Economics and Ideologies of Slovenian Literary Mediation

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This paper addresses the economics and ideologies that influenced Slovenian literary mediation in four very dissimilar historical periods of Slovenian book production and circulation: the Habsburg Monarchy (1779–1918), the interwar period (Royal Yugoslavia, 1918–1945), the communist period (Federal Yugoslavia, 1945–1991), and the democratic period (the Republic of Slovenia, from 1991). The analysis considers three groups of factors (or constraints) that condition the production and circulation of books (and ideas) in general: economic factors, political (ideological) factors, and networking factors. As a small system, Slovenian literature turns out to be special in many respects and only partly governed by market logic.

Keywords: literature and society / Slovene literature / book library / literary mediation / book market / publishing / ideological mechanisms

Even though Slovenian literature is relatively small in size, composing an article-long overview of nearly two and a half centuries of its existence in terms of book history still represents a daunting task.[1] On the other hand, such a distant view—accepting, obviously, the risk of obliterating some details—may not only cast light on the overall historical evolution, but can also be an aid understanding the present situation and the potential futures of Slovenian literature. This paper reviews the production and circulation of *literary* books (in relation to overall book production) within Slovenian society from a specific viewpoint. Taking as a starting point the literary mediation research published in a recent special issue of *Primerjalna književnost*, I focus on various factors that—through the choices of the mediatory sector—helped shape the "universe" of available books in Slovenian under various historical circumstances.[2]

From the point of view of the "economy of cultural spaces," this focus on mediation can easily be justified.[3] Namely, the role of the mediatory sector is often underestimated or even ignored despite the fact that mediators never were simply "transmitters." They were often crucial in furnishing the final versions of texts, and they notably affected the structure of available reading in a given historical situation, thus significantly

shaping the stock of ideas in circulation both in vernacular literary fields (or scholarship) and in international exchange (see Chartier and St Clair). Another good reason for concentrating on mediation is the current trends in publishing. The centuries for which the printed book was a dominant (material) carrier of intellectual content brought large-scale differentiation to the mediatory sector, which today employs a large number of book-chain–related professionals. The future of the entire sector seems bleak, and at least one thing is clear: the transition to the age of "digimodernism" will profoundly affect all facets of mediation.[4]

While keeping this in mind, in this article I do not indulge in the fashionable activity of foretelling the future. Instead, I examine whether a condensed historical view from a small, semi-peripheral literary system has anything to offer to the broader scholarly discussion. At the very least, my intention is to shake the all-too-widespread conviction that perhaps deserves the label "methodological colonialism" – because it seems that the application of models derived from book production environments that were strongly or exclusively market-governed is simply taken for granted as a departure point of much research on book history. Such an obviously self-evident transfer is as arrogant as it is naive. Moreover, ignoring the fact that the market is in no way the only driving force in the process of creating the unique and complex structure of European literary cultures is certainly not a promising starting point for thinking about the future.

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There is much evidence that, in the print culture universe, the mediatory sector has the crucial function of a "gatekeeper" or filter, which means that its role in shaping book production is considerable (see de Nooy 513–14 and de Glas 386). Focusing on its operation, choices, and omissions offers insight into the important intersection of various social forces that, in the final instance, construct and shape a particular "semiosphere." In general, the forces (or constraints) that cross-determine mediatory sector operations can be classified into three groups: *economic*, *political/ideological*, and *networking* (Dović, "The Editor" 214–16). Like any classification, this one is only provisional: in practice, the three groups are interrelated and not always easy to delimit. The *economic factors* that regulate book production and circulation have been well researched, which is especially the case with larger book markets such as the English and French ones (see St Clair 710–12). However, the substantial diversity of actual book markets' historical parameters has not always been adequately considered.[5]

To an even greater degree, study of *political and ideological factors* reveals surprising variety. Intellectual property regimes as one such factor have naturally been given great attention within book history. Indeed, the prevailing concepts of authorship, translated into copyright legislation, have become a massive economic factor that has influenced the production and circulation of printed books for centuries (see Rose; Lessig; and St Clair 713–14). Apart from this, modern literary systems, as they evolved from the eighteenth and nineteenth centuries onwards, have been shaped by many ideologies. The mode of political rule is one of the primary frameworks here: are we dealing with a primarily politics-based or market-based model of regulating book circulation?[6] However, even in the latter case, political intervention in market logic is hardly exceptional: ideologies and value presumptions other than the dogma of the "invisible hand" of the market frequently regulate book production.[7] Along with the ideologies, the *networking effects* that would only be a trivial factor in a fully market-driven model have greater prominence in such a situation.[8]

From this perspective, the principal constraints that directed the production and circulation of literature in four (political) periods of Slovenian history can be represented with the following scheme (which requires a detailed explanation):

	Economy	**Politics/Ideology**	**"Networking"**
Habsburg Monarchy (1779–1918) *before 1848* *after 1848*	Undeveloped book market / patronage Proto-market / alternative distribution models (societies)	Nationalism ("cultural mission") Preliminary censorship Retroactive censorship	Enlightened "circles" of the elite Patriotic / nationalist organizations International networks (Pan-Slavic, Illyrian)
Royal Yugoslavia (1918–1945)	Free book market (limited size) *Translated/original canon*	Nationalism ("cultural mission") Competing identity policies (Pan-Slavism, Yugoslavism, Illyrism) Censorship (anti-communism / anti-separatism)	Patriotic/nationalist organizations Political divisions (catholic/liberal/communist)

Federal Yugoslavia (1945–1991)	Partly regulated market (limited size) *State subsidies* (ideological contamination)	Communism (state ideology) Nationalism Censorship / self-censorship	"Regime" networks (bureaucratization / centralization of institutions and means of consecration) "Dissident" networks
Republic of Slovenia (1991–)	Free book market (limited size) *State subsidies* (system-autonomous criteria)	Aestheticism Nationalism (state cultural politics) *Dominant ideologies* (liberalism, cultural expansionism, etc.)	Domestic networks (symbolic capital / subsidies) International networks

The Habsburg Monarchy (1779–1918): The founding of Slovenian literature

As the "virus" of cultural nationalism reached the territories of the Habsburg Monarchy with a predominantly Slovenian ethnic population (especially the province of Carniola), tendencies to develop the distinct vernacular "literary culture" grew stronger.[9] From the perspective of book history, the long period under discussion falls into two phases: the *pioneering* phase (1779–1848) and the *consolidation* phase (1848–1918). In the first phase, Slovenian books, as scarce as they were, were mostly published and put into circulation as spontaneous individual projects, thwarted heavily by the very sharp preliminary censorship, scant reading audience, non-existing market for Slovenian books, and poorly regulated copyright.[10] Although their production could make use of the meager commercial infrastructure—consisting chiefly of printers, which were at the same time publishers and booksellers of mostly German and Latin books—the publication of Slovenian books was far from being a commercial enterprise. With boutique-scale sales, it would not have been possible without the financial help of wealthy patrons or self-financing by authors able to bear the printing costs (who mostly earned their florins as either clergymen or state bureaucrats). In this phase, Slovenian books were rare objects, competing with Latin and German books and circulating on a limited scale among the small networks of the enlightened elites bound to the ideas of "national revival."[11]

After the Revolution of 1848, things gradually began to change: the overall modernization of the monarchy was on the threshold. The informal networks of enlightened "circles" and tavern table companies were

supplemented by more organized efforts by patriotic associations (especially the rapidly spreading "reading rooms"). As the preliminary censorship was abolished and replaced by a more liberal (retroactive) censorial regime, the amount of Slovenian publications started to grow exponentially, creating a fully-fledged media system towards the end of the century. Book production and consumption were on the rise due to publishing associations such as the popular St. Hermagoras Society (*Družba Sv. Mohora*) and the Slovenian Society (*Slovenska matica*). Book circulation was channeled through a very efficient internal (ecclesiastical) subscription and distribution network, of which especially the subscription network made a massive contribution to the emergence of a proto-market for Slovenian books and the appropriate readership for it. At the end of the Habsburg period, the St. Hermagoras Society's annual collections were printed in some 90,000 copies and were reaching nearly a fifth of the Slovenian-speaking population: unquestionably, this was a matchless achievement (Dović, *Slovenski pisatelj* 124–28).[12]

In the consolidation phase, the most important ideological factor (besides market logic) that helped shape book circulation was *nationalism*—often related in complicated ways to competing identity policies favored by ideologies such as Pan-Slavism or Illyrism.[13] Producing, buying, and reading Slovenian books was encouraged as a patriotic act *par excellence* especially as the idea of the immense relevance of literature for Slovenian national identity was becoming commonplace.[14] In this respect, the evolving mediatory sector, nourished by incessant enthusiastic appeals to support Slovenian production, was never fully committed to free market ideals. Publishing Slovenian books in general—and Slovenian literature in particular—was never a "pure" business: it had to pay homage to the notion of a specific "cultural mission," or at least pretend to do so.[15] Nevertheless, the rapid evolution of the mediatory sector to a certain degree reinforced the economics of Slovenian book production, rendering possible the existence of a new social stratum, the professional "men of letters": finally, even writing literature could pay.[16] Furthermore, the growing body of original Slovenian literary, popular, and scholarly works was gradually being supplemented with a body of translated books (especially at the turn of the century, when more systematic translation activities were initiated), which was the first step towards the "nationalization" of knowledge. The up-and-coming Slovenian intellectual, until then apt to communicate in several languages and partake in multilingual discussions, gained ever wider access to the international "republic of books" through the monolingual book system.[17]

Royal Yugoslavia (1918–1945): A (patriotic) book market

After the collapse of the Habsburg Empire, the Slovenian cultural realm found itself in a new political context within Royal Yugoslavia. Even if again a minority, the nearly one million Slovenians now experienced an unparalleled level of cultural autonomy in the new Slavic state.[18] Leaning upon its previous achievements, the long-awaited University of Ljubljana (1919), and the entirely Slovenized education system, book production in the interwar period flourished. Although the state officially did not interfere much with book production, the mediatory and media sectors developed quickly. Exposed to the free market environment and regulated from 1929 on by relatively modern copyright legislation (Trampuš 26–28), a set of publishers of various sizes and profiles operated. Because the market was the major economic constraint, each book selector was basically faced with the question of whether he would be able to cover the production costs with sales of the book. Publishers introduced various marketing strategies such as subscriptions, advertising, thematic series, combinations of magazines and book collections, and so on; bibliophile and proto-scholarly editions became available. Along with the alternative "direct sales" methods employed by the book-publishing societies, conventional bookselling through the bookstore network also gained ground. The final outcome was well-differentiated, lively book production both in terms of originals and translations (Dović, *Slovenski pisatelj* 198–203; Moravec 65–97).

In this new setting, German quickly lost its primacy, and the role of Slovenian book production grew. The data published in 1939 in a sort of books-on-the-market catalogue entitled *Slovenska knjiga* (The Slovenian Book), reveal that, towards the end of this period, some 5,000 Slovenian titles were on sale in Drava Province bookstores.[19] Of these, over 1,500 books classified as literature represent an important share of the overall book production (about 30%). What can be inferred from this literature structure? As expected, the majority of titles listed (65%) belong to narrative prose, 23% to youth literature, and 12% to poetry. The share of translated literature is higher than average and reaches almost 40%, but depends very much on the genre: although only 12% of the poetry books are translations, the share of translated youth literature exceeds one third, and translated prose approaches 50%. Obviously, reader demand for leisure fiction resulted in the marked presence of authors such as May (collected works with eighty volumes), London (ten books), Sienkiewicz (nine) and Doyle (six), along with the more canonical Tolstoy (twelve), Turgenev (six), and Dostoevsky (six) (*Slovenska knjiga*).[20]

Apart from the market, which obviously determined the structure of the translated (popular) fiction, a variety of other ideologies were again inscribed in the mediatory sector's choices. The traditional political and ideological divisions between liberals, clericals, and socialists were, for example, reflected in the leading publishers' policies—but this merely indicates a certain degree of societal differentiation. Moreover, production was hindered by (retroactive) censorship, which kept a vigilant eye on the threats of communism, as well as any kind of separatism (and even of simple nationalism under the dictatorship from 1929), potentially endangering the cohesion of the new political formation. Even more significant may be the fact that—as the literary field was reaching ever greater autonomy—the emerging mediatory sector for the "elite" production became increasingly organized around the idea of the *canon*. By systematically transplanting "great masterpieces" into Slovenian, the Goethean "world literature" was supposed to attain its localized version. Along with the "Slovenian" world literature canon, conceived as a kind of a cosmopolitan "measuring rod," the Slovenian literary canon was hastily constructed: classics were reprinted—sometimes while the authors were still alive—and published in the form of collected works, pedantically edited (cf. Juvan, "Peripherocentrismus" 60).[21]

This (double) canon formation process has tightly bound literary mediation to the education system and university-level humanities studies, especially the evolving field of literary historiography. Again, its dominant ideological backbone seems to be *nationalistic*: the ambition of a small literary culture, aspiring to its place in line with other cultivated nations on an equivalent basis. This is why the devotion to the idea of special cultural and national mission of literature (and Slovenian books in general) remains a factor of importance when reviewing this period. As Kovač has demonstrated, one should acknowledge that publishing, printing, and buying Slovenian literature was still very often understood as a *patriotic endeavor* that can help explain, for example, the readiness of authors, translators, and publishers to invest their effort, work, and even financial resources in writing and publishing books that did not bring them any reasonable economic profit.[22]

Federal Yugoslavia (1945–1990): Ideologically regulated market

After the Second World War, the Yugoslav Communist Party came to power. The enthusiastic architects of the new communist federation nationalized and centralized cultural institutions (publishing houses, magazines, artistic associations, theaters, and film studios) and established con-

trol over the means of consecration. Following the substantial book purges that removed the corpus of undesired works from circulation, book production was substantially reorganized and placed under state control. At first, the new mediators' main problem seemed completely different: it was not so much whether they would be able to sell a sufficient number of copies of a published work, but whether the works would be approved by the ideological leaders. If this was the case, they could receive subsidies that enabled the publication of works regardless of sales success. In this way, the *ideological principle* was incorporated into the book exchange to an unprecedented degree (Dović, *Slovenski pisatelj* 206–10).

However, the situation in Yugoslavia was not exactly analogous to the harsher cultural policy models enforced throughout the East bloc (see Neubauer 55–60). Communication with the West was never entirely suspended, and cultural institutions were allowed a certain degree of autonomy. In the early 1950s, the special censorial bodies ("agitprops") with the executive authority to reject or "improve" the lists of publications proposed by publishers were abolished. Instead, softer and less obvious forms of censorship were introduced: by ensuring the loyalty of the majority of the institutions' managing board members, the authorities did in fact maintain the desired degree of control (Gabrič, *Slovenska* 19–24). Officially, there was no explicit censorship in Yugoslavia.[23] Nevertheless, its effects were ubiquitous: the absence of clear regulations, the dense denunciation network, and the threat of anathema or imprisonment heightened the degree of *self-censorship*. Only when things got out of control (which was seldom) did an actual repressive apparatus have to be employed. Such a situation stimulated two lines of networking: while the first one ran along the regime's official structures (enjoying the benefits of loyalty), the other one, mostly connected to disobedient magazines, heralded subversive values and was often subject to persecution. As elsewhere in Eastern Europe, the "dissident" formations (consisting in great part of literary authors) gradually gained specific cultural capital and played an important role in the democratic process of the 1980s (Dović, "Totalitarian" 169–74).

It is important to emphasize that during this period the *subsidy policy*—as an active instrument of state interference—established itself as an important force determining the structure of books in circulation. Initially, this instrument was predominantly driven by the official ideology of *socialism*.[24] However, on closer inspection it turns out that the communist subsidies were influenced by other ideologies as well, or at least they were not entirely politicized, but also allowed for arguments and evaluations produced within the respective social subsystems (especially the arts and sciences). In the case of literature this can be illustrated by the tendency to

consider the autonomist requests from the literary field and to support the elite production with higher artistic ambitions. Such logic made its way in translation subsidies; this logic was particularly evident in Slovenian production, where the nationalism-based idea of the special cultural mission of literature now gained its ultimate expression in the fact that the state somehow became "responsible" for the material well-being of its representative authors—offering them sinecure employments, subsidies, and officially prescribed author fees. In spite of such excessive state regulation, the role of the book market was never completely annihilated. In contrast to the Stalinist case, the Yugoslav book market—after 1957 regulated by modernized copyright legislation—was not completely monopolized; instead, the authorities "allowed the competition of communist publishers on a communist market" (Gregorin 99). Communist publishers were, of course, far from being private publishing companies in many respects, but they quickly accommodated to market demands: especially in the last two decades of communism they started to publish books that could be sold alongside the "market-proof" subsidized titles.

In terms of statistics, book production displayed moderate, steady progress throughout the period. As the population in Slovenia grew from about 1.5 to 2 million, the number of new titles published per year rose from 400 to 600 in 1945 to 1960 to some 2,000 in the 1970s.[25] This number remained relatively constant afterwards. Initially, average print runs were 4,000 to 5,000 copies, and they remained surprisingly large (close to 4,000) until the end of the 1980s. The share of translations was some 15 to 20%, sometimes even lower, rising above 20% at the end of the 1980s. The proportion of literature was consistently slightly above 20%, reaching some 30% in the early 1960s and then returning to its previous levels. A fact of interest is that the print runs in literature were higher than in other sectors: 6,000 to 7,000 copies (average 4,000 to 5,000) in the first two decades, remaining close to 5,000 at the end of the 1980s (average close to 4,000). Quite remarkably, the share of translations in literature was very high, usually some 35 to 40%, sometimes almost 50% (with an average of around 20%). Obviously, this makes literature by far the most "open" sector of the book production. As in Royal Yugoslavia, the share of the (translated) novels was very high: at the end of 1980s they actually outnumbered original novels (Dolinar 230–32, and *Statistični letopis*).[26]

Recapitulating book production in general and literary production in particular, it should be noted that the communist period also saw the centennial project of creating a full Slovenian book system nearly to completion. The considerable expansion of the domestic literary repertoire leaning upon the firmly set canon of national classics, translations of "indis-

pensable" masterpieces of world literature properly arranged in collections and equipped with learned essays, and the translated corpus of classics of "theory" were among the more durable results of book production, which at the same time generated an abundance of ideologically orthodox intellectual goods. Not unlike the censors in the Habsburg Monarchy, whose role was not only to suppress subversive ideas but also maintain quality, the communists, interwoven into all social strata and self-fashioned as the society's enlightened elite, played an ambivalent role: using inexcusable repression towards any opposition, they nevertheless contributed to a book-production model that many writers today would willingly return to. The unusual combination of state regulation, (ideologically biased) subsidies, and market competition resulted in a varied, stable, and surveyable book production of relatively good average quality.

The Republic of Slovenia (1991–): Market restored, literary production subsidized

Slovenia's transition to a parliamentary democracy after attaining independence in 1991 brought substantial changes for the book-publishing sector. In economic terms, a free market serving some two million potential readers and based on modernized copyright legislation, was restored.[27] Some of the old publishers disintegrated and some managed to adapt to the new circumstances; apart from these dozens, even hundreds, of new publishers of very different sizes, profiles, and competences appeared.[28] Book production exploded, becoming plural and unsurveyable: the previously ordered universe became seemingly infinite, decisively throwing off all traces of the illusion of finiteness that had been so neatly encoded in the structure of the great "collections" of the communist era. The number of new titles per year skyrocketed: in 1991 it reached 2,500, in 2000 it exceeded 4,000, and by 2010 the number was around 6,000. At the same time, the print runs declined dramatically: rather than thousands of copies, nowadays they tend to be only hundreds. The book-market structure changed significantly in favor of "commercial" books, and the overall quality declined with the advent of unskilled mediatory newcomers. The share of translated titles in the total production rose significantly in the early 1990s (even reaching 40%) and then settled at a relatively constant level of slightly below 30%, which is substantially more than in the former era (*Statistični letopis*).[29]

The share of literature declined to about 20% at first, but after 2000 regained almost a quarter of the new title production. The reduced size

of print runs was even more dramatic, settling at an average rate of several hundred copies.[30] As expected, prose (fiction) dominates over other genres (with a share of some 60%), and the share of poetry is still comparatively high. It remains close to 20%, even higher than in previous periods. Again, the share of translations is very high: in the early 1990s it was 35 to 40%, but then rose to about 50% after 2000. Within translations, English as a source language is indisputably dominant with almost 60% (*Statistični letopis*). Because these remarkable features were already characteristic of earlier periods (except that the source languages were more equally distributed), they deserve a closer look. How should one interpret this "openness" of Slovenian literature, especially when it is well known that larger markets sometimes allow only a few percent of translations? Does this point to the limited productive capacity of a small culture? This hypothesis is supported by the fact that novels are predominant among translations, which may signal that good original novels are a structural deficiency characteristic of a small culture's limited productive capacity.[31] On the other hand, this openness may also be partly due to a subsidy policy that eliminates the initial cost difference between originals and translations (which may be one of the reasons non-regulated systems show little interest in communication with other literatures nowadays).[32]

In general, the status of literature within total book production is strongly determined by the fact that the market economy is not the only factor at play.[33] The main financer, the Slovenian Book Agency (*Javna agencija za knjigo*, JAK) with an annual budget of some €6 million, funds various links of the book chain.[34] JAK's policy seems oriented towards the mediatory sector, but through the system of prescribed minimal author fees—partly resembling the communist bureaucratic measuring of authorial work—it assures that publishers pay the authors and translators decent fees; as a rule, these fees are much higher than the ones they could expect on the market. The system is rounded out by the purchase policies of public libraries, which usually buy a substantial part of the print run. In general, JAK (as well as its predecessor within the Ministry of Culture) is assumed to be doing a decent job of assuring the quality and diversity of production.[35]

However, there are some potential drawbacks inherent in such a support system. With comparatively high average subsidies per book (see also the international comparison by Grilc 52–61), authors and publishers (especially those that acquire the status of being program-funded) are tempted to produce works that require no buyers and are not stimulated to reach an audience.[36] Another contestable issue is the different treatment of program- and project-funded publishers; informally, inequalities have

often been explained by the impact of networking.[37] Topical problems also include the fact that the system does not exclude the so-called "commercial" publishers; in fact, the "richest" publishers are among the biggest subsidy receivers (see Breznik's comparative table in this volume).[38] Heated discussions also arose regarding the distribution of public lending rights (*knjižnično nadomestilo*). This state-funded instrument is partly divided according to the lending indexes in Slovenian public libraries, and partly allotted, in the form of scholarships, by the Slovene Writers' Association. In the first case, the distribution model was disputed, especially the top census, which prevented linear remunerations for authors with over 20,000 registered borrowings. In the second case, the seemingly arbitrary awarding of scholarships was interpreted as a clear sign of muddy networking.[39]

To a certain degree, these discussions can be described in terms of ordinary struggles over economic and symbolic capital within the cultural field. However, the existing state support systems do have a visible impact on the body of circulating literature. Books of literature circulating in the contemporary Slovenian scene fall into either the "commercial" or the "subsidized" group, with only a few exceptions. In the one group the question is how to persuade the customer, and in the other the (simplified) question is how to convince the Slovenian Book Agency commission, which consists of "field experts" often combining the roles of scholars (philologists, comparative literature scholars), editors, critics, translators, and writers. The "ideology" at work here is obviously an *aesthetic* one: the subsidies are meant to be a qualitative corrective for a book market faced with the threat of trivialization or commercialization. In this respect, it is possible to generalize Sapiro's conclusion that the modern state has moved away from direct ideological interventions (such as censorship) and has gradually become "committed to help literary activities preserve a certain degree of autonomy from the market" (441).[40] Although this autonomist argument may prevail in insiders' circles, in the broader picture the urgency of subsidizing Slovenian books, especially literature, is still often advocated using ancient nationalist rhetoric.[41]

What about other opportunities for non–market-based book financing? Apart from the modest potential of regional funding (mostly for the works of local authors), Slovenian publishers can also participate in larger international programs (such as EU grants, UNESCO programs, and Traduki) or apply for grants from the "source literature" for translations into Slovenian.[42] In all of these cases, certain ideologies are inscribed into the priorities and evaluation criteria of these programs. In the first case, they are often derived from contemporary *liberal values and ideologies*, such as the protection of minorities or favoring suppressed social and ethnic

groups. In the second case, their mechanisms evidently serve the purposes of expansionist *cultural promotion*—which, naturally, opens the topical question of asymmetries in the formation of transnational canonical structures (Juvan, "Svetovni" 195–201). However, these mechanisms seem to lack the power to withstand the overall trends, especially the dominance of English both as a source language and as an intermediary in more distant communications.[43] More or less the same holds for the attempts to counterbalance the perceived imbalances with focused support mechanisms. Upon examining two recent German subsidy programs, Slávka Rude-Porubská concludes that their potential "to modify the hierarchical order underlying international exchange is still very limited" (282). To some extent, her findings can be generalized, like in the case of the East European "contemporary canon" in the U.S. as presented by Andrew Wachtel (268–72).

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In conclusion, the question to be posed is the following: what can one possibly gain from such an overview? One thing is evident: Slovenian literature was only able to exist as a fully developed system with the help of non-market regulations and corrective mechanisms involving a range of value presumptions and ideologies cross-operating through the production and mediation of literary books. Throughout history, the desire to participate equally in the "Europe of nations" was obviously one of the strongest driving forces that rendered possible the frequent bypassing of the harsh economics of print culture. Apart from this, other ideologies were also indispensable and need to be carefully considered. The question can finally be posed: what could be the common feature of phenomena as diverse as the euphoric bourgeois patriots eager to venerate "national poets," the official censors of the Habsburg Monarchy attentive to potential insults of the crown and monitoring text quality, the communist elite anxious to maintain ideological orthodoxy, the subsidy commission concerned with the aesthetic relevance of texts, and the European bureaucrats financing projects that favor minorities or suppressed groups? The answer is at hand: all of them fashioned themselves as an *enlightened elite*, a subject that "knows better" and intends to improve the situation by interfering in a particular way.

At the moment, much of Europe is facing radical cuts in cultural budgets. Metaphors of cutting, trimming, and pruning are frequent among the current Slovenian political elite; they signal a revival of the old idea that the market will do it better anyway. As recent analyses of the major book markets have demonstrated, the "invisible hand" has not resolved things:

instead, it has produced giant media industry conglomerates in which publishers are obstructed by the demand for immediate profit (Schiffrin), the (global) star-system, which critically narrows the base of "good enough" writers (Squires), and—through the networks of interested professional associations—the ever-expanding and restrictive authorship legislation, which is barely able to cope with the pressing current problems (Lessig). We may be reluctant to assess the cultural consequences of such developments as devastating, but in the long term they can hardly be expected to secure favorable results. Even less certain is the future of the mediatory sector. In an age when analyses become obsolete as soon as they are printed, the point that "the system" (i.e., the ideology of the market) *does not know better* is to be remembered at least. In the end, then, we should be the ones to take the responsibility for finding new solutions, inventing appropriate policies, and defending the ideologies that may interfere in the future production of books, e-books, or whatever they may be called.

NOTES

[1] The term "literature" refers to the production of texts with predominantly aesthetic ambitions: the poetry almanac *Pisanice* (Writings) from 1779 is the first notable Slovenian book that fits this concept. Otherwise, Slovenian book history begins in 1550, when the Protestant writer Primož Trubar published his *Catechismus* (Catechism), the first Slovenian printed book.

[2] The volume *"Who Chooses?": Literature and Literary Mediation* was edited by Marijan Dović, Jernej Habjan, and Aleš Vaupotič, and published as a bilingual issue of *Primerjalna književnost* (33(2), 2010).

[3] For the most part, my usage of the term "mediatory role" overlaps with the one in Siegfried Schmidt's model of the literary system (see Schmidt, *Grundriß*). However, it was book historians that first drew the necessary attention to the indispensable role not only of the book (or journal) editors, but of all those involved in the complicated process of book production: printers, typesetters, proofreaders, literary agents, copyeditors, publishers, librarians, booksellers, and distributors.

[4] In this respect, see especially the papers by Kovač, Weedon, and Notaro in this volume.

[5] These parameters include the size of the market, the degree of differentiation of the book circuit, the prevailing types of sales channels, types of publishing companies, the territorial ranges and average print runs, purchase prices and price policies in general (defining the demand curve and access timing for different social strata), modes of regulating book sales (taxation, unified book prices, and subsidies), the role of public or private library networks, buyers' habits, general education, literacy rates, and available information systems.

[6] In politics-based models, especially totalitarian ones, there is a tendency to control the circulation of cultural ideas by means of state regulation such as monopolies, subsidies, and censorship. In contrast, within liberal models, the market is supposed to regulate production. Failing to fully recognize this difference seriously hampers discussions of twentieth-century book history that include, for example, the Eastern bloc countries (see Neubauer's overview).

[7] Motives for this type of regulation are varied: from simple nationalism to cultural expansionism, from the ideology of artistic (as opposition to "commercial") autonomy to promoting different values and ideologies such as tolerance, integration of minorities, or protection of marginal social groups (Dović, "The Editor" 217–20).

[8] Networking is seldom discussed and usually remains beyond the horizon of literary criticism. Yet, anyone with experience in dealing with books knows that agents in the literary field are generally inclined towards creating a systematic network of relations and positioning themselves within the core of such a network. This is especially the case in post-production fields (critique, academia, and general media), competing for awards, and battles for symbolic capital or simply for funding (from award-giving juries, subsidy committees, professional associations, leading editors, critics, or essayists to university humanities). Whereas Bourdieu may have stimulated general interest in this problem in *The Rules of Art*, contributions by sociologists of literature such as Sapiro ("The Literary Field") or Janssen ("Side-Roads") have shed some (empirical) light on this gray zone (see Dović, "The Editor" 220–3).

[9] This movement—starting with Marko Pohlin and Anton F. Dev around 1770, developing with Sigmund Zois' circle, and reaching its first climax with France Prešeren's poetry in the "Vormärz" period—has always been a privileged subject of Slovenian literary studies. However, it is symptomatic that this substantial research usually failed to pose questions relevant from the viewpoint of book history.

[10] Before 1846, there was no proper legislation protecting intellectual property in the monarchy; the publishers' (but not the authors') rights were only partly protected by the common laws from 1811 regulating publishing contracts. The 1846 law, however, protected the authorship of literary works during the author's lifetime and thirty years after his or her death (Trampuš 19–22).

[11] According to Hroch, such a situation was typical in the initial phase of national movements (Hroch 6–7; see also Leerssen 559–61).

[12] In the mid-nineteenth century, the number of Slovenians living in (several) Habsburg provinces surpassed one million. By the end of the century this number had risen to some 1.25 million. At the same time, the rate of illiteracy fell to around 15%.

[13] In general, the relations of Slovenian book production to Pan-Slavism or Illyrism are complex and cannot be explained here properly.

[14] This suggestive idea was later labeled the "Slovenian cultural syndrome"; recently it has been severely criticized (see Dović, *Slovenski pisatelj* 272–9).

[15] A prime example is the activities of the Slovenian Matica Society (*Slovenska Matica*), a patriotic publishing association with scholarly ambitions (see the bibliography for 1864–1930 collected by Šlebinger).

[16] Towards the end of the century, it became possible to make a modest living by combining various roles in the evolving media system. After 1900, especially the writer and dramatist Ivan Cankar fought a hard battle to secure professionalism in the literary field. However, his success was only partial; up to today, the size of the market seems to thwart the full professionalism of literary authorship (Dović, *Slovenski pisatelj* 285–96).

[17] The process of incorporating the Slovenian language and textual corpus into the educational system, which began in the second half of the nineteenth century, was slow, and German books were still indispensable to intellectuals in both scholarship and literature (Ciperle and Vovko 59–68). Even after the collapse of the Habsburg Empire, cheaper mass editions (like those from *Reclam*) were widely used.

[18] After the pressing issue of state borders was settled in 1920, more than 400,000 Slovenians found themselves living outside the borders of Yugoslavia; that is, in Italy (over 300,000), Austria (some 80,000), and Hungary (fewer than 10,000; cf. Vodopivec 173). In

general, their cultural conditions soon became worse than they had been under Austro-Hungarian rule.

[19] The Drava Province (*Dravska banovina*) was the administrative name for the "Slovenian" division of Royal Yugoslavia after 1929. In 1931, its population was about 1.15 million; adding the Slovenians in Italy and Austria, the number of potential readers was about 1.5 million.

[20] In contrast to statistical data stated for later periods, this overview is not based on a count of new titles. In terms of methodology, its advantage (as well as drawback) may be that it mirrors the "live" market scene. *Slovenska knjiga* was put together as a joint effort of booksellers and, fortunately, includes Slovenian works that were printed in centers outside of the Yugoslav borders (Trieste, Gorizia, Klagenfurt). It also lists a handful of works published by Slovenian publishers in other languages, but their share is statistically irrelevant.

[21] The prose authors canonized this way included Cankar, Jurčič, Kersnik, Levstik, Tavčar, Trdina, and Pregelj; the poets included Prešeren, Vodnik, Gregorčič, and Jenko. The complete works of the first Slovenian novelist Josip Jurčič were even published in two competing critical editions, and the complete works of Prešeren, the undisputed national poet, were available in multiple editions.

[22] This "hidden dimension" of the Slovenian culture may be the reason that, even up to today, many intellectuals in Slovenia would only reluctantly recognize publishing as a branch of business in which profit is a legitimate category (Kovač, *Skrivno* 173).

[23] An exception is the index of prohibited books that remained active throughout the period. For an excellent overview of communist censorship in Slovenia, see Gabrič ("Censorship").

[24] In translation subsidy policies, the initial strong orientation towards Russia was abolished in the 1950s and was later partly replaced by favoring literature from the "non-aligned" countries—those belonging to neither of the two Cold War blocs.

[25] Centralized control also resulted in more accurate gathering of statistical data on book production, which was published in *Statistični letopis*.

[26] Normally, Slovenian publishers' translation contracts included the payment of around 6 to 8% of the purchase price of the entire print run to the copyright holder.

[27] The new, exemplary authorship law was passed in 1995. Among other things, it extended the protection of works to seventy years after the author's death (from the previous fifty years). Even before (leaving out the slightly bizarre legislation prior to 1957), the authorship laws in communist Yugoslavia were not incomparable with those in the West (see Trampuš 28–42).

[28] In 2005, there were as many as 1,778 active publishers. Although many of them only publish a few books annually, in 2008 around 40% of the total production was covered by the forty-one largest publishers (with more than twenty new titles). Of these, only Mladinska Knjiga can be considered "large": in 2008, for example, it published 527 books, creating almost €60 million of annual revenue.

[29] Compared to the oscillating share of translations, the share of reprints (of both Slovenian and translated titles) has remained relatively constant at slightly below 15% from the beginning of the communist period up to the present.

[30] Some 500 to 1,000 copies of fiction (not including bestsellers) and some 300 copies of poetry books are usually printed. In fact, even such low print runs are not always justified by sales results—they are often prescribed by a financer as part of a subsidy contract.

[31] This trend can be observed since the end of the 1980s, when translated novels outnumbered original ones. In 2007, the ratio of original to translated novels was as high as 1:3.5. In recent years, original novel production has only slightly exceeded one quarter of total novel production, whereas translations from English have approached one half.

[32] Due to the current regulations, the fixed production costs of subsidized translations (copyright plus translation fees) usually do not exceed the prescribed author fees for publishing subsidized originals.

[33] According to Rugelj, small markets in general "cannot function and develop without adequate state support" (75).

[34] The data refer to 2010. The future of the agency is uncertain at the moment. After avoiding the threatened abolition by the new government, it will probably continue working with a severely reduced budget.

[35] The state funding for culture in contemporary Slovenia consumes some 2% of the total state budget (€200 million out of approx. €10 billion in 2010), which is normally some 0.5 to 0.6% of GDP (€36 billion in 2010). Established public institutions (operas, theaters, etc.) spend some €55 million (in 2009, the principal theater, SNG Drama Ljubljana, received €5.5 million, and SNG Opera Ljubljana €9.3 million; its Maribor counterpart received €10.1 million; the Slovenian Philharmonic Orchestra received €5.5 million and the Cankar Center €6.3 million). Institutions related to "cultural heritage" spent some €50 million. The JAK budget, which covers the total production of "quality books," is about €6 million; that is, some 3% of the total culture budget. Apart from this, the public libraries' buying policy rounds out the subsidy system. In 2006, over 250 libraries bought over half a million new units with a budget of some €4 million. In contrast to theaters and museums, in the book sector the state only covers the program production costs (and not the salaries, infrastructure, or administration costs). This may be one of the reasons that Rugelj, who criticizes the distribution of cultural funds in general (81–83), considers the book support system to be quite efficient.

[36] This is especially obvious in the case of poetry collections. With a fixed fee of €2,500 guaranteed, poets are stimulated to write collections. Is the state perhaps assuming the role of a poet-comforting geisha (to paraphrase Gabriel Zaid's ironic comment)? A recent study has shown that the public lending of subsidized books in libraries is alarmingly low (with an average of one annual lending per book) and stagnant—despite the rapid growth of lending in other segments, especially "trivial" works (Rugelj 199–224).

[37] In 2010, JAK program funding was approved for twenty-four publishers, which published 295 books together (totaling €1,900,000; the average subsidy was €6,500). Other publishers published eighty-nine books using project funding (totaling €460,000; the average subsidy was €5,200); €70,000 was spent on long-term projects (series), and €60,000 on a special series of translations of works from classical antiquity (the data are available at the JAK website: http://www.jakrs.si/). Before 2010, the discrepancy was even greater: a program-funded publisher would receive almost double the average subsidy compared to a project-funded counterpart. This was changed in response to complaints, but then again, as more publishers pushed forward to enter the program scheme, the inequality was once again reestablished within this scheme. There were signs that such inequalities were also partly due to successful lobbying of cultural networks.

[38] In my opinion, the problem is not whether they should be allowed to partake in the subsidy system (and I leave aside the issues of defining a commercial publisher); they are doing this under the same terms as others, and it would in fact act be odd for them to ignore such a financial opportunity. In other words, it is impossible to expect them to follow a "cultural mission" and finance "quality" books through sales of cookbooks: they simply will not. The only relevant criticism has to do with the monopolistic distribution network, not because of the network itself, but because it was mainly created in a partly monopolist communist environment.

[39] In 2010, €245,000 was distributed among Slovenian authors according to the borrowing records of the joint public library database (COBISS), and some €230,000 went to authors selected by the writers' association.

[40] However, it is the decline of public interest in the subsidized corpus that requires a re-thinking of contemporary support strategies, methods, and goals. Such strategies will have to be active, complex, and engaged to be able to withstand the trend of "trivialization" and to resist the arguments of those that want to abolish "elite" production and push its agents (together with all their symbolic capital and networking games) even farther to the social margins.

[41] Mentions of language, books, and literature as the constitutive trinity of "Slovenedom" are rarely omitted in presidential addresses, for example.

[42] Sometimes support is available through institutions with active branches in Ljubljana, such as the Goethe Institute, Charles Nodier French Institute, Italian Culture Institute, or embassies' cultural departments. Slovenian publishers also seek the aid of specialized book exchange and promotion institutions in the source countries; for example, the Flemish Literature Foundation, the Ireland Literature Exchange, the Portuguese General Directorate of Books and Libraries, and so on. The Slovenian state also supports translations of domestic authors either directly through JAK or through the Trubar Foundation (*Trubarjev sklad*).

[43] However, one should not oversimplify the situation, as was well illustrated by a recent analysis of contemporary fiction bestsellers in Europe: smaller literatures and medium-size publishers can still produce international bestsellers (Kovač and Wischenbart, "A Myth Busted" 293–301).

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