

POETIC REPRESENTATIONS OF TRIESTE IN THE 20<sup>TH</sup> CENTURY

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## ABSTRACT

*Methodologically, the article comes from geocriticism, the field of comparative literature. The research focus is on poetry about Trieste in the 20<sup>th</sup> century, on the analysis of the poetic discourse about Trieste which reflects different historical interpretations of the Trieste region through the poetic representation of Trieste. Thus, the article analyzes the literarization of Trieste by poets from the Slovenian Trieste community, poets from the Italian community, and authors from the Istrian Trieste community, taking into account the multifocalization of views on a specific reference space. Based on the corresponding corpus of poems, we have captured the intersection of the poems in the representations and feelings of the decaying and disintegrating Trieste after the Second World War. At the same time, we identified different representations of the city over time: Trieste as a Roman city; Trieste as an Italian city; Trieste as a symbol of pain; Trieste as a symbol of alienation.*

**Keywords:** Slovenian poetry, Italian poetry, Trieste, Istra, Lina Galli, geocriticism

## LA RAPPRESENTAZIONE POETICA DI TRIESTE DEL 20° SECOLO

## SINTESI

*Metodologicamente l'articolo deriva dalla geocritica, un campo della letteratura comparata. Il focus della ricerca è sulla poesia della Trieste del Novecento, sull'analisi del discorso poetico che riguarda Trieste discorso che riflette le diverse interpretazioni storiche del territorio attraverso la rappresentazione poetica di Trieste. L'articolo analizza quindi il discorso letterario di Trieste da parte di poeti della comunità slovena, poeti della comunità italiana e autori della comunità istriana triestina, tenendo conto della multifocalizzazione delle opinioni riguardo ad uno specifico spazio di riferimento. Sulla base del corrispondente corpus di poesie, abbiamo catturato l'intersezione delle poesie nelle rappresentazioni e nei sentimenti della Trieste decadente e disintegrata dopo la Seconda guerra mondiale. Allo stesso tempo, abbiamo individuato nel tempo diverse rappresentazioni della città: Trieste come città romana; Trieste come città italiana; Trieste come simbolo del dolore; Trieste come simbolo di alienazione.*

**Parole chiave:** poesia slovena, poesia italiana, Trieste, Istria, Lina Galli, geocritica

## METHODOLOGICAL INTRODUCTION

This paper will draw from geocriticism, a field in comparative literature which assumes that “the referent and its representation are interdependent and interactive” (Westphal, 2011, 113). We will focus on literary production from the town of Trieste. Literary representations of this town from the end of the 19<sup>th</sup> century onwards contributed considerably to the town becoming a point of reference. This aspect has been highlighted by author Claudio Magris, who stated that Trieste is a “city of paper” (Westphal, 2011, 156): “Svevo, Saba, and Slataper are not so much writers who are born in it and through it, but are writers who generate and create it, who give it a face that otherwise, in itself, would not exist in that form” (Ara & Magris, 1987, 16).<sup>1</sup>

In his example, Magris draws from Triestine history from the late 19<sup>th</sup> to the early 20<sup>th</sup> century. Although Trieste was part of the Austro-Hungarian empire at that time, there were growing irredentist demands for the town’s annexation to Italy. For the purposes of this paper, we will refer to Italian Triestine literary production from this period as “irredentist” literature. Drawing from the irredentist political discourse, the authors of these works gave shape to an irredentist literary discourse. The latter is based on the conviction that Trieste was a Roman-Italian town; according to its literary vision/predictions, the beautiful Trieste will one day become the bride of the Italian prince.<sup>2</sup>

It should be pointed out that the above-mentioned citation by Claudio Magris only refers to the Italian-speaking community and does not mention the Slovene community in Trieste. The last decades of Austro-Hungarian rule saw a surge in irredentist feelings<sup>3</sup> among the Italian-speaking population. In the same period, the Slovene community started demanding more rights in a place it considered as the most important city with a Slovene-speaking population.<sup>4</sup> With the end of the First World War came the demise of the Austro-Hungarian empire and the annexation of Trieste to Italy. This is when the Italian government began implementing systematic and violent assimilation policies. In reaction to such measures, Slovene authors from Trieste started writing about the oppression of the town’s Slovene community.<sup>5</sup>

As becomes apparent, by focusing on Italian literary texts alone, it is not possible to analyse the many different views on the town of Trieste. In order to gain a wider perspective, we need to resort to a *multifocalisation* of views on a given referential space. Multifocalisation is one of the methodological tenets of geocriticism: “Geocritical analysis involves the confrontation of several optics that correct, nourish, and mutually enrich each other” (Westphal, 2011, 113). “The geocritical representation emerges from a spectrum of individual representations as rich and varied as possible [...] we opt for a plural point of view” (Westphal, 2011, 113). Thus, the “question of the corpus becomes crucial” (Westphal, 2011, 126).

The scope of this paper is to analyse the most varied possible corpus of literary works. With this aim in mind, the author of this paper has selected a corpus of Slovene and Italian poems written by Triestine authors in the first half of the 20<sup>th</sup> century, which she had compiled and analysed previously (Toroš, 2011). In addition to literary works by authors belonging to the Italian and Slovene communities in Trieste, we will also consider some iconic literary works by Italian-speaking authors who fled from Istria to Trieste in the aftermath of the Second World War. These authors are known as “Istrian Triestine authors” (Toroš, 2019).<sup>6</sup> Furthermore, we will look closely at the changed perception of Trieste and its surroundings in the works of major Slovene authors from the second half of the 20<sup>th</sup> century (Marij Čuk, Miroslav Košuta, Marko Kravos).<sup>7</sup>

In the first two cases—i.e. when looking at poems by Slovene and Italian poets from Trieste—the authors belong to two different Triestine communities which started writing about Trieste between the end of the 19<sup>th</sup> and the beginning of the 20<sup>th</sup> century. This period was first marked by an increase in nationalistic tendencies and later saw the rise of the fascist regime. For Slovene and Italian Triestine authors, literature served primarily as a means of reclaiming the town of Trieste and reasserting the existence of their communities. Thus, we could argue that these authors have an *endogenous* viewpoint (i.e. an autochthonic vision).<sup>8</sup> Yet, each of them focuses on different, often even contrasting aspects of city life. As Westphal points out: “[t]he territory-nation seems to obey a *logic of belonging* that paradoxically legitimizes exclusion” (Westphal, 2011, 144). Conversely, Istrian

1 Trieste’s literary identity was also researched by Katia Pizzi, cf. Pizzi (2001).

2 For additional information on Italian Triestine poetry in the interwar period cf. Toroš (2011).

3 For additional information on Irredentism cf. Vivante (1912).

4 For additional information on the number of inhabitants in the town of Trieste and in the province of Trieste cf. Pletikosić (2006).

5 For additional information on the Slovene community in Italy cf. Kacin-Wohinz & Pirjevec (2000). For additional information on Slovene Triestine poetry in the interwar period cf. Toroš (2011).

6 Our selection of authors and literary works is based on the contents of the textbook *Literatura na stičišču2* (Literature in contact) EDUKA2 and on the monography *Esodo Giuliano-Dalmata nella letteratura. Atti del convegno internazionale, Trieste, 28 Febbraio-1 Marzo 2013*.

7 Our selection of authors and literary works is based on France Bernik’s book *Trst v slovenski poeziji* (Trieste in Slovenian poetry, 1984).

8 *Multifocalisation* is expressed in three main variations: endogenous (autochthonic vision), exogenous (vision of the traveller), allogeneous (somewhere in between) (Westphal, 2011, 128).

Triestine literature offers a different view of Trieste, portraying it as a place of depravation and yearning for the Istrian homeland. Since Istrian Triestine authors are not originally from Trieste, their viewpoint can be defined as *allogeneous* (somewhere in between). Despite the many differences, the three literary representations of Trieste we have just mentioned all have in common a “monolithic conception of space” or a “collectively fixed scheme” (Westphal, 2011, 144). The authors belong to three different communities (the Slovene Triestine community, the Italian Triestine community and the Istrian Triestine community). Each community draws from a different traumatic collective memory and postmemory.<sup>9</sup> The Slovene literary representation of Trieste focuses on the interwar period; the Italian literary representation draws from Roman times, while the Istrian Triestine literary representation hones on the aftermath of the Second World War.

As it has already been pointed out, we shall consider this literary space by taking into account not only the different perspectives, but also the different time periods: the period before the First World War, the interwar years and the aftermath of the Second World War. In doing so, we will adopt a *stratigraphic* vision; we will therefore examine the impact of time on the perception of space (Westphal, 2011, 137). The chosen time frame is crucial. In fact, in this historical period, all three communities in question faced significant changes, which are reflected in literary works.<sup>10</sup>

The last aspect we will consider is the concept of *polysensoriality*, which states that the experience of an environment comes from all the five senses: visual perception, smell, taste, touch, hearing (Westphal, 2011, 132).

#### THE LITERARISATION OF TRIESTE BEFORE THE FIRST WORLD WAR

Of all the analysed literary works (Slovene, Italian and Istrian Triestine literature), Italian Triestine poets are the first to advance a model for the literary representation of Trieste and they do so in the decades before the outbreak of the First World War. This predictable and predetermined model is used by a large number of Italian poets from Trieste, who see the town from two different perspectives: as a Roman town on the one hand, and as the “bride of the Italian prince” on the other. Neither of these representations draws from existing landmarks, such as squares, streets, etc. Instead, authors use elements from legends and fairy tales (e.g. Roman Trieste; Trieste as a beautiful young lady who is waiting for a prince/her husband to rescue her from jail). Both literary representations of the town reflect political/

irredentist tendencies, while also showing the authors’ considerable emotional attachment and fondness for the town of Trieste, i.e. the subject of literarisation.

#### The Roman image of Trieste

In the period before the First World War, Italian Triestine poets create a topical image of their town, which could be defined as the image of “Roman Trieste”. In fact, literary works from this period are set on the hill of San Giusto, which overlooks the town’s main square and where Roman ruins can still be seen to this day. Some of the ruins found on this hill have been used as structural elements or as decorations of contemporary buildings, reiterating the poetic image of a magnificent and long-standing Roman-Italian culture. The cathedral, the bell tower and the statue of San Giusto (situated on the bell tower’s outer wall) played a crucial role in poetry due to the Roman monumental gateways that had been added to these structures as decorative elements. These gateways are mentioned, for example, in the sonnet *San Giusto* (Levi, 1915, 21) by Augusto Levi (1855–1915) and in the poem *San Giusto* (Pitteri, 1906, 259–260) by Riccardo Pitteri (1853–1915)—one of the greatest Italian Triestine poets who wrote about Trieste in the beginning of the 20<sup>th</sup> century.<sup>11</sup> In his poem, Levi hones in on the San Giusto cathedral, while Pitteri focuses on San Giusto’s statue.

In both representations the prevailing feeling is one of magnificence and impressiveness, which leads to the perception that Trieste is everlasting. To this end, Pitteri uses the words “secolar rocca” (centuries-old stronghold) and “gigante di macigno” (a boulder giant). Levi, on the other hand, starts his poem with the following words: “Xe secoli passai, ma cara e bela / Dileta ciesa ti xe sempre là”.<sup>12</sup> To convey the idea of eternity, Levi uses the words “immortal vita” (immortal life), while Pitteri uses the adjective “perenne” (eternal). It should not be overlooked that, in the poems, the town’s “immortality” is only mentioned in relationship to its Italian-Roman characteristics (“la tua italianità”, i.e. your Italian roots; Levi). No mention is made of the timelessness and long-standing presence of other cultures in town (e.g. the Slovenian culture).

#### The image of Trieste as Italy’s bride

In addition to the image of Roman Trieste, in Italian poetry in the period before the First World War Trieste is often depicted as the Italian prince’s bride. The portrayal of the town as a beautiful young woman is made possible because in Italian Trieste is a feminine noun (*quella Trieste*). Thus, many Italian poets from

9 For additional information on the concept of collective memory and postmemory cf. Halbwachs (2001), and Hirsch (2008).

10 For additional information on the history of Trieste cf. Cantaruzza (2016), and Kacin-Wohinz & Pirjevec (2000).

11 For more information on these poems see: Toroš (2011).

12 “Centuries have gone by, but you, my dear and beautiful, / beloved church, are still there”.

this period represent it as the Italian prince's bride who is kept captive by Austria-Hungary. Depending on the poem, the bride is either waiting to be rescued or decides to take action and attempts to break free. In this case, too, we are not presented with a realistic image of Trieste with its squares and streets, but rather with an imaginary/fairytales-like representation of the town.

In her poem *L'attesa* (The wait), Maria Gianni (1886–1943) depicts Trieste as an enamoured bride ("Trieste come sposa innamorata"), while in the poem *La città magica* ("The magic town") she compares Trieste to Sleeping Beauty.<sup>13</sup> A knight's kiss will turn her into a Valkyrie who is free to choose her saviour in a decisive battle: "Trieste dorme immemore, / come si narra della Rosaspina. / Ebbene sì: ma venne una mattina / che il cavalier d'un bacio la destò! // Sta, se volete, come la Walkiria / In un cerchio di fiamme alte roventi" (Gianni, 1919, 58–59).<sup>14</sup>

#### THE TOWN'S REPRESENTATIONS IN THE INTERWAR AND POSTWAR PERIOD

After the First World War, the literary image of Trieste changes considerably. Following the town's annexation to the Kingdom of Italy, Roman imagery was no longer of interest. The war and the political changes it brought inspired different feelings in Italian Triestine poets. In terms of literary discourse, this resulted in an increasingly less loving and more detached attitude towards the town they once loved as well as in increased feelings of alienation. These feelings grew even stronger in the aftermath of the Second World War. In the interwar period the Slovene literary image of Trieste came into being as well: a markedly sentimental image, which is directly related to the oppression of the Slovene community in the province of Trieste.<sup>15</sup> In this period, the dominant feelings the town evokes in Slovene Triestine poets are pain and love. These two feelings have a significant influence on the poets' representation of the town as well as on their choice of settings and of local events to be included in their poems.

#### The image of an alienated Trieste

From the end of the First World War until the period after the Second World War, the image of the beautiful Trieste becomes increasingly less popular among Italian Triestine poets. Although they still personify the town and address it directly, their feelings have changed. While before the First World War poets expressed their feelings of love and closeness to the

town, later on the dominant feeling is the feeling of estrangement from the town.

We will analyse the poem *Arivando a Trieste* (Arriving in Trieste; Leghissa, 1926) by Adolfo Leghissa (1875–1957) and the poem *Trieste 1947* (Rugo, 1947) by Mariano Rugo (1895–1977).<sup>16</sup> Despite the differences in style and register—the first poem is written in the Italian Triestine dialect, while the second poem is written in standard Italian—and the fact that the two poems were written in two different periods—the first poem was written at the end of the First World War, while the second poem was written at the end of the Second World War—the two poets have a similar attitude towards the town. In fact, both portray it as a woman named Trieste, and both emphasise the differences between present-day Trieste and Trieste from the past. Present-day Trieste is depicted using markedly negative terms:

- Rugo uses expressions such as: "a sorrowful image", "a poor woman", "an orphan";
- Leghissa describes it as "thin and shallow", "in poor health".

Contrary to the poets' expectations and wishes, in both cases the town is associated with famine, poverty, disease and scarcity. Their representation of an alienated Trieste is the result of the war and of the socio-economic changes brought by it.

#### Trieste as pain

The Slovene literary image of Trieste comes into being after the First World War, in response to the socio-economic changes taking place at that time. These changes led to the implementation of assimilatory policies under the Fascist regime and, consequently, to the violent and planned Italianisation of the Slovene community in the province of Trieste. In this period, Slovene poets begin to write about past traumatic events that affected the Slovene Triestine community. In doing so, they often draw from the Slovene collective image of Trieste before the outbreak of the First World War—i.e. the image of Trieste as the town with the largest Slovene population and a flourishing Slovene culture<sup>17</sup>—and contrast it with the gloomy image of Trieste in the interwar period. This representation sometimes focuses on existing town quarters (Ponterosso, the harbour, Oberdan Square, etc.). These settings are included in literary works with a specific aim: they serve as reminders of the oppression endured by the Slovene population. Thus, all the settings convey the same, ever-present feeling of love and emotional attachment to the town, while at the

13 For more information on these poems see also: Toroš (2012).

14 Trieste sleeps, oblivious, / as in the tale of Sleeping beauty. / Well, it is true: but then came the morning / when a knight awakened her with a kiss! // Now she stands as a Valkyrie, if you will, / encircled by high, scorching flames.

15 For additional information on Slovene people under Italian rule cf. Kacin-Wohinz & Pirjevec (2000).

16 For more information on these poems cf. Toroš (2011).

17 See for example Pirjevec (2001).

<p><i>Trieste triste</i></p> <p>O čas, osip srebrnih ur s poliranih kredenc, ples porcelanskih miniatur v zavesah težkih senc,</p> <p>parket in tepih razcefran, ko da v njem gnezdi miš, hodniki dolgi, da v njih dan nanaglomla zgubiš,</p> <p>in ogledala, kjer premaz je kdovekdaj odpal in mnogoteri že obraz je skozi je odpotoval,</p> <p>orehovina, ki ječi, ko vanje grize črv – nekdo, ki zdavnaj ne živi, bi končno rad umrl. (Košuta, 1976, 82)<sup>19</sup></p>	<p><i>Ta Trst</i></p> <p>Ta Trst je ko mesto na robu sveta. Obreden in star gre pod stojnico hiš, na grla kakor na flavte igra, ko mu v srebrnino obraze loviš.</p> <p>Cesarsko odpada nekdanji sijaj. Po ulicah ladje na vetru drse. Kot ženska odpira se na stežaj. Grenkejši kot pelin so mrtvi ljudje.</p> <p>Opasan z jeziki, ki pesmi pojo, pijan od požara in strog od soli, okraden za jutri, ob čast in nebo – ta Trst je kot vera, ki ne dogori. (Košuta, 1974, 3)<sup>20</sup></p>
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same time expressing the pain caused by the authorities' attempts to wipe out even the smallest traces of the Slovene language and culture in town.

By way of example, we will now analyse two poems by Janko Samec (1886–1945) (*cf.* Samec, 1981), one of the greatest Slovene Triestine poets of the interwar period. In his cycle of poems entitled *O, Trst, ti moja večna bolečina!* ("O Trieste, my everlasting pain!"), the title alone conveys the predominant feeling/attitude of Slovene poets towards the town of Trieste in the interwar period.<sup>18</sup> On the one hand, they are pervaded with love toward their home town; on the other hand, they are faced with constant inner pain. Their pain reveals their close ties with their home town and seems to suggest that the poet is at one with his home town and cannot be separated from it.

### The image of *Trieste Triste* (Sad Trieste)

From a symbolic standpoint, it could be argued that the main message conveyed by Slovene Triestine poetry in the interwar years is contained in Janko Samec's verse: "O, Trst, ti moja večna bolečina!" ("O Trieste, my everlasting pain"). Similarly, we could maintain that the predominant literary image of Trieste in Slovene literary works after the Second World War can be summed up

with the title of a poem by Miroslav Košuta (born in 1936), one of the greatest Triestine Slovene contemporary poets: *Trieste Triste* (Sad Trieste). At first glance, the difference between this new attitude and the attitude of poets between the two wars seems negligible. Like their predecessors, this new generation of poets also writes about their love and attachment to Trieste, and about the fear and pain resulting from the oppression of the local Slovene community. Nevertheless, an in-depth analysis of the aforementioned poem—as well as other poems by Miroslav Košuta and poems by some of his younger contemporaries—shows that postwar Slovene Triestine poetry expresses a different feeling altogether. In fact, the postwar generation of poets emphasises the feeling of estrangement from their home town. Such a relationship between the author and his home town influences the poets' choice of town quarters and of Triestine stories to be included in their literary works.

As is evident from these poems by Miroslav Košuta, the poet's perception of Trieste is very different from that of the interwar generation of poets. This is evident from the poet's choice of adjectives and verbs in his two poems on Trieste. Košuta uses adjectives such as "heavy", "ripped", "old", "inebriated", "bitter"; and verbs such as "moan", "bite", "fall off". He also associates Trieste with a worm and a rat. The key image in both poems is the

<sup>18</sup> For more information on the above-mentioned cycle of poems by Janko Samec see also: Toroš (2011).

<sup>19</sup> "*Trieste Triste* // O time, silver hours slipping / from polished cupboards, / porcelain miniatures dancing / on heavy shadowed curtains, // the parquet, a ripped carpet, / as if a mouse nest was hiding beneath it, / long corridors, where daylight / is soon lost // and mirrors whose polish / fell off long ago / and many a face / has travelled through them, // the walnut wood moans / when eaten by a worm – one who has stopped living long ago, / wishes to die at last."

<sup>20</sup> "*This Trieste* // This Trieste is like a town on the edge of the world. / Solemn and old it moves along stalls of houses, / mistaking human throats for flutes, / when its faces are captured in silver. // Its past splendour is falling with imperial decorum. / In the streets boats are gliding on gushes of wind. / It is wide open like a woman. / Its dead are more bitter than wormwood. // Wrapped in singing tongues, / inebriated from the fire and stiff from the salt, / robbed of tomorrow, bereft of its honour and dreams – / this Trieste is like faith, immortal."

<p><i>Trst</i> (excerpt) Ta bedna krtina zemlje, sivo, umazano morje, dlani vse zatohle in potne prosilke sonca.</p> <p>Zaprte okna: vlaga večerna in topo listje v zraku grizeta misli, zdihata v prsi strup. (Kravos, 1969, 68)<sup>21</sup></p>	<p><i>V Trstu prodajajo kavbojke</i> (excerpt) Želje izobčenca se zrcalijo v svetovih propadlega ljudstva. [...] In vse je noč, ki se rojeva iz noči. (Čuk, 1982, 56–57)<sup>22</sup></p>
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image of “dead people” in town. This image is conveyed in the following lines: “someone who has stopped living long ago and wishes to die at last.” (Košuta, 1976, 82) and “The dead are more bitter than wormwood” (Košuta, 1974, 3).

The next generation of poets also describes Trieste in a similar way. Hereafter we shall analyse the poem *Trst* (Trieste) by Marko Kravos (born in 1943) and the poem *V Trstu prodajajo kavbojke* (They sell blue jeans in Trieste) by Marij Čuk (born in 1952).

When describing Trieste, Marko Kravos uses the adjectives “wretched”, “grey”, “damp”, “stuffy”; he also associates the town with “poison” and with the verb “to bite” (Kravos 1969, 68). Marij Čuk describes the Slovene inhabitants of Trieste as “decaying people” and compares the town to “the night” (Čuk, 1982, 56–57). His view is similar to Košuta’s impression that the inhabitants of Trieste are “dead people”. This interpretation is reinforced by the following lines in Marij Čuk’s poem: “In vse je noč, / ki se rojeva iz noči”<sup>23</sup> (Čuk, 1982, 56–57). The night symbolises a static condition and a slow death.

It can be concluded that in Slovene Triestine poetry after the Second World War, Trieste is portrayed as a town with no prospects. This feeling paralyses people, depriving them of enthusiasm and the will to live. When this collective unease is conveyed through poetry, it becomes the predominant element and overshadows more realistic representations of the town (squares, streets, etc.).

#### THE LITERARISATION OF TRIESTE AND ITS SURROUNDING AREA IN ISTRIAN TRIESTINE LITERATURE

After the Second World War, large numbers of Italian-speaking people from the Istrian peninsula decided

to flee Yugoslavia.<sup>24</sup> Many of them stopped in Trieste for some time. Among them were also writers who depicted the town of Trieste in their literary works. Graziella Semacchi Gliubich explains in this regard: “Fermo restando che per la letteratura dell’esodo, in particolare del esodo istriano, si intende un fenomeno molto ampio, costituito da un isieme di opere e di autori collegati a uno spirito, a una situazione, a un territorio e a un tempo comuni” (Semacchi Gliubich, 2013, 213). The situation, from which this literature grew, was traumatic, as Natalie Dupré notes: “/U/n “evento limite”, o meglio ancora come una “situazione limite” e traumatica che ha portato con sé conseguenze che perdurano nel tempo. In quanto passaggio da una condizione di vita a un’altra, infatti, l’esodo segna una forma estrema di rottura nella continuità esperienziale” (Dupré, 2013, 280).

For the purposes of this paper, we examined a selection of literary texts by Istrian Triestine authors, which were published in the textbook *Literatura na stičišču 2* (Literature in Contact 2). The authors in question often depict Trieste as a town characterised by scarcity, cold and shame. In contrast, Istria is usually portrayed as a beautiful, yet lost land, and is often idealised.<sup>25</sup> In analyzing the Istrian-Triestine literature, we also relied on the collection *L’esodo Giuliano-dalmata nella letteratura* (2013). Within the research of Istrian poets who lived in Trieste, the poetic work of Line Galli (1899–1993) is highlighted. For example, Barbara Stagnitti explains that: “A Parenzo, ove nasce nel 1899, l’autrice trascorre gli anni della propria infanzia e adolescenzam segnati dalla scomparsa, nel 1903, della madre Maria Marellich. Diplomatasi maestra nel 1919, l’anno successivo, frequentando un corso di perfezionamento in Abbazia intesse i primi important contatti con personalità di spicco della cultura italiana” (Stagnitti, 2013, 200). In further

21 “Trieste (extract) / This wretched molehill-land, / the sea is grey, dirty, / damp and sweaty palms / are begging for some sun. // Close the windows: / the evening damp / and the numb leaves in the air / are biting into the thoughts, / breathing poison into the chest” (Kravos, 1969, 68).

22 “They sell blue jeans in Trieste (extract) / The wishes of an outcast / are reflected / in the worlds / of fallen people. [...] And everything is night, / born out of night” (Čuk, 1982, 56–57).

23 “And everything is night, / born out of night.”

24 For additional information on Istrian exiles cf. Gombač (2007).

25 For additional information on the relation between the exodus from Istria and the ensuing literary discourse see for example: Scott Valentino (2001).

Pietro Zovatto: “Lina Galli stabilitasi a Trieste prima dello scoppio della guerra, si considera istriana esiliata, e riguarda il dramma sua gente come suo personale” (Zovatto, 2013, 180).

As we can see, although the poet came to Trieste in the interwar period, she identifies herself with the fate of Istrian Ezuli and such an importance is also assigned to her by literary history (Baroni & Benussi, 2013). Due to the importance assigned to her in the literature of the Istrian Ezuli, in this article we have chosen her as a reference poet. Her poems were drawn from two of her poetry collections *Mia città di dolore* (1968) and *Un volto per sognare* (1987). The collection *Mia città di dolore* consists of three introductory chapters: Tempo di angoscia (1945...), Tempo di declino (1955...), Tempo dubbioso (1965...), which in themselves express her basic mood towards Trieste. What is remarkable is the striking similarity to the basic sentiment that can also be observed in Slovenian poetry from Trieste at this time. Even the title of the collection resonates strongly with the already exposed Trieste image of Janko Samec: “Oh, Trieste, you are my eternal pain”.

Other sentiments expressed by the poet in relation to Trieste are: “solitudine” (Galli, 1968, 36), “isolamento” (Galli, 1968, 41), “respiro di prigioneria” (Galli, 1968, 41), “contorti conflitti” (Galli, 1968, 43). On the one hand, the latter may refer to the national, ideological and political tensions and insecurities in Trieste after the war, while on the other hand, they probably refer to her feelings in a ‘foreign’ city, in contrast to her hometown Poreč. Thus, in the poem *Giardino Pubblico* her fate as a migrant is secretly announced: “Sente l’uomo il dolore / della pianta esiliata / o si consola la pianta / all’ esilio dell’ uomo” (Galli, 1968, 54).

On the other hand, Lina Galli points to the same urban areas as the contemporary Italian Trieste poets of the interwar period and also gives them a comparable meaning: the pier (Galli 1968, 28), the Grand Canal (Galli, 1968, 29), San Giusto (Galli, 1968, 35), Barcola (Galli, 1968, 52), Giardino Pubblico (Galli, 1968, 54), Trieste cafés (Galli, 1968, 57), Miramare (Galli, 1968, 61). In the poem *Barcola*, for example, she gives this place the same meaning as in the interwar Italian Triestine poetry, i.e. as a place of romantic love, without reference to the contemporary socio-national problems of the Slovene population there: “Casta una gioia di vivere s’effonde”, (Galli, 1968, 52). She even embodies the hill of San Giusto, associating it with the post-war events, but the fundamental meaning of this hill remains unchanged, as a symbol of the power of the Italian part of the city, founded in Italian Trieste poetry in the decades before the First World War: “La sorte nuova richiedeva un olocausto. / Erano come le pietre di un tempio che saliva. / O Scipio, il Carso vi bruciò dentro il suo rogo” (Galli, 1968, 35).<sup>26</sup>

According to what has been written, Lina Galli seems to have internalized the literary image of Trieste from the Italian Triestine literature, in the sense of literalizing certain literary spaces of Trieste and a specific view of them. Accordingly, a connection to the (Italian) literary and political history of Trieste is noticeable: Svevo (Galli, 1968, 54), Oberdan (Galli, 1968, 65), Saba (Galli, 1987, 45).

Through her poems we can observe how strong the Italian literary image of Trieste was in her time and how it guided the experience and knowledge of the “real” Trieste, and also how correct Magris’s interpretation of Trieste as a “city of paper” is.

For her, the city of Trieste is a city of contrasts, as in the famous poem by Umberto Saba (entitled *Trieste*): Sei sempre nuova col tuo vento / e le rocce bianche col piede nell’ azzurro. / Appari datrice di gioia e invece / vortichi di continuo anime in tumulto” (Galli, 1968, 32).

The poet sometimes takes on a first person plural confession, thus connecting her own, individual destiny with the group destiny of the Italian part of the city in the stormy post-war years. In many poetic speeches he personifies Trieste, without assigning her a clear image of the bride / mother / warrior etc. Her image evokes a kind of divine image of a tree-animal, obscure shapes, even an archipelago (*Città – archipelago*; Galli, 1968, 43). She observes it from afar, from a bird’s eye view. Stai come inerme creatura / fra tetri armati, / tesi a oscuri fati” (Galli, 1968, 15). Similarly: “Stai come tenera preda / nell’ armonia del golfo, / ultima città dell’ Occidente!” (Galli, 1968, 11). And further: “/ L / eghiamo i nostri viso alle tue luci. / Ti apparteniamo oltre la morte / insidiosa, misteriosa, unica” (Galli, 1968, 17). “Sospesa, senza linfa, / a radici scoperte ti dilatti” (Galli, 1968, 31). In še: “Quando così risplendi / in una cintura di buoio pauroso / il tuo corraggio sembra un fresco giuoco” (Galli, 1968, 11).

It seems that there is no closeness, no heart in her poems about Trieste. She is somehow distanced from the place. She observes it from a distance, negative emotions predominate. Her descriptions of the city repeat the predictable motifs: the bora (Galli, 1968, 12, 25), the seagulls, the sea (Galli, 1968, 18), which is more evident in comparison to the motifs she uses in relation to her hometown Poreč and Istria. In this case, from the polysensory point of view, the motifs are richer and evoke positive feelings: “rosmarino”, “pietre calde”, “nuvole candide” (Galli, 1987, 39, 42).

Probably due to the negative feelings of fear, disappointment, alienation and hopelessness expressed in Slovenian and Italian poetry from Trieste, the poetic alienation from Trieste is not so obvious in the poems of Lina Galli, as it largely coincides with the image offered by the *autochthonic* view.

26 For more on the Slovenian and Italian image of Barcola and the hill San Giusto in Slovenian and Italian poetry, see in: Toroš (2011).

## CONCLUSION

It can be concluded that the First and Second World Wars and the socio-economic changes brought by them had a significant impact on the literarisation of the town of Trieste. Literary representations of this town change constantly through time (*stratigraphic* vision) and vary depending on what local community the author belongs to. In this paper, we have analysed the literarisation of the town by Slovene Triestine authors, Italian Triestine authors (*autochthonic* vision) and Istrian Triestine authors (*allogeneous* vision). Drawing from a selection of authors and literary works, we have identified different types of literary representation.

In the period before the First World War, Trieste was represented primarily by Italian authors (*autochthonic* vision). Their literary discourse reflected the political agenda of that period, namely the need to justify the demands for the annexation of Trieste to Italy. Consequently, authors reinforced the idea of Trieste as a former Roman town and a future Italian town. Thus, the town is depicted primarily by drawing attention to architectural elements on the hill of San Giusto, which was once a Roman colony. The predominant image is that of a majestic, grandiose, eternal town; emphasis is placed on its Roman-Italian identity. The literary discourse underlying this image died down when Trieste became part of Italy, since at this point it was no longer necessary to emphasise the town's Roman-Italian roots. Another image present in literary works by Italian authors in the period before the First World War, is the image of "beautiful Trieste", where the town is portrayed as a beautiful woman who is kept captive by Austria-Hungary. In contrast with the image of Trieste as a Roman town, the representation of the Trieste as a woman persists for a much longer period and can be found in literary works even after the end of the Second World War. Nevertheless, it should be noted that in this case we are no longer dealing with a romanticised Trieste, which is worshipped and admired by the poet, but rather with an elderly, impoverished and malnourished Trieste. Instead of evoking feelings of familiarity, the town is associated with feelings of alienation, anxiety, disappointment and disillusion.

Based on these feelings of alienation, unease, and disillusion, we can conclude that the Italian image of the estranged Trieste is similar to the representation by Slovene authors after the Second World War (*autochthonic* vision). They perceive Trieste as a rotten, decaying and static town inhabited by "dead people" who lack vitality and a vision of the future. It should be noted that such feelings of estrangement from one's home town are not yet present in the representation of Trieste by Slovene authors in the interwar period. In fact, after the First World War, when a collective literary image of the town comes into being in Slovene poetry, Trieste is ide-

alised and portrayed as a beloved town where the Other strives to violently suppress the Slovene people and their flourishing culture. Thus, the predominant emotions in this corpus of literary texts are love on the one hand, and pain and anxiety on the other.

Similar feelings of estrangement can also be found in the analysed poems written by Lina Galli. The author identifies with the group of Istrian Triestine writers (*allogeneous* point of view), i.e. writers who moved from Istria to Trieste after the Second World War and who wrote in Italian. Her poems and the literary works of other Istrian-Trieste authors share a negative perception of the city. Since their change of environment was most likely dictated by changes on the political scene rather than by the desire to start a life in a different country, it is not surprising that their representation of the town is permeated with negative feelings, and by the desire to return to Istria, their beloved homeland. A more unexpected discovery is that feelings of estrangement are also present in literary works by Slovene and Italian Triestine authors (*autochthonic* vision). This can probably be ascribed to the role of literature in the Slovene and Italian Triestine communities in the first half of the 20<sup>th</sup> century. As shown in this paper, literature was used to support the cultural identity of both the aforementioned communities, while also reinforcing the image of Trieste either as a Slovene or as an Italian town. This tradition of representing the town by focusing on a community's needs, interests and wishes, was carried on by the postwar generation of Triestine authors. In their literary discourse, the contrast between the authors' expectations and reality is reflected in the image of Trieste as an alienated town.

From a stratigraphic point of view, we can note that in the developmental arc from the beginning to the end of the 20th century, regardless of the type of *multifocalization* (*autochthonic* vision, *allogeneous* vision), the poems about Trieste are increasingly static, filled with weariness, resignation, sense of alienation from the city. We have also established that the experience of Trieste does not come from all five senses (*polysensoriality*). We are dealing either with an imaginary, fairy-tale image (the image of beautiful Trieste), or with a mythical image oriented towards the past (the image of Roman Trieste). The post-war feelings of Trieste (rot, dampness, wetness), common to the authors regardless of the type of *multifocalization*, express the poets attitude towards the city, their own feelings towards it, rather than realistic perceptions of the city. We can therefore conclude that the poems are increasingly narrow from a polysensory point of view, in the sense of being narrowed to feelings of anxiety, fear, insecurity, bitterness, suffocation, heaviness, but without feelings of joy, freedom, serenity, which could be expressed through the rich sensory experience that the picturesque city by the sea certainly offers.

## PESNIŠKE REPREZENTACIJE TRSTA V 20. STOLETJU

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## POVZETEK

Članek metodološko izhaja iz geokritike, področja primerjalne književnosti. Raziskovalni fokus je na poeziji o Trstu v 20. stoletju, na analizi pesniškega diskurza o Trstu tekom prelomnega 20. stoletja, ki prek pesniške reprezentacije Trsta zrcali različne zgodovinske interpretacije tržaškega prostora. Prispevek tako analizira literarizacijo Trsta izpod peresa pesnikov iz slovenske tržaške skupnosti, pesnikov iz italijanske skupnosti in avtorjev iz istrske tržaške skupnosti, upoštevajoč multifokalizacijo pogledov na dani referenčni prostor. Na podlagi zadevnega korpusa pesmi smo evidentirali pesemsko presečišče v prikazih in občutenjih propadajočega in razpadajočega Trsta po drugi svetovni vojni. Obenem smo identificirali različne reprezentacije mesta v teku časa: Trst kot rimsko mesto; Trst kot italijansko mesto; Trst kot simbol bolečine; Trst kot simbol odtujenosti. Rimska podoba mesta je značilna za italijansko tržaško poezijo iz obdobja pred prvo svetovno vojno. V tem času zasledimo znotraj italijanske tržaške poezije tudi personifikacije mesta Trst: sprva je prikazano kot lepa Trieste, nevesta italijanskega kralja. Kasneje, v medvojnih letih in po drugi svetovni vojni, je mesto upodobljeno kot obubožana ženska in mačeha, ki vzbuja občutke odtujenosti. Takšna čustva odtujenosti so vidna tudi v korpusu istrsko-tržaških literarnih del, torej literarnih del v italijanščini pišočih avtorjev, ki so v Trst prišli iz Istre v medvojnem obdobju ali ob koncu druge svetovne vojne. Občutki odtujenosti in brezperspektivnosti so v ospredju tudi v tretjem korpusu pesniških besedil, znotraj slovenske tržaške poezije, napisane po drugi svetovni vojni. Drugače prikazujejo slovenski tržaški pesniki Trst v medvojnem obdobju, in sicer kot simbol bolečine.

**Ključne besede:** slovenska poezija, italijanska poezija, Trst, Istra, Lina Galli, geokritika

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