to Claudius's approaches while her husband was still alive. Was she in love with Claudius before her husband's death and maybe even hardly waited for his end so that she could enjoy in a new (sexual) relationship, although according to the Bible Claudius was not supposed to marry his brother's wife (The Old Testament, Leviticus: "And if a man shall take his brother's wife, it is an unclean thing ... (20. 21); "A widow ... shall he not take" (21. 14). Likewise St. Paul in his Epistle to Timothy commands him: "Honor widows that are widows indeed. / Now she that is a widow indeed, and desolate, trusteth in God and continueth in supplication and prayers night and day. / But she that liveth in pleasure is dead while she liveth" (The New Testament, 1 Timothy, 5:3, 5, 6). Had Gertrude been over sixty years old, well-known for her good works, brought up her son etc. she would have been exempt from these rules, but in Shakespeare's text there is no indication that this might be so, even if we know that Hamlet is a grown-up person, but until recently still a student at Wittenberg. Therefore he (and probably also courtiers and ordinary citizens) do not see Gertrude's marriage being in agreement with Christian laws.

Male-female relationships become in *Hamlet* even more complicated if we accept Lacan's suggestion that Hamlet wished to defend his mother in order to preserve her for himself (Lacan 38). This critic obviously does not have a good opinion about Gertrude's moral norms, for he calls her "this voluptuous woman" (51). As we can see Shakespeare does not answer a number of questions directly, and thus leaves several interpretations possible. Therefore any kind of labelling of the play, which has been done through the centuries, is a generalization of only one view. So, for example, Philip Edwards accepted Lucien Goldmann's theory of tragedy (*The Hidden God*), according to which the role of Hamlet can be viewed as his own predicament; the hero tries to obey the distorted voice of a God who may not exist.¹⁸ Jan Kott points out that there are many topics dealt with in this play, as e.g. politics, morals, love, philosophy, etc. and that therefore we should choose which topic we wish to stress. But he adds: we can choose, but we should know why. Such starting point ensures a possibility of

¹⁸ Philip Edwards, »The Tragedy of *Hamlet*. Part Two«. *Report of the twentieth international Shakespeare conference held at The Shakespeare Institute* (University of Birmingham), Stratford-upon-Avon, 22-27 Aug. 1982: 7.

a wide range of interpretations, which are justified due to the openness of the text (in his essay "Hamlet and his problems" T. S. Eliot even says that Shakespeare treated in it too many themes), which is at the same time an advantage and a disadvantage of the play, depending on our interpretation.

It is not amazing that in our age, in which scepticism in long-established moral norms is also often a domineering principle in man's thinking, we are inclined to believe that Gertrude had her share in the crime committed by Claudius and in the events following her husband's death. As we have seen the Ghost (as well as Hamlet) believes that Gertrude is a hypocritical person although all three men love her! Can it be that her worries about Hamlet are - at least to some extent - only pretence, because, like Claudius, she also wishes to have Hamlet under control? Or does she play games with Hamlet as she may have been doing with the old King? Or does this hastily arranged marriage happen so quickly because of Gertrude's desire to remain young and happy, "desperately refusing to grow old", as Granville-Barker suggests in his study (qtd. in Heilbrun 10-11)? If Gertrude is (much) older than her husband's brother Claudius, does she think that it is now her last chance to seduce Claudius, marry him and that nothing should interfere with her plan?

Some critics believe that Gertrude was in no way involved in her husband's murder and that she did not commit adultery with Claudius when she was still married to old Hamlet. For example, Carolyn G. Heilbrun stresses in her study "The Character of Hamlet's Mother" that critics "have traditionally seen her /Gertrude/ as well-meaning but shallow and feminine (in the pejorative sense of the word), incapable of any sustained rational process, superficial and flighty" (10). Heilbrun mainly refers to opinions expressed by some well-known literary historians as e.g. A. C. Bradley, H. Granville-Barker, and John Dover Wilson. She believes they have misunderstood Gertrude and she tries to prove that Gertrude is a "strong-minded, intelligent, succinct, and, apart from this /i.e. her/ passion, sensible woman", and "certainly never silly" (Heilbrun 11-12). As a possible evidence for her assertion she gives examples of Gertrude's "concise", "direct", "courageous", "intelligent" speech (12-13). Even though Heilbrun has to admit that Gertrude is "lustful", she insists that Gertrude "is also intelligent, penetrating, and gifted with a remarkable talent for concise and pithy speech" (17). This conclusion does not sound very plausible, for Gertrude's short and "concise" speech may also indicate that she was not particularly eloquent (and/or intelligent), and that her short responses were a sign of her insecurity and/or of her wish not to expose her true self too much. She was most likely aware that the nobility and even average citizens did not approve of her "o'erhasty marriage", not only because according to Christian teaching it was a sin, but because people might see in it her "true nature", her extreme sensuality, or even her lasciviousness. Shakespeare's Gertrude is, no doubt, a very influential character in this play, although she apparently stands in the shadow of both male heroes, Hamlet and Claudius.

Another important female character in this tragedy is Ophelia, Polonius's daughter. Her character is not as open to interpretation as Gertrude's, but she also has some features in her character, which puzzle the reader. She does not successfully perform her father's order to extract from Hamlet the reasons for his strange behaviour and she

actually approaches him awkwardly so that Hamlet becomes immediately suspicious of her. Although some critics blame Hamlet for breaking off his relations with Ophelia it is evident that Ophelia's behaviour is a proof for Hamlet that the world is evil and women are "frail". Had she loved Hamlet more than her father and Laertes, who warned her not to have a close relationship with Hamlet, had she been sincere with Hamlet and had she trusted him, he would have most probably reacted to her action differently. But because of her complete loyalty to her father Ophelia becomes her own worst enemy, and gives herself over to self-torture. To assert that in Shakespeare's time children had to obey their parents and that this is a sufficient reason to explain her behaviour towards Hamlet as decent, or even loving, is a gross oversimplification of her character and, even more, a basic misunderstanding of Shakespeare's art. It is man's free will, which is the essential condition for actions in Shakespeare's plays and he definitely did not create his characters on the basis of a naturalistic determination. Such a simplified interpretation is a gross misinterpretation of his creativity (possibly showing even the lack of knowledge of his work), particularly if it is considered as the only valid one.¹⁹ If Polonius's will (or generally speaking the will of parents) were the only important and decisive factor for Shakespeare to create this and other female characters, how is it then possible that he created a number of heroines who disobey their father (e.g. Cordelia, Desdemona, Goneril, Regan, not to mention the romantic portrait of Juliet)? The answer is simple, Shakespeare made it clear what parents expected from their children, but their actions mainly depended on their character, on the way they looked upon their parents and/or on their beloved person, whether they obeyed them or not. They choose their actions freely and therefore they are responsible for them.

Piotr Sadowski analyses in his study *Dynamism of Character in Shakespeare's Mature Tragedies* (2004) the behaviour of Shakespeare's characters in terms of functional equilibrium between the stable properties of one's mind – regardless of the pressure of sociocultural environment – and the immediate situational context.²⁰ This principle makes Shakespeare's characters real individuals and perfect artistic creations. Besides, Shakespeare did not place the action of this (and many of his other plays) in Elizabethan England, and he wrote them in such a way that they have a universal and timeless significance. In *Hamlet* - at least as much as we can judge about Ophelia from her deeds - she does not have and does not express her own will; she allows to be manipulated, to be a tool in the hands of her father. She is probably not even aware of this. This is a flaw in her character which can be compared to the blindness of tragic heroes who do not realize that by making a tragic error they cause their own fall. A critic who in the postulated manner simplifies the issue of Ophelia's character is not aware of the complexity and individuality of Shakespeare's person-

¹⁹ Such interpretations sometimes occur in book reviews or even theatre criticism in Slovenia. See also, for example, Piotr Sadowski, *Dynamism of Character in Shakespeare's Mature Tragedies* (Newark, U of Delaware P, 2003).

²⁰ See also: Laurie E. Maguire, *Studying Shakespeare* (Oxford: Blackwell, 2004); Emma Smith, *Shakespeare's Tragedies* (Oxford: Blackwell, 2003); David Bevington, *Shakespeare* (London: Blackwell, 2002); John Russell Brown, *Shakespeare: The Tragedies* (London: Macmillan, 2001); Kate Chedzoy, ed. *Shakespeare, Feminism and Gender* (London: Macmillan, 2000).

ages and his vision of life. Polonius even uses a very pejorative syntagm concerning his plan to make Ophelia extract the truth from Hamlet when he explains Ophelia's role in this plot by saying to the King and the Queen: "At such a time I'll loose my daughter to him" (2.2.162). The verb "to loose" is explained by John Dover Wilson as: (a) release (as a dog from a leash), (b) turn loose (in cattle or horse breeding) (*Hamlet* 277). Ophelia is only used by her father as bait to please the King. The remark made by Polonius definitely shows his lack of respect for his daughter.

Ophelia is presented in the first half of the play as a "weak" character, who does not stand by Hamlet in need; she does not help him - even worse, she is willing to spy on him. When Hamlet realizes this he is shocked and this fact also explains why he behaves towards Ophelia so cruelly. E. M. W. Tillyard explains Hamlet's relationship to Ophelia with a statement: "Hamlet's disgust at his mother had prompted his dealings with Ophelia; and her actions in their turn exacerbate his feelings against her, his mother, and all women" (Tillyard 29). Unfortunately Hamlet only sees that Ophelia could not bear the weight of her tragic fate when it is too late, at her burial, when he publicly admits his great love for her. Ophelia recognizes that her behaviour was morally questionable only after her father's death, when her mind is for the first time free but also damaged, so that she is incapable of rational actions (4.5). Her song about the girl's seeing her beloved on Saint Valentine's day indicates first a pure love which turns into a sexual encounter (4.5.47-53), and the song that follows may be understood in the same way too (4.5.57-65). The question whether these lines are only the sign of Ophelia's madness or whether they actually refer to her relationship with Hamlet remains open to interpretation. Jacques Lacan finds Ophelia's portrait as one of the "most fascinating creations" (12), a pathetic and disturbing character, about whom one cannot be sure whether she is an embodied innocence or a wanton woman ready for any kind of behaviour. He even equates her in the following manner: "a Girl = Falos" (53-54), whom the hero had rejected (67). A similar interpretation of Ophelia is noticeable also in the film version of *Hamlet* directed by Franco Zaffirelli.

However, in Ophelia's final appearance in the play, when she presents flowers to the King, the Queen and Laertes, her action seems to point to the "real" Ophelia, seized with desolation and despair. After the loss of Hamlet and the death of her father she no longer cares about the impact her deeds make. Dover Wilson explains her conduct with the following words: "Each flower has its meaning and is presented to an appropriate person" (*Hamlet* 226). Ophelia gives the King fennel and columbines, symbolizing flattery and cockoldry; rue to the Queen, symbolizing sadness and repentance, and rosemary to Laertes, for remembrance (4.5.179-186). With this deed Ophelia expresses her true opinion about other characters, but this happens only after she has lost control over her actions and when she is no longer terrified by the authority of her father and the royalty, or by her brother. She has changed, but unfortunately it is too late for her.

In spite of the fact that both characters, Gertrude and Ophelia, are not the protagonists of the play, they are in some ways even more interesting because their characters are in many ways open to different interpretations, although they also embody some of the features, which can often be observed in female characteristics of other Shakespeare's heroines - that is of innocent, inexperienced, and naive women.

But we most frequently encounter in his great tragedies females who lust for joys of sensual life and, particularly, for power. Whereas the first type of a woman is an almost angelic being, the second type is shown as a ruthless creature, without moral norms, obsessed by evil and enjoying in the process of her misdeeds. Some of the female characters portrayed by Shakespeare are – figuratively speaking – even more covered with blood than their partners, because once they start doing evil deeds they do not stop doing them, for they lack a sense of justice and/or real repentance. They are clever enough to realize that they have chosen a destructive path (this is true especially of morally negative female characters in *King Lear* and *Macbeth*), but they are so deeply involved in criminal actions and so morally corrupt, as well as pitiless that they do not regret their wrong deeds and continue to perform evil until they are physically or psychologically ruined; in most cases their destruction happens on both levels of their existence.

Theatrical experiments with *Hamlet* in Slovenia during the last two decades

Since the first performance of *Hamlet* in Slovene language at the Deželno gledališče v Ljubljani (The Provincial Theatre in Ljubljana) in 1899 there have been more than twenty different productions of this play done by Slovene professional companies.²¹ The directors mainly tried to follow the “classical” vision of this play, paying most attention to psychological persuasiveness of characters, particularly of the main hero. Each production was in many ways unique, either in attempts of directors to follow suggestions which can be obtained from Shakespeare’s text, or by “re-creating” the text, seeing it from a modern perspective, but nevertheless trying to preserve essential dramaturgic elements of Shakespeare’s play. After World War II there have also been a number of attempts made by theatre directors in Slovenia to produce “experimental performances” of Shakespeare’s *Hamlet*, including adaptations of Shakespeare’s text. Such attempts usually had various purposes: to apprehend the meaning of the play in a new light, to search for new artistic elements, which could enrich the traditional theatrical productions, and sometimes simply to shock the audience. The extent of such experimentation is rather large therefore these productions will not be dealt with here in their theatrical totality, but only with regard to some of the more noticeable features which we could see in Slovenian theatres during the past two decades. Several such “experimental” performances were based on the assumption that there is an artistic crisis in the professional theatre and theatre directors and producers should not repeat the “orthodox” ways of treating the text. As I have indicated above these – generally young – directors, who often collaborated in preparing the production with script-writers and actors believed that each performance should bring the main ideas of Shakespeare’s play closer to our reality (than this is generally done by “classical” productions) and that it should provide new means and

²¹ See the bibliographies *Repertoar slovenskih gledališč* (The Repertory of Slovene Theatres) and *Slovenski gledališki letopis* (*Slovene Theatre Annual*), now published yearly by Slovenski gledališki muzej, Ljubljana, Slovenia.

modes of theatrical expressions. The central question regarding such improvisation is how to create a theatrical event, an event which will be – in opposition to the “mimetic” performance of reality – a representation of something vague, something which had been pushed back in our subconscious, and which may still not be quite clear, but which the actors and the director “sense” exists, along with what they wish to discover.

Another fairly frequent premise of such experimental groups is the realization of the total theatre. This idea is one hundred years old and was first theoretically explained by Edward Gordon Craig in his work *On the Art of the Theatre* (1905). The total theatre was practised in England in the 1930s by the Group Theatre, in which – besides the director Rupert Doone and scenic designer Robert Medley – an important role was played by new, young poets, writers (turned) dramatists, including W. H. Auden and Christopher Isherwood, Louis MacNeice, Stephen Spender, and, although only at first, also by T. S. Eliot. However, when such productions based on the vision of the totality of arts are staged, it often occurs that the abilities of individual actors (like singing, playing music, dancing, mimics etc.) do not reach a very high artistic level, and that therefore such experiments may be aesthetically less satisfying than a straightforward realistic production. The improvisation, which is also frequently declared as a basis for experimental productions and which depends on a particular situation in the theatre, often lacks the director’s inspiration and actors’ artistic accomplishment. This may therefore be one of the main reasons why such productions are often artistic failures, met by the negative response of critics and also by a disinterested public. Although experiments in the theatre are, generally speaking, most welcome and necessary, theatre directors and theatre critics do not always seem to be aware of these artistic problems with which such productions are faced.

In 1971 the well-known British theatre director Peter Brook founded the International Centre of Theatre Research in Paris, which became an international theatre centre (Théâtre des Bouffes du Nord – C.I.C.T.). Brook directed there several plays, among them also his adaptation of Shakespeare’s *Hamlet*. In his advice to a young actor, who tries his skill in one of the great roles in this play, Brook advises him:

Forget Shakespeare... think that your first responsibility of an actor is to give a breath of life to human beings ...set aside every thought that Hamlet is ‘like me’. Hamlet is not ‘like me’, he is not like anybody, because he is unique ... And it is ridiculous to think that someone could be replacing Ophelia with his beloved, or Gertrude with his own mother, express himself with Hamlet’s vigour, his vocabulary, his sense of humour and opulence of thoughts .../In this play/ every new syllable gains new importance, every new letter can become an essential key in reconstructing a particularly complex personality ..and the entire play becomes a huge mosaic ...Over and over we can rediscover that play and make it alive by starting to search for its truth again... Behind the surface of the play there is a hidden myth.²²

²² See the theatre programme: *Hamlet*. Adapted by Peter Brook. Directed by Peter Brook. Performed by actors of the International Theatre Centre (C.I.C.T), Paris. - The group visited Dubrovnik, Croatia, and gave there three performances of *Hamlet* on the island of Lokrum (I saw the performance on 27 June 2003).

If we agree with Brook's suggestions they may be an interesting starting-point for our understanding of so many "classical" as well as experimental versions and adaptations of this play. Let me mention some of the more interesting performances which took place in Slovene theatres during the period under discussion. Such a new approach towards Shakespeare's *Hamlet* could undoubtedly be found in Mile Korun's production of *Hamlet*, performed by the Mestno gledališče v Ljubljani (The Municipal Theatre of Ljubljana). The premiere was on 12 January 1984. It was an experimental production primarily as far as the casting of roles of characters and consequently relations among them are concerned. Claudius was presented by a young actor (Boris Ostan), who was only a few years older than the actor who was playing Hamlet (Slavko Cerjak). As in many "classical" performances of this play Gertrude was also here acted by an "opulent" actress (Nika Juvan Kalan). She is past her prime but she may still be sexually attractive, which is indicated by her fleshy body and her sensual behaviour. She looked on the stage like one of Rubens's portraits of passionate mature women, a voluptuous figure, whose physical desire for much younger Claudius cannot be controlled. Although this triangle seemed somewhat ridiculous at first, as if the actor who played Claudius was not properly cast, such casting soon made sense and proved to be a possible variation of the plot and the usual character portrayal. Claudius could be the old King's (much) younger brother, who desired to secure the crown and with it a lusty Queen. In Korun's production Claudius was completely self-sure and he cynically treated Hamlet as a sissy, or as a latent homosexual. This was indicated already during the first encounter between Claudius and Hamlet, when Claudius embraced Hamlet and kissed him on the lips. The kiss could also be seen as Judas' kiss, as a symbolic indication of Claudius' betrayal of Hamlet. Gertrude's efforts to persuade Hamlet to forget the death of his father and to accept her new husband could be interpreted as her perfidious mask with which she tries to cover her lustful nature. But if we accept the suggestion that Hamlet is impotent, or that he is a homosexual, the closet scene (4. 3) in which many directors see Hamlet's discovery of his Oedipus complex, Hamlet's rage of his mother's marriage could also indicate his envy supported by his abnormal feelings towards his mother. Then his "struggle" with Gertrude in this scene could indicate his wish for matricide, as it is understood by Gertrude. If we accept the above mentioned assumptions about his character we also find the explanation for why he hates women, even his sensitive, fragile, frightened Ophelia (Jožica Avbelj). Although Gertrude is not the protagonist of the play, she provides a new focal point in this tragedy and becomes an important combatant among the central characters in this production of Shakespeare's *Hamlet*.

A much more radical adaptation of Shakespeare's *Hamlet* could be seen in Heiner Müller's version of this play, in *Stroj Hamlet (Die Hamletmaschine)*, first performed in Slovenia by the experimental theatre Glej (the premiere was on 1 October 1988) and directed by Matjaž Zupančič. Müller used Shakespeare's play as a starting point for the interpretation of the main hero, or rather, of the actor who performs in this role and who searches for his own identity. There are only a handful of other characters transferred from the original, Shakespeare's play into this (short) play, but the production was "enriched" by three dancers. The central dilemma in Müller's play is the discrepancy between the real and the fictitious world: the real world is here shown as more intensive and it is filled with hero's hallucinations, reflected in his

schizoid behaviour. But Hamlet is still “me”, whereas allusions connected with the character of Claudius (he could be simply a father figure, or Stalin, or the rebel, the master, the machine), can be numerous. The hero’s destruction represents also the destruction of the myth, linked with classical myths of the Argonauts and Medea), and linked in time with a number of authors (e.g. T. S. Eliot, S. Beckett, Dostoyevsky, Verlaine etc.), quotations from whose works became a part of the play.

Another adaptation of *Hamlet* was also performed by the experimental theatre Glej, entitled *Hamlett Packard*. It was directed by Tomaž Štruel and shown at the Cankarjev Dom Stage Production in Ljubljana (the premiere was on 3 April 1992). Parts of Shakespeare’s text were produced as a MTV video clip, supposedly meant as a parody of popular television serial programmes and hardly a word was said in Slovene. Four actors impersonated Hamlet’s character, behaving like “puppets” (as caricatures of “heroes” in a James Bond film), placed in a modern, digitalized world. The whole play was done as a mixture of Shakespeare’s text, television shows, ballet, music, including a rapsong written for the performance by Zdravko Duša (see Appendix 2). This “adaptation” of *Hamlet* was meant to be a simplified travesty of modern world but the performance itself was not removed enough from the target.²³ Although the production was accepted with the approval and laughter by young audiences, theatre critics in Slovene newspapers showed less understanding for this experiment done with the help of various media.

There is hardly a thematic connection between Shakespeare’s *Hamlet* and Vinko Möderndorfer’s play *Hamlet in Ofelija* (Hamlet and Ophelia), which was performed at Mala drama (The Small Stage) of the Slovene National Theatre in Ljubljana (the premiere was on 14 October 1994, directed by the author).²⁴ The play presents two juvenile delinquents who find refuge in the basement of the theatre where they are joined by an aged, drunken actor, who has just performed in the role of the Ghost in Shakespeare’s *Hamlet*. The debate between these characters centres on their view about the immorality of the modern world consisting of the world of poverty and crime, which is the reality of the two youngsters, and the world of apparently glittering past, which has turned into illusion. The text lacks coherence and leaves too many unanswered questions.

On August 22, 1997, a reduced version of Shakespeare’s *Hamlet* was done as a street-theatre production on the Čevljarški most (The Shoemakers’ Bridge), a popular venue for musical and theatrical performances during the summer months in Ljubljana.²⁵ The performance was prepared by a group of amateur actors, KUD France Kotar, and it was directed by Natalija and Ravil Sultanov. Circus tricks, juggling with balls, acrobatics, walking on stilts etc. were combined with monologues from Shakespeare’s *Hamlet* and humorous “paraphrases” taken from some other Shakespeare’s plays. The performance was primarily intended as children’s entertainment and it was also accepted as such by occasional passers-by.

²³ Tadej Čater, »Enigma Hamlet,« *Dnevnik* 7 April 1992: 8; Marko Crnkovič, »A bi al’ ne bi, to je zdaj vprašanje,« *Naši razgledi* 17 April 1992: 967.

²⁴ Aleš Berger, »Bonnie in Clyde pod odrom,« (*Delo* 19 Oct. 1994: 12).

²⁵ M. V. »Shakesperiada«, (*Delo* 22 aug. 1997: 11).

The fact that the performance is only an adaptation of Shakespeare's play is clearly indicated on the theatre bill for another experimental production of *Hamlet*. The author of the adaptation was the actor, Andrej Rozman Roza, and the play was performed by Slovensko mladinsko gledališče (The Slovene Youth Theatre) in Ljubljana. The premiere was on February 18, 2001, directed by Dario Varga and announced as "tragic comedy".²⁶ The role of Hamlet was given to a twelve-year-old boy, who plays a computer game called Fortinbras. The boy repeats some of Hamlet's famous lines, but he is shown as a person who is emotionally and morally unable to accept the responsibility forced upon him. His opponents wear grotesque rubber masks and they look like some kind of humanoids from another planet. If the boy wishes to survive he must pretend to agree with corruption, greed and moral grossness of his mother and his uncle. Roza very much truncated the original text, omitted a number of characters, and rewrote the text so that the language used by Hamlet suited the mentality of a young, clever boy. The ending comes as a big surprise: Hamlet survives and he discusses the past events with Fortinbras. It was all just a computer game.

On 16 August 2001 the Glej Experimental Theatre ("i" Teater) produced a choreographic version of *Hamlet*. In this production of *Hamlet* life is reduced to television reality. The script was written by an actor, Aleksander Jurc. There is only one female actor, actually a dancer performing in this production (Mojca Türk) whose medium are not words, but human body.²⁷ It was a dance performance, filled with energy and full of dynamics, moving facial expressions, but Shakespeare's play was almost reduced *ad absurdum*. The dancer's movements were accompanied by almost indiscernible sounds of a modern urban noise stifling the terrifying silence of the heroine's inner world, which was occasionally broken by hysterical laughter or ticking of the alarm clock. The director's point was to show that the youth today can no longer listen to the words (meditate) or to accept silence, because they live in the world of TV productions or they escape to the world of dreams.

An early experimental play written by Bernard-Marie Koltes, *Dan umorov v zgodbi o Hamletu* (The Day of Murders in the Story of Hamlet) was performed in Ljubljana on 6 January 2005 by the Glej Experimental Theatre.²⁸ It was directed by Ivica Buljan, and staged as a practical exercise (a variation on the theme of *Hamlet*). The combination of quotations from Shakespeare's play was performed by four actors representing four characters from *Hamlet* (Hamlet, Ophelia, Gertrude and Claudius), and the Voice. The production did not receive much attention either by theatre public or by critics.

Another adaptation of *Hamlet* is announced to take place by the end of 2005 by a semi-professional theatre company (Šentjakobsko gledališče in Ljubljana).²⁹ The script was written by Barbara Kapelj who included in it besides the text taken from Shakespeare's *Hamlet* also passages from *Romeo and Juliet* and from *Othello*. Kapelj

²⁶ Tanja Jaklič, »Otrok v gnilem svetu,« (Delo 16 Feb. 2001: 9); M.T., »Hamlet, (Delo 17 Feb. 2001: 16). – Blaž Lukan, »Mrtve Hamletove spake,« (Delo 20 Feb. 2001: 9).

²⁷ Špela Stramšek, »Hamlet brez besed v 'i' Teatru,« (Delo 16 Aug. 2001: 6). – Špela Stramšek, »Kričanje brez smisla ali neznosni užitek,« (Delo 21 Aug. 2001: 6).

²⁸ Blaž Lukan, »Premetanka na Hamletovo temo,« (Delo 5 Jan. 2005: 9).

²⁹ S.S. »Iz take smo snovi kot sanje,« (Delo 26 Oct. 2005:10).

is also going to direct the play. According to the programme announcement the play will be done as "a show" in which pathos, banalities, humorous situations and simplification (whatever this may mean) will be used to show "various prejudices denoting contemporary 'trade' of images".

These are some of the main features used in experimental productions of Shakespeare's *Hamlet* in Slovenia. However, there are another two performances of Shakespeare's *Hamlet* which were staged by professional theatrical companies in Slovenia since 1990, and which should be mentioned in the context of theatrical experiments made by two best professional companies in Slovenia. The first one is the performance which was directed by Tomaž Pandur and staged by Drama slovenskega narodnega gledališča v Mariboru (The Drama of the Slovene National Theatre in Maribor) on 7 December 1990. A slightly revised version of this production was done on 29 March 1994.³⁰ Pandur is known as *enfant terrible* of the modern Slovene theatre, who has "adapted" a number of classical plays in Slovenia and abroad. His *Hamlet* symbolizes the decomposition of the world and his pathological creatures (living in a castle) remind the audience of "the ship of fools". The performance began with fire works celebrating the marriage between Gertrude (Milena Mišič) and Claudius (Matjaž Tribušon) in front of the theatre, and then the actors and the audience moved into the theatre. The director rearranged the plot of the play in the form of Brechtian montage of individual scenes. Characters behaved as if they were in a delirium: they were all very aggressive, terrifying personalities (particularly Claudius), almost pathologically obsessed by sex. Horatio (Livio Badurina) is Ophelia's (Ksenija Mišič) lover (!) and also Hamlet's "friend". Gertrude is noticeably older than Claudius (this is a feature, which we have already noticed in the production of *Hamlet* directed by Mile Korun). Hamlet finds himself to be "misplaced" in this world, and what is happening in the catacombs of the Elsinore castle seems to him like a bad dream about the mad world. He is also a witty intellectual, full of dilemmas, innocent and melancholic, but at the same time God's avenger in the world which he had been doomed to put in order. As a born dreamer he never knows whether he moves in the real world or in dreams. Some of the characters from Shakespeare's play are missing (e.g. Fortinbras, the Grave-diggers). Nevertheless by the end of the play individual scenes begin to make sense, they are again put together to make a complete picture presenting the beginning of a new world. The nightmare has passed away. In the revised version, produced by the same company in 1994, Hamlet's figure (Matjaž Tribušon) acquired a more lyrical note and Polonius (Radko Polič) is not shown as a servile minister but as a shrewd man, looking after his own interests. He is at first an equal opponent to Hamlet and he covers his real essence with humorous behaviour. The roles of Rosencrantz and Guildenstern are represented only by one actor (Peter Ternovšek), although both school-fellows are addressed by other characters as if they were only one man representing a double personality. The text was shortened for this production but the dramaturgic structure remained the same as in the 1990 production: it is composed of a series of individual episodes, which are much less tightly connected than in

³⁰ Andrej Inkret, »Mariborski *Hamlet*,« (Delo 12 Dec. 1990: 9).- Andrej Inkret, »*Hamlet*, izčiščen in dognan« (Delo 28 Mar 1994: 7).

Shakespeare's text. Pandur's productions of *Hamlet* were mostly praised by critics as rather original, although some critics and audiences believed that he used too much spectacular machinery to present our "mad world".

Although the production of *Hamlet* staged by Janez Pipan at the SNG Drama Ljubljana (The Drama of the Slovene National Theatre of Ljubljana; the premiere was on 14 October 1994), does not belong to the experimental productions in the strictest sense, it should be mentioned here briefly because Pipan introduced some new textual interpretations.³¹ Milena Zupančič performed the role of Gertrude as a clever, speculating woman, but one who is so overwhelmed by her sensuality that she suppresses her intelligence in favour of her carnal pleasures. But at the moment of catharsis, which is brought about by her admission of guilt when confronted with Hamlet's accusations, she cannot control her life any more and is led into irrevocable madness, which she tries to drown in constant intoxication. In this production the figure of Hamlet (Jernej Šugman) is modelled as an angry revenger, who hesitates at first in performing his duty, but who is from the very beginning of the play a dangerous opponent of Claudius (Boris Cavazza). It is obvious that in such a world Ophelia (Saša Pavček), presented as a young, naive, almost child-like figure not yet fully grown (she could also be another Juliet), is out of place – she is only really happy when she is with her brother. In critical situations she shows her inability to freely express herself, because she is completely intimidated by her father and she therefore would not allow herself to grow to womanhood. Her sensuality bursts out from time to time (shown in her masturbation) but whether this could indicate that she has had sexual relationship with Hamlet, is not clear. Although actors in this production wore modern dress, the director did not stress this fact in any way: his interest was centred on the major characters and their fate - which also denotes the decay of society and the destruction of the kingdom. In Pipan's production the personal fate of individual personages is most closely linked with the fall of the state.

Some recent visits of foreign theatre companies performing *Hamlet* in Slovenia

Among performances of foreign theatre companies which we could more recently see in Ljubljana was also the production Shakespeare's *Hamlet* by Schauspielhannover under the direction of Nicolas Stemann (Drama SNG Ljubljana, September 20, 2003).³² Stemann has been known in Europe as a minimalist, adherent of pop aestheticism, whose interest lies in investigation of new theatrical forms which reflect modern pop iconography, in the post-ideological world. Shakespeare's text was shortened and the performance was centred on Hamlet's response to the murder of his father: will he react upon this event and how will he do it. Stemann's *Hamlet* has many references to contemporary political and social situations, particularly in Germany (e.g. the prototype of Hamlet's

³¹ Aleš Berger, »Hamlet med nekdanj in zmerom,« (*Delo* 17 Oct 1994: 7).

³² Vesna Jurca Tadel, »Neuravnoteženi *Hamlet*,« (*Delo* 23 Sept. 2003: 8). – Tanja Jaklič, »Politični kraljevič v režiji pop esteta,« (*Delo* 20 Sept. 2003: 8).

uncle Claudius was the then German foreign minister, Joschka Fischer). Hamlet's character is combined with Horatio's character; he is the hero's alter ego and also speaks several of Hamlet's monologues. Claudius accuses Hamlet of not wishing to change the world, but to destroy it. The director uses a number of means to make the audience aware that we are only watching a play. For example, several TV sets are placed on an empty stage and they show us parts of various film versions of Shakespeare's *Hamlet* as well as parts of the play which we are watching. An interesting alienation effect is used in the Mousetrap scene, when Hamlet forces the King and the Queen to perform in it the murder of old Hamlet. In spite of various shortcomings this, somewhat ludistic production, was very well accepted by the audience.

This cannot be said about the production of *Hamlet* by Divadlo Komédie from Prague, which visited Ljubljana with its production of this play in the Mestno gledališče ljubljansko (The Municipal Theatre of Ljubljana; the premiere was on 15 April 1998). The play was directed by Jan Nebesky, and the role of Hamlet was performed by David Pracharž. The performance began with a short puppet play, which was done as a comic parody of Shakespeare's play. The story is set in an indefinite place and time, and Hamlet's opponent is Orestes, who was faced with the same duty as Hamlet – carrying out the revenge of his father's murder. But after some initial shocking scenes, after Hamlet's tenseness is reduced to madness, the play loses its initial force and after what had been an innovative approach the performance lost its impetus instead of gaining it.

— A similar fate awaited the production of *Hamlet. Dreams*. This is a long, unconventional performance consisting mainly of visual-kinesthetic-musical elements, a kind of modern revue, only vaguely connected with Shakespeare's *Hamlet*. It was directed by Andrij Žoldak, and performed by Taras Ševčenko Theatre, from Harkov, Ukraine (at the Drama of the Slovene National Theatre, Ljubljana, 17 September 2004). Slovene theatre goes – after having seen a number of excellent film versions of various musical comedies and revues either in theatres or on television – are not easily satisfied with such productions unless all the component parts (acting, ballet, singing, music, visual elements etc.) are well united and on a very high artistic level.

As my report has shown this is true regardless of the fact, if the company comes from Slovenia or abroad. Improvisations are only accepted by various experimental stages, which are usually run by students, as e.g. KUD France Prešeren, or Stara elektrarna in Ljubljana, and similar experimental theatres in Maribor (e.g. Pekarna) and – from time to time – also in other cities in Slovenia. They often aim at “creating an event”, at *poiesis* instead of *mimesis*, even though some such events are not always noted by wider audiences or by mass media.

Othello: Desdemona

In the past women were often seen as the bearers of the principle of goodness, sometimes symbolized by the Holy Grail. On the other hand men were largely blamed and made responsible for the decay of society, what was one of the basic distinctions between the sexes. The male domination in society has eventually become less powerful, although in Shakespeare's plays it is still rather obvious. The mother was consid-

ered not only the bearer of children, but also the basic source of emotional connection among the members of the family, as well as an important socializing and moral force for the children, by being herself an example of the way of living. It should be pointed out here that in Shakespeare's great tragedies the mothers - as an ideal image for her children's conduct - are missing. Can this be considered as an influential factor in the character development of Shakespeare's evil, morally degraded heroines? It seems that we can assume that his evil females developed into self-centred, egotistic, kindless and even cruel women because they lack motherly love.

The person who has "divine" qualities in Shakespeare's tragedies is Desdemona in *Othello*, written in 1602-1603 and first performed in 1604. Although Shakespeare used as a main motif for this play Giraldi Cinthio's tale in his *Hecatommithi* (1565), it is relevant that in the Italian version of this story Iago is in love with Desdemona. Because she does not answer his pleas he suspects that she is in love with Cassio and therefore he invents a plot against her. Like in other plays (e.g. in *Romeo and Juliet*) Shakespeare intensified the story by leaving out this possibility and he also changed the character of Othello. In Cinthio's version Othello does not admit his crime, whereas in Shakespeare's play the hero accepts his responsibility as a man of honour so that the dramatic reversal and recognition take place.

If we accept the traditional division of characters, as suggested, for example, by L. C. Knights, that there are the deceivers and the deceived, both the hero and the heroine fall into the second group. If Othello is misled by Iago into making false judgments about Desdemona, her "mistake" seems to be her naive trust in the goodness of people and her lack of ability to see what Othello's nature, his character is like. He, meanwhile, obviously imagines that he can judge other people's characters, which proves to be his big mistake, because he does not estimate correctly anybody who is close to him, least of all Desdemona and, of course, Iago. We can assume that he has a preconceived opinion about Desdemona, and being aware of the racial, religious and the age difference between himself and his wife, he becomes an easy prey to Iago's plotting. Both, Iago and Desdemona's father Brabantio are racially prejudiced and Brabantio had warned Othello "not to haunt about my doors" (1.1.97). Brabantio calls Iago a villain when Iago uses one of his many vulgar images hinting that Othello and Desdemona have a sexual intercourse ("your daughter and the Moor are now making the beast with two backs" 1.1.116-117). But Brabantio is also shocked because Desdemona has allowed herself to become involved with "an extravagant and wheeling stranger" (1.1.138), as Roderigo describes Othello to Desdemona's father. Of course, Brabantio has no better opinion of Othello and of his race: he considers him to be "a devilish malefactor" who practices black magic (Wilson 149). Brabantio cannot get rid of his preconceived opinion about the man who is different, even when the Venetian Senate speaks highly of Othello and when the Duke tells him "Your son-in-law is far more fair than black" (1.3.290).

At that moment in the play Othello is still completely certain about Desdemona's love for him and when her father warns him that "She has deceived her father, and may thee", he answers, "My life upon her faith!" (1.3.293-294). What a change between this moment and all the doubts in Othello's mind after a prolonged and skillfully managed Iago's devilish plan to blacken Desdemona's character, when Othello - still

very much in love with Desdemona – calls her ironically “Excellent wretch!” (3.3.91). Iago uses now the same argument as Brabantio has hinted at by saying: “She did deceive her father, marrying you” (3.3.208) implying the suggestion that Desdemona is now deceiving Othello. (Is it possible that – at least partly - Othello represented to Desdemona a substitute for her father, that she was “acting out” an Oedipal situation?) The system which insisted on female obedience made the hero uncertain, he is torn between his love for Desdemona and his thoughts, and his fear that she is deceiving him. He does not know what to do until he is completely persuaded by Iago that his fear is rational. Othello loves Desdemona and he knows life without her would be completely meaningless, because her betrayal would mean a complete absence of all human values and worldly order for him (“But I do love thee; and when I love thee not / Chaos is come again” (3.3.92-93).

When Desdemona rejects Othello’s accusation that she is not true and loyal to him and she calls heaven as her witness, Othello responds to her that “Heaven truly knows that thou art false as hell” (4.2.40). Her honesty is for him a matter of life or death, but because he thinks that she has betrayed him, he cannot bear this thought and he indirectly condemns her to non-existence before he actually murders her: “O thou weed, / Who art so lovely fair and smell’st so sweet / That the sense aches at thee, would thou hadst ne’er been born!” (4.2.68-70). And further on, when he calls her “Impudent strumpet!”, she refers to herself as “a Christian” who “shall be saved”, Othello with masochistic irony comments upon her statement by crying: “I took you for that cunning whore of Venice / That married with Othello. You mistress / That have the office opposite to Saint Peter, / And keep the gate of hell!” (4.1.84-90). Desdemona cannot stand Othello’s torturing any longer; she has become apathetic, starting to think about her death (4.3.24). Iago’s wife Emilia tries to console her and tells her a story about her mother’s maid Barbara whose lover “proved mad / And did forsake her”. Then Barbara used to sing a song about a willow tree which “expressed her fortune, and she died singing it” (4.3.29-30). Thus Desdemona’s premonition of her death is announced in her singing, and her song ends with a knock of Death, an image of terrified woman, “Hark! Who is’t that knocks?”. The question is answered by Emilia (trying to comfort Desdemona), with an enigmatic statement “It’s the wind.”. (4.3.52-53) These lines are referred to in “A Game of Chess”, the second canto of T. S. Eliot’s poem *The Waste Land*. Shakespeare makes little usage of the fact that Othello is a Mohammedan, whereas Othello places Desdemona into a Christian sphere, albeit he believes that Desdemona’s sin pushed her among the fallen angels. His torment in accepting the decision whether to murder her or not is based on the images of light and darkness (“Put out the light: and then put out the light” (5.2.17), for he will carry out his deed in darkness and he will, symbolically speaking, extinguish his “light”, his beloved and – as a consequence of this deed - he will shed “cruel tears” (5.2.21). Shakespeare also very intensively applied the images of light and darkness in *King Lear* and in *Macbeth*, in which man’s cruelty, his denial of any moral laws is brought to a peak in Shakespeare’s plays.

The final scene between Othello and Desdemona is again full of his threats upon her life and her pleas to heaven for his mercy. Like Hamlet, who would not kill praying Claudius Othello says, that he would not kill her “unprepared spirit”, he

would not kill her soul (5.2.32-33); but the difference is, of course, in completely different circumstances: Claudius is guilty of the murder of his brother, whereas Desdemona is innocent. This is an extremely intense emotional scene (5.2.24-87), because the audience still hopes that Desdemona will be saved; however, the tragic deed is carried out, and her innocent life sacrificed.

Shakespeare's portrayal of Desdemona represents one of the morally purest female characters in Shakespeare's tragedies, which is shaded only by Desdemona disobeying her father, and her tragic fate could be compared to Gloucester's fate in *King Lear* (4.1.36-7). Such a situation evokes in the reader the thought about the injustice of gods, which we cannot understand and which may indicate the absurdity of man's existence.

King Lear: Goneril and Regan, Cordelia

In the Elizabethan times children's obedience to parents was a social rule (but as people say, rules are there to be broken), which was based on one of God's Commandments to Moses: "Honor thy father and thy mother, that thy days may be long upon the land which the Lord thy God giveth thee." (The Old Testament, Exodus 20:12) Although Kott thinks that it is difficult to find some psychological probability in exposition of the play in the character of the main hero (Kott 105), Lear's foolish behaviour at the beginning of the play can be accepted if we take into account his old age and his long rule. As we know he is terribly mistaken: whereas Goneril and Regan pretend to agree to his suggestion about the division of the kingdom, and when Cordelia has nothing to say upon Lear's question which of his three daughter loves him most, Lear is immediately insulted and his answer shows his despotic attitude of a ruler, and his ill temper: "Nothing will come of nothing; speak again" (1.1.89). How little he knows his three daughters is clearly seen by his immediate division of the kingdom between his two elder daughters and his straightforward disclaim of Cordelia as his daughter: "Here I disclaim all my paternal care, / Propinquity and property of blood, / And as a stranger to my heart and me / Hold thee from this forever" (1.1.112-15). He considers her now his "sometime daughter" (1.1.119). Although the Earl of Kent has obediently served his master a number of years he cannot make Lear see his emotional and intellectual blindness and is punished because of his pleas for Cordelia, banished from the kingdom. Lear's delusion about his daughters is absolute and is a moving cause for the development of the play, of all the crises which follow this (almost) unbelievable exposition.

The story about King Lear appeared in 1136 in a Latin version, which was written by Geoffrey of Monmouth in his *Historia Regum Britannie* (*The History of the Kings of Britain*) and is presented in Part II, "Before the Romans Came" (ii, 11- ii, 15). This is an important source, because we can find in it all the basic elements of Lear's story, with an important exception: just before the end of this story Cordelia's husband Aganippus, King of the Franks, summons all his soldiers to help King Lear restore the kingship of Britain. And when this happened "Leir marched at the head of the assembled army, taking his daughter (Cordelia) with him. Lear beat his sons-in-law (husbands of Goneril and Regan) and brought them all under his dominion again"

(ii, 14). Three years later Leir died, his daughter Cordelia inherited the government and the kingdom of Britain and she ruled it peacefully for five years.

It may be interesting to note that Holinshed's version of the story was also known in Slovenia at the end of the seventeenth century. The Jesuit teachers, who came to Ljubljana at the end of the sixteenth century, also produced several plays for which they took the subject-matter from English history, among them a version of King Lear's story (Grošelj 61, 67-69). Although the plays are lost, the synopses (in German) and the extant manuscripts report about the plays; data preserved in diaries and annals offer some insight into the subject matter as well as in the dramatic structure of the texts. The play was called *Tugend-Cron Der Kindlichen Liebe. In Cordilla einer Tochter Layri Königs in Britannien* (The Virtue-Crown of Filial Love. In Cordilla, a Daughter of Layrus, King of Britain). The play was performed at the concluding distribution of school prizes in 1698. The plot begins with Layrus (King Lear) being banished from his kingdom; he is accompanied with his faithful servant Spiridus (Kent). They return to England from France together with Cordilla. Layrus is proclaimed King, but he is later killed in battle. The battle continues between Spiridus and his opponents, Merganes and Conedagus, who are Cordilla's nephews. Spiridus wins the battle and Cordilla is crowned Queen. She rules Britain for five years, but then she is captured and imprisoned by her evil nephews, and then, out of despair, she kills herself. The play consisted of a Prologue, Act 1 (ten scenes), Chorus, Act 2 (ten scenes), Chorus, Act 3 (6 scenes) and Epilogue. The audience only learned from the Argument about the tragic end of the Queen, so that the play ended happily. The play was accompanied by music (performed in the Prologue, Epilogue and between scenes) and the tragic suspense was lessened by dancing and low comic interpolations. Thus the theme of the play, stressing the triumph of filial love, was emphasized.

The reason why I have briefly presented the story is that it becomes clear how Shakespeare made Lear's daughters much more important than they were in the original version. The comparison also shows that Shakespeare did not believe that a happy ending was appropriate here and changed it into a tragic end. Besides, Shakespeare used in his play several other sources, among them Edmund Spenser's *Faerie Queene*, the anonymous play *King Leir* (with a happy ending) and Sir Philip Sidney's *Arcadia*, from which Shakespeare took the Gloucester story. It is interesting to mention that the version of *King Lear* with a happy ending was approved by Samuel Johnson (1709-84), who prepared an edition of Shakespeare's plays (1765). Several best English actors of the time, including David Garrick (1717-79), J. P. Kemble (1757-1823) and Edmund Keane (1787-1833), acted in a "revised" version of this play with happy ending. In 1838 Shakespeare's ending was finally accepted by an actor-manager William Charles Macready (1793-1873), and the play has been performed since as a classical tragedy. Shakespeare's tragic vision of this story is obviously much more persuasive than a happy end. In *King Lear* the psychological delineation of the hero and of his three daughters matches the playwright's highest achievements of human portraits in his plays, although it is only Lear who grows throughout the play emotionally, morally and in wisdom, whereas the characteristics of his three daughters remain the same. Goneril and Regan hide at first, in public, their true, evil nature, but the audience learns about it immediately after the division of the kingdom, when the two sisters remain alone:

Goneril: I think our father will hence tonight.

Regan: That's most certain, and with you; next month with us.

Goneril: You will see how full of changes his age is. ..He always loved our sister most, and with what poor judgement he hath now cast her off appears too grossly. (1.1.280-89)

Goneril accuses her father as having been rash and that they cannot expect him to be wiser; due to his old, choleric age he will only "offend" them in the future, and therefore she believes that she and Regan should act in agreement. They immediately find excuses to scold him and Goneril's explanation provides the main reason for her impatience with him: "...Idle old man, / That still would manage those authorities / That he hath given away!" (1.3.17-19). If not earlier the understanding of the characters is by now completely clear to the audience, whereas the other characters in the play (with the exception of Gloucester's bastard son, Edmund, who made love to them both) are not openly informed about Goneril's and Regan's character until much later. Regan, Goneril's younger sister, competes with Goneril and therefore she stresses in her answer to their father's absurd question: "Which of you shall we say doth love us most" (1.1.50) her self-value ("I am made of that self metal as my sister, / And prize me at her worth" (1.1.68-9). Even more, she professes her love for him above "all other joys" (1.1.72). Goneril and Regan do not mind if some of the courtiers may realize that they exaggerate – or even lie – about their love, because their aim to achieve power is at stake. As soon as they get what they want Goneril has nothing nice to say about their father; he is for her an "idle old man", an old fool who is like a baby, who believes that he has preserved the authority, which he has given away.

The truth about the real feelings Goneril and Regan have for their father comes out soon, it appears to him as a shock not only because of his misjudgement of his daughters: "Are you our daughter?" (1.4.219), but also about himself: "Does any here know me? This is not Lear" (1.4.225). Lear's doubts about the reality, his disappointment with the world and human relation grow throughout the play; the world has become hell for him and he experiences the torments of the biblical "wheel of fire" (4.7.47), which the Renaissance period has "inherited" from "the mediaeval legends and visions of Hell and Purgatory" (Wilson 257). Therefore the majority of events in the play spring up and develop from Lear's famous question, "Who is it that can tell me who I am?" (1.4.230), a question which has become misused and in a scientific manner almost impossible to answer, but which is still just as relevant today as it was in Shakespeare's time, if we wish to screen our ethical norms, our essence.

When King Lear's rage with Goneril becomes almost uncontrollable the most severe punishment he can wish her is his appeal to Nature to make her sterile (1.4.279), "And the stored vengeance of heaven fall / On her ingrateful top" (2.6.158-9). And when he is confronted with an identical situation with Regan he cannot bear his daughter's heartlessness any longer and he pleads her, "I prithee, daughter, do not make me mad" (2.4.24). But it is all in vain, Goneril and Regan proceed with their foul play, first by contibuting their voices to blind the Earl of Gloucester and by Regan's murder of the Servant. Besides, Edmund has made love promises to both of them, and particularly after the death of Duke of Cornwall, Regan's husband (4.2), Regan is pre-

pared to fight for her lover and she tries at first to bribe Goneril's servant Oswald ("I'll love thee much", 4.5.23) and she even tells him about her secret plans and about their relationship: "Edmund and I have talked, / And more convenient is he for my hand / Than for your Lady's. You may gather more." (4.5.30-33) But after Edgar kills Oswald in a duel he reads Goneril's letter in which she complains to Edmund that her marriage to the Duke of Albany is like a prison to her. Goneril hopes that Edmund will kill him and thus free her from her husband's bed "and supply the place for your labour" (4.6.259-267). When they meet again and when she asks Edmund, "Tell me—but truly—but then speak the truth- / Do you not love my sister? (5.1.8-9), Edmund, of course, denies this, but in his monologue at the end of this scene he admits, "To both these sisters have I sworn my love" (5.1.). However, from the rest of the monologue we see that he does not love either Goneril or Regan: "Which of them shall I take? / Both? One? Or neither?" (5.1.57-8). A common feature of character both Goneril and Regan have is betrayal. They betrayed their Father by lying to him about their love; they betrayed Cordelia by taking away from her a part of kingdom which was to belong to her; they betrayed their husbands by having a relationship with Edmund, and finally, they also betrayed each other by being dishonest regarding their relationship with Edmund. Additionally, Goneril is jealous and afraid that Regan might be more successful in enticing Edmund to become her husband, so she decides to poison her and then to commit suicide. Edmund, who is aware that "The wheel is come full circle" (5.3.173) and that his death is near, openly admits: "I was contracted to them both; all three / Now marry in an instant" (5.3.227-8). Goneril and Regan, whose main law of life is evil, have practically broken all Ten Commandments (The Old Testament, Ex. 20), and even if some of the wrong deeds which they had committed could nowadays be forgiven by civil law they could not be pardoned their murders (for example, in Act 3 Sc. 7, when Cornwall's loyal Servant tries to prevent the blinding of Gloucester Regan "shows her strength", and kills the Servant).

Shakespeare does not provide any particular reason for Goneril's and Regan's evil nature. They are simply immoral creatures whose negative impulses have prevailed. On the other hand, although Edmund is also evil he is completely aware that "The gods are just, and of our pleasant vices / Make instruments to plague us" (5.3.169-170). When he is mortally wounded he wishes to annul his order for Cordelia to be hanged in prison (5.3.242-55), but it is too late. His repentance, his catharsis, may not seem believable, unless Edmund's deeds are shown in the performance as the result of his rational decisions, especially when compared to Goneril's and Regan's evil nature which they never recognize. Edmund knows that his guilty actions are the consequence of his own decisions, a thought which he clearly expresses in the monologue at the beginning of the play:

This is the excellent foppery of the world that when we are sick in fortune, often the surfeits of our own behaviour, we make guilty of our disasters the sun, the moon and stars; as if we were villains on necessity, fools by heavenly compulsion, knaves, thieves, and traitors by spherical predominance, drunkards, liars, and adulterers, by an enforced obedience of planetary influence, and all that we are evil in by a divine

thrusting on. An admirable evasion of whoremaster man, to lay his goatish disposition to the charge of stars. (1.2.120-31)

Goneril and Regan are two morally negative characters, who can “compete” in their immorality with features we find in Claudius and in Macbeth. Their cruelty is also a decisive factor for the whole development of tragic events in *King Lear*, and in a sense they are the forerunners of the morally most corrupt female character in Shakespeare’s great tragedies, Lady Macbeth. They are the proof that Shakespeare showed that regarding moral issues his women characters are men’s equal partners, and they are also given the dramaturgic impetus, which sets them in equilibrium with the rest of protagonists of this tragedy.

Among Shakespeare’s morally positive female characters the profile of King Lear’s youngest daughter, Cordelia, is drawn most positively. When the three daughters are asked by King Lear: “Which of you shall we say doth love us most” (1.1.50), Cordelia immediately decides that her motto is: “Love, and be silent” (1.1.61). She can say nothing, which would not be true, and not dishonest as her sisters were, and which would provide her with a part of the kingdom. Although Lear is enraged by her answer and he disclaims “all my paternal care, / Propinquity and property of blood”, and calls her “thou my sometime daughter” (1.1.112-3, 119), she remains firm in her stand and she tells her sisters that she knows what they are like and that their cunningness will be revealed in time (1.1.260-280). Cordelia knows that she has lost her father’s favour because she did not use “that glib and oily art” (1.1.223), which her sisters had used, but she does not give in and accepts her father’s decision, preserving her moral integrity. She remains loyal to him and is moved by his misfortunes and she responds to them with “patience and sorrow”, not with rage. Shakespeare’s poetic imagery for Cordelia’s response (her face showed “Sunshine and rain at once”, “As pearls from diamonds dropped” 4.3.19, 22) properly characterizes Cordelia’s character. She returned to England for “love, dear love, and our father’s right” (4.4.28) and their reunion is one of the most moving scenes of reconciliation between a parent and his child in world literature. The suffering Lear had to undergo changed him completely and he now perceives reality knowing about the mistakes he had made in life. He receives Cordelia with the following words:

You do me wrong to take me out o’ th’ grave:
Thou art a soul in bliss; but I am bound
Upon a wheel of fire, that mine own tears
Do scald like molten lead. (4.7.45-48)

Lear is now aware of his physical and mental condition, and like Hamlet before his tragic death, Lear has achieved mental and spiritual ripeness and he is ready for death when it comes. He could accept all sorrows had Cordelia remained alive but Cordelia’s death pushes him back into the situation when man realizes that his life is ruled by forces of Nature, which he cannot control (cf. Lear’s emotions in the storm scenes, 3.2. and 3.4). He wishes to express his sorrow over Cordelia’s death with words indicating the Apocalypse: “That heaven’s vault should crack!” (5.3.259). Shakespeare’s tragic vision of life is here at its lowest ebb, for Cordelia’s tragic fate could only be compared with that of Desdemona, even though Desdemona does not reach such a high level of moral integrity and of intellectual awareness as Cordelia

does. She is the most developed female character although she is given less opportunity for discourse than some other female protagonists in Shakespeare's mature plays.

Macbeth: Lady Macbeth

Critics agree that Lady Macbeth is the most sinister female character in Shakespeare's tragedies. If Macbeth is sometimes interpreted as "the history of a human soul on its way to Hell, a soul at first noble, humane, innocent; then tempted through ambition to commit an appalling crime; and last, passing through the inevitable stages of torment and spiritual corruption that precede damnation" (Wilson in *King Lear* xlvi), this cannot be said of his wife. After having read her husband's letter about the Sister's prophecy, who addressed Macbeth as the future king of Scotland ("Hail, king that shall be" 1.5.9), Lady Macbeth accepts this as an aim which they should reach, regardless of moral norms or any other inhibitions they may be confronted with on their way to this goal. In the hierarchy of evil thinking and evil deeds she stands higher than the Weird Sisters, who have often been characterized as "the incarnation of evil in the universe" (*ib.* xxi). The Weird Sisters only foretell Macbeth's future whereas Lady Macbeth actually persuades her husband that in order to prove himself his deeds should match his desires, to be a king. She wishes him to be a kind of a superman, who has no moral obligations, not even to King Duncan who is even his relative (Macbeth is his cousin), who is his superior and besides, who has just promoted him. She knows that Macbeth is ambitious, but on the other hand he is too kind, his moral standards would not allow him to "play false" or to use for advancement ways which are not proper. But she does not stop and in a monologue which she speaks before the arrival of Macbeth back home she delivers herself to the realm of evil, yet spoken by a female character in Shakespeare's plays:

.....Come, you spirits
That tend on mortal thoughts, unsex me here,
And fill me, from the crown to the toe, top-full
Of direst cruelty! Make thick my blood,
Stop up th'access and passage to remorse,
That no compunctious visiting of nature
Shake my fell purpose, nor keep peace between
Th'effect and it! Come to my woman's breasts,
And take my milk for gall, you murd'ring ministers,
Wherever in your sightless substances
You wait on nature's mischief! Come, thick night,
And pall thee in the dunnest smoke of hell,
That my keen knife see not the wound it makes,
Nor heaven peep through the blanket of the dark,
To cry 'Hold, hold!' (1.5.39-53)

Lady Macbeth does not renounce here only the moral and religious principles that existed in Shakespeare's time and are still valid, she also refuses to accept the natural

laws of womankind, her gender and her human nature. She becomes personified evil. But when she is supposed to perform such cruel deeds, as e.g. the murder of King Duncan, she cannot do it. However, she still sticks to her ambition and she cunningly persuades Macbeth to perform the murders himself or to use other morally corrupt men, as e.g. the First and the Second Murderer who are to kill Banquo and his son Fleance. Even though Macbeth becomes aware that Duncan's sons, Malcolm and Donalbain suspect that there is some foul play going on and that they become suspicious (Donalbain says to his brother Malcolm: "... where we are, There's daggers in men's smiles" 2.3.139-140), and they run away, Lady Macbeth still encourages her husband to continue killing their (possible) opponents. The butchery cannot be stopped; Macbeth becomes terrified and mentally disturbed believing that dead Banquo has taken his seat at the banquet table. In this moment Lady Macbeth is still strong enough trying to persuade the guests that Macbeth had a sudden fit. She tries to provoke him by suggesting that he is not a man if he cannot control his fear. But in his mind the ghost of dead Banquo reappears and Macbeth is lost again (3.4). He cannot control his speech, but he is aware that he has crossed the Rubicon and that there is no return possible. He realizes that there is no end of killing ("It will have blood; they say, blood will have have blood", 3.4.123). The Weird Sisters seem to pacify his fears when they warn him to "Beware the thane of Fife" 4.1.72), when they promise him that "none of woman born / Shall harm Macbeth." (4.1.80-81), and that he will not be vanquished "until / Great Birnam wood to high Dunsinane hill / Shall come against him" (4.1.92-94). These pieces of news seem favourable to Macbeth and his first move is to surprise Macduff's family, to kill them all, or as Macbeth sees it "To crown my thoughts with acts" (4.1.149).

The slaughter of Macduff's wife, his children and his servants is one of those "acts of Gods", which cannot be rationally explained. Macduff's question, "Did heaven look on, / And would not take their part?" (4.3.223-24) can be compared with situations in which Ophelia, Desdemona and Cordelia found themselves before unjustifiable death, and which is so briefly but also so hopefully declared by Desdemona before her death: "I am a Christian ... I shall be saved" (*Othello* 4.2.4.2.83, 87). But, as we know, none of Shakespeare's great morally positive female characters is physically "saved", neither is saved Lady Macduff nor her innocent children. Whereas Macbeth and his wife willingly and knowingly chose the path, which was morally wrong, Ophelia, Desdemona and Cordelia were the victims of circumstances, they are not responsible for their fate. Lady Macbeth is a driving force in the play and her husband's fate as a murderer is also largely due to her plotting. Her sleepless nights, which are the result of her depression are reflected in the disturbance of her behaviour and lack of feelings (these effects could be made worse if she drank a lot of alcohol). The symptom of depression also cause a person sleepless nights. Psychoanalysis, as practised by Sigmund Freud, Alfred Adler and other psychiatrists, might even bring her back to normal health condition unless her subconsciousness was already in such a bad state - as Carl Gustav Jung would say - that it could not work efficiently unless her consciousness properly performed its function, which, of course, is doubtful regarding crimes which she (and her husband) had committed.

The Gentlewoman tells the Doctor about her Lady's strange behaviour but she would not reveal the words spoken by Lady Macbeth during her walking at night,

although her excuse is rather weak; she would not do it, because she has “no witness to confirm my speech” (5.1.17-8). Both of them see how Lady Macbeth rubs her hands trying to wash away the blood of innocent people Macbeth and his wife had killed and the Doctor’s diagnoses Lady Macbeth’s behaviour correctly: it is schizophrenic, paranoid, it affects Lady Macbeth’s heart (5.1.51) and he knows that this disease is “beyond his practice”, because it is caused by an illness when “Unnatural deeds / Do breed unnatural troubles”; “More needs she the divine than the physician” (5.1.70-1, 74). Of course, Lady Macbeth cannot be cured, she has not openly admitted and repented her crimes; she has not gone through the process of catharsis, she is still dominated by her guilty conscious for which she finds death as the only possible solution.³³ Therefore her depression (even her madness) is not tragic in the Aristotelian sense of this concept. When Macbeth is informed about her death, he is not emotionally touched by the news and he calmly retorts to Seton’s information about her death: “She should have died hereafter” (5.5.17), he does not even enquire of Seton when or how she actually died. Now Macbeth begins to realize that his past life was full of mistakes, that it was wrongly and foolishly spent; there is no doubt that Lady Macbeth immensely contributed to such an end. On this occasion he pronounces the words, which in modern times have sometimes been interpreted as one of the darkest moments in Shakespeare’s life too. The hero sees no aim in life, or rather, accepts the view that life is absurd, meaningless:

To-morrow, and to-morrow, and to-morrow,
Creeps in this petty pace from day to day,
To the last syllable of recorded time;
And all our yesterdays have lighted fools
The way to dusty death. Out, out, brief candle!
Life’s but a walking shadow, a poor player
That struts and frets his hour upon the stage,
And then is heard no more: It is a tale
Told by an idiot, full of sound and fury,
Signifying nothing. (5.5.19-28)

Such nihilistic thoughts can only be expressed by someone who has not only lost his hope in God, but who is weary of life, of his existence. However the question remains how are we to explain the deaths of innocent heroines in Shakespeare’s great tragedies. According to Christian belief, which was rather common in Shakespeare’s time, the suffering of a righteous man was often linked with the question of God’s justness, his righteousness. This topic is extensively dealt with in the Bible (in the Old Testament, in the Book of Job). Job’s initial answer to this question is that God “destroyeth the perfect and the wicked” (Job 9:22). But when Job recognizes his own worthlessness and his inborn evil he begins to see the suffering as his chastening. After man has done whatever he can to bring about love and happiness then he can accept his fate as God’s will, as a sign of God’s omnipotence. Christian faith brings

³³ Eva Petrič, »Ko so noči predolge ...in prekratke« (*Delo znanost* 7 July 2005:17), - See also: Kenneth Tucker, *Shakespeare and the Jungian Typology* (London: McFarland, 2003).

him hope of God's blessing and restoration of his life in God. But such a mental and emotional state can only be achieved if man is aware of his sinful nature and of his responsibility to choose his ways justly and honestly. Then he is, like Job, granted the protection from anxiety and peace of mind. According to the Bible man should not judge God's doings, "For my thoughts are not thy thoughts, neither are your ways my ways, saith the Lord" (Isaiah 55:8). We may surmise that such were the answers not only some of Shakespeare's heroes and heroines might have given, but also many of the Bard's contemporaries. We may speculate that in this period of his life Shakespeare saw man's fate as absurd, like the Earl of Gloucester ("As flies to wanton boys we are to th' gods, / They kill us for their sport". *King Lear* 4.1.36-7). In our age in which agnosticism and religious as well as moral nihilism seem to have won as philosophical doctrines a number of adherents, Christian views may not be seen as values by some (many ?) readers and theatre-goers. In the twentieth century when philosophical views asserting the absurdity of life were widely spread, Christian ideas might seem obsolete and questionable. Nevertheless, judging on the presentation of life, man's thinking, events, ideas and persuasiveness of their artistic implementation in Shakespeare's great tragedies, we may conclude that the playwright saw life as an intricate battle between good and evil, in which evil finally always loses the battle, but it also creates a lot of tragedies and the loss of many innocent people.

CONCLUSION

This analysis of some major women characters in Shakespeare's great tragedies proves that the dramatist did not underestimate the role women played in lives of men in his age, even though they were not given such social importance as men. He explored their psyche with great depth; however, only two characters, Gertrude and Ophelia, are open to different interpretations as regards their ethical norms, intelligence, and integrity. Other female characters are much more clearly and definitely drawn and there is no doubt about their basic moral and ethical features: Desdemona and Cordelia as morally positive and Goneril, Regan, Lady Macbeth as negative characters. The latter are shown as more cunning, plotting females, who use their intelligence primarily for their wicked purposes. They are self-sufficient, self-assured, egotistic creatures, whose ambition for power and whose lust dominate their lives as well as lives of men who surround them. They can be referred to as embodiments of primeval evil, whereas Cordelia symbolizes "the redeemer" (see *King Lear* 4.6.203-5). Shakespeare also characterizes them by the lack of motherhood and lack of sincere emotions. They also often overestimate their strength and end their lives either in committing suicide or in murdering their rivals before their own tragic end. The dramatist's artistic force is also seen in the fact that they are not perceived – at least not predominantly – from a masculine perspective, but are portrayed in such a way that they stand before us as complete human beings whom we might encounter nowadays in females frustrated for one reason or another, but who are definitely far from ideal, socially and sexually liberated women. They must take into account their own mental and emotional limitations just as men have to do.

Appendix 1

I believe that the title of my article as well as its subject matter need a brief explanation. In 1964, at the time of the four hundredth anniversary of Shakespeare's birth, I visited Stratford-upon-Avon for the first time in my life. Shakespeare's birthplace offered then a number of exhibitions and, of course, new performances of Shakespeare's plays, some of which I had the opportunity to see. I reported about my visit on the Slovene Section programme of the BBC (on 29 April 1964; this was my first article on Shakespeare). During the academic year 1963/64 (which I spent at the University of Sussex preparing my Ph.D. thesis on English poetic drama of the 1930s under the supervision of Professor David Daiches) I saw a number of performances at the newly established National Theatre including the "romantic" version of *Hamlet* with Peter O'Toole in the main role. This production was not particularly well received by English theatre critics; however, they were enthusiastic about Sir Laurence Olivier's performance in the title role of *Othello*. I reported about this and some other modern English plays in various Slovene publications. In the following decades I was lucky enough to travel quite frequently so that besides seeing many performances in the Slovene theatres and in Croatia (at the Dubrovnik Summer Festival a play by Shakespeare was regularly produced) I saw theatrical performances also further afield (e.g. in London, New York, Sydney). About some of them I also wrote articles for Slovene newspapers and magazines.

The first complete edition of Shakespeare's work in Slovene appeared in 1974 under the editorship of a well-known Slovene poet, dramatist and translator, Matej Bor (this is a pen name of Vladimir Pavšič, 1913-1993). Bor asked me to write for this edition an essay on Shakespeare's use of literary and historical sources in his plays, which I did ("Vloga in pomen virov za Shakespeareovo dramatiko". *William Shakespeare*. Zbrana dela 14. Ljubljana, DZS, 1973: 499-545). In 1968 I became the first Professor of English Literature teaching Shakespeare and Elizabethan drama at the Faculty of Arts, University of Ljubljana. At that time it was extremely hard to buy English books in Slovenia and therefore I decided to prepare for my students a short text-book, entitled *Notes on Shakespeare and His Contemporaries* (Ljubljana: FF, 1985. 119 pp.). Later on I revised this text-book and it appeared under the title *Zapisi o Shakespearu. Notes on Shakespeare* (Ljubljana: ZIFF, 1995, 171 pp.; rpt. and revised in 1997, 207 pp.). Some of my other articles on British and American drama (including Shakespeare) were published in my book *Od Shakespearu do naših sodobnikov* (From Shakespeare to Our Contemporaries. Ljubljana: FF, 1983. 175 pp).

Since 1995 another Slovene poet, dramatist and translator, Milan Jesih (1950-), has newly translated a number of plays written by Shakespeare, and I have written nine prefaces for these editions. I also wish to mention in this connection the main predecessor of the two above mentioned translators of Shakespeare's plays into Slovene, Oton Župančič (1878-1949). He used in his translations poetic, elevated speech, whereas Bor and Jesih tried to modernize their translations of Shakespeare's plays and bring them closer to everyday, spoken Slovene.

The Slovene theatres perform almost yearly a new, "classical" production of Shakespeare's *Hamlet*. However, during the past few decades a number of Slovene (and foreign) theatre directors tried to create and produce their own, experimental versions of this play. Therefore I have pointed out in my article some of the most characteristic features of these productions, which have been performed in Slovenia during the past two decades. My paper is thus a continuation of my past work on Shakespeare and I have tried to deal in it with some new and specific questions and interpretations of *Hamlet* and other Shakespeare's great tragedies.

Let me also use this opportunity to express my sincere thanks for their help to the following: Jason Blake, Department of English, Faculty of Arts, University of Ljubljana; the Librarians of the Department of English, Faculty of Arts, University of Ljubljana; Francka Slivnik, Slovenski gledališki muzej (The Slovene Theatre Museum), Ljubljana; and Marija Nodilo, Librarian, Inter University Centre, Dubrovnik, Croatia.

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Appendix 2

Zdravko Duša: "Hamlett Rap". This song was part of the text in *Hamlett Packard* production on (The Glej Experimental Theatre and Cankarjev dom, Ljubljana, 3 April 1992). It was printed in *Naši razgledi* 8 May 1992: 260. The song was sung by a well known Slovene actor Boris Cavazza. It is quoted here with the author's permission.

He had a lousy uncle that killed his dad
And his mother took the killer to her bed
How very sad! Oh Hamlet!
He had this friend Horatio a kid next door
In this old Danish castle of Elsinore
And there was a ghost coming to the place
He was a clever motherfucker wouldn't show his face
Hamlet had to promise he would kill
But then he wasn't sure if he ever will
Frankly speaking he was not the kind
He had a serious flaw he couldn't make up his mind
To be or not to be to be or not to be to be or not to be
To be be bebebe be be be bbbbbb ...
Oh Hamlet!

Was it true they were lovers he didn't know
'T was all yes and no and no and yes and yes and no
For prince of Denmark! Oh Hamlet!
So once these actors came to set a trap
His mama and his uncle took a wrong step
Now he had a proof they were a horny couple
Mama was a bitch and uncle was a fucker
In his fury Hamlet did a stupid thing
He murdered Polonius instead of the king
He was sent abroad to be killed on the spot
But had a naval rumble and was left behind
He had a serious flaw he couldn't make up his mind
To be or not to be to be or not to be to be or not to be
To bbe be bebebebe, bebebe be bbbbbb ...
Oh Hamlet!

Now Hamlet had to kill or be killed by the king
This was no more a game but a real thing
'Twas life or death! Oh Hamlet!
So there was this funeral and all that stuff
They buried Ophelia his only love
Her brother was real pain in the ass
He jumped into the grave the guy had no class
They started to fight Hamlet and the brother
With a poisoned sword they wounded each other
Some good poisoned wine killed the mother-witch
And Hamlet killed the royal son of a bitch
He ran a sword through the old man's heart
Then said to Horatio his friend be smart
Try to keep your ass away from the bloody mess
... the rest is silence.

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EXISTENTIAL CONCERNS AND NARRATIVE TECHNIQUES IN THE NOVELS OF FORD MADOX FORD, VIRGINIA WOOLF AND ALDOUS HUXLEY

Radojka Verčko

Abstract

The article addresses the issue of the close relationship between the existential concern and the narrative techniques used by English writers Ford Madox Ford, Virginia Woolf and Aldous Huxley to present the general human condition. The selected authors had introduced narrative techniques that influenced the entire development of the modern novel and that are still highly relevant and widely used in the contemporary novel, including the Slovene modern novel.

The human condition and the essence of human existence have always raised the interest of philosophers as well as of creative artists. At the beginning of the 20th century the existential concerns became extremely intense, due to the tensions and despairs that had been experienced as the consequence of World War I. A strong response to the decay of social and moral values is particularly noticeable in the modernist movement in literature, and the novel became the main form of literary discourse that reflected the writers' response to the existential concerns of the period. Reasons for the response were researched by literary critics already in the 1930s and are strongly argued mainly in the critical work of Stephen Spender. Apart from the writers' search for adequate narrative techniques to present their existential experience, also their preoccupation with the aesthetic value of their experience and of their artistic creation appeared, within the general atmosphere of the age that faced the loss of traditional values in morals, religion, politics and ways of social behaviour. The intensified existential experience demanded a break with traditional approaches in narrative strategies, since the concepts that were based on the apprehension of values that existed no more were no longer acceptable. Positivist assumptions about the perfectly knowable nature of human existence could not be tolerated by creative artists in many fields of artistic creation, and an adequate response to the need for a change was raised by the modernist movement, particularly in the English literary creation. Dilemmas of artistic and of ethical nature were experienced also by other creative artists in the early thirties, mainly by the English dramatists, who wished to raise social awareness among the public and were therefore torn between their moral and their artistic duties (Jurak, 9).

The issue of the relationship between existential concerns of the English novelists from the beginning of the 20th century and the corresponding change in narrative techniques and strategies that they applied to express their experiences and concerns is a subject of great importance for further development of the modern novel. English writers who wished to convey their artistic apprehension of the human condition at the beginning of the previous century invented new approaches to the creative process of the novel and they also introduced new theoretical concepts of the literary genre, as is strongly argued by the literary critic and historian David Daiches already in the first half of the 20th century, and afterwards resumed also by Malcolm Bradbury and many other prominent literary historians. Also later literary critics like David Lodge believed that a novel should have a thematic and narrative unity that could be described. Ford Madox Ford, Virginia Woolf and Aldous Huxley are listed among the novelists who shared the existential concerns of the age and who wished to balance their views of life with adequate artistic and aesthetic expression. By complementing their views of life with their artistic beliefs and creativity in the use of new techniques of narration they contributed to the development of a new creative process of the novel and thus became integral parts of the evolutionary process that gave rise to the modern novel. All three of them were creative writers and conscious literary critics and theoreticians at the same time. Therefore, they focused their innovative approaches in artistic creation towards the main category of the narrative process, which is the role of the narrator, and brought literary discourse to the level of subjectivity. Afterwards their narrative approaches extended even farther, to the level of conscious and subconscious happening in the minds of their literary protagonists. Five of their novels that excel in the artistic complexity of the literary form and of existential thought have been chosen for analysis of their new approaches in narrative strategies, owing to their preoccupation with human condition. These are: *The Good Soldier* by Ford Madox Ford, *To the Lighthouse* and *The Waves* by Virginia Woolf, and *Antic Hay* and *Point Counter Point* by Aldous Huxley. At this point a special reference should be made to the work of James Joyce who often personifies the change and innovation in narrative techniques of the modern novel, owing to the interior monologue and the stream-of-consciousness technique. Because of the complex and voluminous nature of his work, James Joyce occupies a special and significant position among the most prominent writers of the 20th century. His work merits to be analysed individually, and in Slovenia several profound analyses of his work and life have been already carried out, the most significant ones by Aleš Pogačnik and above all by Janez Gradišnik who also translated Joyce's novel *Ulysses* – the Slovene translation of *Ulysses* appeared in 1967/68. For the sake of better understanding of the creative process of the modern novel, it should be mentioned that James Joyce was among the main innovators of the narrative techniques. To make the presentation more complete, I give some observations of the characteristics of his writing in the article.

James Augustine Aloysius Joyce (1882–1941), expatriate Irish writer and poet, is known mainly for his collection of short stories entitled *Dubliners* (1914) and for his novels *A Portrait of the Artist as a Young Man* (1916), *Ulysses* (1922) and *Finnegans Wake* (1939). James Joyce combined several controversial features in his character, he was cosmopolitan by nature and at the same time attached to the narrow local setting of

his home town, he spent most of his life abroad, nevertheless he portrayed his native Dublin in the utmost detail. Joyce imposed exile on himself already in early manhood, after his previously well-to-do family had begun to slide into poverty; he lived in Pola, Trieste, Paris and Zurich, but it was always the Irish setting and the Irish experience that preoccupied his mind. The city of Dublin and Dublin society were the subject matter and the outer setting of his writing. *Dubliners*, a collection of short stories that was published in 1914, already points to the narrative techniques that Joyce developed later, to the use of interior monologue and to the preoccupation with psychic reality rather than with the external material world. In his novel *Ulysses*, Joyce used a variety of literary techniques to present his characters: jokes, stream of consciousness, parodies, dream associations, literary allusions. The novel was published in 1922, which was the key year of the English language literary modernism, since T.S. Eliot's poem *The Waste Land* was published in the same year. The language used in the novel is peculiar and obscure, Joyce observed no convention regarding plot and character, which he totally expelled from his writing. The main activities happen in the minds of his characters, but the author, who searches for the essence of human existence, finds the means to incorporate detailed descriptions of the city of Dublin in his narration. An immense quantity of external detail confronts numerous allusions to Greek myths, to history in general, and the author refrains from any proper introduction to the allusions. The details are not meant to help the reader to understand the novel, just the contrary, they imply the idea of chaos in narration. Yet, Joyce surpasses the presentation of a particular individual, even if he makes the reader enter the minds of the protagonists, the reader is never in a position to identify with the main characters. Joyce's characters resume a general human value and the chaotic impression of the structure of the novel reveals a cleverly premeditated internal structure, based on classical mythology.

In the selected novels which are considered in the article, the writers Ford Madox Ford (1873–1939), Virginia Woolf (1882–1941) and Aldous Huxley (1894–1963) focused rather on the presentation of the autonomous individual than on the socially conscious self. Therefore, the research has been based on the analysis of changes that they had introduced into the concept of the novel in their search for narrative strategies that would break with the literary conventions of time. They abandoned the concept of the omniscient narrator of the Edwardian novel and united the act of observing and the act of narrating which were the essential elements of the narrative system. Thus they adopted a new narrative strategy and started a creative process that gradually developed, through the changes in narrative concepts and techniques. Their contributions to the process have been analysed through the most significant features of their writing which involve, besides the introduction of a subjective and unreliable narrator, also the accompanying narrative categories of the level of narration and of the presence, or rather absence, of the social dimension of their writing. The analysis of their new approaches is based on compilation of data from literary history and from the biographical facts about their lives, and it is complemented by a presentation of critical response to the novelty of their literary creation, in the time of their creative period and in the recent past.

The selection of novels that illustrate three different innovative approaches in narrative techniques used by Ford Madox Ford, Virginia Woolf and Aldous Huxley

has been done from the point of view that the three mentioned authors belonged to the same cycle of the literary creative process that came into existence as a response to the social changes which those authors witnessed at the sunset of the 19th century. The novelties in narrative techniques that they introduced were created within a creative process of logical and chronological sequence. Each of the novelties that they introduced in their approaches to narrative techniques marked a milestone in literary creation of the time, within the process that led to the creation of the modern novel which has ceased to belong exclusively to the English literary creation and has assumed global dimensions.

Ford Madox Ford made an important innovative step in the narrative technique of the novel by merging the subjective attitude of the narrator with the object of narration. He introduced a new concept of narrator, since he abandoned the traditional apprehension of an omniscient narrator and attributed a new, subjective role to the narrator. Through the novelty of his approach the narration of his novels became unreliable and multi-faced, the pluralistic nature of the narration had been strongly emphasised also by means of the highly ironic attitude of the narrator towards the emotional, sentimental and almost tragic background of the narrated story. The introduction of a subjective and unreliable narrator is only one innovative instrument of Ford's narrative technique, which is complemented with great effectiveness by repetition and by the cyclic nature of narration. Ford introduced novelties also in the structure of the novel. While the traditional structure of the novel helps the reader to get acquainted with the subject matter of the novel and to develop a relationship with it, the approach that had been introduced by Ford prevented the reader from gaining a reliable apprehension of the plot, and thus created a new relationship between the author and the reader. Ford built his novel through a scattered pattern of different points of view and different temporal frameworks. Therefore, the main change in narrative technique was introduced at the level of relationship between the author and the reader. Ford Madox Ford followed a new narrative strategy to create a new and relaxed relationship between the author and the reader. His novel *The Good Soldier* (1915) is written as a direct, first person narrative of a modern man from the New World. To enlarge the effect of his technique Ford Madox Ford entrusted the narrator with an additional function, he turned the narrator into the main protagonist and thus abolished the omniscient and omni-potential narrator from his novels. The narrator and the main character in the novel *The Good Soldier* is John Dowell, a rich and indifferent American who gets involved with the English nobility, stricken by poverty and corruption at the turn of the century. The narration of a highly sentimental and emotional subject matter is entrusted to a narrator who is incapable of any feelings, and for that reason a special kind of situational irony arises from that approach. The narrator is an ironic conveyer of his own feelings and, besides, also a diagnostician of his own emotional reactions. Ford succeeds raising the narration to the level of an "objective correlative" of his personal experience and therefore presents to the reader a genuine existential situation. The threats of the war, the indifference of the ruling classes, and the concerns of modern man are revealed through this search for modern narrative techniques. Furthermore, the characters are presented from different angles, from different points of view and from different temporal perspectives, while their

experiences from different times of their lives - that are constantly paralleled in the narration - present another element that builds the existential picture of a modern man, through the means of an indifferent and unreliable narrator. John Dowell, the main character and the narrator, does not follow the chronological principle in his narration, his narration follows a very subjective pattern of sequence of events, with numerous temporal shifts and changes in the view points of narration. The incredibility of the narrator and of the narration conveys the existential concerns that are grounded in the decaying English society at the turn of the century into the universal sphere of a general human condition where temporal and historical backgrounds matter no more. The concept of time and the changing pattern of different temporal perspectives are important elements in Ford's narrative technique. They affect the reader by implying the sensation that the real essence of being may never be touched and understood. The carefully premeditated structure of the novel that builds the effects of uncertainty and generality of human condition is also a powerful means of Ford's narrative technique. The importance of Ford's innovative approach to the writing of a novel has been researched and strongly stated by a literary critic of today, David Trotter.

Virginia Woolf is an author who does not experience the same kind of existential concerns as Ford, nevertheless she does follow the same principle of growing subjectivity in the creative process of writing. The social dimensions of existence are not of her primary concern, she does not focus her attention on the relationship between man and society, but rather explores the changes that arise in society due to the changing nature of the human essence. Personally, she had been sorely affected by the historical and social circumstances of the time of her life, because of the premature deaths of her mother, her brother and, even though later, her father. She had suffered the effects of World War I, yet she never wrote about her experience in a direct way, she communicated her rejection of violence, her disgust with the general atmosphere of the time through the narrative technique that she used. In her writing, the narrator assumes some of the traditional omniscient character, but at the same time he is denied the capacity of a reliable reporter of objective reality. Her narration does not aim to build an image of the main character, Virginia Woolf presents the mental landscapes of her protagonists, the flows of thoughts in their minds and even the happenings in their subconscious minds. From the presentation of the objective, material world she transferred her narration into the abstract, imaginary world of her protagonists, and for that sake she created a relevant narrative technique of interior monologue that affected the entire creative process of the novel thereafter. Ford introduced the concept of the unreliable, subjective narrator, and Virginia Woolf promoted the creative process even farther in terms of the relationship between the subject and the object of narration. She merged the two of them and by this action she annulled the concept of objective reality; she found, by means of her narrative technique, a mediator between the objective reality of the world and her subjective apprehension of it. The real life, the reality has become absolutely uncertain and doubtful.

Georg Lukács, a literary critic and theoretician from the beginning of the 20th century, also recognised the need of an artist of the time to present the human being in its totality, the essence of his being through the merged aspects of his emotional, rational and physical experience, and he named the phenomenon as "the lyrical cos-

mos of pure interiority” (Lukács, 114). The poetical language that was used by Virginia Woolf and the experimental way of her writing made her literary creation a milestone in the history of the novel. Virginia Woolf developed also her own critical attitude towards the literary creation of the time, which does not often support her own method of writing. She believed - and she delivered lectures and published articles on the subject - that the women writers were to develop a socially critical novel, nevertheless she denied to women the ability to consider analytically the essence of human life. Her theoretical concepts of literary creation were known under the name of “feminist aesthetics” of the time, nevertheless, as a writer, she had the ability to forget about her own literary concepts and to rise beyond her feminist attitudes in her creative efforts. Her denial of traditional values of Edwardian society are expressed by her turning to nature, by her acceptance of the rhythm of nature and by its attribution to the ticking of everyday life. Her “sensation of living” implies profound feminine sensibility and a sharpened experience of the existential dimension of everyday life. With James Joyce, Virginia Woolf shared the belief that a creative individual was lonely in his/her world of perception and because of that doomed to choose a subjective approach in the technique of presentation, a narrative technique that conveyed the mental landscape of an individual. In transferring her existential concerns from the relationship between man and society to the relationship of an individual with his/her own body, she embarked on the road to an impersonal, immaterial presentation of pure existential matter. By means of images and thoughts that traverse the minds of her protagonists she wished to express the pure essence of human being. In her novels *Mrs. Dalloway* (1925), *To the Lighthouse* (1927), *The Waves* (1931), there is no plot, nevertheless each of the novels has a leading theme and a kind of contents. Nothing or very little happens in her novels, apart from the intermingling of the flows of thoughts of her protagonists, yet, everything which matters in life, happens in her novels.

In the novel *To the Lighthouse*, Virginia Woolf presents Mrs. Ramsay, by means of the interior monologue and stream-of-consciousness technique. The personality of the main character arises from the “triangulation” of several streams of consciousness and by the means of free indirect speech. Along with the character of Mrs. Ramsay, the relationships among different family members are also revealed. The writer was trying to find a poetic language that would be as true as life itself, and in her next novel, *The Waves*, she presents, in a totally abstract manner, six personalities of six protagonists, friends from the time of their childhood. There is a leading theme of their reunion, on behalf of the seventh character who never appears, which weaves the streams of their consciousness, the thoughts of the characters, sometimes expressed in their interior monologues, into a narration which builds the characters by passing from one to another, reflecting one’s specific traits in the thoughts of the other. Only from time to time does the author link the monologues of the main characters by passages of impersonal prose that always refer to natural phenomena, to the changing of light, to the movements of water, to emphasize the eternal, essential existential repetition in a timeless frame. Through the ways in which the individual minds of her characters function, through the particular use of language, the protagonists create their own personalities, they reflect upon their identities, upon the physical limitations of their bodies and they experience their existence mainly by means of their

bonds to nature. Since their bodies are vulnerable and unreliable, their existential experience contains tension and fear and raises doubts along with a wish to search for the meaning and essence of being. The use of interior monologue or of a stream-of-consciousness technique to present the author's subjective experience of her existence touches on the use of the phenomenon of subjective time. In this respect Virginia Woolf is a predecessor of later writers who are concerned with the problem of the passing of time, analysing the existential dimension and value of existence in each separate moment of life.

Great existential concern characterises also the work of Aldous Huxley, who also addressed the social and political changes that had happened in English society at the beginning of the 20th century and gave rise to the tensions and fears of modern man after World War I. Technological achievements of the time provoked doubt instead of enthusiasm in the author, even though he had been born to a family of great intellectual tradition and respect for science. His existential concern did not focus on the effect that the loss of traditional values had for the mind and the soul of an individual, instead his interest was oriented towards the relationship between the individual and society. His view of life differed significantly from the apprehension of human existence that was shared by, for example, Virginia Woolf and James Joyce, and his strategy in conveying his experience to the readers differed accordingly from other narrative techniques that were practised by English modernists. Aldous Huxley paid great attention to the importance of literary form since he was looking for the communicative value of literature, yet he made no effort to invent a new narrative technique. His care was oriented towards the impact that a literary form, especially an epic literary form, might have on a wide reading public and he influenced the reading public of the time significantly, mainly due to the communicative value of his novels. That a novel may bear a greater communicative value than other literary genres is a generally known fact, which was recognised also by Georg Lukács. Aldous Huxley shared the wish that was common to the majority of the modernist writers in England, to present the despair because of the loss of traditional values, to change the world and the human position in the social context of the time. Nevertheless his narrative strategy did not follow the innovative techniques that were invented and implied by Joyce and Virginia Woolf, by the techniques of narration he remained traditional and preserved the established relationship of direct communication with the reader. Aldous Huxley was looking for a substitute for the missing moral values and tried to replace them by highly aesthetic values of art, of literature. His literary creation followed his wish that life itself might be changed into a work of art. The main elements of his narrative strategy are a highly ironic attitude, unreliable narrator and the use of techniques of presentation that belong to the domains of other arts than literature - to music, to the visual arts (painting, film). In his earlier novels *Chrome Yellow* (1921), *Antic Hay* (1923), *Those Barren Leaves* (1925), he reveals his disappointment over the rapid development of civilisation which had brought great technological achievements but which simultaneously oppressed man with tensions and psychological crises. Man had no reason for faith in a better and more prosperous future, he was left with a feeling that the present moment was the only possibility for fulfilling his existence, therefore, that instant had to be enjoyed and intensely experienced before it

faded away. With a lot of wit and cynicism Huxley narrates about the vanity of striving for momentary pleasures and from his narrative a deep concern for true human values arises, along with a painful search for the meaning and essence of human existence. Irony pervades his presentations of the contemporary human condition, given in a loosely knitted series of images and experiences that have no real casual bonds among them or that even contradict each other. His novel *Antic Hay* is designed as a mosaic of individual images from the lives of his protagonists, standing for their reflections over different subjects or for their discussions with other protagonists. Since Aldous Huxley wished to present the mental landscapes of his protagonists along with the dimension of social problems of the period, he did not build the characters of his heroes through the novels, but presented his characters as personified ideas. From the contrapuntal nature of different situations presented, from the juxtaposition of irrelevant events, the overall effect of universality and unity of the world comes into existence. Aldous Huxley is an author of a "novel of ideas" and a writer who brought together the elements of a novel and of an essay, by means of attributing a musical composition to a work of literature. The novel *Point Counter Point* (1928) may be considered a collection of essays on the issue of human existence, presented in a dialogic form under the frame of a novel, by characters who are almost caricatures of the ideas that they stand for.

Study of the selected novels reveals a thesis that the modernist movement as reflected in their use of new narrative techniques was apprehended by the contemporary critics of the time mainly as a break from traditions, while later criticism adopted the idea that the modernist movement is not solely an effort to emphasise discontinuity with the past tradition, but that it is only one of the responses - perhaps the most adequate and the strongest - to the existential concerns of the time. Randall Stevenson addressed the questions of advantages of contemporary literary evaluation along with role of narrative techniques in the creative process and David Trotter argued in his work *The English Novel 1895-1920* that narrative techniques, due to their actuality and expressive power became a coherent part of the novel. Also Steven Connor who did research on the English Novel in the period from 1950 to 1995, states that the novel by its very nature always addresses a problem and that therefore an uninterrupted and smooth communication between the author and the reader is improbable. For that reason the modernist narrative strategy may be defined as an open method for the presentation of existential experience which may be suppressed for a certain time but which may re-emerge in a modified appearance. Analytical approach to the ways in which the writers responded to contemporary preoccupations had been undertaken also by David Trotter in the early 1990s who strongly stated in his literary criticism that modernism as a powerful cultural event had determined the way writers wrote ever since that particular historical moment.

The thesis on the adequacy of the modernist narrative techniques for expressing existential concerns is highly relevant also for the response to the modern English novel in Slovenia, in literary criticism and in genuine literary creation. Due to the particularity of historical and social conditions in Slovenia in the first half of the 20th

century, it was only after World War II that existential experience was addressed by Slovene writers by means of modernist narrative techniques. Slovenia has always been bordering on territories with Romance as well as with German cultural traditions; in the mere fact of its geographical position among different cultures lies the main reason for its "perpetual efforts for a genuine literary creation" * (Zadravec 1974: 73). In Slovenia, in the mid-1930s, the writers, who were exploring the deepest layers of the human soul and who were striving to reach the truth by an understanding of human existence were carefully studied. The impact of the English, French, German aesthetic, literary and political reflections may be traced in the aesthetic and literary attitudes of the main critical minds in Slovenia of that time; in addition, due to the French existential philosophic and literary thinking, there was a significant trend towards the exploration of the personal inner world of an individual. Besides the English modern novel, the Russian and the Scandinavian literary creation influenced the Slovene authors at the beginning of the previous century. In the first two decades of the 20th century, some novels were written in Slovenia that recall the English modern novel due to the narrative techniques that were employed by their authors and also due to the subject matter of their narration. *Nina* (1906), a novel written as an interior monologue by Ivan Cankar, and the novel *Novo mesto* (1929) by Miran Jarc excell in narrative techniques that introduced similar approaches of close psychological observation, yet, the social and political constraints of the time were too great to be neglected by the authors:

Ivan Cankar introduced, as early as in the first decade of the 20th century, a contrapuntal way of narration, reducing the narrative to a single level of narration and using a free indirect speech. His concern for the aesthetic and linguistic aspects of the novel could not be neglected ever after, his novels are a milestone in Slovene literature creation. He portrays the mental landscapes of his protagonists but, in addition to the existential concerns of modern man, his novels reveal also strong moral and social concerns.

Even after World War I, contemporary English authors like James Joyce exercised no real impact on literary creation in Slovenia, because bad social conditions and burning national problems prevented the Slovene authors from devoting themselves to the labyrinths of the human mind. English classics were popular at that time, the English contemporaries were known to the Slovene reading audience but had no significant influence either on the critical thought or on the genuine writing. Nevertheless, the late 1930s are usually considered by Slovene literary critics as the beginning of the Slovene modern novel. Like elsewhere, some authors continued the literary tradition of the past, employing traditional narrative techniques, while others started to develop new ways of narration to express contemporary thematic concerns of the age* (Glušič-Krisper 1974: 109). At that point already, the first indications appeared - apart from the literary traditions and influences of global literary flows - that Slovene literary creation would follow two principles, reflecting two views of the world, a realistic and a subjective apprehension of the world, and that the two apprehensions would constantly be confronted in a kind of "dialectic opposition" *(Kmecl 39).

The novelists Miško Kranjec, Anton Ingolič and Ignac Koprivec are listed among those who wrote about the contemporary experience of living and used the traditional

narrative techniques. Among those who contributed to the development of the modern novel in Slovenia, the writers Ciril Kosmač, Ivan Potrč and Edvard Kocbek are most often mentioned. Their views of life differed significantly, while Ciril Kosmač and Ivan Potrč explored the emotional and instinctive parts of human nature; Edvard Kocbek, sharing existential beliefs and Christian philosophical persuasion, wrote about existential concerns and employed highly innovative narrative techniques. The subject matters of his existential concern are nevertheless so closely linked to the tensions and fears arising from clearly defined historical facts of the national liberation fight that they remain within a very special framework of the human condition and cannot be generalised as a purely existential presentation of human existence. The existential concerns of modern man gained more importance in the Slovene literary creation of the fifties, when the influence of foreign literatures - mainly of the English literature and also of the French and American literatures - became more vigorously felt in Slovene cultural space. Of special significance for the Slovene literary creation has been the influence of Sartre and of the existentialist thinking. Authors like Lojze Kovačič and Vladimir Kavčič introduced to the readers their inner worlds, while Beno Zupančič conveyed to them his apprehensions of the ethical aspects of the writer's role in society. Pavle Zidar and Vitomil Zupan are authors who were able to portray the existential tensions and human alienations of the modern man with great expressive power. It was not only the novel which adopted new approaches in the use of narrative techniques, drama and poetry also became popular means for presenting the tensions and alienation problems of modern man. With a delay of thirty or even forty years, there appeared in Slovenia modernist authors who share many similar characteristic features with English writers of the modern novel. Lojze Kovačič, Rudi Šeligo, Peter Božič, Jože Snoj are contemporary Slovene novelists who spontaneously used the same narrative strategies as English authors of the modern novel to present the mental landscape of their protagonists. It may be stated that the first significant influences of modernist narrative techniques were reflected in the Slovene literary creation of the 1950s and that it was only in the sixties and seventies that modernist techniques of writing became an established way of expressing the alienation problems and fears of modern man in the Slovene novel. The contemporary novel in Slovenia bears in many cases the traits of autobiographical narrative, irrational and emotional sides of human experience are often presented and it may be stated that the characteristic feature of the Slovene novel of the last three decades is the author's search for his self, for his identity, for the apprehension of his psychological crisis. The literary creation is in no respect a delayed wave of modernist writing as it appeared in England at the beginning of the 20th century, but a genuine literary creation that uses modernist narrative techniques as adequate means to express existential concerns of the time. In the specific national and geographical circumstances the authors frequently feel that interior monologue, free indirect speech and stream-of-consciousness technique present good strategic means of narration and that they convey their existential concerns.

Of extreme importance for the evaluation of literary creation of the time and for the genuine literary creation were the timely information on new happenings in literature and the availability of novels in Slovene translations. As an important element in the process of bridging traditional and cultural boundaries that accompany the reading

of a literary text, the role of introductory studies to the publications of novels in the Slovene language must also be stated, since as early as in the 1960s translations of the most sound modern novels started to be published in the collection "Sto romanov", always accompanied by a thorough and profound analysis of the author's work and life. Among the most prominent authors of introductory studies to the translations of English modern novelists into Slovene are Katarina Bogataj-Gradišnik, Mirko Jurak, Rapa Šuklje, Majda Stanovnik, Janko Kos, Jože Udovič. Some of them, mainly Janko Kos and Jože Udovič, are also listed among the most important Slovene literary critics and theoreticians, along with Dušan Pirjevec and Franc Zdravec.

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* Translations of quotations from Slovene authors into English are mine.

Note: the article is based on the author's Ph.D. thesis, which was supervised by Professor Mirko Jurak.

JOSEPH CONRAD IN SLOVENE TRANSLATIONS

Majda Šavle

Abstract

Joseph Conrad gained public admiration for the romantic glamour and atmosphere of his tales of the sea, of distant coasts and exotic locales, while his fellow artists and literary critics praised his superb use of language, his writing style, and his narrative techniques. The following chronological account of translations and critical responses to them and of the discussions about the life and work of Joseph Conrad show, that in Slovenia, too, Conrad is considered to be one of the greatest novelists in the English language.

Józef Teodor Konrad Natęcz Korzeniowski (1857-1924), who, becoming a naturalized British subject in 1886, changed his name to Joseph Conrad, is seen as one of the most interesting and influential novelists of the twentieth century. He spent nearly twenty years as a sailor and did not begin writing novels until he was nearly forty. His literary career is commonly divided into three periods: a short early period of largely Malay fiction ending in 1896; the major phase extending from 1897 to 1911; and his later period (considered by many critics) of transition and decline, extending from 1911 to his death in 1924.

Conrad persistently experimented in the form of the novel. The devices he resorted to – such as character doubles, thematic recurrences, parallel situations, shifts in narrative sequences, central narrators, recurring symbols – had all been used by his predecessors, as Frederick R. Karl points out in his *Reader's Guide to Joseph Conrad* (1970), but the arrangement of his material and the force of his vision established him as one of the most influential and discussed modern authors writing in English.

The first to introduce Joseph Conrad to Slovenian readers was Matej Šmalc. His translation of one of the five *Tales of Unrest* (1898), "Lagoon" ("Laguna"), and the accompanying article "Inozemski pregled" ("An account from abroad") were published in the literary magazine *Ljubljanski zvon* in 1927, just three years after Conrad's death.

Šmalc briefly presents some facts about Conrad's biography and work, touching upon the issue (rarely mentioned by Conrad's English language critics) of the attitude of the English towards Conrad's literary work:

Srečeval je v kolonijah vse vrste tipov in jih gledal kot Anglež; Anglija, vladarica nad valovi, mu je bila vzor človeške organizacije, slava in moč

Anglije vse, kar je vredno občudovanja. In vendar so njegova dela baš Angležem nekako tuja – kontinentalna, slovanska¹ (Šmalc 256).

Thirty years later this was no longer the case, according to the critic Scott-James (*Fifty Years of English Literature 1900-1950*, 1956), who wrote:

The mixture of French manner and Slav feeling, of classicism and mysticism, of order and unrest, of hardness and fineness – the earth-bound and the other-worldly – this at the last appealed to the romantic yet practical English when they had learnt to appreciate his subtle, nervous, expressive style (Scott – James 62).

The second of Conrad's works brought to the attention of Slovenian readers was one of his latest novels, *The Shadow Line* (1917) (*Senčna črta*), translated by the well-known Slovenian poet Oton Župančič in 1931. Shortly after its publication by *Tiskovna zadruga* two articles followed, offering a brief summary of the novel and a short evaluation of Conrad's style and mood - Miran Jarc's article "Joseph Conrad - Senčna črta" ("Joseph Conrad - The Shadow Line") appeared in the magazine *Dom in svet* while Jožko Prezelj's contribution appeared under the same title in *Ljubljanski zvon*.

Jarc shares his opinion about Conrad's writing style with those critics who find that "nekaj čudno svojstvenega diha iz Conradovega dela – prelivanje resničnega in sanjskega sveta, pa tako tesno, da ju ne ločiš več"² (Jarc 517), something that recollects Russian authors, particularly Dostoevsky.

Despite Conrad's denial of any similarity to Dostoevsky (literary critics like Neville H. Newhouse and Frederick R. Karl cite evidence of Conrad's distaste for Dostoevsky, "a grimacing, haunted creature" (Conrad in Newhouse 51), "confused and insane" (Conrad in Karl 42)), it is evident that a deep disappointment with life characterizes all Conrad's writing. His personality reveals "mrkega, težkega duha, ki se venomer protivi, ki z nezaupanjem in sumnjo sprejema življenje"³, concludes Jarc (Ibid.).

Jožko Prezelj agrees with Jarc that one can sense a melancholic Slav soul behind Conrad's naturalistic pessimism. Prezelj speculates that Conrad is less romantic than Robert Louis Stevenson: "/.../ nima tistega idealnega optimizma, ki tako zelo zbližuje Stevensonova duši mladostnika ali človeka, objokujočega izgubljeni raj" /.../ pri Conradu stoji v ospredju človek s svojo krizo, s svojo skrito bolečino"⁴ (Prezelj 315,316).

Prezelj continues his analysis by praising Conrad's skilful use of language: "z redkimi, toda mojstrsko izbranimi besedami zna pričarati tako rekoč pred naše telesne

¹ He met in the colonies all sorts of types and looked at them as an Englishman. England, master of the waves, was to him an ideal of human organization, her glory and her power everything worthy of admiration. Yet his works were somehow alien to the English – continental and Slavic.

² something strangely unique breathes out of Conrad's work – a distillation of the real world and the world of dreams, yet so murky, that you can no longer distinguish them.

³ a gloomy, troubled soul, always disturbed, accepting life with distrust and suspicion.

⁴ /.../ he has no such ideal optimism that so strongly draws Stevenson towards the soul of the youth, or that of a man, mourning after the lost paradise" /.../ in Conrad the individual with his crises, with his hidden pain stands forward.

oči čaroben videz sveta in življenja”⁵ (317). He is also fascinated by Župančič’s translation: “čudovito skladen, mirni ton pripovedovanja in bogati, izbrušeni jezik mojstra Župančiča zares kar najbolj pravilno odražata tudi v slovenskem prelivu Conradovo osebnost”⁶ (Ibid.).

What is more:

Župančič je prav srečno nabral v besednem zakladu naših pomorščakov množico tistih mornarskih strokovnih izrazov, ki pri nas Slovencih iz izvestnih razlogov niso narodna last, ter nam tako pokazal, kje naj oplajamo v primeru potrebe svojo jezikovno domišljijo, preden se odločimo za drzne neologizme⁷ (Ibid.).

Maja Novak is the recent translator of *The Shadow Line* (*Senčna črta*) (published in 1997 in the collection for young and adult readers *Albatros*). In his short accompanying note Dušan Čater points out that Conrad’s young heroes (with strongly individualistic characters) very often find themselves in foreign places, in the middle of fatal events, between treachery and confidence, solidarity and loneliness, usually incapable of solving the ethical problem they have to face (Čater in Conrad 1997: 136). These are the virtues, which, in Čater’s opinion, place Conrad at the very top of European realist literature (Ibid.).

In 1933, the poet and translator Griša Koritnik rendered into Slovene one of Conrad’s most popular sea-stories, *Typhoon* (1903) *Tajfun*. Its publication by the publishing house *Evalit* received no critical response. By the end of 1935 two other Koritnik translations appeared (in instalments from 5 September to 25 October) in Slovenia’s national daily *Slovenec*. First was the short story “Gaspar Ruiz” from the collection *A Set of Six* (1908) followed by some chapters from the novel *Youth* (1902) (in 1952, Slovenski knjižni zavod published the complete translation of the novel, unfortunately no longer available to readers).

It was Ljubica Rodošek who, after nearly forty years, offered to young readers an abridged and adapted translation of this well-known story (rendered in Slovene as *Mladost*). Interestingly enough, the book was published the same year (1997), in the same collection (*Albatros*), and with the same author of the accompanying notes (Dušan Čater), as the previously mentioned *The Shadow Line*.

Čater comments on two authors, who, in his opinion, influenced Conrad’s writing – Dickens and Flaubert:

S prvim ga povezuje povsem stvarno popisovanje dogodkov s precejšnjo mero humorja in s smislom za grotesko ter močno karikiranje likov, pri

⁵ with scarce, yet masterfully chosen words he knows to conjure (so to speak) right in front of our eyes a magic vision of the world and life.

⁶ the marvelously congruent, calm tone of narration and the rich, polished language used by master Župančič reflect very accurately (in the Slovene rendering) Conrad’s personality.

⁷ Župančič very fortunately depicted out of the seamen’s vocabulary a variety of those nautical expressions that we Slovenes (for various reasons) cannot consider as national property. By doing so, Župančič showed us where to fecundate (in case of necessity) our linguistic fantasy before we decide to use audacious neologisms.

Gustavu Flaubertu pa je Conrad občudoval njegovo opisovanje pozitivističnega opazovanja dejstev ter natančno dokumentiranje dogodkov⁸ (Čater in Conrad 1997:64).

A further investigation into Conrad's 'presence' in Slovenia shows that August Petrišič translated *Lord Jim* (1900), one of Conrad's best known novels, as early as 1937 (reprinted twice, lastly in 1975).

In her course book *Angleški roman 1830-1920 (The English Novel 1830-1920)*, Meta Grosman dedicates the chapter about Conrad to some important English critical responses to *Lord Jim* as well as to the analysis of the narrative structure of the novel. In her view it is

only during the second and further readings that the reader begins to notice hints and suggestions interconnecting individual elements in this novel as well as individual symbols and their development, together with the complexity of suggested meanings (Grosman 133).

Twenty years had to pass before the rest of Conrad's major works appeared in Slovene. In 1958, Božo Vodušek translated *Nostromo* (1904), Conrad's longest novel (it took him two years to finish it). Mirko Jurak, who published his critical response to the translation in the magazine *Naši razgledi* in July 1959, included his *Nostromo* critiques in two of his books: *Od Shakespeara do naših sodobnikov* (1983), a collection of critical essays and notes on English, American and Australian literature, and in his practical reader about British, American and other authors in English *Literatures in English 2* (1994).

Jurak points out that before the public acclaim, Conrad gained appreciation from his contemporaries like James, Wells, and Crane, "saj se že v prvih Conradovih romanih kaže njegova sposobnost za opisovanje narave in odlično opazovanje ljudi, ki nam jih pisatelj predstavlja s čopičem impresionista"⁹ (Jurak 1983:92).

Conrad was a great master in describing human character, continues Jurak,

znal je odkriti notranje vzgibe in nagone, ki včasih vodijo človeka po na prvi pogled čudnih poteh. V teh osebah najdemo več kot samo njihove življenjske zgodbe: nevsiljiva je Conradova etika, ki obsoja zlo"¹⁰ (93).

Jurak dedicates the last part of his critical note to Božo Vodušek's splendid translation (in some points even exceeding the level of the original):

Prevajalec je pokazal izredno gibkost pri izbiri besednega gradiva, tako

⁸ a completely realistic inventory of events, with a good deal of humour and a sense of grotesque as well as a strong characterization of figures connect Conrad and Dickens while in Gustav Flaubert Conrad admired the positivistic observation of facts and accurate documentation of events.

⁹ since Conrad's first novels already show his ability to picture nature and his excellent depiction of people whom the writer presents with an impressionist's brush.

¹⁰ he was able to discover the inner impulses and instincts that sometimes lead the human along (at first glance) strange paths. In these people we find (much) more than just their life stories: Conrad's ethics, condemning evil, is unobtrusive.

da je znal poiskati ustrezna slovenska rekla za tiste odtenke izvirnika, ki bi jih na primer angleški bralec lahko ločil po intonaciji, v slovenščini pa bi bili z dobesednim prevodom zgubljeni. Zelo pomembno je tudi njegovo prizadevanje za uvajanje občevalnega jezika v knjižno slovenščino, ki je prevajalcu brez dvoma uspelo¹¹ (Ibid.).

It was in 1966 that Jože Dolenc rendered *The Nigger of the 'Narcissus'* (1897), one of Conrad's most faithful documents of life at sea, into *Črnc z 'Narcisa'*. Dolenc, too, dedicates his accompanying notes to a brief analysis and chronology of Conrad's life and work.

He agrees with those critics who state that Conrad's stories seem romantic

predvsem zato, ker v njih opisuje ljudi in kraje, ki so za nas nenavadni, neznani; drži se jih mik in čar eksotičnosti; zunanji pečat jim dajejo stvari, kot so pustolovščine, spletke, izdaje, nasilje, skrivnosti, nevarnosti in strah¹² (Dolenc in Conrad 1966: 159)

nevertheless, the reader is not so overwhelmed by this as by the manner "kako pisatelj globoko zakoreninjenemu pesimizmu postavlja nasproti trdno vero v možnost zvestobe, prijateljstva, požrtvovalnosti in veličine"¹³ (Ibid.).

In addition, Dolenc believes that "dela, ki so bila napisana s težavo, s trudom, počasi, včasih naravnost z muko, terjajo od bralca pazljivosti, če hočemo slediti vsemu dogajanju in uživati ob njem"¹⁴ (160).

On the occasion of the sixtieth anniversary of Conrad's death (1984) the publishing house Prešernova založba from Maribor published Conrad's most important novel *Heart of Darkness* (1897), rendered into Slovene as *Srce teme* by Mart Ogen (who in 1986 also translated *Victory*, (*Zmaga*) one of Conrad's last novels (1915)).

In addition to some already well-known opinions about Conrad's writing, included in his accompanying notes, Ogen also makes the point that:

kljub dejstvu, da je Joseph Conrad pisal v slogu in na način, ki se je močno razlikoval od poglavitnih struj v romanopisju njegovega časa, velja pri večini kritikov in literarnih zgodovinarjev za največjega prozaista zgodnjih desetletij našega stoletja. V angleško prozo je vnesel novo in plemenitejšo zvrst moderne romantike in to s svežim, poživljajočim

¹¹ The translator showed a special resilience in choosing the verbal material so that he knew to find adequate Slovene expressions for those shades of the original that an English reader could (for example) distinguish by intonation, yet in Slovene would be lost by a literal translation. The translator's (undoubtedly successful) effort to introduce the language of intercourse into literary Slovene is also very important.

¹² above all because in them he describes people and places that are unusual, unknown to us; they possess the charm and spell of the exotic; they are externally veiled by matters like adventure, intrigue, betrayal, violence, mystery, peril, and fear.

¹³ with which the writer confronts deeply rooted pessimism with the strong belief into the possibility of faithfulness, friendship, self-sacrifice and grandeur.

¹⁴ works that have been written with difficulty, slowly, sometimes in true torment, demand the close attention of the reader in order to follow all the events and enjoy them.

pisanjem v jeziku, ki ga je spoznal šele kot odrasel človek (vse življenje je govoril z močnim tujim naglasom)¹⁵ (Ogen in Conrad 1984: 143,144).

Ogen concludes that *Heart of Darkness* is a text that still generates hundreds and hundreds of interpretations because of its lyric exhibition of the inner complexities of the psyche (Ibid.).

The last of Conrad's works translated into Slovene (both by Miha Avanzo) are the two political novels from Conrad's middle period – *The Secret Agent* (1907) and *Under Western Eyes* (1911). The former was published by Mladinska knjiga as *Tajni agent* in 1989, the latter appeared in the Cankarjeva založba collection *XX. Stoletje* in 1994 (under the title *Z zahodnimi očmi*).

Mirko Jurak provided the translation of *The Secret Agent* with excellent and detailed critical notes. He makes the point that the main reasons why Conrad's writing still remains in the centre of critical attention and is permanently included in the contemporary English literature canon throughout the world are:

izvrstna tehnika, ki privlači bralce, intenzivno podajanje snovi ter kritične življenjske situacije, ki junaka zaradi napačnih odločitev ali tragičnih napak često pripeljejo v tragičen položaj, iz katerega pa se lahko reši z ohranitvijo svoje človečnosti in medčloveške solidarnosti, pogumom in vztrajnostjo¹⁶ (Jurak in Conrad 1994: 348,349).

Jurak also suggests that besides Flaubert, already mentioned by Čater, there were two other writers who influenced Conrad's work: Guy de Maupassant, master of objective realism, and Henry James, psychological realist. But in contradistinction to both writers, explains Jurak,

Conrad ne gradi svojih romanov na logičnem, dramatičnem zaporedju dramatičnih situacij, na premočrtnem razvoju zgodbe, temveč izbira posamične epizode, ki so z junakom neposredno ali posredno povezane, jih kontrastira, razvija do določene stopnje, nato pa jih poveže med seboj in jih končno sestavi v mogočen sklepni akord¹⁷ (349).

Jurak concludes his evaluation of the novel expressing his thought that

v marsikaterem pogledu je roman prava klinična analiza družbenih razmer dvajsetega stoletja, ne le njegovih totalitarizmov in revolucij, temveč

¹⁵ besides the fact that Joseph Conrad wrote with a style and in a manner that was very different from the main movements in novel writing of his period, most literary critics and historians consider him as the greatest prose artist of the early decades of the twentieth century. He invested in English prose a new and nobler type of modern romanticism, with a fresh, revived writing in a language he learned only as an adult (he spoke with a strong foreign accent all his life).

¹⁶ an excellent technique, which appeals to the reader, an intensive handling of material, and crucial life circumstances. The hero's wrong decisions or tragic mistakes brought him into a tragic situation, out of which he could save himself only by preserving his humanity and interpersonal solidarity, courage and persistence.

¹⁷ Conrad does not build his novels on consistent, dramatic subsequence of dramatic situations, on the straightforward development of the story, he chooses particular episodes with which the hero is directly or indirectly connected, he contrasts, develops to a certain level and then links them together, finally joining them into a mighty final accord.

tudi prispodoba usodnih odločitev, ki so jih ljudje – ne junaki po naravi – morali sprejemati v vsakdanjem življenju in ki so jih tako ali drugače tudi usodno zaznamovale¹⁸ (358).

Two other (very brief) critical responses followed the translation of *Under Western Eyes*, one by Milan Markelj, whose article “Novih pet XX. stoletja” (“The New Five of the book collection XX. stoletje”), was published by the local paper *Dolenjski list*, the other, written by Tone Smolej, entitled “Z zahodnimi očmi” (“Under Western Eyes”) appeared in the general interest magazine *Tribuna*.

Smolej makes the point that “v tem poznem in manj znanem Conradovem romanu smo priča značilni absurdni situaciji, ki je tipična za rahlo ironičen ton Conradovega pisanja”¹⁹ and that the novel is “mojstrovina, ki na pretanjen način opisuje rojstvo krivde, njen razvoj, pokoro, pričakovanje kazni ter njeno sprejemanje”²⁰ (Smolej 29).

Shortly before the eightieth anniversary of Conrad's death (4 August 2004) a reprint of the Slovene version of *Heart of Darkness* appeared in the collection *Vrhunci stoletja*. The translator and essayist Miriam Drev wrote about it just previously in her article (published in the national paper *Delo*) “Morski klativitez pluje po reki skozi pragozd” (“The Sea-Vagabond Sails up the River into the Jungle”). She focused on two of the characteristics of Conrad's writing. Firstly she highlighted the central theme of his fiction:

Conradovi romani soočajo zahodnega človeka, predstavnika osvajalne kulture, ki s trgovsko grabežljivostjo prisvaja dobrine tujih celin – vendar v njegovih knjigah vsakič le posameznika z lastnimi karakternimi značilnostmi – z ljudstvi, živečimi po drugačnih načelih²¹ (Drev 13).

She continued by evaluating the writer's narrative technique, which is refined, besede uporablja kot mrežo, s katero kolikor je mogoče natančno zajema pomene, z zelo modernim čutom za to, da bo celo v gostem tkivu povedanega ostal prostor za preoblikovanje zgodbe v njeno rahlo drugačno različico²² (Ibid.).

Conrad's figure of master-mariner/story-teller intrigued Dušan Fabe, who dedicated part of his doctoral dissertation *Semantični vidiki angleške pomorske terminologije*

¹⁸ from many points of view the novel is a genuine clinical analysis of the social conditions of the twentieth century, not just of its totalitarianisms and revolutions, it is also an allegory of fatal decisions that people – not heroes by nature – had to make in their everyday lives and which, in one way or another, fatally marked them.

¹⁹ in this late and less known Conrad novel we are delivered a characteristic absurd situation, typical in its slightly ironic tone of Conrad's writing.

²⁰ a masterpiece, which in a subtle way describes the birth of guilt, its development, penitence, expectation of punishment, and its acceptance.

²¹ Conrad's novels confront the western man (representative of the conquering culture, which through trading rapacity appropriates the goods of foreign continents), yet the individual always has his own personalized characteristics — with the people, living by other principles.

²² he uses words as a net, with which he grasps (as accurately as possible) the meanings; he has a very modern sense for keeping (even in a very dense tissue of the told) some place for the transformation of the story into its slightly different variation.

ter vprašanje slovenskih ustreznic (2002) (*Semantic Aspects of English Maritime Terminology and the Question of Slovene Equivalents*) to the analysis of some selected Slovene translations of Conrad's works. Fabe opted for Conrad because

predstavlja izviren in zanesljiv vir terminološkega gradiva, kajti avtor sam je bil morda največji poznavalec pomorskega izrazja v angleškem jeziku in hkrati tudi eden največjih književnikov angleškega leposlovja v začetku 20. stoletja²³ (Fabe 6).

What is more

z izrednim posluhom za jezik, kar je sicer redka lastnost morjeplovcev, je predstavljal idealen primer simbioze stroke in jezika. Izjemno je bil pozoren zlasti na pravilno rabo strokovne terminologije. Morda toliko bolj, ker mu angleščina ni bila materni jezik. Hkrati s trdim delom in neizprosno vztrajnostjo je ustvaril zahtevno branje za vsakogar. Tisti pa, ki so se lotili prevajanja njegovih del, zaslužijo še posebno priznanje²⁴ (Fabe 175).

The translations of eight novels, analyzed by Fabe (*Tajfun, Mladost, Nostromo, Črnc z "Narcisa", Lord Jim, Srce teme, Zmaga, Senčna črta*), appeared during a long period of time – from 1933 to 1997. Fabe estimates that during these decades many new maritime terms appeared, confirming that language is a living organism.

Fiction is thus merely the art of writing

ki ni neposredno povezana s stvarnim svetom, pa vendar je prevajanje leposlovnih del, katerih dogajanje je umeščeno v specifično, četudi izmišljeno, strokovno okolje, zelo trd oreh za vse prevajalce. Problemi, s katerimi se pri tem soočajo, so večplastni²⁵ (203).

Translating Conrad's fiction raises a fundamental question, maintains Fabe: "kako v ciljnem jeziku ohraniti razmerje med poetiko (stilnimi izraznimi sredstvi) in realističnim "odslikavanjem" dogajanja oz. resničnega sveta, kajti oboje se v njegovih delih medsebojno prepleta²⁶ (204).

Fabe's analysis focused explicitly on maritime terminology. As he points out, he would like his corrections and proposals to be of some help for the future (courageous

²³ it represents an authentic and reliable source of terminological material, as the author himself was probably one of the greatest experts in nautical terminology in the English language and at the same time one of the greatest figures in the English literature of the early twentieth century.

²⁴ with an extraordinary sense for language, otherwise a rare characteristic of mariners, he represented an ideal case of professional and linguistic symbiosis. He was extremely attentive particularly to the correct use of professional terminology. Maybe even more so as English was not his mother tongue. With hard work and inexorable perseverance he created demanding reading for everyone. Those, however, who have undertaken the translation of his works, merit special recognition.

²⁵ which is not directly connected with the real world, yet the translation of fictional works with stories, placed in a specific, although fictitious professional environment, is a very hard nut to crack for the translators. Problems, with which they are confronted, are thus multi-layered.

²⁶ how to preserve in the target language the relation between the poetics (stylistic means of expression) and the realistic "depiction" of events or the real world, as both intermingle in his works.

enough) translators of Conrad's works that still wait for translation into Slovene (in particular his first two novels *Almayer's Folly* (1894) and *An Outcast of the Island* (1896)).

To conclude, a very fresh reprint of *Tajni agent (The Secret agent)* for the collection *Vrhunci erotike in napetosti* (published in April, 2005) proves that the Slovene public is still well aware of the special place this extraordinary writer has in the world's literary heritage.

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The author's translations from Slovene into English are in the footnotes.

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SEXING THE WASTE LAND

Gender, Desire, and Sexuality in T.S. Eliot's *The Waste Land*

Andrej Zavrl

Abstract

The article analyses T.S. Eliot's *The Waste Land* (1922) to show how Modernist men often plunge into the wild waters of gender and sexuality, revealing a remarkable degree of anxiety, only rarely accounted for by more traditional critical approaches. *The Waste Land* can be perceived as an expression of male hysteria and, the author argues, hysteria is never far from aberrant sexualities and unruly desires.

POETRY FOR MEN

T.S. Eliot, exemplary of many male modernist writers, saw his mission in exclusively masculinist terms; for many male modernists, "one of the chief aims of the modernist movement, as they defined it, was the restoration of virility to poetry" (Lamos, 55). James Joyce wrote in his notebooks in the early 1920s that "T S Eliot ends [the] idea of poetry for ladies" (qtd. in Lamos, 55). Many modernist writers believed it was their calling to work towards a male literary coterie, including a primarily male readership, in "a revolt ... against what they saw as the effeminate influence of women writers as well as the prominence of women in the literary marketplace as publishers and patrons" (Lamos, 55, 56).

Harriet Davidson notes that "[r]ecent criticism sees the whole modernist movement as caused in part by shifting notions of sexuality and gender, resulting in an upheaval in both social customs and the very formation of subjectivities" ("Introduction", 15). Similarly, but more directly, Virginia Woolf, not without personal demur, "defined her generation's move away from Victorianism by their decision to talk openly about same-sex love". Moreover, she "felt that homosexuality was, for the next generation of writers, an exclusive passport for literary success" (Lee, 614). Gregory Woods follows Michel Foucault's thesis of the construction of homosexual identity when he claims that "[h]omosexuality is in essence a construct of the (late) nineteenth and twentieth centuries; as an essence it is just as distinctively a characteristic of modernism as are atonalism in music, Cubism in painting, or interior monologue in the novel" (5-6).

The anxiety of masculinity is never far from Eliot's writing. Try as he may to firmly constitute a male literary world, the feminine element makes continuous attempts at its disruption. Eliot's sexuality is thus never unproblematic; indeed, "[t]hroughout his early poetry Eliot typically depicts women as threatening figures who torment and castrate men" (Lamos, 77). In that respect, femininity can be seen as the disturbing element that makes men, either through their identification with or surrender to it, unmanly and effeminate. In short, as Eliot himself admitted, "the problem of female power lies at the core of modernist literature" (81).

Male uncertainty, in a psychological truism, tends to air its frustrations through violence against women. The substantial place that misogyny occupies within Modernism should be taken into account but it should also be emphasised that, moral(istical)ly regretful as it might be, for Eliot this misogyny seems to have been aesthetically productive. Following this logic, I disagree with some of the feminist interpretations that reject Eliot for his anti-women assumptions, because misogyny, among other concepts, when considered outside self-victimising discourse, reveals much more about the misogynist than many would be ready to acknowledge (occasionally even that he was not so misogynist as previously thought).

For a possibly fruitful analysis, therefore, not only gender, not only sexuality, and not only desire should be considered, but the very area where they intersect. Let us call it the queer spot, traditionally blind, and now impossible to ignore.¹ It is perhaps appropriate to focus on the poem that brought Eliot fame, and has kept him famous (and occasionally infamous), the poem often seen as the embodiment of Modernism.

"MEMORY AND DESIRE"

"The thing now runs from April ... to shantih without [a] break", wrote Ezra Pound to T.S. Eliot in December 1921, commenting on the revisions of *The Waste Land*, which was to be published in *The Criterion* in the October of the following year (Pound's letter to Eliot, 24 Dec. 1921, in Eliot, *Letters*, 497). Even though its structure seems fragmentary, Pound's view of the completeness and unity of the poem appears to be based on formal as well as thematic levels. Stephen Spender correspondingly insists that although Eliot is "a poet of fragments", with fragmentary inspiration, his themes are not fragmentary at all. Rather, "[t]hey are obsessive" (106). Accordingly, I argue that some of the themes binding together the sections and fragments of *The Waste Land* are very closely associated with the notions of gender and sexuality, and in particular with the expression and repression of desire.

Despite Eliot's early critical assertion in "Tradition and the Individual Talent" that poetry "is not a turning loose of emotion, but an escape from emotion; it is not the expression of personality but an escape from personality" (21), many interpreters, and not only very recent ones, have seen a degree of biographical approach highly

¹ Theoretically, my analysis is part(ial)ly indebted to queer theory, especially in its insistence on the relevance of the textual negotiations of (varied and often unstable) genders, desires, and sexualities rather than on stable and definit(iv)e identities that respect, rather than fight, the borders between what is decent or indecent, acceptable or unacceptable, gay or straight.

relevant to their analyses of his poetry. Indeed, so suspicious are some of them of Eliot's poetics of impersonality that they denounce it as "the purest camouflage, whether he was aware of subterfuge or not" (Hall, "Notes", 100-01). Not only aware of it, as Lyndall Gordon writes, Eliot's "celebrated theory of impersonality ... he once admitted, was a bluff" (*Imperfect Life*, 4).

Maud Ellmann insists that both Eliot and Pound "use the doctrine of impersonality to attack their own infatuation with its opposite", and they have both personal and political reasons for endorsing the doctrine (129). The conservative agenda behind the impersonality ideal, in Ellmann's view, began to germinate with Eliot's and Pound's rejection of individualism (198). A slight (mis)appropriation of the argument has given the impression to many critics, it would appear, that they have carte blanche to indulge in more or less deep, though hardly ever very profound, biographical interpretations via often rather implausible conjectures. It has become commonplace to insist that poetics and politics are inseparable and that every artistic, as well as intellectual engagement is ideologically (pre)determined, so much so that texts themselves often end up being ascribed marginal importance in comparison with the omnipotence of interpretation. And there is no denying that whether it is Eliot or his critics (of any conviction, it would seem), cultural hijacking appears tirelessly to be going on – most of all in the places where hijackers pretend to be liberators.

Nevertheless, impersonality has been shown to have had very personal origins, at least in the view of Eliot's more acerbic critics: Maud Ellmann traces the "prying form of criticism" back to the 1880s when, accompanying the rise of popular psychology, "readers had begun to search the text for confessions of the author rather than the truth of the external world". In her view, the impersonal theory of poetry is both a rejection of and a defence against that. She also quotes Eliot telling John Hayward "that he had 'personal reasons' for asserting his impersonality" (5).

For some critics, biography has been a no-go area; for others a go-go area. Eliot's own views against biographical interpretation of poetry have become well-known truisms: from his 1919 assertion that poetry is "an escape from personality" to his warning "against too much psychological and biographical conjecture in the explication of poetry" during his baseball-stadium lecture on "The Frontiers of Criticism" in Minneapolis in 1956 (Ackroyd, 317). And, of course, he prohibited an official biography of himself. In 1938 he told John Hayward, whom he had in mind as his literary executor, that his task would be to prevent the appearance of biographies, the publication of letters and early writings, in other words, "to discourage any attempts to make books of me or about me, and to suppress everything suppressable" (qtd. in Seymour-Jones, 577).

The directions biographically oriented interpretations point at are without fail Eliot's relations to women, particularly Emily Hale and his first wife Vivien, or – seeing *The Waste Land* as an elegy – to Jean Verdenal. It is interesting to observe that the critics of these two "camps" often use very similar strategies, even quote the same (excerpts from) texts, to support their oppositional claims. Exemplary of this are Lyndall Gordon, and John Peter, who support their interpretations of *The Waste Land*

² See also Spender *passim*; Hall, 100; Froula, 166-67; Koestenbaum, 124; Woods, 121-23.

in the light of Eliot's possible real-life experiences with Hale or Verdenal, respectively.² It is clearly significant that, forty years after he had published his famous essay, Eliot himself described writing poetry as "[wanting] to get something off one's chest" (Hall, *Interview*, 207), and even though "Tradition and the Individual Talent" was written simultaneously with various fragments of *The Waste Land*, Eliot later commented on the poem as "only the relief of a *personal* and wholly insignificant grouse against life" (Eliot, *Facsimile*, xxxiii, emphasis added).

"OLD MAN WITH WRINKLED DUGS"³

The individual is symptomatic of the state of civilisation as a whole (Spender, 91), but it is the very combination of the public and the private that gives *The Waste Land* its wider significance. Although we are likely to "perceive his poetry as negotiating intractable personal material which persists even in the final form" (Sharratt, 224), it is important to realise that the elements "which are undoubtedly personal in origin ... are also, while not surrendering the poignancy of personal experience, fully thematic, as well as recurrent, and thus something much more than merely or limitedly personal" (Olney, 4).

Among such characteristics, to be readily recognised in the discussion of the poem's intricate dealing with gender, desire, and sexuality, is its widespread ambiguity, more specifically, the ambiguity of gender with its unclear distinctions of male and female characters and voices. Carol Christ, for example, observes that "among the most striking characteristics of Eliot's poetry is the way in which it fragments not just female bodies but all bodies, and frequently in a way that makes gender ambiguous" (29). The reason for this, according to the author, is the problem that the representation of powerful women poses for Eliot's representation of men. To avoid this dilemma he often prefers not to attach gender to bodies at all (30). In *The Waste Land*, in its last section in particular, writes Christ, Eliot's many religious as well as natural images and allusions articulate human situations in a more abstract and gender-free manner, which, by avoiding the categories of body and gender, represses sexual difference (35-36).

In this respect Eliot's more general portrayal of men and women seems of some relevance. Wayne Koestenbaum maintains that "[a]ll of the women in the poem ... are sexually violated, and respond in a hysterical code to this violation" (133). Perhaps the most prominent example is the echoing of Philomel's rape in "The Fire Sermon" (ll. 203-05): "Twit twit twit / Jug jug jug jug jug jug / So rudely forc'd".⁴ But Koestenbaum also argues for less obvious, that is to say more metaphorical, "rapes": the Rhine Maidens, for instance, upon realising that their river has been violated and plundered of its treasure, response hysterically: "Weialala leia / Wallala leialala" (ll. 290-91) (Koestenbaum, 134).

Harriet Davidson, on the other hand, admits that the women characters of the poem are linked rather traditionally with sexual desire and reproduction. "But", she

³ Eliot, *The Waste Land*, l. 228.

⁴ T.S. Eliot, *Collected Poems 1909-1962*, London and Boston: Faber and Faber, 1974 (1st publ. 1963). All references to Eliot's poetry, except when stated otherwise, are to this edition.

adds, “quite untraditionally the poem concerns itself not just with women as objects of desire, but also with women as subjects with desires” (“Improper Desire”, 127). The scene with the nervous woman (ll. 111-26) or the conversation in the pub (ll. 139-72), as two prominent instances, may not present women in a very positive, emancipated light, but they do bring female perspective into the poem, even if only to disclose “how often desire leads to frustration, ennui, and violence” (*ibid.*, 127).

Some feminist critics, however, have described Eliot as an “archetypal white male élitist conservative literary icon” (Sharratt, 232), and seen literary Modernism solidly founded on “interminable sexual warfare” (Brooker, 213). “For the male modernist”, Sandra M. Gilbert writes, “gender is most often an ultimate reality” (162), and conservative gender distinctions are fundamental for the reinforcement of patriarchal, hierarchical social order. She views the substance of *The Waste Land* as “a Dantesque Inferno of sexual misrule”, full of “anomalous sexuality [arising] from sexual anxiety and specifically from anxiety about a blurring of those gender distinctions in which human beings ought properly to be clothed” (162, 163).

Against the manipulation of binary logic and against the accusations of Eliot as “a nostalgic male with a sexist agenda”, consisting of his supposed devaluation of women’s intellect, his stealing of women’s work, his fight for a male literary history and sexist aesthetic, Jewel Spears Brooker points out that these critics of Eliot miss “the complexity and subtlety of his thinking”, and that their “blindness ... keeps them from recognising those aspects of Eliot’s thinking that support feminism” (219, 221, 223).

Perhaps one of the most explicit examples in *The Waste Land* of different kinds of ambiguity is “a bisexual seer” (Koestenbaum, 133) – Tiresias – an “old man with wrinkled dug” (l. 228). The discussion of this “spectator and not indeed a ‘character’ ... yet the most important personage in the poem, uniting all the rest” has been triggered off by Eliot himself in his “Notes on *The Waste Land*”. Eliot goes on to explain that the characters of the poem melt into each other, that all the men are actually one man, “and so all the women are one woman, and the two sexes meet in Tiresias”. A sentence from the same note, as famous and widely discussed as any, claims that “[w]hat Tiresias sees, in fact, is the substance of the poem” (Eliot, *Poems*, 82). What does the blind man actually see? Indeed, how literally should Eliot’s conspicuously emphasised verb be taken? A. David Moody draws attention to the fact that we do not see what Tiresias sees; instead, we see him seeing, and “[h]is seeing, without love, passion or pathos, is the dead heart of *The Waste Land*: what the poet must pass beyond or perish” (92). But Eliot’s notes, on the whole “the embodiment of the implied male reader”, in Koestenbaum’s view, “demonstrate that the poem has absences which an external body must fill. The footnotes valorize the poem’s hysteria, and convert it from meaningless chaos into allusiveness” (136).

THE HYACINTH BOY

If Tiresias is an instance of more outspoken gender ambiguity, then the hyacinth garden is much less obvious. At first glance, the lines in “The Burial of the Dead” seem to be pretty unambiguous: “You gave me Hyacinths first a year ago, / They

called me the hyacinth girl” (ll. 35-36). Lyndall Gordon seems convinced that these lines refer to Emily Hale, who “reappears, through memory and desire, as a source for the hyacinth girl” and “prompts a non-wasteland moment” (“Eliot and Women”, 10). But if we consider the mythological implications of the boy Hyacinthus, as well as the link that the manuscript of “A Game of Chess” makes between the hyacinth garden and the drowned sailor, already introduced by Madame Sosostriis and remembered by the neurotic’s partner – “I remember / The hyacinth garden. Those are pearls that were his eyes, yes!” (Eliot, *Facsimile*, 19, ll. 49-50) – then it is no longer entirely impossible to claim that the episode “appears to memorialize not a girl but a boy” (Froula, 162).⁵

Some of the ambiguity has to do with the voices of the poem, Christ argues. The male voice, which is not specific in terms of time and space, and “conveys emotion through literary quotation, and portrays experience only through metaphoric figuration” (31), is contrasted with a number of female voices, which, on the contrary, are presented within their settings, dramatic situations, individual stories, and voices. The only exception to this structure, according to Christ, is the hyacinth garden episode, the emotional centre of the poem, where the poet himself is the speaking voice (32).

Moody, who summarises *The Waste Land* as “at once the fulfilment and the contradiction of the romantic tradition of English poetry” (107), having “[a]t its heart ... an intense moment of passion, ‘ecstatic or terrible’, now removed into memory”, likewise maintains that this episode is the centre of the entire poem; and here the direct experience is of primary importance (79). Beside the hyacinth garden, according to Moody, the scenes with the neurotic woman and the typist’s rape are the two other centres which consequently give the surrounding passages their weight, and these in return provide the three centres with illumination and expand them into impersonal generalisations (80).

The three scenes that Moody foregrounds are eminently representative of the failure of (romantic) love and hence, through disturbing passion (“[b]urning burning burning burning” [l. 308]), indicative of a total breakdown of human relationships and profoundly unsatisfying existence. In “The Burial of the Dead”, the memory and desire of the hyacinth garden appear to be so overpowering that the speaker’s senses fail entirely. Unable to speak, see, reason, even live, he undergoes a paralysing experience, “[l]ooking into the heart of light” (l. 41). This ultimate experience, as light itself can be, is dazzling, but it is inexplicable and inexpressible. Therefore, it is only appropriate that the immediately following line, and at the same time the last line of the poem’s segment, should be in a foreign language: “*Oed’ und leer das Meer*” (l. 42). This quotation from Wagner in German, by way of the language and allusion, also relates to the Starnbergersee episode earlier in the section with Marie’s recollections of childhood fear and excitement, and structurally as well as thematically links to the other quotation from Wagner about the lover’s desperation (ll. 31-34).

The nervous woman in “A Game of Chess”, on the other hand, talks a lot, but does not seem to say much to her partner. His only responses – unspoken – are of a private nature, unrelated to the woman and her predicament. A step further, where

⁵ See also Woods, 122; Peter, 169; Seymour-Jones, 300-01.

love and sexuality fail so badly as to turn into downright brutality, is the episode with “the young man carbuncular” (l. 231) and the “bored and tired” typist (l. 236), told in a sharply cool manner by Tiresias:

Flushed and decided, he assaults at once;
Exploring hands encounter no defence;
His vanity requires no response,
And makes a welcome of indifference.
 (“The Fire Sermon”, ll. 239-42)

Gordon’s explanation for *The Waste Land*’s disturbing treatment of desire and sexuality is Eliot’s “fierce disgust for the flesh” and his idea of love which “does not fit our usual categories, sexual or romantic”. She believes that Eliot “wished to transform the energy of desire into something absolute and lasting ... nothing less than perfect love” (“Eliot and Women”, 16). She supports her argument by a quote from Eliot’s essay “Views and Reviews” (1935):

I mean the turning away of the soul from desire ... of drugged pleasures, of power, or of *happiness*. I mean “love”, in the sense in which “love” is the opposite of what we ordinarily mean by “love” (the desire to possess and to dominate or to be dominated by) (qtd. in Gordon, “Eliot and Women”, 16).

What Eliot seems to be suggesting here is a defence against destructive, or errant desire which so often intrudes into his own poetry despite his attempts at keeping it at bay. This notwithstanding, it is not as obvious as Gordon seems to suggest whether Eliot’s definition is really so different from “our usual categories, sexual or romantic”. In this context, it is perhaps telling that the “*Datta*” of “What the Thunder Said” (ll. 401-09) suggests that the sole thing worth giving is “[t]he awful daring of a moment’s surrender” (l. 403). That this is (or should be) something out of the ordinary can be gathered from the lines following: the only existence of any valuable significance is that which is uncommon, even if “improper”, “[w]hich an age of prudence can never retract” (l. 404).⁶

Carole Seymour-Jones makes her case for Eliot’s disgust rather more specific. She notes on “the deep hostility of the verses whose subject is a woman” in contrast to those whose subject is male homosociality, or even homoeroticism (297). One of the most striking instances of Eliot’s “disgust for heterosexual love” (301) is perhaps the scene with Lil and Albert of *The Waste Land* (ll. 139-72). Some other critics have offered related views of the tensions operating in the poem. Gregory Woods, discussing *The Waste Land* within the tradition of classic elegies, writes that Eliot expresses “fastidious distaste for the sheer physicality of sex”, and therefore, in a deeply troubled way, “[f]or him the body was the object of fear and revulsion, perhaps especially when most intensely desired”; and it is no different with sexuality – it is a cause of despicable degeneration (187). This, in Woods’s interpretation, is true of Eliot’s atti-

⁶ What is that “[w]hich is not to be found in our obituaries” (l. 406), and that so fundamentally shakes our hearts, has, of course, been subject to various contesting interpretations. For a brief summary of the argument, see Seymour-Jones, 296.

tudes towards both homo- and heterosexuality. The openly homosexual episode with Eugenides (ll. 208-14), just like any other in the poem, “merely underlines how things have worsened since the moment in the hyacinth garden” (122).

“A HEAP OF BROKEN IMAGES”⁷

Colleen Lamos argues that the attraction that the poem has for present-day readers is in its resistance to coherence, which has led many recent critics to interpret it “as a critique of literary and sexual proprieties” (108). Harriet Davidson accordingly asserts that “*The Waste Land* can be read as a poem about the proper and the improper”; more specifically, it “returns again and again to ‘improper’ sexual desire, temptation, and surrender and their often tragic consequences” (“Improper Desire”, 122). The desire of New Criticism to establish the dominance of the proper over the improper is, according to Davidson, abundantly exemplified in the “Notes” that Eliot provided for the editions of *The Waste Land* following the publication in *The Criterion*. Whether Eliot’s purpose with the notes was wholly serious or not, he did encourage “the kind of source-hunting that began to take over readings of the poem” (*ibid.*, 124). Such views of “scholarly propriety” on the side of the “proper, pedagogic side” of the poem appeared “to promise a full and scientifically accurate explanation which would overcome its fragmentation and suggestiveness” (*ibid.*, 125).

Where Carol Christ makes the distinction between different (types of) voices along the gender divide, Davidson contrasts a lyric voice opening the poem (using metaphoric and symbolic images, repetitive and stylized syntax) with “the babel of many voices” (resisting categorisation, emerging in vivid scenes, full of movement and change) (“Improper Desire”, 125). While the singular authoritative voice, tending toward finality, relates the visions of waste and repulsion of life in a controlled manner, the other voices with their many shifts and alterations, make any definite, clear-cut demarcations of identities impossible. The two modes, “of sterile propriety and fertile impropriety”, run parallel to two of the poems most striking images: desert and water – “the dry, unchanging desert contrast[s] throughout the poem with life-giving rain and drowning sea” (*ibid.*, 126, 125).

Christine Froula’s reading of the poem similarly finds “the deep conflict in the poem between forbidden passion ... and the self-disgusted degradation and repudiation of such desire” (167). Her point of departure is the manuscript of *The Waste Land*, and the fact that its initial title was “He Do the Police in Different Voices” prompts her to name the speaker’s divided selves, split apart by his internal need to repress desire, “the Police” (“the forbidding, judging, threatening self”) and “the Lover” (“the passionate, remembering, desiring self”) (168). The already mentioned merging of characters into one another, often from attractive into repugnant (an opposite example would be the blending of Mr. Eugenides with the Phoenician sailor) stems from the need of the Lover in the speaker to appease the repressive Police (174). This approach has enabled Froula to combine some of the more controversial inter-

⁷ Eliot, *The Waste Land*, l. 22.

pretations of *The Waste Land*. Acknowledging the view that the poem is an elegy for Verdenal, she maintains that it is more than that – first and foremost, it mourns the Lover, whose death is again and again brought forward, because

[b]y the lights of the Police, the unworthy Lover must be suppressed, drowned, so that the modern poet can abandon his former sins, amend his life – so that he can, in other words, fashion himself the inheritor not only of Dante’s poetic authority but of the Christian epic poet’s moral authority (175).

Inasmuch as the poem is open to different interpretations because of its interest in metamorphosis, quick and unorthodox juxtapositions, blurred boundaries, the blending of characters and voices, extensive intertextuality, as well as the refusal to make definite connections between images, scenes and voices, the reader is “drawn into the chain of desire to search for final meanings in a poem which suggests these meanings but then denies them any stability” (Davidson, “Improper Desire”, 128). Yet, as much as the reader, together with the Police, may strive for order, and aspire to enforce complete control,

the desire for stability, the desire to end desire, is always a paradoxical one.... The reader’s interpretation, like any desire for order, is really just another proliferation of possibility, not at all a stabilizing of the poem. In this sense all desire is improper desire, disrupting clarity and stability in favor of change and movement (*ibid.*, 126).

The tensions between the desire for order and the surrender to the chaotic desire of life, Davidson points out, remain in place throughout the poem (“Improper Desire”, 129-31).

WOMEN: HISTORICALLY HYSTERICAL?

Wayne Koestenbaum argues that there are clear “affinities between the discourse of high male modernism and the discourse of hysteria” (114). For him, too, “the desire is ultimately stronger than prudence”; and he analogously explains what he calls “hysterical discontinuities” in the light of *The Waste Land*’s textual history, which he perceives as a repression of “Eliot’s arguably sexual interest in Jean Verdenal” (135). Pound’s revisions buried the “homosexual subtext” and omitted the more “elucidative” poems, and that is why “*The Waste Land* suffers from Eliot’s reminiscences of Jean Verdenal” (124). Throughout his analysis, Koestenbaum argues that the reminiscences that hysterical texts (like patients) suffer from are those of queer erotic attachments. That also explains, for him, the role of Ezra Pound for the poem. Pound set out to cure the poem’s hysteria by cutting certain representations of the feminine and by masculinising its core, and he demanded less indecisive language (124-25). Pound saw Eliot’s – and his speakers’ – inability to act, either erotically and linguistically, as the “primary hysterical symptom”. He did not allow Eliot any affinities with the effeminate Prufrock and the anxious Gerontion, who are “afraid of desire

and direct statement". Whatever the cost, Pound attempted to rid his friend of "pathological indecision about gender and sexual preference" (128-29).

It has to be stressed again that

[f]ar from proving that Eliot was secretly homosexual or that the 'hyacinth girl' is Verdenal in disguise, these contiguities demonstrate the vagrancy of forbidden desires and identifications which Eliot considered errant and, especially later, tried to distinguish sharply. Indeed, they testify to the force of Eliot's determined, stiff-upper-lip affirmation of heterosexual masculinity (Lamos, 114).

Following the Freudian notion that hysterics suffer mainly from reminiscences, Maud Ellmann defines *The Waste Land* as "the most hysterical of texts" (91), whilst Christine Froula, too, observes the poem's abundance of reminiscences and disturbances. She maintains, moreover, that the Lover is not entirely silenced because he has learnt how to escape, or avoid, the Police: he has to be, not unlike the songs of the mythological birds, unintelligible (177). The very end of the poem returns to the inability of expressing oneself and communicating with others. Echoing the devastation of the Babel Tower, fully in line with the poem's persistent use of a mixture of voices, the final lines in English (including its Elizabethan variant), Italian, Latin, French, and Sanskrit, coming from widely disparate contexts, has to be the one choice to illustrate how the Lovers' self-imposed unintelligibility culminates in *The Waste Land*:

I sat upon the shore
Fishing, with the arid plain behind me
Shall I at least set my lands in order?
London Bridge is falling down falling down falling down
Poi s'ascose nel foco che gli affina
Quando fiam uti chelidon – O swallow swallow
Le Prince d'Aquitaine í la tour abolie
These fragments I have shored against my ruins
Why then Ile fit you. Hieronymo's mad againe.
Datta. Dayadhvam. Damyata.
Shantih shantih shantih

("What the Thunder Said", ll. 423-433)

But just as the more you try to suppress something, the more it will force its way onto the surface, so the disruptions of the repressed subtext and the aberrations of all sorts are never far away. Koestenbaum asserts that the "memories of enacted desire return so intensely that by each section's end, Eliot's language is fractured". This is one of the basic characteristics of hysterical discourse, which is the result of the "extreme retreat from desire into hysteria" (134, 135).

It is very important to add that just as a hysteric needs an analyst, hysterical discourse (in Eliot's case a poem) needs a reader. Such a confessional discourse "is also a ritual that unfolds within a power relationship, for one does not confess without the presence (or virtual presence) of a partner who is not simply the interlocutor but the authority who requires the confession, prescribes and appreciates it, and intervenes in order to judge, punish, forgive, console, and reconcile" (Foucault, 61). If we

relate this to *The Waste Land*, then Koestenbaum's interpretation seems quite to the point. "As hysterical discourse", he writes, "*The Waste Land* remains passive: it invites a reader to master it. Unwilling to explain itself or move past hysterical disjunction, requiring a reader-as-collaborator ('mon semblable, – mon frère!' [l. 76]) to unravel its disguises, it is a feminine text, and implies a male reader" (135).

Hysteria is, generally speaking, often directly linked to sexuality but it is typical of Eliot's poetry up to the mid-1920s that the tackling of male sexuality through hysteria takes the direction from external description to internal revelation: at first it seems as if the male speaker only described hysteria around himself, generally in a woman, but it eventually turns out that he is at least as much the victim of the condition as she is. The belief that hysteria is solely a female malady is thus ceaselessly unmasked as a mere disbelief.

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WASHINGTON IRVING IN SLOVENE

Jerneja Petrič

Abstract

Washington Irving played a crucial role in the development of the American short story. His tales featuring American characters and American settings represented a giant step forward in the development of an independent American literature. His tales have so far been translated into Slovene a few times. The objectives of my paper were to establish the number of Slovene translations of Irving's work, record pertinent information regarding the translations, evaluate the translators' achievement in terms of their ability to present the period and the characters relative to the original texts as well as their ability to transplant Irving's unique humor and finally research Slovene critical response on Irving.

Washington Irving has been honored with the position of the first major American man of letters, in particular as an author of imaginary tales. Born the youngest child of a well-to-do merchant family in New York in 1783, "the year the United States won its freedom, and named for the military hero venerated as the Father of His Country" (Bercovitch 661), he was destined to become a lawyer but never practiced that profession. Having fallen prey to tuberculosis at the age of 21, he went abroad to recuperate, which brought him to England, France and Italy between 1804 and 1806: there the romantic movement in literature and otherwise was well under way. After his return to New York he successfully embarked on a literary career, first as a pastime and then professionally, particularly after the publication of *A History of New York by Diedrich Knickerbocker* (1809), whose author was supposedly an eccentric mysterious man named in the title. Irving returned to Europe in 1815 and stayed seventeen years. In England he met and befriended Sir Walter Scott whose historical novels proved to be an important source of inspiration for him. Fully aware that fellow Americans had relatively little to flaunt in terms of history – compared to Europeans – he nevertheless "tried to give the New World some of the sense of a romantic past that Europe possessed" (Fuller 93). However, this Father of American literature was actually the first in the line of American authors to treat American history humorously. He took it from its high pedestal by turning it into a disentangling mix of actual events and names with invented ones. This makes him a predecessor of the 20th century author E.L. Doctorow whose main objective as a writer was to unmask the "objectivity" of history by turning it into a mixture of reality and fiction.

In Europe Irving became infected with the spirit of romanticism that found value in the past. Walter Scott encouraged him to read German legends that, as it

turned out, Irving pirated rather freely. Other influences came from France and particularly Spain where Irving resided twice, between 1826 and 1829 as a diplomatic attaché, and as the American Minister to Spain between 1842 and 1846.

Irving spent his final years in the States. Celebrated as one of the foremost New York Knickerbockers, he enjoyed a popularity unprecedented in the history of American literature.

None of Irving's many books equaled the popularity of *The Sketch Book of Geoffrey Crayon, Gent.* First published in seven pamphlet-like installments in 1819-20, it then reappeared in book form both in England and America (1820) and earned its author thousands of dollars thus proving one could live by writing alone. This miscellany was ostensibly written by a certain Geoffrey Crayon who, according to Bercovitch, "proclaims his admiration for the antique, the customary, the unregulated. The pseudonym 'Crayon' and the title 'Sketch Book' underline his impracticality: drawing and painting were fine arts many Americans still viewed with suspicion as useless luxuries in 1820" (670). The first version of the collection contained five sketches, one of them being "Rip van Winkle". However, by the time the book's final version appeared in print in 1820, the author had added 27 essays and tales making for a total of 32. Only four had an American setting including Irving's second-best known tale "The Legend of Sleepy Hollow". Critics nowadays agree that Irving's reputation as a major American author rests on these two pieces. It is no wonder then that they have been the first to be translated in foreign languages including Slovene.

Washington Irving in Slovene

The total number of Slovene translations of Irving's literary work is relatively small: one essay and 11 tales or sketches: "The Art of Bookmaking", "Rip van Winkle", "The Legend of Sleepy Hollow", "The Spectre Bridegroom", "The Governor and the Notary", "The Legend of Don Munjo Sancho de Hinojosa", "The Devil and Tom Walker", "The Adventure of the Mason", "The Pride of the Village", "Mountjoy or Some Passages Out of the Life of a Castle-Builder" and "The Grand Prairie – A Buffalo Hunt". Most translations are fairly recent dating back to 1998, however, "Rip van Winkle", "The Legend of Sleepy Hollow" and "The Spectre Bridegroom" have so far appeared in different translations. In my paper I intend to present these along with the oldest translation of Irving's work in Slovene, his essay "The Art of Bookmaking". The Slovene title of the latter was "Kako nekteri spisujejo bukve"¹; the translator, however, is known by his pen name only – Luka Primčkov. There was an asterisk above this name leading to a mysterious footnote I have not been able to decipher: "Draga nam obljava Vaša. Prosimo. Vred."² The translation appeared in two installments in a paper called *Kmetijske in rokodelske novice*³ in 1860. An ancient translation like

¹ Archaic. In modern Slovene the title would be "Kako nekateri pišejo knjige".

² Vred.: abbreviation for vrednik or vredništvo – in modern Slovene urednik/ uredništvo. "We appreciate your promise. Please. Edit. /Edit. Board."

³ 1843-1902, published in Ljubljana under the editorship of Janez Bleiweis. A weekly at the time of publication of Irving's essay. Vol.XVIII, Nos.11 and 12, pp. 82-83 and 91-92.

this is, naturally, archaic in the choice of vocabulary, spelling as well as syntax. It is not my intention to evaluate the translator's solutions for every constituent of the original. However, a brief overall assessment of the translated text and a comparison with the original reveals numerous inconsistencies. First of all, the translator allowed himself certain adjustments such as leaving out the title of Robert Burton's "satire on the inefficacy of human learning and endeavor"⁴ *The Anatomy of Melancholy* (1621) from which Irving selected his epigraph. For some reason the translator divided Irving's text into additional paragraphs and stressed certain words/ideas by using double spacing between letters. Now and then he added a poetic touch nonexistent in the original thereby completely misrepresenting the author's idea: "I found that these mysterious personages, whom I had mistaken for magi, were principally authors, and were in the very act of manufacturing books" (Irving 95; my emphasis). (Zvedil sem, da so ti skrivnostni ljudje, ktere sem si jez mislil čarovnike, večidel p i s a t e l j i, ki so ravno serkali medeni sok iz cvetlic" (Primčkov 82)⁵.

The translator was aware of the differences in socio-cultural background of the late 19th century Carniola and early 19th century England. This accounts for the adjustments he made in order to make Irving's text sound less alien, e.g. utilizing equivalents known to the Slovenes: instead of *biscuit* he uses more familiar *terdi kruh*⁶ (96;83) and instead of *dinner južina, ali zajterk*⁷ (Ibid.). He also made some mistakes such as translating *toe of frog* as *žabji zob* (96; 83) and *parson* as *profesor*⁸ (98; 91).

Considering the fact that reconstructing history represents one of the basic milestones of Irving's narrative art it is interesting to observe how the translator handled proper nouns be it personal or place names. "The Art of Bookmaking" is a satire against contemporary "writers" who plagiarize the work of others in the library of the British Museum in London. Primčkov's version is hardly a translation. He adapted and abbreviated the text, leaving out complex phrases and parts of sentences but especially names of places such as Primrose Hill or Regent's Park knowing they would mean nothing to an average reader of the Slovene popular paper *Kmetijske in rokodelske novice*. Similarly he left out names of Beaumont, Fletcher and Ben Jonson but for some reason kept the name of Sir Philip Sydney (Slovenized as Sir Filip Sidnej). There are other adjustments of this kind in Primčkov's simplified version of Irving's essay; however, bearing in mind the nature of the paper it was printed in (it targeted peasant population) as well as the time of publication it would be unfair to hold a grudge against the translator. He probably published the text in order to call attention to plagiarizing as such. Irving's historical context was considered irrelevant as it could not be understood by the majority of readers anyway.

There was, to my knowledge, no critical observation of the above translation whatsoever.

⁴ *The Oxford Companion to English Literature*. Margaret Drabble, Ed. Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1986, 27.

⁵ Meaning "who were just then sipping honey dew from flowers".

⁶ In English "hard bread".

⁷ "luncheon, or breakfast".

⁸ "frog's tooth", "professor".

Slovene translations of Irving's tales

The second earliest translation of Irving into Slovene appeared in print in the United States right at the beginning of the twentieth century when immigration from Slovene territories was at its peak. People came streaming in, hoping "to make it" in the New World in order to return to the Old Country a couple of years later as well-to-do if not rich "Amerikanci". In the meantime, however, they sought to accommodate to the new environment as best as they could. Slovene language newspapers and magazines were being established to provide the immigrants with Old World and New World news, practical information as well as culture. The latter was a rare commodity; editors were often at their wit's end wondering how to fill the "culture" pages of their papers. Some turned to writing themselves, others published Slovene literature or translated into Slovene. One of them, Ivan Mulaček, the editor of Chicago based paper *Nada* (Hope) translated and published in his paper at least one story by Washington Irving in 1904, "Duh-ženin" (The Spectre Bridegroom). Beside this, he supposedly translated other works by British, American as well as some other authors to be published both in the States and in Slovenia. His translations range from tales and stories to novels (Stanonik 69-70). Unfortunately they are lost.

18 years passed before another Slovene translation of Irving's work appeared in print. As if wanting to make up for the negligence the translator Jan Baukart⁹ published three collections of translated tales in the same year, 1922. A tiny one titled *Dve angleški povesti* (Two English Tales); an enlarged edition titled *Štiri angleške povesti* (Four English Tales) as well as a collection titled *Šest angleških povesti* (Six English Tales). The first booklet contained Slovene translations of Irving's best-known tales, "Rip van Winkle" and "Povest o dolini srca" (The Legend of Sleepy Hollow). The four-story edition included just one tale by Irving - "Pošastni ženin" (The Spectre Bridegroom), two tales by Edgar Allan Poe and one by Charles Dickens. The third book added "Pošastni ženin" (The Spectre Bridegroom) to the two Irving tales mentioned above, containing also two tales by E.A. Poe and one by Dickens.

In the 1920s English and American literatures were not widely known in Slovenia. Few people could speak and/or read English. The Yugoslav kingdom was but four years old at the time and the principal foreign language in Slovenia was German, largely due to Slovenia having been part of Austria-Hungary for so long. It is no wonder then that the translator (who was also the editor of the above mentioned publications) did not discriminate between American authors and the British one but presented them all as "English" due to their common language.

In the wake of this promising introduction of Irving's work in Slovene came a long silence of 76 years; it was not until 1998 that Irving reappeared in Slovene. Založba Karantanija (the Karantanija publishing company) published a Slovene translation of two recent editions of Irving's work: *Rip van Winkle* (Rip van Winkle and Other Stories) and *Legenda o speči dolini* (The Legend of Sleepy Hollow and Other Stories). The publishing information concerning the source text is missing. The translator was Aleksandra Perič.

⁹ Jan Baukart (1889 – 1974), teacher, school principal, poet, prose writer, translator from English, Czech, Croatian, Serbian, German.

As I was searching for any kind of pertinent material through various departments of the Narodna in univerzitetna knjižnica v Ljubljani (Ljubljana National and University Library), I chanced upon an interesting remark referring to the above mentioned late 20th century Slovene translations of Irving's work. They were namely categorized as juvenile literature, intended for young readers aged 9 to 12 by the publishing company Karantanija that issued the translations. Interestingly, the Internet site of The Penguin Group USA classifies its edition *Rip van Winkle and Other Stories* (1994) as "Reading level: Ages 9-12" whereas *The Legend of Sleepy Hollow and Other Stories* released on 16th August 1999 as "illustrated junior library" targets young readers aged 10 to 18 (sic!). The Slovene publisher not only took over the above categorization but, as we will see, subjected Irving's tales to what might be termed "moderate simplification". One may presume that was done in order to make the texts more acceptable for young readers as we know that Irving wrote for the adult

I will not attempt a thorough analysis of Slovene translations of Irving's three major stories. Instead I intend to make a couple of insightful observations based on certain selected elements of the stories such as the toponyma, personal names, historical events as well as some evidently expressive terms used by the author as a means of humor, satire or irony or simply allusion. Irving's stories are firmly embedded in time and place whereby the historical background plays a crucial role. His tales tell about the salient moments in the formation of truly American literature, particularly "Rip van Winkle" and "The Legend of Sleepy Hollow". The above stories offer a rich literary legacy and can be placed within the mythic tradition of American historical fiction. Therefore the layers of meaning mentioned above are indispensable for the readers' proper understanding and full appreciation of Irving's work. A good translation should, in my opinion, tackle the above-mentioned layers with delicate care so as to retain as much of the original stories' aesthetic qualities as possible. I also included Irving's story "The Spectre Bridegroom" in my presentation although its historical background is not American but early 19th century German or even earlier. The fact that this story has occasioned three Slovene translators' interpretations including the oldest one ever was largely meritorious in my decision to begin my survey with this story.

"The Spectre Bridegroom" in Slovene translation

Irving's tale has a recognizable historical background. Ivan Mulaček's early 20th century translation attempts to follow the original closely. Its Slovene is of course archaic, using obsolete spelling, e.g. - *solnce* (sonce - sun), *mejtem* (medtem - in the meantime) etc., as well as a number of grammatical structures nowadays no longer used, e.g. the dual feminine form *niste izpustile* instead of *nista izpustili* (95, meaning *the two of them did not let go of...*). The title is translated as if the two title words, "spectre" and "bridegroom", were both used as nouns, the translator placing a dash between them (Duh – ženin). Mulaček's *duh* is used to translate both Irving's *goblin* (200) and *spectre*. Mulaček attempted to use Slovenized toponyma where possible albeit not very consistently. He did Slovenize *Upper Germany* (183) into *gorenja Nemčija* (94) but did not know what to do with the *Maine and the Rhine* (183) finally

settling for *Main in Rhein* presumably because the two names rhymed beautifully. He chose to leave the *Odenwald* (183) in the original using it in this form throughout the story but “corrected” Irving’s misspelling of the German town of Würzburg. Irving wrote Wurzburg and Mulaček corrected it into Wuerzburg. He was not consistent in the treatment of personal nouns either. According to the customary use of the time, he declined just the first name and not the last one as well (e.g. with *Herman von Starkenfaust* (189) - s *Hermanom von Starkenfaust* (97). Mulaček corrected Irving by adding the word “von” to a last name thus expressing the person’s title of nobility that went missing in the original: where Irving speaks of returning to the ancient family of *Katzenellenbogen* (100) Mulaček wrote *k stari rodbini von Katzenellenbogen* (99). As a matter of fact, Irving’s use of the title of nobility in his story is very inconsistent – he either spells it with capital V or small v or does not use the word at all.

The time pressure all self-employed, solo-working Slovene American editors of the pioneer days were exposed to is well known; Mulaček was no exception and his translation of Irving’s story proves it: he got the name of *Baron Von Landshort* wrong changing it into *Baron von Landhorst* using the wrong name as many times as it appears in the text. Irving’s story includes some German quotation words such as *Heldenbuch* (185), *Rhein-wein*, *Ferne-wein*, *Saus und Braus* (188), however, Mulaček failed to observe their local color importance and translated them into Slovene thus impoverishing his translation of a fine German touch. Where Irving said, “she knew all the tender ballads of the Minnelieders by heart” (185), Mulaček corrected him by replacing the word *Minnelieders* with *minnesaengerji* (95, Minnesaengers). Mulaček was of course right: it was the Minnesängers who sang Minnelieders – the latter being the “product” of the former. However, he committed the unpardonable sin of changing the original.

Mulaček’s translation follows Irving’s original paragraph by paragraph making it easy to compare the texts. He performed a fairly decent job offering his fellow Slovene Americans (whose ears were still much better attuned to German than English) a story they could enjoy reading. From the present-day point of view the archaic sound of Mulaček’s translation provides a touch of history by itself and this need not necessarily be regarded as a weakness.

Jan Baukart divided Irving’s text into smaller units thus making it more difficult to compare the original with the translation. Unlike Mulaček who had retained the epigraph – an excerpt from *The Faerie Queene* (Bk.3/ Canto I) – in the original but left out the three names (Sir Eger, Sir Grahame, and Sir Gray-steel), Baukart translated the verse rather awkwardly as well as misspelled two of the names (Sir Edgar and Sir Greystell). He translated the title as “Pošastni ženin” (monstrous bridegroom) and he consistently used the noun *pošast* (monster) where Irving uses *goblin* (200) or *spectre*; *goblin* in Slovene actually meaning *škrat*. As far as the toponyma are concerned, Baukart Slovenized them even more than Mulaček, e.g. *the Maine and the Rhine* (183) into *Men in Ren* (69) in Slovene. He corrected Irving by spelling Würzburg the way Germans do but was, on the other hand, inconsistent in his use of Slovene *Odenski gozd* (69) for *Odenwald* for he later on forgot that he had already used the Slovene name and returned to *Odenwald*. Baukart’s language in general is obsolete though somewhat less than Mulaček’s; he uses obsolete words such as *gospica* (young

lady), *solnce* (sun) etc. He is not consequent in translating the aristocratic titles – Baron Von Landshort and Count Von Altenburg have no equivalents of *Von* in Slovene translation whereas Herman *von* Starkenfaust becomes Hermann (!) *pl.* Starkenfaust (73), *pl.* meaning *plemeniti*, the Slovene equivalent of *von*. Baukart also translated the German quotation words I already mentioned when discussing Mulaček's translation thereby reducing the effect of genuine German spirit that Irving's story radiates. Baukart's language in general does not reproduce Irving's fine humorous touches mentioned earlier.

If we compare the above two translations it seems unlikely that Baukart knew about Mulaček's translation. The two versions are simply too different, using different syntax in many places, both translators turning Irving's sentences upside down in different places. We can say that both translations were pioneer works, one in the U.S. and the other in Slovenia. Like Mulaček's translation Baukart's can also be considered a decent enough rendering of Irving's tale. If read today, its partly obsolete language harmonizes rather well with Irving's equally archaic expression.

The third Slovene translation of Irving's tale appeared in 1998: the Karantanija Publishing Company published a collection "Lastovka: najlepše zgodbe sveta" (Swallow: world's most beautiful stories). The translator was Aleksandra Perič. A brief comparison of Irving's original with the new translation reveals some obvious differences. Perič did not translate the subtitle "A Traveller's Tale" that had been translated by Mulaček and Baukart, and she chose not to include the epigraph either. She may have done it to spare the young readers who were the target audience. Perič's translation of the title is "Demonski ženin". The word "demon" stands for "evil spirit, personification of evil, Devil, Satan" (Tavzes 192) meaning that Perič's translation is not precise. If we compare the three translations mentioned so far it is Mulaček's (awkward as it is) that captures the meaning of Irving's original title best.

Perič translates paragraph after paragraph. No part of the text is omitted (not counting smaller units such as words or phrases). She uses Slovene toponyma only in so far as they are customarily used such as *Ren* for *Rhine*. Otherwise she leaves them as they are, e.g. *Odenwald*. Perič also left some German nouns untranslated such as *Heldenbuch* and *Minnelieders* (46), however, she changed the meaning slightly in order to fit the word perfectly in the context: "[She] knew all the tender ballads of the Minnelieders by heart" (200) – "na pamet je znala prenekatero žalostno balado iz Minnelieders (46, my emphasis)"¹⁰. Perič was also consequent in the use of aristocratic titles in the full. She decided to leave them in the original thus keeping the German *von* instead of Slovene *pl.* (*plemeniti*). On the other hand Perič translated German quotes *Rhein-wein*, *Ferne-wein* and *Saus und Braus* as if following the example of Mulaček and Baukart. She did not correct Irving though in his misspelling of Wurzburg and paid attention to names that, with one exception, are spelled correctly. She only made a mistake once and "renamed" Herman von Starkenfaust into Hans (59). Otherwise Perič's translation is a modern one and reads smoothly. A closer inspection of her text would, in all probability, reveal some further inconsistencies,

¹⁰ Perič changed "of the Minnelieders" into "from the Minnelieders" thus correcting Irving who evidently mistook Minnelieders for Minnesaengers. However, the original sin is with Irving who pluralized German nouns that were already in plural.

such as for example her different Slovene equivalents for the English *goblin* – *prikazen* (52, meaning apparition) and *škrat* (53). Irving used some archaic words in his story and they were replaced by Perič with neutral, modern words.

One of Perič's most obvious deficiencies is reduction. She tends to omit small parts of Irving's text, especially in places where Irving shows a disposition towards expressive or even bombastic language – using words like *somewhat scandalized*, *negligence*, *marvelous story* (202; underlined words not translated, 60). The translation reads smoothly but it lacks Irving's fine humorous touch achieved by means of mock sophistication.

Slovene translations of “Rip van Winkle”

Irving's story begins with an introduction that Baukart translated in the whole. He made a meaningful change in the subtitle; “A Posthumous Writing of Diedrich Knickerbocker” (my emphasis) is translated as *rokopis* (manuscript). Another important change was his inclusion of Shakespeare's quote from *Hamlet* (Act.I, Sc.2, 231-2) “more in sorrow than in anger” into the text without quotation marks thus integrating it into the text; in this way any reference to Shakespeare was obliterated.

Irving's epigraph– five verses from William Cartwright's 17th century poem – was not translated in full, Baukart deleting the second line completely¹¹ – presumably to avoid a lengthy explanation of it in Slovene. Not a poet himself, Baukart's translation is rather awkward and reads as prose.

Irving's tale was translated by Baukart paragraph after paragraph including the final Note. This time there are no additional divisions into paragraphs. Baukart's translation of toponyma reveals some difficulties, such as in the case of *Fort Christina* that becomes *trdnjavica Christina* (little fort), however, Baukart explains it in his glossary of terms appended at the end as “Swedish settlement in Delamare (sic!)”. If we take the misspelling of Delaware aside, the explanation itself is insufficient. Baukart should provide further information¹² for Slovene readers to make them realize that Irving's mention of Fort Christina alludes to the constant friction between the Dutch, led by Peter Stuyvesant (whose name Irving also mentions), and the Swedes: the former claimed the area for themselves and the latter refused to give it up. An important historic event was thus reduced by the translator to his mention of a couple of proper nouns thus considerably impoverishing Irving's text of its historical undertone.

Baukart decided to leave the toponyma in their original form. His treatment of the Hudson, however, is peculiar for he personified it thus possibly misleading a reader ignorant in American geography into believing the Hudson was a man: “He saw at a distance the lordly Hudson...” (49) – “V daljavi je videl ponosnega Hudsona...” (17).

“Rip van Winkle” is a fine tale with a delicate humorous touch. This is partly achieved by means of carefully selected words and phrases – Irving oscillated between

¹¹ “From whence comes Wensday, that is Wodensday”.

¹² e.g. Fort Christina being the first Swedish settlement in North America and the principal settlement of the New Sweden colony, built in 1638 and named after Queen Christina of Sweden. It was also the first permanent settlement in the Delaware valley.

rare and bombastic words, between archaic and sophisticated vocabulary. His story is indeed replete with humor:

/.../ the unlucky Rip was at length routed by his *termagant* wife, who would suddenly break in upon the *tranquility* of the *assemblage*, and *call the members all to naught*, nor was that *august personage*, Nicholas Vedder himself, *sacred* from the daring tongue of this terrible *virago* / .../. (48-9, my emphasis)

Baukart's translation is in part mildly "neutral" in tone: his translation of the above terms was *jezična žena* (talkative wife), *družba* (company), *in pitala njene člane z ničvredneži* (a good, juicy Slovene phrase that captures the wrathful connotation of the original "...all to naught"); Baukart's translation *prevzvišeni* for *august* is also perfect – both expressions containing a good deal of irony. His translation of *sacred* though is *varna* (safe, f.) and *virago* is awkwardly translated as *polženska* (half-woman). Baukart sadly failed in finding a biting Slovene equivalent for *Dame*¹³ in *Dame van Winkle*. He used the perfectly neutral and respectful *gospa* instead. Irving's characterization in the story is clearly black-and-white. His portrait of Rip is very sympathetic, the narrator making no attempt to conceal his partiality towards this lazy and easygoing Dutchman. His wife, on the other hand, is presented as a she-dragon, Rip's tormentor and parole officer in one. She has no sympathies of the narrator whatsoever. In Baukart's translation both characters turn out less extreme, somehow "flattened-out".

Numerous other subtleties of Irving's story get lost in translation, for example his mention of the *Union Hotel by Jonathan Doolittle* (56). Although adequately translated into Slovene, the obvious political connotation of the name was lost in Slovene for reasons already mentioned. Baukart added a short glossary of terms at the end of his text explaining some (not all) proper nouns used by Irving. These explanatory notes are, for the most part, too brief, a couple of times explaining a name with another one, the suggested pronunciation often wrong. In my opinion the notes are too brief and partly misleading to be of any real use to the reader.

Through Baukart's translation "Rip van Winkle" became available to Slovene readers for the first time ever, albeit in a somewhat impoverished form. It lacked Irving's delicate humorous touch as well as the historical undertone in many places.

Aleksandra Perič translated "Rip van Winkle" in 1998. She chose to forgo the subtitle and Cartwright's verses altogether. She did translate paragraph after paragraph though including the final Note. In the end she translated another appendix, a text titled "P.S." nonexistent in Irving's original, in my case the 1843 Tauchnitz edition. The language of her translation is modern Slovene. If we skim through it focusing on the points already discussed in previous translations, the comparison reveals the following: In her treatment of proper nouns Perič follows the rule determined by *Slovenski pravopis* (Slovene orthography) whereby well-known proper nouns should be used in their Slovene form and others in their original. *His Majesty George the*

¹³ According to *Webster's New Universal Dictionary of the English Language* (1977) there are 8 meanings to the word *dame*. I believe Irving meant "a title formerly given to a woman in authority, a head of the household (...)" (459). Irving's choice of word indicated the power of authority of Rip's bossy wife.

Third (47) thus becomes *njegovo veličanstvo Jurij Tretji* (11), the Appalachian family (43) becomes *Apalači* (6) but Fort Christina, Kaatskill Mountains, and most personal nouns remain unchanged, with the exception of Derrick Van Bummel whom Perič renames *Derric* (11). The Kyffhäuser mountain is changed into “gora Kypphauser” (28). Perič’s translation of Irving’s expressive language is sometimes more, sometimes less successful. She did well, for example in translating *a termagant wife* (44) with *ujedljiva žena* (7) but failed, like her predecessor, in finding a satisfactory equivalent for Irving’s sarcastic *Dame*.

Perič’s translation reveals some inconsistencies such as inaccuracy of equivalents, e.g. “Rip van Winkle was *thrice* blessed” (44) – “je bil Rip van Winkle *resnično* blagoslovljen” (truly blessed, 7); or leaving out words as in “Rip’s sole domestic adherent” (47), where Slovene translation contains no equivalent for *domestic*.

Perič’s translation follows in the footsteps of her predecessor in that it fails to reproduce Irving’s delicate humor and witty irony. The historical allusions are lost on young readers whose knowledge of early American history is presumably not sufficient to appreciate Irving’s masterful handling of the period of the Dutch settlement in Manhattan. There is no explanation of names such as Peter Stuyvesant, Hendrick Hudson or the Union Hotel whatsoever. As a result of this, young readers can appreciate Irving’s story mostly on the level of its plot whereas other textual subtleties remain for the most part unrecognized.

Slovene translations of “The Legend of Sleepy Hollow”

Jan Baukart’s translation begins with a curious misinterpretation of the title: “Povest o dolini sna”. *Povest* is a Slovene name for a literary form “without a clear profile” (Kmecl 293); it is often synonymous with the short story although it can also mean a “longer, artistically less important literary work” (Ibid.) focusing on plot. Why Baukart avoided the word *legenda* is not clear. He also selected a poor equivalent for *Sleepy Hollow*; *Dolina sna* meaning *Valley of sleep*. The name of Diedrich Knickerbocker is mentioned in his translation albeit slightly changed into German sounding *Ditrih* whereas the verse epigraph, an excerpt from James Thomson’s poem “Castle of Indolence”, is turned into prose.

The main characteristics of Baukart’s translation can be summarized as follows: the Hudson is personified again but most of other proper nouns are left unchanged – Greensburg, Tarry Town, Katrina Van Tassel, Baltus Van Tassel, Brom Bones, Gunpowder and Major Andre. Baukart seems to have been aware of the symbolic connotation of some of the names for he provided explanatory notes some of which are inadequate and even funny. I rather doubt his readers profited from his explanation of *Tarry Town* as *mudno mesto* (66) or Ichabod’s last name as *žerjav*. In Slovene the latter means either a bird or a lifting engine. On the other hand *Brom Bones*’ last name is suggestive of his robust physical appearance, strength and determination of will, however, Baukart offers no explanation. Furthermore, Baukart’s change of Katrina Van Tassel’s name into *Katarina* is out of place. *Katrina* is a fine Dutch name, it matches the girl’s last name and rounds off her portrait as a typical Dutch country maiden.

Baukart's replacement of the name thus robs the girl's character of one of her most distinct characteristics.

Baukart's style in his translation of "The Legend of Sleepy Hollow" closely resembles the style of his other translations. He neutralized expressive phrases such as *roistering blade* (417) – *glasen fant* (loud boy, 44). From the perspective of a present-day reader his language sounds old-fashioned in vocabulary and syntax thus placing his translation of Irving's story within a historical context, albeit not the one Irving had in mind.

Aleksandra Perič translated Irving's title as "Legenda o speči dolini" (the legend of sleeping hollow); in my opinion the more adequate translation would be *legenda o zaspani/zaspanjani kotlini*. Perič's attitude toward proper nouns is the same as in "Rip van Winkle": less usual names left in the original, more common ones translated. Perič provides a footnote in explanation of *tarry* in Tarry Town thereby making the connection between the town's name and the propensity of its husbands to linger in the local tavern on market day. Whereas most of the characters' names remain unchanged, Perič decided to alter Derrick Van Bummel into Derric and Ichabod into Schabod, in the latter case following Baukart's example. Perič Slovenized certain toponyms that were composed of a proper and common noun, e.g. *Wiley's swamp* – *Wilejevo močvirje*. But she was not consistent as she left *Ten Pound Court* (43), *White Plains* (31) and *Raven Rock* (32) in their original form.

Perič obviously misinterpreted *Mynheer* Van Tassel as a female first name. Other deficiencies of her translation include untranslated parts of the original: when speaking of Cotton Mather, Irving mentions *A New England Almanack* whereas the title is missing in the translation. Perič further omits Cotton Mather's name in relation to his *History of New England Witchcraft*; the title itself adapted into *Zgodovina umetnosti čarovništva Nove Anglije* (History of the Art of New England Witchcraft) as if Mather's attitude to witchcraft were positive which is not the case.

On the whole, Perič's translation represents a simplified rendering of Irving's story. The actual degree of simplification, however, would require a detailed comparison of Irving's original and Perič's translation.

Critical response to Irving's work in Slovenia

The first to respond to Irving's work in Slovenia was Jan Baukart in his introduction to *Šest angleških povesti* (1922) titled "Predgovor" (Foreword). Baukart initially said he selected six tales written by "three English or Anglo-American writers respectively" (n.p.), i.e. Washington Irving, Edgar Allan Poe and Charles Dickens. His footnotes suggested a simplified and somewhat approximate phonetic transcription of the names. In his next paragraph Baukart asserted his reader that no work by Washington Irving had been translated into Slovene by then. It seems very likely Baukart knew nothing about Mulaček's translation of "The Spectre Bridegroom" from 1905. He speculated as to the reasons suggesting that Irving's tales were simple, without complex plot and "particularly lacking in psychological insight that is nowadays considered as one of the most important criteria of artistic perfection" (my transla-

tion, n.p.). Yet Baukart said Irving's tales nevertheless contained something in place of the above mentioned deficiency, namely a pleasant style and fine, typically English (!) dry humor as well as unobtrusive enthusiasm for the noble and the beautiful, especially the beauty of life itself. Baukart then went on to mention the key facts of Irving's life whereby he emphasized his mother's Dutch origin as well as the period of Irving's life spent among the Dutch in New York. According to Baukart that spurred Irving into writing *Zgodovina države New York* (A history of New York). Baukart mentioned the *Sketchbook* as Irving's finest work as well as the source he translated from. *Bracebridge hall*, however, was "famous because with it [Irving] introduced into English literature (sic!) so-called "kratka povest" (short story) that remains to be one of the most important as well as the most fruitful literary forms"(n.p.).

Both books of translations by Aleksandra Perič were followed by an Afterword written by Dušan Čater. He provides a brief biography of Washington Irving (sixteen lines altogether) followed by "Irvingovo literarno življenje" (Irving's literary life) where Čater briefly presents Irving's most important works by their titles. *A History of New York* is described as the result of Irving's youthful wanderings across the landscape of New York where he gathered information on the earliest Dutch immigrants. The findings were used in his humorous presentations popular among the descendants of the Dutch and elsewhere (95-6). "Irvingov prostor v ameriški literaturi" (Irving's position in American Literature) begins with Čater's statement of the so-called cyclic nature of Irving's work. Čater goes on to say that Irving did not aim to achieve psychological depth in his writing as his treatment of themes was rather superficial. What saved him was his unique mixture of humor and pathos. Irving was the first major writer to write short stories about America and the first American writer to be read in Europe (96-7).

This is followed by a brief survey of literary periods in America with Čater stressing the fact that truly American literature began only in the Romantic period. Čater mentions some typical characteristics of American Romanticism without naming any other Romantic authors.

The final chapter on "Rip van Winkle" begins with a short plot summary. According to Čater the story belongs among classic American literature - Irving's intention being to write a legend about a Dutch settler, the one who discovered the Hudson (!). In his conclusion Čater presents original titles of stories included in the book.

The Appendix in *Legenda o speči dolini* is identical with the exception of the final chapter that, naturally, speaks about "The Legend of Sleepy Hollow". Following a brief plot summary Čater speculates on Irving's use of his pen name Diedrich Knickerbocker as being, in all probability, a fictitious one. Like the previous one, this essay also ends with a list of Irving's tales included in the book.

In my evaluation of Slovene translations of some of Irving's best tales I focused on the elements that most evidently determine Irving's uniquely humorous style as well as define his stories within the historical context of the early days of Dutch settlement in New York. I did not attempt a thorough evaluation of Irving's work in Slovene translation; a detailed critical evaluation of Irving's translated work in Slovenia has yet to be done.

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SYLVIA PLATH - A WOMAN BETWEEN EROS AND THANATOS

Barbara Galle

Abstract

The opposition between the Hughes family and the radical feminists led to the emergence of two diametrically opposite Plath myths: a mentally disturbed, manipulative woman, unstopably driven towards suicide, or an innocent victim of a treacherous husband? Both sides interpret Plath's life and works in view of her untimely death, neglecting the underlying life force that pervades her poetry and prose. Relying on the psychoanalytical theory of instincts, the author shows how Eros complements and even makes use of Thanatos on different levels of Plath's writing: on the level of language as a meaningful structure, on the level of meaning, and in the function of language as therapy. The duality of instincts is particularly evident in Slovenian criticism, where the physical and temporal distance from political scandal enabled the development of two distinct critical currents: one following Hughes's morbid determinism, the other concentrating on Plath's intelligence and joyful observation of nature.

I. The Poetry of Sylvia Plath

Sylvia Plath, a renowned poetess and a winner of the Pulitzer Prize, has gained worldwide fame due to her untimely death in 1963. Her tempestuous marriage to the late Poet Laureate, Ted Hughes, and his allegedly repeated infidelity have been viewed as main reasons for her suicide at the age of thirty. Radical feminists have turned her into a martyr, condemning Hughes and repeatedly wiping his name off her tombstone. Hughes's family, however, responded by creating a diametrically opposite myth of Plath as a mentally disturbed woman with suicidal tendencies, whose unbearable behavior invariably pushed Hughes into the arms of another woman. Most critics have felt obliged to take sides and, labeling her as either mentally unstable or victimized to the point of suicide, interpreted her life and work in view of her unfortunate death. "The writer, like the murderer, needs a motive" (Malcolm 1995: 176) stated Janet Malcolm, a renown literary critic and one of Plath's biographers, who after an extensive research decided to take Hughes's side.

Fatalistically interpreting Plath's life and works as death-driven, Ted Hughes and his followers disregarded the creative life force that is not only naturally present, but actually pervades most of Plath's poetry – its meaning, structure, and its function in Plath's life. By furiously attacking Hughes, radical feminists attempted to reduce

the extent of Thanatos attributed to Plath; however, they concentrated on the outside events instead on what was already present in Plath's own biography and works. For decades the scandal surrounding Plath's death prevented most British and American critics from being able to interpret her poetry as such. Contemporary critics, especially those relying on structural psychoanalysis, have described such Plath criticism as "psychotic" (Rose 1996: 158), and have attempted to avoid the trap of guilt attribution by viewing her texts as fantasies, where every interpretation is possible. However, even they have been attacked by the Hughes family if their interpretations did not match the expectations.

The purpose of this essay is to compensate for the lack of opposition to Hughes's fatalism without attributing guilt. By using psychoanalytical knowledge of instincts and their characteristics, we will expose the life force in Plath's biography and works. This requires a very clear notion of what instincts are and how they work. There are two opposing, yet complementary forces in the human psyche: Eros and Thanatos. The concept of a life-instinct was first introduced by Sigmund Freud in "Beyond the Pleasure Principle" in 1920. He assumed that there are two basic psychological drives. The life-instinct, metaphorically named Eros, is a drive towards unity, complexity and self-preservation. Already in the womb it ensures the multiplication of cells and a development of a complex organism, while later it often comes to expression as a wish for perfection, love, and structure. Since every human being has a (more or less unconscious) memory of the perfect unity of the fetus with the mother, we attempt to reestablish that experience of perfection through platonic or erotic love, religion, sometimes even through drugs.

Such attempts are, of course, bound to be futile. In its striving for an illusory unity, Eros is inevitably blocked by Thanatos, which is at the same time its extension and its barricade (Rutar 1996: 51). The absolute, "oceanic" pleasure is only possible in the absence of all structures and boundaries, including a person's identity. On nearing the final aim of Eros, an individual is invariably faced with the horror of self-annihilation, stemming from his disintegrating identity. In its extreme, Eros therefore leads to (symbolic) death, and at that stage we can no longer refer to it as a life-instinct. It has turned into its opposite: Thanatos, the death-instinct, under the influence of which a person becomes a living automaton without any desire, sense of identity, or a reasonable thought. The two instincts are strongly interrelated and they are only rarely encountered in their pure form. Usually they are merged into a whole, where one of them prevails while the other serves it.

To detect these two currents in Sylvia Plath, we need to take a close look at her biography. We will notice that the erotic drive for perfection and unity continually outwitted her suicidal tendencies and even made use of them to make Plath into an even more successful writer.

Born on 27 October 1932 in Boston, Massachusetts, Sylvia Plath was an extremely talented child. At the age of ten she read forty books for her own pleasure, wrote verse all the time and decorated it with her own illustrations. In high school she continued getting nothing but the best grades, each year receiving numerous awards for creative writing and drawing. Her poems and short stories were by this time regularly published in newspapers and magazines, such as *Seventeen*, *The Christian Sci-*

ence Monitor and *The Boston Globe*. In 1950 she entered Smith College, where she managed to keep her grades, but the continual striving to keep her scholarship, combined with a part-time job to cover the other expenses, began to take a toll on her health. When she won the first prize for her short story "Sunday at the Mintons" in 1952 and was invited to spend the holidays in New York as a guest editor of the *Mademoiselle*, her exhaustion gradually led to depression. Faced with her insecure future, disappointment with the opposite sex, and doubt in her own artistic abilities, she attempted suicide not long after returning home. However, Eros was still very much at work. Her body first refused to drown, popping out like a cork, then her wrists seemed too white and innocent to be cut with a razor. Even when Plath finally stuffed herself with sleeping pills and crawled into a hiding place, she moaned until she was found and rescued. Having spent six months in McLean psychiatric hospital, she returned to Smith and continued her career as a model student.

She graduated *summa cum laude* and went to Cambridge on Fullbright scholarship. There she met Ted Hughes, a talented young poet whose work fascinated her. Ignoring his reputation regarding women, she married him only four months after their first meeting. After the honeymoon in Spain they returned to Cambridge, where she finished her studies, and then took off to the States where Sylvia taught at Smith and Ted at the Massachusetts University. A year later Ted convinced Sylvia to give up teaching and live entirely on their writing. To get fresh ideas, Plath worked part-time as a secretary in Boston psychiatric hospital and attended the lectures of Robert Lowell at the Boston University, where she got acquainted with the new "confessional poetry" and made friends with Anne Sexton.

In 1959 Plath and Hughes traveled all round America, spent two months in the Yaddo writer's colony, and then permanently moved to England. In 1960 their first child, Frieda Rebecca, was born. The same year Plath published her first collection of poetry, *The Colossus and Other Poems*, which was praised for the show of technical skill, but did not make her name. Hughes, on the other hand, was by that time a celebrated poet, consorting with such great names as T. S. Eliot and Stephen Spender. Plath remained in his shadow, working on her first novel and increasingly doubting the power of her imagination. In 1962, soon after the birth of their second child, the marriage, already troubled by her jealousy and mood changes, suffered the final stroke. Sylvia became painfully aware of Ted's affair with Assia Wevill, a common friend, and her rage produced some of her best poems. Ted moved to London, leaving her with two small children.

In December 1962 she moved to W. B. Yeats's house in London, maintaining contact with Ted. In January she published *The Bell Jar*, a novel describing her suicide attempt in 1952. The first critiques were not very enthusiastic, and her latest poems, now believed to be her best, were rejected as being too morbid. Alone with two ill children in a bitterly cold house, rejected by critics as a writer and by Al Alvarez as a woman, she committed suicide on 11 February 1963 by putting her head in a gas stove. Some doubt remains as to whether she actually intended to die, for she left the phone number of her doctor clearly displayed and she was expecting a visitor at that time. There has been speculation that she planned another rebirth, similar to the one in 1952.

Since Plath and Hughes were not yet divorced at the time of her death, her literary legacy came under Hughes's control. For several decades he duly edited and

published her work. In 1965 he published her second collection of poetry, *Ariel*, which comprises her last, most intense poems. However, he omitted the poems which for personal reasons he did not find acceptable, and he also changed the intended optimistic order of poems, implying a far gloomier and deterministic mood. In 1971 he published her transitional poems in *Crossing the Water*, and the previously unpublished late poems in *Winter Trees*. In 1975, Plath's mother Aurelia published a collection of Sylvia's *Letters Home*, in order to neutralize the negative presentation of the mother-daughter relationship in *The Bell Jar* before its publication in America. In 1977 Hughes edited the selection of Plath's short stories *Johnny Panic and the Bible of Dreams*, and four years later *The Collected Poems*, for which she was posthumously awarded the Pulitzer prize.

Sylvia Plath had a habit of keeping a journal throughout her life. In 1982, a highly censored edition of her journals was published, enraging the readers with innumerable omissions. Before his death in 1998, Hughes sanctioned the publication of unabridged journals, which finally became accessible to the general public in 2000. The journals do not include the notes on the last three years of her life, originally contained in two notebooks. The first one has disappeared (Hughes suspected Sylvia's mother of having secretly taken them), while Hughes admitted having destroyed the second one in order to prevent their children from ever reading it, and also because at the time he viewed forgetfulness as the only means of survival (Plath 1998: xiii). Two of Plath's novels have been similarly lost. Plath herself is said to have destroyed one when she discovered Hughes's infidelity, while the other, *Double Exposure*, which was probably about finished at the time of her death and recounted the tragic story of Plath's failed marriage, has also disappeared. The Plath Archive is now in the hands of her grown-up children, so the possibility of new publications is not excluded.

The main reason for the censorship of Plath's work is its obviously autobiographic nature. Hughes was convinced that it was more important to protect her acquaintances from the "vivid, cruel words she could use" (Plath 2000b: 9) than to reveal certain facts about the famous writer. However, Plath's works also include fabrications, so skillfully interwoven with facts that truth and imagination become indistinguishable. *The Bell Jar*, for example, contains such obvious parallels with Plath's breakdown in 1952 that the reader is quickly deluded into believing that this is a purely autobiographic novel. In 1987 such misconceptions led to a lawsuit against the filmed version of the novel. Plath's former acquaintance and rival Jane Anderson recognized herself in one of the characters, Joan Gilling, who is in the novel presented as a lesbian who eventually commits suicide (Rose 1991: 106-107). Anderson, by that time a successful psychotherapist, claimed that she had never had any homosexual feelings, and was worried about the effect of such rumors on her female patients. Since she obviously had not committed suicide either, the lawsuit triggered widespread speculation about the share of fiction in Plath's work.

"What I've done," Sylvia once mentioned to her mother, "is to throw together events from my own life, fictionalizing to add color" (Plath 1999: 262). The characters are mostly caricatures of the people she once knew, their traits are often exaggerated and sometimes two or more people are merged into one. Actual events are frequently partly changed in order to make a point or to add a touch of mystery. The

early short story "Sunday at the Mintons" is a typical example of transformation in Plath's writing. In this story she presents her relationship with the revoltingly conceited Yale student Dick Norton through two elderly siblings, Elizabeth and Henry. Elizabeth, used to her brother's endless patronizing and criticism, accidentally drops her mother's brooch during a walk on the beach. Henry, who bravely attempts to retrieve it, is washed into the ocean by an unexpected wave, and Elizabeth drifts into the air, giggling uncontrollably. What turns out to be Elizabeth's fantasy is, of course, an expression of Plath's own frustration. However, she was well aware of the possible reaction the story might produce, so she took the necessary steps to veil the true identity of the protagonists, making them old and related.

Still, not all transformations of reality seem to be intentional. In the essay "Ocean 1212-W", which describes her idyllic childhood at the seaside, she remembers her first contact with the sea, when she crawled right into the water and was saved at the last moment by her mother. According to Aurelia Plath this did not happen to Sylvia, but to her little brother Warren. Plath's favorite childhood memory, swimming with her father, who died when she was eight years old, also turns out to be false, for Otto Plath never took time to go swimming with his children. It was Sylvia's grandfather who did that. Anne Stevenson, the author of *Bitter Fame*, one of the most hostile Plath biographies, claims that there is nothing unintentional in such changes: "Sylvia's memory ... served the purposes of her art-myth; she revised her life constantly to suit her art" (Stevenson 1998: 14).

However true this may be, we should not neglect the basic findings on the way memory works. In *The Psychopathology of Everyday Life*, Sigmund Freud claims that early childhood memories are all but reliable: "Some of the mnemonic images are certainly falsified, incomplete or displaced in time and place" (Freud 1991: 87). Such mistakes are brought about by unconscious desires, and therefore memories should be analyzed in the same way as dreams and fantasies. Swimming with the father, who in reality never spent much time with the children, is an obvious example of wish-fulfillment, and it is very likely that the transformation of the grandfather into the father took place even before the literary depiction, in the memory itself.

Since Plath's works contain a lot of - intentional or unintentional - fictitious elements, we should not make rash conclusions about her life solely on the basis of her writing. This is also true of her poetry, often carelessly labeled as "confessional". Her poems have been roughly divided into three phases: her "early" poems, collected in *The Colossus and Other Poems*, are technically impeccable, but they show a certain want of originality and inspiration: "How excited we would be about Miss Plath if we - and she - never read Mr Ransom and Miss Moore. Or if she were 23 and not 28" (Wagner-Martin 1988: 35). The poems are well-controlled and intelligent, but Plath herself confessed during a later interview with Peter Orr that they "privately bored her" (Bronfen 1998: 65). The complex linguistic structures and imaginative metaphors win the reader's intellectual admiration, but they fail to involve his emotions.

The "transitional" poems (written between 1959 and 1962) reveal a search for Plath's own style. The syntax loosens and the poems become more readable, gradually nearing spoken language that marks her late poetry. There is yet no trace of the intense emotions and wild fury which made her name. The poems reflect the peace-

fulness of a happy family life and are either dedicated to her newborn babies (“Morning Song”) or describe the stay in hospital after a miscarriage and appendectomy (“In Plaster”, “Tulips”).

“The Rabbit Catcher” and “Event”, written in May 1962, mark the beginning of the late period. The marriage of two great poets begins to disintegrate and her poems are suddenly pervaded by rage and jealousy at the discovery of Ted’s infidelity. Written without much contemplation at four a clock in the morning, before the children woke up, these poems seem to lack conscious control both on the level of structure and contents. The spoken language with an exquisite sound quality at times nears the ramble of a small child, the lines are noticeably shorter, but the metaphors manage to retain their ingenuity. The poet’s worries ruthlessly intrude into the verse, denigrating Ted (“Bastard / Masturbating a glitter, / He wants to be loved.”) or his new flame (“Toad-stone! Sister-bitch! Sweet neighbor!”). The children, though still a source of joy and freshness, come to be viewed as a heavy burden on the single mother: “With a goddam baby screaming off somewhere. / There’s always a bloody baby in the air.” The thought of death constantly reappears, but she still fights it: “His beak / Claps sidewise: I am not his yet.”

Due to the highly personal themes that mark her late poetry, Plath has been repeatedly classified as a confessional poet. Confessionalism was an American poetic movement whose members concentrated on their psychological problems, nervous breakdowns and suicide attempts. The founder of the poetry that used psychoanalysis to transform personal experience into art was Robert Lowell, Plath’s former professor, who was soon followed by authors like Hart Crane, John Berryman, and Anne Sexton. By the end of the 1970s confessionalism carried a negative connotation: “It signaled the end of control, the opposite of craft” (Wagner-Martin 1988: 12). The women-dominated poetry was seen as egotistic, prosaic dealing with one’s own problems, which had no artistic or wider cultural meaning.

Although Plath attended Lowell’s classes and consorted with Anne Sexton, her poetry could hardly be described as confessional. Her aim was to transcend the self-centeredness by giving personal experience a universal validity in a certain social context: “I think that personal experience shouldn’t be a kind of shut-box and mirror-looking narcissistic experience. I believe it should be generally relevant to such things as Hiroshima and Dachau” (198). Her poems are indeed personal, but at the same time general enough to allow a wide specter of readers to identify with them. Sylvia Plath could not have become an icon of the developing feminism if women had not seen her work as an expression of rebellion against the patriarchal society of the early 1960s. The lines “Out of the ash / I rise with my red hair / And I eat men like air” from “Lady Lazarus” were a source of inspiration to female intellectuals even before the beginning of an organized feminist movement.

The use of personal experience in her writing was for Plath not a choice, but a means of survival. Having learnt at a young age that writing and academic success were the only ways of obtaining the love of her parents, she came to see her literary achievements as a proof of her own worth: “I felt if I didn’t write nobody would accept me as a human being” (Plath 2000a: 448). Continual writing, technique development, market research, and a wish for success became an obsession that gradually

took over her life. Periods of compulsive writing were usually followed by writer's blocks, accompanied by severe panic attacks and depressions. These confirm that writing for Plath became a form of obsession, a "private religion", where the absence of the ritual produces intense feelings of guilt.

In "Obsessions and Religion" Sigmund Freud draws parallels between obsessive and religious rituals, pointing out that both are protective measures that help to sustain a repressed instinctual impulse. The repressed instinct presents a temptation, for which punishment is expected. Due to the constant expectation of punishment, the person suffers from "a lurking sense of expectant anxiety, an expectation of misfortune, which is linked, through the idea of punishment, with the internal perception of the temptation" (Freud 1991: 37). The obsessive ceremony serves both the repressed instinct and the forces which are repressing it, functioning as a "compromise between the warring forces of the mind" (39): on the one hand it helps to sustain repression, while on the other the form of the ritual reproduces some of the very pleasure it is designed to prevent.

In the case of Sylvia Plath, writing served above all to help her deal with her ambivalent feelings towards her mother, Aurelia Schober Plath. Throughout Plath's childhood, her mother concentrated on taking care of her husband Otto, who eventually died of diabetes, and of Sylvia's younger brother Warren, a rather sickly child. Sylvia was often sent to spend long periods of time with her grandparents, whom she loved; but who could not replace maternal love. In her letters to Sylvia, Aurelia mostly praised her academic and artistic achievements, thus encouraging Sylvia's development into a perfectionist over-achiever, dependent on external success. The wish to buy her mother's love and the love of the whole world gradually drove Sylvia onto the verge of death. The psychoanalytic sessions with Dr Ruth Beuscher after the first suicide attempt revealed an underlying hatred towards the apparently loving and self-sacrificial Aurelia: "Like a shot of brandy went home, a sniff of cocaine, hit me where I live and I am alive and so-there. Better than shock-treatment: 'I give you permission to hate your mother'" (Plath 2000a: 184). She expressed her wish for her mother's death in *The Bell Jar*, but outwardly she remained little "Sivvy", who in every letter to her mother expressed endless gratitude and the hope she could "continue to lay more laurels at [Aurelia's] feet" (Plath 1999: 94).

Letters Home have been viewed by critics as a proof of Plath's hypocrisy, of giving her mother what she wanted to hear. However, had Plath fully embraced the newly-discovered aggression, the ritual of writing (as a means of sustaining the repression of aggressive feelings towards Aurelia) would have become unnecessary and the depressions would have disappeared. The genuine feelings of love, gratitude and filial duty towards Aurelia could not simply be erased: "I may hate her, but that's not all. I pity and love her too. After all, as the story goes, she is my mother" (Plath 2000a: 445). The ambivalence of her emotions caught her into a vicious circle. She continued writing in an attempt to win her mother's love and to suppress the socially unacceptable murderous desires. On the other hand, she used writing to express the very feelings she was trying to deny, and so reduced the dangerous pressure of unconscious impulses. Writing as an obsession therefore paradoxically turned into a form of therapy.

The dual function of writing in Plath's life illustrates the continual struggle between Eros and Thanatos, two mutually exclusive, yet complementary instincts. The therapeutic value of an obsession in Plath is a typical example of Eros taking over and making use of Thanatos. Although senseless repetition is in the domain of Thanatos, Eros managed to turn it into a means of self-preservation, reducing the pressure of unconscious murderous desires, which could, if they burst into the consciousness, produce deadly feelings of guilt. The fact that it was writing that became her obsession can hardly be coincidental, for language itself is in the service of Eros, since it sustains the structure of the symbolic reality that makes us human.

Julia Kristeva distinguishes between two orders within language: the semiotic and the symbolic. The semiotic, associated with sound and rhythm, is a remainder of the pre-Oedipal, maternal world. Whenever the sound quality of the signifier prevails over the signified, we are dealing with an attempt to reestablish the primeval unity. This expression of Eros is particularly obvious in Plath's late poetry, which is to be read aloud. In "Daddy", the rhythm and the repetition of the infantile "u" sound produce a strong association with a toddler's speech: "You do not do, you do not do / Any more, black shoe ...". While reading this poem on BBC, Plath actually imitated a small child. It can hardly be a coincidence that the semiotic prevails in the very poem in which Plath expresses her anger and frustration at both her father's and Hughes's departure. The disappointment with both substitute love objects triggers a wish to reestablish the once-lost symbiosis with the mother. In accordance with the natural progress of such a desire, a characteristic wish for death appears at the end of the poem.

Language also performs the function of the Eros through the symbolic, which maintains its structure and logical connections. Governed by control and order, the symbolic finds its peak in poetic language, therefore we can find nothing surprising in Harold Bloom's belief that "Eros equals figurative meaning" (Ellmann 1994: 25). Sylvia Plath's poetry is marked with a persistent wish to control both the form and the meaning, and the elaborate metaphors testify to its highly symbolic value. Despite the frequent theme of death the poems are tightly interwoven with Eros, the wish for structure. Both semiotic and symbolic aspects of Plath's poetry therefore serve as protective measures against her self-destructive impulses.

Eros, however, does not find expression solely through sound and structure. Plath's poems are often brimming with eroticism. "Pursuit", written after the first meeting with Hughes, combines hypnotically erotic atmosphere with masochistic pleasure in imminent death. Hughes is presented as a blood-thirsty panther, gradually catching up with her:

I hurl my heart to halt his pace,
To quench his thirst I squander blood;
He eats, and still his need seeks food,
Compels a total sacrifice.

The tension and rhythm increase from stanza to stanza, till the fever culminates in the last two lines:

The panther's thread is on the stairs,
Coming up and up the stairs.

The erotic atmosphere and rhythm are enhanced by the threat of death. "Death," Plath wrote in a letter, "includes the concept of love, and is larger and richer than mere love" (Plath 1992: 222). Violence and death in Plath's poems carry a strong erotic connotation, partly stemming from her actual relationship with Hughes, who during her first meeting ripped off her earrings and headband, while she took vengeance by biting his cheek and leaving him with a bloody mark. Marital conflicts sometimes ended with twisted fingers and bloody scratches, while in "The Rabbit Catcher" she is being strangled. However, even here the approaching death takes on an orgasmic quality. As shown by Georges Bataille, the area of eroticism is in itself the area of violence, for every act of disrupting discontinuity is severely violent (Bataille 2001: 14). Although people search for continuity that could only be established by death, they paradoxically do so only if their search is not to be completed. Marquis de Sade was one of the few exceptions who were not appalled by the eroticism of torture and death. Plath's "terrible beauty of death" (Plath 1992: 222) was therefore not a product of a disturbed mind, but a deep insight into the true nature of man, who fears most what he most desires.

In consistence with the nature of Eros and Thanatos, Plath sees death as the ultimate goal of love and desire. The longing for the unity with the object of love is frequently combined with elements of incest, which is again perfectly natural, for the desired unity is essentially the lost unity with the mother. Since it cannot be reestablished, people look for substitute love objects, and the first choice for a young girl is usually her father, succeeded by other male lovers. In Plath, however, the death of her father when she was eight years old preserved the little girl's Oedipal fixation and gave death an additional meaning.

Disappointed with mother's attachment to her brother Warren, little Sylvia transferred her affection to her father Otto, a strict patriarch who spent most of his days working on scientific books and articles. Due to his preoccupation with work and his early death, Plath preserved the infantile image of his enormous size and abilities. In "The Colossus" he is presented as the scattered statue of a 34-meter Apollo, one of the Seven Wonders of the World, which was destroyed by an earthquake in 227 B.C.: "O father, all by yourself / You are pithy and historical as the Roman Forum". The mourning daughter lives among the enormous ruins that she will never be able to put together again: "I crawl like an ant in mourning / Over the weedy acres of your brow / To mend the immense skull-plates".

Since the Plath family spent the last years of her father's life at the seaside, the image of sea and water in Plath's writing retained the allusion to happy childhood. At the same time water with its murderous qualities becomes the place of unity with her father: "Father, this thick air is murderous. / I would breathe water". In *The Bell Jar* Plath describes her first suicide attempt as trying to drown, which she imagined to be the best way to die. However, her attempt to be in this way reunited with her father failed: "... somehow the urge to life, mere physical life, is damn strong" (Plath 1992: 130). She found herself popping out of the water.

Otto's death from diabetes intensified Plath's already conflicting relationship with her mother, which contributed to her suicide attempts in 1952. In her journals Plath connects her wish to die with an unconscious wish to kill her mother: "... a

transferred murderous impulse from my mother onto myself” (Plath 2000a: 447). In Freud’s “Mourning and Melancholia” she recognized her own feelings and reasons for suicide. Freud noticed that the symptoms of melancholia match those of mourning a lost object of love, and so he concluded that melancholia must in fact be an unconscious way of mourning. Due to the fixation on the lost object, the Ego refuses to accept the loss and attempts to preserve the object through internalization. Since every relationship is inherently ambivalent, the negative feelings and reproaches towards the object are now also internalized. Criticism towards the lost object therefore becomes self-criticism, and possible murderous impulses come to expression as a strong suicidal urge, which may in some cases lead to actual suicide.

Plath connected her own feelings of depression with her emotional “loss” of the mother, which led to the internalization of mother’s image. Since Aurelia made a great effort to conceal her feelings from the children when her husband died, Sylvia blamed her for not loving her father and even for killing him by marrying him too old. In the process of internalization she directed these reproaches towards herself and suffered from feelings of guilt she could not explain. In combination with Oedipal feelings of rivalry, disappointment with Aurelia’s emotional inadequacy, and filial feelings of guilt of nurturing such hostile emotions towards the woman who gave birth to her and sacrificed her own happiness for her, Plath’s self-reproaches reached a dangerous level.

Although Plath thoroughly analyzed her ambivalent feelings towards her mother, she refused to venture into a similar analysis of her relationship with her father. The “bee god” was not to be touched. During therapy with Dr Ruth Beuscher she claimed to see no point in going into her apparent feelings of guilt in relation to her father’s death, and it was only after her marriage disintegrated that she acknowledged any negative feelings towards her father. In “Daddy”, she expressed the first upsurge of hate towards the cruel fascist that was no less Ted than Otto. The two were by this time intertwined to such an extent that even Plath could not tell them apart anymore. Just like Otto’s imagined omnipotence once gave Ted an air of god-like superiority, her husband’s infidelity pulled her father along into the abyss of vindictive wrath.

The inability to cope with the loneliness and with the life of a single mother, whose first novel and the latest poems were bitterly rejected by the critics, finally pushed Plath into untimely death. Consequently, she has been repeatedly described as mentally disturbed, and her poetry has been said to reflect her mental illness: “... these are poems of schizophrenia, or rather, poems by a schizophrenic who had painstakingly, over a period of years, mastered the craft of poetry” (Wagner 1988: 73). Early criticism above all attempted to pathologize Plath through a series of amateur analyses. They attributed to her nearly all existing diagnoses, from schizophrenia to neurosis, psychosis, and hysteria. Still, when Plath was treated in McLean after her first suicide attempt, no signs of schizophrenia or psychosis were discovered, nor did the doctors believe that there was any danger of the present neurosis developing into a serious mental illness (Plath 1992: 126).

Modern feminist currents describe Plath’s mental instability as a normal response of an ambitious, creative woman to the social conditions in the 1950s. Sibylle Duda and Luise F. Pusch did an extensive research into the lives of eleven famous

women, who rebelled against the patriarchal society, only to be first labeled as insane and then subjected to violent psychiatric treatment, which actually caused them to lose their mental balance (Duda 1995: 313). According to Duda, Plath's "madness" reflects the constant oscillation between adaptation and rebellion, which eventually became unbearable. Believing in the social ideal of the mother and housewife, she at the same time strove for recognition as an artist, equal to men. Unwilling to give up either of her ideals, she kept finding herself in conflict with society, her family, and herself.

Radical feminists saw Plath as a typical victim of a patriarchal society. They openly blamed Hughes for murdering her, repeatedly erased his surname from Plath's tombstone in Yorkshire, and fought against the censorship of Plath's diaries and letters. They saw Plath as a predecessor of the feminist movement, although already at that time serious doubts emerged as to whether Plath is to be associated with feminism at all: "With her philosophy of catch your man and be happy, she seems closer to the world of romantic fiction than to that of Germaine Greer" (Rose 1991: 168). Robert A. Piazza believes that the readers, in search of political support, attributed to her writing feminist sentiments that Plath in reality never nurtured (Kinsey-Clinton 1999). On the other hand, critics like David Holbrook have accepted the feminist vision of Plath, and despite all her efforts to find fulfillment in her femininity and motherhood describe her as "sadly pseudo-male, like many of her cultists" (Holbrook, qtd. in Rose 1991: 19).

The journals and other works of Sylvia Plath reflect her eternal dichotomy between social expectations and the wish for freedom and equality: "I dislike being a girl, because as such I must come to realize that I cannot be a man" (Plath 2000a: 54). Realizing that a woman in the 1950s could only gain recognition through the success of her husband, she concludes that the only free choice a woman can make is that of choosing her partner, in whom she will invest her energy. Although her independent personality is repulsed by this idea, she already begins to accept it: "it is as I feared: I am becoming adjusted and accustomed to this idea" (ibid.).

After marrying Hughes, Plath attempted to act as a model housewife and mother. Her literary attempts could continue, for they posed no threat to her far more successful husband. Although they denied any feelings of artistic envy in their relationship, Plath's short story "The Wishing Box" proves otherwise. Janet Malcolm in *The Silent Woman* emphasizes that the feelings of envy, hatred and self-hatred were at that time a normal part of a female writers' attitude toward their husbands: "Writing got all mixed up with men. It was in some way the man's fault when the writing didn't go well, as it was Harold's fault when Agnes's dreaming didn't go well" (Malcolm 1995: 88).

"The Wishing Box" shows Plath's feelings of inferiority and complete lack of imagination in comparison to Ted. Ted's role of Plath's writing teacher only intensified this feeling. His letter to Aurelia Plath after Sylvia's death shows that he himself believed in her artistic incompetence: "She doesn't seem to have had an idea of her own, beyond plain outrage and indignation". These words could be just an expression of anger and opposition to his mother-in-law; however, if sincere, they give a clue to the source of Plath's low self-esteem. Although Hughes rarely allowed himself such slips after Plath's death, she must have sensed his opinion about her writing. This also explains why she began to hide her work from him a few years after their wedding.

Sylvia was ready to accept a traditional female role, however, she was only willing to subject herself to a colossal, fatherly man, who would be physically and intellectually superior to her. She despised weak men, whom strong women marry to always have it their own way. Young Sylvia dreamt of a man who would drag her by the hair into the cave and wildly rape her (Plath 2000a: 174). Her journals and other works are brimming with the desire for a dominant man, which culminates in the masochistic lines of "Daddy": "Every woman adores a Fascist, / The boot in the face, the brute / Brute heart of a brute like you." Radical feminists, of course, found these lines very problematic. Even in the case of identification with the fascist, the female reader cannot feel flattered. One of the feminist interpretations therefore prefers to see the father-fascist as standing for the violence of the patriarchal society. Consequently, the vindictive violence to the father, which follows, comes as a justified and victorious revenge of the woman on the repressive male society (Rose 1991: 235).

In the last six months of her life, Plath produced her most influential works, preserved in the minds of the readers and critics as the only true Sylvia Plath: an angry, disillusioned, deserted woman, who does not hesitate to expose her suffering and the ridiculously subjected role of the woman in society. In "The Applicant" the search for a wife is presented as buying an empty-headed, submissive doll: "A living doll, everywhere you look. / It can sew, it can cook, / It can talk, talk, talk." In "Purdah" the doll, facing her husband's betrayal, transforms into the lioness – the self-confident and lethally dangerous woman, who has nothing in common with the meek, loving representatives of conventional femininity. This image, embraced by radical feminists, made Holbrook and similar critics equate her with the hordes of women who, wearing pants, demanded equality and therefore lost their femininity. A woman who is not willing to subject herself and demands her own career is not a real woman, for she exhibits typically male qualities.

Hughes explained Plath's transformation as the liberation of her true self and stressed that what she showed before were only masks. His thesis that Sylvia pretended during the six years of their marriage cannot hold, for even though the traditional role of a woman is primarily a male fantasy, this does not mean that women experience it any less intensely (Rose 1991: 128). Still, in order to please men and show themselves as "feminine", women have to accept certain ways of behaving and thinking, and suppress the traditionally "non-feminine" impulses like aggression, ambition, and independence. These are the very qualities that burst into Plath's poetry after her breakup with Hughes. In "Purdah" the doll unleashes the destructive lioness, indicating the previous repression.

According to Jacques Lacan, the woman who accepts traditional female characteristics puts on a mask and escapes into an illusion of safety, firm identity, and possession of objects (Žižek 1999: 8). This gives her self-confidence and security, and at the same time protects the patriarchal male identity. The "real woman", however, recognizes her *manqué* and presents herself as a hysterical blend of appearances, covering emptiness. She is much more difficult to live with, for she requires the man to desire and in this way admit his imperfection (Miller 1997: 13).

When faced with the loss of perfection and safety in marriage, Plath transformed into a "real woman". The transformation was accompanied by a terrifying loss

of identity, for even the identity of a lioness could not hold. The “real woman” has to face emptiness, the absence of identity, described in “Purdah” as the “cloak of holes”. The “real woman” gives up her role of a mother and is willing, like Medea, to sacrifice her children to cut an indelible emptiness into the man. Accordingly, Plath’s last poem, “Edge”, gives an image of a woman perfected in death, holding two dead children in her arms.

The image of a “real woman” is closely related to the image of death. The mask she refuses to wear is in the service of Eros, for it brings the illusion of firmness and perfection. The disintegration of the illusion leads to Thanatos, the horrifying feeling of losing firm ground, which accompanies the loss of identity and security. After a couple of months of trying out the identities of the bee queen and god’s lioness, which produced her best poetry, Sylvia Plath progressively succumbed to the death instinct. The crisis came after the New Year of 1963, when Plath was painfully rejected by Al Alvarez. His memoir tells us that this was the first time he obtained a look behind her mask, realizing her despair, imperfection, unpleasantly smelling hair (Alvarez 1974: 48). He discovered that she needed help, and ran away. This was a typical escape of a man from a “real woman”, who poses a threat to his identity as well.

Although she explored the question of her identity all her life, Plath only in the last month of her life became aware of the absence of any identity. As a “real woman” she finally “took on her non-existence” (Žižek 1999: 7) and disappeared.

II. Sylvia Plath in Slovenia

With Andrej Blatnik’s translation of *The Bell Jar* (Stekleni zvon) and Miha Avanzo’s translation of a choice of Plath’s poems in 1992, the Slovenians became aware of this unusual poet, whose life and self-destructive tendencies reflect their national stereotype. In the first years of the 21st century the interest boomed and nowadays the Slovenian public is more interested in Plath than ever.

Slovenian literary magazines first mentioned her name already in 1962, while literary criticism only began discussing her work thirty years later. In 1993, Tomaž Toporišič expressed his surprise that her poems had not been translated already at the peak of modernism, for their structure of meaning was extremely close to the poetry of Dane Zajc and Venko Taufer, while their lyricism and poetic self-dissection was much closer to our idea of the nature of poetry than to the poems of her beatnik contemporaries (Toporišič 1993: 45). Toporišič sees the value of her poetry above all in tearing down the boundaries of language and in its combining capacities, which enable her to invent unprecedented, daring, grotesque imagery. He is convinced of a close connection between the mood of her poems and the general atmosphere in Slovenia. According to Toporišič, Slovenian readers could not only recognize themselves in her poetry, but also realize their own self-captivity – the lack of distance to themselves.

In 1994, two articles on Plath appeared in Slovenian literary magazines. In *Pesniška tribuna*, Petra Colarič describes Plath’s mind as neither logical nor psychologically convincing (Colarič 1994: 19). In *Vestnik*, Jelena Tomanič compares the poetry of Sylvia Plath and Anne Sexton, concluding that Plath manipulates the reader

into taking her side, while Sexton attempts to pass on the message that people should strive for warm interpersonal relationships (Tomanič 1994: 382). Both authors view Plath as a manipulator, in this way reflecting the influence of Anne Stevenson's hostile biography, which was published in 1989 and at that time presented the main source of information on Plath's life. Written under Olwyn Hughes's supervision, the book attempts to protect Ted Hughes by blackening Plath's character and presenting her as a skilful manipulator. Since this biography doubts Plath's every statement and emotion, it should come as no surprise that contemporary critics adopted this view.

In 1998 Plath's name appeared for the first time in the *Delo* newspaper. Lenca Ferenčak's article accompanied her translation of "Three Women", broadcast by Radio Slovenia in February 1997. Refusing to concentrate on Plath's tragic death, Ferenčak includes extracts from interviews with the still happily married Sylvia, in this way creating an image of an intelligent young woman, well aware of the world that surrounds her. Although worried about the terrifying military-industrial complex in America, as well as about the influence of radiation on human genes, she does not let such thoughts influence her poetry, which rather describes the misty moon over the yew tree in the neighboring garden (Ferenčak 1998: 16).

In recent years, two theatrical performances reminded Slovenians of the life and tragic death of Sylvia Plath. In 2001, Damir Zlatar Frey combined acting and dancing capacities of Rosana Hribar in *Sylvia Plath - a Monologue from Beyond* (Sylvia Plath – monolog iz onstranstva), a co-production of Koreodrama Ljubljana and Plesni teater Ljubljana. Accompanied by Preisner's *Requiem for My Friend*, Hribar presented the emotional charge that triggered Plath's suicide. The goal of the performance was not to give a clear image of Plath's complex personality, but to concentrate on her numerous suicide attempts and on the transition between different psychological states. The performance without words was based on emotional expressiveness, on the pleasure of self-destruction, where every word is superfluous. The highly symbolic performance was not well accepted by the audience, either because there was almost no connection with the actual personality of Sylvia Plath, or because the depressed, almost psychotic psychological state repulsed the Slovenians with its very familiarity. Thanatos in its purest form seems terrifying and revolting, the pleasure of suicide grotesque.

In 2003, however, *The Longing and Death of Sylvia Plath* (Hrepenenje in smrt Sylvije Plath), an excellent performance directed by Jernej Lorenci won the hearts of the Slovenian audience. The co-production of Teater SARTR from Sarajevo and Kulturno društvo B-51 from Ljubljana could be seen in Drama as part of the Ex Ponto festival. The role of Sylvia was outstandingly played by Selma Alispahič, who had actually worked with Ted Hughes in Young Vic Theatre in London, and could therefore enrich the performance with her own personal experience. Having intensely worked on Plath's work for several years, Alispahič also contributed the largest share of the extensive biography research. Besides reading all Plath's works, she carried out a study of her character with the help of a psychiatrist and transactional analysis.

The performance effectively reflects the complexity of Plath's life and character. Framed as an analytic session with Dr Ruth Beuscher, it apparently gives the audience an insight into Plath's unconscious. The characters merge and transform into each other on the basis of more or less unconscious connections, while the characters

from *The Bell Jar* intrude into real life. The border between Otto Plath and Ted Hughes is so misty that the same character is greeted as father and then treated as Ted. Ted is presented as cold and dominant, forcing Sylvia to recite Shakespeare and criticizing her for not doing it perfectly, while Otto appears at times of crisis and comforts her. The demonic mother openly expresses pleasure at her husband's death, and forces cake into Sylvia's mouth to make her sound sweeter. Occasionally Sylvia bursts into murderous screams, telling mother to be quiet, but her hatred is eventually introverted and transformed into strong suicidal impulses. In the final scene Sylvia is left completely alone, with no one to look at her new poems, and neither Ted nor father respond to her desperate cries. She breathes in and departs from this world with a smile.

The main difference between Frey's and Lorenci's performance reflects the dichotomy in Slovenian literary criticism in relation to Plath's life and death. Due to the geographical distance, the lack of radical feminism, and the late availability of her work, Slovenian literary criticism did not split into Ted Hughes's advocates and enemies, leaving more space for the inherent dualism between Eros and Thanatos. The critics who, influenced by her life story and Hughes's interpretations, understand her life as an unstoppable drive towards the unavoidable end, either express dissatisfaction with her morbidity or through identification indulge in the pleasure of self-destruction. On the other hand, the critics who are more open and better informed recognize in her works an immense will to life and self-perfection, for Plath's personal symbolism considers death just one more step on the path to freedom, happiness, and rebirth.

Many Slovenians are simply fascinated by Plath, which can be understood in the light of Janek Musek's research of Slovenian national character. Although stereotypically introverted and rather cold, we are supposedly one of the most aggressive, dominant, and ambitious nations in the world (Musek 1994: 74). The combination of aggressiveness and introversion explains the high suicide rate, and also clarifies the affinity with Plath, who preferred to direct her murderous impulses towards herself. The Slovenians are fascinated either by her ambition, similar to our own, or by her unstoppable aggression, which in both cases turns towards the ego and leads to suicidal tendencies. The young American poet represents the fulfillment of our most secret desires, and at the same time gives us a clear warning. In this way, one could consider Sylvia Plath a truly "Slovenian" author.

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JOŽE ŽOHAR, A SLOVENE MIGRANT POET FROM AUSTRALIA

Igor Maver

Abstract

Jože Žohar migrated »down under« to Australia in 1968 and struggles to pacify inside him the two homelands, Slovenia and Australia. In his three published collections of verse in the Slovene language (1990, 1995, 2004) the poet remains torn between the two countries, between Eros and Thanatos, between a unique erotic experiencing of the homeland and the wish for physical and spiritual ending and closeness of death, which brings deliverance. The article tries to contextualize his recently published book of verse *Obiranje limon* (2004) within recent theories of diasporic writing.

If home(land) is also and especially one's mother tongue, then this is certainly true of Jože Žohar, the Slovene migrant poet who has been living in Australia since 1968. His verse, however, proves that the limitations of his language are not also the borders of his world. Bert Pribac and Pavla Gruden are the other two best known migrant poets from Australia that have published both in Australia and especially in Slovenia (Maver 2002). As a contemporary Slovene migrant poet Žohar experiments, researches the Slovene language potentials and thus constantly tries to expand the borders of his world and language by transcending traditional poetic aesthetics and original linguistic self-awareness. Characteristic for Žohar's poems written in Slovene is linguistic experimentation: palindromes, alliterations, vocal colouring, puns, homonyms and ornamental adjectives, as well as lexical and syntactic play. Experimentation is central to contemporary Slovene poetology and to Žohar it signifies even more: his personal freedom.

He could also be described as a migrant poet from the Prekmurje region, for *genius loci* is of great importance in his verse: on the one hand of the Prekmurje region (the plain and the hills of the Goričko region in Slovenia bordering with Hungary and Austria) and Australia (the arid bush) on the other. Žohar constantly moves between the two locales and identifies with each of them increasingly in his poems. The fact that the poet writes about his Prekmurje experience is significant, because this experience is like the region itself, close to the archetypal, elementary folk tradition, the typical melancholy, mostly flat Prekmurje landscape as the landscape of the mind. In all three collections a strongly present element is the specific geographical environment, which appears in a dual relation: on the one side the poet's native Prekmurje and Goričko, and on the other the Australian desert landscape, which he

co-positions throughout: he wishes to be at the same time »one in two, be there and be here« simultaneously, something he considers a special yet agitating privilege.

In his very first collection of poems *Aurora australis* (Žohar 1990), Jože Žohar states that he does not acknowledge the division between a »physical« and »spiritual« migration, since the two appear to him complementary never appearing separately. In his almost erotic link with all of Slovenia, not only his native Prekmurje, which is to remain in him as »the eternal serpentine«, he feels that the key question is how to reconcile within himself two countries: he became dis-placed and never finally trans-placed, remaining a cultural »hybrid«, half Slovene and half Australian, which in his case represents a sort of homelessness (Maver 1992; cf. also Jurak 1983, 1997). It should be stressed that in the different thematic clusters of this first collection he already reveals a gift for linguistic experimentation, which suggests an allied formal significance, reflecting his dividedness between the »old« and the »new« homeland (cf. Suša 1999). The initial homely sentimentality is replaced by the existential anguish of a migrant and a person *per se*.

Žohar's second collection, *Veku bukev* (To the Crying of Beeches, Žohar 1995), which can mean a chronological definition of his youth spent among the beeches but also crying after it, i.e. an ode to a Proustian »time lost«, time spent among the reeds, poplars and beeches (Maver 1995, 2003). Geographical locale is again of prime importance in the book and it appears in the typical dichotomic relationship: the Prekmurje vs. the Australian bush country are constantly being contrasted and juxtaposed. This second collection of the poet's verse represents his attempt to identify Australia as his new home; yet Žohar remains caught »in between« and sings to the Australian »harem of camels in the desert, tombstones under the eucalypt trees, the waves broken on the shore, kangaroos, run away from bush fires«. Žohar revives alliterative verse, amply uses paronyms (words that are identical but have a different meaning in a changed context) and palindromes (that can be read forwards and backwards and may have the same or a different meaning), amasses numerous homonyms, synonyms and uses onomatopoeia.

Žohar's new verse collection *Obiranje limon* (Lemon-picking, Žohar 2004) shows he has remained true to his bold linguistic experimentation. As a migrant he constantly tests the borders of the Slovene poetic expression, and in this book for the first time he uses rhythmical prose, representing the dark inventory of the poet's life via the metaphors of lemon-picking in Australia. This rhythmical prose or poems in prose (»sketches of things that refused to be a poem«) also represent some sort of reconciliation with the anguishes of a migrant abroad and the significance of »home-land« for an emigrant as »one of us, displaced, with home away from home. Jernej. Domen. The tenth child. And much more« (»Wanderings« VII, 49). Žohar intimately yet only partly accepts Australia as his new homeland, because as a migrant he remains constantly displaced and not fully transplanted (Maver 2004). He sees his life as an endless process of saying good-bye here and there and writes that he is diminished each time he goes away, in Slovenia as well as in Australia, where as the prodigal son he tries to find his peace but where he also finds poetic inspiration: »Where you are now, there is June, when lemons and oranges become ripe, time when you leave all behind and everybody leaves you behind, because you want it like this for a change. For you know full well that among lemon-trees sensually rich poems happen too. Find yourself shelter among them« (»Complaints, Conciliations« II, 29).

The poet's new collection of poems *Obiranje limon* contains seven cycles or thematic clusters: »At Home! At Home! At Home! (The Two of Us)«, »Symposion«, »From Apple-tree Orchards«, »Indian Fragments«, »Lemon-picking«, »Nameless«, and »Word Anguishes«. The first cycle represents the poet's most explicit wording of his migrant experience and the overpowering sense of homelessness.

»Lemon-picking« consists of lengthy poems in prose, and the cycle »Nameless« features puns and linguistic experimentation. Žohar's poems in rhythmical prose are a new form for him (and most other migrant poets from down under), where he shows his essential dividedness between the two »Homes«:

You feel: there is less of you with each new coming back. Anywhere you go, you are merely saying good-bye. From everything and everybody. From bays and beaches.

From the Blue Mountains, when they dwell cold in silence or when they speak out in fire.

From the house which is the home of Home. From eucalypts, magnolia. From fences and walls between wordless neighbours.

From new roots. Yes: from new roots. You feel: there is no more of you with each new coming back. You bite into a ripe lemon,

Suck out its juice. The tongue pricks you. The tongue that is called ...

You feel like crying.

(»Lemon-picking« VIII, 35)

In »Word Anguishes« there are poems consistently written in rhymed stanzas, which once again, as in his earlier work, establishes an erotic relationship with his homeland personified as a woman: (»Who is this coming back / down the muddy road? An old man / to see his bride.«). The cycle »Symposion«, for example, reestablishes the image of a dark »aurora australis« (Australian dawn), the themes and the used allusions and elements taken from Greek mythology are, however, quite new for Žohar. The third cycle »From Apple-Tree Orchards« inspires the poet with melancholy nostalgia, and not only one for home left behind (characterized by apple-trees) but also one for one's own lost youth at the realization of Man's fragility and transience, which drives him to an Australian pub where he does not find solace nor does he feel at home.

The cycle titled »Indian Fragments« represents an important novelty in Žohar's poetic opus, although certain references to Buddhism (or Hinduism in his most recent collection) can already be found in the collection *Veku bukev*. Man's anguish at the realization of his own transience suddenly strikes the poet, a Man, a migrant, as Everyman as a pilgrim through life during his visits to India less dense and pressing, for he seems to be able to find a way out of it in an after-life voyage and search for a new life after death.

Scented flames,

O, bright flames of cremation,

Anoint the body that through you

Offers itself to the gods.

There is the time of search and migration.

All the destinations and terminals are also the returns.

(»Pilgrimages«, 18)

It is interesting that the speaker's experience and thinking about life (abroad) ends with a certain projection into the future, into for him a more »neutral« locale and culture, India, not Slovenia and not Australia. India represents for him, physically and symbolically, »something in-between«, the phrase he uses to describe himself in a previous collection, a Slovene migrant to Australia. The new collection of verse by Jože Žohar *Obiranje limon* connects descriptions of Man's existential anguish with questions of migration.

In the current processes of globalization and trans-nationalization, migrant literature appears particularly important, and this is of course true also of Slovene migrant literature in Australia (where the term migrant has been fittingly used for some time, unlike in some other traditional receptive countries, in order to efface the emitive/receptive country and to stress the inclusive value of migrant transcultural/transnational contribution). Despite the »tyranny of distance« between the two countries, migrant literature should not be ghettoized, in Australia or in Slovenia, and is, in fact, increasingly represented in the main anthologies, published by major publishers, and receives major literary prizes, etc. Slovene migrant writers perceive reality and their own personal experience in two different systems, which is why their work can be regarded an enrichment of both cultures, the source and the target one. Increasingly they are seen as transcultural authors in the best sense of the word, figuring both in the unified Slovene cross-border cultural space worldwide and the Australian multicultural society. These two, as Žohar's most recent collection of verse *Obiranje limon* amply proves, are becoming more and more interchangeable.

Is the future culture/literature of the newly settled migrant countries such as the United States of America, Canada, and Australia going to be part of the melting pot, ethnic mosaic, some transnational hybrid or a new fusion of various ethnic identities? Recently introduced new concepts, in addition to the already well established multiculturalism, are polyvocality and hybridity. Homi Bhabha argues that the concept of hybridity as a form of cultural difference, while sometimes regarded as manipulative, allows the voices of the Other/migrant, the marginalised and the dominated to exist within the language of the dominant group whose voice is never fully in control (Bhabha 1994). In recent theoretical debates diaspora and its writing has been frequently connected with the constructed and transnational nature of identity formation, since the concept refers to both voluntary and involuntary migrations and movements. In the future migrant/diasporic writing should be examined for how it represents »otherness« in a text and how it brings otherness to bear on the actual experience of reading. Contemporary theory of diasporic literature perceives Home as several locales, liberated of the spatial concept of location, which is at the same time deeply embedded in the cultural memory of a migrant and her/his own personal biography.

In Jože Žohar's poetry dis-placement and trans-placement and the fluid diasporic identity, as well as the changing position of the subject in the globalized world show his contemporary »dynamic« global view. The sense of movement in his verse underscores his themes. The two remain in his poetic opus the source of an original and assured artistic inspiration.

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DAS WERK FRIEDRICHS VON GAGERN IN LITERATURGESCHICHTLICHER BETRACHTUNG

Anton Janko

Abstract

Friedrich von Gagern (1882-1947) is one of the best known novelists who originate in the Slovene ethnic territory but write in German. Hunting stories which represent his first literary output made him nearly famous among connoisseurs of this literary genre. Most of these and of his later works (mainly novels or *novellas*) are situated in his country of birth, Slovenia, where he was born in the castle of Mokrice on the Slovene-Croat border. In his novels von Gagern depicts the social situation and living circumstances in this border region, where common man is being corrupted by the contemporary industrialization process. The old social order of master and peasant dependancy appears as on the verge of destruction; von Gagern decries these changes which to him are of evil nature. In this aspect of his writings he is very close to the reactionary ideology which forms the basis of German literary production best described as *Blut und Boden* literature. The article examines the German literary critical evaluation of this author.

Friedrich Freiherr von Gagern (1882-1947) war Zeit seines Lebens ein bekannter, wenn auch nicht berühmter Schriftsteller. Er entstammt einem alten Adelsgeschlecht, das ursprünglich im deutschen Norden (Insel Rügen) beheimatet war; unter seinen Vorfahren sind Politiker und politische Schriftsteller zu finden, mütterlicherseits war er mit Anastasius Grün (Anton Alexander Graf Auersperg, (1806-1876), verwandt¹.

Im vierten Band der *Deutsch-Österreichischen Literaturgeschichte* von Nagl und Zeidler wird er als „einer der bedeutendsten Erzähler unserer Zeit“ bezeichnet². Die in seiner Zeit populäre *Geschichte der deutschen Literatur* von Karl Borinski reiht ihn unter jene österreichischen Romanschriftsteller ein, die in ihrer „überschäumenden sinnlichen Lebensnatur“ einen „schwermütig gebrochenen Klang“ zum Tragen bringen und die Borinski in einem mit *Heimatkunst und Volksdichter* überschriebenen Abschnitt kurz behandelt (darunter auch Gustav Frenssen und den Steiermärker Rudolf Hans Bartsch)³. Von Gagern wird nur der Roman *Der böse Geist* (1914) erwähnt.

¹ Neben Grün ist Gagern wohl der bedeutendste deutsch schreibende Autor im slowenischen ethnischen Gebiet, wenn man das Mittelalter ausser acht lässt (Ulrich von Liechtenstein, Bruder Philip aus der Kartause Žiče/Seitz in Untersteiermark).

² Eduard Castle, Hrsg. *Deutsch-Österreichische Literaturgeschichte*. Ein Handbuch zur Geschichte der deutschen Dichtung in Österreich-Ungarn. Unter Mitwirkung hervorragender Fachgenossen nach dem Tode von Johann Willibald Nagl und Jakob Zeidler herausgegeben von Eduard Castle. Vierter Band. Von 1890-1918. Wien: Carl Fromme 1937, S. 1261.

³ Karl Borinski: *Geschichte der deutschen Literatur*. Zweiter Band. Stuttgart, Berlin u. Leipzig: Union Deutsche Verlagsgesellschaft 1921, S. 613.

In der nur wenige Jahre später erschienenen *Deutschen Literaturgeschichte* von Heinrich Kurz werden zwar die beiden politisch wirkenden und schreibenden Vorfahren unseres Dichters erwähnt (der Urgroßvater Christoph Hans /Goethezeit/ und der Großvater Maximilian /Frankfurter Parlament, 1845 zum Katholizismus übergetreten, ab 1855 im Außenministerium in Wien tätig, ein Gegner preußisch-deutscher Politik/), unser Dichter dagegen erstaunlicherweise nicht.⁴ Erst der nationalsozialistische Literaturhistoriker Hellmuth Langenbucher⁵ widmet sich ihm (neben der schon oben erwähnten *Deutsch-Österreichischen Literaturgeschichte*) mit lobenden Worten.

Heutzutage ist Friedrich von Gagern dem lesenden Publikum kaum noch in Erinnerung und auch die Literaturgeschichte erwähnt ihn nur noch sporadisch und in Zusammenhängen, die sich wenig mit einer kritischen Bewertung seines Schaffens abgeben. So erwähnt ihn auch die von Herbert Zeman besorgte und großangelegte *Österreichische Literatur. Ihr Profil von der Jahrhundertwende bis zur Gegenwart (1880-1980)*⁶ nur am Rande, meistens in Verbindung mit anderen gleichrangigen österreichischen Autoren der ersten Republik, die in die Rubrik „deutsch-völkisch“ eingereiht werden (unter den Autoren Mirko Jelusich, Ottokar Kernstock, Erwin Guido Kolbenheyer, Joseph Friedrich Perkonig, Karl Heinrich Waggerl, Joseph Weinheber u. a.). Dadurch geschieht Gagern gewissermaßen Unrecht, obwohl ihn im Lichte der nationalistischen Geschichtsschreibung vieles in seinen Werken unter diese Gruppe von Schriftstellern einzureihen erlaubt.

Max Morold⁷ hat 1933 in einer sehr deutschtümelen Weise eine Reihe österreichischer Autoren folgendermaßen charakterisiert:

Wenn deutsche Kunst und deutsche Geistesarbeit das Beste und Wertvollste deutscher Art und deutschen Wollens in unzähligen Formen zum Ausdruck bringen, wenn in ihnen zugleich die Fülle und die Einheit des großen Deutschtums sich spiegelt, so haben besonders die deutschen Dichter Österreichs (in Wien und in den Alpenländern, in Böhmen, Mähren und Schlesien) den wundersamen Reichtum ihrer vielgestaltigen Heimat und zugleich das urdeutsche Wesen, das von alter Zeit fruchtbar und segenbringend, schaffend und bauend sich hier entfaltet hat, in bedeutenden, ja in unvergänglichen Werken festgehalten.⁸

Auch Friedrich von Gagern stammt aus einem Alpenland und hat seine „vielgestaltige Heimat“ aus einem „urdeutschen“ Winkel geschildert und wird durch die oben angeführte Darstellung trotz der ideologiebezogenen und durchaus positiv gemeinten Wertung trefflich charakterisiert.

⁴ Heinrich Kurz: *Deutsche Literaturgeschichte*. Neu bearbeitet und bis in die Gegenwart fortgeführt von Dr. Max Wedel. Berlin: Eigenbrödler Verlag 1927.

⁵ Hellmuth Langenbucher: *Volkhafte Dichtung der Zeit*. 6. unveränderte Auflage. Berlin: Junker und Dünnhaupt 1941, S. 331-336.

⁶ Herbert Zeman, Hrsg.: *Österreichische Literatur. Ihr Profil von der Jahrhundertwende bis zur Gegenwart*. Teil 1. Graz: Akademische Druck- und Verlagsanstalt 1989, S. 44 und passim.

⁷ Egtl. Max von Millenkowitsch (1866-1945).

⁸ Zitiert nach Herbert Zeman, Hrsg.: *Geschichte der Literatur in Österreich von den Anfängen bis zur Gegenwart*. Band 7: *Das 20. Jahrhundert*. Graz: Akademische Druck- und Verlagsanstalt 1999, S. 96.

Es scheint uns berechtigt, Gagerns Leben und Werk in kurzen Zügen hier nachzuvollziehen. Er wurde am 26. Juni 1882 auf Schloss Mokritz (Mokrice) in Krain⁹ als Sohn eines Offiziers geboren. Sein späterer, ererbter Wohnsitz war das in unmittelbarer Nähe von Mokritz liegende Schloss Turn am Hart, das früher der Besitz Anastasius Grüns¹⁰ gewesen war. Die beiden alten Schlösser befinden sich an der südlichsten Ostgrenze von (Unter-)Krain und damit auch an der Grenze des alten Österreichs; das auf der anderen Seite liegende Kroatien war ein Teil Ungarns. Seine Jugend verlebte er zwischen den Grenzlandwaldbergen im Strombereich der Save, „der noch ungebrochenen Naturkraft dieser gewaltigen Landschaft verfallen“¹¹. Gagern selbst schreibt:

Meine Kindheit war einsam und glücklich ... in Tier und Pflanze, in Wind und Wolken, im guten Buch, in reiner Musik fand die Seele früh ihr innerstes Genügen, ihren vertrauten Heimatkreis. Da blieb, schlug Wurzel, trug Frucht, wurde Wesen. Meine besten Tage und Jahre verbrachte ich in aller Herren Wäldern, meine seligsten Nächte draußen unterm Kreisen der Sterne, in weltfernen Jäger- und Hirtenhütten, in sturmmuwühlter Turmstube, an der Orgel mit Bach, am Flügel mit Beethoven, Schubert, Schumann, Chopin. Solch ein Mensch ist mitteilbar nur durch sein Gestalten und seine Geschöpfe, vermag nicht dem Augenblick zu schmeicheln, stellt sich nicht hin noch ein; er ist, er schweigt, er schafft. ... Hingabe an das Unverlierbare, das halte ich für Erlösung; und unverlierbar ist mir das Allbewußtsein und das kleine Weltreich in der eigenen Brust.¹²

Das Studium an der Konsularakademie in Wien unterbrach er aus wirtschaftlichen Gründen und wurde Redakteur einer Jagdzeitung (in Wien), 1914 kehrte er in die Heimat zurück, wartete dort das Kriegsende ab und übersiedelte später nach Niederösterreich (Haus Geigenberg bei St. Leonhard am Forst), wo er bis zu seinem Lebensende im Jahre 1947 verblieb.

Als Autor trat er zuerst mit Jagdgeschichten an die Öffentlichkeit; mit diesen machte er sich nicht nur unter den Fachgenossen einen Namen, sondern ist auch als ein bemerkenswerter dichterischer Darsteller dieses Lebensbereichs anerkannt worden, so dass er oft als dem Dichter der niedersächsischen Heide, Hermann Löns, ebenbürtig eingeschätzt wurde. Die künstlerische Behandlung des Stoffes ist bei Gagern auf jene höhere Ebene gebracht, wo schließlich das Gegenständliche (das Wild und seine Erlegung) zum Vorwand wird, um dem außen Belauschten und dem innen Ersonnenen den Rahmen zu geben. Er ist bis zu seinem Tode ein Mann der Natur geblieben und

⁹ Krain, d.i. Herzogtum Krain (slow. Kranjska) wird in Gagerns Buch *Schwerter und Spindeln*, „eine andere Welt, in unserer großen Heimat ein Park der Wunder“ genannt. Siehe Friedrich von Gagern: *Schwerter und Spindeln. Ahnen des Abendlandes*. Berlin: Paul Parey 1939, S. 97

¹⁰ Anton Alexander Graf Auersperg, 1806-1876, auch ein Spross eines alten Krainer Adelsgeschlecht.

¹¹ Norbert Langer: „Einleitung. Verströmt an die unendliche Natur“. In: Friedrich von Gagern: *Jäger und Gejagte*. Eingeleitet und auserwählt von Dr. Norbert Langer. Graz und Wien: Stiasny 1958, 5-24, S. 7.

¹² Zitiert nach Langer. Ebenda, S. 7.

man kann ihn zu jenen frühen Verfechtern des Naturschutzes zählen, die die natürliche Umgebung gegen Ausbeutung und Zerstörung verteidigen. „Haupt-, Grund- und Tiefstgenuss alles Jagens“, schreibt er, „ist die Hingabe an beschauliche Untätigkeit, an entspannte Aufnahme der Lebensflutwellen und freies Verströmen der Seele, aufgelöst in Licht und Jahreszeit, losgelöst von jeder Absicht und Sucht; dies, nicht das wuchtende Geweih oder das punktpfundige Gehörn, /ist/ die heimliche Krone des Weidwerks.“¹³ Diese Ausdruckweise ist nicht frei von Gefühlsbeladenheit, doch ist sie auch ein Spiegel seiner Achtung vor der Natur und ihren Gesetzen und seiner in gutem Maß ins Mystische entrückten Lebensauffassung.

Was in seinen Jagdgeschichten in der Tierwelt beobachtet und ersehen wurde, zeigt sich auch in Gagerns zweiter Werkgruppe, den Indianergeschichten, in denen er Kampf und Bewährung der „heldischen Zeit“ des amerikanischen Kontinents gestaltet. In seinem *Grenzerbuch* (1927) schildert er den zweihundertjährigen Kampf der Indianer gegen die eindringenden Weißen, ihre Vernichtung und ihr Sterben, das eine Etappe der gnadenloser Wirkung einer höher entwickelten Zivilisation darstellt. Das *Grenzerbuch* trägt den Untertitel *Von Pfandfindern, Häuptlingen und Lederstrumpfen*. Es ist ein Thema, das schon J. F. Cooper, Ch. Sealsfield, F. Gerstäcker, K. May und viele andere benützt und bearbeitet hatten. Das Werden Nordamerikas wird in Gagerns Buch lebensvoll und dokumentarisch zugleich beschrieben. Er lobt das freie, selbsttätige, einfache und doch auch reiche Leben der neuen Siedler und ihrer Kundschafter. Ihr Heldentum bewährt sich in einfacher und harter Lebensweise, fern jedem Luxus, der zum Verfall führt. Darin sieht Gagern das Gesunde, innerhalb dieses Lebensstiles spielt die Jagd als „Urgut des männlichen Wesens“ eine wichtige Rolle. Andererseits wird das traurige und tragische Schicksal, der Untergang, der (seiner Ansicht nach) begabteren, tapferen roten Völker beschrieben, die von der westlichen Zivilisation zerstört werden. Es geht Gagern darum, junge „unverderbte“ Menschenkinder aus „romantischer Urwalddämmerung der unsterblichen Lederstrumpfgeschichten hinauszuführen ins offene Licht historischer Wirklichkeit“¹⁴.

Börries von Münchhausen schrieb zu diesem Buch Folgendes:

Wir haben wenig Künstler im Schrifttum der Gegenwart, die einen so hinreißenden, leidenschaftlichen Schwung der Darstellung haben. Cooper war ein Dichter, Gagern erzählt Wilderes, Spannenderes und: es ist alles geschichtlich war! ... Am spannendsten und künstlerisch wertvollsten wird die Darstellung da, wo sie in das große Geschichtsbild die Bildnisse der sagenumwobenen großen Persönlichkeiten – Waldläufer, Skalpjäger, Indianer — einfügt. Hier wird das Buch zum Kunstwerk, werden Romane und Novellen gegeben, die doch sämtlich nur künstlerisch erschaute Wirklichkeit sind.¹⁵

Der Autor selbst bemüht sich im einleitenden Wort das Eigentliche seines Werks klar zu bestimmen: es ist die Grenze. Diese Grenze, schreibt er, sei der fortschreitende

¹³ Ebenda, S. 9.

¹⁴ Ebenda, S. 15.

¹⁵ Die Verlagswerbung um das Buch in *Schwerter und Spindeln* (Anm. 9), nach S. 784.

Rand der westlichen Zivilisation, ihr Zeichen, ihr Wappen sei die Axt mit ihrem eisernen Recht. Amerika sieht er als das neue transatlantische keltogermanische Reich, wo ursprüngliche, barbarische Gestalten, die Hagen, Hildebrand oder Dietrich ähneln, zu finden sind. Die Geschichte der amerikanischen Grenzverschiebung, zum Schaden der Indianer, ist „die Geschichte des modernen Sparta“, dessen Drama noch nicht geschrieben worden ist. Aus diesen Äußerungen spricht deutlich ein europamüdes dichterisches Subjekt, einer, der die primitive Unschuld der barbarischen Völker bewundert. In der Darstellung des Untergangs der Indianer ist eine bedeutende Verschiebung in der ethischen Wertung der Eroberung des amerikanischen Westens zu sehen, worin sich Gagern von den die gleiche Thematik behandelnden Autoren deutlich unterscheidet. J. F. Cooper berichtet in der Vorrede zu seinem Roman *Die Prärie* (1827), dass die Überreste der Mohikaner, der Delawaren, der Creeks, Chottas und Irokesen ... ihrem endlichen Geschicke anheimzufallen“ scheinen. ... Er freut sich, dass „der Einfluss des Staatenbundes viel dazu beigetragen“ hat, „diesen wilden Schauplätzen den Frieden wieder zu geben, und man reist da wohl jetzt sicher, wohin sich vor fünfundzwanzig Jahren ein Weißer nicht ohne schützendes Geleite wagen durfte“. ¹⁶ Gagern scheint es wichtig und höchst notwendig, diese aus Coopers Sicht erfreuliche Entwicklung zu beklagen. Er glaubt (wahrscheinlich auch in Anlehnung an Oswald Spengler), dass jede Zivilisation eine ihr eigene, in den Formen auf den Ursprung zurückweisende Basis ihrer Kultur besitzt. Die (sogenannte) Weltzivilisation ist seiner Meinung nach ausschließlich gebunden an die Formensprache der faustischen Kultur ¹⁷ und mit dem politischen Verfall des Abendlandes zum Erlöschen verurteilt. Bei veränderten Leitmotiven kann sie sich vielleicht erhalten, aber nur, wenn sie ihre Fehler und Fehlleistungen einsieht und in sich die Kraft findet, sich zu ändern. Die Rettung ist in einem ursprünglichen, kraftvollen, innerlich und äußerlich gesunden Leben zu finden.

Sehr deutlich ist Gagerns Kulturpessimismus schon in seinem trivialen Abenteuerroman *Das nackte Leben* (1923) ins Offene getreten. Es ist das die Geschichte eines österreichischen (allerdings in Konstantinopel geborenen) Adligen namens René, der nach Marokko verschlagen wird und dort bei einem wilden Nomadenstamm *Beni Uriachel* Zuflucht, Geborgenheit und Liebe findet. Als er, um seine Angelegenheiten in Ordnung zu bringen, zu Besuch nach Europa kommt und in Triest den Kontinent betritt, erzählt er der Frau eines jüdischen Kaufmannes, der ihn bei der Suche nach einem afrikanischen Vandalenschatz im Stich gelassen hatte:

Ich bin vielleicht einer der wenigen Menschen, denen es wirklich gut geht, Madame. Wir haben keine Post, kein Theater, keine Mode, keine Zeitungen, keine Steuern, keinen Staat, keine Behörde, keine Literatur, wir sind ein Volk und tun so ziemlich, was wir wollen, und darum geht es uns auszeichnet. ¹⁸

Das Volk, bei dem René diese idealen Verhältnisse gefunden hat, sind Nachfahren der Vandalen, was übrigens die Runeninschriften an den Felswänden in der steinernen Wüstenei in Nordafrika beweisen.

¹⁶ James Fenimore Cooper: *Die Prärie*. Übers. Richard Zozmann. Leipzig: Max Hesses Verlag o. J., S. 7

¹⁷ Wie Spengler den Begriff versteht.

¹⁸ Friedrich von Gagern: *Das nackte Leben*. Berlin: Paul Parey 1924, S. 460.

Die Vandalen, die bertüchtigten, die geschmähten Mörder der marmornen Antike: die langgelockten, versengend kühnen, dann unter Salben, Saitenspiel und Wollust verweichlichten Vandalen: — nun wohnten sie hier im grünen Heimgarten ihrer Berge, friedlich in ihrer Armut, kriegerisch in ihrer Freiheit, die letzten Germanen auf Erden.¹⁹

Europa hat ihre Chancen vertan. Der erste Weltkrieg bricht aus. In der Stadt Melilia (irgendwo in Nordafrika), die René nach einem viertägigen Ritt von seiner Wohnstätte aus erreicht, liest er Zeitungen.

Russland! ... Frankreich! ... England! ... Serbien! ... Der offene Wahnsinn. Die Würfel waren schon jetzt gefallen. Mit Mitteleuropa war es vorbei. Im Westen: französische Rachsucht mit englischer Zähigkeit versteift – im Osten der slawische Abgrund, in den Hunderttausende seiner eigenen Kinder naturgemäß zurückstrebten – und an den verborgendsten, allinnersten Hebeln all dieser mobilisierten Staatsmaschinen die Juden. Und wenn die Nibelungen in Ost bis nach Moskau, in West bis nach Paris durchschlugen und durchsiegten: sie wurden trotzdem erschlagen bis auf den letzten Mann. Denn ihr Feind ... war der Jude — und die Riesen, die ihm dienten. Die Riesen der Industrie, der Mode, des Luxus, der Presse, der Denksäure, des Papiers, des Geldes, der Kunst, der Ideen.²⁰

Die Schuld für den von den „Nibelungen“ angefachten und dann verlorenen Krieg tragen vor allem die Juden und die moderne Zivilisation, die die modernen Germanen (d.h. Deutsche und Deutschösterreicher) „verweichlicht“ hatte.

Auch „sein altes todkrankes ausgelebtes Österreich war erledigt“²¹ und er war nicht mehr bereit, für seine ehemalige Heimat zu kämpfen. Jetzt hatte er ein anderes Volk,

das er liebte; er hatte sein Haus, das er selbst gebaut; er hatte Weib und Kind ohne Falsch; ... Für sein nacktes freies Leben wird er sich ohne Überlegung totschießen lassen und totschießen. Für Tschechen, Galizianer, Slowenen, Großmannssüchte, Tangoweiber, verrückte Dichter und Missmusikanten, verhetzte Arbeiter, Journaille und kreuzspinnende Juden aber nicht.²²

Man kann diese überspannten Äußerungen als Folge der veränderten historischen Lage Deutschlands und Österreichs nach dem ersten Weltkrieg einigermaßen verstehen, nicht aber auch rechtfertigen: aus ihnen spricht überhebliche Geringschätzung anderer Völker Europas und ein kaum zu fassender Hass ihnen gegenüber. Sie sind beinahe ein politisches Programm, das dann in Gagerns wichtigsten Werken etwas gemildert auch verwirklicht immer neu thematisiert wurde.

Nach dem von ihm so verehrten „ursprünglichen“ Leben sucht Gagern auch in Europa und glaubt es in den Gebieten seines Geburtslandes Krain zu finden, das in

¹⁹ Ebenda, S. 372.

²⁰ Ebenda, S. 476.

²¹ Ebenda, S. 478.

²² Ebenda, S. 479.

mehrerer Hinsicht ein Grenzland ist. Diese Grenzlandschaft liegt an der heutigen slowenisch-kroatischen Grenze, die auch eine wilde, oft beinahe unzugängliche Gebirgskette (Gorjanci/Uskokengebirge) umfasst und in der zweiten Hälfte des 19. Jahrhunderts in mancher Hinsicht einer der rückständigsten Teile der Monarchie war. Für Gagern war das nahezu eine ideale Welt, in welcher er die Realität seiner Gesellschaftstheorie vom Verfall und vernichtenden Einfluss der Zivilisation auf die alte, ursprünglich hierarchisch geordnete Volksgemeinde beobachten und nachher in seinen Werken beschreiben und nach seinem Ermessen gestalten konnte. Die meisten Erzählungen und Romane Gagerns, auch die Mehrzahl seiner Jagdtexte, schöpfen Stoff und Thematik aus dieser Gegend, seiner ursprünglichen Heimat am Berührungspunkt des slowenischen und kroatischen Volkes.

Zwei seiner besten Romane, *Ein Volk* (1924)²³ und *Die Straße* (1929), spielen in dieser Gegend. *Ein Volk*, schreibt Norbert Langer (1958), „ist das Epos des kroatischen Stammes, ein buntes Heldenlied vor dunklem Hintergrund, voll sozialen Gefühls und Mitgefühls“.²⁴ Der nationalsozialistische Literaturgeschichtler Hellmuth Langenbucher (1940) sieht darin die Schilderung eines Volkes, das unter fremder Herrschaft schmachtend „geprügelt, gestoßen und geschunden“ wird (die Handlung spielt etwa nach 1868), das sich aber auch „tatenlos in sein dumpfes Schicksal ergeben“ hat.

Eine Zeitlang ersteht dem Volk eine Hoffnung auf Änderung dieser Zustände. Verkörpert durch einen tapferen Menschen aus seiner Mitte, der aber den Anforderungen der letzten großen Entscheidung nicht mehr gewachsen ist. Unschuldig gehetzt und arm geworden, wird er von den Kugeln der ihn verfolgenden Häscher tödlich getroffen. Sein Schicksal ist Sinnbild für das Schicksal des Volkes, für das er sich opferte, ohne ihm im letzten doch helfen, ohne ihm ersohnte Befreiung bringen zu können.²⁵

Gagern stellt mit großem künstlerischen Geschick das genügsame, fleißige Volk in einen breiten Querschnitt: es ist ein farbenfrohes Durch- und Miteinander in Dorf und Stadt, bei allen Gelegenheiten des Lebens und Sterbens. Es ist, mit Langenbucher gesprochen, „die Gestaltung der schicksalhaften Lebenseinheit zwischen Einzelmensch und Volk, zwischen Volk und Landschaft“²⁶. Der Held, der nicht ganz bewusst für das Wohl des Volkes kämpft, scheitert an der politischen Unmündigkeit seiner Volksgenossen.

Fr. von Gagern ist ein scharfer Beobachter, er macht sich jene Fähigkeiten zugute, die nur ein Jäger und Weltwanderer besitzt.

In epischer Breite baut sich eine wuchtige Handlung auf und lässt in impressionistischen Skizzen und mächtigen Prosahymnen allmählich aus

²³ „Unvergleichlich tiefer als *Frau Utta und der Jäger* von R. H. Bartsch.“ Castle, Anm. 2, S. 1262.

²⁴ Langer, Anm. 11, S. 19. Es ist erstaunlich, dass noch 1958 in einer angeblich kritischen Auseinandersetzung mit der in der schöngeistigen Literatur behandelten Thematik und die die Beziehungen (in Hinsicht auf ihre Zivilisationsstufe) von unterschiedlich entwickelten Völkern untersucht, das geschichtlich verbürgte Volk der Kroaten mit dem Begriff „Stamm“, wie Langer das macht, gekennzeichnet wird.

²⁵ Langenbucher, Anm. 5, S. 331-332.

²⁶ Ebenda, S.333.

einer Fülle von Gestalten, deren Namen wechseln und deren Denkart völlig gleich ist, das Bild des naturnahen Kroaten erstehen, mit hellseherischer Deutlichkeit bis in die Tiefen der unbewussten Volksseele geschaut. Wie auf fernem Erdteil lebt hier noch ein genügsames Volk, unfrei träumt es von dem Tage, da der Türkenheld Marko aus langem Schlaf erwachen und die Freiheit wiederbringen wird ...²⁷

Auch der letzte große Roman Gagerns spielt in diesen Gegenden. *Die Straße* berichtet vom Bau einer Straße, die den slowenisch-kroatischen Grenzwinkel der großen Welt eröffnen soll. Der wird aber, wie zu erwarten, zum Anlass von Unfrieden und Gewalttat und stört den stillen Urwaldzauber und die Unschuld des Naturvolkes auf. Die Menschen des Grenzstriches werden völlig aus dem gewohnten Gang ihres Lebens gebracht. Unheimliche Leidenschaften, die gelebt und gelitten werden mit der Unbedingtheit des Naturmenschen, des edlen Wilden, tun das ihre, um ein Geschehen wachsen zu lassen, das alles übertrifft, „was wir in Büchern mit ähnlichen Stoffen sonst oft finden“²⁸.

Bei einem Straßenbau versammelt sich eine Menge verschiedener Arbeiter verschiedener Herkunft. Die menschlichen Leidenschaften, die aufflammen, entfesseln ein wahres Chaos: vom Grafen bis zum Verbrecher werden sie alle in das Geschehen einbezogen. „Alles ein webendes Kreisen von Not und Wehr, Genuss und Leid, Macht und Übermacht; ein Spirallauf von Jägern und Gejagten, Fressern und Gefressenen, Hunger und Stillung, Wahn und Wehe.“ Der Geist der „entfriedeten“ Wälder geht würgend um, Mord und Verbrecher sind wie Symbole. Bis an die Grenze des Nihilismus scheint das Buch heranzuführen. Aber das Schicksal meint es am Ende doch wieder gut mit dem Hauptprotagonisten Primus Koschutnik, einem urwüchsigen, bärenstarken jungen Mann, der, weil er einen Menschen erschossen und einen anderen mit einem Fausthieb erschlagen hatte, seine Strafe wird absitzen müssen. „Wieviel Jahr, denkst, wird er kriegen, unser geliebter grüner Grasteufel?“, fragt der Fürst Auersperg den Grafen, bei dem Koschutnik im Dienst war. „Also sechs, sieben Jahre; grad genug für so einen jungen Menschen, gewohnt an Licht und Wald und Freiheit.“²⁹ In der Zwischenzeit wird sich der Graf seiner Braut annehmen und auch Primus wird wieder in den Dienst aufgenommen. Es geht für den Helden gut aus, aber nur weil er in die alte Geborgenheit von Herr und Diener zurückkehrt. Das Postulat vom treuen Diener und guten gerechten Herrn, dem Gagern axiomatische Gültigkeit zuweist, und gleichzeitig die ideale Gesellschaftsordnung, die keine soziale Gleichstellung der Menschen kennt, wird noch einmal uneingeschränkt, und ohne das Problematische eines solchen Gesellschaftsmodells wahrzunehmen, auf eine verblüffend unreflektierte Weise als die beste aller möglichen Welten dargestellt. Es ist kein Wunder, dass die „völkisch“ denkenden Bewunderer Gagerns ihn am meisten schätzen.

Trotz dieser heute anfechtbaren ideologischen Positionen des Autors ist sein Roman von großer künstlerischer Kraft. Wie in anderen Werken Gagerns kann man auch hier das gleiche Leitmotiv und den gleichen Leitgedanken finden: die brennende

²⁷ Nagl, Anm. 2, S. 1262.

²⁸ Langenbacher, Anm. 5, S. 334.

²⁹ Friedrich von Gagern. *Die Straße*. Leipzig: L. Staackmann 1934 (zuerst 1929), S. 580.

Liebe des Autors zur „keuschen“ Unverdorbenheit in Wald, Tier und Mensch, die ihn zum nachdenklichen Betrachter der Kulturwerte macht. In seinen Werken vereinigen sich stets die Einzelschicksale zu symbolischen, überpersönlichen Erlebnissen, woraus sich allgemein-menschliche Lösungen ergeben.³⁰

Mit einigen Vorbehalten kann man Alkers Einschätzung zustimmen, wenn er meint, Friedrich von Gagerns Beitrag zum österreichischen soziologischen Roman sei beträchtlich, aber von den anderen, wie z.B. Musil, Roth, Broch, Doderer, die auch zu dieser Gattung beigetragen haben, „trennten ihn Welten“. Alker schreibt:

Er (d.h. Friedrich von Gagern) ist in jeder Hinsicht ein Grenzfall, als Mensch, als Schriftsteller, als Zeitgenosse, als Vertreter einer sozialen Schicht wie als Vergegenwärtiger höchst verschiedener geistig-seelischer Haltungen. Nachfahr sehr alter Aristokratie, heftiger Sozialkritiker ohne ideologische Bindung, unerbittlicher Verist mit Aufgeschlossenheit fürs Übersinnliche, Sympathiseur mit den Mächten der Volkskollektive, aber frei von Wohlwollen für das Formal-Demokratische und die Hypertrophie des Nationalen, kriegerischer Individualist und Autokrat ohne sichernde Berufs- und Parteiuniform, unbürgerlicher großer Herr aus der Gilde der versprengten Edelleute, Gegner der die harte, aber sinnvolle Ordnung der Natur zerstörenden Zivilisation und doch kein bohemischer Reaktionär, in einem Charmeur und Grobian: ein Typus, der nur im abendlichen k. u. k. Österreich entstehen konnte ...³¹

³⁰ Vgl. Dazu Ivan Pederin, »Djelo Friedricha von Gagern kao idološki predložak nacizma«. In: *Slavistična revija* (Ljubljana), 35 (1987), št. 1-4, 381-401. Ders.: »Balkanski okvir slike Slovenaca i Hrvata u austrijskom i njemačkom zavičajnom romanu«. *Slavistična revija*, 36 (1988), št. 1-4, 284-291. Siehe auch: Drago Grah, »Das Menschenbild im Werk Friedrich von Gagerns«. In: *Acta neophilologica* (Ljubljana), 14 (1981), 9-18.

³¹ Ernst Alker: Profile und Gestalten der deutschen Literatur nach 1914. Stuttgart: Alfred Kröner 1977, S. 795-796.

VERGIL UND DIE WESTLICHE ÜBERLIEFERUNG

Vid Snoj

Abstract

Der Artikel befasst sich mit dem Stellenwert der Vergilschen Dichtung in der westlichen Überlieferung. Vergil bezieht sich in der berühmten *Vierten Ekloge* auf den Mythos vom goldenen Geschlecht, der in der Dichtung erstmals bei Hesiod bezeugt wird. Als erster in der griechisch-römischen Überlieferung dichtet er über Rückkehr des Goldenen Zeitalters, die er zugleich mit der Geburt und Wachstum des Göttlichen Knaben bzw. des kindlichen Erlösers vorhersagt. Sein Dichten erhält damit eine messianisch-eschatologische Dimension, wodurch es sich von der griechisch-römischen hin zur jüdischen Überlieferung bewegt. Es ist jedoch Vergil selbst, der die messianisch-eschatologische Kunde seines Frühwerkes säkularisiert. Im sechsten Gesang der *Aeneis* erkennt er nämlich nachträglich im Göttlichen Knaben den Kaiser Augustus und trägt so im Rahmen der römischen Aneignung des trojanischen Erbes maßgebend zu der Übersiedlung der Macht bzw. des Imperiums von Osten nach Westen bei.

Große Dichtung wird nicht nur durch den literarischen Kanon oder auf den Listen der Pflichtlektüre erhalten. In der späteren Überlieferung sind ihre Überlebensformen sehr verschieden: Dichtung, der ein glückliches Schicksal widerfährt und die noch gelesen wird, kann sogar so fortleben, dass sie unsere Ansichten, unsere Sitten, unsere geschichtliche Welt gestaltet (und sich dabei auch selbst verwandelt).

In der westlichen Überlieferung kommt dem Vergilschen Dichten ohne Zweifel eine besondere Stellung zu. Theodor Haecker nennt Vergil¹ nicht ohne Belang „den Vater des Abendlandes“.² Wie aber lebt Vergil in der westlichen Überlieferung fort?

¹ Vergil wurde am 15. Oktober 70 v. Chr. im Örtchen Andes bei Mantua geboren. Sein erstes größeres Werk stellt eine Sammlung der Hirtengedichte *Eclogae* oder *Bucolica* (42–39 v. Chr.) dar. Ihr folgte das didaktische Gedicht *Georgica* (37–29 v. Chr.), das Asinius Pollio gewidmet wurde, der ihn bei Augustus einführte und ihm Zugang zum Kreis der römischen Dichter (Propertius, Horaz u. a.) ermöglichte, die sich um den eponymen Förderer der Dichtung Maecenas sammelten. Im Jahre 29 v. Chr. begann Vergil das Epos *Aeneis* zu schreiben, das aber bei seinem Tod am 21. September 19 v. Chr. in Brundisium unvollendet war. Im Europa des Mittelalters, vor allem aber in den romanischen Ländern, aber auch in der Neuzeit wurde Vergil für den größten Dichter überhaupt gehalten. – In die slowenische Sprache wurden alle seine Hauptwerke übersetzt. Die erste vollständige Übersetzung von *Georgica* hat Jožef Šubic (1863) geschaffen, die ersten vollständigen Übersetzungen der *Bucolica* und der *Aeneas* und eine neue Übersetzung von *Georgica* stammen von Fran Bradač (1964). Die *Bucolica*, eine Auswahl der anderen Vergilschen Sammlungen, *Appendix Vergiliana* und *Catalepton*, und eine Auswahl aus der *Georgica* erschienen im Jahre 1994 in der Übersetzung von Marko Marinčič.

² Die genannte rühmende Bezeichnung findet sich bereits im Untertitel des Haeckerschen Buches (1931).

Wie lässt sich sein Fortleben erklären? Was empfängt er in dieser Überlieferung, in dieser Übergabe, und was gibt er weiter? Was nimmt er vom Mythos auf und was gibt er an die Geschichte ab?

Ich möchte beim heutigen Vergilschen Erbe beginnen, beim westlichen Alltag, beim tagtäglichen Geldgeschäft. Das große Siegel der Vereinigten Staaten, abgebildet auf der Rückseite des amerikanischen Dollarscheins, trägt die Aufschrift: *novus ordo saeculorum*.

Magnus ordo saeculorum, so aber sprach Vergil. Was der Geldschein behauptet, was er in harter Währung in Geltung und in Umlauf setzt, ist nichts weniger als eine neue Weltordnung, wobei er sich auf Vergil bezieht.³ Der Geldschein nimmt einen Kredit auf bei einer literarischen Autorität, einen Kredit als eine Bevollmächtigung. Nicht durch Zufall. Denn Vergil ist auch in dieser Hinsicht „der Vater des Abendlandes“. Am Beginn der berühmten *Vierten Ekloge*, der der Spruch auf dem Dollarschein entliehen ist, heißt es (V. 4–10):

Ultima Cumaei venit iam carminis aetas;
magnus ab integro saeculorum nascitur ordo.
Iam redit et Virgo, redeunt Saturnia regna,
iam nova progenies caelo demittitur alto.
Tu modo nascenti puero, quo ferrea primum
desinet ac toto surget gens aurea mundo,
casta fave Lucina: tuus iam regnat Apollo.⁴

Schon kommt das letzte Alter des kumäischen Liedes;
groß vom Anbeginn an gebiert sich die Ordnung der Zeiten.
Schon kehrt zurück die Jungfrau, es kehrt die Saturnische Herrschaft,
schon entsteigt ein neues Geschlecht dem erhabenen Himmel.
Sei nur dem Knaben, gebornem, mit dem sich das eiserne Alter
schließen wird, und rings auf der Welt ein goldnes Geschlecht aufgehen,
sei, Lucina, ihm hold: schon herrscht dein Apollo.

Beim Auslegen dieses Gedichtes, vielleicht eines der am häufigsten interpretierten Gedichte, das es je gegeben hat, möchte ich mich nur auf das Notwendigste beschränken. Das Gedicht bringt, gleich nachdem der Dichter die sizilianischen Musen zum Mitsingen aufgerufen hat (V. 1–3), eine Kunde. Das Gedicht kündigt an, was bevorsteht, was kommt, was beinahe schon da ist, und zwar einerseits mit einem dreifachen „schon“, das zweimal sogar am Anfang des Verses steht, und gleichzeitig dramatisch, d.h. als sich verwirklichend. Das deutet die Handlung im Präsens an, das an einem Punkt der Verwirklichung, die es so darstellt, als ob es schon vergangen wäre, in das Futur übergeht. Die Kunde im Präsens ist ein Voraussagen des Künftigen und endet im Futur.

³ Michael Ferber weist in *A Dictionary of Literary Symbols*, Stichwort „Sun“ (1999, 213), auf die Aufnahme und Anpassung von Vergilschen Versen auf dem Dollarschein hin.

⁴ Zitiert nach der textkritischen Ausgabe (1900). Die Verdeutschung des Originals folgt im Grunde der Sprachstruktur der alten Übersetzung von Johann Heinrich Voss, doch sie verändert ihre Wortwahl an den Stellen, die für die Auslegung von Bedeutung sind.

Was bevorsteht, ist das letzte Weltalter (*aetas*), das die kumäische Sibylle vorausgesagt hat. Dieses Zeitalter kommt, indem die Ordnung der Zeiten (*ordo saeculorum*) entsteht bzw., wie Vergil sagt, „sich gebiert“ (*nascitur*). Das Gebären dieser Ordnung, das sich sozusagen „gleichzeitig“ mit dem Aufkommen des letzten Weltalters vollzieht, fällt doch am Ende mit der Geburt des Knaben zusammen, der einem neuen Geschlecht (*nova progenies*) vom Himmel angehört. Mit dem Knaben, der *geboren wird*, wird eigentlich auch die „große Ordnung der Zeiten“ geboren. Eine Ordnung, die sich gebiert – der die eigene Geburt bevorsteht –, wird in Wahrheit im genau gleichen Moment wie der Knabe geboren, der gerade jetzt geboren wird (*modo nascenti*) – und dadurch entsteht das letzte Weltalter. Dies ist das Zeitalter, in dem zwar nicht sofort, sondern erst allmählich das goldene Menschengeschlecht (*genus aurea*) zurückkehrt.

Die Kunde des Gedichtanfangs lautet also, dass die Welt mit der Geburt eines Knaben in das letzte Zeitalter eintritt. Dieses Zeitalter, das von der Geburt des Knaben eingeführt wird, soll aber so lange dauern wie das Leben des Knaben, genau so lang wie ein *saeculum*. Was heißt *saeculum* ursprünglich?

Seiner Herkunft nach handelt es sich um einen etruskischen Begriff, der ursprünglich nicht ein Weltalter kennzeichnete, sondern eine Lebenszeit, die Dauer des längsten Lebens innerhalb eines Menschengeschlechts, d.h. die Lebenszeit, die mit der Geburt und dem Tod des ältesten Angehörigen gemessen wurde, desjenigen, der in einem Geschlecht von allen am längsten gelebt hat.⁵ Später entwickelte sich daraus in Rom die neue Vorstellung vom Menschen eines *saeculi*, nach der es sich um einen Menschen mit halbgöttlichen Eigenschaften handelte, z. B. Pompeius, Cicero, Cäsar oder Augustus.⁶ Vergil aber benennt den Knaben, den Angehörigen des neuen himmlischen Geschlechts, überhaupt nicht, sondern nennt ihn bloß *puer*, so dass er ohne eigenen Namen bleibt. Als Vergil, gleich nach der anfänglichen Kunde von der Ankunft des letzten Weltalters durch die Geburt des Knaben, sich an seinen Gönner Pollio wendet, sagt er über diesen Knaben nur, dass er während seiner Amtszeit als Konsul geboren wird (V. 11–12). Es ist jedoch offensichtlich, dass Vergil als den Menschen des *saeculi*, der Zeit des neuen himmlischen Geschlechts, gerade den unbenannten Knaben verkündet und als das neue *saeculum*, das einmal während der erwähnten Amtszeit anfangen wird, die Lebenszeit des Knaben.

Der Kunde des Vergilschen Gedichtes zufolge stimmt also das letzte Weltalter, das mit der Geburt des Knaben beginnt schon seit seinem Beginn mit der Lebenszeit des Knaben überein. Diese Lebenszeit aber umspannt in ihrem künftigen Verlauf die „große Ordnung der Zeiten“ und ihr Nacheinander: Die Ordnung, die „sich gebiert“, wird mit der Geburt des Knaben nicht nur geboren, sondern wird mit dem Knaben in seiner Lebenszeit auch wachsen. Die Zeit wird wachsen.

In der Zeit werden sich die Zeiten aneinander reihen. Zwei Zeiten werden wachsen. In der Lebenszeit des Knaben, seines Heranwachsens zur Reife, wenn eine Zeit des Menschengeschlechts nach der anderen wachsen wird, sollen die Zeiten, eine nach der anderen, aufbrechen. So soll mit der Geburt des Knaben die Zeit des eisernen

⁵ Vgl. Nisbet (1978, 60) und Du Quesnay (1977, 40).

⁶ Vgl. Du Quesnay, ebd.

Geschlechts enden. Am Ende seiner Kindheit, mit dem Beginn der Reife, wenn der Knabe die „Loblieder über die Helden“ und über die „Taten des Vaters“ (V. 26) zu lesen beginnen wird, soll die Zeit des Heroischen anbrechen. Und nachdem der Knabe reif geworden ist, bricht endlich die Zeit des Goldenen Zeitalters an. Doch diese Zeit wächst nicht nur nach den ersten beiden, sondern auch durch die zweite Zeit hindurch. Ihr Wachstum beginnt schon mit der Geburt des Knaben, in seiner Kindheit, wenn die Erde „ohne Zucht“ (V. 18) den Knaben mit Rosen und Blumen überschütten wird, und hört zu wachsen erst in seiner Erwachsenenzeit auf, wenn, ohne dass die Erde von Menschenhand bearbeitet worden wäre, „jedes Land alles tragen wird“ (V. 39).

Erst wenn die unberührte Erde alles im Überfluss geben wird, wird auch die Zeit des goldenen Geschlechts, ihren Wachstum erfüllend, erneut erstrahlen – und es wird kommen, ohne wegzugehen. Und wiederzukehren. Und so weiter. Es wird ohne Weggang und Wiederkehr zurückkehren, ohne die ewige Wiederkehr, für immer. Dann wird die Zeit anbrechen, die es schon einmal gegeben hat, die Zeit der Saturnischen Herrschaft. Nur, dass sie diesmal bleiben wird, wobei auch die Jungfrau zurückkehrt, d.h. die Gerechtigkeit, die, wie Vergil in der *Georgica* (2, 474) andeutet, bei Anbruch des Eisernen Zeitalters in den Himmel, in das Sternbild der Jungfrau, gefahren ist. Die Lebenszeit des Knaben, in der sich die drei Zeiten von drei Geschlechtern aneinanderreihen werden, und zwar so, dass die letzten beiden nacheinander und die dritte, die Zeit des goldenen Geschlechts, auch durch die zweite hindurch wachsen und am Ende ihres Wachstums endgültig zurückkehren bzw. bleiben wird, ohne wegzugehen – dieses neue *saeculum* wird ein Weltalter werden, das nicht von der Welt, sondern vom Himmel ist.

Im Vergleich mit der offiziell ersten dichterischen Übertragung des Mythos vom goldenen Geschlecht in *Tage und Nächte* von Hesiod hat Vergil die Zahl der Geschlechter von fünf auf drei reduziert. Dies ist aber keineswegs die bedeutendste Veränderung. Vergil ist der erste, der in der griechisch-römischen Überlieferung die *Rückkehr* von der Zeit des goldenen Geschlechts bzw. vom Goldenen Zeitalter überhaupt dichterisch erschaffen hat. Er zeigt es als Wachstum, das mit der Geburt des Göttlichen Knaben beginnt und mit seiner Reife endet, womit das Goldene Zeitalter selbst als *das Allerletzte* des letzten Weltalters dargestellt wird. Für die Alten stellte das Goldene Zeitalter ein verlorenes mythisches Paradies dar, das nie wiederkehrt. Obwohl es schon bei Hesiod (ebd., V. 109–111) mit der Herrschaft von Chronos bzw. Saturnus verbunden wird, war in der griechisch-römischen Überlieferung vor Vergil keine Rede von seiner Rückkehr. Und noch weniger davon, dass es nach seiner Rückkehr bleiben würde.

Vergil besingt somit nicht nur das Goldene Zeitalter anders, als es in der griechisch-römischen Überlieferung üblich ist, sondern auch den Menschen des *saeculi*. In seiner Dichtung gibt es etwas, was wohl am treffendsten mit Ausdrücken, die durch den jüdisch-christlichen Gebrauch bestimmt sind, als *das Messianische* und *das Eschatologische* zu bezeichnen wäre.

Diese beiden sind in seinem Gedicht eng miteinander verflochten. Das Messianische ist das Neue, etwas oder jemand, der kommt und das Alte rettet. Das Eschatologische ist das rettende Neue, das zuletzt und endgültig kommt, d.h. es kommt nur einmal, ohne Wiederholung jedes anderen, eventuellen Einmal. Das Retten des Alten geschieht durch den Knaben und verläuft allmählich, gleichzeitig mit seinem

Wachstum, aber trotzdem endgültig. In seiner Lebenszeit, seines *saeculi* als des letzten Weltalters, kehrt das Goldene Zeitalter schließlich rettend zurück – und es bleibt jenseits der ewigen Wiederkehr des Gleichen, jenseits von Weggang und Wiederkehr, jenseits des ewigen Kreislaufes der Zeitalter, die die Welt durchläuft bzw. durchlaufen hat. Das Vergilsche Dichten von der endgültigen Rückkehr des Goldenen Zeitalters lässt aus dem *saeculo*, in dem diese Rückkehr als das Allerletzte geschieht, ein eschatologisches werden. Weil sich aber die dichterische Eschatologisierung des Mythos vom Goldenen Zeitalter stets mit der neuen Vorstellung, dem Mythos vom Menschen des *saeculi*, verflechtet und dadurch den alten griechischen Mythos mit dem neuen römischen verbindet, ist sie mit der Messianisierung seiner Gestalt untrennbar verflochten.

Das eschatologisch-messianische Dichten Vergils in der *Vierten Ekloge* wirkt innerhalb der griechisch-römischen Überlieferung befremdend. Es entfernt sich von ihr, ohne sie ganz zu verlassen: Es befremdet in der sich innerhalb der griechisch-römischen Überlieferung vollziehenden Bewegung hin zur jüdischen Überlieferung, wodurch die beiden Überlieferungen näher zueinander rücken. Und gerade in dieser befremdlichen messianisch-eschatologischen Dimension wurde das Vergilsche Dichten auch vom Altchristentum aufgenommen. Dieses wurde sich, indem es sich die jüdische Überlieferung zusammen mit der Heiligen Schrift aneignete, der Nähe dieser Dichtung sowohl zu den alttestamentarischen als auch zum außerbiblichen, im griechischen Judentum entstandenen Sibyllinischen Weissagungen bewusst. Ursprünglich galt es als von diesen Weissagungen abhängig, worauf Vergil selbst verweist, wenn er sich auf die Weissagung der kumäischen Sibylle beruft (V. 4), oder aber als völlig unabhängig, als die eigentliche Prophetie inmitten des Heidentums.⁷

Die am Ende des Vergilschen prophetischen Gedichts stehende Rückkehr des Goldenen Zeitalters, wenn auch die Gerechtigkeit aus dem Himmel zurückkehren wird, bringt, nach einer Zeit des heroischen Geschlechts und nach dem Feldzug des zweiten Achilles nach Troja (V. 36) während der Reifezeit des Knaben, nicht nur den Menschen Frieden, sondern schon am Anfang, in der Kindheit des Knaben, auch den Tieren. Das kennt auch die griechisch-römische Überlieferung, doch wiederum nicht im Goldenen Zeitalter. „... nicht fürchten [wird] das Rind die großen Löwen,“ sagt aber Vergil (V. 22). Dieser Friede trotz der Anwesenheit der Wildtiere, dieses friedliche Miteinander der zahmen und der wilden Tiere, die nach der Metamorphose ihrer Raubtiernatur auch zahm geworden sind, erinnert uns an die Vision Jesajas vom tierischen Frieden im *éschaton* (11, 6):

Da werden die Wölfe bei den Lämmern wohnen und die Panther bei den Böcken lagern.

Und noch:

Ein kleiner Knabe wird Kälber und junge Löwen und Mastvieh miteinander treiben.⁸

⁷ Vgl. Luiselli (1983–1984, 133–149).

⁸ Luthersche Übersetzung (1985, 671).

Das Bild des tierischen Friedens ist auch den Sibyllinischen Weissagungen bekannt.⁹ Sie künden aber in diesem Bilde nicht von einem Knaben, vom „kleinen Knaben (*na'ar katan*)“, so wie Vergil vom *puer*. Doch gerade der Knabe (*na'ar*) wird in der messianischen Prophezeiung vier Kapitel vorher, bei Jesaja (7, 14), als der angekündet, der vom einem Mädchen oder, in der Lesung der Septuaginta, von einer Jungfrau (griechisch *parthénos*, hebräisch *'alma*, „Mädchen“) geboren und Emmanuel genannt wird.¹⁰

Kurz gefasst: in der Tatsache, dass Vergil das eschatologische *saeculum* dichtet, in dem das Goldene Zeitalter zurückkehrt und mit ihm ebenso die Jungfrau bzw. die Gerechtigkeit, die den Frieden unter die Menschen und auch unter die Tiere bringt, gerade darin, dass Vergil dieses *saeculum* als das *saeculum* des kindlichen Erlösers dichtet, sah das Altchristentum das Aufkeimen des Logos, das Aufkeimen seines Samens in einer anderen Kultur, ohne dass dieser in der eigenen Literaturüberlieferung zuvor kultiviert worden wäre. Ein Aufkeimen ohne vorherige Zucht – eine prophetische Offenbarung.

Doch was ist mit der Wendung *novus ordo seclorum* von der Rückseite des Dollarscheins, die sich auf Vergil bezieht? Worauf zielt sie? In jedem Falle auf etwas anderes, und zwar auf die Tatsache, dass sich die Macht, welche die neue Ordnung für alle zukünftige Zeiten gründet, im Westen befindet. Dass sie dorthin übersiedelte.

Die Übersiedlung der Macht bzw. des Imperiums nach Westen stellt eine gewaltige geistesgeschichtliche Bewegung dar, die auch den Dollarschein trägt, der die Worte aus dem *Vierten Ekloge* paraphrasiert. Sie beginnt aber nicht in diesem Vergilschen Jugendwerk und wurde von Vergil auch nicht selbst ausgelöst, wohl aber maßgebend in Gang gesetzt, allerdings erst in seinem unvollendeten Lebenswerk *Aeneis*, einem Gedicht über Aeneas, der die Trojaner aus der besiegten Stadt auf die italienische Halbinsel brachte, nach Hesperien, *ins Abendland*, in das „Land des Abends“ bzw. das Land im Westen.

Erster Anstoß für die Übersiedlung der geistigen und weltlichen Gewalt und Macht, des Geistes und Imperiums vom Osten nach Westen, gab die Aneignung des trojanischen Krieges im großen römischen Epos Vergils. Dabei handelt es sich um die Aneignung aller Aneignungen, um die „Kronaneignung“ in der römischen Literaturüberlieferung sozusagen, die bis zu den epischen Dichtern Ennius und Naevius zurückgeht. Für Herodot, den ersten griechischen Historiker und Erforscher der griechisch-persischen Kriege, in denen es den Griechen mit ihrem Sieg gelang, ein Bollwerk im Osten zu errichten und so das Aufkeimen ihrer Frühkultur zu sichern, war der Trojanische Krieg der erste Krieg zwischen den Barbaren überhaupt, d.h. zwischen den Persern, die über die barbarischen Völker im Asien herrschten, und den Griechen in Europa. Nach der Meinung von Herodot handelte es sich um den ersten Krieg zwischen Asien und Europa.¹¹ So war der erste Militärsieg Europas über Asien, sei es ein mythischer oder historischer, in jedem Fall ein Verdienst der Griechen.

⁹ Vgl. Nisbet (1978, 66).

¹⁰ Das hebräische Original und die Übersetzung der Septuaginta sind nach der elektronischen Ausgabe *BibleWorks for Windows* (1993) zitiert.

¹¹ Vgl. Herodot, *Historia* 1, 4. Zitiert nach der textkritischen Ausgabe (1927).

Indem die römische Mythendichtung die Wurzeln des Römertums im – wie Vergil ihn mehrmals nennt – „frommen Aeneas“ sah, der durch die Achtung der Überlieferung der alten Götter Latium eroberte, in dem später das zweite Troja gegründet wurde, hat sich Rom, anstatt der Ehre vom ersten Militärsieg über Asien, das geistige Erbe des Ostens angeeignet.

Den zweiten Anstoß für die Übersiedlung der Macht bzw. des Imperiums nach Westen gab die Wiedererkennung des Knaben aus der *Vierten Ekloge* in der *Aeneis*. Es wurde bereits versucht zu zeigen, dass die messianisch-eschatologische Dimension des Vergilschen Dichtens vom Mythos des Goldenen Zeitalters durch die Gestalt des kindlichen Erlösers die historisch-politische Dimension des Mythos erfasst und verwandelt, z.B. die Angabe, dass der Knabe während der Amtszeit des Konsuls Pollio auf die Welt kommen soll. Diese messianisch-eschatologische Dimension hat Vergil jedoch selbst wieder historisiert. Die Sprechzeit in der *Vierten Ekloge* ist nämlich seit Anfang an nicht die Zeit, die besprochen wird: das letzte Weltalter ist noch nicht da, es kommt erst, es tritt mit der Geburt des Knaben erst in Erscheinung, wenn das Goldene Zeitalter zurückzukehren beginnt, das erst mit der Reife des Knaben völlig zurückgekehrt sein wird. Im sechsten Gesang der *Aeneis* knüpft aber Vergil selbst an die Prophezeiung aus der *Vierten Ekloge* an, so als ob das Ereignis, das von dieser Prophezeiung vorausgesagt wurde, nicht mehr kurz bevorstehen würde, sondern sich die Prophezeiung selbst in der Zwischenzeit, vom Schreiben der Ekloge bis zum Schreiben des Epos, schon erfüllt hätte. Das Vergilsche Dichten sollte auf diese Weise *vaticinium post eventum* werden, da Vergil im Knaben aus seiner eigenen Prophezeiung Augustus wiedererkennt, den ersten römischen Imperator, und ihn mit den Worten lobt, die er aus dem früheren prophetischen Gedicht nahm. Im Hinblick auf die Sprach- und Ereignisgestaltung des Gesangs wird es jedoch *vaticinium ex eventu*, da Vergil die Prophezeiung, die sich noch zu seiner Lebenszeit erfüllen sollte, den mythischen Trojaner Anchises aussprechen lässt. Die Worte des Wiedererkennens, „die Lösung des Rätsels aus der *Vierten Ekloge*“ (Glei 1991, 56), legt Vergil also Anchises in den Mund, der sie zu seinem Sohn Aeneas spricht, und zwar über seinen künftigen Nachkommen (6, 791–795):

Hic vir, hic est, tibi quem promitti saepius audis,
Augustus Caesar, Divi genus, aurea condet
saecula qui rursus Latio regnata per arva
Saturno quondam, super et Garamantas et Indos
proferet imperium...¹²

Dort der Mann, dort ist er, den oft dir verheißen du hörst,
Kaiser Augustus, das Geschlecht Gottes, welches die goldnen
Zeiten wieder gründet in Latium durch die Gefilde,
über die Saturnus einst herrschte, jenseits Garamanten und Indern
dehnt er das Reich...

¹² Zitiert nach der textkritischen Ausgabe (1900).

Mit anderen, fast identischen Worten, doch mit einem anderen Wortsinn, spricht Vergil hier folgendes aus: Goldene Zeiten (*aurea saecula*) bzw. das Goldene Zeitalter ist schon zurückgekehrt, es kehrte dorthin zurück, wo einst schon Saturnus herrschte, nach Latium. Es kehrte mit dem Kaiser Augustus zurück, der schon geboren wurde und der bereits in allen Himmelsrichtungen seine Herrschaft angetreten ist, auch im Osten. Der über die ganze Welt seine Herrschaft ausgebreitet hat, „das große Imperium“ (6, 812), das auf dem trojanischen Erbe des Westens gegründet wurde und dessen Zweck es ist, über die Völker zu herrschen, über jedes Volk mit dem ihm gehörigen Maß des Friedens (6, 852–853):

... pacisque imponere morem,
parcere subiectis, et debellare superbos.

... Zucht anordnen des Friedens,
mild dem Ergebenen sein und niederducken den Trotzer.

Damit wird die Prophezeiung, die messianisch-eschatologische Kunde aus der *Vierten Ekloge* säkularisiert, d.h., sie verflechtet sich wieder mit der geschichtlichen, der sich ereigneten und sich ereignenden Welt. Durch die Säkularisierung wird das jetzige Weltalter zum letzten Zeitalter, sie preist den bestehenden Zustand bzw. die erlangte Weltordnung und verherrlicht sie zugleich als die gerechteste Weltordnung.

Mit Augustus und seinem Imperium besingt Vergil die *pax Romana*, den ersten imperialen Frieden im Westen. Die Geschichte kennt ähnliche Verherrlichungen der säkularisierten Eschatologie unter den Namen *pax Hispanica*, *pax Britannica* oder *pax Americana*. Und auch andere Gedichte von Übersiedlungen, die nach der *Aeneis* geschrieben wurden, andere metaphorische Bewegungen von geistiger und weltlicher Macht bzw. des Imperiums nach Westen. Dorthin siedeln Freiheit, Kirche und sogar die Dichtung über;¹³ oder wie, alles zusammenfassend, im 18. Jh. George Berkeley in einem Vers aus *Verses on the Verses on the Prospect of Planting Arts and Learning in America* sagt, die in den Vereinigten Staaten oft zitiert wurden:

Westward the course of empire takes its way...¹⁴

Westwärts bewegt sich die Richtung des Imperiums...

Seien wir präzise bei diesem *westward*, bei seinem Woher: das Übersiedeln des Imperiums begann nicht in Mittelasien, wo sich ehemals von Indus bis nach Mesopotamien persische Imperien ausbreiteten, die dem späteren römischen Imperium im Westen ähnlich waren und im großen persischen Epos, in *Buch der Könige*, von Firdusi besungen werden. Dieses Übersiedeln erfolgte nicht von Persien über Mesopotamien bzw. dem Nahen Osten bis nach Griechenland und dann noch weiter westlich. Es begann weder mit dem mythischen Sieg Griechenlands über Persien, der von Homer besungen wird, noch mit Griechenlands historischem Sieg, den Herodot

¹³ In der englischen Dichtung ist von *westering*, d.h. von der Übersiedlung der Freiheit nach Westen bei James Thomson und William Collins, von der Übersiedlung der Kirche bei George Herbert und der Dichtung bei Thomas Gray die Rede. Vgl. Ferber, *A Dictionary of Literary Symbols*, Stichwort „East and West“ (1999, 69).

¹⁴ Zitiert nach Ferber (1999, 213).

beschreibt – dem Sieg Europas über Asien, der vom militärisch-politischen Gesichtspunkt aus gesehen die günstigen Bedingungen für den Beginn des klassischen Zeitalters der griechischen Antike schuf. Im Gegenteil: das Übersiedeln begann mit der römischen, vor allem aber der Vergilschen dichterischen Aneignung vom besiegten Troja, und zwar als *das Übersiedeln des Ostens westwärts, nach Westen*, als der immer neue, ewige Aufgang des Ostens im Westen. Der Aufgang des Westens.

Als ob das Licht, als ob die Kraft von Osten nach Westen ginge, wie die Sonne, die ihrem unabänderbaren Lauf von Aufgang und Untergang folgt. Die Metapher der Macht- bzw. der Imperiumsübersiedlung nach Westen beschreibt allerdings eine Bewegung, die nur scheinbar den Lauf der Sonne wiederholt, denn obwohl das Übersiedeln seinen Gang nach Westen nimmt und, im Westen angekommen, sich immer westlicher bewegt, kennt es, im Gegensatz zur Sonne, keinen Untergang, es geht nie unter. Im Gegenteil: Es scheint, als würde die Sonne der Gerechtigkeit, des Friedens und der Freiheit, die im Osten aufgegangen ist, im Westen fortwährend scheinen, so als würde sie immer westlicher aufgehen und mit einer nicht nachlassenden, wachsenden Kraft scheinen, ohne je unterzugehen.

Bleibt aber das Imperium im Westen, ohne sich immer westlicher zu verlagern, von Rom noch weiter, in das christliche Westeuropa und nach Amerika? Oder bleibt das Imperium im Westen so, dass es sich in das christliche Osteuropa verlagert, nach Konstantinopel und, unter der Fahne der Orthodoxie als des rechten Rühmens des christlichen Gottes, nach Moskau, also dem zweiten und weiter noch dem dritten Rom, nach Russland, dem fortwährenden Bollwerk gegen das große gelbe Asien, die schlummernde Katze, die immer kurz vor dem Aufwachen ist? Im Westen – ostwärts, nach Russland? Oder westwärts, nach Amerika, in die Vereinigten Staaten?

Wie auch immer, die zeitgenössischen linken Kapitalismuskritiker Antonio Negri und Michael Hardt stellten sogar fest, dass im Westen ein Imperium als eine „neue globale Souveränitätsform“ (2001, XII) entstanden ist. Dieses Imperium wiederholt nicht nur die alten Formen des Imperialismus und stellt nicht nur ein Weltreich unter denen dar, die durch das Ausbreiten ihrer Herrschaftsgrenzen die bekannte Welt von der unbekanntem, das besiedelte Land der kultivierten Welt von dem der barbarischen Welt oder von dem unbesiedelten Land überhaupt trennten. Sein Raum, die Stätte, an der es seine Herrschaft demonstriert, die ohne Imperator, ohne Mittelpunkt und ohne Ort der Macht überhaupt auskommt, ist jetzt die ganze Erdkugel. Mit den alten Imperien teilt es nur die Bestrebung, den Frieden über die bekannte Welt, d.h. über die ganze Erdkugel als die menschliche Welt zu verbreiten. Gerade diese Bestrebung aber macht dieses neue Imperium zum Erben des römischen Imperiums. Demzufolge ist es kein Zufall, dass Negri und Hardt als den herausragendsten Bekunder des römischen Friedens, des frühesten Vorfahren des Friedens, der jetzt verkündet und verwahrt wird, gerade Vergil anführen, und zwar die Stelle, die sich auch der Dollarschein zueigen gemacht hat: „The final age that the oracle foretold has arrived; / the great order of the centuries is born again“ (167).

Ein Text wächst mit seinen Lesarten stimmt Paul Ricoeur,¹⁵ einer der größten Hermeneuten unserer Zeit, einem mittelalterlichen Denker zu. So wächst auch der

¹⁵ Vgl. Ricoeur (1999, 21).

Vergilsche Text aufgrund seiner Bedeutungsangebote, bekräftigt seine Autorität und verwandelt sich durch unser Lesen.

Und was sagen die Dichter über die Macht in unserer Zeit? Existiert überhaupt die Macht *über* die Welt *in* der Welt? Wohin zeigt, welche Bewegung zeichnet ihr dichterisches Wort?

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FUTURE PROFESSIONAL DICTIONARY USERS AND THEIR USE OF DICTIONARIES

Marjeta Vrbinc and Alenka Vrbinc

Abstract

The article presents the results of a study on dictionary use by students of English who are to become professional dictionary users. The first part of the article gives information on test subjects, their knowledge of English and their dictionary habits. The second part discusses the results of individual tasks with an emphasis on dictionary use and the relationship between the correctness of the students' answers and their dictionary consultation. In the last part of the article information is presented concerning the types of dictionaries students own; additionally, there is a discussion of the reasons why students do not consult their dictionaries as often as they should.

1. INTRODUCTION

Since the first dictionaries were compiled, great changes have been made in content and design. In the 1970s and 1980s language teachers and lexicographers became aware of the fact that dictionaries, learners' dictionaries in particular, had to be tailored to suit dictionary users. Dictionary making has undergone revolutionary changes due to the development of research on dictionary use, dictionary users and dictionaries themselves (Tomaszczyk 1979, Béjoint 1981, Hartmann 1989, Hartmann 1995, Bogaards 1996, Wiegand 1998, Tono 1998, Tono 2001, Atkins 1998, Dolezal and McCreary 1999, MacFarquhar and Richards 1983, McArthur 1989).

The oldest among the learners' dictionaries, the *Oxford Advanced Learner's Dictionary of Current English (OALD)*, has seen seven editions since 1948. It was followed by the *Longman Dictionary of Contemporary English (LDOCE)* in 1978, which has been revised three times so far. In 1987, the *Collins COBUILD English Language Dictionary (COBUILD)* was first published introducing many changes to the microstructure. In 1995, the above-mentioned leading monolingual learners' dictionaries were all revised and another learners' dictionary, the *Cambridge International Dictionary of English (CIDE)*, was first published; in 2003 it appeared in a revised edition. The *Macmillan English Dictionary for Advanced Learners (MED)*, another monolingual dictionary for foreign learners, was first published in 2002.

This article presents the findings of research on a specific group of dictionary users, namely, the students of English who are future English teachers or translators and thus

cannot be regarded as general dictionary users. In the course of their studies, students are constantly reminded of the importance of using dictionaries and of the wealth of information included in them. This holds true especially for monolingual dictionaries, not only general but also specialized ones, because the existing English-Slovene and Slovene-English dictionaries are not reliable sources of information. It has to be pointed out that the most comprehensive English-Slovene dictionary was published in 1978 and has not yet been revised, whereas the most comprehensive Slovene-English dictionary underwent a partial revision in 1990. This revision brought no changes to the macrostructure and in the microstructure only some of the most glaring mistakes were corrected.

The research we conducted is the first of its kind in Slovenia; we therefore decided to carry out a study on the general use of dictionaries rather than investigate a certain aspect of dictionary use or concentrate on a special part of a dictionary entry. We based our questionnaire partly on the questionnaire used in the EURALEX/AILA project (Atkins and Varantola 1998). We adopted the design of the questionnaire used in this project, but made several modifications to meet our needs. The sample sentences for different tasks were changed, and sentences that are contrastively different in English and Slovene, thus posing problems to Slovene learners of English, were included. Some tasks were excluded (e.g. a passage for translation from one's mother tongue into English, since the correction of translations involves subjective decisions on the part of the person doing the correcting), and some were newly included (e.g. testing the ability of dictionary users to read the IPA, testing the ability to recognize grammatical properties of words, testing the ability to choose the appropriate meaning of a polysemous word).

2. DESCRIPTION OF THE STUDY

Test Subjects and Their Level of Knowledge: Research was carried out among second-year students of the Faculty of Arts, Department of English, University of Ljubljana, Slovenia, in March and April 2003. The researchers distributed 60 questionnaires. Fifty-seven respondents (i.e. 95 %) speak Slovene as their mother tongue and three (i.e. 5 %) speak Croatian.

The test subjects were asked to give details about the number of years they had been studying English. They have all been studying English for between eight and sixteen years: the highest percentage of respondents have been studying it for ten years (35 %) (see Table 1). All of them have studied English in primary school, grammar school and at the university; three of them stated that they had additionally attended courses in Slovenia and abroad, and one of them mentioned watching TV as a means of learning English.

Table 1: Distribution of years of English study among respondents.

Length of English studies	Number of respondents in %
8 years	5 %
9 years	20 %
10 years	35 %
11 years	20 %
12 years	10 %
16 years	10 %
Total	100 %

For the purposes of the EURALEX/AILA project, respondents had to undergo a placement test, which is understandable, since the research was carried out in different countries and in different educational systems. Our test subjects did not undergo a placement test, because all students had to meet the matriculation requirements to have become students of English; this means that their grades in English in grammar school as well as in the final examinations at the end of grammar school should have been A or B. Thirteen students (i.e. 65 %) that took part in our research obtained a grade of A, whereas seven of them (i.e. 35 %) obtained a grade of B.

Test Design. The questionnaire consisted of two parts (cf. Atkins and Varantola 1998: 21–81): a Dictionary user profile form and a Dictionary research test. The first part was aimed at obtaining information about dictionary users, i.e. their mother tongue, how long they have been studying English, their grades in grammar school. The next few questions concentrated on the dictionaries they own and their reasons for purchasing these, on the frequency of use of bilingual and monolingual dictionaries, the dictionaries they use for particular tasks (e.g. while reading a text in English, while translating, checking spelling), and on their preferred dictionary/dictionaries.

The test subjects were asked to list a dictionary or dictionaries they were going to use throughout the test. In some tasks students were encouraged to use dictionaries, whereas in others they were asked not to use their dictionaries. The aims of individual tasks were as follows: testing the students' ability to recognize the correct part of speech, to recognize grammatical properties of words, to locate multi-word lexical items, to select the appropriate prepositional complement, to understand polysemous words in context, to read the IPA, to fill the slot in context and to select the appropriate word to fill the slot in difficult contexts.

Information Prior to the Test. The students were acquainted with the aim of the test. We asked them not to use their dictionaries in certain tasks and explained why. They were also asked to give details about the dictionary they were going to use in a particular task. When dictionaries were allowed, the students were asked to indicate whether or not the dictionary had been consulted in that particular instance.

3. RESULTS

The Dictionary research test consisted of eight tasks each comprising several questions. Each task was aimed at testing a specific skill, ability or expectation of a dictionary user. The results obtained from the questionnaire are presented below.

3.1 Identification of part of speech

Task 1 consisted of six sentences in which students had to identify the part of speech of a word in italics. The majority of the existing monolingual and all English-Slovene dictionaries include different parts of speech as separate entries. It is, therefore, necessary for dictionary users to be able to determine the part of speech before looking up a word in a dictionary. In this task, dictionaries were not allowed.

The students did not have problems identifying *just* as an adverb and an adjective (in both cases 95 % gave the correct answer). *After* was more problematic when

used as a conjunction (45 % gave the correct answer) than when used as a preposition (65 % answered correctly). Amazingly, the respondents found it easy to identify *present* as an adjective (85 %) but only 55 % could identify it as a noun in the sentence “At *present* the outlook appears bleak” (for details see Table 2).

Table 2: Identification of part of speech.

Question	Parts of Speech				
	1/1	adverb 25 %	adjective 0 %	conjunction 5 %	preposition (*) 65 %
1/2	adverb 35 %	adjective 0 %	conjunction (*) 45 %	preposition 15 %	don't know 5 %
1/3	noun 0 %	adjective (*) 85 %	adverb 10 %	preposition 0 %	don't know 5 %
1/4	noun (*) 55 %	adjective 5 %	adverb 30 %	preposition 0 %	don't know 10 %
1/5	noun 0 %	adjective 0 %	adverb (*) 95 %	preposition 0 %	don't know 5 %
1/6	noun 0 %	adjective (*) 95 %	adverb 0 %	preposition 0 %	don't know 5 %

(*) The correct answer.

If we consider the results of this task, we can see that the percentage of correct answers ranges from 45 % to 95 %. It must be stressed that the respondents were second-year students of English who had all passed two grammar examinations in the first year, a fact which explains the high percentage of correct answers for questions 1/3, 1/5 and 1/6. In the rest of the questions the percentage of those who answered correctly is lower (between 45 % and 65 %).

3.2 Recognition of grammatical properties of words

Task 2 tested whether students are aware of certain grammatical restrictions and properties of English words (e.g. transitivity/intransitivity, verb complementation, countability/uncountability, predicative/attributive use). The students were encouraged to use their dictionaries. As we can see from the results (see Table 3), correct student answers range from 55 % to 100 %, but it seems that their choice of answers depended mostly on previous knowledge rather than on dictionary consultation, since only very few respondents actually consulted their dictionaries (0 % to 20 %). Interestingly, very few students, if any, used their dictionaries in questions that were answered correctly by all or almost all respondents, but the percentage of those who consulted their dictionaries increases in questions that were answered correctly by fewer respondents (e.g. 20 % of the respondents consulted their dictionaries in the example that was answered correctly by 55 % of the students). The question arises of why the number of look-ups was not greater in examples where students did not know

the answer. One would have expected that students of English would have made greater efforts to find the correct answer.

Table 3: Answers to questions concerning grammatical properties of words and dictionary use.

Question	Answers			
2/7	a. 0 %	b. 95 % (*)	c. 0 %	d. 5 %
	+ dict. 0 % - dict. 100 %			
2/8	a. 0 %	b. 0 %	c. 0 %	d. 100 % (*)
	+ dict. 5 % - dict. 95 %			
2/9	a. 0 %	b. 100 % (*)	c. 0 %	d. 0 %
	+ dict. 0 % - dict. 100 %			
2/10	a. 75 % (*)	b. 15 %	c. 0 %	d. 10 %
	+ dict. 10 % - dict. 80 % (+)			
2/11	a. 45 %	b. 55 % (*)	c. 0 %	d. 0 %
	+ dict. 20 % - dict. 80 %			

(*) Correct answer.

(+) Two students (10 %) did not provide an answer.

Table 4 shows that the students who did consult their dictionaries chose one of the monolingual learners' dictionaries and that their look-ups were mostly successful, a finding which means that the consultation of dictionaries obviously contributes to a better result.

Table 4: Successful and unsuccessful look-ups.

Question	Number of respondents who used a dictionary	Correct + dict.	Incorrect + dict.	Dictionaries consulted
2/7	0	0	0	/
2/8	3	3	0	COBUILD, OALD
2/9	0	0	0	/
2/10	6	3	3	LDOCE, OALD
2/11	12	9	3	COBUILD, OALD

3.3 Lexical items and their expected place in a dictionary

Task 3 tested students' expectation of where in the dictionary they can find different (multi-word) lexical items (e.g. idioms, phrasal verbs, compounds). The use of dictionaries was not allowed, since students might have believed that the correct answer could be found in their dictionaries. This is, of course, not true, as the inclusion of multi-word lexical items and special meanings of, say, plural nouns differs from dictionary to dictionary. Our initial hypothesis was that students would not consider a multi-word lexical item as a separate entry word. The results of the survey confirm this hypothesis, since only 5 % to 10 % of the respondents regarded a multi-word lexical item as a separate entry word. The phrasal verb *come through* was regarded as a separate entry by 10 %, but even here it can be assumed that some students believe that phrasal verbs are independent entries in monolingual learners' dictionaries, although they are included as run-ons. The rest of the answers comply with our expectations, i.e. dictionary users try to find a multi-word lexical item under the noun if it contains one (see Table 5).

Table 5: Expectations of students of the location of (multi-word) lexical items.

Question	In the entry for ...			
	3/12	hard 25 %	nut 70 %	hard nut 5 %
3/13	pay 20 %	dividend 80 %	pay dividends 0 %	don't know 0 %
3/14	come 80 %	through 10 %	come through 10 %	don't know 0 %
3/15	colour 60 %	colours 35 %	/	don't know 5 %

Interestingly, there is a gap in students' expectations about where to find the noun *colours*. The majority of students (60 %) would look up the noun *colours* under *colour*, while 35 % would expect to find *colours* as a separate entry.

3.4 Selection of the appropriate prepositional complement

Task 4 tested students' ability to find the correct prepositional complement of various English words. We selected grammatical collocations that present problems for native speakers of Slovene (i.e. grammatical collocations that are different in English and Slovene). If students were not acquainted with the correct preposition, they were supposed to check it in a dictionary. Generally speaking, the results are far from discouraging, since the question that was answered incorrectly by the greatest number of students was still answered correctly by as many as 70 % of the respondents, which is a high percentage. We can see that even in the question which was answered correctly by all the students, 20 % of the respondents consulted the diction-

ary, which helped them find the correct answer (see also Table 7). The results of this question are summarized in Table 6.

Table 6: Selection of the appropriate prepositional complement.

Question	Answers			
4/16	with 0 %	by 30 %	for 0 %	at (*) 70 %
	+ dict. 30 % - dict. 70 %			
4/17	at (*) 80 %	of 0 %	in 20 %	with 0 %
	+ dict. 30 % - dict. 70 %			
4/18	at 5 %	over (*) 70 % (*)	on 0 %	in 25 %
	+ dict. 5 % - dict. 95 %			
4/19	for 25 % (*)	at 0 %	on 0 %	by (*) 75 %
	+ dict. 20 % - dict. 80 %			
4/20	for 0 %	in (*) 100 %	to 0 %	by 0 %
	+ dict. 20 % - dict. 80 %			

(*) Correct answer.

Table 7 shows the number of look-ups by individual questions. It is evident from the figures that not many students consulted their dictionaries (from 5 % to 30 %), but that those who did found the appropriate information in the dictionary. Only one student failed to find the correct preposition used with the adjective *surprised*, even though he/she stated that he/she had used the OALD where the correct preposition is included. The student who gave an incorrect answer to question 4/19 (the preposition *by* should be inserted in the sentence "Profits declined ____ 6 % this year") consulted the COBUILD. It is true that this dictionary neither includes a sample sentence with this preposition nor provides one anywhere else in the entry for *decline*.

Table 7: Successful and unsuccessful look-ups.

Question	Number of respondents who used a dictionary	Correct + dict.	Incorrect + dict.	Dictionaries consulted
4/16	18	15	3	OALD, COBUILD, LDOCE, ESD
4/17	18	18	0	COBUILD, OALD, ESD
4/18	3	3	0	OALD
4/19	12	9	3	COBUILD, OALD, ESD
4/20	12	12	0	COBUILD, OALD

3.5 Understanding polysemous words in context

Task 5 tested how well students understand polysemous words in context. The students were asked either to provide the Slovene translational equivalent of the underlined word or to paraphrase it in English. They were allowed to use their dictionaries. The correct students' answers range from 70 % to as much as 100 % and here, the average percentage of students who used the dictionary is higher than in the previous tasks (as high as 55 %).

The question can be asked why students used their dictionaries more often in this particular task than in the previous ones. The answer may be sought in the demands placed upon the students in Task 5. In comparison to the previous tasks where students were supposed to choose the correct answer from several possibilities, Task 5 required that the students themselves provided an answer. It is understandable that, if they did not understand the meaning of the word in question, they would consult their dictionaries. This pattern of behaviour complies with our expectation that the dictionary is used quite frequently while reading an English text and encountering unknown words.

Table 8 proves that dictionary consultation helped the students choose the correct answer. Only in question 5/26 (students were supposed to decode the meaning of the verb *ring* in the sentence "Ringed by soldiers for protection, he tried to address the crowd") did three students who consulted the ESD fail to provide the correct answer; even though this meaning is included in this dictionary. The ESD has two separate entries for the verb *ring*, one treating different senses of the regular and the other one of the irregular verb. The students looked up the entry for the irregular instead of the regular verb. The look-up operations of all the other students were successful.

Table 8: Successful and unsuccessful look-ups.

Question	Number of respondents who used a dictionary	Correct + dict.	Incorrect + dict.	Dictionaries consulted
5/21	12	12	0	OALD, COBUILD, ESD
5/22	15	15	0	COBUILD, OALD, ESD
5/23	33	33	0	COBUILD, LDOCE, OALD, ESD
5/24	6	6	0	LDOCE, ESD
5/25	0	0	0	/
5/26	12	9	3	ESD

3.6 Reading the international phonetic alphabet

Task 6 dealt with the IPA, which is used in British monolingual (learners') dictionaries to indicate pronunciation of entry words. This task was added to the questionnaire because we hypothesized that a great number of non-professional dic-

tionary users in Slovenia cannot read the given pronunciation. This part of the research was not carried out only on the sample of students of English but also on more general users. The questionnaire used in the research was the same for both groups. The test subjects whose results are discussed in this article are students of English who regularly come across dictionaries in the course of their study and are constantly reminded by their teachers that dictionaries are a primary source of information for those who teach English, translate or are otherwise professionally involved with English. Here, too, we should mention that the second-year students have already passed the examination in English phonetics, which means that they have systematically been taught to read and write the IPA. To test the ability of respondents to read the IPA, we included six well-known words (i.e. *unimaginative*, *birthplace*, *northern*, *approach*, *breathing*, *showgirl*). Dictionaries were not allowed. The majority of the students were able to decipher the words (from as many as 95 % to 80 %), but there were still 10 % to 20 % of the students who did not make any attempt at trying to decipher the words given (see Table 9).

Table 9: Students' ability to read the IPA.

Question	Answers		
	correct	incorrect	no answer
6/27	95 %	0 %	5 %
6/28	80 %	0 %	20 %
6/29	80 %	10 %	10 %
6/30	80 %	0 %	10 %
6/31	80 %	10 %	10 %
6/32	80 %	0 %	10 %

3.7 Filling the slot in context

Task 7 tested students' ability to find a suitable word to fit the context. Test subjects were allowed to use the dictionary. The text contained 14 slots that had to be filled with parts of lexical and grammatical collocations. The percentage of students who gave the correct answer ranges from 15 % to 100 %. Six out of 14 slots were filled with the correct word by all the respondents, whereas two slots were filled with the correct word by only 15 % of the students (one slot had to be filled with either the verb *fill* or the verb *make up* to form the collocation with the noun *prescription*, and the other one had to be filled with the preposition *against*, which collocates with the adjective *effective* in the sentence "The medication is reported to be very effective

_____ the common cold"). Interestingly, only 10 % and 20 % of the students, respectively, consulted the dictionary in these two cases. There are two possible explanations for not using the dictionary: one is that the students simply did not know what to look up and the other is that they thought they knew the correct answer (especially in the case of the preposition). Also worth mentioning is the case (question 7/35) where 55 % of the respondents inserted the correct word, but as many as 45 % consulted the dictionary.

It has to be stressed that the use of dictionaries was much more demanding in this task than in previous ones. Here, the students should actually have looked up the bases of the collocations, i.e. the words that were given in the text, in order to get the collocators, i.e. the words they were looking for (e.g. they should have looked up the noun *prescription* to find the verbs *fill* or *make up*, which collocate with this noun). Since a possible reason for not (sufficiently) consulting their dictionaries includes the fact that they simply did not know what to look up, we strongly believe that students should be systematically taught which words in word combinations they should look up if they want to become efficient dictionary users.

Again, it can be established that the majority of the students who consulted their dictionaries provided the correct answer. If we have a look at the dictionaries the students used to get the correct answer, we can see that they comprise seven different dictionaries (COBUILD, LDOCE, OALD, LTPDSC, OCD, BBI, and ESD), three of these being monolingual learners' dictionaries, three being specialized dictionaries of collocations and one being a bilingual dictionary (see Table 10).

Table 10: Successful and unsuccessful look-ups.

Question	Number of respondents who used a dictionary	Correct + dict.	Incorrect + dict.	Dictionaries consulted
7/33	0	0	0	/
7/34	0	0	0	/
7/35	27	21	6	COBUILD, LDOCE, OALD, OCD, LTPDSC, BBI, ESD
7/36	9	9	0	OALD, BBI
7/37	6	6	0	COBUILD, OALD
7/38	21	21	0	COBUILD, OALD
7/39	6	6	0	COBUILD, OALD
7/40	0	0	0	/
7/41	12	9	3	OALD, COBUILD, BBI
7/42	0	0	0	/
7/43	6	6	0	COBUILD, OCD
7/44	0	0	0	/
7/45	36	27	9	OALD, COBUILD, LDOCE, ESD
7/46	0	0	0	/

3.8 Selection of the appropriate word

Task 8 tested students' ability to choose the appropriate word from a list of four items to fill the slot in relatively difficult contexts. They were allowed to use their dictionaries. The results of this task show that the percentage of students with the correct answers ranges from 70 % to 95 %. Interestingly, in as many as four questions (i.e. 8/48, 8/49, 8/51 and 8/52), the students eliminated two out of four given answers and chose one of the remaining two. One might assume that all the students considered the eliminated answers wrong and that, in all likelihood, those who consulted their dictionary looked up only the remaining two answers.

As far as dictionary use is concerned, the percentage of those who used the dictionary varies from 0 % to 65 %. This broad range is presumably due to the fact that the students were not familiar with any of the words listed. In 8/51, the verbs *rummage*, *ravage*, *forage* and *salvage* were given to complete the sentence "_____ through the attic and see if you can find anything for the jumble sale". They looked up all the words and narrowed their selection down to two items with a similar semantic meaning – in the above-mentioned case to the verbs *rummage* (90 %) and *forage* (10 %). The other example that is worth mentioning is 8/52 where the adjectives given are familiar words (*wide*, *straight*, *deep*, *long*), but the students were in two minds about which of these could be used to fill the slot in the sentence "It is often difficult for ex-convicts to keep to the _____ and narrow".

As has already been mentioned, the students who consulted their dictionary gave the correct answer in the majority of cases. Most of the students used monolingual learners' dictionaries, which is the right choice in case of doubt concerning idiomatic expressions and unfamiliar semantically similar lexical items (see Table 11).

Table 11: Successful and unsuccessful look-ups.

Question	Number of respondents who used a dictionary	Correct + dict.	Incorrect + dict.	Dictionaries consulted
8/47	21	15	6	COBUILD, OALD, LDOCE, OCD
8/48	0	0	0	/
8/49	3	3	0	OALD
8/50	24	21	3	OALD, LDOCE
8/51	39	36	3	OALD, LDOCE, ESD
8/52	15	15	0	OALD, LDOCE

4. DISCUSSION

The aim of this study was to gain insight into the use of dictionaries by students of English whose mother tongue is Slovene. We wanted to get information on which dictionaries they consult, what types of information they expect to find in a particular

dictionary and when they consult a dictionary. The dictionaries the respondents listed range from bilingual to monolingual learners' dictionaries as well as monolingual dictionaries intended for native speakers. Among general monolingual dictionaries, they most frequently possess the learners' dictionaries, such as OALD, LDOCE, COBUILD, MED and CIDE, whereas among dictionaries for native speakers, they enumerated *Random House Webster's College Dictionary*, *Webster's Collegiate Dictionary*, *Collins English Dictionary and Thesaurus* and *Oxford English Dictionary*. Not only did the students mention general dictionaries but they also named a wide range of specialized dictionaries, from dictionaries of idioms, collocations or phrasal verbs, to dictionaries of pronunciation. Understandably, they all possess bilingual English-Slovene and Slovene-English dictionaries.

The Dictionary user profile form included a question that referred to the frequency of use of bilingual dictionaries. Forty-five percent of the respondents claim to use a bilingual dictionary often (i.e. every week), 40 % say that they use one rarely, 10 % use one regularly (i.e. almost every day) and 5 % never use one. When the students were asked how often they used a monolingual dictionary, the following results were obtained: 70 % use one regularly and 30 % often use one. This part of the Dictionary user profile form enquired about the students' habitual use of dictionaries, whereas in the questionnaire they were asked in each individual task to indicate whether they consulted a dictionary or not.

The students who participated in this research project were well aware of its aims and they were encouraged to use their dictionaries as much as possible when completing the questionnaire. The high percentage of students who did not use their dictionaries can be explained by the fact that many questions were simply too easy for them; consequently, they did not need to consult their dictionaries. The same questionnaire was also filled in by a group of test subjects who are not in training as professional users and are therefore considered more general dictionary users. In order to assure comparability of results, the same test was used with both groups of dictionary users. We dare to speculate that we would have obtained different (perhaps even more relevant) results concerning dictionary use in this group of test subjects if different, more difficult questions had been used for this special group of dictionary users, because they would have been forced to perform more look-ups.

Sixty percent claim that they were taught at school how to use their dictionaries in comparison to only 40 % who say that they were not given any systematic lessons or precise instructions on how to do this. Obviously, in primary and secondary schools in Slovenia, not enough time (if any at all) is devoted to promoting students' awareness of the wealth of information that can be found in dictionaries, let alone to the development of dictionary skills. We strongly believe that dictionary use should be systematically taught throughout the educational process, and attention should be paid not only to bilingual but also (or even more intensively) to monolingual dictionaries, especially to those intended for foreign users.

5. CONCLUSION

Dictionary use has not yet been the subject of research in Slovenia, but the first study conducted on general aspects of dictionary use has proved to be well accepted by

the respondents. While completing the questionnaire, they had to think about what to look up and how to find the word they were looking for. At the end of the questionnaire, the students were asked to give their opinions about the dictionaries they had used. Their comments as regards the disadvantages of the dictionaries they consulted can be briefly summarized as follows:

- lack of examples of use,
- absence of the preposition used with a particular word,
- absence of the appropriate definition (in reference to monolingual dictionaries) or translational equivalent (in reference to bilingual dictionaries),
- absence of the word they were looking for,
- the dictionary does not provide information about the frequency of entries,
- new words or slang words are not included,
- lack of illustrations,
- lack of appendices of any kind,
- difficulty in finding idiomatic expressions in the idiom section; the student proposed the inclusion of each idiomatic expression in a new line,
- difficulty in finding idiomatic expressions if they are not treated within the idiom section,
- lack of grammatical information,
- lack of definitions and/or examples of use in run-on entries,
- too few collocations,
- lack of technical words and expressions.

Among the advantages of the dictionaries used the respondents listed the following:

- a good layout of the dictionary,
- easy-to-understand definitions,
- cross references among idiomatic expressions (the user is guided to the right place in the dictionary where the idiomatic expression he/she is looking for is treated),
- information on synonymous expressions.

The students who participated in this research by completing the questionnaire expressed satisfaction because they were given a chance to air their opinions about the dictionaries they use, their advantages and disadvantages and about the problems they have when consulting them. As future professionals, they would find it useful to receive more information about different types of dictionaries and about what different dictionaries include. This seems reasonable because in future they will have to use dictionaries as an invaluable reference tool for solving the linguistic problems that will arise in their professional careers. Apart from that, they lack sufficient training in dictionary use because many of them will work as teachers of English at different levels and will have to teach their students how to use dictionaries effectively.

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Dictionaries cited

LDOCE	<i>Longman Dictionary of Contemporary English</i>
OALD	<i>Oxford Advanced Learner's Dictionary</i>
COBUILD	<i>Collins COBUILD English Language Dictionary</i>
MED	<i>Macmillan English Dictionary</i>
CIDE	<i>Cambridge International Dictionary of English</i>
ESD	<i>English-Slovene Dictionary</i>
BBI	<i>The BBI Dictionary of English Word Combinations</i>
OCD	<i>Oxford Collocations Dictionary for Students of English</i>
LTPDSC	<i>LTP Dictionary of Selected Collocations</i>

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DISCOURSE FUNCTION OF NOMINALIZATION: A CASE STUDY OF ENGLISH AND SLOVENE NEWSPAPER ARTICLES

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Abstract

The article deals with nominalization as a linguistic form with a universal discourse function. It offers an explanation of the discourse function of nominalization as a topicalization mechanism. From this stems the assumption that the use of nominalization is associated with specific text types, which is supported by a comparative study of nominalizations carried out on a sample of English and Slovene newspaper articles from two different periods. The study tests some predictions with regard to the use and frequency of nominalizations in the sample, which are based on general assumptions about the function of nominalizations and some previous observations about nominalizing tendencies in English and Slovene. The results of this study show that both English and Slovene newspaper articles yield similar global patterns in the distribution of nominalization in connection with the text type.

1. INTRODUCTION

The simplest definition of nominalization states that nominalization is essentially "turning something into a noun" (Comrie and Thomson 1985). Nominalization thus always involves the functional reclassification of a non-nominal into a nominal unit (Heyvaert 2003:51). To this category belong nominals such as action nouns derived from action verbs and state nouns derived from stative verbs or adjectives, the so-called deverbial and deadjectival nouns. Nominalization also includes other categories of nouns, for example agentive nouns, but here we limit our discussion to nominalizations with abstract meaning. Nominalization as a linguistic expression is often presented as a structure with a kind of intermediate status. Action nouns, for example, contain one or more reflexes of a proposition, while their internal structure parallels that of an ordinary nominal phrase. Comparative studies of action nominals in English and other languages show that nominalization is a category that has an intermediate status between verbs and nouns, although its structure differs to some degree from language to language. Regardless of structural differences among languages, nominalization seems to have a universal discourse function: it allows a notion which is verbal or adjectival in origin to be inserted into a proposition as if it were a noun. It should be noted that in functionalist approaches (e.g. Halliday 2004), the definition of nominalization extends beyond the morphological derivational cat-

egorization. Rather, nominalization is considered as a part of a wider phenomenon called grammatical metaphor, i.e. a phenomenon created through untypical selections following through from the semantics to the phonology. For example, semantic representations of people, places and things are typically realized by verbs; actions by nouns; quality by adjectives; logical relations by conjunctions and so on. Nominalization thus makes it possible for meanings which are typically realized by verbs or adjectives to occupy prototypical nominal position of subject, direct object and indirect object.

2. NOMINALIZATION AND DISCOURSE

In the last twenty years, pragmatically oriented studies of discourse genres have increasingly stressed the role of nominalization in written language. However, the importance of nominalization for linguistic studies was first recognized by linguists working in the generative tradition, as it provided many insights which proved to be important for the development of transformational-generative theory itself (Milojević-Sheppard 1980: 24). The interest of generative linguistics was primarily in nominalization as a structural phenomenon. In those studies, nominalization was used as a perfect example for illustrating the construct of 'transformation'. However, as Haeyvert (2003: 53) notes, often such relationships of agnation have not been interpreted with regard to the *semantics* of the nominalized constructions in question, and have concentrated more on formal characteristics.

As opposed to generative approaches, functionalists in general concentrate more on the semantic and pragmatic import of nominalized structures. In a recent approach to the categorization and explanation of nominalizations from a cognitive-functional point of view, Heyvaert (2003:52) argues for a multifunctional account of the semantics of nominalization based on Halliday's three linguistic metafunctions, that is his representational, interpersonal and textual functions (e.g. Halliday 1994, 2004). Heyvaert (2003:61) claims that "only when the parallelisms between the functional organization of nominals and clauses are clear can the process of nominalization itself be elucidated and the mechanisms that lie behind specific nominalization types be identified." However, despite the fact that she takes into account all three linguistic functions in her explanations of relationships of agnation between nominalized structures and their clausal agnates, Heyvaert does not go beyond the semantic level of the structures in question.

A different perspective on nominalizations is offered by Halliday and Martin (1993), who treat abstract nominalized structures as part of a broader phenomenon called grammatical metaphor, a phenomenon which is to a large extent defined by its discursual function. They define grammatical metaphor broadly as a marked or untypical correlation between syntactic and semantic categories, whereby nouns typically correlate with the semantic class of objects, verbs with the semantic class of actions, and adjectives with the semantic class of properties. Word classes are inextricably connected with certain pragmatic functions, a view also held by Vidovič Muha (2000:30) when she talks about the categorical properties of world classes. However, word classes can have an untypical correlation with semantic classes. In the case of nominalization, nouns

mostly correlate with the semantic class of actions or properties. Nominalizing as an untypical relation between the syntactic category and semantic class thus has two important discursive effects: “ (1) packaging a complex phenomenon into a single semiotic entity, by making it one element of clause structure, so that (2) its rhetorical function – its place in the unfolding argument – its rendered fully explicit (Halliday and Martin 1993:60).” This makes it a kind of integrative device.

In his explanation of grammatical metaphor M.A.K. Halliday (Halliday and Martin 1993:12) explains these discourse functions as closely connected to the nature of written language and the rise of scientific discourse in some cultures. He claims that the language of science is the main source of the language of literacy in western society and as such has a significant impact on the development of language registers used in other spheres of life (Halliday and Martin 1993: 12-13).

While focusing on the discussion of the development of English scientific discourse, Halliday (Halliday and Martin 1993:13) recognizes that similar conclusions also apply to other European languages. The reason Halliday gives for confining his account to western science is that “it was in the west that the move from technology into science first took place” (Halliday and Martin 1993:12). Halliday suggests that nominalization and its related features should be treated as innovations that first evolved in the context of science in ancient Greek and classical Latin, developing further from the Renaissance onwards in English and other languages of Europe, such as Italian, English, French, German and Russian (Halliday and Martin 1993:80).

When explaining nominalization as an innovation tied to a specific type of discourse, such as the discourse of science, Halliday presents its development and distribution as discourse-driven and mainly context-dependent, but at the same time seems to imply that it is a part of the typology of the European languages.

However, typological research indicates that integrative devices such as nominalization are also present in most if not all unwritten languages (e.g. Chafe 1982). In light of these observations we propose to view nominalization as a construction which is not closely tied to any particular culture, language or any one type of discourse, but suggest instead focusing primarily on the universal discourse functions which make its distribution dependent on the universal demands of discourse.

In cognitive linguistics, syntactic categories are usually ascribed certain pragmatic or cognitive properties. So the overall function of a nominal is to refer to a thing and make it “a momentary focus of attention” within the speech event (Langacker 1991:53). Similarly Croft (1991: 108) claims that referring “creates an autonomous entity and makes it into a kind or and individual of the kind (with its attendant stereotypes and connotations).” This also makes nominalization an integrative device. Its effect is actually twofold – first it integrates the information of a clause into a single nominal element, and second, it enables this information to be promoted to the subject or object position in the clause, the positions which are used to code the primary clausal topics (Givon 1984). The heavy use of nominalization in these positions thus results in texts with a highly abstract content. Subject matter, however, does not itself entail formal complexity and marked structures, although there is a strong frequency-association between written discourse, formality (distance on the interpersonal level) and abstract academic topics. These topics are formally and semantically complex, so

they take the opportunity for planning and revising offered by written transmission. This explains the frequent use of nominalizations in written language.

Corpus studies of nominalization so far have mainly been in the context of the difference between spoken and written language as a typical feature of the integration in written style as opposed to fragmentation of spoken style (Chafe 1982, Biber 1986, Halliday 1989). Many of these studies (e.g. Chafe 1982) discuss the use of nominalization primarily with regard to the restrictions of real-time production in speech versus opportunity for extensive editing in writing. Some studies also include the cognitive explanations of nominalization as the topicalization of verbal and adjectival meanings (e.g. Biber 1986). Most of the corpus research has been carried out on texts in English, so it is not completely clear to what extent such findings are universal and how far they apply to similar text types in different languages. Studies of other European languages suggest similar tendencies in their written varieties, for example the nominalizing tendency in written German (e.g. Petrič 1994).

Biber's analysis (1986) clearly indicates three textual dimensions distinguishing written types from spoken types. The dimension which he labeled 'Abstract vs. Situated Content' is marked by nominalization (along with some other features such as passives, specific conjuncts, prepositions etc.). The identification of this dimension reaffirms the cognitive view of nominalization as a referring expression and a topicalization device. As Biber (1986: 395) puts it: "Nominalizations compress the information of a clause into a single nominal element...; this again results in ... the promotion of a more abstract concept." Givón (1990: 740) holds a similar view in his discussion of topicality. He claims that topicality is actually a property of nominal participants. Givón (ibid.) says: "When whole events or states are made topical, they are almost always nominalized. That is, they are made morphologically and syntactically noun-like." Topics as nominalizations typically depend on written transmission, since writing allows for extensive editing and more time for decoding. At the same time written transmission usually also entails a higher level of formality and a greater degree of interpersonal distance between the producer and the receiver of the text. An even better understanding of the discourse function of nominalizations can be achieved through further empirical research of the textual use of nominalization in different languages

On the structural level, the comparison of English and Slovene nominalizations shows that both languages display nominalizations characterized by the genitivization of both subject and object of their sentential agnate. Some structural differences do exist. English, for example, has two types of genitives, i.e. the 's genitive and the -of genitive, the difference between which is used in action nominals to correlate with that between subject and direct object of a verb, whereas in Slovene action nominals the same difference is expressed by a possessive adjective and the adnominal genitive, for example English *the enemy's destruction of the city* versus Slovene *sovražnikovo uničenje mesta*. Slovene also lacks the gerundive nominalization which belongs to the sentential type of nominalizations (Kotptjevskaja-Tamm 2003: 726) of the type *his drawing the picture rapidly*.

In comparisons of English and Slovene it has been assumed that English is a more nominalized language, in other words, that it often shows an inclination to use

abstract nouns where Slovene prefers adjectives, verbs or phrasing. Klinar (1996: 193) thus talks about a noun-oriented tendency in English in comparison with Slovene, defining it in the following way: "English shows an inclination to use nouns where Slovene prefers adjectives, verbs, or (idiomatic) phrasing." Klinar (1966) views the nominalized character of English from the perspective of the translatability of English nouns, focusing his attention on English abstract and agent nouns not directly translatable into Slovene. His discussion, however, is limited to the translatability of nouns at the level of phrases and clauses. .

Empirical contrastive studies of this issue across larger corpora are still in the initial stages. In order to establish how the distribution of nominalizations in English discourse compares to that of other languages such as Slovene, which at the micro level have a less pronounced nominalization tendency, the analysis has to move away from a search for a general correlation between spoken or written register and the distribution of register-specific features. In light of the discourse function of nominalization as a topicalization or thematization of verbal and adjectival meanings, one also has to take into account the level of specific text types in specific languages. The notion of text-type in functional linguistics stands for the purpose of the text and the combination of textual variables of field (subject matter, theme), tenor (interpersonal distance, i.e. level of formality) and mode (the role of language in the speech situation, e.g. written or spoken). The distribution of nominalization, as indicated above, reflects all these three variables, and consequently the text-type. By taking this into account, we can establish a more reliable taxonomy of text types in English and show how they differ, if at all, from text types in other languages, in our particular case Slovene.

3. STUDY

Random observations so far have shown that – as expected - Slovene, similarly to English, uses nominalization on a massive scale in text types with a high degree of specialization and technicality, i.e. in text types with a predominantly abstract content, such as expository prose (c.f. Plemenitaš 1998). Below we present an example of a more systematic comparative study focusing on the use of nominalization in English and Slovene news articles (Plemenitaš 2004). It focuses on the analysis of nominalization in a sample of English and Slovene newspaper articles. The sample consists of eight English and eight Slovene newspaper articles from two different periods, from the years 1961 and 2001 respectively, 16 articles in total.. The sample consisted of 5265 words for the English articles and of 4318 words for the Slovene articles. The articles were taken exclusively from broadsheet newspapers, the English ones from the *Guardian* and the *Times*, and the Slovene ones from *Delo* and *Večer*. The results of the analysis presented here are part of a wider investigation into the patterns of nominalization in Slovene and English newspaper discourse. The original study (Plemenitaš 2004) also included a sample of newspaper arts reviews. Due to space limitation we concentrate here on the analysis of the sample of newspaper articles, comparing the two languages and the two periods in this text-type. However, in order

to show some notable characteristics of the distribution of nominalization in newspaper articles, we also compare some of the results obtained for newspaper articles with the results obtained for newspaper arts reviews.

We present the results obtained for the distribution of nominalizations in the sample of newspaper articles with regard to their overall frequency. The distribution of nominalizations according to meaning is also considered. The category of meaning takes into account the functional organization of the agnate clauses of action and gerundive nominalizations, and the lexical semantic class of the agnate words of other nominalizations (e.g. deadjectival nominalizations with the meaning of property, different kinds of modality). The classification of clause types which are agnate to nominalizations is based on Halliday (1994:108), who distinguishes – in general lines – among the processes of doing belonging to the physical world (i.e. material processes), processes of sensing belonging to the world of consciousness (mental processes of cognition, affection and perception), and processes of being belonging to the world of abstract relations (relational processes). Behavioural, verbal and existential processes are on the borderlines between these processes. All these processes are included in the analysis under the category of meaning of nominalizations. It has to be noted that in this analysis nominalization is not viewed as a word-formational phenomenon alone, but also includes untypical semantic classes in typical nominal positions (e.g. circumstances as subject or direct object). The analysis does not include agentive –er nominalizations. Lastly, the analysis also takes into account the type of formation of nominalizations and their grammatical function (subject, object). Where necessary, the results obtained for that sample are compared with the results obtained for the sample of newspaper reviews. The results were calculated using the computer program SPSS.

4. RESULTS

Some of the predictions about the results of the analysis were anticipated in the form of five hypotheses (Plemenitaš 2004: 62).

The first two hypotheses are based on the assumption about the connection between the text type and the use of nominalizations. They compare newspaper articles with newspaper arts reviews.

- 1) The frequency of nominalizations with the meaning of verbal processes in newspaper articles is higher than in reviews in both English and Slovene.
- 2) The frequency of nominalizations with the meaning of property in newspaper articles is lower than in reviews in both English and Slovene.

The text type in our sample is that of newspaper news or newspaper articles. It mainly includes what Košir (1988) calls extended news. Lord and Dahlgreen (1997: 326) describe this text type in the following way: “These articles typically report a news event and provide a discussion of its background and significance along with comments from participants, observers, and/or knowledgeable sources”. It is defined here as the text type of which the main purpose is to inform the reader about an event or happening. The sample did not include editorials, which belong to a separate genre

of argument texts. We assumed that the feature distinguishing new articles from reviews would be a higher frequency of nominalized verbal processes, presenting comments from participants etc. as topics. At the same time we expected a lower frequency of nominalizations with the meaning of property, which would typically be made into topics in reviews as the text type of which the main purpose is to inform and convince the reader about the value of a certain work of art.

First, we present some general findings regarding the category of meaning. As Tables 1 and 2 show, the proportion of nominalizations in the category of meaning in both languages and periods yields certain patterns which we primarily associate with the text type of newspaper articles. The results show, regardless of language and period, the highest proportion of nominalizations in the category of meaning is made up of nominalizations with the meaning of material processes, followed by verbal processes and states. The second largest proportion in newspaper articles, in all the subsamples, is made up of nominalizations with the meaning of verbal processes. There is a less clear pattern with lower proportions, however there is a fairly high proportion of nominalizations with the meaning of state and mental processes. It is concluded from these results that the larger proportions of nominalization in the category of meaning depends on the field typically associated with a specific text type. We also assume that smaller proportions which do not yield any consistent pattern depend on the even more specific field of individual texts. Our findings reaffirm the assumption about the role of nominalizations in turning meanings normally associated with non-referential expressions into the topics of the text.

Below are some typical examples of nominalizations in English and Slovene newspaper articles from different categories of meaning.

Material processes

political, economic events:

English examples: *in further moves on IRA arms , without suspension, after yesterday's vote, the public support of his ministerial colleagues*

Slovene examples: *iz spomladanske napovedi gospodarskih gibanj, po padcu naložb še padec izvoza, z omejevanjem napredovanja in novega zaposlovanja*

Concrete events:

English examples: *the bewildering speed of the continuing Taliban collapse, their northern headquarters lost in heavy fighting a year ago, electrification, the re-construction of Euston Station*

Slovene examples: *nadaljevanje krvavih spopadov, umik civilistov, toleriranje albanskega nasilja, umor osmih pripadnikov varnostnih sil*

Verbal processes:

speech acts (declarations, comments, talks, promises):

English examples: *appeals from Tony Blair, fighting for days against mounting criticism, the announcement that the US shed 415,000 jobs*

Slovene examples: *sporočilo Adulove vlade, so izrazili mnenje, ponavljali so izjave o ustanovitvi palestinske države, Britanski premier Tony Blair po pogovorih s*

Šaronom

information sources (reports, opinions):

English examples: *unconfirmed reports suggested, , it is not good news for America; according to reports from his delegation meeting today*
(slovenščina) *se po nekaterih informacijah ...zbirajo skrajneži, Po Kerimovem mnenju, po podatkih albanskih virov, bo po Powellovih besedah*

States:

English examples: *recession in America, Mcleish leaves labour in chaos, contest for the Scottish Labour leadership, railway solvency*

Slovene examples: *varnost Makedonije, prizadevanje za mir, katanški problem, sporazum o premirju, rušenje ravnotežja z Moskvo*

Mental cognitive processes:

English examples: *firmer estimates than ever before; unanimous in thinking that..., a happier memory of their deliberation, the dilemma of whether to call assembly elections, a sign of faith in Republicans*

Slovene examples: *nove ocene makroekonomskih dejavnikov, v pričakovanju dokončnega sklepa, po starih zaključkih,*

Mental affective processes:

English examples: *the concerns of people of Scotland, absence of any disposition towards hatchet-burying, the time for repentance is now, plunging labour into turmoil, private unease*

Slovene examples: *premierove besede o izražanju lojalnosti albanskega prebivalstva, nasilje razširja etnično sovražstvo*

Mental processes of volition:

Slovene examples: *a general desire to improve the flexibility, a comprehensive scheme with proposals for phasing the investement, no intention to leave for another party, Mr. George Brown's desire for a change*

English examples: *ne kaže pretirane volje, da bi ZDA vztrajale na območju,, upanje, da bojo pogajanja žela uspeh, poudarjajo svojo odločenost, izraz pripravljenosti premiera*

Table 1. The English sample: proportion of nominalizations according to meaning

material	199	41.5
verbal	51	10.6
state	38	7.9
mental/cognitive	33	6.9
mental/affective	32	6.7
mental/volition	25	5.2
ability	23	4.8
degree	11	2.3
obligation	10	2.1

property	9	1.9
consequence	8	1.7
time	8	1.7
theme	7	1.5
fact	5	1.0
manner	4	0.8
role	3	0.6
condition	3	0.6
possibility	2	0.4
behavioural/material	2	0.4
space	2	0.4
behavioural/mental	2	0.4
reason	2	0.4
circumstance/general	1	0.2
total	480	100

Table 2. The Slovene sample: proportion of nominalizations according to meaning

	No. of occurrences	%
material	281	59.5
verbal	73	15.5
state	52	11.0
mental/cognitive	10	2.1
mental/volition	9	1.9
degree	6	1.3
fact	6	1.3
mental/affective	5	1.1
property	5	1.1
ability	5	1.1
obligation	5	1.1
circumstance/general	4	0.8
consequence	3	0.6
time	2	0.4
theme	1	0.2
reason	1	0.2
role	1	0.2
space	1	0.2
manner	1	0.2
existential	1	0.2
total	472	100

The results relating to the frequency of nominalizations in the category of meaning help to test the first two hypotheses. Tables 3, 4, 5 and 6 show the frequency index in both periods in English and Slovene newspaper articles. The obtained frequencies indexes completely agree with the hypotheses since they show that the frequency of nominalizations with the meaning of verbal processes in news is, in all the subsamples, higher in comparison with that of reviews (an average of 6.7 for news compared to an average of 2.1 for reviews).

At the same time the frequency of nominalizations with the meaning of property is generally lower compared to that of reviews (an average of 0.7 for news compared to an average of 10.7 for reviews).

The third hypothesis is based on the assumption that English generally has a stronger nominalized tendency than Slovene.

3) The frequency of nominalizations in Slovene newspaper articles is lower than in English newspaper articles.

However, this hypothesis is rejected. It was assumed that the text type of news as a less theoretical text type than reviews would show a weaker nominalising tendency in Slovene, however, the overall frequency of nominalizations in Slovene news is not lower than that of English news, but actually exceeds it. The comparison between news and reviews also shows that the overall frequency index is higher in news, which at the same time contrasts with the general assumption about a more nominalized character of the text type of reviews.

Table 3. English newspaper articles 2001 – frequency index

	total	material	mental	circumstance	verbal	state	modality	property
Frequency index	41.8	18.3	7.5	5.1	5	3.1	2.6	0.3

Table 4. English newspaper articles 1961 – frequency index

	total	material	mental	modality	verbal	state	circumstance	property
Frequency index	50.5	20.1	10.5	4.9	4.7	4.5	4.1	1.5

Table 5. Slovene newspaper articles 2001 – frequency index

	total	material	verbal	state	mental	circumstances	property	modality
Frequency index	53.6	34.6	7.4	4.3	2.9	2.7	0.8	0.8

Table 6. Slovene newspaper articles 1961 – frequency index

	total	material	verbal	state	mental	modality	circumstance	property
Frequency index	56	29.8	9.8	8.5	2.6	3.2	1.8	0.3

The fourth hypothesis refers to the proportion of nominalizations according to the category of word-formation (Tables 7, 8, 9 and 10). This hypothesis is based on the previous findings which show that the development of nominalization in journalistic Slovene is directed to a more extensive use of nouns derived by morphemes other than *-je*, which in general stress the resultative rather than processual meaning (Žele 1996:198), which is a step up in the development towards more nominalized expression.

4) In Slovene, the proportion of non-gerundive nominalizations in the modern period is higher in comparison with that from the past period.

The comparison of Slovene gerunds between the two periods in the sample of newspaper articles indeed shows a slight decrease in the proportion of gerunds in the modern period, which agrees with our hypothesis, whereas in English it stays the same. It is also interesting that in our sample the proportion of Slovene gerunds (nouns derived by *-je*) is in general higher in comparison to the proportion of English verbal and nominal gerunds (i.e. gerundive and action nominalizations) combined.

Table 7. English newspaper articles 2001 – the type of word-formation

	No. of occurrences	%
deverbal conversion	74	30.5
noun (non-derived)	66	27.2
deverbal derivation	54	22.2
gerundive nominalization	16	6.6
action nominalization	14	5.8
deadjectival derivation	10	4.1
deadjectival conversion	5	2.1
denominal derivation	2	0.8
deadverbial conversion	2	0.8
total	243	100

The proportion of gerundive and action nominalizations: 12.3%

Table 8. Slovene newspaper articles 2001 – the type of word-formation

	No. of occurrences	%
deverbal derivation	72	27.7
deverbal conversion	71	27.3
gerundive nominalization	52	20
noun (non-derived)	44	16.9
deadjectival derivation	20	7.7
denominal derivation	1	4
total	260	100

The proportion of gerundive nominalizations: 20%

Table 9. English newspaper articles 1961 – the type of word-formation

	No. of occurrences	%
Deverbal derivation	74	31.4
Deverbal conversion	63	26.7
Noun (non-derived)	63	26.7
Action nominalization	11	4.7
Deadjectival derivation	9	3.8
Gerundive nominalization	7	3
Denominal derivation	6	2.5
Deadjectival conversion	3	1.3
total	236	100

The proportion of action and gerundive nominalizations – 12.3%

Table 10. Slovene newspaper articles 1961 – the type of word-formation

	No. of occurrences	%
Deverbal conversion	74	34.9
Deverbal derivation	64	30.2
Gerundive nominalization	47	22.2
Noun (non-derived)	16	7.5
Deadjectival derivation	10	4.7
Deadjectival conversion	1	5
total	212	100

The proportion of gerundive nominalizations: 22.2%

The fifth hypothesis refers to the proportion of nominalizations with the function of subject and (direct) object. It is based on the concept of subject and object as the most important topics in the text.

5) The largest proportion of the functions of subject and direct object in the analysed sample, in both languages and periods, belongs to nominalizations which have the highest proportion in the category of meaning.

The results obtained from the sample of newspaper articles show that the functions of subject and object are occupied by the nominalizations which have the highest and the second highest proportion in the category of meaning (Tables 11, 12, 13 and 14). The highest proportion of subjects is thus made up of nominalizations with the meaning of material processes. In news, the second highest proportion of subjects consists of nominalizations with the meaning of verbal processes, whereas in reviews it is nominalizations with the meaning of property. There is a similar pattern with objects, with the exception of English news from the past period, where nominalizations with the meaning of verbal processes in the function of subject are in fourth place. This inconsistency is probably connected with specific fields of individual texts.

Table 11. English newspaper articles 2001 – subjects and objects

	material	verbal
subject	44.9%	18.4%
object	41.7%	16.7%

Table 12. Slovene newspaper articles 2001- subjects and objects

	material	verbal	state
subject	78.9%	7.9%	
object	61.7%	8.5%	10.6%

Table 13. English newspaper articles 1961 – subjects and objects

	material	verbal	ability	mental/affective
subject	36.2%	10.6%		
object	29.2%	10.4%	16.7%	12.5%

Table 14. Slovene newspaper articles 1961 – subjects and objects

	material	verbal
subject	47.6%	28.6%
object	37%	24.1%

5. CONCLUSION

The results of this study show that both English and Slovene newspaper articles show similar global patterns in the distribution of nominalization according to the text types. This reaffirms our assumption about the relation between the use of nominalization and text types. We assume that this relation stems from the universal discourse function of nominalization as a topicalization device. The results of this study suggest that the global nominalising tendency in Slovene in written text types is at least as strong as in English. The contrastive differences in the degree of nominalization between English and Slovene seem to be local rather than global, restricted to typological differences which are not significantly reflected at the discourse level. There are a lot of open possibilities for further research in this area. Future investigations of this kind should include a wider variety of text types from different languages.

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LÚDOVIK OSTERC

OBITUARY

Janez Stanonik

With deep regret we report the demise of Lúdivik Osterc, retired Professor of Spanish literature at the Autonomous National University of México (Universidad nacional autónoma de México) at Mexico City, and one of the most distinguished coworkers of our Review. Professor Osterc, a Slovene by birth, died at Mexico City on 19 April 2004. At noon he came to the university from his home: he collapsed and was taken to the hospital, where he died towards the end of the same day. For more than thirty years he had suffered from severe diabetes which he kept under control with strict discipline. His ashes were transported to Slovenia, where they were buried in the Ljubljana town cemetery on 8 September 2004.

Lúdivik Osterc was born in Ljubljana on 9 August 1919. Ljubljana had been since the end of the First World War the capital of Slovenia, at that time a part of the Kingdom of Yugoslavia, and after the end of the Second World War a part of Tito's Yugoslavia. During the last decade of the 20th century, after the disintegration of Yugoslavia, Slovenia became an independent state which, during the subsequent ten years, joined the European Union as a full member.

The father of Lúdivik Osterc, Rajko Osterc, was a journalist with left political orientation, and, according to Lúdivik Osterc's dedication of his book *La verdad sobre las Novelas Ejemplares* to his father, "un intrepido luchador contra el fascismo y social-imperialismo". After the occupation of Slovenia by Fascist Italy and Nazi Germany, in 1941, Rajko Osterc sympathized with the Yugoslav resistance movement. In midwinter 1943/44 he was arrested by the Gestapo and sent to the Dachau Concentration camp, where he died on 20 February 1945.

Lúdivik Osterc lived in his early youth in Bežigrad, a northern section of the town of Ljubljana. Here he completed primary school. In 1938, after the completion, also in Ljubljana, of the secondary school (Vegova gimnazija), he enrolled at the Ljubljana Faculty of Philosophy to study Romance philology. This he concluded in 1941 with a diploma in French language and literature as his main subject.

After the Fascist occupation of Slovenia (in spring 1941) Lúdivik Osterc supported the Yugoslav struggle for national liberation. He was imprisoned by the Italian police and sent to internment on the islands of Tremiti, in the southern Adriatic Sea. After the capitulation of Italy, in September 1943, Lúdivik Osterc, freed from im-

prisonment, joined the Yugoslav liberation army outpost at Bari in British occupied southern Italy. In 1944–1945 he was with the Yugoslav military mission in Algiers, and, after the war, in 1946–1947 in Tirana (Albania) as a member of the Yugoslav legation there. During the Tito–Stalin conflict he had to continue his work on a lower level as a librarian, first in the Celje town library (Celje is a smaller town some 70 km northeast of Ljubljana), later in the Ljubljana University library, and finally in the library of the Romance Department of the Ljubljana Faculty of Philosophy.

In 1956 Lúdivik Osterc came on scholarship to Mexico City where he continued his studies of Romance philology at the postgraduate level at the Autonomous National University of Mexico, specializing in Spanish studies. Guided by Macío Bolano e Isla, he decided to do his doctoral dissertation research on Cervantes and his novel *Don Quijote*.

Lúdivik Osterc provides in the introduction to the published text of his doctoral dissertation – *El pensamiento social y político del Quijote* and with the subtitle *Interpretación historico-materialista* – an account of his growing awareness that in the published studies on *Don Quijote* the coverage of a number of crucial problems for the valuation of this novel had been left almost completely unexplored: While there were thousands and thousands of studies discussing its style, structure, vocabulary, the influence of popular tradition, and especially of the mediaeval romances and of the world of chivalry, he could find only about twenty titles discussing the impact of the political and social life of contemporary Spain on the life and work of Cervantes. At the same time he found that the standard fields of Cervantes research were covered by the most distinguished Cervantes scholars with all their great knowledge and patient perseverance, yet, on the other hand, the sociological researches of Cervantes and his work had attracted only a few less known scholars, and their work was fragmentary, enigmatic, and formal. This state of Cervantes research was all the more surprising since his text is full of allusions which reflect the author's views of contemporary Spain, an absolute monarchy ruled by Philip II and controlled by the Inquisition.

In 1963 Lúdivik Osterc defended with distinction his doctoral dissertation. In it he gave a survey of the social and political life in Spain in the time of Cervantes and the criticism of it expressed by Cervantes in his prose. In the same year the dissertation was published by his university (reprinted in 1973 and 1987).¹ The publication called forth a considerable number of scholarly reviews: the vast majority of them were favourable, although there were also some – frequently politically inspired – less favourable evaluations.

Lúdivik Osterc continued to follow all his life the type of research begun with his doctoral dissertation. Osterc tried to penetrate by way of a careful analysis of Cervantes' texts to the authentic views of Cervantes regarding the life and society which surrounded him. For such a research Osterc needed texts for which he was

¹ Osterc Ludovik. *El Pensamiento social y político del Quijote. Interpretación historico-materialista*. Mexico: Cuadernos del Instituto de investigaciones filológicas 15. UNAM, 1963.

We use in these quotations the abbreviation UNAM which signifies: Universidad nacional autónoma de México.

certain that they had preserved most faithfully the original thought of their author. Osterc was therefore interested in the earliest editions of the work of Cervantes. He studied carefully the rich collection of early Spanish prints in the Museum Franz Mayer in Ciudad Mexico which has only recently – in 1986 – been opened to the public.² From the same aspect which he followed in his evaluations of *Don Quijote*, he also examined *Las Novellas exemplares*, devoting in his book on them a special chapter to each Novella separately.³ A separate volume Osterc devoted to the examination of the views of Cervantes regarding the church and the Inquisition.⁴ One of his volumes was a biography of Cervantes.⁵ In a separate volume Osterc discussed the problems connected with the Arabic name Cide Hamete Benengeli, used by Cervantes as a pseudonym behind which he could hide his identity.⁶ Finally, Osterc prepared a whole volume dedicated to the history of the reception of the novels of Cervantes in Spain and in other parts of Europe, in England, France, Germany, Holland, Italy, Russia and elsewhere, and the views expressed by their leading cultural representatives on Cervantes and his work during the last 400 years.⁷ It is interesting to note that the reception of the works of Cervantes was for a period in Spain – above all in the second half of the 17th century – in a deep crisis, while northern Europe, especially England, remained open-minded to them.

Besides these book-length researches Ludovik Osterc wrote also shorter studies which he published in scholarly reviews, among others in *Annales Cervantinos* (Madrid).

In 1968 Lúdivik Osterc was nominated Professor of Spanish Literature at the Faculty of Arts with the assignment of teaching the history of Spanish literature on the level of licenciante and giving lectures on Cervantes and his work on the postgraduate level (División de estudios de posgrado, Facultad de Filosofía y letras, Universidad nacional autónoma de México). In 1976 he was promoted to the head of postgraduate studies. In this way he had an open possibility to convey his knowledge and experience to the younger generations. In 1987 Lúdivik Osterc was awarded the highest distinction the Mexican government gives to its scholars, the title of a National Scholar.

As a Cervantes scholar he played an active role in the postwar development of hispanic studies through his participation in scholarly meetings of Cervantists, thus at the first international conference of Cervantists in Madrid in 1978, and at the international Cervantes festivals in Guanajuato in Mexico (1976, 1977, 1978, 1978).

During the late nineties of the past century, when he was approaching his eightieth birthday, Lúdivik Osterc began to feel increasingly the burden of age. He desired a peaceful retirement in the countryside. But the problem was that he had come late to Mexico, in 1956, and late in his life – in his fifties – was also the beginning of his

² Osterc Ludovik, *Los Wuijotes de la Colección Franz Mayer. Bibliografía crítica*. México: UNAM, 1981.

³ Osterc Ludovik, *La Verdad sobre Las Novelas Ejemplares*, México: UNAM, 1985.

⁴ Osterc Ludovik, *El Quijote, la Iglesia y la Inquisición*. México: UNAM, 1972.

⁵ Osterc Ludovik, *Los Momentos cruciales de la heroica e intechable vida de Cervantes*. México: UNAM, 1977.

⁶ Osterc Ludovik, *Cide Hamete Benengeli, el supuesto autor del Quijote*. México: UNAM, 1981.

⁷ Osterc Ludovik, *Breve antología crítica del cervantismo*. México: UNAM, 1992.

university career. At the same time the Mexican laws require thirty years of continuous work for a full pension. The University where he worked endeavoured to help him within the limits of its possibilities by reducing his university duties primarily to research work. He planned to complete a new up-to-date edition of *Don Quijote*, richly equipped with a fundamentally new commentary, by the summer of 2005. Yet destiny overtook him before he could bring his new work to a successful conclusion.

After his departure from Slovenia, in 1956, Lúdvik Osterc almost completely lost contact with Slovenia, his home country. In the late seventies, however, the editors of *Acta Neophilologica* succeeded in obtaining his Mexican address. By letter they asked him whether he could help the hispanic studies which at that time were just beginning to be started in Slovenia. His answer was positive: he was prepared to send some of his hispanic studies to Ljubljana to be published in the appropriate scholarly reviews here. In 1980 he had his first study published in Slovenia in the review *Acta Neophilologica* (vol. XIII), and in 1999 in the review *Verba Hispanica* (vol. VIII). Appended to the here published obituary we add the bibliography of all studies by Lúdvik Osterc which appeared in print in Slovenia since 1980. Since 1956, the year of his departure for Mexico, he had no texts printed in Slovene and published in Slovenia.

In 1996 Lúdvik Osterc paid – after a long absence from home and in combination with his visits to Spain and Austria – his first short visit to Slovenia. He was thus enabled to refresh his old university contacts in Slovenia. In the week from 13. to 18. Maj, 1996, he gave in Ljubljana six lectures on Cervantes at the Faculty of Arts. He was again on a short visit to Slovenia in April 2001, and – for the last time – in April 2003. When he then left Ljubljana we could not know that this was to be his last visit here.

The text of this present obituary has been written somewhat longer than this is usually allotted to them. With it we have desired to preserve for the time to come some basic facts connected with the life and work of Osterc. We can be quite certain that the name of Lúdvik Osterc will preserve its place in the history of Slovene-Mexican cultural relations.

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* In this Bibliography we use abbreviation AN for: Acta Neophilologica, and VB for Verba Hispanica, Both of these reviews are published by the Ljubljana University, Faculty of Arts. Back issues of both reviews are still available. (If desired, write to: The Library, Department of Spanish, Faculty of Arts, Aškerčeva 2, 1000 Ljubljana, Slovenia.)

University of Ljubljana, Slovenia

SUMMARIES IN SLOVENE – POVZETKI V SLOVENŠČINI

UDK 821.111.09 Shakespeare W.: 792.02"19/20

Mirko Jurak

NEKAJ DODATNIH ZAPISOV O SHAKESPEARU

V pričujočem prispevku obravnava avtor nekatera vprašanja, ki so ga vznemirjala v zadnjih letih. Med njimi je, na primer, vprašanje o pomenu književnosti in še posebej Shakespearove dramatike v sodobnem svetu. Njegov odgovor je vsekakor pritrdilen, čeprav nekateri podatki kažejo, da se manjša pri nas in po svetu motivacija za branje ter da njeno funkcijo prevzemajo drugi mediji (film, televizija, gledališče, CD romi, internet itn.). Toda še bolj vznemirljivo je dejstvo, da so tudi sedanji programi angleške in ameriške književnosti pri pouku angleščine kot tujega jezika v slovenskih srednjih šolah slabi, in da to dejstvo vpliva tudi na slabe bralne navade v šolah. Za to stanje je zlasti odgovorna sestavljalka omenjenih programov, ne pa starši, na katere skušajo nekateri univerzitetni "svetovalci" preložiti krivdo. Nadalje obravnava avtor vprašanje o avtorstvu Shakespearovih del, ki se vedno znova pojavlja v množičnih sredstvih obveščanja, zlasti v časopisih in revijah. Čeprav je namen piscev tovrstnih člankov večinoma goli senzacionalizem, so, po drugi strani, zanimive nekatere sodobne raziskave o Shakespearovem življenju zato, ker nudijo nove možnosti interpretacije njegovih dram. Ob tem avtor opozarja na nekatere raziskave o dramatikovih "izgubljenih" letih (1584-1592), torej v času med njegovim odhodom iz Stratforda, in letu, ko se Shakespeare pojavi v Londonu kot gledališki igralec. To obdobje naj bi (po the raziskavah) Shakespeare preživel kot študent v Reimsu (Collegium Anglicum) in na potovanjih po Evropi. Najobsežnejši del študije je posvečen nekaterim teoretičnim in praktičnim pogledom na feminizem, še posebej v povezavi z glavnimi ženskimi liki v Shakespearovih "velikih tragedijah" (*Hamlet, Othello, Kralj Lear, Macbeth*). Pri tem avtor podaja nekatere nove poglede na glavne junakinje omenjenih dram (Getruda, Ofelija, Desdemona, Goneril, Regan, Cordelia in lady Macbeth). Po avtorjevem mnenju se dramatikovi pogledi na njegove ženske like najbolj izražajo v njihovih značajskih potezah, v njihovem vplivu na moške junake, kot tudi v njihovi moralni in odnosu do človekovega bivanja, pri čemer je sama kvantiteta njihovega diskurza manj pomembna.

Pisec ugotavlja, da je Shakespearov pogled na žensko psiho in na dejanja njegovih junakinj bipolaren: pri nekaterih ženskih likih lahko govorimo o visoki stopnji njihove morale in etike, dočim so nekateri drugi liki upodobljeni kot pravo utelešenje zla in so v tem pogledu edinstveni v svetovni literaturi. Sledita še dva dodatka: o avtorjevem kritičkem delu ter o njegovih dosedanjih "zapisih" o Shakespearu, ter song Zdravka Duše "Hamlett Rap", iz uprizoritve gledališča Glej (*Hamlett Packard*, 1992).

UDK 821.111.09-31"1900/1930":82.02(497.4)"19"

Radojka Verčko

BIVANJSKA PROBLEMATIKA IN PRIPOVEDNE TEHNIKE V ROMANIH FORDA MADOKSA FORDA, VIRGINIE WOOLF IN ALDOUSA HUXLEYA

Angleški modernisti Ford Madox Ford, Virginia Woolf in Aldous Huxley so bili ustvarjalci novih konceptov v pisanju, sodelovali so pri genezi modernega romana. Bili so del procesa, povezanega z razvojem modernega romana, prav zato, ker jim je njihova zavzetost za bivanjsko tematiko narekovala uporabo novih prijemov v načinu pripovedovanja, ki dotlej niso bili v navadi ali pa sploh še niso obstajali. Pri ustvarjanju novih, specifičnih pripovednih tehnik za predstavitev bivanjske problematike so imeli pomembno vlogo, v kontekstu angleškega romana in tudi v globalnem smislu. Na literarno ustvarjanje slovenskih sodobnikov niso imeli posebno velikega vpliva, čeprav je v prvih treh desetletjih preteklega stoletja v Sloveniji nastalo nekaj modernističnih del. Modernistični način predstavljanja bivanjske problematike se je v slovenski književnosti pričel uveljavljati šele po drugi svetovni vojni. Sodobni slovenski pisatelji pogosto uporabljajo pripovedne tehnike, ki so jih uveljavili Ford Madox Ford, Virginia Woolf in Aldous Huxley, kar potrjuje mnenje, da je modernizem časovno odprt proces, v katerem prav bivanjska problematika kroji nastajanje pripovednih tehnik.

UDK 821.111.09 Conrad J.: 81'255.4=163.6

Majda Šavle

JOSEPH CONRAD V SLOVENSKIH PREVODIH

Pričujoči prispevek predstavlja raziskavo (ki sem jo opravila za svoje magistrsko delo *Vpliv apokaliptične vizije sveta Josepha Conrada na ameriško književnost*) o pristojnostjo Josepha Conrada v slovenski publicistiki - od prvih prevodov in kritičskih zapisov do novejših publikacij. Iz raziskave je razvidno, da slovenski bralci in literarni kritiki poznajo vsa Conradova najboljša in najpomembnejša dela že dolga desetletja (prvi prevod in kritičski zapis segata v leto 1927, zadnji ponatis enega izmed Conradovih romanov pa je bil objavljen letos), vendar bi veljalo seznam prevodov še dopolniti. Med dela, ki bi pripomogla k popolnejši predstavitvi ustvarjalnega opusa tega svetovno

UDK 821.111(73).09-1 Eliot T.S.

Andrej Zavrl

KAKŠNEGA SPOLA JE PUSTA DEŽELA?

Spol, poželenje in spolnost v Pusti deželi T.S. Eliota

Članek izhaja iz konflikta med nameni nekaterih modernističnih pesnikov, med katerimi je bil v ospredju T.S. Eliot, da bi poezija ostala kar se le da domena moških, in okoljem, v katerem so se znašli, ki pa so ga zaznamovali prav siloviti premiki stran od ustaljenih pojmovanj spola in spolnosti. Ta konflikt se v Eliotovi poeziji zelo jasno odraža skozi najrazličnejše vidike moške tesnobe in domnevno vznemirjajoče vloge žensk in ženstvenosti.

Prispevek analiza pesnitev T.S. Eliota *Pusta dežela* (1922), da bi pokazal, kako se modernist Eliot spoprijema s problematičnostjo spolov, poželenj in spolnosti. Razprava se ene od utelesitev modernizma loti predvsem preko presoje področij, kjer se ti koncepti med seboj prekrivajo, in ugotavlja, da so pri njihovi ubeseditvi prisotne izrazita nedokončnost, nedoločnost in neodločnost, ki napeljujejo na ugotovitve o značilnih težavah lirskih subjektov z možatostjo/ženstvenostjo in spolnostjo.

Ravno tako kot se histerik iz nevzdržnih napetosti med redom in kaosom ter neobvladljivih poželenj umakne v histerijo in potrebuje analitika, da njegovemu govoru da pomen, pasivno besedilo potrebuje bralca, da ga obvlada. Za Eliota je bil prvi tak bralec Ezra Pound, ko je pesnitvi dal končno obliko, ki pa kljub njegovim posegom vendarle ohranja jasne vzporednice med Eliotovo poetiko in histeričnim govorom. *Pusta deželo* zato lahko razumemo kot izraz moške histerije, ki razkriva, da takšno stanje ni nikoli daleč stran od neobvladljivih strasti in nenormativnih spolnosti.

UDK 821.111(73).09 Irving W.: 81'255.4

Jerneja Petrič

WASHINGTON IRVING V SLOVENŠČINI

Čeprav velja Washington Irving za enega najpomembnejših avtorjev ameriške književnosti na začetku 19. stoletja, saj je bil med prvimi, ki so se trudili dati ameriški književnosti tipično ameriško noto, pa je na slovenskem razmeroma slabo poznan. Obstaja sicer nekaj prevodov njegovih najpomembnejših del – novel in esejev – vendar doslej še noben ni uspel prikazati vseh umetniških razsežnosti pisateljevega ustvarjanja. Irving je namreč v svojem delu stremel za tem, da bi svojim rojakom podaril zgodovino, ki je bila v primerjavi z evropsko precej mlada. In to še toliko bolj, ker so najzgodnejši beli

priseljenci v 17. stoletju povsem hote prezrli bogato kulturno izročilo ameriških Indijancev. Irvinga so v slovenščino prevajali Ivan Mulaček, ki je svoje prevode objavljajl v *Nadi* (Chicago), a se je do danes žal ohranil le eden ("Duh-ženin"); Jan Baukart, ki je v dvajsetih letih preteklega stoletja izdal tri snopiče svojih prevodov ameriških in angleških piscev vključno z Irvingovimi ("Rip Van Winkle" in "Povest o dolini sna"); ter slednjič Aleksandra Perič, ki je 1998 za založbo Karantanija prevedla dva izbora Irvingovih novel in esejev vključujoč že omenjene tri novele. Pričujoča študija skuša dognati, kako uspešni so bili prevajalci pri "prevajanju" zgodovinskega konteksta Irvingovih zgodb, ki je ključnega pomena za razumevanje besedila, nekaj pozornosti pa posveča tudi uspešnosti oz. neuspešnosti prenosa Irvingovega humorja. Izsledki kažejo, da noben od prevajalcev ni bil pretirano uspešen. Starejši prevajalci se zgodovinsko-družbenemu kontekstu niso posebej posvečali prejkone zato, ker so morali računati z bralci, ki jim ameriška zgodovina ni bila poznana. Prevodi s konca 20. stoletja pa so bili namenjeni mladim bralcem in so želeli predvsem posredovati zanimivo zgodbo.

UDK 821.111(73).09 Plath S.

Barbara Galle

SYLVIA PLATH: ŽENSKA MED EROSOM IN TANATOSOM

Nasprotja med radikalnimi feministkami in družino Teda Hughesa so v zadnjih desetletjih privedla do dveh diametralno nasprotnih mitov o Sylviji Plath: na eni strani podoba mucenice v patriarhalni družbi, na drugi podoba duševno motene ženske z neustavljivim gonom smrti. Obe interpretaciji življenja in dela pesnice se osredotocata predvsem na njeno zgodnjo smrt, pri tem pa zanemarjata gonilno življenjsko silo, ki prežema njeno poezijo. Članek s pomočjo psihoanalitične teorije izpostavi prevlado Erosa nad Tanatosom v življenju in poeziji Sylvije Plath, tako na ravni jezika kot strukture kot na pomenski ravni.

Slovenska literarna kritika zaradi fizicne oddaljenosti in casovnega odmika od škandalov bolj pristno odseva dvojnost Erosa in Tanatosa v pesnicinih delih. Razvila sta se dva razločna tokova, od katerih prvi sledi morbidnemu determinizmu Teda Hughesa, drugi pa se uspe oddaljiti od nesrečnih okoliščin njene smrti in se osredotoci na inteligenco in radost mlade žene in matere.

UDK 821.163.6(94).09-1 Žohar J.

Igor Maver

JOŽE ŽOHAR, SLOVENSKI IZSELJENSKI PESNIK IZ AVSTRALIJE

Jože Žohar je emigriral v Avstralijo leta 1968 in je doslej v Sloveniji objavil tri samostojne pesniške zbirke, *Aurora australis* (1990), *Veku bukev* (1995) in *Obiranje*

limon (2004). Članek opredeljuje pesnikov značilno jezikovno eksperimentiranje, tematiko njegovih pesmi in ugotavlja, da je v vseh treh zbirkah najti močno prisotno specifično geografsko okolje, tako Prekmurja kot tudi avstralske pokrajine. Posebej v zadnji zbirki, ki je podrobneje obravnavana, se že kaže avtorjeva razpetost na dvojje »domov«, a ta obenem tudi ostaja brez prave pripetosti na katerega od njiju, kar je nasploh značilno za sodobno diasporično književnost.

UDK 821.112.2(497.4).09 Gagern F.v.

Anton Janko

DELO FRIEDRICHA VON GAGERNA V LUČI NEMŠKE LITERARNE ZGODOVINE

Friedrich von Gagern (1882-1947) je eden najbolj znanih pripovednikov rojenih na slovenskem ozemlju, ki so pisali v nemščini. Uveljavil se je s svojimi lovskimi zgodbami, ki so mu v tem literarnem žanru prinesle velik ugled. Večina njegovih kasnejših del (povečini so to romani in novele) se dogaja v njegovi rojstni domovini Kranjski, kjer je bil rojen na gradu Mokrice na slovensko-hrvaški meji. Gagern v svojih romanih popisuje družbene in življenjske razmere v tej mejni pokrajini v času, v katerem se očitno kaže kvarni vpliv modernega procesa industrializacije na preprostega človeka, ki ga trga iz varnega zavetja tradicionalnih moralnih vrednot. Stari družbeni red, sloneč na odnosu gospodar — služabnik/hlapec, se kaže v razkroju; Gagern ta proces obžaluje in mu pripisuje negativne predznake zla. V tem segmentu pisateljevega razumevanja svojega poslanstva je Gagern zelo blizu reakcionarni ideologiji, ki jo nemška litererana zgodovina v umetniški upodobitvi običajno označuje kot *Blut und Boden Literatur*. Sestavek prikazuje in kritično ocenjuje literarnozgodovinsko oceno tega avtorja s strani nemške literarne zgodovine.

UDK 821.124'02.09 Vergilij

Vid Snoj

VERGILIJ IN IZROČILO ZAHODA

Članek govori o položaju Vergilijevega pesništva v izročilu Zahoda. Vergilij se v slovit *Četrta eklogi* navezuje na mit o zlatem rodu, prvič izpričan pri Heziodu, in prvi v grško-rimskem izročilu pesni o vrnitvi zlate dobe, ki jo napoveduje hkrati z rojstvom in rastjo božanskega dečka oziroma otroškega odrešenika. Njegovo pesnjenje s tem dobi mesijansko-eschatološko razsežnost, v kateri se od grško-rimskega izročila odmakne proti judovskemu. Vendar Vergilij sam sekularizira mesijansko-eschatološko znanilo svojega zgodnjega dela. V šestem spevu *Eneide* namreč v božanskemu dečku vzvratno prepozna cesarja Avgusta in tako v okviru rimskega prisvajanja trojanske dediščine odločilno pripomore k selitvi oblasti oziroma imperija z Vzhoda na Zahod.

*Marjeta Vrbinc in Alenka Vrbinc***BODOČI PROFESIONALNI UPORABNIKI SLOVARJEV IN NJIHOVA RABA
SLOVARJEV**

V članku so predstavljeni rezultati raziskave o rabi slovarjev, v kateri so sodelovali študenti angleščine, to je bodoči profesionalni uporabniki slovarjev. V prvem delu članka so navedeni podatki o testirancih, njihovem znanju angleščine in o tem, kako uporabljajo slovarje. V drugem delu so predstavljeni rezultati po posameznih nalogah, pri čemer je poudarek na razmerju med pravilnostjo odgovorov in rabo slovarjev. V zadnjem delu članka so navedene vrste slovarjev, ki jih imajo študenti. Poleg tega so navedeni tudi razlogi, zakaj študenti ne uporabljajo slovarjev v večji meri.

UDK 81'42:81'367.622=111=163.6

*Katja Plemenitaš***BESEDILNA FUNKCIJA POSAMOSTALJENJ:
PRIMER ANGLEŠKIH IN SLOVENSkih ČASOPISNIH ČLANKOV**

Tema članka je posamostaljenje kot jezikovna oblika z univerzalno diskurzivno funkcijo. Podana je razlaga posamostaljenja kot mehanizma za ustvarjanje tem v besedilu. Iz te razlage je izpeljana predpostavka, da je raba posamostaljenj v tesni povezavi s posameznimi besedilnimi vrstami. Ta povezava je ponazorjena s primerom primerjalne študije posamostaljenj na primeru vzorca besedil, sestavljenega iz angleških in slovenskih časopisnih člankov iz dveh različnih obdobij. Ta študija preverja nekatere hipoteze o rabi in pogostnosti posamostaljenj, ki temeljijo na podlagi splošnega razumevanja diskurzivne funkcije posamostaljenj in o dosedanjih opažanjih o samostalniškosti angleškega jezika v primerjavi s slovenskim jezikom. Spoznanja te raziskave kažejo, da lahko tako v angleških kot slovenskih časopisnih vesteh najdemo podobne vzorce rabe posamostaljenj, ki se navezujejo na besedilno vrsto.

UDK 929 Osterc L.

*Janez Stanonik***LÚDOVIK OSTERC**

Dne 19. aprila 2004 je umrl v Ciudad Mexiku Lúdivok Osterc. Po rodu Slovenec, je v Ameriki postal vrhunski znanstvenik, poznavalec klasične španske književnosti. Študija je bila napisana, da se ohranijo v našem spominu podatki o njegovem življenju in delu.

Lúdvik Osterc je bil rojen v Ljubljani 9. aprila 1919. Po končani srednji šoli (leta 1938, Vegova gimnazija) je študiral romanistiko na Filozofski fakulteti v Ljubljani in diplomiral leta 1941 iz francoskega jezika in književnosti. Pod italijansko okupacijo je bil interniran na otokih Tremiti. Po kapitulaciji Italije se je v Bariju priključil enotam NOB. Prva povojna leta je delal na jugoslovanskih predstavništvih v Alžiru in Tirani, nato pa kot bibliotekar v Celju (mestna knjižnica) in Ljubljani (NUK, knjižnica oddelka za romanistiko Filozofske fakultete). Leta 1956 je odšel v Mehiko na specializacijo iz španske književnosti. Tu je leta 1963 doktoriral iz Cervantesa (*El pensamiento social y política del Quijote*) na Avtonomni narodni univerzi Mehike – Universidad nacional autónoma de México. L. 1968 je bil imenovan na tej univerzi za profesorja klasične španske književnosti in l. 1976 za predstojnika Oddelka za podiplomski študij. Leta 1987 je dobil kot znanstvenik najvišje priznanje mehiške vlade, naziv nacionalnega znanstvenika. V svojih knjigah in znanstvenih razpravah se je odcepil od tradicionalnega znanstvenega pristopa do Cervantesa kot kritika literature srednjeveških romanc in opozoril na Cervantesa kot kritika socialnih in političnih razmer v Španiji za časa Filipa II.

Lúdvik Osterc je po letu 1980 obnovil stike s Slovenijo. Od leta 1981 je objavljaj svoje razprave v reviji *Acta Neophilologica* in od l. 1999 v reviji *Verba Hispanica*, ki obe izhajata v Ljubljani. Slovenijo je obiskal v letih 1996, 2001 in 2003. V tednu od 13. do 18. maja 1996 je imel na ljubljanski romanistiki serijo šestih predavanj iz klasične španske literature.

