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IVO ANDRIĆ

THE ARDOR AND PASSION
OF THOMAS GALLUS

Before nightfall, on one of the final days of the month of July of 1914, the Heligoland sailed into the port of Trieste. The ship, which sailed in from the Red Sea, carried not only people and merchandise, but the air and humor of tropical places, too. The heat, color palette and particular liveliness of the port into which the ship had sailed that evening, matched the humor which the ship had brought perfectly. It was the time of ripe heat, when day and night were hardly discernible from each other, only the moon would, in fact, replace the sun, and at any time of day and night, people would work and take walks, eat and sing, all in equal measure. It was the time when one would think of life as anything but passing. The time when the first ripe grapes would swarm into the town, and when fruit seeds would begin to darken. Above all else, it was the day before war was declared on Serbia. Mobilization had already started. The town boiled over. The flow of life quickened and changed, and in the minds of the townspeople, a spark began to quiver, one which they had never known before. Thereby the quays were more crowded than usual, and the lights in front of the taverns were many and more lively. Only the vineyards down the slopes would light their idyllic fires calmly and monotonously. Besides the music in front of the taverns and the gigs which echoed throughout working class suburbs, military music sounded from somewhere, its notes, heavy and solemn, sending wild shivers down the spine and unwarranted tears to the eyes.

To Gallus, who sailed into Aden aboard the Heligoland, and who had not the faintest idea of what was happening in the world, none of this seemed curious. It had been over two months since the last time he picked up a newspaper. Upon his return, he would see English newspapers with their headlines about assassination in Sarajevo printed in large

letters, and hear passengers talk about it. At the mention of the word Sarajevo, when it was first uttered, something cold and unpleasant passed through his being and gave him a start. But none of this lasted. And, nowadays, to us, who know what went on afterward, and what goes on still, it appears scarcely possible that a man would be so utterly oblivious to the happenings which would prove crucial for both him and the world. We, nowadays, having been torn and tortured, each in their own way, cannot begin to imagine the peace, light-heartedness and carefree liberty with which a man, even in the summer of 1914, was able to travel and—to live. Such a state of affairs Gallus handled rather with ease, owing to his ‘tropical madness’, as he would in the later years describe the ardor of that summer, which had been in full swing. And what is more, for him, such a temperature was not nearly high enough. For the flame which burned within him during the fifteen days he had spent in Aden was flowing through his veins and crawling beneath his skin, ceaselessly. So vigorous was his sense of self, that he had shut out the rest of the world completely. All it took was for him to move his tongue, to lick his palate and his lips, and this feeling would pass, the feeling which had consumed him even before Africa was in sight and had never left him, not even in his dreams.

Those fifteen days in Aden! Already upon his arrival in Aden, disembarking from the filthy French steamship, deep down he felt a strange, powerful and flowing serenity, and a sense of rapidity and firmness behind his decisions.

“I shall stay here for fifteen days!”

He parcels out his time, distributing it with certainty and no hesitation. Everything in sight excites him, delightfully and deeply so. Each thought rouses another cheerful one, familiar or strange.

Naked all day, he lies around or roams about from room to room. A corner of the bedsheet is as warm as fur. He walks, sings, reads under lamplight, for all windows are firmly shut. The act of crossing his legs brings about a feeling of glee, as if something momentous has just been invented. Christina, the maid, and a servant, who was an Arab boy of about ten, but so minute and scrubby, like one of those royal puppies, their eyes clever and lively, would, from time to time, enter his room. Each time they would greet him loudly, and loudly he would see them out, as if it were a kind of a ceremony.

One afternoon, having finished his meal, he lay down on his stomach, across the cold reed mat, and at once, a certain ardor came over him, it surged through his entire being, and, ultimately, having accumulated in his chest, took his breath away. It was in that moment that he felt the opulence and magnitude of the world. And he felt it entirely and suddenly so. And, as though having suffered a blow to the head, he was left in a

daze. He struggled to catch his breath. He tensed his hands and pressed his face firmly against the reed mat, while clear saliva flowed heavily from his mouth. Only once before had he felt such a craze. But that had been under rather different circumstances and on the other side of the world. It had been the month of November. He had been going to a party. The night had been bright and cold, the stars clear and distant, the ground frozen. His footsteps had been echoing. At once, the honking of wild geese, who were heading south, sounded far above him. Looking up, he had faced the clear night sky. And it was in that moment that this splendor had filled his chest, all the way to his throat. He had felt the opulence and magnitude of the world.

The fifteen days in Aden went by slowly, stretching about like an infinite canvas, burbling like a waterfall. Such deadly powerful ardor as he felt that one afternoon, lying on the reed mat, he did not feel again, but it left a small fire inside of him, which burned continually, causing his mind to stir and his skin to resemble a crude, warm and beloved ballistic vest. He would cherish and nurture this feeling of power and infinite dignity, and the fact that there was nothing in his surroundings that would appease him and prompt him to change his mind only made it easier.

In the evenings, he would put on his clothes and go out for a walk. First, he would walk about the part of town inhabited by natives, and then, in front of the Hotel Esplanade. The heat is still emanating from the walls. The air is heavy with the smell of the sea, dust, tallow, and rotten fruit. He walks, flinging his whip, and mingles with the folk. He startles children who let drinking water go to waste. He scolds the cabman whose carriage is stuck within the gates, giving him orders, plain and simple, on how to haul it out. The farther he goes, the stronger his sense of superiority grows, his concern and responsibility for the town. And all these half-naked and hasty people are his minions. And that is when he would stick his chest out even more, walking tall about the town.

“Why won’t this town go to sleep?”

Thus, he would walk all the way to the dark moats, where lay the original fortifications of Aden, and from where he could see the glimmering helmets and flickering bayonets of the night-watch on the bastions. Afterward, he would return to the town.

In front of the hotel, on the terrace, on which a censer smoldered a fumigating substance from all four corners, a black man in a white suit with golden cufflinks, would await there, bowing deeply before him. Gallus would then sit in a large wicker chair, to which a fan was attached with a pulley. Behind his back, an invisible boy would lightly rotate the fan. Gallus would sip on his cold drink, holding his chin outward.

He was blind to the world around him. And, as the hum of the fan and the flow of blood in his veins filled his ears, it seemed to him that the rest of the hotel guests were either piously silent or engaging in a careful whisper. At that moment, he would give into the feeling of his magnitude, and thoughts of a perfect woman would swarm into his mind.

Although, things had been going smoothly and rather spontaneously, once the fifteen days had passed, Christina began to pack his things. When it was all over, he went for one final roam about the rooms, naked as usual, counting the sealed suitcases, snapping his whip at each and every one. On the verandah, in the shade, he found Christina in tears, and beside her was Magbul, the little Arab boy, and he, too, was crying, wiping his tears with her skirt. It nearly touched Gallus. He grinned.

“The minions are crying.”

Afterward, aboard the Heligoland, as he was standing high up on the deck, where he spent most of his time, it seemed to him, again, that the ship and its route were in his charge. Worried, he would stare ahead and, nodding his head, he would signal his approval of the direction and speed the ship was taking.

And now, while Trieste stretched out before him, in the veil of smoke and dust, adorned with the glow of the gone-down sun, with lights which would go on like unexpected garlands, with different music which would blend, fade, then sound again, as if according to a dance, all this he would feel as simple and altogether natural, a logical follow-up to everything that had been happening. And so, watching from the deck as the lights would go on, row by row, and the entire streets light up at once, he would only wonder: what does this cheerful town have in store for him?

The first encounter with the town prompted him to get himself together and sober up a bit. A rigorous examination, both a doctor's physical and interrogation by the police. Then customs. The cold and ruthless Jews at the exchange office. Following dinner, on his way to the hotel, a feeling of dejection and the worrisome silence of the streets, the emptiness of which was rather peculiar for this hour, overcame him. The evening newspapers were scattered about the sidewalk, wrinkled and white, their large printed letters announcing undetermined and contradictory news. Gallus did not even glance at them. The hotel room appeared to him small and miserable. At night, he got up several times and walked over to the window to breathe. However, a deep sleep before dawn revived him.

The next morning, once he left the hotel, he began to feel smothered by the town yet again and, given that he was not to leave Trieste until evening, he decided to climb up to Opicina. It was rather early, but the

sounds of hasty passers-by and boys who sold newspapers, were already echoing through the streets. “A peaceful solution or a bold move?”, “Give Serbia an ultimatum!”, “Partial mobilization?”, “The president denies all alarming news.” And again, there was something cold and caring in all this contradictory news. But only for a moment. He gazed at the vineyards before him, on a brightly lit slope. And the moment he boarded the tram which would take him to Opicina over a steep incline, he forgot about it all. As the tram was climbing the slope, Gallus felt the memory of Aden come alive within him, the feeling of splendor and abundance. Beneath him, the town began to unravel in a pink glow and morning freshness. The sea was embellished with winding currents, alternating with long, smooth periods of quiet. The ships appeared to be frozen. And above all—there was a haze which was an omen of the heat. With his hands in his pockets, pressing his feet against the seat before him, it appeared to Gallus that he was growing larger as the tram went up the incline.

In front of a restaurant, up in Opicina, as the only guest, he ate to his heart’s content everything that was brought before him, watering it down with white wine. Following breakfast, he got up and walked out to the tallest stone tower, from which a flag was waving. He climbed the iron steps to the top of the tower. The stone terrace was white and washed out. A volatile wind was moving the four tin letters, EWSN, attached to the tip of a pole, which denoted the four cardinal points and reported the wind’s direction. The rusty tin creaked and rattled out a sharp and broken melody. Up above, the waving flag was stretched as tightly as a sail; its canvas was flapping: pppppppp. In the distance, the scenery was bright, broad silences framed by wrinkly currents glimmered over the surface of the sea. Gallus pressed his hands against the stone fence, as public speakers do on a balcony.

This port is but a part of a cove which is a part of a larger bay in the Adriatic Sea, which is in itself but a gulf of the Mediterranean Sea, which is again but a small part... His thoughts then got muddled and began to spin like that East-West-North-South tin-sign above his head.

Yes, endless expanses, masses and distances are there; everything among itself intertwined, all in motion and everlasting alteration. And suddenly, Gallus saw it all as interwoven, interlaced and fitted together, perceived it as somehow unattended and left on its own. It was as if the whole world were placed on a steep slope, always in danger tumbling down into chaos. It was something to be contemplated and worried about. It lay at the bottom of all of his feelings, as a fear and a threat, as a dark residue of ardor which did not seem to leave him.

Before midday he made for the town. The tram glided down speedily and without a sound, tingling Gallus’s guts and leaving him breathless.

The town was abuzz. Gallus was singing lustily ever since he started going downhill, not because he wanted to sing, but because he found it impossible to contain in himself the sea of voices which kept undulating and rising and which had to flow away. He was singing without words, as quietly as possible, only for himself, “for his own soul”.

He alighted from the tram as if he were in a dream. He entered the town. Passing through the main streets, singing all the while, in the big glass panes and mirrors of the store windows he saw a young man in a washed-out suit, with a dented hat, with his head tilted towards his right shoulder in a silly way, with merry, tear-stained eyes in a red face contorted in an enraptured, yet painful grimace. He looked at his reflection in surprise a few times, but since that illusion he saw in “cheap Jewish mirrors” had nothing in common his grand, dignified ardor, he sneered at it and forgot about it immediately, as well as about the newspapers and the people and everything around him, and kept walking and singing. Whenever cars and trams drowned out his song, he would raise his voice so as to out-shout them and hear himself better.

In this way, he arrived at the dock, at the big pier full of people. Boys were shouting the news and selling special issues of newspapers yet again. Gallus simply raised his voice and kept on singing his squeaky tune. He barely made his way through the throng which gathered before the anchored ships. Passing through the crowd and the holiday hubbub, walking on white tiles, in the midday sun, he felt like shouting or singing his heart out. But he restrained himself. A few steps from Heligoland, he stopped walking and fell completely silent, for he could not go further, and the people close to him were observing him and drawing each others’ attention to him. It could have ended there and nothing far from the ordinary would have happened. But, while he was watching the crowd and the sea and the boats like that, suppressing the excitement in himself, a cannon was shot from the hill abruptly, followed by a muffled wailing of a siren from afar. Then, a dignified and heavy bell from San Giusto hill was heard, followed by a second and a third one. It was as if it all appeared at some sort of a sign. And in all that rumble and thundering, once again as if brought about at a sign, a siren from a boat near him wailed sharply and merrily and sprinkled everything with tiny drops of dew. As if it were not enough already! Gallus quivered and his body hummed, filled with sound from head to toe. It was futile to hold back any longer. He lifted his hat and, barely breathing, exclaimed several times into all that noise:

“Hurray! Hurraaaaay! Hosanna, people!”

He intended to shout a few more things in other languages, in order for these people to understand him better, but when he looked around him—he stopped. He saw, as quite a few times before, eyes wide open

and foreign faces and that compassionately curious expression on them which he could not name, but which he recognized from a while ago, as one would recognize a particular taste or smell.

Once again, something akin to shame and reason stirred within him, as a last effort to keep himself on that slope down which he was going, to not isolate himself from the world surrounding him. But it was too late. He was wholly consumed by an internal flame. Everything around him began to waver and mix. The sun fell straight on his face. Masts broke in two, the houses were set askew, the colors of the flags, the roofs and women's hats were blended: large tears streamed down his face. A spasm contracted his face and throat. People made way for him to pass (it was as if that painful, cold scar in him spread); everybody moved. Ashamed, he passed through, neither seeing anything nor being able to utter a sound. Only a few times more did he briefly wave his hat in confusion. And he got lost.

Half an hour later, he was arrested.

It was the first day of the war with Serbia. Already, the order for the arrest of dubious persons was delivered telegraphically to the police of all the larger cities in the Monarchy. Among the first people to be arrested in Trieste was that suspicious Bosnian who arrived from abroad, whose peculiar behavior caught the attention of the police from the moment he descended from the ship and who, finally, started to shout some incomprehensible, possibly revolutionary exclamations today at noon at the pier. His possessions were moved from the hotel to the police station. They interrogated him shortly and formally there. His perplexedness made him hesitant—for what he felt was not yet fear, but amazement—while he struggled in vain to convince them that he did not know a thing about the war and politics, and that he was in Aden to claim the inheritance that his uncle, a former officer and tradesman in Aden, left to him. Around six o'clock in the evening, a gendarme led him from the police station to the main jail in Coroneo Street.

The late afternoon was rosy, full of dust and sounds and yesterday, when Heligoland arrived at the dock, only the streets were even more lively, and all the houses bedecked with flags. It was as if the people were just waiting for it to get dark, for the splendid fireworks to begin, and festivity to take place in the streets and gardens. Utterly bewildered, Gallus walked swiftly and with small steps, with his leather bag in his right hand, while the gendarme, a tall and red-haired man, led him by his left arm. With Gallus being one the first persons to be publicly taken into custody and the streets and terraces being full of the excited people, whispers followed him and mindless gossip traveled by word of mouth. Some said that he was a student from Bosnia who wanted to blow up a ship intended for the transport of mobilized reservists; others

claimed it was not so, but that the Bosnian was shot on the spot (today at noon, at the pier, while he shouted: long live the revolution!). The one leading him was the gendarme, while the man himself was a Russian who wanted to contaminate the water supply system and thereby poison not only the garrison, but all the people in the town as well. At the wide crossroads at the entrance to Coroneo Street, the people gathered around them. A man in the uniform of a non-commissioned officer of the navy was the first one to shout:

“To the gallows!”

Exclamations against Serbia and Russia, against the attackers and the spies could be heard. Their path was intercepted by a man of rather short stature, clad in black, with a droopy mustache and a waistcoat which was tapered as if he were a waiter. The man went around the gendarme and kicked Gallus from behind. The kick was not heavy. Gallus only gnashed his teeth. But, there was something ugly and frightful in the manner in which that man, who looked like a waiter without a job, passed quietly by them and how he kicked him, treacherously and disgracefully, without uttering a word once again. It frightened and humiliated Gallus, while it emboldened and encouraged the populace. Exclamations grew more frequent. A middle-aged woman with puffy bags under her eyes spat twice at Gallus and kept shouting after him as they passed.

“Nieder mit Russland! Down with Russia!”

The gendarme made the distraught young man walk faster, so they arrived at the gate almost running. From the crossroads people shouted incessantly.

In the office for the reception of the arrested, he was put on the list, deprived of all of his possessions, of his pocket watch, of his penknife, of his money. They took off his leather belt, led him to a cell on the first floor and locked him up there. There he stood, in the middle of the cell, looking as if he were lost, while holding his pants which now hung loose.

His gaze fell on his sunburned hands and, for the first time that afternoon, he was reminded of his visit to Aden, of the voyage on the boat and of his whole “imperial rule”. That memory was immediately transformed into a fresh and piercing pain. Although he was still unable to grasp the sense or the reason for this whole affair, still that pain and this cell and those kicks and insults, and everything that happened to him since midday seemed like some bygone reality, with which he became akin, he was unsure when, but the connection was close and inseparable.

The music and the cheers which were muffled by the distance and the walls jerked him back to reality. Apparently, demonstrators were passing by the jail. In the clamor of human voices, thin trumpets and

a harsh march were breaking through. For the first time did his ardor cease. In that music, he felt an uncertain fear of something that was impending and that was finally taking him and casting him where that ugly kick from a while ago did—onto the opposite side of that free and singing world outside, on the side of suffering, humiliation and defeat. Instinctively, he felt like plugging his ears, but it was to no avail, for that march blared and raged inside him, like something which was familiar to him from a long ago. Those were the first trumpets of the new times, in which the joy of living freely would disappear, maybe forever, and in which man would eat man like beasts do, but only with less meaning. But, at that moment, he was unable to make that out and understand it completely in his “tropical head”. He only lowered himself onto the straw-mattress, shivered and looked down as if he were to blame.

Translated from Serbian by
Jelena Trajković and Milana Trgić

MILOŠ CRNJANSKI

HEAVEN

When spring came, the whole town was illuminated by a gloomy fog. The neglected streets, with their pockmarked cobblestones, gaped and seemed strangely long and abnormally muddy. The houses, with broken windows from which rags and straw protruded, remained empty and miserable, the way the troops had left them. Below their roofs the tricolors fluttered, torn to shreds by torrential rains and winds; the cloths pinned between the tiles flapped colorless, black, and odd at night. It was impossible to clear the streets of the mud. It was shoveled and pulled away during the day and yet it would emerge and appear the next morning as if the thousands of pale and ragged footmen who had passed through there before were passing again each night, treading on it. The same was with the straw. The rain-drenched, rotten straw stuck out all along the street, jutted from the roofs, from the windows, from the gates. Soft, soaked, rotten rags lay in the street, poked out of the windows and from the roofs: they fluttered, chasing each other in the wind, and at night they would fall and fly around the houses, like weird birds.

It was terrible around the station. Large puddles gleamed around it, no matter whether it was raining or not. For months now they had been full of rags, watermelon rinds, newspapers and empty boxes that would not rot. Here and there an army boot poked out of the puddles and mud. All black and sooty, the station was completely lost among those puddles, especially at night, and black shadows, perhaps the passengers, who moved around all night, would get stuck in the mud and lose their way and call to each other treading through those puddles and cursing loudly. In front of the station, on the ground, the soldiers lay in long yellow throngs, with women among them, and under a lantern which shone from above, those who were squatting and reading newspapers piled up all night long. Behind them, as if they were playing,

large black shadows ran to and fro, and in the dark the locomotives whistled constantly thundering down the steel tracks that intertwined in the darkness. Along the puddles there ran a long low wooden fence. The houses and streets disappeared in the dark, the whole town lay in the dark all night, here and there only the windows, from which drunken shouting was heard, were illuminated.

In the evening everything was desolate in the town. From autumn till winter they would sing and drink heavily in the streets. Just before spring it began to calm down. The town's lights slowly vanished more and more. Torrential rains started and the streets became ever more silent. Tricolors fluttered from the roofs, torn and drenched. And the mud from the surrounding puddles got deeper and deeper into the streets. Thus, the cheerful crowds became scarce. In the dark, at night, the drunk no longer passed, laughing and singing, but again, as earlier, dark shadows began to stagger along, two by two or alone, utterly lonely.

Only behind the station, at one corner there was light all night long. A big red lantern shone far into the night, like waking and sleepless sign. That was a brothel. "Heaven"—what Syrmian seminary students had named it a long time ago. It was also referred to as "Elevation 350"—that's what the officers called it, after the house number. Throughout the winter it was merry and noisy inside; from its top too, a torn tricolor soaked with rain fluttered. Only before spring, when a young officer was killed on its doorstep, was it deserted and dark for several days. At the end of the wooden fence that ran from the station to it, the house, low and yellow, looked like the station's auxiliary building and during the day the peasants often banged on its always closed door yelling: "Hey, have you got any tobacco there?" But the door was closed all day. When the sun shone, the whole crowds of peasants, soldiers and women would sit along the wooden fence and in front of the house door, too, gladly, warming themselves and sunbathing beside its yellow wall. A halva maker stood there all day, and there were a lot of dogs, with or without a tail, which would start to growl and howl before the nightfall. The earth often shook in the evening, when long, black and heavy trains arrived. Only when it got dark was the red lantern lit and light shone through the white shutters.

The whitewashed, opaque window on the door opened and behind the bars a head with grey, mussed up hair appeared. It would stick to the bars and yell at the dogs, which were sneaking and pushing each other around the trees in front of the house, and when that didn't help, the doorbell rang and the door opened and a club was thrown at the dogs, which ran off howling.

Joža sat in his place. Heavy and lame, with a stick in his hand, every evening he would first look through the window bars, then open

the door and chase the dogs away. Taking a look at the street, left and right, he would close the door again. The same routine, every evening for twelve years now. Oh my, he, too, was human. His hair was mussed up, nobody had seen him wearing a hat for the past twelve years. It seemed he wore one and the same clothing, too. He only changed his shoes frequently: he wore yellow, white, even black shoes, and luxurious ones, for that matter. Every now and then, he wore a different pair, always unlaced, never tied. He often wore women's shoes, with white buttons. Every evening he would bring out his small bench into the stuffy little corridor, sit behind the door, put his glass of beer beside him and lean against the wall. He would doze off and calmly get up when the doorbell rang above his head. He would open the door already knowing who was coming. He knew exactly who came and when. Slightly squinting he would say the same every evening.

The students were the first to come. They came earliest. Three or four of them, never alone. After all, he knew all the guests very well. He never talked to strangers. Usually, there were two of them, a postman and a barber, who had been coming for months, early, always to the same girl. He wouldn't say a word to them and they would quickly disappear in the dark, warm, stuffy corridor. After them, the students would arrive. He would grumble the same to them every evening: "Gentlemen, it's still early... it's still early... the girls are still having dinner", then he would come to the door and quickly open it.

Behind him a table could be seen, full of glasses, plates, bread and girls. In an instant, half-naked, colorful figures flashed. One, dressed as a man, with curly hair cut low, combed to the left, was standing by the table with a snack in her hand. He would quickly shut the door again and pushing the students into the corridor grumble, mixing his own German words with theirs: "Now, you've seen it, they are still having dinner...".

But the girls, calling their names aloud, went out through the other door, appeared at the end of the corridor, hugged and kissed with the boys, holding or swallowing, quickly, pieces of food. Because they loved those boys most. They came early, secretly and with some fear. They would hide, each with his girl and so the girls didn't have time to finish their dinner. However, the students were not unpleasant guests. They did for the girls everything these would ask for. On Sundays, in the afternoon, they would take the girls out for a walk outside the town. They would meet them in their boats, under the ramparts and take them for a long ride behind the willow groves. They were tender and dear. They would lie in the grass beneath the girls' feet and talk much about themselves, about school and everything that was going on in the town.

They always brought piles of sweets, tobacco and books. The girls especially liked to be given nice, colorful writing paper and fine stamps. The girls, in their turn, took care that the boys did not drink too much, dressed them in their own clothes, combed their hair the way they liked and told them much about how unhappy they were.

There was a girl among them, short, plump, “the colonel’s daughter”. She often cried and told the boys how she had fallen and how the groom had tricked her. Her eyes were large, grey and sad. The boys would take their hats off to her when they rarely met in the street. And despite being often told that she had never really been a colonel’s daughter but instead was a simple maid and that she kept it a secret, they wouldn’t believe it and remained gentle and dear. They would come early and didn’t turn on the lights in the parlor in which only tables, the piano and the paintings on the wall could be perceived in the dark. They would lie with their heads in the girls’ laps and go through their small presents. The girls would return them the books they had been lent and complain how they no more received letters from their friends who had gone to other towns. They talked much about marriage. And so, the boys lay quietly, and the girls went through their hair with their fingers. But the doorbell would scream more and more frequently. The guests began to arrive. It was time to say good-bye. Couple after couple parted in the dark back yard, hugging each other for a long time. They held each other tight, kissed and whispered. It could be heard how the boys ask in a low voice: “Do you ever think of me?...”, to which the girls would answer: “Oh, be assured we are not worse than those girls of yours—but go now, for Christ’s sake. I dreamt of you last night—now kiss me and leave.” The boys were tender then and kissed the girls’ hands, and these wouldn’t pull their hands away. They kissed each other long, smooching mouths with their tongues.

They parted in that dark yard almost every evening. And if a couple had differences, the others would sit together to reconcile them. It never came to harsh words. Their shadows folded passionately, and the girls were often brought to tears.

But sometimes they parted merrily. A flower, an embroidery from a stocking, handkerchiefs or something else remained, exchanged until the next day as a keepsake. The boys called the girls by their first names, and the girls addressed them with “sir”. In the dark, leaning against the barrels, the girls would fix their hair and cunningly ask their lovers if the other girls’ lovers were faithful and so all the girls were in cahoots. And they could also be often heard talking against one of them, when picking a quarrel with her: “Do you think he still loves her, he has already lost his interest in her... no wonder... she doesn’t even know how to behave, she’s no match for him”. Afterwards, they would run

inside, giggling cheerfully, stumble, curse, and return to the parlor singing licentiously.

The parlor was brightly illuminated, full of mirrors and it was red, all red. The piano was hammering. In the smoke and heat the parlor was smoking as if on fire and constantly rotated around the dancers. The girls shrieked and ran to dance. Only one of them, dressed as a sailor from Naples, with plump legs, in tight white stockings, made her way through the crowd, dangling her keys. She was collecting payments and exchanging currencies.

And the girls would go away for a while and return, flushed.

There were the keys hanging above the piano, the girls would take them off and go someplace, one by one, and return from there; then they would hang up the keys again.

In the smoke and sultriness, the guests were hiding in the corners of the parlor. The smoke and the dancing bothered everybody, covering them with haze. Some girls were sitting on the tables almost completely naked; in the smoke, they started laughing more and more. In one corner, one and the same couple was turning in a dance and had been doing it almost every evening for more than a month. He was wearing a long, black coat and was dancing as if he was glued to his female partner, with his head in her hair, always stepping to the left, never to the right. From time to time he would free his right hand and wipe his forehead, face and neck, putting his hand deep into his coat, never stopping turning. And when the piano would cease playing he would fall into a red armchair, pull his dancing partner onto his lap and continue to wipe his forehead, face and neck, indefatigably, putting his hand deep into his coat. The girl sat in his lap cooling herself with her left hand, pinching him and laughing. And he wriggled, laughing and kept wiping the sweat off his chest, face, neck.

It wasn't before it was around the midnight when the real guests began to arrive. Some gentlemen who walked around with a cup of black coffee in their hands and behaved friendly but also politely. They would sit in the corners of the room and talk about the news of the town and about peace, laughing quietly. They would often argue about matters of the state.

The officers arrived later.

There were bottles of wine and beer ready and waiting in one corner, and while they were entering the girls cheered and jumped in the armchairs with joy. They hugged the red velvet of the officers' collar patches and ungirded their sabers. And later it would be the same as every evening.

They would first scold each other with recalcitrant words; the girls would jealously eye each other, and the men drank quickly. Only oc-

asionally an argument would develop. Ridges, charges and the dead were mentioned. Afterwards, they would hug each other. Cheerfully, as a joke, they would put the burning ends of cigarettes into the girls' mouths, but once the piano started to play, the dancing continued. Couple after couple stood up and they whirled: black shadows of the dancers would tangle, like a giant cobweb on the red wall, and they whirled among those shadows. The same faces, every evening, for months.

The captain was red in the face and had hiccups: he was the quietest one. When he sat in silence, his eyes, swollen due to heavy drinking, seemed endlessly sad. He talked. And when he talked, mostly about his dead comrades, he waved his hand in resignation after the first drink and began to hiccup. As soon as he started to drink, he began to hiccup. He didn't take off his white gloves, nor the short whip hanging from the little finger of his left hand, never of the right one. He danced bent and silent: he couldn't dance and talk at the same time. Whenever he wanted to say something, he had to stop dancing; although he had had this problem for a long time, he had never managed to learn how to talk while dancing. He was serious when talking to his comrades, and he was bored even at this place. But there was no other way. When the bars closed and the darkness fell over the town, he didn't like them to part; they all came here. He was polite to the girls. After every hiccup, he would cover the mouth with his hand and ask in surprise: "Now, what's this, what's wrong with me?" And when he got carried away during the dance, he would hide behind the curtain. He was with the same girl every evening. She would lie in his lap, and he would talk, seriously, interrupting himself and hiccupping. She would lie there, heavy, fat, with a wreath in her black hair. She was fond of raising her legs in the air, yelling: "Giddup, giddup!" He had been assigned to the gendarmerie sentries and she asked him about every theft and murder. Although she didn't go out, she knew everything that was happening in the town. And he would tell her all the news and then start to complain; he told her about the car in which he made rounds in the villages, in the rain; she knew exactly all his duties, his salary, his troubles. Bent, often hiccupping, he would cover his mouth and wave his hand. But he would become particularly angry when the corporal on duty would come to inform him of something or to ask for his signature. He disliked the service being taken negligibly. In such a case he would swear angrily.

His three comrades, three lieutenants, laughed and shouted to each other. They were always cheerful. One of them was tall and never took off his cap, he never danced. The whole evening, while the others were pinching and chasing the girls around the chairs and red sofas, he would walk around the parlor, arm in arm with two or three girls. A hero, a large

man, he looked funny when he tried to ingratiate himself to the girls; especially during rainy days, he was like a child. He hated rain and was afraid of it. If he heard it was raining outside, he would shiver and whisper, "For God's sake, not the rain again!". He would take the girls arm in arm, always two or three at once, give them sweets and walk around the room, as if he were attending a ball. The girls chatted merrily, informed him of which girl was about to leave, showed him the letters of those who had left. And in those letters it was described in detail what the new parlor was like, what the guests were like, the piano player, how they danced there, what regiment was stationed there and what the officers were like; what the money was, the food, and how often they had medical check-ups.

He would listen to them and lead them around and around the room, constantly adding while they were merrily chatting: "Aha! that's the little one with blue stockings" or "Aha, that's the bumblebee" or "My, is Marushka there; she told me she would go to Wallachia" or "Aha, that's the one who shrieks". "Here you are," he would add quickly to any girl who approached them, offering his arm to her, and lead them around the room.

The other two officers played chess, in a corner, every evening. Their girls were leaning over their shoulders and watching in silence. One player would jam his cap low on his forehead, raise a finger, stretch his arm, then pull it back again, to which the other one would quietly say, "Make a move, c'mon make a move if you dare, look at that pawn, the queen will be in check."

Bent over the chess pieces, they would hum, one by one, the familiar tunes the piano was playing, and only rarely did they smile aside and pat the girls' thighs, adding quietly, "Some water, darlin', please."

Above them smoke was swirling to the mirrors which were shining around their heads, and they would sit like that, bent, for a long time, in silence, playing. Every evening it ended like this: the one sitting in the chair, the fat one, with his collar unbuttoned, would suddenly smile and began to pull a handkerchief out of his rear pocket. His eyes, yellow, hardly visible under long white lashes remained fixed on the chess pieces. He would slowly wipe his nose, very slowly, constantly staring at the pieces. All of a sudden, quickly as a sparrow hawk he rushed and shouted in a high tone: "Check", spread his arms and bow, adding more quietly, in deep voice, "and mate", "and mate".

And the two girls beside them would hug them around their necks and pull their ears and shouted joyfully, "Joža's turn to buy drinks, again, Joža's turn to buy drinks, again". And the other one would add: "Hehe, to buy a rope, hehe, to buy a rope."

However, it would become more and more quiet in the parlor. The mirrors reflected each other's reflection and shone brightly; and through the green shutters the whistling of the trains and thundering of the railroad cars were heard.

The piano player stood by the piano, with his back turned, cutting tobacco on a newspaper and spreading it over the piano.

The red sofas along the walls were covered with hats and caps, scarves and newspapers, paper, pieces of rolls and cups; beer and wine bottles, of different sizes were lined on the tables, like funny double flutes. The room was almost empty, but in the corridors, behind the corners, giggling and stomping and the slamming of the doors was heard. Perfumed heat was descending from the ceiling into the smoke which was floating above the floor. The red chairs around the tables were lying on the floor upside down, and the tables, black, full of yellow plates stood there, firm and colorful, like tortoises. The dark corridors were empty, but the darkness was all full of giggling.

And yet those hours before the dawn were terrible. The pale faces, in the smoke, would acquire an expression of endless sadness. And they would then speak only of sad things, of the killed, of hospitals, of affairs, of adultery, of dying and diseases. And a lot about the war. How everything was awful and how everything was sad. It was often heard, then, how the captain smashed a mirror with a beer bottle.

When that happened, Joža ran around and hid the bottles and protected the mirrors. When he was thrown out of the rooms, he would go the corridor and peep through the bars. The town itself couldn't be seen, nor the river, because of the roofs, but behind the trees he could still catch sight of the station and shadows underneath the lantern. He wondered why "master chief" hadn't come yet. He was a regular on Saturdays and his time of arrival, 1 a.m. had already passed.

Joža heard somebody swearing, on the right, in the corridor and smashing bottles against the wall; just when he was about to go and see what was happening, the sailor from Naples, with her plump legs in tight white stockings, rushed out of the dark yelling: "Jožef, twenty bottles to number five, for the captain". Joža was bestirred, dumbfounded. He wanted to ask if they were all drunk and if their sabers were sheathed but instead he asked, "Why the hell are they all piled up together?" The sailor shook her keys and pushed him aside, laughing, "Of course, all together... on the ground, it's sweeter... bring twenty... can you believe it, the captain slapped Mica."

Behind Joža, the doorbell shrieked. He jumped to his feet, that was the "master chief", Joža recognized the way he rang. "Master chief" rang thrice, he rang the letter "K" telegraphically. Joža didn't know that, but

he knew how “master chief” rang. “Master chief” rang the initial letter of a vulgar word that he gladly used and explained, laughing, every night. As soon as he entered, he would start to yell. His cap with its golden peak was thrown in the air, he would stand at ease and report, “Joža, I am dutifully reporting that I, as the chief general, have received five trains and one express train, and now I want to receive...”, and then again add something vulgar. They had known each other for a long time. Every Saturday, after midnight, for almost a year he had been coming, cheerful and punctual, and they respected him because he was the town’s principal figure, and he allowed them to advise him and ask him a lot of things. He was a widower and a fine man. His legs stepped quite valiantly and firmly. The heels of his shoes were always bent due to his valiant way of walking, and he liked tight trousers and he loved order, order above all. When the trains arrived at the station, he stood still on the tracks, but if anybody would try to cross the railroad gauge, he would shout and lose patience and throw the first thing he grabbed at them. In the corridor a girl would come to him at once. She didn’t come out for any other man nor take part in dancing on Saturdays. She was tall and wore a green dress with a wide yellow sash that fell along her strong hips to her ankles. Her breasts were oddly moved aside, as if they were almost under her armpits and she had a large mouth. And yet in the way she walked and talked, in her big eyes, there was something dear to him, the accustomed, who was her favorite. They neither hugged nor kissed. She would take him under the arm, sit beside him, arrange the pillows so he could sit comfortably; and he would carve a small piece of wood and pick up bean after bean, grain after grain in a cup of frothy coffee.

Joža, who had brought him coffee, stood awhile, behind his back, repeating a few times, “Who else would do it, if not master chief,” and then he would exit slowly, place his small bench in its place, stare through the bars, lean back against the wall and again start to doze off. He quickly made an inner calculation of how many rooms were occupied and grumbled angrily when he couldn’t remember who each girl was with. One of the gentlemen in particular, a clerk, gave him trouble. He came every evening and every evening he picked different girl. This time, just one girl was missing from Joža’s calculations: he didn’t know which one was with the captain and how many of them there were altogether. First there was Mica, but the captain dumped her. Joža thought hard but he couldn’t remember. Outside the wind was starting to blow. It was early dawn and complete darkness. The dark roofs went up, like stairs, somewhere into the darkness. He could hardly see anything through the bars. It was getting cold. Suddenly he started up. The sailor was engaged. He finally knew everybody’s whereabouts. He was a bit

annoyed that they hadn't made the bill previously; he could have forgotten, by the morning, how many bottles he had brought them. He immediately thought about that room with anger, that cramped room where everybody was lying together on the floor. Those hours before sunrise were the hardest. There was a dead silence in the corridors, no yelling, no arguing no singing. For the sake of saving, he had put out all the lamps and now it was dark everywhere.

He thought of going to the chief's room for a short while; they certainly hadn't gone to bed yet; they always had long talks, but he was afraid the owner might find about it and give him the sack. He briefly opened the parlor and took a look if there was anybody in there, but it was empty. The red walls and mirrors surrounded him, spinning. He noticed a big black hat and the sabers hidden under the piano. Then he heard the bell and quickly ran out. But nobody was coming. That clerk, who changed girls every evening, was leaving. Joža opened the door for him irritably, took his tip and slammed the door behind him loudly.

He heard a girl who went to fetch water rustling in the dark yard, yawning and humming. All at once he heard voices in the street; he jumped; he had forgotten all about it this evening.

Those were the merchants. It was very funny, and it had started recently.

There were never vacancies in the local inns, and the passengers wandered around the station. But ever since the chief had been sued for some wheat, the chief threw them out of there, too. Then, one evening a man got his throat cut behind the station in the street and was robbed. Since that day they had been coming. At first, they hid in the taverns, then in houses. But the things got worse. Thefts and murders became frequent in the town. The merchants began to arrive at the fair in the morning but that wasn't better, either, they had to pass through a forest, a thick forest. One evening, a merry fellow came across "Heaven".

He told his mates about it and they cheerfully started to come. And later they got used to it. As soon as they had sold their barrels at the station, they all came to "Heaven" together. They paid a gendarme to escort them to the door, cheerfully entered the parlor, and made themselves comfortable on the sofas.

They rarely called for the girls—they would come without being called; and these fellows would happily pay them in coffee and sweets and ask to be left alone. They were soaked to the bone and exhausted like stray dogs. Their utterly tired faces were pale. They didn't want anything, only to be left anywhere under a roof, to doze through the night hunched over. And though they rarely had any drinks at all, they paid well.

At that particular dawn they became excited and ill-tempered. One of them had gotten his money stolen off his chest or he had lost it.

He himself didn't know to say what had happened exactly. They had left him at the station. They entered, one by one, bent and tired. Slowly they settled down on the sofas. The girls, two of them, who had been left without a guest, approached and started joking. Two of the merchants stood up and left with the girls. But the rest declined tiredly. "Ah, leave me alone...," a tall, graying man said irritably. "I want to sleep, I've had enough of living, this is the last thing I need." Giggling and a hubbub arose. And when they got tired, they settled down, some on the sofas, and some under the piano. And their humorous raillery was more and more turning into a sad conversation, becoming more and more quiet.

They wanted nothing but some peace, to spend the night that way, sitting. Their hushed whispers went from one to another. Calmly they talked about the misfortune. Bent, with their heads bowed, they talked about murders, about frauds, about fairs, about misfortunes. They knew all the towns and currencies and all costumes and customs and people and roads. Now and then a small piece of silk or wool was passed from hand to hand and they immediately knew its price, where it could be purchased and who had it and how much could be made out of it. They started talking about their families, about their children, with pleasure, especially about the children. And the girls would often gladly sit around, sleepy and slobbery. The merchants often took pictures out of big books full of various currencies, and those pictures would be also passed from hand to hand and their eyes quickly followed them. The girls gladly talked about their own families and often laughed. They settled down comfortably to sleep, and when one of them would start to snore, the others would all squat beside him, whistle silently and put a candle into his mouth. Every one of them had a piece of a candle in their pocket. They were especially keen on lying under the piano, where the light couldn't bother them. They would put their coats and boxes on the tables, among the glasses and bottles, and the girls cheerfully squatted beside those who had already fallen asleep and carefully unbuttoned their trousers and the rest, trying not to laugh, handed the funnels made of newspapers, through which they poured cold water into the sleepers' pants. But when this, too, ended, they would lie on the sofas, pale and tired and sleepy and speak with loathing about everything.

Joža fell asleep behind the door. Only the roofs, which started to become lighter and lighter, were seen through the bars. It was drizzling outside. It was already dawning. The houses began to appear vaguely and it seemed as if everything, both streets and trees were coming closer and closer; coming, as if they wanted to hide inside, to enter that house.

Master chief was leaving. He quietly opened the door in order not to awake the servant. The shadow of a female, with pale legs, wearing

slippers, a scarf draped around her shoulders, shivering in the cold, was kissing him good-bye. He was always sad when leaving. As soon as he opened the door, a freezing darkness, full of rain covered him; he looked around, shivered, shook her hand once more and pulled up the collar of his jacket.

“Get inside, you’re gonna catch a cold.”

“Good-bye, send me the newspapers; they always bring them in the afternoon.”

“Send Joža to the office.”

“Good-bye, are you coming this evening?... Shall I have the room heated?”

“I am... now go... you’re gonna catch a cold...”

He slowly departed, seeing her closing the door, looking at him, all bent from the cold, and he bowed his head and left, trudging through the mud.

Translated from Serbian by
Slobodan Kosanović

RASTKO PETROVIĆ

A GREAT FRIEND

I

O seventeen faraway, boundless years of age,
You, too, started from the boundaries of the world's stage;
Is there anything at all that the soul wants more
Than a body imprint in the snow, made by Albania in days of yore!
Sleeping on the floor, I do not press against my friend, cold as ice,
I do not press my hands against my bosom, though they've turned blue,
I'm not annihilated by the cold, or gnawed away by scabies or lice,
But a cold wind stabs my thighs through and through.

Seventeen I was then, cold mornings steaming from me like the dawn;
For the first time, I peered at the face of my friend next to me,
A blue-green face it was – a frozen flow of life all gone –
His hands, flowing like a far-off stream through the fog, I did see!
How I huddled then underneath my greatcoat,
My naked boyish body in its armour of clothes afloat;
You seventeen summers, whose wonder I pledge,
Where have you disappeared from the world's edge?
All night long my back I did warm
Against the shoulders of another man,
All night long there was a snowstorm,
Covering my footsteps and happiness span.
I paid no mind to which friend against me was pressed,
To whose head lay heavy on my chest.

My breath was laboured, but warmed my body wan;
My life was laboured before the day did dawn,

We conversed endlessly in the dark
About our lack of bread (of God was there any trace?);
Only when the first ray broke through the darkness stark
Was I able to see my friend's face:
A strapping soldier in a grey overcoat,
Saying things very bold and loud; his fearless face I did note –
He drank a lot of water, then went on
To lift his bag. He spat. Drank a lot of water and was gone.

O you numberless friends from many an unfathomed night,
In whose lap my head often rested, I waited for you so long
In empty hovels, wondering if you'd come, to my delight,
But being without hope my soul's horror only did prolong!
Then, my unknown friend, if you pushed through the door,
Shaking off snow and cursing terribly:
No one hugged and kissed a brother with such great rapport
Than I did, greeting you silently!
How desolate and huddled I was at seventeen!
I listened to his breathing all night. What? At heaven's door!?
Oh, the only solitary breath of life next to me,
Oh, the priceless breath of a crushed company;
You, nameless company, will meet no more;
My hand lay silently near his breath so dear:
The last living ember of humanity touched me hotly.
I had no yearning, conscience or fear;
My ears, nose and lungs were filled with snow falling softly.

I huddled against the back of another,
My swollen hand pressed to my breast,
I was upset by the slightest sigh of my brother,
How terribly that winter froze my chest,
While I huddled against an unknown soul.

II

I walk again, my forehead burns anew,
The chilly landscape my anguished head doth cool;
In my ear, horrors whispered by a pine-tree accrue –
O God, why do you set me against nature so cruel!?
What does this beggars' *kolo*¹ in the snow mean;
What are they dancing, as around heaven's banner they careen,

¹ Kolo – a Serbian folk dance, translator's note.

Where is that madness headed – circling the hill’s azure sheen!?
At least give them dignity and peace; let them be bitter but serene!

Night opens the belly of a horse, sprinkling it with stardust;
My seventeen years, where do you run from this world!?
The law of order and mercy amongst men,
O God, O God, let me have sleepiness again!
Yesterday, a begging hand like a flower unfurled;
The wind brings it nothing: much too late its petals uncurled;
It’ll freeze under the snow, someplace at the end of this hill.
Running away again, savagery, mountains and snow
Endless nausea, mouldy cheese – it all turns to Albania anyhow:
Along the hems of all my garments, lice their long nests sew;
And from the whiteness of snow, the plain whiter than paper now,
These rises that spasmodic Thought, which my mind doth entice,
And as I walk, if I should feel thirst, I would suck it out of ice;
When I pause, the whiteness before my eyes doth shiver,
When I look around, columns of men, as if on ropes, quiver;
How come I haven’t seen it before,
How come I haven’t managed on that score?
Now I close my eyes and I feel life is nigh,
I see for the first time, shivering, people around me die.

Those who are with Him, hungry for it all – life, death – to pursue,
Who only think of how to sleep, how to recline,
Those whose lips are chapped, whose thoughts are few,
If two of them fall on a carcass, to growling they incline;
Some learned how to beg and very well did fare;
How to hop, grimace, make their teeth chatter and goose bumps align;
How, from their heads, to remove handfuls of hair:
All day, all night, they run away, even in sleep there is no confine,
Oh, is there nothing to tie them down!? – Nothing!
Look how, in a royal resurrection,
Armour from their bodies doth fall,
How rotting rags are torn to shreds
Before the infinity of revelation;
Hips, ribs and knees, they are bared all,
How radiant are the eyes in the heads,
Of pilgrims whose shredding garments appal.

Their skin, more and more transparent it gets;
The blood vessels show inside their shins;
Their pinched faces shine all the more.

In women, even the children in their wombs show,
(Like an engagement ring behind a screen),
Their big blue eyes captivate me so,
A more enchanting gaze I've never seen.

III

We were avenged. Neither bought nor slain.
And what could be seen inside my body's domain
Made no one avert their gaze,
No soul chided me for my youth;
Nor did anyone's interior leave my blue eyes in a daze!
In those lovely fields we puked all that:
Roots, rotten kaymak² with fungi filled,
How nauseous; we made noise and spat,
But on Christmas night, by all of this I'm thrilled.

For the time of riches has passed,
And the time has come to die;
The endless snow drifts and blue shades
Death itself covers as before us they doth lie.

My nourishment too dearly I acquire,
Fever helps me climb the hilly terrain,
My resurrection pulls me up ever higher;
The black and blue marks on my face remain.

Exhausted, I lie on the snow,
My horrid body leaving its imprint entire,
O dreams of mine, suddenly they overflow,
Under the translucence of this oversized attire.

Like clouds, like the sky, clothes tear off people, fall behind,
Their nakedness, fresh and pure, is suddenly captured;
They shiver no more – with what could they? – nor is their pupil blind,
They watch the mountain like Christ, enraptured.

A hungry man's mouth, encrusted around his teeth like a ring-like spasm:
Eternity's spouse, his tongue's blackened, his head on a stick;
Every now and then he seems to be on the edge of a chasm,
And yet he pushes on, there's nothing to make his fear tick.

² Kaymak – a creamy dairy product similar to clotted cream, made from the milk of cows, sheep, or goats in some Asian and Balkan countries, translator's note.

Like clouds, like seas, that's how clothes are torn,
Like seas, like clouds, snow and steppes in the distance, forlorn;
Like nausea, like stench, like fish scales,
That's how rags peel off the body like veils.

Oh, the warm touch of a handshake,
Which warms a frozen hand to the bone;
Leisure days are forgotten, gone like a flake,
And all sounds died away in a moan;
Oh, the warm touch of a handshake!

It's already disappearing from view,
The top of the mountain I passed two days ago;
For me, even then, life's meaning was different so,
In two days, all truths have shifted anew.

Winter has tailored a cold suit for me,
Under which the body won't decay;
Beasts will be able to eat it with glee
When spring takes its bark away;
O brother, how cold this suit's to be!

IV

All night long, another man's warm back I did sense
And the warm breath that someone unknown did send;
A tear did not burn, one's brows were no defence
Against the frost that from God did descend!
'Twas as if I touched a dark wall with my eye,
My eyes widened blindly then and there:
Desperately I moved my shoulder or thigh,
My breathing obstructed by the sharp air,
Until, with a deep cap, its cold I did nullify.

O Lord, for a young soul's yen that's your device,
I remember for a moment thinking:
Into vileness, selfishness, exhaustion and lice
The vestiges of my humanity are to be sinking;
Am I to be gnawed at by fatigue and lice!?

Or, when I closed my eyes, the Devil my breath stole,
Releasing all of the body's ills,
Spitting right between the eyes of my soul,

Whispering: "You'll shake this off in a battle of wills",
While draining my strength as a toll!
Or, when I closed my eyes, He said to me outright:

"Don't you feel your hunger's dread?
And whatever for? 'Tis the second night
That sleep enters your belly without any bread;
The second only: whatever sent this blight!?"

Or, when I closed my eyes, insults at me He threw:
"I spit on your honour, I spit on your past;
Against anyone's back your rotting body you drew,
As long as the warmth did last;
You rarely feel pride now, 'tis true."
- O my past, O you Devil uncouth,
Don't you have anything better, milder, for my youth,
For this blind soul of mine,
Just this ugly plain untruth!?"

He's not sleeping either, my friend close by,
But curses terribly in the dark,
His terrible thirst makes his breath dry:
"O you Devil, you villain stark!"
He sat down. Night hid him from my eye;
How sad is the touch of shoulders in dark gloom!

I gave him my frozen flask without any qualms;
It seemed that he drank from it for hours,
That water defrosted by his palms;
How come he didn't get drunk or freeze, having done so for hours?

Then we spoke about Him in the dark so long...
The day dawned, white, of glass 'twas made;
Is that his hand or face that I see?
I didn't dare utter the word: slayed!
Then dawn's light our faces filled,
From the evening before we'd thus lain;
From those eyes bluer than violets, stilled,
Our sleepy gazes their shine did sustain;
Our greatcoats turned bloody at once!

The day dawns so slowly for me;
Your eyes and mouth now I can make out:

The dark rises from the mounts totally,
The mornings are so strange and empty throughout
When the snow garb falls off a pine tree,
When that dreadful dawn falls off a friend,
And behind fir-trees a corpse comes into sight,
Mocking the very blueness no end –
That corpse resurrected from its clothes forthright.

Each new dawn shows a different face;
Another unknown friend talks about himself;
On another's shoulder my head I place,
And if I look at him (when a new day shows itself),
His gaze so blue I then embrace;
His smile I see, full of hope or temptation:
All of a sudden his words trail away,
Started in the dark, during hours of sleep deprivation –
That woman's losing her toes, to the cold they fall prey –
I listen to his words with unforeseen reservation.

V

Between two hills, towards a line I'm compelled,
Meridians and arcs are the world's stage;
From each new direction by some charm I'm repelled,
In my bosom there sit true contempt and rage.

All night we breathed in the breath of snow flowers;
My friend, awoken by your side, I thought: Oh, how blind!
Your slumber, friend, in its peace is so refined.
Out of reach is the villain whose death I did crave,
As is the power I meant to enslave;
By my futile yearning I admit I'm defeated,
Exposed as stupid, laughable, bitter, my hope depleted;
I despise all people, feel contempt for the world entire;
Lazy as I am, to tread on this flower I have no desire.

'Tis not the body that's hideous, but the spirit's docility;
Not only have I received life, I also kiss its shine;
Cursed be nature for developing in a slave the ability
To hear a voice say from within that slavery's divine!
Oh, do sleep, unknown friend: once I hit Her in the face,
In the face! How deserving was I of her dream then?
More than now, when I'm filled with shame before Her!

A matter of awareness, of conscience, of freedom, of will to life,
A matter of ethics: to exist or not, the question still stands;
I ask you: who slaughters when my hand wields the knife,
And I ask you: who dies when the victim dies at my hands?!
You'll never answer, poor friend, the question this imposes,
Nor will you, endless night, nor you, a prison of thousands – snow roses!

Each question empties the bowels, my bosom by poison is hooked;
I still remember staying in dwellings of pain,
When I forgot abruptly how people looked,
Between the furnace and the table, prostrate, unconscious, having lain;
I sighed then, suddenly, with a scream,
And from the desert of horror, my boyhood's response was a roar extreme.

Did they all see me at the window, through a glass darkly!?
Resting my palms against the windowpane, I stood distraught and wan;
Then I turned round and went to where the depths of hell stood starkly;
And I roamed painfully – my footsteps resounding – and at each dawn
They resound suddenly, while my body falls;
And no one extinguishes the candle, above my head it burns on.
The night guard pauses, and workers, hurrying home from the night
shift halls,
Spit hurriedly, under the blue sky of the dawn.
What kind of pain or passion tries to keep me on the straight and narrow,
And what eternal sin poisons me to the marrow!?

Why do I open the window frantically and thus my hands tear,
Why do I read so many books and all this torment bear?!
Oh, I still remember a moist hand that my forehead did caress;
By that moist and caring hand I was stirred:
The former was my entire bliss then, I confess –
So many friends' moans never have I heard!
Then you, at least, go to sleep, you whose dream is madness pure,
Who will trudge off at dawn through sunlight, as if through a door,
On the other side are the sea, airy shores and delirium's allure,
Seasiders' shoulders, children, sand dunes, mud and more.

VI

O God, God. How can that be?
That, at dawn, a dead friend next to me doth abide;
To die away from home laughing with glee,
Next to a night-time friend, with no beloved at one's side.

O God, God, can it be true verily
That I spoke with a dying man about the sky;
That what I warmed myself wearily
Against was the back of a stranger about to die.

O God, God, is it possible, too,
That, when I first looked at that face,
The dawn lit its ashen hue,
While night hid his killers' every trace.

Not knowing it, for the last time I warmed his hands,
Humanity's last words then he spoke:
Which a decaying young throat did not choke.

With eyes wide open, like windows against a starry background,
I guarded my friend, sunk into the slumber of death profound,
With his hands under his head, from the bottom of his heart, on the
frozen ground.

Sleep, I thought, sleep, my friends, you who have been rained upon,
For I won't be able to: so much of my youth has now been stolen;
Even though they are rotting somewhere, my palms are swollen.

That was the strangest night, one of many a church procession,
I warmed his cold hand, would a sister have done it with greater
compassion?
I whispered soft words to him, a father would have been more exacting,
If he had ever heard his son's voice, it was never more enchanting!
He slept, his sleep being the deep dark slumber of galleons on the sea bed;
When the dawn first broke, I saw him through a wave that surged ahead,
'Twas just my friend's cold corpse; even if all of mankind were dying,
Would I dare to renounce the strength that coursed through me,
so fortifying!?

Oh, what faith would exculpate you for mercy's sake,
Who would warm you with his body in the terrible blizzard of night?
Or perhaps I'd yearn more obviously by your body to hold a wake,
You, my strange Humanity, powerless and plagued by frostbite.

My hands being too weak to dig your grave under the snow,
I buried you under tenderness, as your head I did caress,
I thought about your peace, faced by another cold hill's glow;
But although I had no tears, brother, I did not mourn you less.

I left my friend in the desert as he was, I had to go,
Oh, these sanctified hands that warmed his own,
Let this night be holy – this Christmas woe –
For that moment of companionship that heard no moan.

Behold, there's the sky and all! and I see the sea again now;
At long last the passion of yearning I did evince;
More excited than ever, against the dawn I pressed my brow:
Many purple dawns have risen inside me since.

But the transparency of the soul and body nothing could blight,
I walk again across the desert of snow so wide,
And raising – with my thought – the endless Heavenly linen so white,
I see my divine friend: he sleeps in the heart of the snowy hillside.

Translated from Serbian by
Novica Petrović

RAJKO PETROV NOGO

FRANÇOIS

For days I have been watching
From my bed a robber spider

That master of ambushing

Who stealing a little bit
From itself and a little from the sun

Has been spinning and spreading its web
And lounging in it

The François Villon of the aboveground

A master of starvation
Certain of its catch

The loafer is rocking
In the cobweb-like cradle
Waiting for its prey

The threads are shining in the sun like silver
Connecting here too
The unborn with the dead

He is mine
The Three-horned shakes his comb
You have mixed up the sides

Were it not for
The stickler for cleanliness
Spiders would
Cover your eyes with their web

While I was asleep
My wife Ljilja
Dusted both the spider and the cobweb

And in legible
Unquestioning
Female alphabet

In invisible letters
Wrote

A spider is not
A member of our household

A CONVERSATION

The Silent One winks at me
You do not write love poems

All of my poems are love ones

I only write when I am
In love with the language

That's fine
But about women
You know what I mean

I talk of idleness with reluctance
Of human and monkey secrets

And so for some fifty years
I know what I know

Neither in youth nor in old age
I talk nonsense

If you are forsaken be silent
If you have forsaken be even more silent
If you are loved be most silent

I am silent so as not to bewitch

One grieves only for one's dead darling
And even then one sings already sung songs

You solitary heart of mine
Night be still
Perhaps she sleeps

Then I am a poet too
Stutters the Silent One

No you are incorporeal
You are just an angel

SHAR PEI

What do I need a dog for
I can barely stand people

This is a *Shar Pei*
Chinese frowning dog
It thinks it's a human

Little China lady Ljubica
My aunt is turning over in her grave

Lo
She is the only one that
Doesn't complain about me

She never hindered me
During my peripatetic walks

Nor did I hinder her in sniffing
Around her morning news

Now she lies by the bed the whole night
Taking depression away from me
Lowering my temperature absorbing my illness

You Three-horned standing aside and watching
I tell you this three-headed beast is
My personal Cerberus

An unwelcome guest will not slip by her

Welcome or unwelcome
It depends

THE CLOCK HAS STOPPED

First that quadrilateral one
Wooden one
Flat one
With Arabic numerals
A church
And an ash tree in the middle

And then also the rectangular
Black Box
With Roman numerals
And an Inquisition pendulum

Ticktock
Ticktock
You are gone

Both you
And the world
That you used
To resurrect in vain

In the dead of night
From somewhere
From far away
There appears a clocksmith

Just like that
Because of his wish
To hear my voice

I did not say
That the clock had stopped
That the clocks had stopped
That the church was mute
That the ash tree was numb
That the pendulum's guillotine was still

Your clock has stopped
Has stopped the clock

Translated from the Serbian by
Dragan Purešić

VLADIMIR PIŠTALO

From the Book *The Sun of This Day – A Letter to Andrić*

IDENTITY

*To correct a natural indifference, I was placed
halfway between poverty and the sun. Poverty
kept me from thinking all was well under the sun
and in history; the sun taught me that history was
not everything.*

Albert Camus

Dear Ivan,

More was written about your affiliation than about your literary work. I'm not so sure your standards were those people applied to you. In a world in which love is more shameful than hate, you did not forsake civilized behavior in any respect. You were barely four years old when a saint came down from a painting and turned over to you the crucifixion that had become too heavy to bear. At that moment, you took upon yourself the burden of objectivity. You vowed to describe the Bosnian people and never betray anyone. This requires not only good will but also rare intellectual and emotional insight.

I

Your Attitude towards the Serbs

Dear Ivan,

People don't care about what someone knows, until they find out if he cares.

You cared. You consistently identified yourself with Serbian literature. This affiliation is confirmed not only by your, early and later, statements but also all official documents, from your ID card, issued in 1951, to the Registrar of Marriages in 1958. You refused to have your poetry included in other national corpora, twice, first in 1934 and then again in 1958. You wrote that you didn't know the editorial reasons, "and even if I did, I could only respect them, but not share them as well." According to your letters, the Belgrade climate restored your health. You thought that in this city everything was harder to acquire, but worth more. You praised real Serbia *in which a fragile word hides restraint and conceals emotion*.

You celebrated and mourned Serbian heroes.

For you, Njegoš was less a heavenly being in the company of an eagle and more a half-learned seventeen-year-old who took upon himself the burden of running a state. In him you saw an ill and lonely man bearing catacombs. You felt sad for everyone, except for Vuk. One cannot feel sorry for such a natural force. Along with Vuk, you believed that Serbian culture should be presented *in the best possible light without offending the truth*. In general, you built your literature on Vuk's foundations. You were a lifelong gatherer of words and expressions. (A scythe with the words *Boehme & Sohn, Wiener Neustadt*, written in gold letters, the people called **zlatka**. They called businessmen **pretrglije** and a police spy **potajnik**. To describe an aggressive, violent man, the word **tucibrat** was used. A partisan going into battle against the Nazis with a rifle was called a **puškar**.)

The entire story of Aska and the Wolf is an illustration of the term "outplay".

You built your literature equally on the passion of Bora Stanković and the sober clarity of Sima Matavulja, whom *many praised so they wouldn't have to study him*.

You didn't shrink from touching upon Serbian historical traumas, which others avoided. (Isidora Sekulić accused you of insisting on the horrific.) You described dreadful executions on a bridge. Whipped mothers staggered to their children, which were being taken from them by Janissaries. Dogs tore the meat off impaled heads.

A symbol of this tragic side of Serbian history is the Čele-kula in Niš, a tower built from human skulls. The sufferings in World War I and II added many more stories to this tower and turned it into a, so to speak, skyscraper whose top had disappeared in the clouds.

You knew (no matter what Isidora thinks) that historical traumas must not be forgotten. Nevertheless... one cannot—and you knew this—live in a house of skulls. One must go outside.

This is why Crnjanski welcomed Branko Radičević, for his erotic lightheartedness cast off the dominant dark themes of our poetry. This is why you welcomed Whitman, for with him you were “far from our dark Slavic sorrow”.

About Njegoš, you wrote that he unveiled the view to clear skies through blood and lamentation and smoke.

And you even hoped that...

that...

that... we had an obligation towards martyrs, those to whom life was denied, to live a good and relatively cheerful life.

II

Your Attitude towards the Croats

You considered the Franciscan monasteries to be lamps in the Bosnian landscape.

Fojnica, Kreševo, Travnik, Guča Gora.

You showed an interest in the miraculous founder of an order, the Christian pantheist, on the border of heresy.

Among the best characters you have created are those of friars.

The physician, Fra Luka, helped ungracious life and wrote his books, the “likaruše” (collections of folk recipes). (Many of your stories are “likaruše” for goodness.) Fra Marko was a standing tombstone of a man. Huge, like Thomas Aquinas, after work *he was a smoking hill*, talking both with the living world and with God. Fra Petar repaired clocks as if he were repairing time! Fra Serafin repaired the world with his laugh.

(I am writing these lines in New England. Fra Marko is sitting next to me. Fra Petar is looking at me under his grey brows with eyes filled with silent joy.)

You have described a natural force named Antun Gustav Matoš.

Using one of your characters, you said that “a woman of Latin nationality is more passionate than any other woman”.

Your Mara is Croatian, but I can’t think of her as a “Croatian”, but as a martyr for all martyrs.

You admired the vitality of the people of Split and you would have gladly lived in interwar Split.

You began your career in *Hrvatska mlada lirika*, a Croatian journal of poetry, as a fellowship holder of the Croatian Cultural Society *Napredak*.

And you gently enquired about the health of Croatia in a letter to a deceased lady from Gornji Grad.

In the Registry of Births of the Church of St. John the Baptist, a record was made on October 9 1892, stating that your father was Ivan Antun Andrić, school janitor, and your mother, Katarina (née Pejić). Today, a bust of you stands in front of this church.

III

Your Attitude towards Muslims

Some say you “hated the Muslims”. But for your readers (if they really read your work and not just walk over it) *it is not easy to forget the blushed, girlish face of Ahmet-beg, with shiny teeth and brown, bright eyes of a highlander, and the smile of a man not afraid of anything.*

Your Salihaga Međuselac was *a kindly, cheerful man.*

The word of *Hamidage Škare, a just and fearless man*, carried weight in Sarajevo, both with the authorities and the people, and was often decisive...

You have immortalized Avdaga Osmanagić as *a man with a sharp tongue who was generous and bold-hearted. Avdaga was... outspoken, energetic, always ready to speak out and defend something when others feel it would be better to keep silent...*

Kajmakam Ali-beg spoke, motionless, *in a voice full of warmth and honesty in his eyes...*

You imagined the brave, generous and handsome Veli Pasha... *with a calm, serious look in his eyes, the kind one sees in bright children and truly brave and noble people...*

Hadžiomerošica was a vital and insightful woman, always with a smile on her face... *She did everything openly, decisively and honestly...*

Dauthodža Mutevelić... a wise and devout, stubborn and persistent man... reconciled a long time ago with the knowledge that our fate on earth is nothing but a struggle against sin, death and disappearance.

Fata in *The Bridge on the Drina* was described as an exceptional creature, an unattainable role model... Bringing tears to the eyes of so many readers at the thought of the tragic pride of a father and daughter.

Arif-beg was a *quiet, healthy and honest man, who had nothing to fear or hide and thus had no need to frighten and persecute others...*

Ali-beg Pašić's entire being exuded aristocratic dignity. He *wore his gentility like a heavy and noble title which... is inferred and cannot be explained or feigned.*

Wiseman Alidede *possessed not only knowledge and insight and a wider perspective than other people, but also perfect harmony between body and soul... he never in his life uttered a word that saddened or belittled another human being...*

Never.

A word that saddens or belittles.

This was your motto.

You never went to visit a place with as much humility, such pure desire to see and learn, such an open heart and mind as when you went to Turkey.

You wistfully assumed that many readers would overlook the news that Bursa had burnt down. You, as you said, were touched and hurt. You recollected the bright, *dignified türbe mausoleums in Bursa, covered with the most beautiful surahs in the Quran... written in the shape of strange flowers and crystals...*

A Scandinavian interpreter read the Quran so as to better understand you.

In your vision, Istanbul at night was like fireworks stopped in flight. In this city, at daybreak the sky turns red and descends to the ground and there is plenty of it for everyone.

Vuk's proverb says: *Neither criticize nor praise other religions!* You couldn't help yourself. In your opinion, in Islamic funeral rituals, death does not cast darkness on life. No other society buries its dead with more lighthearted solemnity and moving simplicity.

"Muslims," you wrote, "*the real Bosnian Turks (are) people of a stubborn faith and a stony pride, who can be as impetuous as a mountain stream and as patient as the earth*".

Fra Petar said about Čamila:

I never felt such sorrow for any other living being.

“*You leave Rasim-beg alone,*” you warned (in a deeper and somewhat foggy voice) through your Fra Serafin. “*May his good soul rest in peace in accordance with his laws. The world hasn’t seen such a man, nor will it in any near future.*”

* * *

You liked to say a good word and with this word allow something that was forbidden by various guards—the value of others.

And even more than that.

Mehmed-beg Biogradlija drank and spoke about the beauty of the world which, with “a cross over one’s eyes”, remains invisible. In saying so, his eyes were *deep and intelligent, and his face wore an expression of sublime pain*. As he blasphemed, Fra Marko saw a halo around his head—a halo in the eyes of the observer.

Jeremija Gagić, a Russian consul in Dubrovnik, portrayed Njegoš as a *young, insulant, unbridled and, by reading obscene books, damaged man who poses a threat to everyone including the Montenegrins*. They called Vuk Karadžić a joke and the one who brings darkness to the Serbian language. Illiterate and influential people would tell him that no one had done so much damage and brought such shame to the Serbian people since Kosovo. They claimed you did more damage to the Bosnian people than all the armies that had marched through it.

I would encourage those who accuse you of hate (perhaps because *eyes cannot see what lies in the soul*) to read the previous lines and ask themselves: do they speak of their enemies in this way?

For those who think of you as an enemy should be cautious of their friends.

IV

Your Attitude towards Jews

Dear Ivan,

You were a consistent friend of the Bosnian Jews. In short stories like *Children* and *Buffet Titanic*, you were horrified by anti-Semitic violence. In *Bosnian Chronicle*, you sent a Balkan message to Europe through Rafe Atijas:

“*For we... For we too...*”

Your Jewish ambassador to the Balkans sends word that we too have a fervent desire to participate in the life of a distant and better world. To *have a more dignified life and a place of our own within it...*

In Kalmi Baruh you noticed a lot of old-fashioned shame and consideration, and quiet and *persistent loyalty to everything he considered to be true in life and science*. You were there when Segovia Baruh forgave a boy for his rudeness, when he tells him that “Spain does not like” Jews. In the shy Hispanist, this same Spain *had lived its ghostly life for centuries, expressed through Latino songs and handicrafts in shady mahalas*. You admired Isak Samokovlija, our Chekhov, the most read author, with good reason. You were amazed at how Sephardic Spanish wore away less over the centuries than the stones beneath the feet of the Jews. You left a wonderful text on Jewish graves in Sarajevo: by the narrow-gauge railway above the city, old tombstones *lie like white lions*.

You noticed an inscription on the tombstone of Elias Kabiljo:
And so we are alone, alive or dead, always the same.

The Unwanted Bridge

You were always opposed to revenge... You wanted the people in this region to live in peace and harmony... You know I always admired, respected and listened to you. But this time, I'll do the smart thing. I'm going to kill the animals and beasts like they were rats.

Dušan Kovačević, *Who's Singin' Over There?*

Dear Ivan,

How many solid D's were given out in former Yugoslavia on the topic of the bridges in your works?

Where did it all go?

You gladly wrote about people who were the East to the West and the West to the East, completed and uncompleted converts, like Čamil, son of a Greek woman, in love with a Greek woman, Il Dotore Ilirico, Fra Serafin, Bonneval-pasha, Latas, and the entire Murtad tabor.

You were a master for ill-defined situations, that is to say, for situations well-defined in four different ways.

Unity in plurality, plurality in unity, repulsive love, attractive hatred. What was it all like in your youth?

Lukumo-Arimos

I'm afraid that the sentiments of your youth must be written in “Yugoslavian”. It's less important whether or not today's writers or readers feel the same way. The “Yugoslav language” is now forgotten,

like Etruscan. I think I know two words in Etruscan: arim(os)—monkey, and lukum(o)—king. Lukumo-arimos is an interesting combination.

In a democracy, a man has the right to hold unpopular opinions. Your (now universal) unpopular opinion was that the Serbs, Croats, and Muslims are one people.

The battle between two powers, the East and the West, has divided our national entity in half, and on whichever side people found themselves was the side they fought for, with the same meaning, the same heroism, and the same faith in the righteousness of their cause.

This was that Krleža's manure, which the wheel of history crossed.

A young man thinks the borders are a misunderstanding. They're not. It's not until later that he realizes how really big and heavy and impenetrable they are. What sort of prayers could dam up and level out all this... There are no such prayers.

You wanted to understand existence beyond the form of life that limits you. As we already said, in a spiritual sense, for you the Balkans were the *catena mundi*, the lifeblood of the world and a privileged watchtower from where it was easy to understand German, Mediterranean, Russian, and Turkish culture. How can a player of any type of pinching flute understand the mind of an organ player? Your universal quality was attainable by many. They've always tried to explain duplexity with unilaterality, polyphony with disharmony, the unusual with the usual.

You have been a three-time convert: between Croatianism and Serbism, royal diplomacy and Communism, a sober state and madness. You have lived in LIMBO. This is where you were able to be yourself. A master. You understood limbo. You were a being of limbo. You rooted yourself in the change of Heraclitus. And, like Tesla, you made your nest in a crown of lightning. Some say this is bad because "a forked peg won't go into the ground". Some say this is good because the gods live between worlds.

There is a certain cosmic spot, some cosmic bridge for weeping.

There is a room beyond this world where Franz Ferdinand and Gavrilo Princip are talking.

Your greatest ability, unparalleled in our literature, is that you see the world through the eyes of many.

You have taken on a role which complicates things between warring identities.

You were an unwanted bridge.

Translated from Serbian by

Persida Bošković

VULE ŽURIĆ

A WEDDING IN CHEROKEE COUNTY

The red muddy waters of the Sava were still flooding the ground and the night.

Every fourth night he had to patrol the guards by the river.

The shore he was treading was muddy, and the other—filled with enemy soldiers. His uniform was new and he never seemed to get it dirty enough so that it would look like all the rest in the town.

The last few months, Šabac went from hand to hand four times and the city was nothing but a name on military maps and a strategic position. A wretch here and there, many soldiers, even more ruins and the one and only decent tavern, run by Ruža.

He left the machine gunners within the walls of an old Turkish fortress and headed towards Voloda, a sailor, Russian, who guarded a torpedo tube. Just as he lit a cigarette, a bullet whizzed over his head. He threw himself on the ground and went on smoking, while a whole swarm of the same buzzers dwindled in a thicket.

He put the cigarette out in the mud and crawled towards the shore.

“Voloda?!” he whispered as loudly as he dared.

The Russian waved.

“Anything new, Voloda?” he asked as they lit new cigarettes, hidden in a thicket, squatting.

“No sir, lieutenant, thank God,” said the Russian as he started to cough. “And if there were,” he spoke through his coughing, “the whole town would already know.” He couldn’t stop coughing. “When a torpedo hits, everyone knows except for those who are hit.”

He stood up, leaning on the bony shoulder of the sailor who was still coughing.

Nighttime in the city didn’t differ in any way from nighttime in the fields.

People walked over the ruins almost indifferently.

He liked the ruins of Dr. Vinaver's house the most. There he would gladly "borrow" novels and philosophical discussions and then neatly put them back in the crater where the doctor's big library once stood.

This time he was in a hurry, it was almost midnight.

He hoped Ruža was still free, and that they'll have time for a few dances before the commander shows up, who was—they warned him as soon as he was transferred here—"her friend!"

The first sounds of cheerful music arrived with the frail light of a lantern, which spread the faint shadow of his sturdy figure across the facades of the houses he had left behind. He moved quickly through the carcass of the city as the echo of the waltz played by captured Austrian musicians became clearer.

As he came to the intersection, only a few steps away from the tavern, he heard them playing Ruža's favorite waltz.

However, she was dancing it with the commander.

The tavern was packed. Army officers and girls stood pressed tightly against the colorful wallpaper, which was barely sticking to the walls that were barely standing, while his newest love counted her steps as she danced in the arms of a fat man.

"You were in the Balkan Wars," stated the commander after he properly introduced himself and handed him an envelope with orders to transfer to Šabac.

"Yes sir, I was Colonel!"

"Well," said the commander as he listlessly lowered all the papers onto the table, "you can see for yourself that this place is something completely different."

His face was even paler now, while the Colonel's cheeks had a vulgar shine to them.

"Krakov, you've arrived!" said a colleague of his from the Academy. "Or," he continued, handing him a glass of champagne, "you haven't arrived on time."

He downed his champagne and got the urge to smash the glass on the floor, against a wall, somebody's head, but he returned it to the Colonel and left.

The rhythm of the waltz wouldn't even allow him to walk more briskly towards the command headquarters building, where the guards gave him a proper salute.

The commander's adjutant caught up to him with some difficulty in a long hallway, on the first floor, where his office was.

"The Colonel gave orders for you to come and see him tomorrow at eight."

"Where?!"

The adjutant was sleepy, and now also confused.

“Where should I go to see him?”

“Well, at his office.”

He opened his mouth to say something, anything, but he raised his hand to the rim of his cap, saluted and dragged himself into his office.

He couldn't go “home”, to one of the few undamaged buildings, where a few other officers were given quarters. He took off his army coat, still cleaner than it should be, threw it on the wooden floor, convinced he wouldn't get a wink of sleep because of the anger, jealousy and helplessness that he felt.

He was awakened by a knock on the door, which turned into banging on the door.

He flinched, jumped up, took out his revolver, looked out the window, into the fog, and then slowly opened the door, only slightly.

“Lieutenant,” the even more tired adjutant swallowed hard.

“Yes?!”

“I thought... we thought...”

“You haven't been on the front yet, have you?” he asked him, putting the revolver back in the holster.

“No sir, Lieutenant.”

“That's what I thought,” he said, without knowing himself why he said it.

“The Colonel is expecting you.”

“Tell him... don't tell him anything. I'll be there in a minute.”

He wanted to sneak out through the window, slide down the gutter and go to Ruža, who was, he couldn't get the image out his head, sleeping warm and naked under the covers.

“Yesterday, we captured a deserter who left his position during the previous battles,” said the Colonel, without looking up from the papers lying on his desk. “He was sentenced to death by a firing squad. Take him to the embankment tomorrow morning and execute him.”

“Yes sir, Colonel!” he almost shouted, clicking his heels.

The fog was so dense that for a moment he thought that time had stopped but, the very next moment he changed his plans and dropped by Miljko's tavern where he ordered a glass of brandy.

Actually, there was nothing to think about. He had to choose.

“But, that's impossible!” said Ruža after he told her his plan while they drank coffee in the salon, behind closed curtains. “He'll kill you or punish you severely, transfer you to who knows where and we won't be able to see each other at all.”

“I have a right to you!”

She sat silent.

“And you want me, too.”

“Yes, but...”

“I’ll come by tomorrow night, after...”

Ruža placed her hand on his knee. A loud bang was heard coming from the Sava.

“Dear God!” Ruža shrieked.

“Don’t be frightened,” he said, getting to his feet and strapping on his saber. “A torpedo must have sunk the Austrian watchtower.”

As they were squatting on the shore, Voloda told him everything. However, he wasn’t listening.

“And boom!” said the Russian, startling him back to reality. He tapped him on the shoulder, got up and headed back towards the city, as he looked for a good spot for tomorrow’s execution along the way.

The commander’s adjutant caught up to him again in the hallway.

“Lieutenant, sir, the prisoner killed himself!”

“How did he kill himself?”

“He’s still alive, but he killed himself!”

“I have no idea what you’re talking about?!”

“He hanged himself?”

The adjutant shook his head sleepily.

“No, you see, he...”

Finally, he requested that they take him there.

He followed the adjutant, a guard, and another guard who had taken the prisoner to the latrine.

“I didn’t untie his hands,” the guard told him. “I wanted to, I swear Lieutenant, but we were given strict orders not to untie him for any reason. He goes in, I stay outside, to have a smoke and he isn’t coming out. I go in and what a sight to see.”

There was blood still lying on the floor.

“How could he break his spine?”

“If you will allow,” said the other guard, then he leaned his rifle against the wall, unbuttoned his army coat, took it off and handed it to the adjutant. “He used this,” he said pointing to a bump in the floor. “There used to be another wall here.”

“Alright.”

“And then,” the guard continued as he lay down on the floor, “something like this”. He started kicking around on top of the bump. “Do you understand?”

“Get up.”

“Yes sir!”

“He’ll be dead by morning,” said the other guard.

“He’s unconscious,” added the adjutant, as he reached out to light his cigarette.

He repeated all this in front of the commander and the adjutant, who was blinking more and more slowly, leaving his eyelids closed for longer periods of time.

“The punishment must be carried out,” said the commander calmly.

“But, he can’t get up!”

“Then take him there on a stretcher!”

“Yes, sir!”

The next morning, he walked far ahead of the others, without looking back or ducking, even though more and more bullets were flying in their direction from the other side of the shore.

They came to the designated spot and he ordered them to stand at ease, and continued walking further down the shore. When he returned half an hour later, the commander was standing in front of lined-up soldiers.

“I wanted to scout the terrain,” he mumbled, casting a short glance at the unfortunate prisoner. The soles of his feet, in torn filthy, wool socks, were sticking out from under the blanket.

“And?” asked the commander, as he tried to wipe the smirk from the corners of his thin lips.

“We’re going forward with the firing squad.”

The commander, satisfied, started twirling his moustache, while he ordered the soldiers to take the stretcher to the embankment.

“Why are you just standing there?!” the commander began shouting when four of the soldiers set the stretcher down below the embankment.

“Get him to his feet! Find something to support him if you have to. Find a way, for God’s sake!”

They found some rocks and placed the wounded prisoner in an upright position.

“Good. Lieutenant, you may continue.”

The rocks began to tip and the suicidal prisoner rolled back down.

“Dear God!” the commander raised his arm angrily and headed for the embankment where he mumbled something to the four soldiers, showing them how to secure the stretcher.

“There. Now you can read the sentence!” the commander shouted from the embankment.

But he had lost his voice. He just stood there, gazing at the pale piece of paper in his calm hands.

“Give that to me!” the Colonel said in an almost understanding tone and grabbed the order to execute the death penalty. “Report to my office tomorrow morning. Leave the execution site.”

There was no room in his head for the echo of the salvo fired a minute or two earlier.

He walked into the city like a plague into a village: seemingly barely, determined to follow through with his intentions.

Translated from Serbian by
Persida Bošković

MIHAJLO PANTIĆ

ONCE MORE ABOUT ANDRIĆ'S STORIES

Regardless of how many previous attempts there have been to interpret Andrić's literary work, especially his stories,¹ one is nevertheless faced with a series of ostensible and real doubts and difficulties at the very start, even if they are only unpretentiously attempting to reshape existing observations without trying to discover new insights. Both old and new devotees of Andrić's storytelling will have difficulty in establishing their own hermeneutical circle, independent of previous interpretations, since many ideas and analytical viewpoints (many but not all, for Andrić's work comprises endless possibilities and readings) might seem original and just their own, but the true moment of their birth took place much earlier, somewhere on the pages of libraries of books and studies devoted to our great author. And these libraries are growing bigger with each day.

Still, no matter how much literature on Ivo Andrić's work presents, due to its immensity, an apparent "burden and problem", its extensiveness and value actually make fertile ground for further, endless research, by revealing first of all, the many layers of Andrić's storytelling, and then the inventiveness of literary critics, historians and essayists, who approached this storytelling in many different ways and from various methodological standpoints.

¹ In addition to the separately published first story, *The Journey of Ali Djerzelez* (1920), Andrić published three books, *Short Stories*, between the two World Wars: 1924, 1931 and 1936. After World War II, along with numerous reprinted and compiled editions, he published *The New Short Stories*, 1948, *Panorama*, 1959, *Faces*, 1960 and *The House on its Own* (posthumously), 1976. In this study, our source is *The Collected Works of Ivo Andrić* from 1963 (publishers: Prosveta, Beograd; Mladost, Zagreb; Svjetlost, Sarajevo; the National Publishing House of Slovenia, Ljubljana), the preparation of which was done with the assistance of the author himself. Roman numerals are used for the volumes, and Arabic numerals for the cited pages in Andrić's texts.

A Look at the Opus

A critical and historical view (the point where synchronous and diachronic reading intersect) of the formal transformations of the jagged, complex and analytically never fully comprehended opus of Ivo Andrić, considering the fact that this opus, to a certain extent, passes through the global stages of the South Slavic cultural terrain of the 20th century, will reveal one seemingly ordinary detail. This is, of course, in reference to the standard “image” of the development of an author—from lyrical to epic forms. Although the boundary lines cannot be drawn precisely because, on his long and fruitful road, Andrić never strove for exclusivity or the exclusiveness of this or that literary form, the domination of different types of artistic expression are clearly seen in certain phases of his work. The development of this monolithic literary structure, with a mosaic interior, begins with dominant lyrical tones and forms (*Hrvatska mlada lirika*, 1914). This is followed by a slow transition to distinct, meditative, prose-poetic fragments in the books *Ex Ponto* (1918) and *Unrest* (1920) in which we can sense the nihilistic spirit and feel the breath of the epoch. They are followed by short stories, then novels and then short stories again, and finally, closing the circle towards the end of his life, the author returns to the beginning by writing poetically tinted texts, resembling verses, and ethical and empirical marginality.

Therefore, if we do not observe the genesis of Andrić’s opus as a straight line and attempt to see the constant permeation of elements which differ in form but always have the same origin, that Andrić-like perception of the world which repeatedly seeks the most suitable form of expression, and does not exist outside this form, then we will, at least in part, begin to understand Andrić’s desire and need for silent change, his interest in poems, poetic writing, stories, novels, essays, literary reviews and articles. (Heteronomy and omnipotence, the continuous change in form when expressing oneself, the world, the imagination, and experiences is the fundamental characteristic of Modernism.) Perhaps this couldn’t have been foreseen in the beginning, at a time dominated by youthful melancholy. In *Hrvatska mlada lirika*, in his short biographical notes on the authors, Ljubo Wiesner states that Andrić has a future, but also categorically claims: “Not enough energy to write long articles”,² which was an absolute miss. However, this miss is symptomatic, because this is foremost a statement about Andrić’s creative state at the time and only then, based on the insight of this state, it is also a statement

² *Hrvatska mlada lirika*, Croatian Writers’ Association, Zagreb, 1914, preface and biography of poet Ljubo Wiesner, p. 147. Only Tin Ujević wrote an autobiography in this book

which was meant to be a prognosis. Today, we know that it was not until later, based on his restless desire to express himself and his explorations of the language, that he discovered his primary, narrative, vocation. His early poeticism however, clearly remained on the sidelines, as a barely audible tone permeating his narrative. Thus, it is indisputable that to interpret Andrić's short stories, beginning with the first, *The Journey of Ali Džerzelez* (1918), one must remember to do so by linking them to the lyrical meditative preoccupations of the author in his youth phase. The transition from one zone to the other of literary form, from lyrics to epics, will then be viewed as an organic transformation of the opus, and not as a radical, unmotivated break, which otherwise could be construed as such since the author is moving from a spatial and temporal impersonality, characteristic of poetry, to the historical, modified by a natural fictionalized narrative, and to a certain extent still factually verified mode of narration. And vice versa. The historical background (of the contextual, not textual type) must not be ignored while reading both *Ex Ponto* and *Unrest*, books which are, more candidly said, the result of the defeatism and melancholy of the war and postwar epoch, just as Andrić, in his moralistic texts, has the need to forebode the evil code of human existence, susceptible to the influence of history with which and in which he lived. Also, prose on the brink of fantasy, which Andrić also wrote his entire life is, perhaps, nothing more than an attempt to run away from the ominous work and the hellish image of this history into language, just like Scheherazade ran from story to story to escape her (as well as our) only inevitability.

The short story is the central narrative form of Andrić's polyvalent opus. Critics have long ago agreed that Andrić is, above all, a narrator,³ and that his works, if we sum up the spoken, suggested and unspoken assumptions, owe their suggestiveness and artistic value to the individual projection, empowerment, creative use and transformation of "the organic power of oral storytelling" (Eikhenbaum). Indeed, Andrić's writings provide for numerous grounds and reasons for coming to this conclusion, either based on analyses of the narrative technique and structure of his works, or interpretations of the links with oral tradition,⁴ or even taking notice of stylistic constants or thematic and semantic sets. Even Andrić's early works, *Ex Ponto* and *Unrest*, whose poetic quality continues in later books, regardless of their enigmatic genre, are characterized by a kind of "suppressed", rudimentary narrative, the beginning of a "story", even if it remains only implied, on a level of a

³ Slavko Leovac in the book *Pripovedač Ivo Andrić*, Matica srpska, Novi Sad, 1979, predominant opinion: "Ivo Andrić is first and foremost a storyteller." p. 5.

⁴ See, among other references, the book *Živi palimpsesti* by Hatidže Krnjević, Nolit, Beograd, 1980.

dynamic or sound image. The great epic creations, chronicles which swallow up centuries, *The Bridge on the Drina* and *Bosnian Chronicle* (the former to a greater and the latter to a somewhat lesser extent) were created by lining up, gathering various narrative forms. *The Woman from Sarajevo*, and especially *The Damned Yard*, due to the specificity of the topic, remain in “no man’s land”, somewhere between a short story and a novel (the structure is that of a short story and the flow of a novel), and they represent good examples of quantitative expansion and qualitative changes in the underlying story, that is, of how it is brought to the threshold of novelistic form. Thusly, the unfinished, posthumously published novel, *The Pasha’s Concubine*, is composed of relatively independent narrative wholes.⁵

The diversity of narrative forms, the affiliation with artistic and social turmoil at the beginning of the 20th century, participating in the movement “Young Bosnia”,⁶ creating within the *Hrvatska mlada lirika*, interest in the short, fragmented modern form, influences of European philosophical thoughts marked by melancholy and pessimism, but also the later references to oral tradition (shape of the story, balanced fable, the use and adaptation of legends), bringing syntax, language and style closer to the literary norms of Vuk’s revision and tradition, as well as finding and accepting the modified realistic convention without forgetting epochal contemporary dilemmas (the relativized position of the subject, the absence of God, the curse of history)—this was what made Andrić’s works so complex. However, this complexity is veiled under seeming simplicity—everything flows harmoniously and in a uniform rhythm. Layers in the text and the meanings are in tune and merge together. However, once one begins to analyze these layers, Andrić’s work of literature turns into a labyrinth, where every exit is mistaken for the right one. Only at this point can we talk about the actual difficulties and doubts in interpreting a narrative world which changes with each new reading, and only then do the challenges of Andrić’s storytelling rise to the surface. The first challenge is the question of typology, which is completely open to interpretation.

⁵ In the text “Napomena uz Omerpašu Latasa”, Prosveta, Beograd, 1977, edited by Vera Stojić, Radovan Vučković, Muharem Pervić and Petar Džadžić, it also says: “Since both of Andrić’s novels/chronicles are written as mosaics, one should assume that this is Andrić’s specific novel writing technique, which he uses to ‘piece together’ completed stories into a novel, and thus uses a similar technique to write this novel.” In the “Notes” of the 1981 issue (with the same editors and publisher), this assumption was reinforced by Andrić’s words: “I actually never wrote books but rather detached and scattered texts which, in time, more or less logically, came together in books—novels or collections of short stories.”

⁶ See more in the book *Dogma i utopija* by Predrag Palavestra, Slovo ljubve, Beograd, 1977.

The Typology of Andrić's Stories

There is a wide range of possible typologies of Andrić's short stories, from thematic classifications, which are the simplest, and at the same time most frequent and the least reliable, followed by formal classifications, which are based on the similarities or differences in narrative patterns or elements, and temporal classifications, which pay special attention to the times in which the story takes place, that is, to the historical and non-historical aspect of the narrative, or those which are based on differentiating between the creative phases ("early", "mature", "late"). This classification is also easily disputed for one simple reason. That is to say, in each period of his creative path, Andrić wrote and published various types of short stories simultaneously. However, the relativity of all the typologies does not actually present a problem, if of course, they are taken to be operative and functional, as proof of the fact that these works cannot be reduced to any typological model given in advance, and finally, as an element which adds to (not subtracts from) the understanding of the works' inner wealth and value. Classification according to genre will show that Ivo Andrić fostered, with equal success, both short, non-fiction, poetic prose models (for example, *Paths*), and short stories which, based on their chronotopic broadness, come quite close to the category of novels (for example, *Zeko* and *Anika's Times*). Genre diversity only confirms our theory that Andrić shaped his story according to the selected situation, and not vice versa. He did not shape the selected situation according to an already existing prose model. An author's ability to adapt to a topic is a sign of his natural urge to write about this topic.

If we observe the narrative prose of Ivo Andrić in the light of the familiar suggestion made by Cvetan Todorov about dividing literature into historical and non-historical genres, according to which historical genres are linked exclusively to one literary historical period (for example, the realistic short story), while on the other hand, non-historical genres are independent of style and form (for example, poetic writings), we will see that this suggestion functions at the level of theoretical abstraction, while in practice it is very relative. That is to say, every literary opus which an author creates by blending various poetic forces, in Andrić's case this is his blending of historical and non-historical genres, is a warning for exclusivity, in other words, an insufficient number of possible typologies, precisely because it exceeds theoretical schematics. Even if we transfer the terms historical and non-historical to a different level of interpretation, and simply classify Andrić's works according to whether they include history or not, we will not come to a more significant conclusion. We might only increase the inadmissibility of

typological research. Even more so because the terms historical and non-historical are proportionately linked to the opposing pair, traditional and modern, which results in a badly founded typology (even axiology), according to which traditional is equated with historical and non-historical with modern. Andrić's works help us to notice this false conceptual concordance. For instance, in some stories with a historical theme (for example, *Mustafa Magyar*), Ivo Andrić is an extremely modern storyteller, while in other stories, seemingly dealing with modern times (for example, *Dorđe Dorđević*), he uses traditional, almost clichéd prose models.

Characteristic Narrative Spaces

The diversity of Andrić's short stories only confirms a compactness of a higher order, a sign of the author's refusal to reconcile to any particular model, the ultimate result of a search for an always new but same story (told in Andrić's manner). Thus, we cannot claim that Andrić was creating and had created one type of short story, only that he always ventured anew to solve the issue of the narrative form by taking an assumed or implied (oral, mythical) story pattern and adding layers of his own characteristic signs and elements (distinguishing forms of description, the monologic nature of expression, a specific manner of introducing the story and a specific way of making a point in the story, emphasizing the psychological aspect of storytelling and a concurrent type of individualization and characterization of the characters, a unique approach to prose structure and a distinctive attitude towards history, a realistic narrative with occasional sidestepping into the fantastic, the stability of the fable and diverse content interpretations, constant thematic composition, reflexivity and so on).

Mimesis dominates Andrić's works, especially his short stories. However, there is also a series of unusually important characteristics, crucial for its "color", which cannot be interpreted using the mimetic principle. The mythical layers and the archetypal narrative situations, the lyrical and poetically phantasmatic elements, which mark almost everything Andrić has written,⁷ the implied and realized metaphysical qualities, the psychological stratification of the characters, the fantasy of "absence" (*Jelena, the Woman of My Dream*), the deceptiveness of reality and (in)consistency of dreams, are all by definition at the basis of all of the most valuable works of our author. Previous interpretations, inspired by the non-mimetic quality, which can be sensed in the background of *mimetic* space, often move in this direction, but in general, remain in the shadow of analyses of epic methods and the content of

⁷ Predrag Palavestra, *Skriveni pesnik, Slovo ljubve*, Beograd, 1981.

Ivo Andrić's stories. These stories, whose definite number has not yet been established, cannot be reduced, as we have already established, to one relatively particular or at least partially reliable narrative profile, but as we have also already seen, it is also quite certain that they contain a certain number of constants, literary topoi and interaction which we could call *characteristic points of narration*. We have listed them, and now let us describe some of them in short.

Links between History and Present Time

Specific interactions of the "transcendental narrator" (which cannot be fully identified with the author or hero-storyteller) with history and historical themes is the most frequently mentioned and interpreted constant in Andrić's works, the interaction which a writer uses to "conquer" discourse about the numinous and universal. This interaction, then, reveals what the writer bases his own story on and how; how he fictionally interprets the factographic, documentary basis of the narration; in other words, how he treats the material, modifies it and adapts it to the laws of artistic narration (forming characters, establishing the time and space of the story, and so on); and, in short, how he creates narrative illusion.

In order to establish the position of a "transcendental narrator" Andrić, to a certain extent, returns to the experience of the ancient story and the primeval narrative. He uses factography not only to tell his story, to communicate or transmit some new or newly articulated form of "knowledge", by exchanging and changing the facts, but also to recreate the archetypical form of narrative which reaches the "truth", in a quintessential way. The selection from an abundance of information, which does not fall under any rationalized hierarchy, but rather creative intuition, including the manner in which this information is fictionally upgraded and combined, reveals a narrator of mythical strength who, through symbolic transposition of the real world, speaks of a real, tragic essence and evil side of history. To paraphrase the introductory statement of *The Story of the Vizier's Elephant: fictional* stories often hide the *real* and *unrecognized* side of history. Therefore, Andrić is not a passive historian, but a narrator who revives history, searches for some sort of meaning in its meaninglessness. Of course, meaning is possible only in language and illusion, in the story. Thus, history "serves" both the author and the reader to recognize contemporaneity, to recognize oneself and find a balance between the state in which "history owns us" and "we own history".⁸ Preservation,

⁸ "For, the main character in Andrić's stories is most often not the one narrated about: the main character is history, while Mustafa Magyar, Celebi-Hafiz, Grand

through the long march of time, of established (verified, tested) narrative conventions—and discourse about the past, about history, about accumulated experience, about objectively viewed individual and universal destinies represents one such convention—is only a specially prepared foundation for stepping out into the secret of existence, into that which cannot be uttered.

Present time enters into Andrić's stories through two mediums: the transposition and the historicizing of the material. This method is much closer to authors of the realistic legacy, who in summarizing the past, search for the universal principle of history and overall existence, which are important for the present as well, than to Andrić's generational and style-forming poetic surroundings, exposed both from the outside and inside to the strong radiation of modernistic, in the narrow sense, expressionistic ideas. Except for a few of his early stories and the unfinished novel, *On the Sunny Side*, Andrić has intentionally distanced himself from current poetic concepts and is thus incomparable. In spite of everything, some analogies can be made even in antithetically based works, in different types of literary expression. Early Andrić and early Crnjanski are more similar than one would guess at first glance, or judging by their correspondence. Simultaneous reading of *The Journal of Čarnojević* and the stories which, potentially, make for the frame of the novel *On the Sunny Side*, can reinforce this thesis and thus should be allotted a separate text. To illustrate the "antithetical analogies", we can look at how Krleža and Andrić, who are antipodes,⁹ take different paths in shaping an early, quite boyish fascination, which they, as peers, acquired at the same time by watching "panoramas". These wandering prototypes of cinematographers, collections of photographs of "distant lands" (this romantic topos is frequent in Expressionism), also visited the cities in the Balkans at the beginning of the 20th century, as a modest part of accelerated technological progress. Andrić writes his story *Panorama* in the third person about a boy in whom this small wonder awakens a lyrical, fanciful desire to see distant parts of the world, while Krleža develops the same theme through the prism of memories, and uses it as merely an introduction to a rhetorical escapade regarding initial political views, which is characteristic of his writing: "Back in high school, we were divided into two groups, the Russians and the Japanese. This was a time when even the moonlight seemed beautiful, like in Anderson's stories, when we went to the international panorama in

Vizier Jusuf and the rest, are but mere deposits and inundations of history, pieces of human material which history carries with it and throws out on the way at some sharp and unexpected turn." (Jovan Hristić, preface to the book of Ivo Andrić's collection of short stories, *The Bridge on the Žepa*, Nolit, Beograd, 1972, p. 12).

⁹ Nikola Milošević, *Andrić i Krleža kao antipodi*, Slovo ljubve, Beograd, 1974.

Margaretska Street with butterflies in our stomachs in expectation of new beauty. We were still so little and couldn't reach the panoramic zooms, so they had to put pillows on our chairs to make us taller and enable us to see the Globe. And there, in the international panorama, the Globe was spinning. Java, Ceylon, Cairo, Madagascar, Port Arthur."¹⁰

Regional and Universal—Links to the Oral Tradition

The connection between regional and universal, this parallelism, marks the entire literary opus of Ivo Andrić. Narrating on an invisible border where two antagonistically opposed worlds touch (closer to the East, but aware of the West), accompanied by the amalgamation of phenomena of different origin, Andrić succeeded in creating symbolic, and evoking genuine, plausibility of both the real and mythical land of Bosnia. In his works, Bosnia is a type of chthonic, chaotic stage on the face of our world, a place where different nations, religions, paganism and Bogomilism, languages, influences, personalities, views and ideologies, dogmas and heresy, good and evil, deep hatred and shallow love, well-known names and nameless protagonists of history, dreams and reality—in short, a realm of the irrational powers of history, intertwine but also atavistically clash.¹¹

Links to oral narration, to the language of the ancient storyteller, to the generic elements of narration, represent the thread Andrić uses to descend down time and then use this mythical ancient model as an impulse to shape a written, individualized world of prose whose meanings are metaphysical and universal in character. Andrić repeats and by repeating renews some forms of oral storytelling. *Skaz*, an oral form

¹⁰ Miroslav Krleža, "Eppur si muove", *Plamen*, 1. VIII 1919, p. 96.

¹¹ "The history of Bosnia dominates the greater part of Andrić's artistic world. This is a Bosnia where there are still traces of Roman buildings and times, where there is still heroic and legendary memory of medieval independence, but most of all, a Bosnia under the Turks (1463-1878) and Austria-Hungary (1878-1918). This is to say, Bosnia as a great trade and cultural crossroads in the history of the Balkans, with a Muslim, Orthodox and Catholic population and way of life. There are also Jewish communities here and there—especially communities of the Sephardim, Spanish Jews who came to the more tolerant Ottoman world to escape the Christian Inquisition during the 16th and 17th century. And finally, like on all vast roads of history, there were various individuals blown in by who knows what winds: the Levant people, the Turks, the French, the Germans, people from various parts of Central Europe and others. This colorful array of people and destinies were enough to direct Andrić's work more towards the ultimate questions and enigmas of human life than towards ethnically homogeneous romantic notions in historical prose. This is the fundamental difference between Andrić's portrayal of the past and the manner in which it was portrayed in traditional historical novels—for example, those of Walter Scott, Henryk Sienkiewicz, August Šenoa and Janko Veselinović." (Svetozar Koljević, *Pripovetke Ivo Andrića*, Zavod za udžbenike i nastavna sredstva, Beograd, 1983, p. 20).

of narrative—narrative of an oral form, a stylization technique of quoting speech in an unmediated form is something we often come across in his works, while the story serves, similar to the traditional narrative, only as a motive for telling new stories. The language, thereby, remains completely in accordance with the tradition of Vuk. It has already been noted that “the structure of Andrić’s sentences remains close to the structure of the sentences of our folk storytellers and Vuk’s method of narration”.¹² However, the link to oral narration is neither linear nor one dimensional, precisely because it is achieved through the medium of the “letter” and then passed through poetically separated, individualized narrative optics. This link is very complex, dynamic and stratified with regard to both method and meaning.

The Point in Andrić’s Stories: the World in One Sentence

Just as Andrić always starts his stories in a different manner, initiating in the opening sentence the magic of storytelling and luring the reader right into illusion, he also always ended them in a different manner, by usually selecting an artistically most suitable and most effective ending. There are numerous ways to end a story, but there is only one that is right—Andrić knew well how to manage this abundance of possibilities. Here, we will call the final statement of his story the point, which is slowly becoming a common term in the theory of short prose forms, when speaking about the final sentence of a story, the place where the narration definitely stops. Although, in a broader sense and not strictly speaking, the point can be any effective, meaningful statement, similar to a saying or a maxim, a statement which is the focus or heart of the narrative and whose appearance in the story does not have a strictly designated place. (the point can naturally appear anywhere in the narrative.) However, we are more interested in the way in which Ivo Andrić ends, that is, makes a point in his story, how he prepares the reader for that moment filled with silence which, as a rule, occurs the moment the story is read. Jovan Hristić says: “In a classical short story, the end means bringing down the curtain on a world which lasted a few printed pages and then disappeared, just as suddenly as it appeared, by transforming into a perfect symbol or formula; with Andrić, the end is a somewhat more privileged point in time—death or departure—but we know that events continue even after the story has ended, just as they have been taking place before the story began.”¹³

¹² Dragiša Živković, *Od Vuka do Andrića*, Studentski centar, Beograd, 1965, p. 122.

¹³ *op. cit.*, p. 9.

Ivo Andrić tells several types of stories and tales—from those which are built on a matrix of simple forms or oral storytelling (it once was and is worth remembering)—to forms which are raised on an artificial, written template, or are simply a frame for some static scene—to those which actually overrun conventions and the length of short literary forms and approach the category of novels. More types of stories means more types of points, although it is impossible, and theoretically useless, to search for an algorithm which would enable us to say that this and this type of storytelling goes with this and this type of point. In solving the given narrative equation with many unknowns, it is undeniable that the type of narration partly determines the type of point, just as vice versa, the type of point partly determines the nature of the narration which created it. But, be as it may, with Andrić we can relatively easily notice several types of points, although surprisingly, the type with a strong focus on the topic, known as “the falcon theory”, which unexpectedly changes and redirects the basic meaning of the story, is proportionately rare. There are, however, points in the form of images, statements regarding the completion of the event being narrated, what happened next, a universal statement, a “point” which purposefully avoids the point, and the special, one could say, Andrić’s unique, complex point, the focus of our interest, which synthesizes all of the aforementioned types and is somewhat greater than the sum of them all. This is the point in which narration is thickened to the point of something that cannot really be told, but only indicated. Calmed by this type of ending statement, the story stops being a story (about someone or something concrete) and becomes a universal metaphysical foreboding. When, for example, the author ends the story “Mustafa Magyar” with the sentence: “The persecutors are coming.” (V, 40)—the reader suddenly finds himself in a strange interspace between the illusion of the story and tangible reality, and can almost sense as these persecutors—now we are no longer sure whether they are Magyar’s persecutors or his (everyone has persecutors, at least in their head), flow from the world of illusion into reality, as they return to their original, true state, because they did come from our world, not someone else’s, and entered Andrić’s story. It seems that, by writing these types of point sentences, Ivo Andrić is actually listening to and examining that blurry and unclear intermediate world, a world in one sentence, that inexpressible space of shaky and indistinguishable borders between dreams and reality, life and death, fiction and fact, talking and silence. Partially independent, or at least clearly separated from their natural position (that’s how we most easily and characteristically remember them), these point sentences, mutually evoked and connected, comprise the golden thread of Andrić’s works. Let us look at some examples:

“I was young and foolish. I didn’t know the things I would later come to understand as I walk the world, among people: that this devil prattles, mumbles and whispers around the world, a little everywhere, not just in the mill under Graovik.” (*In the Mill*, VI, 110.)

“Before and after this, my father, in a fit of temper I couldn’t understand, had beaten me often and hard, as he did my brother, as soon as he was a little older. (Later, we spend the greater part of our lives healing from this childhood!) But I don’t think I’ve ever felt worse or harsher pain and humiliation than that morning I got a beating while everyone in the house was still asleep and the outside world appeared through a broken window, under the first light of day, full of senseless evil and incomprehensible, complicated answers.” (*The Window*, IX, 60.)

“Further on, beyond here, outside the house, a world scattered, the darkness and the night hardened into dark roads, suspicious and dangerous areas where someone is always trudging and staggering.” (*The Walk*, VIII, 257.)

“Like murky waters, time closed in above the tall young man and carried him out of cell no. 115, far away, never to return.” (*In Cell No. 115*, X, 62.)

“For, dreams have no power over a man who, when he wished, would easily and quickly forget real events, and did not remember dreams at all.” (*An Uneasy Year*, V, 129.)

“And when the next morning, on a cold and gloomy dawn, he was awakened by a sharp and cold sound of the prison bell, he wondered, without pain or bitterness, why the night is filled with sunshine and richness, and the morning is gray, glum, without a ray of light.” (*The Sun*, X, 71.)

“Even I am no longer me, but a nameless, silent space through which human faces pass in floating processions, swiftly, on a flashing line with no end or beginning, and so I am losing myself in them, silent and faceless, like in a snowstorm.” (*Faces*, X, 97.)

“He died from a heart attack, feeling no pain or illness, he slipped away in a moment, as he sat on the terrace of his house. In the glass of water beside him, a cube of sugar dropped into it was dissolving and sending upward tiny, fine bubbles, like sparks.” (*A Family Portrait*, VIII, 285.)

“So he breathed his last. It was Friday evening, the night of a new moon; and by general agreement, his death was miraculous and holy and filled men with wonder, like his life itself.” (*Death in Sinan's Tekke*, VI, 209.)

Andrić's point is the climax of Andrić's magic.

Storytelling as Psychological Analysis

The depth of psychological analysis, as a constant in the narrative of Ivo Andrić, does not slow down the flow of the narration, nor does it really change its chronological (linear) nature—sets of psychological motivations are always in the function of upgrading and strengthening the central plot. In just a few quick digressions, the narrator develops an inner description of a character, and this seemingly minimalized “psychological study” has a crucial influence on the ultimate effect and “color” of the narrative. Although extremely “precise”, or better yet, well-discovered, not one of Andrić's statements is apodictic. It is due to this that his stories come out of the framework of realistic tradition and become modern. The narrator *implies* more than he *says*. A muffled, mystical aura always floats around his characters. Quite often, these characters are under the power of only one sense, or they are obsessed with only one thought (“The world is full of swine,” Mustafa Magyar keeps repeating), marked by fate in some muffled, inaccessible way, which other people cannot understand. Their predestination leads to a tragic conclusion. Their downfall is inevitable.

Suggestiveness is also achieved in the narrative by consistently building contrasts. The outward image of the heroes is inconsistent with their true, inner state. The apparent success, fulfillment, fame and status are eaten away and ultimately thwarted by psychological unrest, regardless of what it is: erotic darkness, damnation, ontological insecurity, loneliness or a “hazy” being. In accordance with this, Andrić's first published story, *The Journey of Ali Djerzelez* (1920), is also read as an introduction to the depth psychology of his entire opus. Djerzelez is a psychological inversion, a grotesque interpretation of an epic hero. He is preceded by rumours of glory and behind these rumors stands an ordinary man distorted by misery, erotically unfulfilled, flawed. “Djerzelez” is basically a repetition of the story about discrepancy between reality and desire, about an endeavour to go beyond human limits. Milan Bogdanović has already made a note of this: “Djerzelez is above all a symbol (...) a personification of the eternal battle, described countless times from Don Quixote to the present, between man's desire to have

more, better, brighter and reality, which blatantly hinders these desires with thousands of small, stupid and unavoidable circumstances.”¹⁴

Language and Narrative Forms

Andrić's narrative language is extremely controlled, with a calm rhythm, without sudden leaps and with occasional lyrical passages; it is sometimes sparing with statements and most often approached from a monologic perspective. Dialogues, when there are any, are reduced and sparse, and in most cases, they are used at turning points of the narrated situation. Then, by returning to the regular rhythm, dialogues fade and disappear. In the story *In the Camp*, probably one of the best Andrić had ever written, we, in a paradigmatic way, have practically all of the listed characteristics. The story starts “slowly”, silently, in the form of a “report” and then, by portraying some of the (minor) characters, describing a gloomy place (which “compels” evil and crime) and gradually building the foundation of the “historical time” (the Turkish army is gathering, preparing to suppress the First Serbian Uprising), it begins to flow more quickly only to reach its climax with the point itself. The voice of the narrator, standing on the border of the presented world, is cold, calm and eerily accurate. The main character, Mula Jusuf, is introduced slowly. He is mentioned for the first time, casually, somewhere in the middle of the story, and he is made to be equally as important as the previous protagonists of the story. But then, the narrator's eye “singles him out”, focuses on him and follows only him until he meets his tragic end. This mobility and shift in subjects of interest, accompanied by strict control of narrating techniques and the inevitable acceleration of the plot, represent typical characteristics of Andrić's storytelling.

The first-person narrative is respectively rare in Andrić's stories, while objectivism, impartiality and distance of a chronicler, as well as constant emphasis on being an *observer* and not a *participant* can also be found in more unusually constructed, non-narrative stories. Credibility in the third-person narrative mode—in which objectivity is implied and confessional writing is impossible—is achieved by the narrator's ability to look through the eyes of his hero, a skill which overcomes the limitations of the “he” perspective. In some part of the story, *In the Camp*, the strength of language expression neutralizes the difference between the viewpoints of the narrator and that of the character. The narrator is much closer to the character—their view and understanding

¹⁴ Milan Bogdanović, “Ivo Andrić: *Put Alije Derzeleza*”, SKG, n. s., I, 1920, 2, pp. 124-130.

of the world is practically melted together. By focusing on the character, who stems from the narrator's language, and then bringing closer two points of view (almost identifying with the other), this character becomes absolutely credible, "alive", he actually feels and thinks using the narrator's words. Suddenly, the character "participates" in the narration as much as the narrator does in the character. Let's take a look:

"He asked to substitute for old Alihodja, the local mullah, so the he might announce the time of the night prayer. With an oil-spattered lantern in his hand, he scraped his shoulders and knees against the narrow walls as he climbed the spiral stairway to the top of the minaret. Once upon there, he would cry out through hic cupped palms and thrust his chin out fiercely at the invisible sky and the new moon that was melting softly in pools of murky crimson vapors. And his voice rose steadily, lashing and cutting through the darkness above the town like cold, thin, but irresistible steel, so that children awoke and whimpered and seamstresses lifted their heads from their work. Afterword he could not sleep again." (V, 16)

Or further on:

"With a meek air of helplessness, the girl raised her arms (as if about to be crucified) and peeled off her short sleeveless jacket. The movements of those arms, white and ample and yet drained of all strength and will, overpowered and shattered the trembling mullah, and he came up to her to untie the sash of her pantaloons.

'This, too, daughter. Off with everything, everything'

She resisted weakly, with gestures that were stunted and mechanical as in a dream.

Here the hand could wander at leisure, over those thighs and hips. No end to it, ever! It was warm there, and smooth like ice. His mouth twisted and gathered in a pucker, as if from raspberries." (V, 20)

Suddenly, an oxymoronic devise in sentence structure (warmth – ice; pucker – raspberries) brings us to the very edge of "morbidity", to an almost physiological link to the described situation.

Symbolic Nature of Storytelling

The multilayered quality and wealth of symbolism enrich the foundations of the mimetic interpretation in Andrić's prose. The symbol of the bridge, according to a great number of interpreters, is the key symbol of his work, and *The Bridge on the Žepa* (1926) is the early,

perhaps even the first place where this symbol appears. Ostensibly written in the realistic mode, as a story about building a bridge in a Bosnian crag, this story actually talks about an artist, about his endeavor to create a work of art. (Analogy: Just as the builder of the Grand Vizier's bridge in Višegrad, first built a smaller bridge over a tributary of Drina, so did Andrić, in preparation for his great chronicle, first write *The Bridge on the Žepa*.) The symbolic link intensifies towards the end of the story. The narrator abandons his position as an objective storyteller, becomes the hero of the story and explains how he came up with the idea to write the story *The Bridge on the Žepa*:

“The teller of this tale was the first to think of looking into the origins of the bridge. This happened one evening when he was returning from the mountains and, feeling weary, had sat down beside the stone parapet of the bridge. It was that time of summer when the days were scorching but the nights had a nip to them. As he leaned against the stonework, he noticed that it was still warm from the day's heat. He perspired, yet a cool breeze was blowing in off the Drina; pleasant and somehow unexpected was the touch of that warm hewn stone. There was an instant rapport between them. He then decided to write its story.” (VI, 195)

In addition to taking and creatively enhancing mythical and folklore symbolism, Andrić also makes use of symbolism when it comes to the narrative setting by personifying the space and objects within it (*The Rzav Hills*, *Olujaci*, *The Scythe*), or by assigning symbols of sublimity to low mimetic types (*Miracle at Olovo*, *Čorkan and the German Girl*, *Mila and Prelac* and others). Andrić's prose is a dynamic sum of transcended history, the reality of a tangible region, and the unimaginable symbolic potential of experience, language and the collective unconsciousness. The author first senses all these things, and then he unmistakably finds and talks about them.

The diversity of themes and symbolic forms which the author, in his endeavor to convey a particular type of experience, triggers by moving within the language, (which is particularly apparent in the numerousness of his stories and the inability to categorize them) find their focal point in Andrić's artistic spirit, creatively restless, his inability to settle down with only one form. He wanders and tests both himself and his versatility, the only place he really exists, but also his relative consistency and stability, by constantly changing forms in which he realizes himself. And no matter how rational and balanced Andrić's approach to literature is, one cannot single out a clearly established “system” of meaning without needed caution and with definite certainty. This relativized “system” exists only in the text and can be reached only indirectly, by means of

very complex symbolic relations, which cannot be expressed in the language of critical interpretation.

Here we see a higher homology (of meaning) of the text and the world. Ivo Vidan notices: "The world, as seen by Ivo Andrić, is a gathering of superhuman, unexplainable, irrational forces which shape history, which allow a limited, short-term illusion of meaning for each section of time."¹⁵ In the opinion of Muharem Pervić, Andrić's prose "relates closely to modern sensibility because of the shared doubt that man and his destiny can be reduced to any sort of scheme, frameworks for any sort of lucid speculation, categories of any sort of logic."¹⁶ Based on the previously mentioned observations, we can say that, through his diverse storytelling, Andrić managed to stay clear of a hypostasized type of narrative which would, ultimately, be formed with the simple imitation of the empirical world, and the world can never be expressed completely, especially not in only one, no matter how well constructed, way. (The principle of constant change, that is, the constant transformation of the narrative and the elusiveness of the *story* of the world, are typical of modernistic poetics. However, with Andrić, the changing narrative is a result of his search for constants in human existence, which in turn, undoubtedly gives this narrative an additional artistic dimension.) Knowledge about the helplessness of an individual in the vortex of time, the unrepeatability and irreducibility of all individuality, but also about its dependence on historical fate, whereby no "system" can fulfill and redeem us. We can only seemingly overcome it by agreeing to the illusion of the story, the hum of its language, the forgetfulness in storytelling. Andrić's heroes are controlled by some imaginary, yet existing forces. Different twists within their monotonous existence—motivated precisely by these unknown forces—are often the central part, the mainstay of storytelling. Given a situation such as this, as Andrić says, a story emerges in the form of a "picture".¹⁷

On Stories and Storytelling

Andrić's preoccupation with the illusion of storytelling reveals a constant reference to the reality of storytelling. He often mentions the

¹⁵ Ivo Vidan, *Tekstovi u kontekstu*, Liber, Zagreb, 1975, p. 41.

¹⁶ Ivo Vidan, *Tekstovi u kontekstu*, Liber, Zagreb, 1975, p. 41.

¹⁷ "The main strength and the true source of every story, each individual scene of a story, are found in a single good thought, a single true image. In a set of sentences, it plays the same role as the queen bee in a swarm of bees. When it appears before you, you should leave everything and follow it. It contains the seed and yeast for everything else. The value of a rapidly and illegibly written sentence is not in itself, but in the abundance and the ease with which thoughts and images swarm after it and before it, irresistibly tied to it." (Ivo Andrić, *Istorija i legenda*, Prosveta, Beograd, 1981, p. 54.

place and role of stories and storytelling. Of course, texts and fragments written about story writing hold an especially important place in interpreting the mentioned narrative constants. For the most part, Andrić does not fall under the category of narrators who, in the text of the story itself, by resorting to self-reflection with implicit poetic meaning, comment and follow the course of the story, nevertheless Ivo Andrić, by giving a theme to the place and role of the story and storytelling, and then by making occasional or random notes, continuously talks about the story, is preoccupied, obsessed and gives in to its magical power. During moments of this kind of devotion of both the storyteller and (by reading) the reader to the illusion of storytelling, reality ceases to exist and consciousness focuses on the story which is—in the words used in *Jelena, the Woman of My Dream*—“the greatest reality of all”. (VII, 262) The other side of Andrić’s story, woven out of dreams and irrationality, memories and hallucinations, is just as important as its mimetic foundation. The story often results from fluctuation between the oneiric and the real, referential and poetic, evoking the past and describing the present (*Mustafa Magyar*). Some stories almost completely equate with an imaginative, associative game (*Jelena, the Woman of My Dream, The Game, Woman on the Rock, A Summer in the South*). This part of Andrić’s work is characterized by a special kind of fantasy, seemingly hinged to an objective existing time and place, but to a certain extent also distant, independent, and “cleansed” of the presence of such categories.

Although they predominantly originate from epic transposition of historically imaginable (possible and probable), that is to say, events that actually took place, Andrić’s stories maintain the archetypical pattern of storytelling, with the addition of the author’s awareness of the anthropological significance and meaning of the perception and effect of the *story*. The perception of the stories is identified with the elementary existential situation—we live the *story*, storytelling, history. Storytelling is an elementary, primal, exclusively human ritual, in which the world takes on a shape through language and gains an understanding of itself. Storytelling passes on experiences and knowledge, implies the ineffable, archives the collective and generalizes the individual, makes connections with other and different existences, stops silence and loneliness. “A story is discourse directed at other discourses,” as Bakhtin would say. The narrating consciousness, which arises from the buried, deep layers of Andrić’s story, searches and finds balance between modern research on the meaning of narration and the traditional, coded, magical, generic original need to tell a story free from banal purposes. Andrić’s approach to storytelling, his immanent poetics, observed in the light of his spiritual biography as well, owes his continuous topical quality to the fortunate discovery of inner balance between the traditional foundation

of the story and its modern interpretation, suited to the author's times. And this is why we can say that Ivo Andrić, by mastering the nihilistic experience of his times and recreating the mythical and legendary potential of "basal" narration, renewed the humanistic vision of literature. Starting with a modernistic negation of transcendence which is further strengthened by the calamitous experience of modern times (and man who has found himself in these times), Andrić has, going in the opposite direction one might say (not from belief to non-belief, but from non-belief to belief) come back to the philosophical concept of art, which is essentially inclined towards man, regardless of the true nature of man and his miserable position in every, but especially in modern history. If we observe the ultimate consequences of this concept, for Andrić, the storyteller, art has meaning only when it brings man closer to himself and increases his awareness. Without necessarily making him better.

Everything runs dry except for storytelling. Andrić talks about this in his speech "On Stories and Storytelling":

"In thousands of languages, in the most diverse climes, from century to century, beginning with the very old stories told around the hearth in the huts of our remote ancestors down to the works of modern storytellers which are appearing at this moment in the publishing houses of the great cities of the world, it is the story of the human condition that is being spun and that men never weary of telling to one another. The manner of telling and the form of the story vary according to periods and circumstances, but the taste for telling and retelling a story remains the same: the narrative flows endlessly and never runs dry. Thus, at times, one might almost believe that from the first dawn of consciousness throughout the ages, mankind has constantly been telling itself the same story, though with infinite variations, to the rhythm of its breath and pulse."¹⁸

Therefore, for Andrić, a story is proof of existence, not only and exclusively of the *one telling the story*, but also of *those who are listening* (reading); and then it is, probably, an elusive but nevertheless real revival of *those who are mentioned in the story*; and finally, it is a fictitious, but nevertheless true, objectification of the subject matter.

P.S.

By continuously searching for an artistic equivalent of his perception of the world, Ivo Andrić has dealt with almost every kind of literary

¹⁸ Ibid, pp 69-70.

form. But most of all, the story. This study casts light upon these stories once again, first from the standpoint of the typology of Andrić's entire opus, followed by a catalogue of narrative and poetic constants: language, narrative forms, chronotopes, points, meanings, symbols, perception of a story and storytelling and so on. Based on the description and analysis of these constants, we can conclude that, for Andrić, a story is a creative linguistic act where the energies of different instances meet and both a mythical and modern, humanistic, *Andrić vision* of the world is constructed.

Translated from Serbian by
Persida Bošković

SLAVKO GORDIĆ

FROM THE LOCAL CHRONICLE TO
THE GREAT METAPHOR ON
THE WORLD AND A MAN

Contribution to the history of reading of Andrić's novels

1.

“I do not know a more simple as well as a more complex and obscure man in his own time.”¹ That observation by Dobrica Ćosić on Andrić’s personality can also be applied onto his work. At first glance, translucent and comprehensible by itself, quite often very close to the chronicles and records, Andrić’s storytelling almost regularly provokes in the more careful reader a hint of depth and even unimaginable mystery. Hence, in our time—after the initial critical reading of Andrić’s prose in the horizon of the realistic tradition, or even in an inconsiderate interpretative perspective from which nothing can be seen but the mere “folklore construction” in its structure and meanings—there is a huge number of complex and even more complex interpretations. Of course, they also have far-reaching value implications, especially in the case of both competent and courageous interpreters, who, for example, in the work and poetics of our writer have recognized the charm of “magical realism” long before the appearance of Borges, Marquez and Rushdie.² The interpretation of literary work is sometimes the revenge of mind

¹ Dobrica Ćosić, “Records on Ivo Andrić”, *Writers of my Age*, Zavod za udžbenike i nastavna sredstva, Belgrade 2004, 15.

² Svetozar Koljević claims that the imaginative world of *Migrations* by Miloš Crnjanski has been shaped “by the process of magical realism that will later be nurtured, among others, by Borges, Marquez and Rushdie.” (“*Migrations* as a Personal and National Destiny”, *The Babylonian Challenges*, Matica srpska, Novi Sad 2007, 115)

over art. In particular, in recent times a specific kind of imperialism of mythographs, Freudians and Jungians makes the reader feel embarrassed and guilty when one indulges oneself to the joy of reading the text while forgetting to go through the mythological and psychological dictionaries.

Much earlier, Petar Džadžić advocated a similar thesis, writing about Andrić's type of mythologizing: "The magical realism of Latin American writers, especially Marquez, Asturias, Carpentier, Borges, Arguedas, introduces a new style of processing the realistic and historic using a folklore-mythical hinterland. (...) Andrić's work is closer to the mythologizing characteristic for the world literature of the fifties and sixties, which means at the time when his major works were mostly written, than to the mythologizing in the European literature from the first decades of the century. The tradition and legends which Andrić used often have a historical dimension as well as a local characteristic (certainly they also have their deep connection with myths), so he is also quite close to the orientation of the 'third-world' writers who seek to realize specific national models of life together with historical circumstances and characters. Like Andrić, many of these 'third-world' writers are affectively and intellectually devoted to legend. In a way, Andrić's work precedes the works of these writers." (*Oak's Beam in the Stone Bridge*, Narodna knjiga, Belgrade 1983, 48-49).

Such a shadow is cast on our experience of Andrić's stories and his storytelling. It seems as if they went from one extreme in another: after a reasonably forgotten humble readings, blatantly politicized and ideologized—as were those written by Gligorić and Bogdanović³—we were faced with the top of scholarly exclusivity, where Andrić's well-known world and his writing takes on new, even unforeseen, meanings, known only to the dedicated coders. Thus, Andrić's work, subsequently, becomes overgrown by numerous symbols, signals, archetypes, indications, puzzles and hints that might surprise even the

³ The first ones, in Andrić's stories, stigmatize the absence of a life-attitude and the escape from his own time, which allegedly make them "sterile, surplus". The other, more moderate ones think that the economic function of the bridge is insufficiently emphasized in the novel *The Bridge on the Drina*. (The objection is incredible, especially in the light of the fact that in the "Austrian" section of the novel a matter of earnings, loans and stock exchanges is so often mentioned.) The third claim that Andrić's work shared Bosnia more than many the armies that marched through it and shed blood in it, which is not necessary to comment on. Vuk Krnjević writes about these and some other examples of the unmerciful criticism of Andrić's work in his preface ("Andrić's Bridge of Hope") *The Bridge on the Drina* (Slovo ljubve, Belgrade, 1978).

author himself. Or possibly, the nature and the messages of that work are perceived from the perspective of the author's explicit, discursive explanations, found in his speeches or meditative-essayistic texts, even though the same interpreters were in principle skeptical of such deciphering of his literary work. Without contradicting the demand that the interpretation deals with more hidden meanings and not obviousness, we realize that some new obviousness leads us to new confusion—it is, for example, quite paradoxical that the learned interpreters of Andrić's opus see almost everything in it as a *myth*, or strictly subsume it under a certain *aesthetics*, although the author himself uses the first word very rarely, and the other one just once! It is fortunate that the critics, at least the more intelligent ones, do not consider that their theoretical and methodological starting points and the views on Andrić's work exclude the possibility of different approaches and findings.⁴

The critical-essayistic and scientific polylogue of Andrić's work is characterized by exceptional exuberance and polyphony. Translated into many languages and published in large circulations, our writer had a remarkable critical-interpretive reception for life. Books, scientific meetings and collections of papers dedicated to his work show—even independently of the implicit methodological pluralism—an unprecedented diversity of problems. The internal genre-poetic, thematic and stylistic features of Andrić's creations, their relationship with biography, history and historiography, the aesthetic, anthropological and philosophical disciplines, the Serbian spiritual heritage and foreign literature, their contact with pedagogy and teaching, film and theatre, the many and diverse memories of their author—a poet, a storyteller, a novel writer, an essayist, a historian, a diplomat, a philosopher, a world man and a great traveler—all these and other, unmentioned aspects and relations of an extraordinary life and creative case were so thoroughly enlightened that, on the one hand, it is impossible either to master all these insights or, on the other hand, to suppress their influence to the measure which would enable the return to the original, innocent reading, or the kind of interpretation that would not be (in the words of Allen Tate) strange to the experience of an ordinary reader.⁵

⁴ So P. Džadžić (v.s. 54) states: "To create a complete picture not only of the novel *The Bridge on the Drina*, but also of the whole of Andrić's work, it would be necessary to speak about myth and legend, but also about history and poetry. This writer is the visionary of the historical destiny of the people, in the novel *The Bridge on the Drina* more than in his other works, so Radovan Vučković is right when in the history on the Višegrad's bridge he also sees the story of a nation."

⁵ Jovan Delić, in the entry on Andrić in the first volume of the *Serbian Biographical Dictionary* (Matica srpska, Novi Sad 2004), records the titles of sixty-five books on Andrić and thirteen collections dedicated to the most diverse issues of the writer's life and work, including his reception in the world.

Read and interpreted in an extensive variety of keys and at vast geographical and civilizational distances (from New York and Rio de Janeiro to Tehran and Tokyo), Andrić's work—following another paradox—as if it had been struggling with the planetary communication buzz it had produced by itself. Andrić is a poet of silent inspiration who, after subtle observation approaches the topics of his work, “slowly and quietly, from a distance that is almost impossible to capture, which seems invisible and silent.”⁶ Being himself a prisoner of caution and quietness, it seems as if Ivo Andrić from his new readers also discreetly expected mindfulness and quiet prudence.

2.

Subsequently named the hidden poet, Ivo Andrić after his meditative books *Ex Ponto* (1918) and *Unrest* (1920) also wrote poems in prose and poetry throughout his whole life. Nevertheless, the period between the two world wars shows that the short story is the main literary form of our great writer. At that time his three collections of short stories were published but in his *Collected Works* (1981) his entire narrative work will be arranged in seven books: *A Restless Year*, *Thirst*, *Jelena*, *a Woman Who's Not Here*, *Signs*, *Children*, *Paths*, *Faces*, *Landscapes and House in a Secluded Place*.

So unexpectedly, the third stage and the third genre form of Andrić's creation are novels. Written in the age of anger, they were published in 1945—*The Bridge on the Drina* and *Travnik Chronicle* in Belgrade, *Miss* in Sarajevo. Later, *The Damned Yard* was published by Matica srpska in 1954, first treated as a story, but later on it received the status of novel both among the critics and the readers. After Višegrad and Travnik, Andrić worked on Sarajevo's chronicle, but *Omar-Pasha Latas* (published posthumously, 1976) remained incomplete, which is according to some a great pity and, according to the others, the structural inevitability of that kind of creative intent.⁷

⁶ Boško Petrović, “Ivo Andrić”, *Oral word*, selected and prepared by Ljubisav Andrić, Matica srpska, Novi Sad 1991, 109.

⁷ Džadžić claims that the turncoat drama is a universal framework in which the fate of the Mehmed Pasha Sokolović in the novel *Bridge over the Drina* and the title hero of the unfinished novel *Omar-Pasha Latas* is put. The second one bears the conversion into the fanatic Ottoman without major shocks, so that the “drama of change” in his case “is more a mask, a drama of social mimicry. It's a pity that the novel has remained incomplete.” (P. Džadžić, v.s., 58). Pavel Rudjakov, however, thinks that Andrić tried to reconcile the chronicle and the novel with the central hero, but “he didn't manage to find the adequate structural solution that would enable the synthesis of all lines of the novel and made from it what a novel should be—a novelistic unity. That is the reason, it seems, that Omar-Pasha Latas was not finished.” (P. Rudjakov, “Andrić's Mythological realism ‘and the place of’ story in it”, *Historical novel*, collection

Even from these scarce factual reminders, it can easily be seen how history as a thematic-content source and the short story as a form significantly marked both the subject and the structure of Andrić's novels. These two properties and closeness caught the attention of each reader, so it's not surprising that critiques regularly thematize them.

History (and historiography) being omnipresent in Andrić's work is at the same time the element of *writing material* and a way of *stylization*. By his own admission, both his diplomatic service and foreign language skills were put in the direct function of collecting and studying archival material and printed literature in a dozen European cities. "Even more than that: I had to study the Turkish sources and the Turkish documents, the history of the Turkish state, especially the doctrine of Islam and the Islamic religion, Christianity and the like. Without that I would not be able to write historical narratives."⁸

However, neither Andrić's well-known love for the historical nor the valid effect of studying the historical sources of his "historical narratives" do not explain by themselves his creative equation. Is, for example, the language and style of his historical novels essentially identical to the discourse of his dissertation from 1924 (*The Development of Spiritual Life in Bosnia under the Influence of Turkish Reign*), or is it necessary to make a significant difference between the discursive and fictional language of this writer even on the line of the thematic contact of his scientific and literary work?⁹ If we agree on the necessity of such a distinction it remains, however, an open question what poetic algebra Andrić used when he managed to integrate some extremely historiographical segment of the text—like the chapter on Sultan Jam in *The Damned Yard*—into the literary structure of his work. Or whether the *chronicle*, as the dominant poetic postulate of his narrative, enables epic integration even those thematically-expressive components which, observed separately, differentiate from the artistic language of the narrative prose?

As the historicism of Andrić's novels, viewed in the literary-historical perspective, shows (according to the findings of Gajo Peleš and Jovan Deretić) their significant closeness to the historical text and the

of papers, Institute for Literature and Arts—Belgrade, Institute for Literature—Sarajevo 1992-1996, 162).

⁸ Ljubo Jandrić, *With Ivo Andrić*, Srpska književna zadruga, Belgrade, 148

⁹ Tactfully debating with Radovan Vučković, who is trying to prove that Andrić's dissertation "is primarily a literary work," Svetozar Koljević warns: "In that sense, it is necessary to note that in these discussions it is not sufficiently emphasized how much the artistic language of Andrić narrative prose essentially differs from the discursive language of his dissertation, which means how much the picture of Bosnia as *dark vilayet* is different in these two discourses." (S. Koljević, "Andrić's Dark Vilayet in a Discursive and Fictional Language", op. cit., 82).

mainstream of the Serbian literature (medieval historiography, folk epic, Vuk, Sima Milutinović and Njegoš) in the same way their genre-structural status and pattern, on the other hand, points to the vital tradition of the short story in Serbian prose. Hence our writer—on the trail of Simo Matavulj, who remains a storyteller even when he writes novels—is actually “the last and also the most important novelist of the epoch of the prevalence of the short story”.¹⁰

This moment of the alternation of the literary epochs as if in Andrić's case witnessed a transient, insufficiently delimited status of his creations: *The Damned Yard* is closer to his medium-scale stories, such as “Mara, Concubine”, “Anika's Times” and “Zeko”, which by themselves are on the border of a novel, rather than his prominent novels-chronicles. On the other hand, Andrić's novels-chronicles with their episodic, novelistic composition show more than obvious closeness to a small narrative form—even if they differ from each other in the kind of this closeness, if on *The Bridge on the Drina* mainly consists of a series of stories, and the *Travnik Chronicle* a series of portraits.

Following the tradition, Andrić goes beyond the tradition. Having found *artism* in the Serbian story and the prevailing *randomness* in the Serbian novel, our writer “reached that artism not only in a short but also in the medium and long narrative form, not only in the novella but also in the novel.”¹¹ Andrić's skill and art, in that sense, as if they were not sufficiently perceived in the interpretation of his novels. Overstating the moment of a series of independent episodes around a certain chronological center, the experts seem to lose sight of the thin, almost hidden network of cohesive factors that keep these episodes together and unite them into a novelistic entity. For example, in the novel-chronicle *The Bridge on the Drina*, a bridge and a kasaba are not the only centripetal forces and the only “main heroes”. Several heroes (and several families) connect some of the chapters of this novel, as do the similar misfortunes of several heroes (Fata, Lotika, Mrs. Bauer and teacher Zorka), or perhaps even more effectively, the leitmotiv poetic-meditative comments, which, like a submarine, emerge at legitimate distances, realizing in the structure of the work also some of the effects of the musical principle of the composition.

3.

As a rule, great writers do not have only one great book. This is especially true for novel writers—Balzac, Tolstoy, Dostoyevsky, Proust,

¹⁰ Jovan Deretić, *Serbian Novel 1800–1950*, Nolit, Belgrade 1981, 351.

¹¹ *Ibid.*, 349

Mann and our Andrić. When we talk about the last one, there are a lot of them who consider the *Travnik Chronicle*—an impressive and dramatic picture of the always current contact (and conflict) of different cultures and civilizations—the most valuable of his work. According to the others, *The Damned Yard* is Andrić's most important creation and, at the same time, the quintessence of his poetics. However, it seems, that the most numerous and the most persuasive are the third ones, according to which, *The Bridge on the Drina* (with the subtitle, in the first edition, “Višegrad Chronicle”) is perhaps not better than the above-mentioned ones, “but is more significant, somehow more authentic, more derived from the local tradition, more like Andrić, more original in the topic, structure, genre features, different from all of our and foreign novels, and therefore it is the work which represents our writer to the fullest extent.”¹²

Again, as a rule, great achievements usually have their own pre-history—jobs, activities and days which prepare and announce them. Such is the case with the novel *The Bridge on the Drina*, which was preceded by the thematically related, shorter narrative and meditative texts—“Love in the Kasaba” (1923), “The Bridge on the Žepa” (1925), “Signs Along the Road” (1930) and “Bridges” (1933)—in which we find the motif of the bridge and recognize the embryo, the parallel line or in a different, reflexive register treated the same, great topic of the latter masterpiece. More than anywhere else, the writer will, in this novel, being elated by his Višegrad memories—bring into the narrator's tone and into the image of “our world” a certain quantity of cheerfulness, even humor, as well as the intimate companionship, challenging the deep-rooted image on the objective impartiality and restraint of his narrative approach.¹³

Not calling his main novels ‘novels’ but ‘chronicles’, Andrić based them on the pattern of the Njegoš's “historical sacrament”, whose starting point is not individual human destiny, but a collective fate at one time. To this unquestionable more general insight is usually added a special finding on Andrić's inclination to prefer the local and unofficial history

¹² *Ibid.*, 377

¹³ J. Deretić, recalling the places dedicated to “joyful and cheerful life in kasaba,” claims that “in this novel there is more beauty and joy of life than we are accustomed to by other Andrić's books, so that *The Bridge on the Drina* is undoubtedly his most cheerful work” (op. cit. 366). On the other hand, this novel—written in occupied Belgrade—in the last chapters where the author talks about the enthusiasm and courage of the young generation of Mlada Bosna, shows the writer in the light of the chronicler's accomplice, beyond and above often attributed icy calmness. Nevertheless, a still more recent reading (Željdrag Nikčević, “The Ice Witness”, *Creation*, Podgorica, September-October 1992) insists on Andrić's “incurably sober” rhetoric and the cold, “unbearably concise” nature of his testimony.

of small, passive environments to the great and the official one, those which await for the echoes and stand the outcomes of great events, the history of the environments whose misfortune—according to some writer’s statements—represents not only invisible, or unrecognized, but also the only real, true history. Thus, history meets a story and transforms into the story, and the novel-chronicle—started as history—is diverging into novellas, into a series of the individual stories, or (in Lyotard’s, postmodernist terms), the historical discourse of a “great story” is replaced by the discourse of the characters in the “small stories”. From such an interpretive point of view, the novel *The Bridge on the Drina* in each of its (counted in Homer’s way) twenty-four chapters has a focus on the fate of one of the characters, whereby at the beginning of each episode there is always an introduction from history that prepares “a draft of flow of time together with historical and geographical background”, introducing the “great story” and a historical discourse that “justifies its perspectives and claims the authority of the homogeneity of the time flow, which has a source and which has the telos hidden in the extratextual world. History is presented as a totality surrounding the kasaba without its consent and knowledge.”¹⁴ History, however, in the light of the novelistic structure and meaning, becomes an integral factor with the function of the dual “surrounding”: it introduces a certain common sense in the stories about different events and personalities, and binds relatively fragmented parts into the entirety of larger and more complex narrative form.

The “Big Story”, as the historical outline and the framework of the chronicle, which covers the time of almost four centuries—establishing by such a far-reaching scope the distant relationship with the “Tragicomedy” of Emanuel Kozachinsky, Milutinović’s *Montenegrin Glory* and Njegoš’s *Freedom*—includes the biography of the grand Vizier Mehmed-pasha Sokolović, the successes and the defeats of the Turks in Hungary, the consequences of Karađorđe’s and Miloš’s uprising in Serbia, moving the borders during the Serbian-Turkish wars, the Austro-Hungarian occupation of Bosnia and Herzegovina, the assassination in Sarajevo and major retaliations over the Serbs, and, finally, the first year of the First World War, the great epochal crushes and breaks. The “Small Stories”, however, are, as a rule, the reflex and the consequence of great historical events, which in the provincial and confessional-diverted environment often have cruel reverberations and fundamentally shake the inert life and sweet silence so dear to the inhabitants of Višegrad. We could say that apart from Andrić, no one would succeed in achieving

¹⁴ David A. Norris, “History and the discourse in the novels of Ivo Andrić and Miloš Crnjanski”, *Historical Novel*, Collection of Papers, 154.

complete artistic unity in such a long timeframe. It is based, on the plan of content, on the mutual connection of two key motives—a building and a city—on the deep agreement that exists between the fate of the bridge and the destiny of the kasaba, whereby the bridge as a factor of permanence and duration, equality within its own self, in the composition of the novel has a role that is analogous to the role of the protagonist, “while the destiny of the kasaba with all the changes that brings time through the ages of its existence represents the actual subject of the novel”.¹⁵

That way defined the chronotope, composition and the “real subject of the novel”, to which the chronicle convention requires the factual credibility of the fundamental factors of the story, we determined *The Bridge on the Drina* as a creation essentially close to the classic historical novel of realistic type, in which the imaginative upgrading will not doubt the probability of events and their rationally based, causative-consequent motivation. And indeed, and when deviating from the strict historical truth, our writer does not violate the code of authentic chronicle testimony. In the novel, for example, the great Vizier was taken to Istanbul as a ten-year-old boy—while the historical truth is, in all likelihood, different¹⁶—but will not undermine the coherence of the realistic-chronicle level of narration.

The Bridge on the Drina has, however, its own mythical-legendary plane, a homologous to the realistic motivational stream. It is precisely in that two-foldedness of the work and the simultaneous flows of double motivation that we can see—with the aforementioned way of achieving artistic unity—the matchless excellence of this work. In it, simplicity is associated with the depth and obvious with a hidden meaning and the reader bent over that double bottom of the story and the storytelling does not find any traces of the stiff, constructed “diversity of meaning”, often characteristic of modern prose.

Andrić’s poetics of implicit mythologizing in this novel outgrows the “sober” attitude of the narrator towards the folk beliefs and tradition of the builder Rada, Stoja and Stojan, the giant traces of Šarac hooves and Đerzelez’s mare, a fairy “brodarica” who at night demolishes what was built in the day, the light that glows over Radisav’s grave or perhaps above the burial mound of the Turkish hero Šeh-Turhanija. According to some interpretations, all the aforementioned and the other, unspecified places from prose oral tradition and folk songs are “actually the ground

¹⁵ J. Deretić, v.s., 354.

¹⁶ In the work *Mehmed Sokolović* by Radovan Samardžić (Srpska književna zadruga, Belgrade 1971, 14-20), was expressed the quite reasonable assumption that Mehmed at the time he was taken was not ten, but between sixteen and eighteen years old.

for Andrić's reflection, which creates an ironic fairy tale from them".¹⁷ And more than that: almost all the heroes of both the "Turkish" and the "Austrian" sections of the novel, and Radisav, and the Montenegrin gusle player, and Fata, and the *jurodiv* devotee Jelisije, and the miller boy Mile, and the priest Nikola, and Korcan, and Alihodža politically oriented Stiković "are not only the reflections of the ironic legend and reality game; they—with their flight and fall—unweave the old and start new legends, describing, comprehensively, the unique circle of a new, historical fairytale."¹⁸

However, as we have said, Andrić's work transcends the narrator's critical-ironic attitude towards the discordance between the legend and reality. That goes even for those more delicate and mysterious places in which the writer "consciously or unconsciously poses a trap for those whose national feelings are stronger than their familiarity with their own national culture",¹⁹ as is the case (in the third chapter) with the peasantry who are fascinated and dazzled, listening to the gusle player's song about the splendor of Dušan's court, not knowing, like many of the readers of the novel, that its tacit continuation speaks of the emperor's incestuous desires. Nevertheless, on the other side of every irony and awareness of the deconstructing and diminishing the old legends, *The Bridge on the Drina* has wider and deeper mythical foundations and a mythical hinterland that reaches the level of *more generality* in which all the differences of partial character (historical, tribal and confessional) are silent as is appropriate for the great creator who was, according to a very good observation, among so many phenomena the most obsessed by the "repeatability of the phenomena and the problem of eternity."²⁰ Of course, this overtime and timeless truth about the world and a man is precisely implied in the myth, legend and fairy tale, in which, according to Andrić, and irrespective to his so often quoted explicit statements from the *Conversation with Goya*, *Signs by the Roadside* and the speech read on the occasion of receiving the Nobel Prize, is where the true history of mankind resides, the meaning of our destiny, the path we have passed, and perhaps the goal to which we are going. On the basis of such a logic and the grammar of myth, and with the ever-present awareness of the various (and even ironic) discrepancies of the ideal and reality or of the tradition and history in his work, it seems that Andrić's entire opus is to be read, and especially *The Bridge on the Drina*.

¹⁷ Svetozar Koljević, "The Novel as an Ironic Fairytale: *The Bridge on the Drina*", *Visions and Dreams*, Veselin Masleša, Sarajevo 1986, 177.

¹⁸ *Ibid.*, 183.

¹⁹ *Ibid.*, 179.

²⁰ Nada Milošević Đorđević, "Function of cultural-historical tradition in Andrić's work", *Ivo Andrić in His Own Time*, Scientific gathering of Slavists during Vuk's days (22/1), The International Slavic Center, Belgrade, 1994, 17

For this kind of reading, we owe Petar Džadžić most. On the trail of the ambiguous observation of Milan Bogdanović in one of the earliest records on this novel about something *fatalistic* in Andrić's perception of the world, Džadžić will reveal the new, more complex character of our writer by lucid and daring clarification of the archetypal imagination and the symbolism in Andrić's novels. If, perhaps, we oppose some of his interpretative findings on so many archetypal duplexes and relations in *The Damned Yard*, we will not be able to take away the suggestiveness of his insights about a certain double or bipolarity of the novelistic events in which legendary and realistic make simultaneously a unique entirety and separate layers in the book *The Bridge on the Drina*. Thus, for example, the description of the young black man's death during the construction of the middle pillar of the bridge, given with absolute probability and firmly tied into the cause-and-effect motivational chain of the events of the story, being at the same time a part of the entirety of the suggestive mythic meanings in the level of less noticeable, latent motivational sequence which "groups the data according to the requirements of the archetypal imagination, fulfills the events with the mythic aura and the suggestions, conforms to the principles of the poetics of mythologizing, whose first and fundamental law is to act unobtrusively, from the second plan, and not to disturb the possibility of simultaneous existence of a causal-consequence, that is, a realistic motivational sequence".²¹ In accordance with this poetic code, all the main events and meanings before and after the mentioned scene are in the sign of simultaneous, double motivation. From the first to the last crossing of the Drina by the *black ferry*, when the boy from Sokolović, the latter big vizier and the bridge builder, painful *black stripe* cuts his breasts, through a series of literary and metaphoric *black, lead* curtains and *black* blades, and *lead* grenades and *lead* pain in the chest, until the very tragic vizier's end, after several centuries, Alihodža's, who is the votive guardian of the bridge and the higher meaning that bridge embodies and guarantees, so the story flows about the struggle with the forces of destruction whose noticeable, realistic level is covered by the system of anticipation and foreboding at the mythical-magical level. If we stay only on the hinted, somewhat bizarre meaningful circle, we will notice that already mentioned unfortunate young *black man*, and one of the butchers with lips characteristic for *black men* and *earthly* face who dies of the *black* pimple, and in the "Austrian" part of the novel it is the black frame of the proclamation by which the new authorities announce the rules of the new order on the gate of the Višegrad bridge discreetly join the community of the elements in the magic sign of the *black*. And this

²¹ P. Džadžić, v.s., 69.

circle of mythical-magic elements, as well as the other communities of symbols of the same source, provides, as a rule, its realistic illusion by the scene of *cases* and *coincidences*. Moreover, as if in Andrić's world, "behind the facade of the *case* there is always a myth."²²

The relation between mythic, non-historical, cyclic time, in which there are no changes but only repetition, in comparison to the historical, linear time, according to the observation of some critics (D. Stojadinović and J. Deretić) is, "one of the strongest sources of emotional radiation of the novel, the basis of its peculiar pathos."²³ Why and how? Because, to put it simply, Andrić's world, being essentially unhistoric, lives in a tragic delusion that it is possible to flee from history and the changes it brings by breaking the established rhythm of their existence. The tragedy of this conflict, on the other hand, exactly provides the dynamics of the development of the action in the novel that does not cling to the conventional pattern and the status of the fabula and the main hero.

Putting aside cosmic, mythical and non-historical time, it is necessary to stop at historical opposites between different times and value systems, of which the opposites of "Turkish" and "Swabian" in Andrić's novel have both symbolic and value implications. It turns out that Austrian diligence and over-organization is without more profound purpose and justification. "From these two worlds," says Deretić, "as if all the moral, poetic values belong to the first one", whose way of life (rather than the manner of administration), our writer evokes with the nostalgia we can meet in Višnjić, Sremac, Stanković, Šantić and Ćorović, a nostalgia for the world that irretrievably disappears and "takes away with it not only the evil that has brought us but the beauty and the values as well", and the bridge with whose demolition the novel ends in which it is precisely the "embodiment of this finer, higher and lasting one that was created by that world. Hence the tragic dimension in the experience of the collapse of the Turkish, as the source of one of the deepest feelings that radiate from the pages of this book."²⁴ Surprisingly, and unfortunately, all in the spirit of Jauss's convictions about the enormous space between the work and its possible reception, the warmth and broadness of Andrić's world and writing not all the environments and all the readers have experienced as our respected literary historian.²⁵

²² *Ibid.*, 56

²³ J. Deretić, *op. cit.*, 257.

²⁴ *Ibid.*, 358–359.

²⁵ See: Darko Tanasković, "Reception of the work of Ivo Andrić in the Yugoslav Muslim Environment", collection of papers *Ivo Andrić in His Own Time*, 221–233. The author very precisely identifies the genesis and the forms of the receptive flow in which the theses about Andrić's supposedly anti-Muslim attitude are expressed, as well as the examples of different reactions by important writers (Midhat Šamić, Midhat Begić, Hanifa Kapidžić, Salko Nazečić and Skender Kulenović), "intellectual

Leaning over the well of the past, it seems that Andrić perceives what is coming, in the sense of Shelly's famous motto, according to which the poets are the mirrors of the giant shadows that the future casts on the present. Bridges and monuments are also demolished after Alihodža's anxious premortal monologue. But they also erect new and more beautiful ones, again in the spirit of the hodja's last vision: if it is demolished here and now, somewhere is something built and will always be built, because it cannot be that the great and the soulful people will disappear altogether. "If they were gone, it would mean that God's love would also end and disappear from the world. This cannot be. "These words from the last page of the novel—doubly privileged, because they are in a textual privileged place and reflect the relief of one consciousness in the last hour, which, in the polyphonic structure of *The Bridge on the Drina*, is the closest to the author's position—these words, hence, as though collecting all those ferments of hope and love which, despite everything, circulate through Andrić's great story.

We say *in spite of everything*, because that story is full of human defeats, personal as much as collective, legal as much as "accidental". Defeat, as a rule, awaits rebels and libertarians, enthusiastic and passionate ones, proud and self-conscious ones, detainees of a higher harmony and sense as much as those careful owners who do not do anything without a seemingly secure account. In the present, for beauty and happiness there is no existence. "You cannot hold a moment," as Isidora Sekulić said once, on a different occasion. This can be applied both to those who were cheated or bypassed by love, and to those whose jobs failed just when they believed that they finally "established" and "ensured" their business. And especially for those—immigrants and Muhajir people (refugees)—which were scattered by the winds of history to and fro. For many generations, the lasting and invulnerable is only the bridge on the Drina, while the happiness and safety of man is just a home of foam or a sandcastle. This common connoisseur of so many episodes, by the way, is usually missed by the critics who emphasize the novelistic arrangement of *The Bridge on the Drina*, predicting that besides the bridge, as a symbolic hero, and, as we have already said, several actors and several families, the aforementioned similarity of described human destinies becomes the cohesive factor of the Višegrad chronicle. The melancholy wisdom of the author, as his dominant color, glitters perhaps more from the thematical-content homogeneity of its connectiveness than from his so often quoted poetic-meditative comments.

The Bridge on the Drina, which spread the word across the world about our nation, history and literature more than any other work will

standards closer to Andrić himself rather than the prevailing climate and the traditional value system of its environment" (224).

have, in times to come, new readers and new interpreters. Our jumpy and necessarily incomplete presentation neglected many important aspects and relations of this marvelous creation, especially its primarily artistic, stylistic charms, largely derived from the flinty, as if in the stone engraved, elliptical definiteness of every statement of its creator. After all, no interpretation, even the most comprehensive or the most appropriate, is not and should not be a substitute for the joyful adventure of one's own reading.

4.

Started in 1928, as a novel about Jam, the younger son of Sultan Mehmed the Conqueror, defeated by his brother Bajazit in the struggle for the throne, *The Damned Yard* has undergone radical transformations during the creative process, so that this work, published in the middle of the sixth decade of the last century, in its final form seemed to be much more complex creation from the one that was hinted at in the original concept of novel-portrait and novel-chronicle. The focus was shifted from the unfortunate Jam-Sultan from the 15th century to the no less tragic biographer of his, Ćamil, a young man from Smyrna, who, during the turbulent times of the running out of the Turkish Empire, gets so accustomed to the life of Jam until his complete identification, signifying him with a personal pronoun *me*, which leads him to imprisonment, suffering and disappearance.

In such a roughly presented content basis, the thematically layered story of complex meanings and the original artistic process is woven, which (using Vinaver's words) could represent a problematic and artistic *summary* of Andrić's entire opus.

And regardless of the subsequent author's (dis)agreement with its interpretations, *The Damned Yard* does not exclude the possibility of the most various interpretations—from those, more down-to-earth ones, which in the conflict between Jam and Bajazit see the reflection of the longstanding rivalry for the throne between Đorđe and Aleksandar Karadorđević, through the far-reaching and more recent ones, according to which the story of the Constantinople prison is a global metaphor of the twentieth century as a century of unfreedom, terror, of Auschwitz and the Gulag, even "our" Goli otok as a Stalinist response to the Stalinist threats, to those oriented to the most ancient forms and myth formulas and the deepest layers of archetypal imagination, according to which, for example, the eternal story of the conflict of two brothers or about the identity and identification (no matter if it is the expression and the consequence of the will for power, noble enthusiasm or madness) is found in *The Damned Yard* creatively self-contained response to

which Christian and other myths, ancient records, biographies of great conquerors, the teachings of Schopenhauer, Kierkegaard, Jung, Freud and Kerenji, as well as the novels of Dostoyevsky, Kafka and Thomas Mann, especially his tetralogy *Joseph and His Brothers*, are as hidden as an undeniable background. Almost as much as its thematic-meaning origin and effect, the readers and interpreters are occupied by (at the same time simple and miraculous) the compositional and formally-stylistic mindset of *The Damned Yard* which, first or foremost, is also referred to as the discovery of the secret of the *story* and *telling stories*, and their apotheosis, besides Andrić's well-known lesson of the spiritual and existential value of silence.

The first readers of *The Damned Yard* could not perceive the whole depth of its questioning and its messages, as they could not even shut it without an apprehension that *what* was said and *the way* it was said changed the notion of Andrić's entire work and his place and meaning in the Serbian literature. Borislav Mihajlović, perhaps our most diligent and the most inspired critic and chronicler of the sixth decade of the last century, with all the caution and defensive protection of the writer from those who—wishing for quick and easy accounts—see him primarily as a fine master of the silversmith-filigree processing of more or less the same and all the further Turkish-Bosnian themes, explicitly and boldly emphasizes that in the earlier works of Andrić as well as in the new “novella” over the exotic veils of so-called local colors predominates “the wisdom of transience and destiny” of the writer who “conveys the main power of his stroke wherever a man, psychologically and meditatively, lives alone, eternal, without geographical coordinates and time changeability”.²⁶

Singling out several places in the sign of the general characteristics of man and people, Mihajlović specially emphasizes the two Andrić's explicit generalizations—the one about continuous birth and renewal, “since the dawn of time”—the two brothers who are rivals, and immediately after that essential one, later commented so many times, about the difficult and terrible word *me*, “which, once uttered, always bound us and identifies us with all that we have conceived and said and with what we have never imagined to identify with, and in fact, within ourselves, we have already been one”—to conclude finally at the end of the record that *The Damned Yard* “is much more than a story of the imposter”, “a great metaphor about the identity of all people.”²⁷ With

²⁶ Borislav Mihajlović, „Ivo Andrić: ‘The Damned Yard’”, *From the Same Reader*, Nolit, Belgrade 1956, 295–296.

²⁷ *Ibid*, 298–299.

such observations, rarely characteristic of lightning news reports (the review was first published in the NIN in January, 1955), Mihajlović—despite the recently implied caution—prophetically hits the very center of all the subsequent analyzes of *The Damned Yard*. Moreover, at one time with indefinable boldness, as in a bet on everything or nothing, he gives the highest recognition that can ever be given to a writer. Namely, when Ćamil said to the diligent and senseless inquiries of the police officers, “his crazy, terrible and wonderful: ‘It’s me’”—at that moment, according to our critic, “in our literature is written the deepest page about how close identical people’s fates are, regardless of the centuries and the stairs of the society that divide them.”²⁸

The first is just one, while there are always others. The others will, later, in detail—and sometimes through the polemic interrelations—try to solve the riddle of young Ćamil, Tahir-Pasha’s son from Smyrna, whom Mihajlović sees as a man of unhappy and exciting destiny, a melancholic who both intellectually and emotionally stands high above his environment, a maniac of his own passion who will finally identify himself with a few centuries far personality and fate of the captured Sultan. Thus, Miloslav Šutić, while reading *The Damned Yard* and Ćamil’s fate in a new interpretive perspective, with a great deal of appreciation of Džadžić’s and Tartalj’s interpretation, will endeavor to prove that in Ćamil’s character over the so-called “pathogenic elements still predominate the characteristics of *homo esteticus*, a psychological type described in the aesthetics and criticism of Carl Gustav Jung and Eduard Spranger.”²⁹

Is that, the latest understanding of Ćamil’s character and fate that seriously undermines that pungent, but not the easily fellable (and today’s almost ubiquitous) interpretation according to which Ćamil’s admission (“It’s me”) is in fact “the point of culmination of a tragedy of madness”?³⁰ The incisive assertion of a great erudite, but also a man of fine distinction, which in his study is very carefully contextualized and strongly argued. For this occasion, we will only mention the immediate the continuation of Tartalja’s statement, according to which

²⁸ *Ibid.*, 299.

²⁹ See: Miloslav Šutić, “Andrić’s Story of an ‘Aesthetic Man’”, *Letopis Matice srpske*, May 2007, vol. 183, Vol. 479, b. 5. The same author earlier, in the review “An Attempt of Conceiving the Basic Elements of Andrić’s Aesthetics” (*Wind and Melancholy*, Institute of Literature and Arts, Belgrade, 1998), Ćamil’s immersion in the fate of Jam-sultan, devoid of practical expediency, is connected with Kant’s category of *liking without interest* within aesthetic experience. Šutić also finds similar elements of creative, aesthetic behavior in the character of the Italian from “The Bridge on Žepa”, who was “not a man like other people” for the local people, who only “scraped stones” and “wrote”.

³⁰ Ivo Tartalja, “The core of narrative aesthetics”, *Narrative Aesthetics*, Nolit, Belgrade 1979, 80

“the whole previous story of a young man’s life can be understood as the etymology of a certain clinical case”, i.e. the splitting and transformation of a personality, and his ecstasy—in addition to all its beauty and the arrogant greatness of idealism—as a state in which “at the cost of delusion” he came, which is not a lonely case in *The Damned Yard*, in which there are “more persons whose mind got blurred” and where are depicted a couple of scenes “of general frenzy when prisoners are seized by some type of collective madness.”³¹ No doubt, the madness is a consequence of Ćamil’s fate, as the jail in Constantinople is a real and symbolic picture of an inverted world. And yet, the illness of Andrić’s hero is a madness of a higher order—Don Quixote and Hamlet type—and his sublime incompatibility is the result of true authenticity. Ultimately, whatever anti-psychiatry said about it, often misfits and rebels are above the normative order of things, which in a certain environment and time acquires the features of the “pathology of normal”.

Ćamil’s touching and fatal identification with Jam-Sultan, with all its mythical and clinical implications, was and will probably always be the first question of any interpretation of *The Damned Yard*. The second one is the one that seeks for its personal-narrative instances and their interconnectedness, because—to stay only at the scene of Ćamil’s hearing—it is an unusual long chain of mediators who report and spread it. The answer, obviously, cannot be held up by almost incidental perception of Mihajlović of the supposedly casual and deliberately loose composition of *The Damned Yard*, with its “two to three different destinies and a common atmosphere”.³²

How many stories are there within the story of *The Damned Yard* and how many narrators and narrative voices and whether perhaps next to the impersonal narrator there is in the text also a silent witness, and what is the higher, poetic and anthropological-philosophical meaning of such staging by Andrić for him, so precious a topic as the *story* and *story telling*? Novica Petković, while reckoning various critical-interpretative accounts, offers, from the point of view of literary stylistics, a valuable answer to the narratological questions which “critic illuminated with effort and for quite some time”.³³ The focus of the answer is to determine the position of the silent young man by the window, that is, on the one hand, the author’s shadow and, on the other, a character between the characters.³⁴

³¹ *Ibid.*

³² B. Mihajlović, v.s., 295.

³³ Novica Petković, “What is the Purpose of Stylistics”, *Poetry in the Mirror of Criticism*, Matica srpska, Novi Sad 2007, 104.

³⁴ “We find him,” Petković says, “next to Bosnian friars. However, he also does not belong to them or the narrator, whose shadow he is. He is obviously a character

Petković's perception of the dependence between the narrative structure of *The Damned Yard* and its speech diversity certainly, in an undoubtedly exact way, improves our knowing of this work. In addition to the other, anthropological-philosophical knowing, undoubtedly contributes, besides many others, that Tartalja's commentary on friar-Peter's hallucinations, which "mark the beginning of a new circle in the subject of the story and storytelling (...). The conversations with Ćamil passed and long listening to his story also passed, there remained a memory and then fantasy followed. Using the metaphors of Andrić's Stockholm speech, this future narrator begins to *warm* Ćamil's fate with *his breath and his blood* just as Ćamil warmed the destiny of the unfortunate Jam-Sultan. Ćamil like a specter, as Friar-Peter's wraith roughly reverse, but it is also the base for the shimmering figure that the latter storytelling will evoke."³⁵

In the already immensely diversified critical polylogue of *The Damned Yard* after Ćamil the most frequently comes Karadžoz (Latif), Haim and Zaim, whereby the interpretative range extends from the semantics of their names to their—sometimes constructed—mythical and archetypal status and halos. It seems as if friar Peter, recently mentioned, was put a little bit aside, familiar to us from some of Andrić's stories, whose memories on the events and the people of the Istanbul Damned Yard now become the content backbone of the novel. It is therefore worth mentioning at least one view of this character, and in a wider context, which includes the great novels-chronicles of the same author. Namely, in an early work by Tihomir Brajović, who will deal with Andrić's work more completely later, two time flows were very well noticed in Andrić's novels, which he calls "short" and "long" lasting, somewhat related to the already mentioned temporal and structural opposition of the "big" and "small" stories. While the feelings of "long" lasting, as a rule, expresses the transcendent, all-knowing narrative consciousness, so far "the feeling of a *short lasting* is mediated by the well-known novelistic characters that are immersed in the presented world, but tend to comprehend its essence.

Davil from the *Travnik Chronicle*, Alihodža from the novel *The Bridge on the Drina* and Friar Peter from *The Damned Yard*—these are three characters that paradigmatically represent *chronicle-annal consciousness*, a consciousness that records the pattern of events in which it is, and at the same time desperately longs for (...) to free oneself from the 'short' lasting and realizes the hidden, 'long-lasting' meaning

on the border, so he cannot speak in Ekavian dialect because he will mingle with the storyteller, and he cannot even speak an Ijekavian because he will mingle with the friars. From there comes the ban on speech: the young man is silent." (*Ibid*).

³⁵ I. Tartalja, v.s., 137.

of history, which, directly experienced, is portrayed as an indispensable force of nature. With this urge, each of them literally isolates himself from the world: Davil withdraws into his cabinet every night, in which he writes less his quasi-historical epic, and more he thinks about the sense of the current events; in the same way, Friar Peter finds a refuge in the contemplative silence of his cell, while Alihodža gets away in the small, hidden, back room, as soon as he is pressed by the weight of incomprehensible changes (...) The irony of their position lies in the fact that all three of them, being participants of the known events themselves, simply condemned to incomprehensibility and illegibility of 'short' lasting."³⁶

To this long quote from Brajović's short review it is also necessary to add his final observation on the way in which the transcendent narrator using reflections through which he rounds up and tranquilizes the picture of large, world-historical and **small, human events** both in Travik and Višegrad chronicle, in order to similarly act in friar Peter's life, memories and death. "Finally, the transcendent narrative consciousness of the 'long lasting' that frames the whole existence of a man and his history, metaphorically hoops it into the 'story' of *The Damned Yard*: 'There is nothing more. (...) There's no more story or storytelling anymore. It's like there's no world that's worth watching, walking and breathing. (...) There are no human evils, no hope or resistance that always follows them. There's nothing. It's just snow and the simple fact that it's dying and going into the ground.'"³⁷

Nailing this way—using *the gnomic present tense*,³⁸ characteristic of its own tone and style—a narrative of Friar Peter and his Istanbul memories, as if *The Damned Yard*, with this melancholic message on death from its last page, outflanks and relativizes all the long and short lastings, great history and small human destinies, the fate of Jam-Sultan and effendi-Ćamil, and even those friars who in the last sentence make the inventory of the modest friar Peter's legacy outliving such strange and shocking stories. Is death *the longest of all the lasting*, that is how the critic reads the ending of the novel, or the instinctive "hope and resistance" does not allow us to reconcile, but they tell us that with the story and memory we prolong the chain of memory and *to warm with our breath and our blood* human destinies in the same way as Friar Peter warmed Ćamil's and Ćamil Jam's fate? Perhaps that story of ours

³⁶ Tihomir Brajović, "Andrić's Chronotop", *Letopis of Matica srpska*, January 1993, vol. 451, issue 1, 79–80.

³⁷ *Ibid*, 81.

³⁸ See: Živojin Stanojčić, "Syntax of Andrić's Parenthesis", *Ivo Andrić in his Time*, 369–377.

is capable, “like legendary Sheeherezade’s stories which managed to deceive the butcher, to postpone the inevitability of the tragic accident that threatens us, and prolong the illusion of life and duration”?³⁹ Suggestive and tense, Andrić’s story of story and storytelling—told in imaginative and discursive key—strengthens our faith into the meaning, or at least in the will for meaning.

The Damned Yard, somewhat different from Andrić’s big novels-chronicles—because in its center there is the fate of an individual rather than a collective—yet it establishes closeness with his obsessive theme of deep human splitting up and the need for its overcoming. In that sense, this short novel can be read as “the parable of the splitting of the world and the identity of a man” and as the author of the “spiritual testament”, which presents his “deepest humanistic message”.⁴⁰

Translated from Serbian by
Ljubica Jankov

³⁹ Ivo Andrić, “On the story and the storytelling”, *History and Legend*, Essays I, The Collected Works of Ivo Andrić, Associated Publishers, Sarajevo 1986, 67-68.

⁴⁰ J. Deretić, *op. cit.*, 382.

SVETOZAR KOLJEVIĆ

NATIVE AND FOREIGN VOICES IN THE POETRY OF MILOŠ CRNJANSKI

“I am burning, but there is no one to burn for.”¹

Homeland does not just mean a place of birth and rearing, a family, a broad and narrow social environment, but also ancestral heritage, historical events and their local repercussions, customary and natural surroundings, the specifics of the local language, humour, form of communication, and also the unwritten, sometimes voiceless, assumptions about appropriate behaviour and the fundamental values of life, in short—the roots of the individual person within a certain community.

Just as the root of a plant is the invisible source of life which is taken for granted so long as it doesn't dry out, so the homeland is something which is itself only understood while it is within reach. However, when a person has lost it, or wanders afar hither and thither, it becomes a dramatic literary challenge. The interweaving of native consciousness with everything that exile implies and offers is actually an ancient feature of history, of the destiny of peoples, and of their imaginative resonance with the arts of all kinds, and it will also often suggest a deep permeation of the past and the future.

This, in relation to Miloš Crnjanski, is already quite clearly obvious in the title of his first collection of poems, *Lyrics of Ithaka* (1919), which suggests an allusion to the *Odyssey* as a story about his exciting challenges in foreign lands, and especially the return to his homeland, where he must yet deal with Penelope's suitors before he can feel that

¹ The words of Miloš Crnjanski in an undated letter from Belgrade to Ivo Andrić in the first half of 1920. See “Letters of Miloš Crnjanski to Ivo Andrić”, volume 16, March 2000, Belgrade, pp 48–49 (In relation to the dating of this letter, see notes 6p., 1, 2. P. 46). – In further assertions: CRNJANSKI 2000.

he's back at home. But, of course, it's not by accident that in his commentaries to accompany *Lyrics of Ithaka*, first published in 1959, Crnjanski stresses that he considers "that in this day also, the 'Odyssey', is the greatest poem of humanity".² In the wider mythical and literary context, it is interesting that Cain was punished for the murder of Abel by the curse that he should be a "vagabond and a fugitive"; that he should "ramble and wander through the world".³ In a similar sense, it is significant that Ovid's *Ex Ponto* is also composed as a lament from abroad for his native land at a time when exile was considered the heaviest sentence with the exception of death. Finally, also, the Wandering Jew, condemned to wander until Judgement Day because of sins against Christ who carried the cross on the road to Calvary. All of these are the ancient interwoven imprints of various foreign and native voices to form significant features of mythical and literary endeavours.

It is perhaps interesting to note the characteristics of some of the more recent examples of the distinguished homeless, who sought their literary homeland in the vast ranges of their lives and spiritual paths. Thus, let's assume, Conrad wandered from England to the Indian Ocean and the Pacific, writing in a language which he had never mastered as his own. At the borders of the Old World, where many generations grew up by the same fireside, and where in recent times, few die in the house where they were born, Eliot's *Wasteland* is one of the many literary works which hold associations with distant realms and ancient times which are located at a common poetic level with the immediate present. These are so interesting, as are his thoughts about tradition and individual talent, which mean that the poet's literary homeland is all that was ever written, and that every new poem changes the constellation of all poetry. By virtue of the various historical circumstances, there are more and more great writers—such as, let's say Joyce, Mann, Huxley—who spent great parts of their lives far from their native regions, as travellers, wanderers, exiles or emigrants. With those and many other newer writers, the search for the lost homeland or mysterious foreign lands often smoulders on the margins, disguising their literary achievements, but they also often live with significant spiritual challenges, sometimes in opposition, and sometimes in emotional alliance with simultaneous repulsion and attraction.

In the Balkan territories, as in other oppressed countries exposed to persecutions and migrations, the cult of the homeland is particularly

² See Miloš Crnjanski, "Commentary with Prologue", "Ithaka and Commentaries", *Lyrics*, edited by Ž. Stojković, The Works of Miloš Crnjanski, in the abovementioned, Books 1-4. Miloš Crnjanski Foundation and dr., Belgrade 1993, p. 158. In further assertions: CRNJANSKI 1993.

³ First Book of Moses, 4: 12, 14

accentuated in oral literature. This cult is reflected in a readiness to die in defense of one's own grain-fields, cultural heritage and family life, in the various forms of struggle for survival, including outlawry in God-forsaken places. In Serbian written literature, creative loyalty to the special features of the homeland and the struggle for survival is a major theme of many writers—Njegoš, Branko Radičević, Laza Kostić, Laza Lazarević, Borisav Stanković, Petar Kočić—even when in some of their works foreign voices echo strongly in the native circle. It is interesting in the case of Ivo Andrić that his paths of life led him far from his native land of Bosnia, and that he also, sometimes, introduced significant foreigners into his novels, sometimes referring to “foreign” themes in his reflections such as “Conversations with Goya”, “Saint Francis of Assisi”, etc. But the action of his novels is mostly located in Travnik, Višegrad and Sarajevo, the places of his birth, childhood, boyhood and youth. In all of the literary work of Miloš Crnjanski there is an even sharper boundary that separates an era of very pronounced creative affiliation with the homeland community from the newer, foreign communities. This boundary is noticeable, among other things, in the innumerable contrasts arising with every step from *Lyrics of Ithaka* (1919) to *Lament over Belgrade* (1962), from *Journal of Čarnojević* (1921), *Anthology of Chinese Lyrics* (1923), *Songs of Old Japan* (1928) and *Migrations* (1929), through numerous travel journals and views on various European countries and personalities, to a second book of *Migrations* (1962) and the *Novel about London* (1971).

Often the paradoxes of the life and spiritual orientations of Miloš Crnjanski, both towards foreign lands and towards his homeland, have their own roots in the unusual paths of his life, as in all of his encounters with different cultures. Doesn't he tell us himself about the drama of these creative contradictions of life when, in his commentaries to accompany *Lyrics of Ithaka*, he speaks to us in relation to his own family origin: “who knows who we are, from whence we came, how we got a name and why” and he assures us that “contrary to what you think about us”, he does “not care about the past or the ancestry”, and concludes: “I have always been an ancestor to myself”.⁴ However much it looks biologically and spiritually absurd, significant grains of truth are hidden in that unusual observation about Crnjanski and his work.

There are few great Serbian writers who had such impermanent dwelling places and such a spiritual home in this world like Miloš Crnjanski. After an early childhood in his birthplace at Csongrád, Hungary, he lived from his third year in Timisoara, where he listened in his parents' house to the old Serbian songs and stories which his father

⁴ “Biographical information about the poet” (CRNJANSKI 1993: 164).

gladly sang to him, while he attended the Serbian Elementary School. There he also finished Secondary School with the Catholic Piarist Brothers, socializing with his peers (Romanians, Hungarians, Jews, Germans and Serbs), but spent the summer holidays most often in Ilača which he, in some circumstances, pointed out as his parents' homeland. At the end of Secondary School in 1912, supported by a rich uncle from Vienna, he was sent to study Export Economics in Rijeka, where he learned Italian, practiced fencing, played football in the fields, lived it up, and "delighted in the poems of Leopardi and Carducci" (POPOVIĆ 1980: 11). At the end of the summer holidays, at the beginning of autumn 1913, he arrived for the first time to stay with his maternal relatives in Belgrade which would "make a strong impression" on him: "I was fond of Timisoara, in the way people are fond of the place where they grow up. But I loved Belgrade like a person loves his obsession..." (POPOVIĆ 1980: 13). Later, he will sometimes be in conflict with that obsession, but it will follow him to the end of his life. He arrived in Vienna in the autumn of the same year, where he wished to study medicine and not at the Export Academy, so his rich uncle threw him out of the house, but his mother accepted his decision, sent him money, and he quickly switched to the study of philosophy and history, where he "actively participates in the work of the Serbian students' society 'Zora'" (Dawn) (POPOVIĆ 1980: 14). After his arrest and mobilisation into the Austro-Hungarian army in Szeged in August 1914, getting wounded at the front in Galicia, getting treatment and other changes of fortune, working in a monastery hospital in Vienna during the First World War, he learned the truth of how broad were the highways of life in Zagreb, Belgrade, Germany, Italy, Portugal, England. He visited many other countries—and it all came to an end in 1965. He then returned for the last time to "his" Belgrade.

While he was in his youth "like a 'displaced' person even from birth" (BUNJAC 1986: 20) after the end of the First World War he returned to his "obsession", to the Belgrade "homeland", where he had never lived before; he was soon so dissatisfied with his writing and living environment that he wrote to Ivo Andrić on 21 March, 1920: "I only see disorder and chaos around us [...] I still hold out this hope that this autumn I will succeed in getting away from here for a year or two. I abhor the emptiness that I see. It is monkey business in both Belgrade and Zagreb. There will be people here in five years. Don't come back any sooner". (CRNJANSKI 2000: 44—45). Convinced that everything is different in Italy, in the same letter he encourages Andrić: "Live to the fullest, you're in Rome!" (CRNJANSKI 2000: 44). And that grief over the "homeland" continues in an undated letter in which he replies to Andrić's postcard from Rome of 12 April 1920: "Now it's all bland here, [...] You have no idea how much waste there is here now. [...] I am burning,

but there is no one to burn for.” (CRNJANSKI 2000: 48—49). In a later undated letter, also from the first half of 1920, Crnjanski writes to Andrić, a little wistfully, of the advantages of the foreign lands over the homeland: “See the sun above Monte Citorio, and that’s something. And these taverns, ministries and women lead to madness. At least there you are abroad. It doesn’t hurt”. (CRNJANSKI 2000: 50).

Do those words conceal the germ of Miloš Crnjanski’s hidden need to somehow create a more acceptable Belgrade for himself? In his essay “Death in Belgrade”, published in the *Vreme* newspaper in January 1926, he talks about the superb location of Belgrade at the confluence of two rivers, of “the turbulent and vivid beauty of Belgrade”, one of “the most ancient cities on the Danube and Sava”, “a city created by the poor, honourable and chivalrous” (CRNJANSKI 19956: 176—177). In pointing out that “there is no town in Europe that has been so connected to other towns”, he also points out that “Belgrade has real elegance, obtained through receiving undeserved insults” (CRNJANSKI 19956: 178). Citing afterwards that Branko Radičević called Belgrade the “White Swan”, he concludes his own observations with words which may already foreshadow *Lament over Belgrade*: “There is neither fear nor wickedness in the life of this town; it travels on its cliff, with its hills on its back, beyond the rivers into the blueness of sky” (CRNJANSKI 19956: 179).

Shortly thereafter, already taking the first steps of his novelist-diplomatic career in Germany in 1928, Crnjanski writes to Andrić in a letter dated 12 July that he is “in Berlin, assigned to be a sort of attaché for cultural propaganda”, adding: “And so we run around in the world, and it is all for nothing. Do you know how beautiful it is now in Belgrade and Bosnia?” (CRNJANSKI 2000: 71). In the month of June of that year, in a letter to Svetislav B. Cvijanović, Crnjanski remembers again the “beauty of Belgrade” (POPOVIĆ 1980: 123), and then, on 16 February 1929, he writes to Ivo Andrić that “Berlin is awful, Germany terrible” (CRNJANSKI 2000: 79). It is possible that in this context, the poet’s essay “Belgrade in the Snow”, published in January 1930 in the newspaper *Vreme*, was born out of his craving for his homeland, in which, among other things, he emphasises that Belgrade is “beautiful, standing beautifully upright, appearing on a hill stepping over the water”, that “the changing beauty of one town carries in itself as much experience, sadness and enjoyment, and even more reasons for happy or sad thoughts, as the beauty of the beloved human” (CRNJANSKI 19956: 183). The premonition that the homeland can also be an “obsession” can be seen in the remark that the only “eternal things” are the “views of Kalemegdan” (CRNJANSKI 19956: 185), and that a “new beauty of Belgrade” appears

“from behind the walls that are as silent as hills under snow but that watch, on a winter evening, with the fiery eyes of their lighted windows” (CRNJANSKI 19956: 186). It is perhaps that longing for the poetic homeland is also rooted in the suspicion of what the “foreign lands” will turn his life into, especially as he discovers, as he pointed out much later, that “a writer separated from his country cannot create”,⁵ that “in foreign lands he loses his will to work”, that “the great writer flourishes only in his native place”,⁶ that “his own country is, mostly, the true instinct for creativity possessed by the writer”.⁷ Besides, all his life, both physical and spiritual, was for him a symbol of “migration”, he felt at the same time that he was “a member of a people who have been in constant movement throughout history”⁸—hence, one can assume, so much devotion towards the homeland in *The Migrations* and so much feeling of hostility in the *Novel about London*.

In some ways, some of these contradictions, and perhaps the inevitable constellation of yearning for the foreign, and despair of the foreign, then the impulse for escaping the homeland and towards returning to it arise very early in the poetry of Miloš Crnjanski. At the time when he was attending the fourth grade of secondary school, his first published poem appeared in the Sombor children’s newspaper *Golub* (The Dove) under the precocious title “*Sudba*” (“Fate”) (1908), and already one notices something of the eternal in it, the contradictory human impulse for adventure and tranquillity. This is already apparent in the imagery of the ship “on the blue sea”, which is struggling on the open sea with gigantic waves, all bound for shipwreck—the moment when the foam engulfs just “the last part of the ship” (CRNJANSKI 1993: 13).⁹ Some of these thoughts echo both in native and foreign voices in many other early poems. It’s certainly not by chance that his first collection *Lyrics of Ithaka* (1919) already calls forth the *Odyssey* in its title, as we would expect, sometimes rebelliously defiant, but also sometimes with irony in relation to the homeland.

In the prologue to “Poems of Saint Vitus’s Day”, at the beginning of *Lyrics of Ithaka*, as in a search for the homeland of all humanity, the

⁵ Said by Miloš Crnjanski in conversation with Živojin H. Todorović (1962): “I saved my love”, Essays and Articles II, prepared, with associates, Živorad Stojković, Works of Miloš Crnjanski, L’Age D’Homme, Lausanne, Belgrade 1999, p. 462. In further quotations: CRNJANSKI 1999.

⁶ Said by Miloš Crnjanski in conversation with Anđelko Vuletić (1965): “In London, with Miloš Crnjanski” CRNJANSKI 1999: 486).

⁷ Said by Miloš Crnjanski in conversation with Milorad Tirnanić (1971): “We Were Too Optimistic” CRNJANSKI 1999: 541).

⁸ Said by Miloš Crnjanski in conversation with Milivoj Pavlović (1972): “I sang my song of the swan” CRNJANSKI 1999: 548).

⁹ In further citations from this collection, page numbers are marked in the brackets.

writer informs us that he has returned from Troy “pale and alone”, that his home is “drunk and debauched” now, that “living anywhere around world” is equally sad, and then warns his newly arrived Belgrade homeland that he, a writer, is not “the poet of the sold rights / or the flatterer of higher-class cows”, that he is not a “patriotic tribune”, that his intention is not to surpass “Krlježa, or Ćurčin”, nor become “the pride of the nation” (19). In the last verse he turns yet again to a distant hope for change, which will bring the soul closer to the “perfumed heaven”, but if this is impossible, then “may the Devil take us, and poems, and Ithaca, and all” (20).

We can see how far from finding a shelter in his homeland the poet is by his leftist mockery of then prevalent civic and patriotic slogans and fashionable glorification of the past of “heavenly people”, for example in “Spomenik Principu” (“Monument in Honour of Princip”): “Stop hailing Bašša, Dušan the Mighty. / The nobility, the dukes, the despots, brought nothing but shame. / Hail the ones with haiduk blood in their veins. / And erect a St. Vitus’s temple to honour a murderer!” („O Bašši, i Dušanu Silnom, da umukne krik. / Vlastela, vojvode, despoti, behu sram. / Hajdučkoj krvi nek se ori cik. / Ubici dište Vidovdanski hram!”), 29)

In the same spirit, Crnjanski adds that “my people are hungry, and covered in blood”, and that “the glorious past” is in fact “a lie” („gladan i krvav je narod moj, a sjajna prošlost je laž”, 29). In short, we should face the horrors of the past and the present times, especially the deceiving mirrors that reflect the horrors all shiny and bright. It is both interesting and relevant to the contemporary political context that Crnjanski wrote that Princip “branded us all murderers, and all of us became suspicious not only to the police in Austria-Hungary, but in the whole of Europe”, “making us brothers in blood, bringing us closer than we had been until then by the church and tradition” (Popović 1980: 15).

Following the same line of the break with the sweet lies about the historical realities of the entire human history, Crnjanski wrote the poem “Oda vešalima” (“Ode to Gallows”). The first verses of the poem ask the question why the gallows are “as black as a cross” and “as greasy as a butcher’s door” (27), and they are followed by the remark that they have always been installed and kept in “prison gardens”—is it for the gallows to serve their purpose “behind the closed door”, not to be seen by honourable people, who, in such a world, should like to hang on them “out of shame” (27)? This outburst of cynical, defiant youthful truthfulness about worldly life and its history can be seen in the verses that talk about the possibility of different dreams on the gallows—more beautiful than those available in despicable real life: “A walk in the sky is more beautiful on the gallows / For there is no mud or dirt. / And their

embrace is firmer / Than a bride's hands around a young neck" („Lepše se na vama po nebu šeta, / Po zemlji ima blata. / Čvršće grlite no nevesta zakleta / Oko mlada vrata.”28)

“Soldier's Poem” (“Vojnička pesma”) is written in the same spirit, with the voice of a man whose father, a *sebar*, “moans on a wheel” (“na točku cvili”) while his daughter is “gnawed by wolves” (“glođu vuci”), and he, as a new kind of hero, an ordinary man, freed from traditional pomp, would not “cry either for gold or silver / or for the whole glory of Dušan” („za srebro ni za zlato plako / niti za Dušanov sjaj”), nor would he “as much as raise my finger / for that paradise for prostitutes” („rukom za carske dvorove mako, / za onaj bludnica raj”, 30). In short, many of these early poems by Miloš Crnjanski talk not only about the break with tradition of love poetry as a form of flattery to “high-society cows” (“otmene krave”), but also about the break with a heap of lies about an imaginary historical glory, and the perception of history of one's own people as nothing but deceptive patriotic illusions. These are the features of Miloš Crnjanski's poetic temple of St. Vitus, which go far beyond the language, culture and history of a small nation, and occasionally, in today's contemporary context, they become monuments of hindsight and visionary prophesy.

His poem, on the threshold of the celebrations of the creation of the first Yugoslavia, also sounds ominously prophetic—from the warning that “no tricolor flag that can be seen / is ours” („nijedna trobojka što se vije / naša nije”) to the image of a celebration at the grave of war horrors, the celebration at which “drummers shriek instead of the dead” (“telali umesto mrtvih viču”, 32) and celebrate the new state as a community of the ill-fated, “brothers” in “quarrelling and hatred,” “in shame, repentance, misery” (“braći” u “svađi i mržnji” “u sramu, pokori, bedi”, 33). This ironic anthem “to Yugoslavia” echoes with the ghosts of the past and the future, perhaps more powerfully today than when it was written. Crnjanski writes about that same past and future also in the “Eternal Servant”, in verses that sound as if they were written yesterday, today, or, God forbid, tomorrow: “You shed your tears / and you thought, the war is over. / Oh martyrs, / Gallows grow taller / than the son, wife and brother, / and they are faithful to infinity!” („Oplakali ste rat / i mislili: sad je kraj. / O mučenici, / Vešala rastu više / Nego sin, žena i rat / I verna su u beskraj!” 31).

In that poem, Crnjanski considers not only the moment of his immediate present, but also the entire human history, *sub specie aeternitatis*, and hence those verses, when read today, receive a prophetic tone.

And what do the poems written after the first edition of *Lirika Itake*, poems such as “Sumatra” (1920), “Stražilovo” (1921) and “Serbia” (1925), tell us about his late return to his Ithaca? In “Sumatra”, also in the writer's

note below the poem that says “Belgrade, 29 Braće Nedića Street” (77), distant lands of exile smile as if in a lyrical, harmless haze in which we are “carefree, light and gentle” (“bezbrizni, laki i nežni”), while we realize that “silent and covered in snow / the peaks of Ural are” (“,tihan, snežni / vrhovi Urala”, 77). So when we wake up at night, we smile “at the Moon with an arched bow, / and we stroke the remote hills / and icebergs, with a gentle hand” (“,Na mesec sa zapetim lukom, / I milujemo daleka brda / I ledene gore, blago, rukom”, 77). Unlike these new lyrical encounters with distant lands of exile in the homeland, the poems “Stražilovo” and “Serbia”—written abroad and in exile, but with characteristic native titles—speak of the meeting with the homeland abroad. In “Stražilovo”, written on the balcony of a hotel from which you can see Florence,¹⁰ even the Danube runs somehow “secretly”, and the bridge that leads “into the heavy darkness of the hills of Fruška gora” is seen “under the waters” (86). The homeland is “perceived” at almost every step (87), while the poet, instead of “his life”, actually lives “the storms and shadows of the vineyards of Fruška gora” (88). At the same time, he remembers his youth in which he was drunk with the idea of the homeland (89) under the “leavened leaves” falling from the grave of Branko Radicević (88) and hopes for “the dawns of the hills of Fruška gora” (92) to light up the shadows of exile and death. Could it be, in the figurative sense of the word, a hint of what he will dream of in *Lament over Belgrade*?

Numerous verses of the poem *Serbia* (1925) speak of the nature of this idealization of homeland abroad, as well as of the deep internal contradictions of homeland and exile. On the one hand, when addressing his country from Corfu, the idea that the poet as well as Serbia itself was born somewhere in a foreign country, as a sign of thirst for an imaginary homeland: “Born abroad, under frozen snow / I was fed by your voice, fragility and care. / They laid me down in the powerlessness of childhood, to love you / and to get sick with worry for you for the rest of my life” (“,Porodajem u tuđini, pod zamrzlim snegom / hraniše me tvojim glasom, slabošću i negom. / Spustiše me u nemoć detinjstva, da te volim / I brigom za tobom, za ceo život, obolim.“, 93).

In the further course of the poem, there are other invocations of the imaginary homeland, and the poet’s realization that he has had no greater passion than “the painful embrace of those dead, the ones who gave their lives”, realizing that he, although on Corfu, “searches for the Morning Star in Serbia” (94). But Serbia, as an absolute homeland in the poem of the same name, is possible, as in “Stražilovo”, only as

¹⁰ See the interview with Zoran Sekulić (1972): “To be for freedom is to be a romantic” (Crnjanski 1999: 561)

long as it “is seen in the distance, over the horizon”, while “abroad, it appears in the sky”, as Aleksandar Petrov points out in his analysis of the poems “Stražilovo” and “Serbia” (Petrov 1988: 114). However, reduced to the actual present, this absolute homeland lives only as a “patch / scarecrow in the fields” („krpa, / strašilo u žitu“, 94). This is also explicitly stated in a travelogue written in 1925, in which Crnjanski is appalled at the misery and deprivation that he encounters in the cradle of his country: “Corfu is an abandoned garden that swims, with our cemeteries, on the sea,” appearing “out of the water, in the fog of dawn” (Crnjanski 1995a: 231). These contradictory views of the homeland as a magnificent absolute and, at the same time, its misery, living abroad as a blessing and a curse, grows as an emotional rapture in the question of whether his experience of homeland is nothing but “fog, and smoke” —“Or the brightness of the morning burning of the sun” (95). And in this unanswered question, the poet’s enthusiasm becomes a scream in the storm that recalls the homeland: “Serbia was still caught in that storm / which I am ashamed of now, livid from drowning! / I screamed, amid the frenzied dance of the sea and bubbles / Longing to see my homeland extraordinarily peaceful” („Serbiu, jedinu još hučala je ta bura, / koje se sad, modar pd davljenja, gorko, stidim! / Urlah, sred ludog skakanja mora i mehura, / Da tišinu vanrednu nad zavičajem vidim“, 95). The existential drama of crucifixion on the cross of exile and homeland is also reflected in many other poems, with the final resolution in *Lament over Belgrade*, first published abroad in 1962. According to Miloš Crnjanski, he felt these lyrics as his “swan song”,¹¹ as a vow to his diverse homelands, exiles, memories and experiences—to “his” Belgrade. In a poem written in exile in 1956, “during a vacation, on a beach near London, in a place called Cooden Beach” (589), the poet thinks he sees Jan Maien, a small Norwegian island in the Arctic Sea that he passed by during a trip, in the same way he sees “my Srem”, then “Paris, my dead comrades, cherries in China” (104). As a contrast to everything transient and past, Belgrade grows “into the bright Morning Star”, “with blue Avala, in the distance, as a hill,” as the sign of the poet’s hopes for the eternal peace in the homeland: “And when my voice, eyes, and breath cease to be / I know you will take me under your wing” („A kad mi se glas, i oči, i dah, upokoje / Ti ćeš me, znam, uzeti pod svoje“, 105).

Recalling then his former Belgrade comrades who are no longer what they used to be “when young and powerful”, “but parrots, chimps,

¹¹ Crnjanski said in a conversation with Nikolić Drenovec in 1954, and then repeated several times in other talks—with Đorđe Zorkić in 1965, Vas Popović in 1965, Milivoj Pavlović in 1972, Zoran Sekulić in 1972. See Crnjanski, 1999: 484, 492, 499, 547, (550), 552.

miserable,” he feels that they are now “screaming” in his “solitude” (106). Indicating similar solitude and inevitable transience, the poem evokes many other memories of the experiences in the homeland that makes peace, both bitterly and radiantly, with exile in the embrace of death. In this reconciliation under the auspices of Belgrade, which still stands as a permanent monument to all transient things, the poet invites all the enthusiasm and disappointments of his life to his homeland. Is this reconciliation the lament over the homeland, or over exile as the poet’s destiny, over all that lives in the prose work of Miloš Crnjanski as an expression of the writer’s instinctive need for final reconciliation in his imagined homeland?

In any case, this poem is a premonition of the great crossroads of old, stable, or at least unhurried patriarchal culture and modern, mobile, ever more fast-moving civilization. Patriarchal culture implied roots and closeness, the experience of love and hate, as well as the eloquence that rests on human bonds in the homeland. Mobile civilization implies that human fate takes place in a vortex exile, and its eloquence often springs from faraway lands and flows into them. This eloquence is a kind of objectivity, almost at the border of at least an apparent indifference, as seen in the novels of Miloš Crnjanski, and especially *A Novel about London*. Unlike the traditional rootedness of Serbian folk poetry, Njegoš and Andrić, Miloš Crnjanski’s literary language suggests the climate of new encounters of homeland and exile, in which, after the Second World War, some significant works of writers such as Pekić, Kiš, Albahari, Danojlić, Tasić, Eliezir Papo and others will mature, works in which the immediate features of their emigrant life paths and experiences are reflected.

Finally, in the broader context of watching the interplay of exile and homeland in Serbian literature, Miloš Crnjanski has been characterized by his eternal paradoxes, the idealization of exile that awakens in the homeland, devotion to the homeland that awakens in exile. In this interplay of homeland and exile, on the whole, it would be hard sometimes to make an emotional distinction between repulsion and devotion, bitterness and radiance. Namely, these paradoxes involve, on the one hand, not only the presence of some long-gone worlds, but suggest fundamental features of earlier “homeland” times, in which many generations lived on the same ground, and, on the other hand, the “globalist”, more and more mobile new era. Today, at the threshold of this new era and its characteristic discourse of “globalization,” in the opinion of Slobodan Vladošić, international rights are replaced by “so-called human rights” which, ironically enough, “become the ideology of imperialism” (Vladošić 2013: 191). In this process, cosmopolitanism sometimes grows into an “auto-chauvinist discourse,” which banishes

patriotism and “seeks to destroy the national culture by turning its particles into biomass particles, into a decollectivized, depoliticized mob” (Vladušić 2013: 202). In this contemporary ideology, as if one of the world’s megalopolises grew into the centre of these “particles of biomass” (Vladušić 2013: 199), excluding every form of humanity “in the neo-liberal crusade against the collective” (Vladušić 2013: 197). Asked, in this context: “Why do we need Crnjanski?”, Slobodan Vladušić responds: “Crnjanski is needed because in his opus, as well as in life, this complex relationship of the individual to the collective is revealed, which gives us the opportunity to think about this relationship differently than the neoliberal dogma suggests”(Vladušić 2013: 203).

Translated from Serbian by
Jovanka Kalaba

SLOBODAN VLADUŠIĆ

WHY DO WE NEED CRNJANSKI?

I

In his text *The End of Art*, Gadamer writes that in the course of the 19th century people gradually gained a self-understanding of the tradition of Christian humanism. “Thus losing a shared myth”,¹ concludes Gadamer, taking myth to mean something everyone believes in, something a society does not doubt. The consequences of this epochal change with respect to art are significant: since there is no longer a collective myth to faithfully convey, it remains jobless. Thus, a time of leisure sets in: during this time of leisure modern art, as well as modern literature, have the opportunity to examine their inner being, to contemplate, to distance themselves from new myths, though still remembering their old humanistic, Christian employer. One of these new myths could be money, the frightful leveler, as referred to by Simmel, which reduces the once diverse values of the pre-modern world to the same denominator. Completely in the spirit of positivistic philosophy or neoliberal capitalism, there is no reality until we measure it, and this notion, transferred to literature, marks the moment when the modernistic rebellion against the bourgeoisie, mass culture and the culture industry is replaced by a writer’s desire to find his place in this world of circulating capital: novels begin to resemble screenplays, which are published right before a movie or series is made and sold after they are aired, linked to the infatuation of consumer masses who buy everything that has to do with a blockbuster movie or series.

At the same time, the so-called “serious writers”, who still think of themselves as devotees of “literature as such” are quick to take part

¹ Hans-Georg Gadamer, *Evropsko nasleđe* (European Inheritance), Plato, Beograd, 1999, p.44.

in petitions which at first glance seem very “humanistic”, hence “universal”, while in fact their significance is none other than particularistic and geopolitical. Here, literature finds a new role for itself, which is, ultimately, also devoted to economy, only in an indirect manner: it participates in the process of replacing international law with so-called “human rights”, which become the ideology of imperialism. All this requires the rehashing of humanitarianism in the sphere of foreign politics (not in any way domestic!), and who better for this role than so-called “literature”. It will recall its heroic moments—like Zola’s defense of Dreyfus—in order to legitimize the petty hireling behaviour of the so-called “respectable writers” who are taking part in transforming the enemy of one coterie of powerful people into the enemy of so-called “mankind”—former writers become professional humanitarians. The task of the professional humanitarians is to turn “the priorities of the American elite into a global principle” by means of the syntagm “universal ethics”, that is, to exalt “the deontology of a small coterie to a universal moral code”.² And while Zola, as Hannah Arendt notices, risked his life to defend Dreyfus, in other words the principles,³ for their efforts (in other words, work done) today’s so-called “literary giants” receive deserving crumbs in accordance with their significance: a translation here and there, a minor fellowship, interviews, in other words, everything offered to lower officials in the range of public diplomacy whose task is to distribute soft power.⁴ One should have this in mind: whenever some “humanitarian” utters an abundance of words like “participation”, “responsibility”, “human rights”, it would not be a bad idea to do a little test, according to Pekić: ask yourself, is this person risking something or hoping to get something (scholarship, reward, translation, media promotion)?⁵

² Costas Douzinas, *Human Rights and Empire*, translated into the Serbian by Slobodan Divjak, Službeni glasnik – Albatros plus, Beograd, 2009, p. 101.

³ “And all of the reviews agree: if Zola hadn’t been convicted, he wouldn’t have left the court alive.” Arendt Hannah, *The Origins of Totalitarianism*, translated into the Serbian by Slavica Stojanović, Aleksandra Bajazetov-Vučen, Feministička izdavačka kuća 94, Beograd 1998, p. 113.

⁴ Joseph Nye in *The Future of Power* positions these activities with individual actors in the broadest dimension of public diplomacy: “The third dimension of public diplomacy is the development of lasting relationships with key individuals over many years or even decades, through scholarships, exchanges, training, seminars, conferences, and access to media channels.” J. Nye, *Budućnost moći*, translated into the Serbian by Anika Krstić, Arhipelag, Beograd, 2012, p. 135.

⁵ When it comes to participation, I would like to bring to your attention a moral precondition which doesn’t necessarily have to be important for the good outcome of someone’s participation, but is important for the person participating. There are people [...] whose participation, in any respect, changes nothing in their lives, they sacrifice nothing, risk nothing by participating, give no guarantee of sincerity. Others, however, who are forced to participate under unfavorable conditions, are sometimes in a

II

This is the reason why literature has become insipid and why most writers are insipid. However, as a consolation, although poor, we could say that these developments in literature are the result of changes in governmental practices it describes, and which Michel Foucault legitimizes through his lectures on biopolitics.

That is to say, Foucault's starting point is a theory according to which the governing of the state based on the reason of state means "to arrange things so that the state becomes sturdy and permanent, so that it becomes wealthy, and so that it becomes strong in the face of everything that may destroy it."⁶ A biopolitical government develops in the face of this sovereign state power. Its birth is preceded by the undermining of the absolute significance of the reason of state which is thus brought into question. At this point, attempts are made to limit absolute power. There are external limitations which come from the sphere of law.⁷ On the other hand, there is also an internal limit of the reason of state which originates in the sphere of political economics. At first glance, it assumes the intentions of the reason of state—enrichment of the state—but actually leads to a completely new concept of state. Thus, political economics establishes a new concept of the reason of state:

Governmental reason in its modern form, in the form established at the beginning of the eighteenth century [...] is a reason that functions in terms of interest. But this is no longer the interest of an entirely self-referring state which only seeks its own growth, wealth, population, and power, as was the state of *raison d'Etat*. In the principle to which governmental reason must conform, interest is now interests, a complex interplay between individual and collective interests, between social utility and economic profit, between the equilibrium of the market and the regime of public authorities, between basic rights and the independence of the governed. Government, at any rate, government in this new governmental reason, is something that works with interests.⁸

By careful examination of this segment, we are able to draw a few significant conclusions: firstly, reason of state enables the creation of

situation in which they risk much more than they achieve by participating. I favor the latter." Borislav Pečić, *Vreme priče*, BIGZ, SKZ, Beograd, 1993, p. 34.

⁶ Michel Foucault, *The Birth of Biopolitics*, translated into the Serbian by Bojana Novaković and others, *Svetovi*, Novi Sad, p. 15.

⁷ Foucault: "in the sixteenth and seventeenth centuries there are constant attempts to limit *raison d'Etat*, and the principle or reason of this limitation is found in juridical reason." *Ibid*, p. 23.

⁸ *Ibid*, pp. 70-71.

something we could call a state consensus. This consensus can be directed towards various goals, just as state power pursued by the reason of state can be interpreted in several ways: Nazi Germany had its version of state power; social states interpreted this power in a different way. But, basically it is the power or potential to establish a state consensus, to be more precise, a state of consensus, which gives the government the legitimacy and legality to intervene if its power is brought into question.

[EXCURSUS: It goes without saying that I, personally, would not support a state consensus along the lines of Nazi Germany and that whole frame of racist ambitions which resulted in the formation of a language, an ideology according to which even *Lebensraum*, where there wasn't a single German, legally fell under the Third Reich, whereby it only needed to be cleansed of lower races either by force (as was the case with the Jews), or in accordance with more humane principles, more precisely by limiting the birthrate by means of a cultural policy (as was the case with the Slavs).

However, I would support a state consensus resulting in a state which would look upon the self-immolation of its citizens both as a symbol and a sign of weakness and which would have to react to this weakness. I would support a state consensus resulting in a state which would react to the inability of its citizens to pay for healthcare. I would support a state consensus which would create a state which sees the poverty of its citizens as a reflection of its own powerlessness and which would have to intervene and reduce the poverty.]

Foucault's discourse on a new reason of state (which, as we will see, doesn't have anything to do with the reason of state) leads to a new term—interest. This term can appear only when the state consensus refers to the reason of state whose objective, state power, is brought into question. At this point, one macro-interest breaks down into numerous different, mutually conflicting interests, which not only ignore each other but are also severely opposed. Once again, Foucault is not only someone who describes this new reason of state, he also gives it legitimacy and recommends it by presenting it as being leading-edge and as such, implicitly superior. He does this through a selection of metaphors: he describes the conflict of interest as a game of interest, a game which is so complex that it can be played indefinitely because due to its complexity, no one can win. But, the game metaphor implies fair play, a game played by the rules, a fair game in which the defeated can only get angry on general principle “whoever loses has the right to be angry”, which is

of course a synonym for futility, a synonym for the fact that the one who is angry has the right to be angry only at himself.

However, if the game of interest is actually a war of interest—and the protests which are taking place in almost all of the countries of Europe confirm this quite graphically—then this military term demonstrates more correctly and accurately what this is really about. And it is about the fact that when state consensus regarding the so-called social state ceases to function, more precisely, when the capitalist class dislocates production (so-called globalization) and avoids coming to a compromise with the working class with which until only recently it shared the same boat (state), leaving it on deserted wasteland, then clearly these workers have the right to pose questions regarding their fate. This is an issue of equality, but not equality in terms of income, such equality is impossible because people do not possess equal skills. This is an issue of equality mainly in a closed sphere, the sphere of the state; because if this equality is nonexistent, then it's impossible to imagine that it can exist in a wider, universal sphere.⁹

Industry dislocation to countries with cheaper labor is concurrently accompanied with the elimination of equality with regard to humanity and humaneness within the society itself precisely by activating differences which contribute to the development of various interest groups that fight for their own interests and thus abandon the sphere of state interest, in other words, the reason of state. The loss of the state of wholeness—the loss of a nation—is the moment when the people become a mass whose inner parts battle for particular interests, which ultimately leads to the concept of government described by Foucault—a government which manipulates interests is a government which proclaims influences of a particular group as state interests, the interests of the whole. In this respect, it is all the same which government is in power because it really does not hold the power: the power is in the hands of the most influential group which was not chosen based on election votes.

This is the government Foucault refers to in his observations concerning biopolitics. Foucault differentiates it from sovereign power in the following manner: “Sovereignty took live and let live. And now we have the emergence of a power that I would call the power of regularization, and it, in contrast, consists in making live and letting die.”¹⁰

⁹ This is in fact the paradox of cosmopolitanism, which sees itself as the counterpoint to patriotism. A cosmopolitan who comes to love the world by relinquishing his patriotic emotions forgets that he is thus contradicting himself because he doesn't love the whole world, only the world minus his own nation. Therefore, he is not a cosmopolitan (because he doesn't love the world as a whole) but an “auto-chauvinist” (because he obviously hates himself, more precisely, the nation to which he belongs).

¹⁰ Michel Foucault, *Society Must be Defended*, translated into the Serbian by Pavle Sekeruš, *Svetovi*, Novi Sad, 1998, p. 299.

Terms like “democracy”, “human rights” or “citizens” obviously cannot be applied to this type of power. The various terms are rapidly reduced to simply opposition: there are those who give life and let others die, and there is a population which is thus regulated.

III

At the beginning of his lectures, under the title *The Birth of Biopolitics*, Foucault states: “I have not studied and do not want to study the development of real governmental practice”.¹¹ This dissociation from reality is of course the result of the author’s view that knowledge of the real cannot be attained, as discourse always deforms the truth. Thus, we should set aside Foucault at this point because there is not much more he can add to what’s already been said. We should focus on authors who deal with discourse on political philosophy in the more realistic sense of the word. One such author is Immanuel Wallerstein. In his text “Globalization or the Age of Transition”, we come upon a very promising polemical discourse dealing with globalization:

This discourse is in fact a gigantic misreading of current reality—a deception imposed upon us by powerful groups and an even worse one that we have imposed upon ourselves, often despairingly. It is a discourse that leads us to ignore the real issues before us, and to misunderstand the historical crisis within which we find ourselves. We do indeed stand at a moment of transformation. But this is not that of an already established, newly globalized world with clear rules. Rather we are located in age of transition, transition not merely of a few backward countries who need to catch up with the spirit of globalization, but a transition in which the entire capitalist world system will be transformed into something else. The future, far from being inevitable and one to which there is no alternative...¹²

So, we see here that Wallerstein observes the entire globalization discourse as a collective hallucination which strives to avoid seeing the present, but also the future. Wallerstein further claims that we are in the midst of a battle between alternatives and that the globalization discourse is an instrument used in this battle. Wallerstein euphemistically links globalization to powerful groups who established the discourse. The

¹¹ Michel Foucault, *The Birth of Biopolitics*, translated into the Serbian by Bojana Novaković and others, *Svetovi*, Novi Sad, 2005, p. 12.

¹² Immanuel Wallerstein, “Globalization or the Age of Transition – A Long-Term View of the Trajectory of the World System”, *Globalization – Myth or Reality*, translated into the Serbian by Vladimir Vuletić, Zavod za udžbenike, Beograd, 2003, p. 93.

fact that he then adds that we ourselves had also done the same, is not as important: this is about the term itself which, through the process of educational and media manipulation, creates a general consensus regarding the interest of the minority. And this minority interest, tended to by globalization discourse, is ultimately the creation of a system of government in which the minority will legitimize its right to biopolitical projects, like the one described by Foucault in his lectures at Collège de France in 1976, as well as one of the heroes from Jünger's *Heliopolis*:

The best way is to adjust the number of people to the number of hereditary parts, and not vice versa. The source of all wars, including civil, is overpopulation. This is where the root of evil lies. A global empire is an assumption. Ideal population density must be established and guaranteed. This will increase individual and collective happiness.¹³

Establishing and guaranteeing population density are euphemisms for genocide of people who will be degraded and reduced to a *biomass* in order to legitimize the genocide. And to execute this Kafkaesque transformation of man into a particle of biomass, man first needs to undergo the process of depoliticization, in other words, his absence from the decision-making process with regard to public matters must be affirmed. The process of depoliticization is closely tied to the destruction of the idea of collectives, nations and states, which will transform society into a battleground for partial interests which conceal and do not interfere with the practice of biopower.

For this reason Pierre Bourdieu is right when he says that neoliberalism is “a programme of the methodical destruction of collectives”¹⁴ Neoliberalism is a tool used by the minority to control the battle of alternatives in the age of transition in which the rules and nature of the future world are being established.¹⁵

¹³ Ernst Jünger, *Heliopolis*, translated into the Serbian by Božidar Zec, *Službeni glasnik*, Beograd, 2012, p. 182.

¹⁴ Pierre Bourdieu, “The Essence of Neoliberalism”, translated into the Serbian by Tanja Pekić, *Zlatna greda*, November-December 2014, p. 24.

¹⁵ This is how Wallerstein describes this battle, in keeping with the Orwellian use of language in the area of modern politics: “We can think of this long transition as one enormous political struggle between two large camps: the camp of all those who wish to retain the privileges of the existing inegalitarian system, albeit in different forms – perhaps vastly different forms; and the camp of all those who would like to see the creation of a new historical system that will be significantly more democratic and more egalitarian. However, we cannot expect that the members of the first camp will present themselves in the guise that I have used to describe them. They will assert that they are modernizers, new democrats, advocates of freedom and progressive. They may even claim to be revolutionary. The key is not in the rhetoric but in the

IV

The neoliberal crusade against collectives is fought in various ways: sometimes it is a sophisticated technique of denouncing the opponent; other times we are dealing with the use of Goebbels-like propaganda in which the same lie is repeated a hundred times (patriotism equals fascism) until the people begin to repeat it. This is the point at which their sense of judgement is defeated and the people turn into a mob prepared to lynch anyone who, unlike them, still thinks.¹⁶

The more sophisticated tools used in the neoliberal attack on the collective also include changing the topic of history. Private lives from the past are becoming the primary interest of historiography, whereby political history is replaced by a depoliticized history of the individual. On one hand, this makes it possible to live private lives separate from political events, and thus history takes on the ideal of philistinism. Instead of describing the political existence of an individual, it describes his desire in the past to have security. History is becoming a story about privacy, which can never exist in such a pure and refined form, unless the subject is insane—like for example “the hero” of Sterija’s well-known poem *Na smrt jednog s uma sišavšeg/On the Death of One Losing His Mind*, whose insanity turned him into a private person without a political existence. Accusing political history of being the history of evil, the history of private lives identifies history with the history of idiots in the Greek sense of the word. This, of course, does

substantive reality of what is being proposed.” E. Wallerstein, “Globalization or the Age of Transition – A Long-Term View of the Trajectory of the World System”, p. 111.

¹⁶ When Churchill, faced with the danger of Fascism, calls out to his fellow-countrymen, promising blood, tears and sweat, he is obviously counting on their feelings of patriotism, for why would anyone agree to a future of blood, tears and sweat if they didn’t believe in the idea that they were taking part in something greater than individuality—the defense of their country. If the equation patriotism equals fascism were true, then there would be no difference between Hitler and Churchill. Further development of this “equation” leads to the following consequences: there is no difference between the attacked and the attacker; the only allowed motivation is financial motivation, and an economic transaction becomes the only allowed contact. Now it becomes clear that the neoliberal equation of patriotism with fascism, to be more precise, the stigmatization of patriotism, aims to transform all people into small companies; if someone cannot achieve a profit, they must disappear (go bankrupt). If we think about this idea in the context of the increasingly uneven distribution of social resources which has resulted from the pressure of the wealthy to become even more wealthy at any cost, we will see that, in time, more and more people will be sentenced to death only because of being poor, while at the same time, no one wants to see that the economic system is the one creating poverty. In his book, *A Novel about London*, Crnjanski clearly notes this in his description of the old Jew who was dying of starvation because no one listens to the type of music he plays in the streets anymore. Indeed: if we call extermination motivated by racial discrimination (the extermination of Jews) the holocaust, then we should use the same term to describe the extermination of people motivated by economic discrimination.

not mean that political history does not exist. It only means that history no longer possesses the ambition to be an introduction to the political existence of a citizen, but rather the exact opposite, an introduction to his depoliticization, and thus also decollectivization, which is the first step in the process of his transformation to biomass.

The ideal of philistinism can be described as the readiness to renounce the collective in order to preserve private security at all cost.¹⁷ When the philistine spirit becomes dominant in a collective, the collective breaks down into individuals who, as a whole, constitute a mere biomass: in other words, a group of depoliticised biological particles that have lost not only the tools and instruments to participate in the political sphere, but also the awareness of this loss; and thus they stand at the mercy of power which reduces their density, figuratively speaking.

The megalopolis becomes the gathering place for these particles of biomass, because it targets their philistine spirit, promising them a secure future. It's interesting to study the metaphorical language of the texts that fall into the discourse of urbanity whose primary task is to attract biomass to the megalopolis. One such text is "To London: The City Beyond the Nation" by Kevin Robins. We will focus on two segments of this text: the first is the use of "a lifeboat"¹⁸ as a metaphor for London, thus promising a philistine security, the only thing he really cares about. And the second is the concept of a community based on the loss of national singularity and diversity, whereby an individual becomes a part of a synchronized multitude characteristic of urban communities. The multitude represents a type of pseudo-collective: "A man can become a Londoner quite quickly and, if he desires, he can stop being a Londoner just as quickly; a man 'belongs' to a city very differently than to a nation."¹⁹

Undoubtedly, Robins' London is a paradise for the middle class: it guarantees us security without asking anything in return. The only problem with Robins' London is that it doesn't exist. That is to say, the relationship between a man and the London described by Robins conceals an economic relationship. A man will be a Londoner for as long as he desires, and once he decides he no longer desires to be a Londoner

¹⁷ Hannah Arendt makes note of this: "The philistine is the bourgeois isolated from his own class, the atomized individual who is produced by the breakdown of the bourgeois class itself. The mass man whom Himmler organized for the greatest crimes ever committed in history bore the features of the philistine rather than of the mob man, and was the bourgeois who in the midst of the ruins of his world worried about nothing so much as his private security, was ready to sacrifice everything—belief, honor, dignity—on the slightest provocation. Nothing proved easier to destroy than the privacy and private morality of people who thought of nothing but safeguarding their private lives." Hannah Arendt, *The Origins of Totalitarianism*, p. 347.

¹⁸ K. Robins, "To London: The City beyond the Nation", *Studije culture*, translated into the Serbian by Jelena Đorđević, *Službeni glasnik*, Beograd, 2008, p. 602.

¹⁹ *Ibid*, p. 601.

he will cease to be one. What motivates this desire? Only interest, because nothing else draws the man to London. We can describe this relationship between a man and London using economic metaphors: it is a fixed-term contract signed between London and a man.

However, if this is a contract, then the power is not in the hands of only one party, but both. This is what Robins' text is skillfully concealing: just as a man can decide how long he will be a Londoner, London can decide who will be a Londoner and for how long. Just like in a company: an employee can leave to go and work for another company where he will be better paid. However, he can also be fired when the company decides his services are no longer needed. The only thing an employee can't do is influence the business policy of the company: and analogously, Londoners do not have any influence on what London is; what it wants, it does. Since, of course, London is not some superhuman entity, but a human creation, this means that the power of London lies in the hands of a certain number of people who run the city and whose management is not limited to *part-time* Londoners, for in Robins' text there is no mention of the instruments available to the "now-we-are-and-now-we-aren't" Londoners with regard to managing London. This would be like if seasonal workers on some plantation fantasized about managing the business policy of the company which had hired them for a period of three months.²⁰

Robins' text, thus, intentionally conceals the double nature of Londoners: the existence of those who *are* London, and those who only work and live in London. This difference ultimately becomes visible in the texts of authors who approach the idea of a megalopolis much more seriously, which is why they are able to notice the dual nature of such urban spaces. For instance, here is what Manuel Castells wrote:

Because the information society concentrates wealth and power, while polarizing social groups according to their skills, unless deliberate policies correct the structural tendencies we are also witnessing the emergence of a social dualism that ultimately leads to the formation of a dual city.²¹

²⁰ This is why we should note right now that it's better to read Crnjanski than Robins because while Robins' text nominally falls under non-fiction, it is actually a fairy-tale, in other words, it gives a misleading impression. Crnjanski's novel, on the other hand, falls under fictional writing, but unfortunately, it is a cognitive medium of the first order. That is to say, there is something anticipatory in the words of the great author, written four decades ago: "Nor does England belong to the English or London to those who were born there, or Russia to him even though he loves it so. They just pass through them, no more," M. Crnjanski, *Roman o Londonu* (A Novel about London), Prosveta, Beograd, 1996, p. 256.

²¹ M. Castells, "European Cities, the Informational Society, and the Global Economy", *Urbana sociologija*, translated into the Serbian by Sreten Vujović and Mina Petrović, Zavod za udžbenike i nastavna sredstva, Beograd 2005, p. 188.

In the social dualism described by Castells, we can detect a division into biopower on one side and biomass on the other because, like in biopolitics, the majority does not have the instruments to control the minority. And this is what Robins' narration about London beyond the nation wishes to conceal by offering a philistine portrayal of London as a paradise where security and freedom reign. It is these two values—security and freedom—that serve as a carrot on a stick which a citizen, who is still able to politically act within a collective, focuses on while he is secretly transformed into a particle of a depoliticized and decollectivized biomass: at which point he will be neither free nor secure.

V

When biopower is finally established, claiming the legal and unlimited right to the life of the biomass, literature will no longer exist. This will happen because literature, by nature, is a practice that refers an individual to one collective. This collective is determined by the language of literature, even though this limitation is not insurmountable. Of course, literature can be translated and is, but whether or not a work of literature will be translated into another language falls under the area of social reception of this work, in other words under cultural politics.

The relationship between a modern writer and the collective is tense. On the one side, the collective sets certain requirements for the writer, and on the other, the writer can accept these requirements as his own or he can refuse, in an effort to express himself through his writing. This self-expression can be poetically or thematically formulated. The collective can react to such a gesture on the part of the writer with rejection or silence. Nevertheless, this *novelty gesture*, which brings a truly new work of literature, can also rip the collective at the seams and, in time, sew it back together as well, whereby this work of literature and the writer himself become the connective tissue. This is the moment when the collective accepts the novelty, a moment when the collective is enriched with the novelty which enables it to enhance its personal vision of the world with one more nuance, that is, to increase the resolution of this vision and see the details that have been invisible before the *novelty gesture*. Once we realize this, it is no surprise that a series of cultural figures and writers in Serbian literature become a series of theses, antitheses and syntheses that end the tension between an individual and the collective.

[EXCURSUS: If we compare the cultural attainment of three constitutive figures of Serbian literature—Saint Sava, Dositej and Vuk—we will see that the traditions of thought and action which they created in numerous places contradict one another. Obviously, each intellectual

who acts within Serbian culture, and as such strives towards world culture, can choose his own tradition. And still, there is also a common point, respect, understanding of that which is on the other side, but within the same culture. However, it is possible to accept these different traditions and their mutual tensions without being exclusive. Because, essentially, each of these traditions represents a different tactic of the same strategy: the strategy for the survival of a small, but not insignificant, nation. Contrariwise, rejecting all three figures, an act which dominates auto-chauvinistic discourse, has a clear strategic interest that is in opposition to the strategic interest of national culture: auto-chauvinistic discourse strategically aspires to destroy national culture by turning its members into particles of biomass, a decollectivized, depoliticized mob. The use of “modernization discourse” is a typical example of the “Orwellization” of political language: above all, this is a regressive wish to bring a nation back into the state of being an unarticulated mass.]

It now becomes clear why neoliberalism is always growling at literature. Neoliberalism wants to present the relationship between an individual and a collective as a binary opposition in order to separate the individual from the collective and thus depoliticize and transform him into a particle of biomass. Literature replies to this by showing that the quantity of tension between an individual (writer) and the collective hinges on how much the individual depends on the collective, but also the collective on the individual. Because the thing that keeps the writer alive is the collective: in other words, the practice of reading and research which keeps the writer in the visible horizon of a collective. Such a practice can exist as long as there is at least an indication of reason of state within a collective: because reading one’s own authors and keeping them in the visible horizon corresponds to the expression of reason of state in the area of culture. If the reason of state, by means of national interest, calls for increasing the wealth of the state, then there is no reason to differentiate economic and symbolic wealth. They are both so intertwined that it is impossible to imagine an economically wealthy, but symbolically poor state.

On the other hand, the novelty gesture of a writer, by which he expresses his personality, gains significance only within a collective whose vision of the world this writer can modify. If he acts outside the collective, in a so-called transnational register, this writer can, at best, only be used against the collective he belongs to by language, and no more: his expiration date is the same as that of a bomb that explodes and destroys everything around it, including itself.²²

²² There is an illusion, a philistine illusion that great authors belong to the whole world. This is, of course, a ridiculous illusion, first of all because it overlooks the

So, the writer has the ability to modify the view of the world within a collective, whereby the relationship between the writer and the collective is presented as a tense combination of acceptance, rejection and modification. If the latter—the modification of the view of the world within a collective—is an expression of the author’s power, then it is also an expression of his political existence, which distinguishes him from a particle of biomass. And this is what refers the writer to the collective, because a collective is a framework for expressing the political existence of a writer. The collective is where he invests his gesture of freedom: his novelty gesture, and his freedom, his individuality depend on the survival of the collective otherwise, without this framework, all the written pages will be blown away by the wind towards different sides of the world, to rot far from the language homeland where and for which they were written.

VI

This is where the answer lies to the question in the title: *Why Do We Need Crnjanski?* We need Crnjanski because his opus, and his life, reveals this complex attitude an individual has towards the collective, enabling us to form a relationship which differs from the one suggested by neoliberal dogma: a binary opposition in which an individual turns against the collective.

Crnjanski, we can freely say, lived and wrote the tense relationship between a modern individual and a modern collective. Early Crnjanski implied in his Sumatraism phase a planetary collective in the spirit of abstract expressionism, a collective of those returning from war, which he couldn’t justify with an apologia for the national spirit and myth. This position, the Sumatraistic position regarding a lonely individual who has nothing to offer to the collective and the collective has nothing to offer to him, is concluded in *Migrations*.

Two important nuances, which the Sumatraism of early Crnjanski did not have, can be noticed here: the first is the positioning of ideal space into a genuine toponym—Rosija. No matter how much this reality is

simple fact that the world is made up of different languages, which makes it impossible for a work of literature written on one side of the world to be readable on some other side. This even applies to writers who write in English, since the wide use of this language is not the result of cultural but economic and political prestige of countries whose official language is English. Therefore, the jurisdiction of language does not focus on culture but rather economics, resulting in a technical understanding of language: the borders of the global English language are the borders of economic transactions, and not the world. It is not used to help understand the world, but to survive in the world. When it comes to smaller languages, it is clear that the policy of translation adheres to the cultural policy, which then adheres to the foreign policy of the country whose language is being translated. In short: the translation policy does not depend on the aesthetic value of the translated text, but primarily on (geo)political connotations.

irrationalized by a Sumatraistic sfumato, the ideal space is nevertheless connected to individual freedom in a not-so-Sumatraistic milieu: this is the political context of the attempt to convert Vuk Isaković to Catholicism. Due to this political framework, Rosija becomes a metaphor for a collective that gives an individual his freedom. Consequently, freedom of religion in the context of *Migrations* functions as a synecdoche for individual freedom in general.

The second nuance refers to the motif of a warrior who fights not for his own people, but for a foreigner. Here Crnjanski seems to imply a different way of reading *The Journal of Čarnojević*, which would take into account the fact that the hero of this novel is a foreigner in the country where he lives and fights for, while Sumatraism becomes a synonym for a disoriented state. Writing about the hero of his first novel, Crnjanski writes: “This young weakling, sentimentalist, an offshoot in a foreign land, thrown out of an Austrian prison and into battle, can he even have any ‘thoughts’ on war? Isn’t this for me, who has nothing to do with all this, only a nightmare?”²³

It is not a coincidence that these words are found in Crnjanski’s reply to Krleža’s text on “Slandered War”, in which the author of *Migrations* strives to install a collective in the metaphor for a soldier and military tradition, which would be able to defend itself from two monsters: the first is Communism and the second, which is less evident, the megalopolis which was revealed to Crnjanski in the form of Weimar Berlin during his first diplomatic service in this city. Here, the military tradition holds a double meaning: on one hand, it is opposed to Communism because it strives to secure the continuity of a national tradition which would be able to respond to the threat of class identity which is undermining it. On the other, it is opposed to the megalopolis which turns an individual into a particle of biomass by taking away its will. And for Crnjanski, war is above all a chronotope for will.²⁴

²³ Miloš Crnjanski, “Miroslav Krleža kao pacifist”, *Eseji II*, Zadužbina Miloša Crnjanskog, Editions l’âge d’homme, Beograd-Lozana, 1999, pp. 401-402.

²⁴ A malicious reading of Crnjanski’s text “Slandered War” would focus on the prejudged anti-humanistic pathos of the celebration of war. However, Crnjanski’s position on war cannot be characterized as a celebration of killing. It is perceiving war as a radical expression of the will to last. This is not only about the well-known link between the intensity of life and closeness of death. It is about the existence of will that differentiates a citizen from a philistine, in other words, a particle of biomass ruled by apathy characteristic of those who have lost control over everything, and influence nothing. This is why Crnjanski sees the megalopolis as something that dehumanizes man by stripping away “even the last remaining thing in a man’s life, the light within him. Will.” (Miloš Crnjanski, *A Novel about London*, Prosveta, Beograd, 1996, p. 381). It would be good to mention at this point a witty, but actually quite profound, remark made by a French philosopher who defined the spirit of Vilnius or Quisling as a spirit more afraid of war than defeat. This is also the best definition for a philistine’s spirit, if he even possesses a spirit.

This perception of the metaphor for soldiers and the military makes the appearance of two soldiers in the late works of Crnjanski understandable: they are Pavle Isakovič and Prince Rjepnin. In both cases, however, Crnjanski does not stop displaying sensitivity towards modern times which prevent the establishment of collectives based on military tradition. Thus, Pavle Isakovič is both the hero of the idea of collectives and a caricature used by modern times to flee at his need for a collective. As a result, Pavle's Russia must come to resemble Austria, and individual freedom, which this term embodied in *Migrations*, dissolves in modern times, dominant in the *Second Book of Migrations*.

Still, Prince Rjepnin, with his animosity towards Napoleon and his sympathy towards his officers, constitutes the difference between a military habitus and modern times in which this habitus irretrievably dissolves. Napoleon belongs to London, and London belongs to Napoleon, and this fact demonstrates how incorrect the imagological readings of *A Novel about London*, which oppose Rjepnin as a Slav and London as synecdoche for England, that is, the Anglo-Saxon spirit, really are. That is to say, if this were the key opposition in Crnjanski's last novel, then Crnjanski himself could remain the hero of the novel. The appearance of Rjepnin tells us, however, that the line of separation here is not drawn between people but between the indications of collectivity in premodern times, evoked by the military habitus and the biomass whose shadows appear on the horizon of the megalopolis.

In both cases, military collectivity, which Crnjanski revealed as far back as his first poem "Serbia", in 1925, during his visit to Corfu and the untended graves of Serbian soldiers, dissolves in the darkness of modernity. Modernity no longer allows the creation of individuals who reason independently and thus participate in public life. Instead, modernity, by means of a leveler such as money and sex, is debasing individuals broken away from their collective and transforming them into particles of biomass, which do not differ from one another in any way: which is why Pavle Isakovič meets up with the characters, doubles, Garsuli/Višnjevski, separated by hundreds of kilometers, on his travels from Austria to Russia, the travels which are not travels because the disappearance that threatens Isakovič at the beginning of the journey is waiting for him at the end. Precisely due to this levelling, Prince Rjepnin meets with a series of "devil's advocates",²⁵ therefore, a series of depersonalized copies which, as such, surprise the reader accustomed to the phrase "modern individuality". And so, on the other side of a militarily structured collective there is no such thing as individuality but rather a depersonalized biomass. The bleak imaginary worlds of *Second Book of Migrations* and *A Novel about London* are sending the

²⁵ See: Milo Lompar, *Crnjanski i Mefistofel*, Nolit, Beograd, 2007.

reader a message that this transition from military collectivity to modern biomass cannot be stopped.

However, in Crnjanski's opus there is a text which leaves open the possibility of creating a different collective, which could be an alternative to the reduction of man to a particle of biomass. This text is "Lament over Belgrade".

VII

The poem *Lament over Belgrade* is one of the most enigmatic poems in Serbian literature. This impression intensifies with each new reading of the poem and becomes more and more unclear. It always surprises the reader because it seems, at first glance, as if all hermeticism is foreign to it. That is to say, it is very easy to uncover the principles according to which this poem was structured, and it seems quite enough to simply follow the relationship being established between the lyrical subject, in whom we recognize Crnjanski himself, and Belgrade in order to reveal the meaning of the poem. But this is merely an illusion set before the eyes of the interpreter.

The relationship between the lyrical subject and Belgrade is of course the fundamental relationship in the structure of *Lament over Belgrade*, which means that the metaphors and poetic images which make up the poem rally around these two poles. What separates the lyrical subject from Belgrade? The note at the end of the poem, which says that the poem was written in England, tells us that there is a spatial distance between the subject and Belgrade. But here, one should take notice of a moment of inventiveness, which at this stage of the poem cannot be completely devised yet: Crnjanski is avoiding turning Belgrade into a chronotope which would conjoin the temporal and special idyll, in other words the good old times and the place of nostalgia. On the contrary!

The drama of the lyrical subject lies in the fact that this idyllic chronotope is unattainable to him: the whole past, an intense life, are transformed in the memory of the lyrical subject into something worthless, grotesque and insignificant. It is this series of metamorphoses that present the leitmotif element of the stanzas dedicated to the lyrical subject. At the end of these metamorphoses appear images of nothingness, corpses, an unfathomable past, graves and darkness.

In contrast to the past that dominates the verses of the lyrical subject who talks about himself, the verses about Belgrade are dominated by the present and future. The lyrical subject continuously projects Belgrade into the future, while presenting the present as something intransient and unchangeable. Still, due to the wealth of images and metaphors used to describe Belgrade, we notice here as well a series of figurative

metamorphoses. The direction of these metamorphoses differs from those in the stanzas dedicated to the lyrical subject. Belgrade grows, spreads; it breathes, moves, glows: all this increases the distance even more in relation to the infernal metamorphoses of the lyrical subject. While in the memories of the lyrical subject everything turns into nothingness, in the future Belgrade turns into everything: a warrior, mother, perhaps even God.²⁶

So, what is the “Lament over Belgrade”? First of all, the term lament is more of an enigma than an answer to this poem. The poem is a lament, since the lyrical subject is grieving over his past. However, why is he grieving? He is not grieving over death, but because he had come to realize that what he thought his life was is actually not his life. The uncontrollable metamorphoses of memories, which surprise the lyrical subject and cause him to lament, suggest the truth about modern times, but also the truth about the existence of the particle of biomass: the life of the subject is not his life, his memories are not his memories, everything that seemed beautiful turns into something ugly and horrifying, into nothingness. This is the truth of a man who has been turned into a particle of biomass: letting someone die means taking from him, before and after death, all that can still be of use, whereby death is nothing, not an event, not an act of passing from life into memory, because a particle of biomass has no one to remember it.

However, this lamenting tone is being interrupted by something that awaits the lyrical subject in the future, and that is salvation. How is Belgrade his salvation? Mainly because the poem suggests that there is a connection between Belgrade and the lyrical subject. Belgrade is therefore a metaphor for a collective where the death of a man is an event which continues to live in intimate memories. Belgrade is therefore a presence that makes a man a man, for death in its arms is not final death: something remains out of the reach of death and that is Belgrade itself, which preserves the symbolic memory of the dead. This is precisely one of the key differences between a biomass and a collective: in a collective there is room for the dead, while in a biomass there is no presence of the dead.

So we come to the most important question of this poem: if Belgrade is a metaphor for a collective, how is it possible to have this collective in modern times? Now it becomes possible to deliberate over Crnjanski's poetic invention which separates Belgrade from the idyllic chronotope. The poet wished to suggest that a collective in modern times will no longer be based on a military past but a common future.

²⁶ This is indicated by the phrase “Your Name” in the ninth verse of the last stanza. Of course, based on the context this name is Belgrade, but the phrase itself, and not coincidentally, evokes in the mind of the reader the text of a prayer. See: Miloš Crnjanski, “Lament nad Beogradom”, *Lirika, Zadužbina Miloša Crnjanskog* – Editions l'âge d'homme – Beogradski izdavački zavod – Srpska književna zadruga, Beograd, 1993, p. 155.

With this, the poet turns Belgrade into a dual city: on the one hand it remains a capital which implies a connection between the lyrical subject and the city in the past; this does not mean merely living in Belgrade but rather belonging to the tradition this city, as the capital, represents. However, this remains tacit in the poem. This accentuates even more the other part of Belgrade—its closeness with the megalopolis, which is being established as a society of those who believe in a common future. So, a capital or a collective can survive modern times only if it has the strength to project itself into the future, instead of continuously insisting on its establishment in the past. In short, the past is preserved by conquering the future, not by closing itself off from it.

The dual character of Belgrade in Crnjanski's *Lament over Belgrade* is portrayed in one more way. It would be absurd to compare Crnjanski's Belgrade with the real Belgrade at the time *Lament* was written or with the Belgrade of today. Belgrade in *Lament* is a concept, an idea, a personal creation, striving with its poetic power to impose itself on a collective as a vision of the future, as a mimesis of ideality. Crnjanski's poem is thus a symbolic transfer of a personal creation to the heart of a collective, which takes this creation and builds it into itself, enabling it to last after its creator ceases to live. And so Crnjanski's poem repeats itself: it shows us how an individual can remain an individual, without being opposed to the collective. On the contrary, only the collective is able to preserve him as a prominent individual in collective memory. Without collective memory, the verses of Crnjanski's swan song would be a corpse, a grave, the past, nothing...

That is one of the possible answers to the question in the title of this text. We need Crnjanski because in his opus, (modern) literature underlines the impossibility of establishing one type of collectivity, which would only be based on the past, but also offers another type: a type of collectivity based on faith in the common future, faith that still preserves the will to create this future and not simply survive. Furthermore, in his opus Crnjanski conceptualizes a relationship between an individual and the collective in a way which undermines the neoliberal dogma about the individual who builds his distinct character opposite the collective to which he belongs. Crnjanski's conceptualization of the relationship between an individual and his collective, which he develops and then shares with others, by shaping this collective, definitely provides an opportunity for a more humane, altruistic life than the one promised to us by biopower and biopolitics.

Translated from Serbian by
Persida Bošković

JOVAN DELIĆ

IVO ANDRIĆ AND THE FIRST WORLD WAR

My thanks are due to the Matica srpska and to you personally, Mr. President, for bestowing on me this honour—on the great feast day of Serbian culture, and from the place I personally feel to be the most exalted one—to address this honorable, elect and elite assembly and speak about subjects that exceed my powers in every way but which I do have at heart.¹

If anything makes me deserving of the honour to stand in this place at this moment, it is my ascendants to whom I dedicate this oration: the Piva Commander in the Battle of Mojkovac² Nikola Delić, his soldier from [the Battles of] Skadar³ and Mojkovac Tanasije Delić, and the Austrian convicts Spasoje Delić, Rade Delić and Jovan Radović who, accompanied by a score from Piva,⁴ escaped from the Austro-Hungarian prison camp and—in their prison apparel, without any papers, money, weapons, map or compass, moving furtively at nighttime and orientating at daytime watching the Sun, with their cranelike instinct, feeding off the fruits of the land like the birds of the air—on the fortieth day after their prison break in Hungary, reached the foothills of Mt. Durmitor.

¹ The **Matica srpska** was founded on Feb. 16, 1826. The anniversaries are celebrated by solemn sessions of the Assembly of MS; on these occasions, distinguished members deliver orations. This text conveys the oration delivered by Professor Jovan Delić on February 16, 2017. – *Translator's note.*

² The **Battle of Mojkovac** was fought in World War One, on January 6-7, 1916, with the aim to protect the retreat of the Serbian army via Albania to Corfu, when an all-out Austro-Hungarian invasion of Serbia had been in progress. – *Translator's note.*

³ The **Siege of Skadar**/Scutari took place within the First Balkan War waged against the Ottoman Empire and lasted from October 1912 to April 1913, ending in the victory of the allied Montenegrin and Serbian forces. – *Translator's note.*

⁴ **Piva**, or *Pivska oblast*, is a mountainous area in the north of Montenegro, along the Piva River and Piva Tableland, on one side of Mt. Durmitor massif. – *Translator's note.*

These men are with me tonight, in this place they had always aspired to be in—their Matica srpska toward which they had during my childhood directed me unmistakably.

The crucial landmarks of the twentieth century include the world wars with prison camps as parts thereof, and the atom bomb which put an end on World War Two, its explosion blowing to pieces two modern myths—the myth of science and the myth of technical progress.

The First World War gained its planetary, universal attribute later, when it became obvious that the Great War turned into a global disaster and worldwide carnage.

The beginning of the Second World War was not even identified as such at first: it seems that Stalin—as late as in early 1941—firmly believed that his pact with Hitler guaranteed world peace, while Europe was already burning.

So much about the human ability to anticipate, perceive and comprehend the nature of these major historical events which set the world to fire twice within mere quarter of a century.

The First World War was launched under the genocidal/ethnocidal catchphrase *Serbien muß sterben*—*Serbia must die*, which—indubitably, to my mind—lends it some traits of Nazism. Nazism did not emerge just overnight, with Hitler.

In my view, the way in which Serbia and the Serbs survived the First World War was one of the greatest wonders of the 20th century and of Serbian national history on the whole.

I am not aware of any other country which in recent—particularly European—history has been occupied, deprived of its able men (in terms of workforce and reproductive role), maintaining its military force on an alien, though friendly, territory; a country whose king and state institutions operated outside of their sovereign territory without—in spite of the army being halved—capitulation, but nonetheless found itself among the victorious nations.

I am not aware of any other aged king retreating with his army over mountain crags and ravines, through snowdrifts and blizzards, in a four-oxen cart, as was done by King Petar I Karadjordjević; this inspired the French poet Edmond Rostand to write his poem “The Four Oxen of King Peter” (“Les quatre bœufs du roi Pierre”) which was translated into Serbian by Milutin Bojić, Andrić’s coeval.

I am not aware of any army of a small country which, after capitulation and left without its king (he went abroad), stood against one of Europe’s most powerful armies, held it back and routed it—as did the Montenegrin army during the three days of Orthodox Christmas under the command of Voivoda, *Serdar* and General Janko Vukotić.

A great many heroes and martyrs of Mojkovac and their relatives soon found themselves in the Austro-Hungarian prison camps.

It is a little known fact that the song “Durmitor, Durmitore, visoka planino” (“Durmitor, Durmitor, High-Rising Mountain”) originated in a prison camp: it was made/sung by Vlajko Šaulić, a man from the mount, while languishing and craving for his wife just taken into their newly-built tower house.

I am not aware of any army which, as did the one of Serbia, used to pile up its dead troops—the soldiers who reached Greece and could probably be saved, yet were dying of hunger, diseases and exhaustion—the way one piles up split logs in a woodpile, then loaded them onto barges and threw them into the sea, the blue cosmic tomb. So many people could not be buried in the soil; otherwise, all troops would have turned into gravediggers, and all Greece would have become Zeitenlik.⁵

It is usually said that Serbia was left without one third of its population, but often forgotten that it means—without one half of its best part of the male population, capable of work and reproduction. Demographically, Serbia got out of both First and Second World War as a worst-stricken invalid, never to recover therefrom.

Three expressions used by Isidora Sekulić⁶ have been branded on my memory, and she used them in reference to the poetry of Milutin Bojić:⁷ *epoch-making turbulence*, *philosophy of the fatherland*, and *the Vow of Kosovo* (*potres vekova*, *filosofija otadžbine*, *Kosovski zavjet*).

In good literature, and sometimes in historical events as well, an *epoch-making turbulence* takes place, so that the agelong experiences of not only national, but also general literature and history—especially those of the Bible, Old and New Testaments—concentrate into the focal point of a work or an event.

Bojić articulated his “philosophy of the fatherland” in *The Poems of Pain and Pride* (*Pesme bola i ponosa*). His lyrical heroes, his lyrical ‘WE’, bear their fatherland in their minds and hearts. Fatherland is something inseparable from an individual, something one has to bear for ever—in one’s mind, heart, dreams.

So here we are, facing the Vow of Kosovo which across the “epoch-making turbulence” and the “philosophy of the fatherland” emerges

⁵ **Zeitenlik** is the Allied military cemetery and memorial park at Thessaloniki, where some 20,000 fallen soldiers of the Salonika Front were buried. – *Translator’s note*.

⁶ **Isidora Sekulić** (1877–1958) – one of the greatest figures on the Serbian cultural/literary scene in the 20th century, member of the Serbian Academy of Sciences and Arts – SASA. – *Translator’s note*.

⁷ **Milutin Bojić** (1892–1917) – prominent Serbian/Belgrade poet, theatre critic and playwright who marched across Albania with the Serbian Army. He eye-witnessed the tragic destiny of his fellow-soldiers at Corfu and described it in his works, the best-known being the poem “Ode to the Blue Sea Tomb” (“Plava grobnica”). Bojić died of tuberculosis at Thessaloniki, at the age of 25. – *Translator’s note*.

as universal: the Serbs abandoned whatever was of material and earthly character, the whole of the “earthly kingdom”, whatever could not be packed into one’s mind or heart—even their families, houses, properties, land—and took the vow of freedom and victory as their ideal. The sole material thing Bojić carried along was Vuk’s *Srpski rječnik* (*Serbian Dictionary*),⁸ if the book can be taken as material at all. That was the Vow of Kosovo in (historical and art-related) practice.

Owing to such a “philosophy of the fatherland” and the Vow of Kosovo, the Serbs came out of both the First and Second World War as moral winners, with an aura of self-sacrifice and martyrdom. It is this high moral standing accompanied by the Vow of Kosovo that is nowadays (and it will eternally remain so) a constant target of the Serbian enemies. This includes the old Serbian literature implying the Orthodox tradition in the spirit of Saint Sava, and the Church under the wings of which that literature sprang up; folk poetry; the Vow of Kosovo; the Serbian language; Njegoš⁹ as the “tragic hero of Kosovo thought” and, also, the writer who chose Njegoš as his spiritual parent and who was the one to describe him as the “tragic hero of Kosovo thought”—Ivo Andrić.

Ivo Andrić experienced the “troubles with words”¹⁰ very early. He always remembered the three words of the textbook *Kobali: Zorna obuka*, none of which he understood. *Kobali* was the author’s name, and *zorna obuka* meant *očigledna nastava* (‘visual instruction’).¹¹ To the poor half-orphan, taken to Višegrad “in the arms” of his mother when he was only two years old, to Višegrad where clear Serbian language was spoken and from where people’s eyes were falling on Serbia—such troubles with language meant “devilish torment”, so throughout his life he advocated clarity and purity of language, momentarily tied to Vuk [Karadžić] and the man’s linguistic tradition.

⁸ *Srpski rječnik* was one of the greatest achievements of **Vuk Stefanović Karadžić** (1787–1864), the major reformer of the Serbian language and the father of the study of Serbian folklore, primarily the oral literary heritage. His translation of the *New Testament* into Serbian was one of the key events in the history of his mother tongue. Vuk Karadžić was member of the academies in Berlin, Vienna, Saint Petersburg, Moscow, Göttingen, Cracow and Paris. 1987 was ‘The UNESCO Year of Vuk Karadžić’. – *Translator’s note*.

⁹ **Petar II Petrović Njegoš** (1813–51), usually referred to simply as Njegoš, was Prince-Bishop of Montenegro (r. from 1830) whose literary greatness is mostly based on three epic poems: *Luča mikrokozma* (*The Ray of the Microcosm*), *Gorski vijenac* (*The Mountain Wreath*) and *Lažni car Šćepan Mali* (*The False Tisar Stephen the Little*). – *Translator’s note*.

¹⁰ The near-to-proverbial expression *muke s rečima* echoes the title (*Muka s rečima*) of a book by Milovan Danojlić (b. 1937), the Serbian writer, Member of SASA, who lives and works in France. – *Translator’s note*.

¹¹ Implication of the difference between Croat and Serbian terms. The book by Milan Kobali was published in Zagreb (1879, 1891). – *Translator’s note*.

And before that, the boy divined the nature of the relations between “small” and “big” countries, peoples, cultures and languages. As a five-year old he went to the post office with his mother and admired the black phone receiver which enabled conversation with the wide world. Mother was calling someone far away to inform them of the death of a close and dear person. “I understand all they say, but they can’t hear me at all”, the mother complained to her young and only son. The once little boy remembered his mother’s telephone call as long as he lived, for it said something about the relations between “the big” and “the small”: “the small” could not send their tragic, momentous message from their ‘glens’ to “the big”, while “the big” easily showered “the small” with their own trivial banalities.

In Sarajevo’s Higher Gymnasium, Andrić developed a close friendship with Isak Samokovlija,¹² and the two, likewise, befriended their one-year senior, poet and member of “Young Bosnia” Miloš Vidaković, to whom they used to give their writings for reading and opinion with greatest trust, in the belief that Vidaković possessed the integrity of critical spirit and a creative gift.

To Andrić, in all likelihood, the most significant friendship he made in Sarajevo was the one with Tugomir Alaupović, the first Bosnian to be awarded a doctoral degree at Vienna, in the class of Vatroslav Jagić.¹³ That great professor in the national subjects, who later became minister of religious affairs in the South Slav/Yugoslav kingdom, was the man who had a straightforward influence on Andrić’s career; he taught history and prompted Andrić to write. He became headmaster of the Gymnasium in Tuzla, where his students included Gavriilo Princip, Trifko Grabež and Mladen Stojanović.¹⁴ The man’s character and attitude to Serbia can be seen from the permission given to his students in 1912 to take a trip to the Serbian border, wherefrom they crossed the Drina in a launch to kiss the Serbian soil and take a few flowers and pebbles as keepsakes. Alaupović stood trial after the Assassination in Sarajevo and was interned at the monastery of St. Anthony [of Padua] in Sarajevo.

As early as in 1906, and in 1912 definitely, Andrić stepped onto the “awesome and magnificent” path of revolt; until the outbreak of the First World War, he was increasingly overwhelmed with enthusiasm about

¹² **Isak Samokovlija** (1877–1958) – Viennese-educated physician and prominent writer. His short stories and plays describe the life of Bosnia’s Sephardic Jews. – *Translator’s note.*

¹³ **Vatroslav Jagić** (1838–1923) – prominent Croatian scholar in Slavic studies, professor at the University of Vienna. – *Translator’s note.*

¹⁴ The three were sentenced for the assassination of Archduke Ferdinand and his wife Sophie in Sarajevo, June 28, 1914. While the first two died in prison, Stojanović was released three years later and fought in WW II in the partisan forces; he was wounded mortally in 1942 and proclaimed a national hero. – *Translator’s note.*

changing the world. He resembled his character Petar from the story “Riot” (“Buna”). The outstanding and favourite name which means *stone, endurance, staunchness, firmness*, yet also the ability to shape, the *art of masonry and spirit*, was to accompany Andrić throughout his creative life. The name also associated him with his chosen spiritual father, Petar II Petrović Njegoš.

As a young man of respectability and trust, with an innate diplomatic tact aimed at reconciliation and connecting, with the aura of a rebel and striker, Ivo Andrić became the first chairman of the Serbo-Croatian Progressive Youth, the spiritual core of Young Bosnia, the South Slav movement of expressly militant anti-Habsburg attitude, yet one lacking in firm organization and a well-defined programme. All members were rebels and fantasists, ready to sacrifice themselves for the cause of national liberation and unification of South Slav peoples.

Much later, as a writer in his zenith, with the experience of an inmate, outcast and a man stricken by lung disease who coughed up blood, with a world war behind, having a highest-ranking and dangerous diplomatic career, well into the Second World War, in Belgrade under bombs, from a distance of three decades—Andrić saw his generation back in 1913 as he described it in Chapter 18 of his novel *The Bridge on the Drina*:

There had been and would be starry nights over the kasaba, as well as lustrous constellations and moonlights, but there had not been, and God knew whether there would ever be such young men as these who in conversations such as these and with such thoughts and feelings as these spent nights awake at the Gate. It was a generation of rebel angels at that short moment when they still possessed the full power and full rights of angels, and the burning pride of rebels. On these sons of the peasants, tradesmen or craftsmen from a remote Bosnian kasaba, Destiny bestowed—with no particular effort on their part—an open exit to the world and to the great illusion of freedom...

Only the best and the strongest of them would truly swing into action with the fanaticism of fakirs, to burn themselves like moths and immediately be celebrated as martyrs and saints by their agemates (for there is no generation without its own saintly figures), and raised onto the pedestal of unmatchable examples...

What can be said about these men in particular is: For a long time there had not existed a generation which fantasized and talked more, and more daringly, about life, joys, and freedom—yet which gained less of life, suffered more, fell to harder slavery and got killed in greater number than this very generation was to suffer, serve sentences and get killed. But in those summer days of 1913, all of that only existed just as daring yet undetermined intimation. Everything seemed to be an exciting

and novel game on this ancient bridge which glistened white in the moonlight of July nights, young and unchanging yet perfectly handsome and strong, stronger than anything time could bring forth or man could invent and do.

Something of the daring fantasies, hopes and intimations, of the daring, exciting and novel game, radiates from Andrić's "First Spring-time Verse" ("Prva proljetnja pjesma") from 1914, published in the second issue of *Vihor*; the poem is quite untypical of later Andrić for the strikingly explicit intimation of joy and the upcoming "day of great deeds". In the form of a question, its refrain occurs three times:

Whenever shall the King's armies arrive?

In his literary output, Andrić was rarely so declarative politically. The hope for the coming *King's armies* that shall liberate and unite was stronger than his poetic talent and artistic shaping:

Clouds have been moving across the skies this morning, and I sense joys: when the hills blossom with their weapons' awesome flash, when they plant fiery flowers across the fields, when the first trumpet is heard, when the first cavalymen appear, worn down and covered with dust: and sprayed with foam like in a song of old; o what a joy!

When shall the King's armies arrive?

Women are silently weaving the gifts for the men, and they are mentioned in good people's prayers, they are sung about by the girls behind windowpanes and flowers are growing for them in small gardens. A hundred of lovable things are awaiting them.

When shall the King's armies arrive?

Clouds are sailing like an army across the skies; I sense the days of great deeds.

I saw a budding twig this morning.

Whenever shall the King's armies arrive?

Just a few months later, Andrić's poems were arriving from the gloomy atmosphere of a gaol where the feelings of anxiety and fear prevailed.

Andrić left Sarajevo to pursue his studies in Zagreb first, then in Vienna, and in Cracow where he heard of the Assassination in Sarajevo from his close friend Vojmir Durbešić. He packed in haste and left, without anticipating that he was to be arrested on Split's waterfront, in the midst of summer, on July 27 or 28, then detained in Split's prison

first—to share his cell with Jerko Čulić, Oskar Tartalja and Niko Bartulović¹⁵—then in Šibenik and, finally, in the prison at Maribor.

The post-assassination atmosphere in Sarajevo was described by Andrić in *The Woman of Sarajevo* (*Gospođica*),¹⁶ and that in Višegrad—in his novel *The Bridge on the Drina*; that is, quite a while later, at the time of his advanced literary maturity. This was due to the fact that he was in Poland when the assassination took place, and immediately thereafter—in prisons. Life imposed the gaol-related subjects first.

–Go to bed, Mamma. This is of no concern to us—Miss Rajka was comforting her mother; deprived of humaneness and national feelings through the rigour of her stinginess, dreaming about her million. Her mother’s sense of the historic moment was simply common-sense, laid down over the centuries of historical experience:

–Ah but it is, my child, it is indeed. It’ll be the wretched Serbs to pay dearly for it.

And so it was.

The first to roll along the streets was the mob, the city’s scoundrels of the blackest dye with their hidden urge for destruction and violence unleashed, who yelled and swore; then the two hundred of these clamourers organized themselves “following the instructions by a somewhat better dressed man who led them and who strikingly looked like a cop in plain clothes”. At the front, two fellows, “raggedy and villainy men of short foreheads and dull eyes”, carried a picture of Emperor Francis Joseph taken from a state office which in haste, and confused, they turned wrongly, head down, and started moving through the city, trying to sing the national anthem, the words of which, let alone the tune, they could not know.

Arrests did not cease:

¹⁵ **Jerko Frane Čulić Dragun** (1898–1953) – journalist and one of the founding fathers of tourism in Dalmatia, in his youth associated with Young Bosnia, later a close friend, with his wife Maja Nižetić Čulić, with I. Andrić.

Oskar Tartalja (1887–1950) – journalist, organizer of rallies against the Habsburgs before WWI.

Niko Bartulović (1890–1943) – prominent writer and literary critic, leader of the Organization of Yugoslav Nationalists which opposed particularist/chauvinist tendencies. – *Translator’s note*.

¹⁶ Due to the grammatical properties of the word/title ‘Miss’ in the English language, which prevent its use as a common noun with articles, the problem of translating the title of the novel arose, which is not the case with a number of other languages: German *Das Fräulein*, French *Le demoiselle*, Spanish *La señorita* etc. As ‘The Miss’ is not acceptable, translators have resorted to the now well-known (yet objectionable) solution – *The Woman of Sarajevo*. – *Translator’s note*.

They were arresting Serbs all around and taking them to improvised gaols; now it was not only young people and students, but also respectable tradesmen and peaceful civil servants. And this did not take place as an act of justice, abiding to an intelligible law, but with violence, blindly and at random, like an epidemic.

The imagery and the motifs of the First World War are in immediate relation to the development of the main story line and the character of Miss Rajka and require a special study that would be misplaced herein.

The year 1914 is the last year covered by the chronicle of *the Bridge*, the watershed between “two epochs of human history”, singular among all years to those who survived it:

There is no chance that anyone, however much people talked and wrote about it, would be able to, or dare, articulate all that was grasped down there at the bottom of human destiny, beyond time and underlying the events. (...) It will never be possible to articulate all that, for the one who may grasp and survive—is left speechless, while the dead cannot speak anyway.

In that year, like in any other year on St. Vitus' Day, Serbian societies organized picnicking at Mezalin, at the confluence of the Drina and the Rzav. When the picnic was only starting and a kolo dance had just begun, gendarmes appeared and broke up the festivity.

When, at the end of July, the war broke out, “the first chase after the Serbs and whatever was related to them” was launched. The world split up into the persecutors and the persecuted. Respectable men who supervised the business quarter disappeared and withdrew, and the streets saw the march of the *Schutzkorps* led by Huso Kokošar, a character whose “nose had been eaten out by a disgraceful disease in his early boyhood”.

In the midst of the marketplace, toward the bridge, the Hungarian reservists were mounting scaffolds and drawing the first victims thereto: two Serb peasants of identical firm bearing, and the contractor Vajo Ličanin who vainly begged for mercy. An unasked volunteer for the executioner stepped forward from the crowd: it was the drunken inn-keeper Gustav who divulged the fact that he had been an informer for fifteen years, given promise at Vienna that he would be allowed to hang two Serbs with his own hands—when the time came. The drunken cipher was marched off and humiliated in public by the Hungarian lieutenant.

The talks held by the prominent Turkish townsmen at Alihodža's store was of historic significance. They were summoned “to be at the head of the *Schutzkorps*”. Alihodža Mutevelić, whose family name

implied the related tradition,¹⁷ and who was bound by that name to the Vizier's endowment,

...Excited, with blush across his face and an old glister in his eyes, he determinedly refused the very idea of any engagement in the Schutzkorps. He particularly picked Nailbeg up on for the man's opinion that they, as respectable men and instead of Gypsies, should accept weapons and lead the Muslim volunteer detachments.

– I won't be in such business for life's sake. If you had brains, you wouldn't either. Can't you see that the authorities are battling using us while we're going to pay dearly in the end?

Alihodža's words cooled off the beys, so one by one, they took their leave. The last to stay was the bruised Nailbeg whom Alihodža addressed looking him straight in the eyes, almost sadly:

– I can see that you've made up your mind to join in. You feel like getting killed; in the fear that the Gypsies could outstrip you. But remember that long ago old people said: The time has come not to get killed but to show what kind of man each of us is. And this is such a time.

It is not of my concern to judge who adhered to Alihodža, and who followed Kokošar. But it *is* of my concern, however, to say—at the Matica srpska—that Alihodža Muteveli'ć is one of the brightest characters in Andrić's prose on the whole. Andrić lent him the gift of inner insight so that he was subsequently to realize who and when built the dungeon into the seventh pier of the bridge and when; it was a lower-rank officer with a stigma of his myth-related last name.¹⁸

In his mind's eye, a recollection emerged of the soldiers he had five or six years before watched digging something, covered under the green tent, in that same pier; the sight emerged of that iron shutter which was for the years to follow to cover the entrance into the mined interior of the pier, and of the telling face of Feldwebel Branković—deaf, blind and mute.

Like a grand ghost figure, Alihodža was walking toward his death with the most wonderful and most universal thoughts about building and ruination:

¹⁷ *Mutevelija*, local form of the Turkish word *mütevelli*, meaning 'trustee of an endowment (*vakıf*)'. Mehmed Pasha Sokolović Bridge on the Drina was an endowment by this grand vizier whose name in Turkish reads Sokollu. – *Translator's note*.

¹⁸ The name of (Vuk) Branković, Serbian medieval nobleman, stands in the national folk tradition as a symbol of treason yet – according to historians – unjustly so. He fought in the Battle of Kosovo (1389) with his father-in-law Prince Lazar, but – unlike Lazar – managed to survive and preserve his army. – *Translator's note*.

But never mind, he thought further, if ruining is done here, building takes place elsewhere. There must be some peaceful areas and reasonable people aware of God's realm. (...) Anything can be. Yet one thing *cannot*: It cannot be that great and wise, yet soulful humans shall vanish entirely and for ever, those who will for the sake of God's love erect durable structures in order to make the earth more beautiful and man thereon live easier and better. If such people vanished, it would mean that God's love would fade away and disappear from the earth. That's what cannot be.

Alihodža has been 'assigned' to bring the novel *The Bridge on the Drina* to an end—with these thoughts and his death. One cannot give more to any character. That is what the followers of Nailbeg and Huso Kokošar cannot forgive the great writer.

Now let us go back to the unlucky prisoner.

His walk in the yard of the old prison in Split and encounter with sunshine on August 8, 1914 brought tears to his eye:

And this morn they took me out into sunlight:
A ship's masts rise behind the wall,
fulfilled and good sunny minutes,
and nothing else for my eyes to see.
But the very thought that the same sun
glistened along your sunlit tracks—
and like molten gold of eyesight
tear after tear began to roll.
I closed my eyes.
Dark and humid was my cell, when
I got back, and the sword-bearing guard
with the face of a comfort-giver—
thought, poor fellow, that the sunlight made me weep.

Transportation of the arrested to the prison in Maribor was dramatic. In his poetic prose record "The Night on Train" ("Noć u vozu") within "The Day's Unrest" ("Nemir dana"), Andrić depicts the atmosphere of heat, uncertainty, disorientation. People were traveling "from noontime, cramped in the narrow, airless railcars" without knowing where they were being taken to or how the trip was going to end. An aesthetically sensitive person seeks comfort and oblivion in the beauty of colours and light visible from the train window:

And out there, an ever fresh splendour and new colour were descending, some beauty I had never imagined possible was wrapping both

the skies and the earth. I feared to turn my head backward into the car, but pressed my face against the glass, and watched and drank with my eyes, forgetting about all behind me.

When the last colour faded out and the wretched traveler turned his eyes into the car, he was met by complete darkness with strong smells and oppressive heat as the sole interior reality of the train. He was then doomed to the all-night sight of his own face in the window glass, “swinging and trembling like the face of a drowning man in the river at twilight”.

It was only an oversensitive melancholic and an artist by nature that could see himself as the swinging face of a drowning man in the river at twilight.

Writing about the exuberance and suffering of Toma Galus in Trieste, Andrić accentuates the miserable figure of a person “in a waistcoat cut like waiter one” which hits Galus “from behind” while the police officer escorts him to the prison, then passes forward and “vilely and abominably” hits him frontally. The mob humiliates the detainee by yelling and spitting:

A middle-aged woman with hard-swelling under-eye bags spat twice at Galus and stood behind, shouting:
– Nieder mit Russland!

Reading about the sufferings of Girolamo Savonarola, Andrić found a similar scene, remindful of his Galus: Savonarola was taken to prison, followed by infuriated crowd. At the very gate, a man kicked him in his backside, crying: “There! So goes his prophecy.” Events recur over the centuries; man reconfirms both his baseness and his greatness.

Toward the very end of *Ex Ponto*, in a fragment which precedes the epilogue, the poet addresses the tall blonde lady from Maribor who humiliated and hurt him on his arrival in prison:

Ah, yes, it was in your city, unnamed blonde madam, that I found out what it’s like to walk, pale-faced, fatigued and broken, along the wet streets, while hard-hearted men and ruthless women applaud from their lit balconies. It was from you that I learned what a fettered, alien slave feels like when spat at his face.

It occurs to the poetic narrator that some trouble may have afflicted the tall blonde lady as well, and he pities her now as he did then.

Calm pleasure comes from the fact that one still lives and that all the troubles have been overcome; that the humiliations, and the imprisonment,

have been left behind. Instead of petty and base vengefulness, love for people arises and the delight of the ex-prisoner in carrying his part of the cross born by mankind:

The very fact that I live bestows calm joy on me.

I feel great love for people, for their deeds, for fortunes and misfortunes, for sin and passion and all the misery coming from them, for struggles and faltering, for fallacies and sufferings and sacrifice, for whatever man has been given on this planet.

I feel some fleeting yet immeasurable joy of being myself able to drink a drop from the inexhaustible source of human happiness, of being myself able to bear a small piece of the colossal cross born by mankind.

There follows the unforgettable point which takes *Ex Ponto* to its epilogue:

And whatever I look at is song and whatever I touch upon is pain.

After late October of 1914, the leading investigator in Andrić's case was Jerko Moskovita of Split, a secret patriot inclined to the idea of South Slav unity (*jugoslovenstvo*); on March 13, 1915, the arrested writer was informed that the State Attorney Office discontinued "all legal proceedings" instituted against him. A new stage of Andrić's life began—that of controlled freedom, with his mother, in the Franciscan monasteries at Ovčarevo, Guča and Zenica where he set out to read fraternal records/chronicles, getting acquainted with the monastic life from inside. The author developed a sympathy for the friars as guardians of religion and national identity. In all likelihood, that period of his life accounts for the idea of stories about the friars who enjoy high and honourable status in his literary output, with Fra Petar given a privileged role among them. These characters include wags, men of few words, and also masters of stories and storytelling. A whole new world, safeguarding and redeeming, opened for the quite recent detainee.

Andrić's undermined health and occasional activation of his lung disease protected him against mobilization and senseless death on one of Europe's battlegrounds. He found himself in the hospital at Zenica, then twice in Zagreb's Hospital of the Sisters of Charity where he met Ivo Vojnović, yet another ex-convict, who displayed fatherly love to Andrić. To Vojnović, the young author was "my great young Ivo", "pre-chosen flower in the mud of our banality", an ideal young man, a Catholic Serb.

The experience of imprisonment left deep imprints on Andrić's literature. It can be traced throughout his oeuvre as a process of objectivisation, as relocation of the story and events into the past and as experience universalized. The most subjective are those poetic records which sometimes possess the traits of a diary: "The Walk" ("Šetnja") was composed on Aug. 8, 1914 in Split, at the earlier prison; the dating of "The Fortieth Night" ("Četrdeseta noć") consists of the year only (1914), while the poem "1914" was written in Maribor. The fear from his own image seen in water reaches the extent of horror. There is a hint of the theme of the failure to recognize oneself in the blurry water-mirror, that is, of one's distancing and alienation from one's self:

In the dusk and silence
With no nighttime dreams, with no daytime peace.
My soul sank into oblivion slowly
In the garland of its wounds.
But this very morn, with the sunray first,
In a scary sound a memory whimpered
And blood spurted from all of my wounds:
They brought me a jug of water
And for the first time, aghast,
I saw on the water's surface dark
My facial image, gaunt, evil, and pale.

Early enough, the collection *Ex Ponto* invokes Ovid. Already therein, one can spot distancing, and the very manner of composing both *Ex Ponto* and *Anxieties (Nemiri)* can doubtlessly be said to be well thought out. Andrić's distancing from these early works of his—implying the author's long-lived ban on their publication—cast a shadow of doubt as to their unquestionable value and poetic power, as well as their deep and extensive universal anthropological insights. *Ex Ponto* addresses all the sufferers round the globe, as was, implicitly, to be the case with *The Damned Yard (Prokleta avlija)*:

Diverse and many are the pains afflicting people on the Earth,
where most profound sobbing comes from the most splendid souls, but
whoever has been afflicted by just one of those great pains—is my
brother and a friend!

It is to all people round the whole world, those who have suffered
or are suffering because of their soul and its huge and eternal demands,
that I dedicate these pages, once written for myself only but sent today
to all of my brothers in pain and hope.

The cycle of the stories about Toma Galus—Žaneta Đukić Perišić¹⁹ argues persuasively—is part of the abandoned ‘building site’ of the novel *On the Sunny Side* (*Na sunčanoj strani*). Although the author gave up the novel, probably due to the identifiability of his autobiographical details, the story-telling displays distancing. The main character is Toma Galus who was to recur in the novel *The Bridge on the Drina*.

It is this very character, Galus from the Višegrad chronicle, that deserves some attention. He possesses something of Andrić’s own youth and beliefs. The young man has just “completed his graduation from the Gymnasium in Sarajevo”, and “is to go to Vienna this autumn for university studies”. For five years he has studied French as a non-compulsory subject. He also pursued literature and philosophy, wrote verse and became member of “revolutionary and nationalist student organizations”. His major foreign reading included “works from the well-known and big German publishing house, Reclam’s Universal-Bibliothek” from which he “gathered insights into modern German philosophers Nietzsche and Stirner” so that he was able to enter “endless discussions” about them, “with some cool and cheerful passion, without slightest linking of his knowledge to his personal life”.

Unlike his creator, Andrić’s character is “a tall young man with rosy face and blue eyes”, but nationally and ideologically, evidently, a Serb, champion of South Slavs’ unification around Serbia as their ‘Piedmont’, although his father was a foreigner, a German of noble background, Alban von Gallus, “the last descendant of an old family from Burgenland”, who had arrived in the kasaba as a civil servant immediately after the occupation, married the daughter of Višegrad’s respectable business owner Hadži-Toma Stanković and got three children from her, “all of them baptized in the Serbian church, growing up as genuine children of the kasaba and Hadži-Toma’s grandchildren”. As the first direct descendant of the occupier’s clerk, Toma Galus became a Serb and a child of the kasaba.

Andrić’s guardian and stepfather whose name was entered in school records was his aunt’s husband Ivan Matkovšik, another civil servant of the occupying power. It is not my wish to identify the author with his character, yet I cannot fail to notice some pronounced and unquestionable similarities. The distancing of the character from the writer prevails in the physical individualization of the protagonist. The descendants of the members of the occupying administration bore their Serbian identity with pride, their eyes falling behind Panos.

¹⁹ **Žaneta Đukić Perišić** (b. 1956) – literary scholar, author of numerous works dealing with the oeuvre of Ivo Andrić, currently Director of Ivo Andrić Foundation. – *Translator’s note.*

Finally, in *The Damned Yard*, where distancing—in terms of both space and time and personality—is the greatest, Andrić reached the acme of not only his own prose-writing. It would be erroneous to establish a cause-and-effect relation between Andrić's own imprisonment and *The Damned Yard*, but there is no doubt that the author's experience in prison provided fertile ground for the idea of *The Damned Yard*, and its fruition.

The springtime of 1917 was a spring of calamity, of famine—for all the Serbs, wherever they lived. The children's suffering, ill fate and deaths at Višegrad upset and moved the young poet stricken by lung disease, the most recent inmate and a persecuted person; this produced painful echoes in his poetic book *Anxieties*, including the prose piece therein—"Children" ("Djeca"). The town's children would leave their homes in search of food, while some new children kept arriving "from the nearby villages" where typhus was sweeping, so they did not go back there. They were attracted to the military slaughterhouse and any other place where food waste could be found:

The little town was swarming with children. They trod through the brook which ran in front of the soldiers' butchery, catching the pieces of insides dumped into water; they picked the prune seeds, crushed them on the cobbled road and ate their bitter kernels; on the dump behind the officers' kitchens, they reached for the wasted empty cans, poured hot water in these and drank it; to stave off hunger, they chewed elder pith for a long while, until blood appeared behind their teeth; they tasted primrose leaves and fern fiddleheads; they hid in just-sowed gardens at night and dug out with their fingers the fresh-planted potatoes from soft beds; they begged, stole, grabbed, but all of that did not suffice to satisfy hunger and survive.

Women kept working, silent, men were few—they were on the frontlines or in prison camps—so it seemed that children only were dying. What could save them was the waste of some big European restaurant, but food was unevenly distributed around the world. Those dying children were "difficult to forget, if one had seen them once at least squatting in the rags of home-woven heavy cloth and soldiers' garments, chewing raw clover, while green saliva dripped from both corners of their mouths! And horrible was the thought that one day those children were going to be ghostly witnesses at some judgement day where verdicts would be better considered and more justly delivered than those in April 1917".

Two kinds of Andrić's sensitivity concur in this prose: sensitiveness to injustice—and it is in most cases social injustice, and sensitiveness

to the sufferings of children, especially children's starvation to death. It was something our author considered to be mankind's shame, as well as his own. The first kind of sensitivity—to injustice—remained, in his literature, reduced to sketches—*Red Leaves (Crveni listovi)*, while the other was developed into the collection of short stories—*Children (Deca)*. Andrić saw childhood as painful and dramatic. “Throughout the rest of our lives we undergo remedial treatment for such childhood”, the narrator in the story “The Window” (“Prozor”) says.

The subject dictates that we recollect Andrić's writing “Our Literature and the War” (“Naša književnost i rat”) from 1918. The first issue emphasized by Andrić is the fact that at the time there was no war literature with the Serbs and Croats, and that it was good for “our literature” to have “preserved itself well from war themes”, so that “our silence (...) is the best and worthiest reflection of our mood”. As early as then, Andrić was obviously a proponent of silence about issues which could rouse misunderstandings or hatred. However, he did not fail to say that we were “swept by a blustery wind we neither called for nor caused” and that it was perhaps owing to that fact “that it was possible that the kind of songsters spreading blind hatred and disgraceful ephemeral passions remained unseen among our people”, which was not the case “with much bigger and more cultured nations”. The silence of our literature regarding the war is “a valuable and telling proof of its good moral structure, for, if we have not something worth presenting to the future, we shall have nothing to be ashamed of either”. It is much more important “to overview the artistic value”, but also “the social significance” of literature and the conditions in which it is created. Nevertheless, the war has shown, “even to those unwilling to see it before”, “that we are firmly bonded to our country” and accountable to the dead as well as to the unborn.

The firm bond to his people and his country, and the accountability to both the dead and the unborn, show that this author viewed both literature and his own accountability from the standpoint of eternity; or, to put it in his words, “beyond time” and “underlying the events”. Which is most rare and most difficult.

I do not know of anyone who in such a way wrote about fallacies and illusions of triumphs. Neither do I know anyone who depicted as complex a portrait of David after his triumph over Goliath as Ivo Andrić did. The triumphant howl obscures the lie about victory. Victory is “a small bloody lie and a great disaster”. Triumphs generate illusions and false elations; they blur good assessment and fail to enhance true accomplishments. “Your triumph has a low forehead and red eyes”. Victory limits one's cautiousness and intelligence, often taking the victor to the edge of offence and crime. The triumph of today may turn into

a defeat tomorrow, and “in the eyes of a single person”—in all of the wars won or lost—one can only see defeated humanity. Banners pale and wear out, and “man remains always the same, bent under his pain and enduring in his endeavour”. Andrić puts the following thrust to his prose poem “Above victories” (“Iznad pobjeda”): “There are no defeats or triumphs but, ever and everywhere, among both the losing and winning ones—tormented and humiliated man.”

The deed outshines the victor appearing in its full scale and dreadfulness, so that the shepherd and a shepherd’s son can hardly bear this great deed of his—the victory over Goliath—and “all the triumph and glory roaring around him seemed like soaring above his grave. Some perform deeds, others enjoy the fruits and gloat. Through one’s deed, one burns out, gets blind, is left deaf and gets lost to all. Who could ever say that so deep darkness dwells in the soul of a hero!”

Is this not one of the major anthropological discoveries of the Serbian fiction? That is how the once young boy, an orphan from a pathway in Višegrad, wrote—probably the only one in the whole world—about the victor over Goliath.

Finally—“A Tale from Japan” (“Priča iz Japana”), an allegory/parable about the poet, conspirator, convict and expatriate Mori Ipo, one of the three hundred and fifty plotters against the reign of Empress Au-Ung, whose name hints at Austro-Hungary.²⁰

When the Empress died “abruptly and beyond any expectation”, the Three Hundred and Fifty gathered together and took over the rule. The poet Mori Ipo was not there. At the moment of triumph, he bade farewell to his fellow-fighters in a letter, promising that he would, in case of an adversity, rejoin them. However, the victors and new powerholders, blinded by their authority and triumph, did not believe that any calamity could emerge and easily forgot about their wise fellow-fighter, unwilling to even hear his farewell message to the end, skipping lightly to the imports and tariff act:

Mori Ipo sends regards, at farewell, to his comrades, the conspirators!

I appreciate, my comrades, the sufferings and trust and the victory we have shared, and I beg you to forgive me my inability to share the power with you as I did share our struggle. But—unlike other people—poets are loyal in times of troubles only and abandon those who enjoy welfare. We the poets are born to fight; we are passionate hunters, but do not eat our prey. Thin and invisible is the barrier which separates me

²⁰ ‘Hungary’ reads ‘Ungarn’ in German. – *Translator’s note.*

from you but is not the blade of the sword lethal though thin; without harming my soul, I could not cross it to be with you, for we can bear anything but power. Therefore, I am leaving you, my fellow-conspirators, and setting out to seek a thought which has not become real or an aspiration which has not been betrayed. And you should rule in a reasonable and fortunate manner, yet if ever some calamity and test strike upon our Seven-Isles Empire and if ever the need for struggle and consolation in that struggle occurs, please come to me.

Let us say, in the end, that Ivo Andrić wrote about Petar II Petrović Njegoš more than about any other figure of the world's or domestic history and literature.

Now, if we apply the three phrases by Isidora Sekulić which convey three notions of value—*epoch-making turbulence*, *philosophy of the fatherland*, and *the Vow of Kosovo*—to the corpuses of Njegoš and Andrić, we shall easily be assured that nowhere do these notions pulsate as powerfully as in these two oeuvres.

Njegoš is *The Serbian Mirror of the nineteenth*, and Ivo Andrić is *The Serbian Mirror of the twentieth century*.

The two mirrors have merged inseparably through the opted-for spiritual fatherhood.

Translated from Serbian by
Angelina Čanković Popović

ŽANETA ĐUKIĆ PERIŠIĆ

THE TURN AND THE PERSECUTION
Years 1914-1917
Intimations of Great Achievements

St. Vitus's Day as described in the novel *The Woman from Sarajevo* was in no way different from any other day, except for the commotion, the thunder of carriages and roaring of cars, with people dressed in parade uniforms on the Miljacka River bank. In the morning of the day that will shake the world to its core, Andrić's heroine Rajka Radaković relishes the dream she had during the night which involved money, never suspecting that the dull explosion she has just heard is a cause for a historic alarm. Failing to understand her mother's words that *the greatest toll will be on poor Serbs again* (3: 95), she is far from realizing that that day will be an introduction into new and harrowing suffering of her people.

On that day, in the Mežalini district in Višegrad, in the novel *The Bridge on Drina*, Andrić's protagonists from Serbian associations are celebrating, without the idea of a great turn, the complete disintegration of Europe and change of world history even crossing their mind. A vague and scared whisper about the assassination of the heir presumptive in Sarajevo, the beginning of persecutions and hangings of Serbs is spreading slowly around the *kasaba*, in which the atmosphere in the days to follow will resemble that of a boiling cauldron.

It was an introduction into the terrible suffering not only of Andrić's protagonists, but of their maker and his friends.

The dream of the unity of South Slavs, *the new Yugoslavia that will be ours* (144:184) as Crnjanski would put it, never left young Andrić. However, both of them had to go through a great personal ordeal before seeing the creation of the "new Yugoslavia", a country that *dreamers*

*and madmen*¹ dreamt about and that would, unfortunately, bring disappointment to many as early as the first months of its existence.

Andrić's ordeal began with "The First Spring Poem", published in Čerina's *Vihor* no. 2, year 1914. The poem, which shows explicit political engagement, appears to be a step forward with regards to the poetry that Andrić had written so far. Although Andrić had been through many temptations that his revolutionary engagement in Yugoslav-oriented organizations in Sarajevo, Zagreb and Vienna involved, his poetry allowed little of these experiences to show in his works. In "The First Spring Poem", however, the young poet asks a clear and explicit question: *When will the king's armies arrive?*

Perceiving Serbia as a sort of promise, a paradigm of freedom and national integration and the cornerstone of the dreamt unification, Andrić saw this free and independent eastern country as the center that the scattered national forces would group around. And therefore Andrić, a Yugoslav nationalist, uses "The First Spring Poem" and its impressionist frame, which serves only as a platform for the poet's dramatic hopes and desires, to evoke the king's Serbian army with a joyous presentiment:

This morning clouds were drifting in the sky, and I had a joyous
presentiment
Of the day when the terrible glistening of their arms will make the hills
bloom,
When they will sow fiery flowers on the fields,
When the first clarion will be played, when the first horsemen will appear,
Tired and dusty: and sprinkled with foam
As in an old poem; oh, joy!
When will the king's armies arrive?
Women are weaving gifts for them in silence, they are mentioned
By good men in their prayers, they are in the songs
Of young girls at their windows, and flowers grow for them
In little gardens. Infinite tenderness awaits them.
When will the king's armies arrive?
Clouds drift in the sky like an army of soldiers, and I have a presentiment
of the days
Of great deeds.
This morning I saw a budding branch.
When will the king's armies arrive?

Although this poem contains undoubted political connotations, I would say that the idea in question here is not that of an active fight for

¹ *We, the poets, the madmen, the dreamers, we won* – wrote Ivo Vojnović in his hospital diary, on Tuesday 22 October, 1918, at the end of the war (502: 110)

liberation that *the king's armies* should help achieve. The state in which we find the poet is more likely to be one of optimistic expectation. A certain level of resigned reconciliation to the awareness that the decision and the action can come only from where the king's armies come from, that is from the East, from the independent Serbia, is also noticeable in the poem. The poet who is unable to act for various reasons—not being able to find strong enough arguments in himself or being politically limited—he is ready, however, to hail the liberators when the action starts. There is no doubt that the poem was born out of the same mindset that produced the diary entry about Jukić's attempt on Cuvaj's life. Two years after he had written *how joyful I am, feeling that the time of great achievements is coming* (354: 135) in his diary, the poet's hope of salvation from the East came from the same emotional and mental state, and expressed in an almost identical way: *I have a presentiment of the days of great deeds.*

At the same time when he writes and publishes "The First Spring Poem", Andrić publishes a review of the collection of patriotic and war poems by Vojislav Ilić Junior entitled "The Bloody Flowers of V. Ilić Junior" in *Literary News*, no. 8, year 1914. Having, as he says himself, a *pre-liking* for the poet, Andrić, in this *small book about joys of victory, genuine enthusiasm and zealous victims*, sees an expression of Serbian fighting spirit following the Balkan Wars, which inspired him and his Sarajevo- and Zagreb-based friends. The above-mentioned article is undoubtedly the result of the same atmosphere of hope, trepidation and faith in the possibility and legitimacy of unification. *When great things and extraordinary deeds happened on the other side of the Drina River, we observed the events with trepidation, strange thoughts in our heads and joyous presentiments in our souls (...)* *But we were witnessing a bloody sunrise behind bars, we were excluded from the days of great achievements* (13: 240). A powerful, joyous presentiment of the liberation from the jaws of Austria-Hungary and faith in liberation and unification were clearly very present in Andrić on the eve of the First World War: the intimations of great changes echoed in his works at that time.

In the review of an *unpretentious* book by Branko Mašić entitled *The Images and Impressions from the War* published in Zagreb-based *Savremeni* in 1914, Andrić perceives one of the later founders of *Književni jug* primarily as a journalist-reporter from the front with an engaged attitude to reality, who manages to convey his impressions from the battlefields.

In all of the mentioned critical texts written in 1914, Andrić asks an implicit question about the relationship between art and reality, fact and fiction, striving to point to the necessity of differentiating biographic data from its transposition into a literary text (especially in the text about Heine's letters). In spite of that, however, he himself uses profusely not only citations from the works he writes about, but authors' biographies

and details from their lives as well, in order to understand and analyze their work. In his early critical works, much more than in the latter, the author appears before his readers with obvious personal preferences and harsh critical judgments. In the works written after the war he is more reserved in his estimations, prone to relativize his attitudes, more careful and less severe when formulating them.

Big Bang—Sarajevo Assassination

On 28 June, 1914, when Čabrinović tried, and Princip “did” the assassination of Archduke Franz Ferdinand, the heir presumptive of the Austro-Hungarian Empire, *branding us all murderers* (Crnjanski, 144: 133), a revolutionary and conspiring instinct awakens in Andrić, and he rushes to where the history is to be made. He is not spurred into action—he has long given up on that kind of engagement, leaving it to the more capable ones—but the need to be with the likes of him, on his territory, leads him to Zagreb. In the city where Matoš and Ujević are no longer there, Andrić meets Vladimir Čerina, who he plans to go to Split with. During their travel, this sick Dalmatian nationalist suffering from bad nerves, a poet and the founder of the magazine *Val i vihor* will change his mind and, instead of going to his hometown, he will leave for Italy, most probably from Rijeka. (...) *It seems that Čerina knew about the impending evil, or perhaps he had a foreboding of it*—remembers Andrić many years later (232: 63).

Andrić arrives in Split from Rijeka on a steamboat in the night between 17 and 18 July 1914, *gentlemanly, poor, silent, and wise; with an elegant exterior*, as his Split-based friend and fellow prisoner Maja Nižetić Čulić remembers him (363:75). In Split, *where Bosnia gave its strength to the sea, and the sea gave its beauty to Bosnia* (10: 24), he lives a quiet and secluded life, and, knowing that he has been under surveillance, only *rarely and in secret* (10: 25) does he meet people, only few who he knows he can trust and whose addresses he got in Zagreb. These are Jerko Čulić, a journalist and the editor-in-chief of *Sloboda*, Oskar Tartalja, the editor-in-chief of *Zastava*, Vlado Matušić, a law student, and Maja Nižetić, a teacher in Splitska on Brač, the future wife of Jerko Čulić. The writer Niko Bartulović is already in prison. In these rough and troubled times, with something ominous in the air portending evil, Andrić manages to bask in the beautiful summer on the seacoast and the “warm Split aquarelle” until 23 July, the day when Serbia received the humiliating ultimatum from Austria-Hungary,² *the greatest humili-*

² In addition to an extensive incrimination of Serbia, concentrated on the thesis that the idea of assassination was born in Belgrade, that officers and officials, members of the National Defense, gave weapons and ammunition, and that the transfer

ation to Serbia that I had ever seen a country undergo (Edward Grey) and that Serbia could not accept. He will have enough time to write a letter to Evgenija Gojmerac on 22 July, asking her to help him through a common friend, a student called Darko Zajčić, to get the money and the wardrobe left in Krakow before leaving unexpectedly on the day of assassination. He manages to go through his papers and books and get rid of everything that could compromise him, and write to his family that they will not be seeing each other soon, because he will have to stay longer at the seaside due to his health.³

And then I lived another two days as a free man, perhaps two of the prettiest and strangest days of my life. I swam, I sunbathed, I let the sand run through my hands, I walked, ate the first grapes, and I knew it was the last time, so I did everything quickly and yearningly, but with a sense of peace that I myself could not quite understand—wrote Andrić in 1924 in the autobiographical note “The First Day in the Split Prison”, most of which can be useful in reconstructing the real events that happened in the summer of 1914 (10: 25).⁴ Giving meteorological and topographic facts, Andrić stresses in the text that “unprocessed memory”

of troops to Bosnia was carried out by the head of the Serbian border service, the Austro-Hungarian authorities made an ultimatum of ten points in which it was requested, among other things, that an investigation into the assassination in the territory of Serbia be carried out by the bodies delegated by the Austro-Hungarian authorities, that the National Defense and similar organizations be dissolved, and that the Serbian government ban all publications written against the Austro-Hungarian Empire.

³ On 16 August, 1914, Andrić's uncle Ivan Matkovšik, without knowing where his sister-in-law's son is, writes to Vojmir Durbašić in Sarajevo: “I take the liberty to ask you kindly to inform me where you and my Ivan last saw each other, and who he traveled to Split with – I received a letter from him at the beginning of this month, in which he informs me that he will be staying in Split with a friend, following a recommendation from a doctor, in order to recover his health, and then return home. Since there has been no news from him since 1 August, and given the present critical situation, I am very worried that he may be under some kind of suspicion, or maybe imprisoned, since there is no trace of him.” (409: 85-86)

⁴ Contacting Andrić from Primošten on 9 January, 1973, Dr. Josip Beroš recalls the days of his youth and the time of Andrić's arrest: *It was in Split a few days before the war broke out in 1914. At that time Oskar Tartalja invited me to a meeting at the Ćiril Jedlička's Inn on the coast. The inn was in the same, “yellow” house where the Split prison was, in the former Venetian Lazaret, just the entrance was on the side of the coast. At the meeting there were – as far as I remember – a narrow circle of young people belonging to the United Nationalist Youth: Jerko Čulić, Jure Vrcan, leader of the Split Falcons, Jozo Šegvić-Bašar, Taso Sotirović, a graphic worker, Belgradian. They are all dead today. Oscar presented you as a Bosniak student, an associate of Vihor. – Before the war broke out, the first day of mobilization, they also arrested the four of us. You were also arrested, perhaps a day later. I do not remember seeing you in prison. You were on the other, northern side. They did not take me to Šibenik when all of you were moved there. I, Oscar, Vrcan and some of the older prisoners stayed in the Split prison. A few days later, they took us as hostages to secure the transport of Sudeten Germans who, via Trieste, went to Naum and from there to the front (94: br. 1387:2).*

is used in order to provide true facts related to the day of the arrest, questioning and prison.⁵

What could have made a pale, sickly literature and history student suspicious to Austro-Hungarian authorities? Was the police system of the dying monarchy indeed so sensitive to read subversive, destructive ideas into “The First Spring Poem” and the “joyous presentiment” of great achievements?⁶ Will Andrić’s short Young Bosnian revolutionary adventure, the strike and a diary in which the poet has a presentiment of great achievements remain vividly etched on the memory of the Austro-Hungarian police? It appears that, in an atmosphere of distrust and suspicion, even faint traces of a poet’s political activity will be a sufficient reason for an efficient and careful administration and guardians of the system to put him in prison.

The Dark Aquarelle of Split

When today I say, “I got arrested”, I must say it does not have the importance or the implications that the act had back then, in my youth—said Andrić many years later. (...) When my generation was your age, even younger, we were not used to being arrested. (...) Being in prison, it seemed back then that it was the end—of everything. The end of life—all you do is wait to be taken to the execution site (417: 14).

On a sunny morning at the end of July, while he was having coffee at a restaurant on the coast in Split, Andrić was intercepted by a plain-clothes agent with a moustache and, after waiting for the young poet

⁵ The exact date of Andrić’s arrest is unknown. When the dates of his arrival and stay in Split are compared, based on his autobiographical note “The First Day in the Split Prison” (10: 25-26) that was written ten years after the arrest, when the memory of the events had slightly faded, it turns out that the young writer was arrested on 27 July, 1914. Based on the information in the text, we conclude that Andrić learned about the ultimatum on the day it was delivered (23 July), that he saw gendarmes in Split taking some of the arrested people to prison the next day (July 24th), and then *I lived two more days as a free man (26 July), and the third day in the morning the writer was arrested (27 July)*. In his submission to the Parliamentary Committee for the Recognition of the Deeds of National Importance, he himself stated that 28 July 1914 was the date of the arrest. However, in the letter from 30 July 1914 written to Evgenija Gojmerac, he still appears to be a free man (*I do not know when I will leave this place. I will probably settle down with a Slovenian friend. I would come to Zagreb if it were possible to live there.*) (78: 61-62).

⁶ In November 1922, in his submission to the Parliamentary Committee for the Recognition of the Decisions of National Importance, Andrić cites the immediate cause of the arrest while giving the wrong title of “The First Spring Poem”: *Later, as a student at the University of Zagreb and Vienna, I participated in all youth movements and was one of the associates or founders of all nationalist papers, such as Zora, Vihor, etc. (To mention only one piece of writing from that time: “When will the King’s Armies arrive”, which came out immediately after the Balkan wars in Vihor and for which I was later held accountable in the court of law (349: 61).*

to pay his bill, he went with him to his apartment, which he thoroughly searched, collected the books and papers that Andrić thought were not incriminating, then took him first to the police and then to the Split prison.⁷ *So, this is the “thing” that we so often thought and spoke about. Yes, it was the “thing”, but I cannot get a grip on myself, everything somehow looks as if these events had no bearing, as if everything was happening to someone else, and I was just observing and wondering* (10: 28).

The first day in the Split prison was an initiation of particular kind, a turn in Andrić's life as tumultuous as a volcano, resulting in great changes in his being and his personal, intellectual topography. Prison was a threat that he could not control, suffering that he could not predict, not knowing what the reasons for his imprisonment were and how long it would last.

Behind those walls, one summer, I felt the first dread of prison— wrote Andrić in his autobiographical notes (10:24). A *yellow-walled massive* (10:24), in which *hundred years ago there were Marmon's stables* (113: 8) was the place of Andrić's first bitter experience. *Apart from the cell being dark and damp, rat and bedbug odour could be felt everywhere. The walls were painted in a vague, probably yellowish colour, filling the soul with a sense of infinite gloom. Nothing but a bare wall could be seen through rusty bars covered with dust, which was also yellowish and without a single opening, and especially in the evenings, when bells would toll on nearby churches and break the dead silence, I had an actual feeling that I was buried alive—*Niko Bartulović described the cell which he shared with Čulić, Tartalja and Andrić.⁸

⁷ In his interviews, Andrić gives several different variations of the details of his arrest. On one occasion, he said that his landlady sent warm clothes, several apples, a blanket, and—just one book, through a court officer sent by a court investigator, a young man from Vienna. When Andrić asked her to send him all the books from the desk, he forgot that he had removed all the books from the table while he was clearing it the previous day, leaving only one, Kierkegaard's Book *Either Or* (53: 137-139). In any case, insisting on the coincidence that it was Kierkegaard's work that found its way to him in prison, Andrić emphasizes the influence of this Scandinavian philosopher on his creative work on every occasion. *In the bundle, therefore, there could have been a book of love stories instead of Kierkegaard. And later this would probably have been interpreted: it only confirms that the presence of love motives, eroticism in Andrić's poetry and prose is very ... etc. etc. But, fortunately, it was Kierkegaard, a most preferred company, which in literary, philosophical terms remained with me mostly at the level of certain spiritual affinity and subjective affection from then until now* (53: 178).

⁸ *Jerko Čulić, Oskar Tartalja, Ivo Andrić and I were a group for ourselves. We were of the same age, cooperated in revolutionary youth organizations, made our first attempts at literature and writing in youth magazines. I knew Čulić and Oskar from high school, we were from the same neighbourhood and we had been like brothers for a long time. But Andrić was Bosnian, and no matter how well we knew each other from the magazines, we had never met in person nor had we known anything about his being in Split. Later he said that he had felt weak, so Vlade Čerina told him go to the seaside to recover, give a letter to Vlade Matešić and get out of the*

A foreign and somewhat confused young man is how Bartulović saw Andrić (113: 10) when he found himself in a *humid, dark and closed space* (10: 28), humiliated, deprived of freedom and aware that someone else was in charge of his destiny. Andrić finds himself, unequivocally for the first time, understanding man's existential confinement. *A sort of dullness, a mental absence that lasted all day suddenly disappeared, and all of a sudden it came to me: how terrible are the things that are happening to us. This is a prison, a loss, precariousness, death. Blood rushed to my head and I broke out in a cold sweat. I covered my mouth with my hands, to stop myself from screaming like a child. I listened all night to my heart pounding and the sound of sea boat sirens, and all the while I knew that it was me shaking in my prison bed, and that it was the beginning of a long suffering for all of us there*—says Andrić in “The First Day in the Split Prison” (10: 28-29).

When the Split prison becomes too crowded for all the prisoners, all those that the hundred-eyed Argus of the Austro-Hungarian police thought were suspicious and potentially dangerous, the whole group including Andrić was transferred to the Šibenik prison. Maja Nižetić Čulić remembers that he spent five to six days there, after which he was sent back to Split. He and the rest of the group were sent to Rijeka on 15 August 1914, again on the steamboat *Višegrad*. He wrote a message to Evgenija Gojmerac on the steamboat, signing his name as *Ivo Andrić, a wretched man* (78: 63). To humiliate the prisoners even more, they bound them in chains, which they eventually took off in Rijeka at the request of Hungarian officers. Before leaving for Zagreb, the prisoners were left to stand in rain for hours, humiliated and weak. They did not stay long in Zagreb; on 18 August, the entire convoy of three hundred and forty of them arrives in Pest via Gyekenyes. Branded as imprisoned Serbian conspirators, they were living on nothing more than crispbread during the journey and all the while were left to the mercy of frenzied crowds that awaited the train (363: 78).

A Poet behind Bars: the Maribor Penitentiary

We set off at noon, in crowded, humid wagons, not knowing where we were being taken or what would become of us (...) Some of us were already wearing prison uniforms that smelled of cooking and workshop.

*way of the Zagreb police, which, after the assassination in Sarajevo, were keeping an eye on all the youths. I, who was locked up under the suspicion of collaboration with the assassins, had been locked up some ten days earlier and expected to be released any day, and found myself surrounded by friends and familiar faces, but in the prison yard – wrote Niko Bartulović in his novel *My Friend Tonislav Majvasija* (Moj prijatelj Tonislav Majvasija) (113: 10).*

(...) And when I turned around, I would see a dark wagon, packed with soldiers, my friends, sullen and worried, scared or indifferent. It was getting dark in the stifling, tottering wagon with spit on the floor. (...) In vain did I close my eyes, I was convicted and had to look into my own eyes over and over again. All night—wrote Andrić in *Nemiri (Unrest)*, in the text “Noć u vozu” (“Night on a Train”) (10: 95-96).

Instead of transferring the prisoners to Arad, where prisons were already packed with imprisoned Serbs from Vojvodina and Bosnia, Andrić and his friends are transferred to Maribor from Pest on a train.⁹ On their way to the prison,¹⁰ in a town full of officers, army and people enraged by the news of the beginning of the war and the first great Serbian victories—the Serbian army triumphs in the battle of Cer in August 1914—the prisoners will have to push their way through the frenzied mass of people who will humiliate them, call them names and punish them in different ways, shouting hate slogans against Serbia and Russia. Andrić, yellow in the face from tiredness, and his fellow sufferers were assaulted by the gathered mob in front of the tavern called “Sofienhalle”, spat on and hit with sticks and umbrellas, as Maja Nižetić Čulić recalls (363: 79).

This image can be found in the story “Zanos i stradanje Tome Galusa” (“Rapture and Suffering of Toma Galus”), in which Andrić’s protagonist will suffer insults and blows in Coroneo Street in Trieste on his way to prison, similarly to his maker who stumbled and fell under the blows of angry citizens of Maribor.¹¹

⁹ *We set off at the break of dawn. Ivo grabs my hand and wakes me up: “Maja, we are at sea!” Drowsy, I tell him that it is not a good time to make jokes. But Jerko says the same: “It is true, come and see!” It was all but sea, it was the turbid Blatno jezero (Muddy lake). It took us two hours to pass by it – wrote Maja Nižetić Čulić in her memoirs (363: 78).*

¹⁰ The building of the former penitentiary is located on the right bank of the Drava River in Maribor. The prison was founded in 1898 and was one of the most modern penitentiaries in the Monarchy at that time. It was designed and built in the shape of a star, so that the control of prisoners would be simpler. It also had a special part for juveniles, as well as a school, whose director was Niko Grabl, a renowned cultural and public figure of Maribor. When the penitentiary was moved to Dob in Mirna, the reception book, in which the arrival of new convicts was recorded, was also transferred. Many documents from the archives, which were otherwise in poor condition, were either lost or destroyed. The documents from the Maribor penitentiary are scattered in many institutions that deal with recent history. The largest number of documents is from 1931 to 1940, and there are no written traces from the time of Andrić’s imprisonment.

¹¹ In 1944, in his “Notebook II”, which is kept in Ivo Andrić’s personal fund at the Serbian Academy of Sciences and Arts under number 401 on page 79, Andrić writes the information he found in Italian historian and politician Pasquale Villari’s writings about the tragic fate of Florentine Dominican Girolamo Savonarola, burned at the stake: *Savonarola is being led to prison, and he is followed by a raging mob of opponents. At the very door, one of them kicks him in the back, shouting: Ecco dove egli ha la profezia! (Evo gde mu leži proroštvo! (This is where his prophecy lies!) –*

Maja Nižetić Čulić especially remembers a certain blond woman who *was flailing her hands about the most in front of us* (363: 79). The same lady was, needless to say, etched on Andrić's brain as well, and the writer would use her as the symbol of cruelty in the story about the arrest of Toma Galus and in *Ex Ponto*. *A middle-aged lady with swollen rings around her eyes spat twice on Galus and shouted after him: Nieder mit Russland!* wrote Andrić in the first of the series of stories about Toma Galus's suffering behind bars (14: 169). In *Ex Ponto* Andrić writes about the dramatic experience of the arrest, feeling of humiliation before the frenzied, cruel mob of people taken over by basic instincts and war euphoria: *Tall blonde lady from Maribor—if I remember you on this morning, filled with joy because of the orchards that are in bloom, then it is without the bitterness of revenge never taken, as I have happily forgotten about it. There has been nothing to forgive, for even then I pitied both you and myself equally.—Yes, it was in your city, the unknown blond lady, that I learned what it was like to walk pale, tired and broken down wet streets while heartless men and cruel women were clapping from their lit balconies. It was you who taught me how a tied and helpless slave felt while being spat in the face* (11: 77).

Studying in Marburg, which was the expression Andrić used in his letters to Evgenija Gojmerac to describe the time he spent in prison (78: 86) will be the experience that will deeply shape his life throughout. In a prison, where an entirely different logic applies and in which, as Karadžo says in *Prokleta avlija (The Damned Yard)*, *no one is innocent*, the young poet is oppressed by injustice and humiliation: *Tell me where there is love! Tell me where I can hide from evil, tell me where I can hide from hatred!* (11: 52) Thrown into *the meaningless terror of circumstances and things* (11: 44), the poet remains behind bars and the justice and freedom he longs for become nothing more than a chimera: *Everything remained outside the big gate that closed behind me*—wrote Andrić in *Ex Ponto*, his “contemplative journal” that he would be writing during his time in prison (11: 11). In a passionate lyrical monologue, that Niko Bartulović calls *a conversation with one's soul* (114: 5-16), in the waking hours of his prison nights, the poet settles accounts with himself, trying to resolve the internal turmoil and free himself from the trauma caused by the arrest.¹²

translated by N. Stipčević.) The writer seems to remind himself here that the fate of rebels repeats itself through history, and mentions his hero Galus, noting: *See: in my story, when Toma Galus is led to prison, he is also hit in the back by someone from the indignant mob* (29: 46).

¹² In the poem “1914” written in one of those Maribor nights, Andrić gives a succinct explanation of the horror that fills the poet at the moment of the final and irrevocable coming to terms with his bitter, lonesome and hopeless position: *In silence and half-light / Without dreams in the night, without peace in the day / My soul was*

After the horrors of the Split prison, the Maribor penitentiary was a relief for all the prisoners. Although imprisoned, the prisoners could simulate leading a normal life to some extent: they woke up at six-thirty every morning, shaved twice a week, found a way to get their hands on books and read,¹³ established a sort of *small university* (78: 76) under the pretext that they were learning German, English, French, Italian and Russian, played cards and chess, walked one hour in the fresh air every day, wrote letters with coded messages,¹⁴ while sending messages written on beer bottle stoppers to each other in different prison cells. In October 1914, during the investigative procedure, Andrić spent *a number of unusually difficult days and caught a deadly cold in a freezing, six steps long, three steps wide prison cell* (78: 64). It is evident from the letters to Evgenija Gojmerac that he made contact with his mother: sparing her from suffering and ready to persevere in order to *save her only son from death*, he does not let her know about the nature and seriousness of his position (78: 67-68).

In one of the fragments from *Ex Ponto*, you can almost hear Andrić screaming from the Maribor penitentiary: *There are moments when desire sets my body and soul of a twenty-three year old man on fire, and, desire-ridden, I hit my forehead against the wall like a bird against glass* (10: 18), after which his mind conjures up a beautiful young woman made for love that he encountered *one summer*, a young woman of *ripe beauty*, and he asks himself who this young woman, who *surrendered to him passionate and teary-eyed, whispering incoherent words that professed faithfulness*, loves now (10: 18).

Sixteen-Year-Old Girls by Andrić

Sixteen years of age seem to be the milestone, the magical turning point in the perception of femininity and adulthood in Andrić's work. It is the year in which his female protagonists stop being little girls and

slowly forgetting / all its pains and wounds. / But in the morning, with the first beams of sun / Came the awful remembrance / And blood screamed from all the wounds / I was brought a pitcher of water / And for the first time, appalled / On the dark surface of water / I saw my face, haggard, pale, and evil (11: 155).

¹³ Besides Kierkegaard, Andrić reads Hugo, Gorky, Sienkiewicz (he specifically asked for books in the Polish language), Kranjčević; he brushes up on his knowledge of anarchic literature that he had read while in grammar school; he asks for an Italian-to-German dictionary.

¹⁴ In his letters to Evgenija Gojmerac, he refers several times to Croatia as the Lady. He had more sympathy for "her" now, forgetting all about his juvenile anger and loves "her" *constantly and unhappily* (78: 69). Asking about the Lady in the letter written at the beginning of January of 1915, the writer, referring to Serbia, says: *I hear that her sister is doing well* (78: 72). What Andrić is referring to here is the victory of the Serbian army in the battle of Kolubara on 15 December, 1915 and recovering of the cities of Belgrade, Valjevo, etc.

become young women, shed the skin of childhood and grow into beautiful and ripe women of roused sensuality that leads them into intricate relationships with men. They, the likes of chimeral Jelena, have *the freshness of mountain milk and hyacinth juice* (7: 256). Some of them are aware of their femininity, which they make use of in dramatic ways (Anika), while others find themselves on a road to ruin because of their youth and beauty (Rifka, Mara, Saida). Andrić's female protagonists' readiness to enter the world of corporeal pleasures will cost them dearly: their men wound them in ways that make them suffer tremendously, each in her own way.

Mara, with the eyes of pigeon blue, *still a sweet child and a beautiful woman* (7: 163), is barely sixteen when Veli-Pasha sees her face and her hands covered in *fine blonde hairs* (7: 97) and desires to possess her. *If he had taken her earlier, it would have been no good, and only three or four months later she would have lost her ripeness*—says the Ottoman pasha about Mara, with the surety of an experienced lover who prides himself on knowing what female beauty is.

Sixteen years of age also prove to be fatal for Jela, Andrić's protagonist from the story about Mara, whose virtue is taken and life ruined by one of the Pamuković men. Anika blossoms too around the age of sixteen, when *her eyes begin to wander more freely, with a tinge of purple in her dark eyes, her skin becomes whiter, her movements slower and more natural* (7: 28-29). In *Bosnian Chronicle*, when Jelka meets Desfosses, she is *fey with the agony of love, with the ravishing promise of love and the shadow of horror that came in its wake* (I. Andrić. *Bosnian Chronicle*. Arcade Publishing, 1993). Other female characters of the same age are Stanka in the story "Whittawers" ("Sarači"), the nameless girl in the story "Byron in Sintra" ("Bajron u Sintri"), Marta L. from the author's personal memories in the story "A Woman on a Stone", Lucia, the only daughter of the renowned Dubrovnik-based Martin Lukarević in the story "The Encounter" ("Susret"), the Gypsy girl Gaga from "The Restless Year", all of who do not lose their lives because of their beauty, but whose presence greatly affects the lives of men.

Their female being is often reflected in their male counterparts at the moment of sensual awakening. Their first encounter with the male principle most often determines what happens to them later and is always in some way fatal and painful. Rifka, one of the sylphlike girls *with slim, curvy waistline* (7: 184) whose coming to maturity is witnessed by the men of Višegrad town, draws attention and causes yearning in shopkeepers and strangers, as well as Stanka in Sarajevo, making them aware that *their beauty is unattainable* (14: 303).

Lying on a rocky sea shore, under the sun's heat and a light breeze, Marta L. remembers the events from her youth when, before turning

sixteen and already aware of her sexuality, she offers herself to old Matija: an accidental look at her young body and the seductiveness of her uncovered thighs arouse the long-forgotten passions in the old beggar. Lucija, the beautiful daughter from the Dubrovnik-based noble family of Lukarević, when almost sixteen, *causes confusion and commotion of every kind* in the soul of the Bosnian scholar Dražeslav (14: 283).

Prison Universities: Ex Ponto

Andrić, apparently absorbed not only in the idea of imprisonment but of the lives of prisoners as well, wrote extensively during the time of his incarceration. The poem “Šetnja” (“A Walk”) was written in the Split prison on 8 August 1914, which is also the moment when the writer begins to develop one of the most important thematic explorations of his work—the concept of prison and of being imprisoned, which would reach its peak in the novella *Prokleta avlija* (*The Damned Yard*). During the imprisonment, besides the lyrical prose of *Ex Ponto*, Andrić, among other poems, wrote “Četrdeset peta noć”, “1914”, “Jutro”, “Psalm sumnje”, “Burna noć” (“The Forty-Fifth Night”, “1914”, “Morning”, “The Psalm of Doubt”, “Stormy night”), in which life is seen as a bipolar occurrence and the poetic voice as a slave and protagonist in the drama in which *the golden thread has snapped ... in the heart (zlatna žica prepukla... u srcu* 10: 156).

At the same time, he also translates the texts whose theme is the lack of liberty: “The Ballad of Reading Gaol” by Oscar Wilde, who spent two years in prison in Reading following the sex scandal with Lord Douglas. This translation is signed *Marburg prison (Marburška tamnica), 4 October 1914* (58: 7-19). This translation remained unpublished during Andrić’s life, and it was written into the Jerko Čulić’s prison journal.¹⁵

In the investigation procedure, Andrić is in luck: his case is assigned to Judge Jerko Moskovita from Split, a confirmed patriot and a secret, dedicated supporter of the idea of Yugoslavia and the fight of Dalmatian patriots. The investigation begins at the end of October 1914,¹⁶ and on 13 March 1915, Andrić writes to Evgenija Gojmerac: *Today I have been informed that the State Prosecutor’s Office has dropped all charges against me* (78: 81).

The unjust fall behind bars into a different—cruel, gruesome and dark—world, where the victim is on a *dry, damned sandbank* (11: 27) leads the poet into a state in which he asks essential existential questions

¹⁵ The original is owned by the Čulić family.

¹⁶ Andrić’s charge sheet was asked from Split, where he found himself in mid-July. Given the obvious lack of evidence, the file was forwarded to Zagreb, where the authorities also failed to make a serious indictment.

that he has to answer in order to attain emotional rather than intellectual peace and inner balance. Just like Vizier Jusuf, who, enduring his prison nightmare, measures the greatness of his power by the scope and tragedy of his fall, the young poet too, when his *tumultuous youth has been shattered into dark minutes* (11: 26), tries to uncover the underlying mechanism of injustice and suffering. The cell from which the poet sends his lyrical notes of *Ex Ponto* as messages into the future—*I dedicate these pages, which I once wrote only for myself, to everyone in the whole wide world who suffered and is still suffering because of their soul and its grand and eternal demands, and today I am sending these pages to my brothers feeling both hope and pain* (11: 9)—is a symbol of all prisons in the world and the image of the man's destiny of prisoner and limitations of his power.

In 1914, while, within the historical, factual frame of reference, Andrić, an ex-conspirator, Yugoslav enthusiast and rising star in the field of poetry is going through his prison ordeal that will produce *Ex Ponto*, momentous changes are taking place within the artistic frame of reference, namely in his *The Bridge on the Drina: A man of right spirit and eyes wide open who lived in those days could see how an entire society was transformed in a day* (1: 355) The storm of war that struck the *kasaba* and turned the lives of people and their everyday lives upside down, caused silent consternation in some people, while others felt fear and panic. While some relished and dreamt about revenge and some went about their business without objection or emotion, others listened to the cacophonous music of war times carefully and with apprehension.

Evil, hatred, aggression and intolerance, heightened in extreme circumstances, develop in those characters who have always had them (Lotika's maddened waiter and police informer Gustav or violent member of *Schutzkorps* Huso Kokošar). Other characters, despite the dramatically changed circumstances, personal decline or the decline of their national or social community, remain faithful to the principles of generosity, understanding, goodness and solidarity (e.g. Lotika, the powerful pillar of her numerous family; the solid, reliable master Pavle Ranković who takes care of the bridge next to which he grew up as much as he does of his family and estate; Ali Hodja, the bridge's chronicler, steadfast in his moral and spiritual path).

The major turmoil in the society after the assassination in Sarajevo affects Andrić's protagonist Rajka Radaković (*The Woman from Sarajevo*) only in the domain of her business dealings. Possessing no national feeling or patriotic zeal, Rajka perceives the war as a platform where her financial transactions are carried out, making increasingly more profit as the war progresses. The woman from Sarajevo, an authentic

master of *ketman* who benefits from the war and without a shred of empathy, is not pained by the brutal and merciless treatment that her people receive.

After spending time in prison, from the moment he is informed that the procedure against him has been suspended, Andrić spends one more week behind bars, afflicted by *the flu and uncertainty, but happy and in a good mood* (78: 83), and he finally leaves the Maribor penitentiary and goes into exile in Travnik and Ovčarevo. *A dignified end to my wanderings and eight months of hard sitting* (78: 87) is what, not without irony, Andrić wrote to Evgenija Gojmerac on 30 March 1915.

Travnik, Ovčarevo, Guča Gora, Zenica

A man, released from prison suddenly and before he is due, after spending considerable time there, always goes through some form of severe crisis. It takes a long period of adjustment for this man to be ready to move around freely again. We can say that there are three phases in this period. Phase one. Wherever he goes and no matter what he does, the man always seems to hear the guards' footsteps and feels the urge to turn around, convinced that he will see them there. Phase two. While walking freely down the streets, the man has the feeling that there is something missing: he can't hear the footsteps and does not have the feeling that, the moment he would turn around he would see an armed guard at his heels. It bothers, disturbs and scares him in a way. And, finally, phase three. He can't hear the footsteps and does not have the feeling that he is being followed, and it does not bother him, because he no longer thinks about guards and the time of imprisonment. It means that he not only survived being in prison, but he got over and recuperated from it as well. This is when an ex-convict can say that he is a free man who moves freely again—these are the words of a man who suffered the horrors of imprisonment and whose burden of being incarcerated is being lifted slowly (8: 286). These are the feelings that Andrić harbours when he leaves Maribor and heads to Bosnia.

On 20 March 1915, Andrić was on his way to Travnik, without the permission to stay longer in Zagreb.¹⁷ Andrić spends several evening hours in the city in which he had *once idled and sinned so much*; he is driven in a carriage down the streets that he feels as friendly, and looks at the windows of city taverns, where, in his youth, he had idled and sinned. Enjoying the first hours of freedom, he sits in a restaurant at

¹⁷ *I am travelling home, and I am not allowed to stay here longer. I have not forgotten about my good friend. I am unwell. I am in a hurry. Be safe and sound, and do not forget your friend –* wrote Andrić to Maja Nižetić from Zagreb, on 20 March, 1915 (78: 117).

the railway station and reads newspapers like *a gentleman who has got his life back* (78:88), and he is so excited that he cannot eat. He spends the next night in Bosanski Brod,¹⁸ and on Monday, on 22 March in the afternoon, after a short stay in Travnik,¹⁹ he arrives in Ovčarevo, where they welcome him as if he was a *prodigal son*. His mother, who works as a hired hand in the priest's household, sees him for the first time after three years. Not knowing what has happened to him or the humiliations he has been through, she sheds the tears of joy: *First she cries, then caresses me, then laughs. Like any mom*—writes her son (78: 87).

In *the quiet corner of the world* where he is sent so as to be controlled more easily, he is weak again: melancholic and nervous fits as well as the advanced lung disease are upon him during these first days, making him feel lonely despite his mother's care. Sent to the periphery, living as *a living illustration of the banal story about the transience of everything earthly* (78: 92), the poet's days are joyless, but he still hopes: *Maybe all will be well, after all* (78: 93). Expecting the arrival of his student's booklet which he forgot when he left Krakow in haste, and which his Polish landlady was supposed to send to him, he dreams about going back to the University of Zagreb (78: 90).²⁰

Despite the stormy past, full of detours and suffering, bitter present and precarious future, there is *still love for this planet* in Andrić's heart (78: 93). He spends time walking with the priest, a Franciscan called Alojzije Perčinlić, visiting nearby monasteries, among which is Guča

¹⁸ *Let me greet you one more time and remind you of a friend, who thinks about you often. I am constantly on the road, I feel as if I was poisoned (...) I am unwell (...)* – Andrić manages to send greetings to Maja Nižetić from Slavonski Brod on 21 March (78: 117).

¹⁹ *Imagine a slave, an ill one, who arrives in Travnik alone, without a penny in his pocket and without knowing anyone in the town where he was born* – remembers Andrić later (232: 137). *I was ill, skin and bone ... My documents said that I was born in Travnik, and prison authorities told me to go there. In vain did I ask them not to send me to Travnik since I had no one to go to, but the order had to be followed. And so I came to Travnik, and I can honestly say, it was my first encounter with my birth town. (...) I went to the police and said: "I will cause no trouble." The policeman I talked to jumped and screamed at my face: "Even if you tried, we wouldn't let you!"* (232: 112)

²⁰ On 29 April 1915, he wrote a resigned letter to Emilija Gojmerac from Ovčarevo: *I don't even go to Travnik anymore, let alone Zagreb. My student's booklet is here, and I look at it in the same manner that young women look at their first autograph book. It was signed by young and old, famous and less famous professors from three different universities, and by looking at it I again go down the winding path of my university days that ended ingloriously in Ovčarevo. This booklet is the only remembrance of a better and kinder world, which had high hopes for me, a free and honourable man. Today, I am nothing but an ill man with no occupation, fortune or freedom, with no one who would or could wish me well. Only a year ago, they wrote about me as an ambitious man with a future (half seriously), and today all my ambitions have come down to one: if I could only study again in Zagreb, even as the lowliest of all students there – and even this cannot be* (78: 92). His student's booklet is kept in the Museum of Ivo Andrić, IA, no. 4.

Gora, reading monastery books, annals and chronicles, going through monastic archives and talking to friars:²¹ that is most probably when the young writer comes to the idea to write about friars one day, these zealous guardians of faith with a developed sense of national affiliation. Their interesting stories about friars' mishaps with both the Turks and the Vatican, ruses that they resorted to during the oppressive times of the Ottoman rule so as to survive, a specific kind of opportunism that they resorted to—all this prepares a fertile soil for the friar saga that Andrić will later write.

Apart from conversing with friars, he also works in the fields, reads the poetry of Kranjčević, Vraz and Slovacki, as well as books in the Polish language sent to him by Evgenija Gojmerac, learns English grammar and writes a little.²²

The emotional and mental material that will later turn into the convincing lyrical prose of *Ex Ponto* continues to mature within him. A poem which arose from the tragic feeling of life without meaning, from the pain of the fall and defeat of a slave whose previous life has been annulled was written by hand in Andrić's "Small Notebook with Colourful Cover" (Mali notes šarenih korica), which he carried around during the entire time of his confinement. The poem was not published during Andrić's life nor was it added to any of his poetry collections until *Collected Works* in 2011.²³

They brought me all bloody and pale
To a small white house at the foot of a hill
one ominous evening. I was brought
Without a sword and a flag, a reflection of defeat.
Premonitions of death, the shame of defeat,
the horror of escape: they all came inside with me.
I had a dream of my mother watching over me and crying

²¹ Friar Ljubo Hrgić remembers that he often met Andrić in the convent in Guča Gora: *I remember him even now: he was quiet and enraptured, like a young mystic. There were people who could speak well among the monastic fathers, vicars, guardians and others; eloquence in friars was always appreciated* (232: 319-320).

²² In June 1915, Andrić writes down a poem in his "Small Notebook with Colourful Cover". The poem was not printed during his life, nor was included in subsequent collections of his poetry: *Take this halo from me / Of heavy gold that burns / The whole life has passed in pain / And loneliness. Evening is approaching / Take this halo from me. // And give me quiet happiness / to be on my way / that leads me home / where there is hope for better days / Oh give me quiet happiness. // Take this halo from me / of terrible gold that burns / I bow my head in pain / – The evening will find me alone in here – / Take this halo from me.* (94, br. 394, on the back of the page no.26). Editors R. Vučković, Ž.Đ. Perišić and B.Đ. Mironja included the poem into the new edition of *The Collected Works of Ivo Andrić* in 2011.

²³ *The Collected Works of Ivo Andrić in 20 Volumes*, Nova knjiga: Podgorica; printed by Makarije: Belgrade 2011.

in rooms filled with peace and darkness.
Long did I lie there all alone. (94, br. 394: 23)

As early as July, he leaves with his mother and friar Alojzije Perčinlić from Ovčarevo to Zenica. On 23 July, he writes a letter to Evgenija Gojmerac that he has been in Zenica for several days now, and that he has been summoned for recruitment on 12 August, after which he is put in the Military Hospital in Zenica due to illness.²⁴ Perhaps this is the first time during the war that fate is kind to him: he is not sent to the front, he does not ruin his health by fighting in the fields and swamps of Galicia. During the period of time of more than a year, he spends time with a group of hospital patients, all young men, with whom, according to the pictures taken at that time, it was not boring at all: he makes friends with Dalmatians Ugo Zovetti,²⁵ Stanko Štambuk and Boško Dujmović, Maja Nižetić's relatives. He plays chess, reads—Heine, among other things,²⁶ drinks wine in the military canteen, poses in front of a camera with his friends on military beds in the dormitory, has a good time listening to the accordion, dances the *kolo*, plays a joke on himself by staging his own deathbed or funeral²⁷ with his friends, and continually writes down the thoughts and feelings that will later be the basis for *Ex Ponto*.²⁸

²⁴ Friar Ljubo Hrgić testifies that they did not allow Andrić to come to Guča Gora from the Zenica hospital, as they did from Ovčara: *I remember sending him food to prison, and I remember those who would take it to him* (232: 320)

²⁵ A postcard sent by Ugo Zovetti to the Hospital of the Sisters of Mercy in Zagreb on January 21, 1918 is kept in Andrić's handwritten legacy. Zovetti sent that postcard to Andrić with greetings from Milan in 1960, wishing to remind him of the days of confinement in Zenica. Here is the text of Andrić's postcard: *My dear friend, I received your card from Zenica long ago, but I waited for your return from leave to reply to you. I am glad you remember me, your card rekindled fond memories of the days that we spent together. – How is life? I work a lot and my health is not too good, but I am fine overall. I will be glad to stay in touch. Please give my best regards to all the people that I know. Tout a vous Ivo Andrić* (94, br. 4764: 3)

²⁶ On page 20, Andrić wrote an original quote by Heine into the "Little Notebook with Colourful Covers": *Aber Der Tod ist nicht poetischer als das Leben* (*But death is not more poetic than life*, translated by Ž.Đ.P. into Serbian), and added: *Zenica, military hospital, 13/8, 17*. The notebook is kept under the number 384 in the personal library of Ivo Andrić at the Archives of the Serbian Academy of Sciences and Arts. Andrić, disagreeing with this attitude of Heine's, quoted him two years later when he spoke about Filipović's *Kosovo Peonies*. On the same page, Andrić also writes a short literary-critical note: *There is an interesting connection between "My Testament" by Slovacki and "Enfant Perdu" by Heine.*

²⁷ His friend from Zagreb Evgenija Gojmerac was actually at her deathbed on 17 September 1915, dying of leukemia at the age of 21. Obviously not being aware of the seriousness of her illness, Andrić writes to her jokingly on 31 July 1915: *Don't let me become sentimental! And you will not be so impolite as to die, will you not? In any case, let me know if you die – you may find it a little difficult, but still, make an effort. Remember me in your will* (78: 96).

²⁸ In February 1916, in one of his notes about Zenica, Andrić writes: *It has been three years since the (first) world war started. A huge camp consisting of grey*

On July 2, 1918, under the strong pressure of the international community, the New Austrian Emperor and Hungarian-Croatian king Charles IV (1916-1918) declares a wide amnesty of political prisoners, and many from the large prisons of the Monarchy—from Maribor, Arad, Graz, Zenica, Terezin, Gospić etc.—are released from serving their sentences. As early as autumn, however, a call for general mobilization arrives, which Andrić manages to avoid again due to poor health. The autumn of 1917 was very cold, and the author writes: *On my birthday it had already snowed in Bosnia. The times were difficult and ugly, the war was coming to an end, and even the biggest fool could tell who was going to lose it* (232: 381). In November 1917, after a short stay in Višegrad, Andrić takes refuge in Vinogradarska Str. in Zagreb, in the Hospital of the Sisters of Mercy along with several of his friends.

This hospital will turn out to be a true refuge for many representatives of the Yugoslav-oriented intelligentsia who, after the ordeals in war prisons and fronts, all came to Zagreb, where they could hide more easily and avoid mobilization. In this hospital refuge, where illnesses were cured, spirits raised, literary ideas turned over in the minds of the intellectuals and the political concept of Europe and the Balkans framed, Ivo Andrić spends two almost uninterrupted years and lives to see his dream of the unity of the South Slavs come true, but also the first signs of the difficulties awaiting him.

Translated from Serbian by
Jovanka Kalaba

wooden barracks, more than six hundred military conscripts of the regiment no. 3 of Bosnia and Herzegovina, incompetent for military service, but detained for the purposes of work. Now they are repairing roads or sowing beetroot in the fields near Zenica. – There is a general shortage of everything in the camp, and the people are starving. It is cold and bleak. – Upon return from work, Dienstpflchtiger Mile Krndija, a weak man shivering from cold, complains to his fellow townsman about the wooden soles of the stout coarse shoes he has got from the army: “Everything else is more or less bearable!” he says, “but these soles that don’t bend, they are killing me! I end up carrying a whole field of soil on them around with me.” A short and lively man, who has somehow managed to keep high spirits and always manages to get some tobacco and alcohol of unknown origin or quality, comforts him: “There, there. Have a glass of this. It makes soles become softer. Why are you looking at me like that? It does, it really does” (16: 522).

MILO LOMPAR

MILOŠ CRNJANSKI AND THE FIRST WORLD WAR¹

As a subject matter, as a motive for debate, as a synthesis of heterogeneous impacts—ranging from political to cultural, and from ideological to art-related ones—war poses a *challenge*: whatever stance one takes on it, whatever rhetorical or artistic stylization one resorts to with regard to it, objections may be raised. The subversive character of war—as an experience or involvement—always seems to be more radical than the subversiveness of involvement: we cannot take *any* attitude toward war, for there is a hardened pre-understanding which excludes some of the possible attitudes. There are some more-than-good reasons for that, but the presence of good reasons does not make hell less of a hell caused by the inherited or projected instrumentalizations in our public awareness. We lack the capability of repeating—in our own experience of things—something of the inherited multiple facets of war-related ideas: assertive when condemning violence, ready to satisfy the expectations encoded in our selves, disinclined to breaches of public instrumentalizations, we are increasingly becoming unable to understand stratified modernist storytelling. Is the postmodern condition *narrower* than the modern one? Is postmodern sensibility disabled by the modern one in a far-reaching manner?

Determined as a momentous event in the Serbian 20th century literature, the First World War divided its experience in a way which seems to evade every doubt. The writers who emerged during the First

¹ The **Matica srpska** was founded on Feb. 16, 1826. The anniversaries are celebrated by solemn sessions of the Assembly of MS; on these occasions, distinguished members deliver orations. This text conveys the oration delivered by Professor Milo Lompar on February 16, 2018. – *Translator's note.*

World War and, particularly, thereafter—are referred to as modernists, for they brought forth the modernist experience as a fresh and contemporary moment in the experience of literature. They can be split into radical/avant-garde and traditional modernists, but they differ considerably from the authors we ordinarily place into the pre-first-world-war period, the writers of Modernism. Naturally enough, there was a transition area between those literary generations: There were writers, and literary forms, which—in the pre-first-world-war time—*heralded* the content-matter which was forthcoming only, just as there were authors and works—subsequent to the First World War—who prolonged some of the formative content-matter of the literature in the preceding period.

It was to a great extent that the experience of the Great War, as the worldwide eventful period from 1914 to 1918 is usually called, determined—in terms of not only subject matters but also of experience and esthetics—the *modern sensibility* of the Serbian literary practice. In that sense, the phenomenon of Miloš Crnjanski² was outstanding. During his long-lasting persistence as a literary artist and writer, he marked the most far-reaching and longest span of modern sensibility in our country—through rambling comprehensiveness and intensity of impacts. The very experience of the First World War was a *deep cut* in people's spirit and emotional state. In the people of our nation who survived it—artistically, politically and socially—it emerged as a radical novelty, since it was gaining cognitive contours in a new country, in an altered world and in an *experiential blend* which was not discernible enough. The experience brought forth great desolation, something like the spirit sinking in some alien areas of experience, and also great despair as a trace of man's immediate witnessing the content of reality: were these feelings conditioned by the historical circumstances or by their spiritual fountainheads? Was this despair *existential*, as a measure of existence, or *historical*, as a touch of reality? Is despair spiritual stance or historical revolt?

The ambiguity of despair was 'imprinted' in the verse by Dušan Vasiljev,³ in his poem "A Man Singing after the War" ("Čovek peva posle rata") which articulates the fundamental attitude of the so-called "postwar generation". The historical reflex of despair implies the experience of a man who was "wading knee-deep blood" and who claims to "have dreams no more", while the spiritual stance—which soars in a kind of

² In a number of (mostly earlier) foreign sources, including some book editions, the name of the author is transcribed as **Milos Tsernianski**. – *Translator's note*.

³ **Dušan Vasiljev** (1900–1924) was an expressionist Serbian poet, novelist and playwright. – *Translator's note*.

sensibility aimed at something that exists *apart from* reality—takes its form within the horizon of a quite quotidian yet strangely inaccessible desire: “I long for some air, some milk and for white morning dew.” What did the war bring along? His experience of *fall* begins to be part of the spans of a *desperate desire*: because it is so simple yet impossible to fulfill, because both milk and morning dew are naturally seeable and at the same time inaccessible, for they have been taken apart through the experience of *fall*—the desire itself is desperate.

Therefore, it proves to be multidirectional: It was that very stance of existential despair, as an upshot of strikingly affective attitude to the war, which made the exposure to war *perspectivized* in the spiritual and literary experience of Miloš Crnjanski. Although his *Vidovdan Poems*⁴ (*Vidovdanske pesme*) are permeated with the echoes of the protest articulated by the postwar generation on the whole, they—verging on the emotion he expressed, most often referred to as anti-war—bring the spiritual experience of revolt. However, the revolt itself was not aimed at war (only) but at the world. On the other hand, this suggests that in Crnjanski’s spiritual experience, and in compliance with the eminently modernist spans of sensibility, a reflex of gnostic sensibility occurs: it is the very revolt which appears to be its sign, the sign which essentially overlays the antiwar stance itself. For, who is the *we* in the line “We are not in pain”? Who is hidden inside the *we*? It is a sign of a kind of separation of the *us* who are *not* in pain from those who *are* in pain. Yet the separation itself looks like a rupture, like separation that marks some pain, detachment from a general condition in which the *we* usually dwells. If the separation actually is a kind of pain, the pain of separation, what is it that keeps *us*—us who are detaching ourselves—in pain amidst the lack of the sense of pain we publicly share? For, “Gračanica is no more / Why the graveyards of Takovo?” Yet if Gračanica is still there, why are we not in pain because it is not here—for us—any more? The lines express the protest and rage of those adorned with the “scornful smile of the slaves”. And they evince a *revolt* which does not want “either victory or glory”, for they merge the tradition of *Vidovdan* and the Kosovo-borne option for the *Vidovdan* ideology which came forth as a result of the postwar world and voiced an experience unacceptable to the radical/avant-garde modernists. For, it was the

⁴ *Vidovdan Poems* is the title of first cycle within Crnjanski’s book of verse *Lyrics of Ithaca* (1919). *Vidovdan* is in the Serbian culture and history much more than a religious holiday (St. Vitus’ Day), for on June 28 a number of fateful events took place, the most outstanding being the Battle of Kosovo (1389) and the Assassination in Sarajevo (1914); it is the latter which underlies the poetic messages of *Vidovdan Poems*. – *Translator’s note*.

Vidovdan ideology which, instrumentalized, overlaid the war experience, transforming it into oblivion—as something that the modernist experience buried deep into itself, internalizing and processing it symbolically, thus unable—even if it had aspired to do so—to suppress it to the world’s oblivion.

Nevertheless, *underneath* this most easily perceptible impact, the lines bring a deep revolt against the world: the pain of detachment from the world results from the recognition that “we no longer believe it”. Which means that what had happened was something that for ever separated us from the belief in trumpets, flowers, honour and happiness, but *inside* it all a more far-reaching detachment was taking place, as something that is source of genuine pain, for it marked an irreparable breakup, for “neither do we respect anything in the world”. The pain of detachment is part of the detachment from the world: the war had heralded this far-reaching detachment. The war had produced an experience which implied that what is painful is something that does not cause pain; moreover, it is painful *because* it does not cause pain. However, there is no transcendence—or God—whereto this pain of the lacking pain could be sent, just as there are none of its surrogates in the world which could make it [the world] intelligible. Correlating with the prevailing developments in the world literature—in Crnjanski’s literary experience—this ontological revolt has merged with the existential experience of the absurd. Is his *Journal on Čarnojević*, multiply provocative, an antiwar novel? Crnjanski himself—in the subsequent controversies he took part in—expressed a certain distance to such a label. Was he honest about that? Or was he just adaptable enough while facing the accusations of getting much too far on the road to self-betrayal? Although there is some pacifistic and defeatist mood in *The Journal on Čarnojević*, Crnjanski’s distancing was justified.

The famed opening of the novel hits the centre of Crnjanski’s artistic sensibility: “Autumn, and life deprived of sense. I spent a night in the prison, with some Gypsies. I was knocking around inns. I would sit by a window, and stare at fog and ruddy, wet, yellow trees. Where was life?” The word *life* has two different meanings: If “life deprived of sense” is what fulfills a man and his world, what is the life invoked through the question “where was life”? There is a life *here*, in the world, one “deprived of sense”, but that is not *all* life: there is a life beyond the world, too. Where? In that way, a dual feeling of life is gradually built within Crnjanski’s war experience: a life deprived of sense as non-authenticity in the world, and a life as an authenticity beyond the world. Which means that the life in the world is *alien*, just as the life beyond the world is

own. That is how the relation between alienness and ownness is established, which situates the story-writing experience of Crnjanski into the area of authenticity. The oscillations between the matters of authenticity fill the germ of Crnjanski's story-writing and poetic experiences.

Within those oscillations whirls his thematization of war. Although *The Journal on Čarnojević* implies war-related content in a representative manner, its beginning does not thematize war: just as the meanings of the world in the novel were to evenly cover both war and non-war matters. Therefore, war does not appear as a peculiarity of the world but as its articulation: the revolt against war turns into a revolt against the world or the position of indifference toward the world. Which means that, in the stage of nascent Modernism, war in Crnjanski's work—and that was the impact of the experience of the First World War—is positioned in multiple directions. In some reflexes of the consciousness manifested by the indifferent and disappointed hero of *The Journal on Čarnojević*, jumpiness and intensity occur: for instance, when he perceives the motions of the men in trench battles, we can make an accurate difference between his stance as the stance of emotionally received absurdity which gets inscribed into the scene depicted, and the existential tension of the fighting men as agonal jumpiness he does not fail to perceive. Those are two perspectives and two kinds of emotion that prove discernible as early as in *The Journal on Čarnojević*.

However, Crnjanski invariably ramified his basic experience of the war. That can be seen in his long poem "Serbia". It is rather characteristic (and has been perceived in related writings) of the titles of Miloš Crnjanski's works that they are discrepant to their subject matter. Thus, the long poem "Stražilovo"⁵ is undersigned "Fiesole, 1921", and the title of *The Journal on Čarnojević* refers to a highly important character, yet one from the background, and not the principal one in the novel. Likewise, "Serbia" bears an enigmatic signature—"At Corfu, 1925", while "Lament for Belgrade" ("Lament nad Beogradom") is marked by the name of an English beach and the year 1956. That means that there is a certain duality in the author's experience: it results from the relation between alienness and ownness which was formed through his experience. The newspaper articles Crnjanski wrote from Corfu in 1925, such as the descriptions of the Serbian military cemetery, provided the experiential, historical and psychological groundworks to his poem "Serbia". However,

⁵ **Stražilovo** is a hill and picnic place near the town of Sremski Karlovci (in the vicinity of Novi Sad), primarily associated with the great poet of Serbian Romanticism Branko Radičević, whose grave lies atop the hill. (Fiesole is a town near Florence, Italy.) – *Translator's note.*

in the poem itself, they somehow disappear. All concreteness, historicalness and realistic quality gets lost inside a metaphysical experience.

For, Miloš Crnjanski introduced a characteristic cosmological-metaphysical experience into the Serbian patriotic poetry. Where Djura Jakšić⁶ spoke of “this rock in the Serbian land”, where Desanka⁷ spoke of “great mystery”, where Oskar Davičo⁸ spoke “about revolt and song among nations”, where Petar Pajić⁹ saw Serbia as “a convict-land”—Miloš Crnjanski set up, in terms of patriotism, a *topos* of cosmological content. This is best articulated through the line “In Serbia I seek the morning star”. The link between the star and Serbia shows in a dual tonality—as the stance of search and the stance of despair, expressed in the verse “I shall die for Serbia, yet we’ve never got together”. The separation between Serbia and the man dying for the country which at Corfu could become an experienced subject matter, for it concerned the Serbian soldiers, appears here within the *topos* of high Modernism as a gnostic *topos*, and in the formation of its content—“the eternal melancholy”, declared by Crnjanski himself to be the constant of his experience; on the other hand, if melancholy is eternal, it has been so since the beginning of time and not since the experience of wartime, and that leaves behind a doubt as to its source.

The motif itself, in a characteristic duality, was to echo in the destiny of Vuk Isaković. For, an extremely complex representation of war was composed in the novel *Migrations*. Disappointed by many a thing life had in store for him, having become heavy like a barrel, difficult both to himself and to others, weary, Vuk Isaković set out with his Slavonian-Danubian Regiment to fight at Strasbourg in the war between the Habsburg emperor and the French king. Telling the story about the fatigue and jadedness that are part of the hero’s ever more futile life, Miloš Crnjanski reverses the perspective: his narration marks one moment in that

⁶ **Đura (Djura) Jakšić** (1832–1878) was a great Serbian poet, dramatist and painter, well-known for his bohemian life and patriotism. The poem “Fatherland” (“Otađbina”) reached great popularity; its opening line reads: “Even this rock in the Serbian land” (“I ovaj kamen zemlje Srbije”). – *Translator’s note*.

⁷ **Desanka Maksimović** (1898–1993) was a poet, fiction-writer, author who wrote much for children, and translator. Also, she became the full member of the Serbian Academy of Sciences and Arts. One of her poems bears the title “Serbia Is a Great Mystery” (“Srbija je velika tajna”). – *Translator’s note*.

⁸ **Oskar Davičo** (1909–1989) was a Yugoslav/Serbian author, journalist and politician. He pursued diverse genres, but his poetry and the novel *Poem (Pesma)* were best known by broad readership. Davičo’s poem “Serbia” (“Srbija”) falls within his greatest literary achievements. – *Translator’s note*.

⁹ **Petar Pajić** (1935–2017) was a neo-symbolist writer, best known as a poet. His poem “Serbia” opens with the lines “I have been to Serbia, Serbia is a convict-land” (“Ja sam bio u Srbiji, Srbija je na robiji”). – *Translator’s note*.

purposeless flow of time, one leap into another dimension of existence, one approach to what is unapproachable, a disturbance in the order of things—through a scene in which Vuk Isaković, gripping his sabre, feels immense vigour filling him and empowering him to stand up and charge ahead, so that it seemed to him he could rise to the stars and over the river. War—as the concreteness of the storm attack—took the hero into the experience of boundary, as has psychologically been signified by Crnjanski. This reveals that in his experience of war the author managed to detect a thing which had been smothered in his earlier works but ramified here in *Migrations*: the way in which—inside a human being—the experience of a boundary links to an experience determined by war. Thus, Vuk Isaković embodies the stratification of an idea about war that occurs in Crnjanski's view.

This did not pass without some changes in the author's overall experience of the world. For, in 1930s, no other Serbian writer, i.e. none of the traditional modernists, showed as much respect for the wartime heroism of Serbia in the First World War as Miloš Crnjanski did. No one else managed to mark—with as much empathy as Crnjanski did—all of the motifs that characterized the huge sacrifice of Serbia in the nascence of Yugoslavia. Owing to different provenances of his efforts and due to the typically negative echo triggered by his words, it was at that time that some doubts and questions arose in him. In a political article, he wrote that the decisive mistake made through the act of unification was disregard for the facts about the side, of the victors or the defeated ones respectively, from which the member peoples entered the new country. The statement seemed to be a self-correction. For, this contour of the experience had been alien to him back in 1918. In the year 1932, however, it became significant and far-reaching.

That reveals that Crnjanski possessed an inner dynamism of his personality, that his personality underwent metamorphoses through the experiences he was exposed to; therefore, even a hazardous and problematic concept such as war could not be presented by him in merely one tonality. Subsequent to the Second World War, when he found himself at the bottom of existence, he maintained both pictures of the war, so in *The Second Book of Migrations (Druga knjiga Seoba)* he gave a description very similar to the feeling of Vuk Isaković when gripping the cold metal handle of his sabre. In an impressive manner, Crnjanski depicted a charge attack of Pavle Isaković as a storm which caused utter astonishment of all, including the Russian general, Kostiurin: the author filled the height of this war scene with a *simultaneous awareness* of the scene being part of the war history. In that way, in an artistically

impressive manner, he created a characteristically ambiguous (tragically-comic, exaltedly-funny) representation of war. That is, he did not abolish the pieces of his war content but perspectivized them. At the moment when he pushes man toward the border area wherein his experience is positioned in a dimension which yields the experience of war, in the novel *With the Hyperboreans* Crnjanski simultaneously depicts this experience within the destiny of a diplomat in Rome awaiting the outbreak of the Second World War: it was there that he emphasized the experience of fear as a characteristic modern experience with regard to the matters of war. *With the Hyperboreans* thematized the hero's existential fear from death and his epoch-related fear which implies war, too.

Yet in *The Hyperboreans*, Miloš Crnjanski quite unexpectedly tackles the experience which takes us back to the First World War.¹⁰ Thus we witness the fact that, fifty years later, that experience was still there in his feelings. On a Sicilian beach, arguing with his wife—for he wanted to leave the beach and visit museums, while she stayed because she wanted to watch the sea as long as possible—the hero of *The Hyperboreans*, somewhat irritated, asked her why she did not want to come along but wanted to stay in that place. She petrifyingly looked at him and asked if he really could not guess why. Only then did he grasp her behaviour and felt ashamed, for, he said, he remembered that her brothers had sunken there after they had crossed the Albanian mountains. Evidently, Crnjanski fostered the memory of this experience of the First World War as one of 1930s, the time of his polemicizing and experiential turning point, translating it into symbols and in a tonality that came with the postmodern story-telling experience with regard to the intertextual relations of *The Hyperboreans*.

Upon the completion of the story about Prince Ryepnin,¹¹ Miloš Crnjanski wrote an additional, last paragraph—an extension of the storytelling after the story itself had come to its end—in order to tell that in the very place of his hero's suicide and sinking in the sea, the light from the lighthouse resembled a star shining to signal this very death. Whose death was it? The image recurs in Crnjanski's prose: it appears as early as in his political article on “the maligned war”. It is the article he closes by saying that the glory of those soldiers who had crossed Albania and those recruits is left behind to shine like a star in the darkness above us. The image also reappears in his evocation of the destiny

¹⁰ The novel *With the Hyperboreans* was published in 1966. – *Translator's note.*

¹¹ Prince Nikolai Ryepnin is the hero of *A Novel about London*. – *Translator's note.*

of King Charles XII of Sweden, above the grave of this renowned military leader. In a somewhat propagandist sense, the star recurs in his reference to the death of King Aleksandar Karadjordjević, assassinated in Marseille. That is, the same motif echoes in various registers.

What is it that the motif ties together? What is it, then, that ties Charles XII, the great Swedish king, to the White Russian officer, Prince Ryepnin? For, the two images are quite similar to each other. In some way, the two men are marked by the same kind of experience. What is it that can put them together? They are tied by the fact that they were both warriors, for they fought in warfare; or, the fact that they were both émigrés, for both men went into exile. But they are decisively—and, in terms of literary art, most suggestively—tied by the experience of defeat. Prince Ryepnin was defeated by the Red Army in the Crimea in 1918, and Charles XII was defeated by the Russian Emperor, Peter the Great, at the famed Battle of Poltava in 1709. Hence, it is not only glory that Crnjanski depicts through the figures of the warriors, but the experience of defeat as well. By its inner ambivalence, the glory of a defeated warrior bears an in-depth concurrence with Crnjanski's "eternal melancholy". Two contrasting experiences create the perspectivism of his feeling. The glory of a defeated warrior is what ensures the multidirectional character of his image. Thus, defeat is not something that abolishes the grandeur of one's endeavour, it sometimes signifies the effort. In his political article about "the maligned war", there is a mention of the same motif, yet a mention of defeat is lacking. For, having served in the period from 1914 and 1918—and that was the intention of this journalistic eulogy—the Serbian soldiers returned as the victors. But there is another political article, one from 1928, wherein Crnjanski sketched the portrait of Milutin Petrović, one of the officers fallen at Mt. Cer;¹² having described the sacrifice and bravery of the defenders, Crnjanski added—with no clear motive, though—a sentence that closed the article: "It cannot be that all these victims fell in vain."

That reveals that in his experience of the First World War Miloš Crnjanski bore some ambivalence in the meaning and a multidirectional content. His experience of, and feelings about, the war—in the full span of their impact—were never of propagandist nature, so neither could they be anti-war ones in terms of propaganda. For, he felt the power of the boundary-experience in the heroes who were most often military

¹² The Battle of Mt. Cer in Serbia was the first Allied victory in the First World War; the numerically inferior Serbian army delivered a major defeat to Austria-Hungary's invading forces. It was waged on August 15-24, 1914 and included the first aerial dogfight in WWI. – *Translator's note.*

figures. Moreover, he felt the importance of the soldiery, and was always sensitive to the issue of the power and purposefulness of the idea of statehood. He *also* felt it by his inner sense of a *prečanin*¹³ who had lived in an alien empire and therefore appreciated having a country of his own people. And he felt it by the power of a metaphysical writer aware of the fact that a man, living on earth, living a “life deprived of sense”, actually desires—and, possibly, succeeds in the aspiration—to live someplace elsewhere. In a manner of a great author, he managed to empathize with various matters of war experience, to radically modernize and perspectivize these—to the extent which makes them a lasting challenge to ideological eligibility and political correctness, as well as a lasting inspiration for the idea of the multifaceted nature of man’s motion.

Translated from Serbian by
Angelina Čanković Popović

¹³ **Prečanin** (fem. *prečanka*) – someone hailing from or living north of the Sava and the Danube, in relation to the people living in Serbia Proper. Term derived from the adverb *preko* (‘across’, ‘on the other side’). – *Translator’s note.*

ALEKSANDAR PETROV

LYRICS OF ITHACA AND THE EUROPEAN
AND SERBIAN POETRY OF
THE FIRST WORLD WAR

Abstract: This paper rests on seven theses. The first three theses point to the tendency of the European poets of the First World War to write poetry that went beyond the national and state interests, in other words that was international in its essence. Some of the distinguished European poets wrote anti-war, anti-imperialist and anti-utopian poetry. Dadaist poets in particular displayed this tendency, as well as those who fought in the war (Apollinaire, Owen, Sassoon, Trakl, Stramm), including the ones who supported the idea of war at the beginning and wrote pro-war poetry only to renounce it later (Rilke). Four theses are dedicated to the Serbian poetry, with an emphasis on the poetry of Crnjanski. Although the Serbian poetry of the First World War was predominantly patriotic, imperial (not imperialist) and utopian, realist and anti-utopian poetry also found its place among the patriotic works of poetry (Vladislav Petković Dis). Crnjanski was a fierce critic of the Serbian patriotic poetry of the imperial and utopian orientation. During the war, Crnjanski wrote anti-war and anti-utopian poetry, as well as love poetry, which, written by an avant-garde poet, did not allow itself to be restricted in any way by state borders or national frontiers.

Keywords: poetry of the First World War; European avant-garde supranational, anti-utopian and anti-imperialist poetry; Dada poets; Serbian imperial and utopian patriotic poetry; Crnjanski as a critic of the Serbian patriotic poetry; poet of the Serbian avant-garde anti-war, anti-utopian and love poetry.

I would like to present my paper “*Lyrics of Ithaca* and the European and Serbian Poetry of the First World War” by elaborating on seven theses.

1. The first thesis points to the tendency of the European poets of the First World War to write poetry that went beyond national and state interests, in other words that it was international in its essence.

This tendency was especially prominent in those poets, and artists in general, who not only condemned the war, but also refused or avoided participating in it. The most obvious example is the literary movement under the name of *Dada*, which was founded in 1916 in Zurich and later spread to New York, Berlin, Hanover, Koln, Barcelona, Paris etc., through the action of independent groups, during and immediately after the war. There were poets and artists of different nationalities, at the beginning mostly Germans (Hugo Ball, Emmy Hennings, George Grosz, Richard Huelsenbeck, Hans Arp, Hans Richter, John Heartfield, Hannah Höch, German Austrian Raoul Hausmann), then Romanians (Tristan Tzara, Marcel Janco), later the French, Americans, the Spanish, Russians, and the often omitted—Serbs. After founding the magazine *Dada*, the Zurich Dadaists strove to connect with the associates of the *Der Sturm* magazine in Berlin, Apollinaire in France and Marinetti and the futurists in Italy, however the contact with the Italians was broken off due to their strong nationalism.

The Dadaists, as it is known, were a group gathered around the ideal of the independent spirit, outside and beyond nationalism and war. They denied the civilization that brought about a world war and, consequently, the art of that civilization. In America, the anti-artistic character of the Dada movement is more emphasized than the anti-war one, which is understandable given that America did not go to war until 1917. Later on, the Zurich group, at the head of which Tristan Tzara was appointed after Ball had returned to Berlin, took a critically more aggressive stand towards the dominant art, partially under Picabia's influence, when he joined them after returning from New York. It was precisely he who, along with Duchamp, was the most prominent fighter against the existing artistic establishment. Unlike in New York, political activism and the related internationalism were very pronounced in Berlin towards the end of war and after the defeat of Germany. The extent to which political engagement was important to them is also shown in the fact that Huelsenbeck denied admission to the Berlin Dada group to Kurt Schwitters, the author of the famous poem "An Anna Blume", while at the same time, along with the like-minded artists, he tried to establish a cooperation with the Russian leftwing avant-garde artists (Tatlin and the El Lissitzky international constructivists group), which happened in the years after the war.

2. The second thesis affirms the first, drawing on the example of the poetry of the poets who, unlike the Dada poets, participated in the war. Apart from being international, the poetry of the renowned European poets was anti-imperialist and anti-utopian as well.

Although certain European poets volunteered in the army, the most significant of them placed universal values above the national ones in their poetry, regardless of the uniform they wore and the flags under which they fought and died. Allow me to point to the poetry of the prominent poets who never lived to see the end of the war: the French poet Guillaume Apollinaire, the English Wilfred Owen, the Austrian George Trakl and the German August Stramm, but also the English poet Siegfried Sassoon, who lived and created for almost a half of century after the war was over.

Apollinaire also volunteered, spending almost the entire first year of the war not as a French, but as a Russian citizen. *Calligrammes: Poems of Peace and War* were written between 1913 and 1916. Apollinaire wrote the last poem in that book after having been severely wounded to the head. *Calligrammes* were published shortly after the poet died, in 1918. When a new edition of *Calligrammes* appeared in the English language in 2005, the English critic and poet Stephen Romer wrote an exceptional book review:

Astonishingly, Guillaume Apollinaire is the sole French poet of the First World War still widely read or seriously rated. Yet more astonishingly, none of the tragic events of the war itself actually seems to resonate in his work. There is no outrage, say, at the *fusillés pour l'exemple* or pity for the victims of gas. Instead, he gurgles at the beauty of the Very lights, the shells explode like fireworks at a private party, the flares are pink, evoking his mistress's nipples, the shape of the shells her breasts, the haunches of his artillery horse her hips. Coming from the austerities of Owen or Sassoon, with their realism and psychological insight, and the moral intensity of their protest, you wonder quite what irresponsible hallucination you have fallen into. (Romer 2005:11)

Apollinaire, in that sense, offers an aestheticized image of war, striving to achieve a radically new expression, which makes the author of *Calligrammes* the forefather of Dada and surrealist poetry, as well as concrete, visual and audio poetry. This is why Romer sees *Calligrammes* as a different kind of modernism from that of the English poets of the First World War.

Whereas Apollinaire pointed out in his last poem "La jolie rousse" that there are so many things that he did not dare say and that he was

not allowed to say, calling on the ones he addresses to laugh at him and pity him, the already mentioned English poets Wilfred Owen and Siegfried Sassoon went as far as being openly critical. I will mention here that, in his poem “Dulce et decorum est”, Wilfred Owen, along with a realistic description of war horrors, decided to write that “Dulce et decorum est / Pro patria mori” is a great lie. Siegfried Sassoon in his poem “Glory of Women” depicted the love for soldiers of his fellow countrywomen, when, as heroes, they are on leave, or when they lie in hospitals wounded, or with shells falling behind their backs, and he, not without irony, added: “You can’t believe that British troops “retire” / When hell’s last horror breaks them, and they run / Trampling the terrible corpses—blind with blood.”

Apart from the ironic, these lines have an anti-utopian character, stressing the naivety of the belief that the English army is invincible. Its soldiers also “retire”, trampling over corpses and leaving them behind. At the end of the sonnet, however, we also read the lines dedicated to the greatness of German women, at that point the women of their war enemies, which is a ringing affirmation of the thesis that the compassion exhibited in the poetry of the prominent European poets of the time overstepped the boundaries of the national: “O German mother dreaming by the fire, / While you are knitting socks to send your son / His face is trodden deeper in the mud.”

When we read some of the most famous poems by George Trakl or August Stramm, we may wonder if they were written by English or German soldiers. This was often a dilemma when reading some of the poems by Owen or Sassoon. Some of the poems of the mentioned English and German poets show even stylistic similarities, with the short and impressive descriptions of the war times. Such is, for example, Trakl’s description of the landscape at the site of the battle of Grodek (“Grodek”), which could have been authored by a poet of any of the warring sides, German or Russian, under the condition that the poem had been written by a poet as great as George Trakl.

At evening the autumnal forests resound
With deadly weapons, the golden plains
And blue lakes, above them the sun
Rolls more darkly by; night enfolds
The dying warriors, the wild lament
Of their broken mouths.
But in the grassy vale the spilled blood,
Red clouds in which an angry god lives,
Gathers softly, lunar coldness;
All roads lead to black decay.
Beneath the golden boughs of night and stars

The sister's shadow reels through the silent grove
To greet the ghosts of heroes, their bleeding heads;
And the dark flutes of autumn sound softly in the reeds.
O prouder sorrow! you brazen altars
Today an immense anguish feeds the mind's hot flame,
The unborn descendants.¹⁴

Although the poem opens up a possibility for different, even contradictory interpretations, it certainly does not offer reasons for justifying war aims of any nation. On the contrary, it calls into question the utopian belief that grandchildren will admire the heroic deeds of their grandparents.

3. The third and the shortest thesis is in line with the previous two, arguing that the prominent European poets abandoned the war rhetoric and celebration of war victories, even those whose poetry, at the beginning of the war, upheld the convictions of their nation's leaders that they were fighting for a good cause, and that their fight would end in victory. Rainer Maria Rilke, just to name one, renounced his earlier patriotic poetry and wrote *Duino Elegies* during the war. Mayakovsky went from writing about Russian war triumphs on the battlefields and in the cities of the adversaries' countries to writing poems about the victims of war whose death could not be justified by any, especially utopian national and state aims, and very soon he became a poet of the proletarian revolution, class, and therefore international in its character.

4. The fourth thesis. The course that the Serbian poetry of the First World War took was essentially patriotic, imperial (not imperialist) and utopian, although patriotic poetry encompassed the poems that fell within the realism and anti-utopian genre as well.

Among the European countries that undoubtedly played a major role in the First World War, only Serbia was not an empire, unlike Austria-Hungary, Germany Russia, France and England. And yet, only in Serbian poetry did the patriotic poetry, written by the first-class poets, have an almost canonical status, marked by the imperial concept and utopian genre (see Petrov 1997, 161-174).

Among the poets of the two forms of patriotic poetry, we should first mention Veljko Petrović, whose work, according to Skerlić, brought a revival of this kind of poetic expression. One form is a critical take on the notion of motherland and the false representations of it, e.g. "Vojvodino stara, zar ti nemaš stida?" ("Old Vojvodina, aren't you ashamed

¹⁴ Translation by Margitt Lehbort, Anvil Press Poetry Ltd.

of yourself?”¹⁵) The other one, however, extols the medieval Serbian empire by comparing it to the Byzantine Empire; perceived through that lens, the dome of Hagia Sophia “glistens like a breast, naked and gorgeous” before the eyes of the emperor Dušan the Mighty. The imperial quality of the poem “Emperor Dušan’s Note”, although seen from a perspective of a socially risen *sebar* in the future, is precisely what makes it akin to the “imperial” poetry of the Serbian poets of the First World War.

Rakić’s “Kosovo Cycle” contains the realist descriptions of battlefields (“rain falling on an immense heap of wounded men”), together with an imperial image of a state defeated in the battle of Kosovo: “shaken empire” with *mighty soldiers in full armour*, “faultless and dauntless”. “The shadow of the mighty emperor”, and an impressive image of a “fallen empire” can be found in Sima Pandurović’s poetry, written on the eve of the First World War. “And after a bloody battle has been fought / Worms fight over the corpses / On the barren ground, where armies passed / Abandoned villages consumed in a flame” (“On the Battlefield of Kumanovo”).

It was the empire that Vladislav Petković Dis wished to see in the horizon of the future (“We await for the emperor”), while to Milutin Bojić, while on Corfu, it appeared on the sea waves (“Ode to a Blue Sea Tomb”). Bojić’s heroic, but after the defeat barely alive Serbia buries its dead as if it were the Byzantine Empire: the dead are being officiated “a requiem ... one that heavens have yet to see” and with galleys—“imperial” ones, of course. Dučić’s sonnets are also imperial (“Imperial Sonnets”), his extraordinary poem “Ave Serbia” too, as well as Šantić’s poems “A Morning in Kosovo”, “Our Apostle”, “The Winner” (“Jutro na Kosovu”, “Naš apostol”, “Pobednik”), and Dragoljub Filipović’s “Kosovo Peonies” (“Kosovski božuri”), and a number of poems written by other, less prominent poets.

Alongside the ceremonious poems of the imperial, Byzantine type, Bojić wrote poems about the tragic fate of the Serbian people, such as the pre-war poem “The Country of Storm” (“Zemlja oluje”) or the war poem “No Exclamation” (“Bez uzvika”). Realist and anti-utopian poems were authored by Dis, the poet whose resting place is in the “blue graveyard”, and were written after the “imperial” ones that I already qualified as “unrivalled within the frame of the patriotic poetry” in my book about Crnjanski published in 1971 (“After Albania”, “Among My Own People”, “Unfinished poems”: “Posle Albanije”, “Među svojim”, “Nedovršene pesme”). Dis’s poems provided Serbian poetry with a pronounced anti-utopian and outcast perspective: “And now the worst thing is / That I have no power. / I am so small that I am afraid: / I live

¹⁵ Serbian poetry excerpts are translated by the translator of the essay, unless it is noted otherwise.

as if buried, in a dark night / Ah, those powerful men of this century,
/ I have no way to go, I am dying without a cure” (“Što je najcrnje za ovaj
mah, / To je što nemam nimalo moći. / Tol’ko sam mali da me je strah:
/ Živim sahranjen kao u noći. / Ah, ti moćni ljudi ovoga veka, / Više
nemam kuda, umirem bez leka.”).

5. The fifth thesis concerns, finally, Crnjanski. Crnjanski was a fierce critic of the Serbian patriotic poetry of the imperial and utopian orientation (Petrov 1997, 129-161). His attitude to it is contained in the lines: “No, it is over. / In Ithaca, entirely different strings / will be played / By me, or someone else / It is no matter” (“Ne, tom je kraj. / Na Itaki će da se udari / u sasvim druge žice. / Svejedno da li ja / Ili ko drugi”, “Epilog”, all the citations of Crnjanski’s poems are taken from: Crnjanski 1993). Certain poems in his early *Lyrics of Ithaca* (1919) and his early literary criticism (of Andrić’s *Ex Ponto* and Ćurčić’s *Mozaic*) are the manifests of a new avant-garde poetry, close to the European international and anti-utopian poetry of the First World War. Crnjanski’s critical views of the culture and civilization, the result of which was the until then the unthinkable tragedy of the First World War, were similar to those of the Zurich Dada group. Crnjanski wrote: “We have nothing. Neither God, nor a lord. / Our God is blood.” („Nemamo ničeg. Ni Boga ni gospodara. / Naš Bog je krv”, the poem „Himna”). However Crnjanski was not a militarist, like Italian futurists, nor a nihilist like Dadaists, but a poet with a positive program: “either life brings us something new, and our soul is uplifted, / to the heavens, high and abounding in stars, or we, and the poems, and Ithaca, and all should go to hell” („ili nam život nešto novo nosi, a duša nam znači jedan stepen više, / nebu, što visoko, zvezdano, miriše, ili nek i nas, i pesme, i Itaku, i sve, / đavo nosi”, the poem „Prolog”).

6. The sixth thesis. Although he fought on the side of Austria-Hungary, Crnjanski wrote anti-war poems, and his Ithaca was not the Austro-Hungarian Empire but Serbia. Serbia as the small island of Ithaca and not the medieval empire nor the utopian Kosovo of the Serbian poetry of the time (see Petrov, 1997). Crnjanski juxtaposed his anti-utopian Ithaca and the avant-garde poetry of Ithaca with the utopian Kosovo of the Serbian poetry of the First World War. However, his Ithaca also has a St. Vitus’s Temple: “Stop hailing Balša, Dušan the Mighty. / The nobility, the dukes, the despots, brought nothing but shame. / Hail the ones with haiduk blood in their veins. / And erect a St. Vitus’s temple to honor a murderer!” („O Balši, i Dušanu Silnom, da umukne krik. / Vlastela, vojvode, despoti, behu sram. / Hajdučkoj krvi nek se ori cik. / Ubici dište Vidovdanski hram!”), the poem „Spomenik Principu”).

It sounds quite anti-utopian and polemical: not to the hero Princip, but to a murderer. The word “murderer” is written intentionally by a poet

who refuses to write what he deems utopian poetry of “victory and heroism”.

7. The last—seventh thesis. During the First World War, poets also wrote love poetry. Dučić’s love poetry, iconographic and bright, as well as Dis’s and Pandurović’s baudelairean poetry of the “dead beloved” are juxtaposed with Crnjanski’s ethereal vision: “You, the never forgotten one / that I came across on the homeland soil, out of nowhere, / remain as nothing more than a shadow, a shadow” („Ti nezaboravljena moja / na rodnom polju iznenadna ženka, / ostaj mi senka, senka”, the poem „Srp na nebu”). The “elegant” soul of his poetic predecessors is juxtaposed with Crnjanski’s soul of “a drunk peasant / a drunk jolly fellow, / in the homeland”, who embraces his “wife while she is asleep, / roughly, as if he were caressing a cow’s corpulent back” („pijanog seljaka, / pijanog veseljaka, / u zavičaju”, „ženu što spava, / tvrdo, ko pleća gojnih krava”, the poem „Moja pesma”).

Beside the patriotic, almost patriotic-erotic poems, there is Crnjanski who wrote the poem “Mizera”. This extraordinary love poem sheds light on Crnjanski as an international and a revolutionary poet: “Do you remember, the night birds, / and the thieves, and the whores, we thought them innocent. // We were ashamed of the houses in bloom, / we swore to remain miserable, / at least you and me” („Sećaš li se, noćne su nam tice, / i lopovi i bludnice, bili nevini. // Stid nas beše domova cvetnih, / zarekli smo se ostat nesretni / bar ja i ti”). The ending is anti-utopian in relation to the following vision of utopia: “Perhaps you are now laughing somewhere, / rich and careless” („Da nisi sad negde nasmejana, / bogata i rasejana, / gde smeh vri?”), however pleading to preserve the utopian vision after all: “Oh don’t be warm and buoyant ... Oh love nothing / neither books nor the theatre, / like the educated. / When in a good company, / do you ever take them by surprise and say / whose side you are on” („O nemoj da si topla, cvetna” ... („O ne voli, ne voli ništa, / ni knjige, ni pozorišta, / ko učeni. / Kažeš li nekad, iznenada / u dobrom društvu još i sada, / na čijoj strani si”, the poem „Mizera”). “Mizera” was written in Vienna: “In the revolution. 1918. For the studentess, Ida Lotringer.” Neither state borders nor national frontiers can prevent the avant-garde poet from loving.

This poem is a proof that Crnjanski was a great European poet, one of the greatest who wrote poetry during the First World War and in the first year after the war was over.

Translated from Serbian by
Jovanka Kalaba

ALA TATARENKO

THE RETURN OF A WARRIOR AND A LOVER
(notes of the Ukrainian translator on
the *Diary about Čarnojević*)

A new (better?) century has come, and Čarnojević has returned to Galicia. In 2015 in Lviv, published by IK *Pyramid*, a Ukrainian translation of the first novel by Miloš Crnjanski appeared. That was also the first special edition of this writer's work in the Ukrainian and the first translation of the *Diary about Čarnojević* into an East Slavic language.¹ Literature has traced the return of a tired warrior home several times, but Čarnojević, independent as well as his writer, returned to the battlefield. Twice in the novel he experienced the return to his homeland, and it was never happy: he lost his mother, and did not return to his wife. And what would it be to come again where he met Lusja, where the stars used to fall in front of him and the Polish girl? Who knows. He returned to the ruddy forests in his painful dreams about the war, and now he returned to Galicia to say (this time in Ukrainian): *I want to tell you stories*.

Strange, but amazing at the same time: the usual modest print-run² was sold out unusually fast, without any advertising or any texts published by a literary critic. When the young and popular Ukrainian writer (and translator) Andriy Ljubka put the cover of the *Diary* on FB and asked his "followers" if they read this great book, it turned out that among the literary gourmets there were more of those who admitted that they did. It seems to me that I can presume why none of them have published a review. The novel by Crnjanski is a book that not only keeps

¹ Although this work has been mentioned in the works of Soviet Slavs since the 80s of the twentieth century, *The Diary* has not been translated into Russian so far.

² 500 copies as a "measure" for the translated book that by chance is not the current world hit or the manual for winning career tops.

its own secrets, but rather takes the readers to the sin of thinking about their own depths, becomes an intimate diary of its readers, their interlocutor. “*Thou art hearing*”.

At one of the few promotions (all held in Lviv), a fellow historian approached the translator of the *Diary* and, next to the flowers he brought, made a confession: “This book has changed my life”. It turned out that in the novel of Crnjanski our young contemporary found answers to the questions that did not give him peace. *So, like in a dream*. I did not dare to ask what kind of questions they were. The *Diary* is a very intimate thing, as well as the reading of the *Diary about Čarnojević*.

The hero of the *Diary about Čarnojević* was somehow immediately “recognized” in Galicia: the graphic editor of the edition, Andri Kis, put an old photo from his grandmother’s house on the cover of the book. An unknown young soldier, whose face is covered with a white shroud, jumps to meet his fate. Above him, we can see the images of the History initiator, while his face can only be imagined, as well as his name. Is this not the most faithful portrait of the hero whose name in the novel remains a secret? That Čarnojević, that Rajić, that Odysseus whose answer to the question of the Cyclops history would be: “I am Nobody” ... A reader who got accustomed to the novel will see his own face in that picture—vaguely, as the face of Čarnojević in the window glass, but painfully recognizable.

Destiny wanted the Ukrainian translation of the *Diary about Čarnojević* to appear during the war in the East of Ukraine and acquire an actuality that could not even be anticipated. “These kinds of books about the war are, perhaps, the best. The best I’ve read over a long time,” was recorded in the notes on the site *Goodreads* by one of the Ukrainian readers.³ The editor of the edition “Private Collection” in which this book was issued, the Ukrainian writer Vasil Gabor recognized in the *Diary* a work that can help in the search for the ways of returning from the war into a peaceful life. And that this is one of the worst problems of soldiers, the author of *Lyrics of Ithaca* knew very well. The hero of the novel returned from the war, but the war went on in his dreams, it smoldered deep within him. Deprived of chronology and a clear portrayal of a lyrical hero, his diary, a diary of premonition and irony, becomes a possible diary of our contemporary. The lyrical narrator of Crnjanski’s novel does not give advice, does not boast with experience, just smiles, bitterly. And offers a conversation: *I want to tell you stories*.

What the Ukrainian reader will hear depends on his literary blood type, on his reading genes. The narrator of the *Diary* is not just a soldier, but a man who lives (in) the books. Ukrainian literary historians men-

³ The Galician city, which was called Lemberg at the time of writing the *Diary*. Lucia Rajces, the beauty that Crnjanski mentioned in the *Comments*, was from that city.

tion the work of Crnjanski “in pair” with the novel of the Ukrainian writer Osip Turjanski *Out of the Border of Pain*, which also talks about the First World War. One of the most striking heroes of this novel is a Serb. The Ukrainian literature theoreticians, writing about the lost generation, along with the novels of Richard Aldington, Eric Maria Remarque, Ernest Hemingway, now mention the *Diary about Čarnojević*.⁴ The impression is that the book of Crnjanski has long been present in the Ukrainian cultural space—in the literary shadow, sub-consciousness, remembering other books.

However, the Ukrainian Slavists began to deal with the *Diary* about thirty years ago. The future translator of the *Dairy about Čarnojević* mentions it in her doctorate (her dissertation “Miloš Crnjanski and his novel *Migrations* (problems and the poetics)”, defended in 1989, was the first monograph on the author of the *Diary*, written in the Soviet Union), and in 1994 Olena Dzjuba Pogrebnyak defended her doctoral dissertation “The Novels of Miloš Crnjanski (problematics and poetics)”. Both literature historians continue to deal with the work of Miloš Crnjanski even now. Olena Dzjuba dedicated a series of articles to him, as well as a notable place in the monograph *The First World War in the Literature of South Slavs*.⁵

Another mentioned Slavist returns to this book as a pattern that has presented literature a whole series of great works, comparing it with Kiš’s *Mansard*, drawing the line of Crnjanski, next to Andrić’s line, in the Serbian literature of the twentieth and the twenty-first century, dealing with the successors of the lyrical novel of Crnjanski during the period of postmodernism.⁶ So it happened that in Ukrainian Slavistics, in the papers written in the Ukrainian language, the *Diary* has been studied for years in synchrony and diachrony. Of course, we cannot speak of the influence of Slavic works onto broad reading circles, even if we add to the publications in scientific journals the electronic ones (for example, on the site “Rastko – the library of Serbian culture”).⁷ The *Diary* itself had to conquer readers’ hearts which it apparently did. So it reached out to non-literary sites where the recommendation could be found: “I recommend! Crnjanski the *Diary about Čarnojević*”.⁸

⁴ <http://litmisto.org.ua/?p=16478>

⁵ Дзюба-Погребняк О. Перша світова війна в літературах південних слов'ян / Олена Дзюба-Погребняк. – К.: Дух і Літера, 2014. – 496 с.

⁶ For ex. Татаренко А. Тема батьків і дітей та її поетикальні проєкції в сербській, хорватській, боснійській літературі кін. XX – поч. XXI ст. // Пост-колоніалізм. Генерації. Культура. – Київ: Лаурус, 2015. – С. 230-242. I refer here only to examples of the works of Ukrainian Serbists in Ukrainian, without quoting texts about the Diary published by these authors in Serbian.

⁷ www.ratsko.org.rs See: Library „Rastko Kijev- Lavov”

⁸ <https://ask.fm/id20266983/answers/127218018462>

Before the novel of Crnjanski appeared in the edition of the *Pyramid*, its fragment was published in 2004 in the electronic magazine “The Train 76” (“Potyah 76”). Right from this translation the author of this text begins to return to the work of Crnjanski, and above all—to the *Diary about Čarnojević*. At the beginning of this road, there is a word “blandly” which I was not able to translate, although I knew the meaning of it. And as one day a storm made the translator to stay at home, she focused on seeking the answers to the question why the hero felt blandly when the officers were paying court to the unknown woman. A possible answer (about the secret love nature of this feeling) she found in the *Comments*, and next to it, some new questions. Seeking the answers, provoked by nothing (except the riddle of the novel itself!), I read the *Diary* then more than twenty times, in all possible editions and editorials. Enchanted by the book, I read it again and again, and after a month of frenzied reading, my first text was written out of pure unrest. I did not write it either for the conference or for the journal, I wrote it for myself, as a diary is written. It was a diary of the search for the hero of the *Diary about Čarnojević*,⁹ who became for me much more than a literary figure. Without this novel by Miloš Crnjanski I would not be what I am. As my fellow historian said, this novel changed my life.

Who knows how many lives the *Diary about Čarnojević* has changed. How many warriors have recognized his painful dreams, how many lovers have recognized themselves in his constant vacillating between “I love” and “I do not love”. We do not know the name of Čarnojević’s birthplace; he does not mention it in the records. We only know that he is from Banat, from the area where there is allegedly no *Weltschmerz*. He enjoyed in Vienna, where he met his *Sumatraist*, he got lost and fell in love in Primorje, walked through the town-tomb of his grandfathers, watched the icy Alps, while the most space in his records was devoted to his homeland and Galicia. It was devoted to Krakow, where love has found him, and to ruddy, golden Galician forests. Here and there the names of the towns in Galicia emerge from the text, the names of the places where bloody battles took place. In Crnjanski’s novel, well-known Ukrainian toponyms sound like words from a poem. That lyrical novel turns into golden words everything it touches, even Galician mud. It is a diary of memory and dreams, war and love, whose writer presents himself as a *soldier* who writes his memories *proudly, as Kazanova*.

⁹ Tatarenko A. Tri zumbula u prozoru: u potrazi za junakom *Dnevnika o Čarnojeviću*// Polja – Novi Sad, 2004. – Br. 428. – S.112–123.

A century has passed, and Čarnojević returned to Galicia. However, it was not the return of a soldier to the battlefield. It was, I believe, the discreet return of a lover to the spaces of happiness.

Translated from Serbian by
Ljubica Jankov

SAŠA RADOJČIĆ

THE SACRED AND THE MISUNDERSTANDING WITH THE WORLD

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The attitude of a modern artist to the domain of the sacred is more complex than it was in antiquity or in the Middle Ages. This is because of the autonomy which aesthetic values have gained in modern times. When placed in a temple, the marble or bronze statue of a Greek or Roman deity performed its cult function and was also beautiful; the liturgical role of a choral composition was more important than the purely musical effects it achieved. The fact that pre-modern art served the sacred and was subordinate to it does not of course exclude the possibility that individual artworks created in antiquity or the Middle Ages can possess traits that hardly correspond to the usual or prescribed ideas of the sacred, but the modern artist's relationship to the sacred is no longer self-explanatory, and it contains a principled contradiction, inconsistency, and disturbing awareness of the discrepancy. The forms of this discrepancy can be expressed in a variety of ways, from mild deviations from the canons to the radical rejection of the sacred in favour of the worldly. A special case is the polemic with the sacred, in which the sacred is simultaneously recognized and disputed, seen as indispensable and exposed to suspicion. The possibility and the meaning of such a polemic between the artistic and the sacred is one of the central motives of Dragan Stojanović's book *Energy of the Sacred in Art*.

This book, together with an introduction to outline some of the basic questions, comprises six essays written in the period 2005 to 2010. The

introduction illustrates the various aspects of the modern artist's relationship with the sacred through the example of Matisse's work on the painting of the chapel in Vence and the circumstances surrounding that project. What connects these essays is not the systematic unity of the book, which the author did not aspire to in the first place, but the affinity of the basic questions they try to answer, the affinity of some of the answers (especially those concerning the understanding of the Virgin), as well as the affinity of the interpretative processes by which the questions are answered. If we wish to sort these texts in some way, we could do so in at least three acceptable ways, following their order in the book. First of all, we could divide them according to whether they deal with Serbian or German themes (the essays on Kostić's poem "Santa Maria della Salute", Lalić's "Canons" and Zlata Kocić's "Lazar's ladder" would tentatively fall into the first group, while the second would contain the essays on the understanding of the Virgin in Goethe's *Faust*, flowers in bloom in the poetry of Gottfried Ben and Nolde's triptych *Maria Aegyptiaca*). The second way, less symmetrical, would be to observe the final essay on painting as an addition to the texts dealing with the interpretation of poetry. And the third, to emphasize the thematic affinity of the three essays that place the poetic understanding of Virgin Mary at the centre of attention. Of course, it is possible to read Stojanović's book—perhaps it is the best way to read it—as a collection of essays interlinked by the common features of the interpretative procedure on the "inside", characterized by a double reflection: the primary reflection, directed to the "object", is a work of art touching on the sacred, while the secondary reflection is directed to the one's own interpretation of the object. Stojanović's essays are hermeneutical in a double sense. On the one hand, they demonstrate high hermeneutical skills in the dialogue with the works of art, while on the other they discuss the possibilities, boundaries and status of these skills.

Thus, for example, the essay "Between Astral and Sacred", dedicated to the swan poem of Laza Kostić, begins with a question about the hermeneutical process ("should we understand the poem and explain it by means of something that is, in all its qualities, exterior to it?") and develops on the trail of that question. The essay about the understanding of the Virgin in Goethe's *Faust* contains long passages of discussion and confrontation previous interpretations. It is similar to other texts in the book. It would not be too hard to say that Dragan Stojanović's essays are to a great extent essays about interpretation itself. Not exclusively, and not even predominantly, but undoubtedly not negligibly. It is easy to imagine the reader who will pay the greatest attention to these "methodological" passages, just as one can imagine the reader who will primarily be interested in the interpretation of the theological teachings

on particular topics raised in the essays. Stojanović's texts are multi-layered, thorough, concentrated as much on the basic problem as on the detail, and decisive in their estimations.

Today, when for various reasons, (from social pressure for more publications to the fragmentation of thought and speech caused by contemporary media and technology) it appears as if focused interpretation conscious of theory is slowly dying out, an approach such as Stojanović's here, is the very pinnacle of what the hermeneutic consciousness can achieve.

It should likewise be noted that his essays, although "secondary" to artistic texts (and paintings), also have the independent aesthetic values of a good essayist's style. In this review, we will take a look at both the aspect of "subject" and of "methodology" of *The Energy of the Sacred in Art*, keeping in mind constantly, as a corrective, that the sacred and narratives that tackle the sacred do not speak in the same way to those who participate in a religious intercourse and to those who do not participate in it. The interpretation should be understood by both.

There are, even in modern times, works that, although not part of sacred art, cannot be adequately understood unless we take into account their relationship with the world. Such is the poem "Santa Maria della Salute" by Laza Kostić, for whose meaning an understanding of the Mother of God is essential. But why does the Mother of God appear at all, as the central question of Stojanović's experiment, why does it appear "in the poem about the excess of desire and unfulfilled love"? The answer to this question is the key to understanding the whole poem. In order to arrive at this answer, the interpreter applies a variety of interpretative procedures, tries to establish intertextual ties with earlier poems by Kostić, goes into the finest details of verses, poetry images, and expressions in them, draws comparative parallels (with Goethe's *Faust*), has a dialogue with previous interpreters, gets into the theological issues in the narrower sense of the word, resolves vague areas by relying on the logic of the interpretation itself...

For example, in interpreting the verses "Tako mi do nje prostire pute / Santa Maria della Salute" (strophe eleven), Stojanović insists that here and in the whole poem, Santa Maria (1) appears in the vocative and not in the nominative case, (2) that it is a matter of addressing the Mother of God, that (3) other meaningful connections established in the poem point in favour of this argument, as well as on (4) punctuation details such as the existence of commas. It would be unusual if the Virgin appeared in nominative, as the one who makes the path "paved and pressed". Of the four arguments used here, two are strictly immanentist (consistency in the naming of the Virgin in the refrains and, accordingly, the choice of cases in the poem), one is predominantly

focused on maintaining the coherence of the meaning established by the interpretation, while the latter favours the author's interpretation, taking Kostić's choice of putting a comma between verses as a guideline for understanding the poem.

In several places in the essays collected in *The Energy of the Sacred in Art*, Stojanović points out that the interpretation must address the text itself and conclusions must be reached from the text itself, regardless of any particular knowledge (theological, or knowledge of the details of Kostić's private life). In connection with the question of whether knowledge about theological issues concerning the being of the Virgin is necessary he explains: "For the understanding of Kostić's poem, there is no great theological thesis in the problems that were ... communicated ... about the Mother of God ... It is far more important to have a general idea of what kind of being Mary is ..."—and every reader of Kostić's poem approaches her with this general idea. This idea may include the attitude of the religious "correctness" of the poem and the poet; this attitude can motivate the interpreter to see what is wrong with the poem, if there is a failure or a violation.

A whole passage of Stojanović's essay is devoted to the consideration of ways in which some of the earlier interpreters felt, in that sense, Kostić's "mistake": from the image of a "burning thing", which Isidora Sekulić sees in the poem, alluding most likely to the strophe that begins with the verse "we hold one another as man and wife", through the discomfort of Mladen Leskovac which was caused by the encounter of the sacral and erotic at the same place, Miodrag Pavlović's reprimand to Kostić because of the "idolatrous" finale of the poem, Stanislav Vinaver's objection to "straying into the Platonic cult". Now, even though the marking of the "error" depends on the interpretation and its assumptions, there is probably something quite open and disputable in the text itself, given that many of its interpreters, prominent ones too, had something to say about it. An additional problem arises when an open segment of the text is covered by figures of style, and is insufficiently clear to interpret ("burning thing").

Dragan Stojanović's interpretation relies on what is in the poem and not on the normative assumptions about what the poem should or should not contain, and he reads it verse by verse. He does not expect from a poet to be consistent in the way that a theologian or a philosopher must. Poetry does not have to respect rational argumentation; it may be, at least partially, irrational. But maybe a careful reading will show that the poet is not as inconsistent as he may seem at first sight? Perhaps it will be shown that places where some interpreters see "mistakes" are, in fact, in line with the basic definition of the Virgin, which can be deduced based on the text of the poem itself? Such a definition

would allow the images of a desired but never fulfilled earthly love to justify the ecstatic finale in which love, realized in the domain of the other-worldly, changes and improves the cosmic order, muffles the pagan tones that impose themselves in certain verses and puts them in accord with the spirit of Christian sanctity ... The Virgin is seen as a being “to whom one can tell everything, as an ideal confidante—open, trustworthy (and in that sense, merciful); as someone who will understand everything.” She is expected to show understanding for all of the poets’ *sinful strayings*. This is not yet redemption; the poet’s repentant prayers and addresses, as Stojanovic points out, still “do not lead him into the state of holiness”. But the Virgin Mary points to the path to holiness by receiving “each and everyone’s word, about everything.” That is why the poet speaks to her; that is the reason she is in this poem.

A reconstruction of the poetic understanding of the Mother of God is the basic task of the essay “Confidence in the Virgin” that interprets *The Four Canons* by Ivan V. Lalić. The starting point of this essay of Stojanović’s is an old and unresolved question: “What is more prevalent in the activity of the spirit that seeks to apprehend the being in its wholeness, and what is more important in human experience—the sacred or the poetic.” Sometimes the sacred and the poetic take separate paths, but sometimes they cross. In this crossing, the poetic gains more than the sacred: because “sooner or later, one becomes speechless before the sacred”; the sacred is self-sufficient even without an aesthetic “addition”. The aesthetic, on the other hand, can receive an additional quality when it meets the sacred. But it is necessary to be careful here, because the mere presence of the sacred, unless it has been transformed aesthetically, does nothing to contribute to the poetic. *Canons*, at the pinnacle of the entirety of Lalić’s poetry, successfully realize this transformation.

In interpreting this poetic work, Stojanović also examines other poems by Lalić that are imbued with religious inspiration—partly in order to strengthen his interpretation by pointing to intertextual connections, which further points to the permanent quality of the poet’s work—and partly to trace Lalić’s path of “gaining great and incomparable confidence in Mary”, in that sense to suggest the developmental process during which Lalić’s ideas changed and became richer. He will use interpretive and comparative arguments, linking Lalić’s sonnet “Never More Alone” (“Nikad samlji”) to the poem “Einsamer nie –” by the German poet Gottfried Benn, judging it “obvious” that it is precisely this poem that Lalić debates with. This obviousness is well supported in the interpretation; the debate is carried out by a poet of “absolute immanence” like Ben, who is entirely of this world and rejects the sacred, and a poet like Lalić, who, still unsure and hesitating at first, wants to find the solution to existential angst in transcendence: “The angel from

your presentiments you will not meet, / Although the air is laden with annunciation” (“Anđela kog slutiš nećeš sresti, / A vazduh trudan je od blagovesti.”)

Stojanović devotes special attention to the poem “As a prayer” from the collection *Letter*. We could best define this poem as a kind of poetic *theodicy*, in which the writer has a discussion with God, addressing him in a way that makes it difficult, if at all possible, to see it as being in line with Christian or, broadly speaking, religious concepts. God is asked whether he is tired or ill. Tired or ill of what? Of uncertainty, of the imperfection of the world that he created, of the presence of evil in the world. The one who asks these questions goes on, half demanding arrogantly, half pleading with God to devise “another covenant” together with him. Stojanović sees this whole poem as an expression of humanistic indignation, judging that the poem stands for a kind of borderline in Lalić’s understanding of the sacred, where Lalić had to “turn to Mary, to be able to get a grip on himself and understand where he is.” Here we should point to the interconnectedness of three of Stojanović’s essays about the poetic understanding of the Virgin Mary: each of them tries to recognize and articulate the borderline from which the understanding of the sacred begins, the point that a poet could fathom—and then, in the next interpretation, to point to the overstepping of that border. Kostić, Lalić, and Goethe are thus perceived as having a unique affinity, as poets whose works of art feature a similar tackling of the relationship towards the sacred, while the understanding of the Virgin is the key to the understanding of that relationship.

Before we show Stojanović’s interpretation of Ivan V. Lalić’s Mariological turn, we will point out an interesting detail of his interpretative procedure. At the place where he proclaims that the humanistic conception of the poem “As a Prayer” cannot be reconciled with Christian sanctity, he includes a long note in which, quoting Hans Küng and John Zizioulas, he explains the essence of Christian humanism. There are many such remarks in this book. Some of them stretch across two whole pages, offering quotations, additional arguments, examples and illustrations ... We can understand these remarks as the embryo of essays—or perhaps as their remains; the sketches of themes waiting to be developed. Some other author would write an entire treatise based on some of these remarks—for example, on an epithet found in Zlata Kocić and Friedrich Holderlin, or the literal, “economic-magical” understanding of the resurrection.

Let us go back to Lalić’s understanding of the Virgin and his great belief in her. Stojanović seems to incidentally cite a detail of the poet’s work. When he speaks of the Virgin in *Canons*, the poet never uses irony, which he normally uses when speaking of the horrors of history and existence, even when, as we can see in the poem “As a prayer”, he speaks

of God (often referred to as “the great warrior”, but also “the great editor of all things”). Lalić’s Mother of God is pure. Among many of her definitions given in *Canons*, Stojanović points to three that he sees as most important.

Firstly, she makes the existence of the world easier to bear, for she “dilutes for us / the density of the world that the Creator made”. “Mary is a being *of a milder quality*,” writes Stojanović, “that blends with that of God, making that quality always in favour of man; she is, therefore, a being that makes history and existence more tolerable or even tolerable at all.” Secondly, she is expected to help in the effort to understand the Book, to make sense of the world, she is the source of light that provides some kind of meaning. Thirdly, she is the source of mercy, the bearer of the “most beautiful name / Supreme meaning of the incomprehensible worldliness”, she will come, when it is time, to “walk one to his dream”. Thus understood, the Mother of God is the one who solves the problem of theodicy: the possibility that the world, as the creation of God, is celebrated even though it is imperfect. For Mary is the one who gives hope of salvation, light of comfort and mercy, in spite of everything.

The most comprehensive and, in terms of hermeneutics, along with Laze Kostić’s poem of repentance, perhaps the most ambitious essay, is the one under the title “The Virgin in Goethe’s *Faust*”. To understand the whole of Goethe’s tragic play, it is, in Stojanović’s opinion, of utmost importance to determine the understanding and role of the Virgin, although she appears only in two verses towards the end of the second part of *Faust*, and although it is obvious that the image of the Virgin built by Goethe differs considerably from the representations established by Christian churches. Having in mind this problem, Stojanović sketches two interpretive strategies. The first would rely on the immense symbolic potential of the Virgin, in particular the fact that she only appears towards the end of the play, when Faust’s salvation is in question and God is absent, which also implies important symbolic connections. The other strategy would be to try to see the most important aspect of the work precisely in the deviation from the usual Christian concepts, in Goethe’s special blend of Christianity and paganism, in trying to understand this or that heresy, or in the manifestations of the private religiousness of the great writer.

He expresses a great deal of knowledge while interpreting *Faust*. However, he considers various approaches that emphasize Goethe’s unquestionable non-orthodoxy. These point to the pagan elements in the image of the Virgin, the similarity to Origen’s general conception of salvation, the manifestation of Goethe’s personal religious beliefs which were influenced by Spinoza, and the possibility that the Christian elements in *Faust* are a kind of mimicry to which Goethe resorted, taking into account the fact that he knew his audience was raised and

formed in a Christian spirit. All of these attempts at interpretation, very interesting when observed individually, have in common the placing of an emphasis on Goethe's "aberrance". In connection to this, at least two hermeneutically important questions are opened up, and Stojanović does not fail to point them out.

Firstly, irrespective of whether Goethe himself had a certain general religious conception on his mind while working on *Faust*, whether he was or was not familiar with certain theological speculations about the Trinity, the nature of the Virgin Mary, or of salvation: the interpretation, whatever it seeks to prove, would have to show itself to be available to the reader who simply reads the particular literary piece regardless of whether there is any knowledge of these speculations. "The text speaks primarily for itself," Stojanović will reiterate his basic hermeneutical *credo*. Secondly, if no special knowledge has a significant influence on the outcome of interpretation, in other words the existing, *previous* understanding of the relevant content—in this case, the concrete understanding of the structure of the already mentioned basic Christian representations, then what distinguishes pre-understanding and possession of special knowledge, which also precedes understanding? The notion of "preceding" should not be understood only in a mere temporal sense. Understanding and its methodically controlled form—interpretation—are *always* marked by a previous understanding, both when there is an arsenal of special philological, biographical, historical, theological, philosophical, etc., knowledge at our disposal and when there is the text itself, and nothing but the text. Stojanović formulates the effect of a previous understanding on the interpretive practice as "the contextual pressure of everything that creates the status of Mary within Christianity", which is too strong to be relativized by the knowledge or insights on mythology, alchemy, or heretical teachings. This does not mean that the knowledge and insights are useless, but that they cannot be crucial. A form of hermeneutic immanentism is what could be a definition of Stojanović's interpretive position, and it differs significantly from the positions that advocate hermeneutical heteronomy, looking for the key to interpretation outside the text, such as different theoretical concepts or the circumstances of the author's biography. Methodological economics speaks in favor of immanentism.

The question that needs to be resolved here is Faust's salvation issue. In order for Faust's soul to be saved, non-Christian, worldly "merits" are sought: his tireless activity, experience of love, clearing his "clouded" soul. Is it enough? Is it necessary? The role of the Virgin, along with all the pagan elements that Goethe adds to her image, shows itself in salvation. She is not just an intermediary, but "the last instance of salvation that we hear about directly". God is distant and inaccessible,

the Virgin is here. She “recognizes love in all its forms,” and love is what will save Faust in the last instance (Laza Kostić reached the same point in *Santa Maria della Salute*). New problems would certainly arise for the interpreter who would like to see the finale of Goethe’s tragic play in an overly Christian manner, for example, the problem of naming. The Virgin is called “the goddess” and “the one equal to the gods”, although according to Christian belief, she is a woman, the human element in Christ’s nature.

In connection with this disagreement, Stojanović presents two more important arguments. Firstly, he insists that in order to understand *Faust*, it is more important that the Virgin “is there in the first place, than the fact that she is attributed characteristics that she cannot have.” Then, in the gradation that begins with a search for happiness and through the fascination with beauty, there is love between two individuals, and that is a symbolic journey that the reader of *Faust* makes, the journey from ancient Greece to Christ, from Helen of Troy to Mater Gloriosa. The role of the Holy Virgin and her acknowledgement of earthly love are of vital importance. Resolved in love, Goethe and his work appear to be more “Christian” than it seems at the first glance.

The essay “Lazaret and Lazur”, dedicated to the collection of poetry *Lazarus’s Ladder* (*Lazareve lestve*) by Zlata Kocić, opens, as well as other essays in the book, both the questions of aesthetic transformation of the sacred and questions about the possibilities and limits of interpretation. The main problem of the first layer is the understanding of the basic factor of the Christian faith—the understanding of the resurrection—while the main problem of the second layer is understanding the poem that develops predominantly owing to its prosodic and associative values.

Four basic thematic motives can be identified in *Lazarus’s ladders*. The first relies on the story from the Gospel of John, the story about Lazarus being raised from the dead which hints at the resurrection that will decisively mark all of Christianity, the resurrection of Christ. The second comes from the story of another miracle, the finding of the head of Prince Lazar; the third from the myth of Atlas, who carries the entire world on his shoulders; and the fourth is based on the idea of ladders that man will climb to get out of this “Lazaret world”, a bad and ugly place that the beauty of worldly things makes more or less bearable. Regarding the status of the miracle discussed in the Holy Scriptures and oral poetry, Stojanović warns that the level of “meaningfulness” of these texts is not the same. The Bible is a canonical text with sacred authority, which is not the case with oral poetry, no matter how firmly it is established in language memory. Both of these texts, philologically speaking, are the products of the collective consciousness deposited over a long period

of time, and its current form is the result of authoritative codification. But only the first, the text of the Holy Scriptures, is placed outside of the realm of the sacred by this authority. Therefore, the status of miracles described in these texts cannot be the same: the miracle of an oral poem is only an echo, an after-image of the miracle of the Gospel.

As for the possibility of the interpretation of poetry which essentially relies on the prosodic and associative potentials of language, Stojanović concludes the following: “We get more from clear semantic destinations, intended purpose, referential objects, concepts and conceptual systems, and the understood contours of a genre. Taken by the sound, we have an experience. The sacred becomes concrete, it lends itself to being felt.” The expression is the boundary of interpretation, just as it is the boundary of every meaningful speech. Without the expression which reflects the creativity of language and which the poetic is based on, we would be in jeopardy of falling into a mere muteness of the world, into nothingness.

As for the remaining two essays in *The Energy of the Sacred in Art*, the one about flowers in the poetry of Gottfried Benn and the one about the triptych *St. Maria Aegyptiaca* by Emil Nolde, we will focus only on the basic. The essay on Ben offers an unusual image of this expressionist poet, a poet completely of this world, to whom the idea of transcendence was completely foreign, and who turns his eyes to the beauty in the world by writing about flowers in his poetry. This beauty, like the poet himself, is distanced from worldly relations and therefore doomed to failure—but it is also a beauty which, at least from afar, points to better (although unrealized) possibilities of the world, perhaps “in one fleeting moment” in which “gods stop the scales”. Salvation is here out of the question. The essay about Nolde’s triptych examines the possibility of religiously inspired modern art, the possibility of religious inspiration in a world that is not only radically secularized, but also projects itself as such. It may not be necessary to emphasize that as far as Nolde is concerned, the artist and his work that we have before us are difficult to place within the framework of the usual religious notions.

Concluding the text about Dragan Stojanović’s book *The Energy of the Sacred in Art*, we will say that the interpretations provided here can be confronted in some detail with other and different interpretations—which has happened before. But it is more a hermeneutical virtue, openness for the Other and what the Other has to say, than it is an objection.

MIODRAG RADOVIĆ
(1945–2018)

IVAN NEGRIŠORAC

COMPARATIVE AND LITERARY
THEORETICAL DRAMATURGY
OF MIODRAG RADOVIĆ

Prof. Dr. Miodrag Radović has left us forever (1945–2018). Leaving, he left behind those who remember him, and even more those who read him or those who will yet read him. A diversified erudite, passionate and true devotee to literature, a man who, faced with the vast and mystical complexity of literary and poetic experiences, sought to reach a rational and argumentative reason due to which we react with so many internal quakes to literary works and spiritual creations. And those inner quakes he felt deeply and strongly, therefore he believed that more than anything else we need to save exactly those and such qualities even in the intellectual, university form of the interpretation of literature.

I can also testify about it as a student who had the opportunity, during just a few classes, to perceive, experience, and even personally contribute to the atmosphere of turbulent intellectual dialogues that he could sometimes drive to unnecessary alternatives, such as: Tolstoy or Dostoevsky? And even though the connoisseur of literary criticism could recognize, in this setting, the alternative on which George Steiner built a whole well-known study, an alternative that Nikolai Berdyaev talked about much earlier, Professor Miodrag Radović did not in any way attempt to lead these discussions into familiar waters and predictable outcomes. First of all, he wanted to encourage his students to think in a multitude of different directions, although he sometimes could be confused by the unexpectedness of the opinion or understanding the interpretations of those works that he would put on the reading and pleasing table.

The developmental arch of literature researchers

And Radović's own work as a literature interpreter contains fertile width and openness to possible alternatives, which can be very well seen from the way his work gradually developed. In this development, we can recognize very specific and not accidental comparative and literary theoretical dramaturgy. In his first book, i.e. his master's thesis *Dostoevsky's Poetics of Dreams* (1978), Radović primarily focused on the interpretation of one piece of work, on the novel *Crime and Punishment*, although, of course, he had in mind the entirety of the work of Fyodor Mikhailovich Dostoyevsky. In the aforementioned novel he singled out those segments that represent the records of the dreams of the two characters, Raskolnikov and Svidrigailov, and then interpreted the meanings of these texts and their function throughout the whole book: both in relation to the portrayal processes of the characters and the motivation of the narrative, and their overall significance for the ways of constituting reality and its understanding in the novel. In Radović's study, the author's profoundly deep confidence in interpretation and interpretation procedures is perfectly perceived, as well as his tendency to keep the adventure of studying literature in the strict framework of careful, analytical reading of the work. Radović openly admitted that he obtained the basic incentive for this study at the lectures of Raško Dimitrijević, who paid special attention on the interpretation of Svidrigailov's dreams.

In addition, he methodologically developed his study as an attempt of applying psychoanalysis in the interpreting literature, and he himself pointed to a whole range of psychoanalysts and interpreters who have left a greater or lesser trace on his approach. That sequence starts with Sigmund Freud, i.e. his interpretation of Wilhelm Jensen's novella *Materials* (which would later be translated by Radović into Serbian) and the novel *Brothers Karamazov* by F. M. Dostoyevsky, then includes creative followers of psychoanalytic thoughts or their critics such as Karl Jung, Alfred Adler, Karen Horney, Erich Fromm, Harry Wales, to end up with psychoanalytic-oriented literary interpreters or their critics and productive followers such as Ernest Jones, Maud Bodkin, Marie Bonaparte, Charles Moron, Serge Doubrovsky, Leonard Kent, Jacques Buske and others. Radović's basic remark to the psychoanalytic interpretation of the literary works, and especially to the model that Freud himself offered, is contained in the fact that "psychoanalysis is not capable of grappling with literary issues, (that) Freud is not interested in Dostoyevsky the novelist but Dostoyevsky the man",¹ so that "he

¹ Miodrag Radović, *Dostoevsky's Poetics of Dreams*, Zamak kulture, Vrnjačka Banja 1978, 3.

does not draw any distinction between real, biological dreams and literary dreams”, i.e. that “he analyzes them according to the same criterion as if it were the same reality”.² And although it is clear to the author that the analysis of dreams in literary works must essentially be based on the ways in which the psychoanalysis has established it, he, during his process of the interpretation, tried to avoid frivolously reducing dreams in literary work into the space of pure life facts. In this regard, his theoretical support was in the structural analysis of the characters themselves who dream, i.e., in the very nature of Raskolnikov and Svidrigailov, therefore in consideration of their role in the content structure of the novel *Crime and Punishment*.

In Miodrag Radović’s next book, in his doctoral dissertation published under the title *Laza Kostić and World Literature* (1983), the theoretical-methodological frameworks have already been significantly expanded: it is, in fact, a comparative study in the full sense of that word. This study is entirely dedicated to Dragan Nedeljković, thus Radović once again confirmed how much he respects intellectual and ethical aspects of the relation between the student and his professor and authentic, right mentor, “without whose strict vigilance and imperative incentive, this book would never have seen the light of day.”³ With gratitude, Radović not only mentions the Commission composed of: Prof. Dr. Strahinja Kostić, Prof. Dr. Ivo Tartalj, and Prof. Dr. Dragoljub Nedeljković, in front of which on the 29 December 1980, he defended his doctoral thesis at the Faculty of Philology in Belgrade. In addition, he mentions Prof. Dr. Miodrag Popović, who “through his sharp criticism and distancing from my method and approach enabled me to avoid many of the dangers and one-sidedness of some misconceptions and mistakes.”⁴ From these seemingly incidental notes, it can clearly be seen how Radović was the man of a dialogue, how much he did not hesitate to point out his debts to other people, and how much he did not avoid uncompromising confrontation with those who were ready to harshly deny his way of research and interpretation. These qualities must be emphasized all the more, because today, even in the academic world, these good deeds are too often forgotten.

And for Radović’s study here, careful, analytically focused reading is very important, which—regardless of the theoretical foundation ranging from Russian formalism and Anglo-American new criticism, through the phenomenological approach, the school of interpretation, and structuralist and semiotic orientation, all the way to the theory of reception,

² Ibid. 4–5.

³ Miodrag Radović, *Laza Kostić and World Literature*, Delta press, Belgrade 1983, 312.

⁴ Ibid.

deconstruction and poststructuralism—remains the central heritage of the entire modern and postmodern form of the internal analysis of literature. With such careful reading Radović tried to describe the comparative context relevant for Kostić's work, and about the intentions and the effects of his approach the author will write:

If the reader, a true devotee of Kostić's work, after reading this study received at least a little clearer idea of the European importance of Kostić as a poet and a thinker, and if he was more specifically perceived in the coordinates of the European spirit, then the author would consider that his research effort was sufficiently rewarded. If, in the light of this comparative research, the understanding and the interpretation of Kostić's poetics and thinking was somewhat changed, the book would thus achieve the main goal set as a task of the research more than ten years ago.⁵

Considering that the “theory of intersection” contributes that “Kostić's poetics and criticism take on the necessary comparative orientation”,⁶ Radović explores the “a hundred voiced sound of world literature”,⁷ which reverberates in the work of this not only a great national poet but also a poet who is important and interesting in even much broader, worldly frames. The author presents his insights in separate chapters dedicated to the connections with the antiquity (“On the Spring of Classic Hippocrene”), perceiving the relation between poetry and philosophy (“Lyre and Logos”), relations with the Renaissance (“Kostić in the Spheres of Renaissance”), the importance of the symbolic experience of light and darkness (“Light Shines in the Darkness”), relations with the German challenges embodied in Schiller and Goethe (“Weimar Dioscuri”), connections with romantic poets Byron, Hugo and Heine (“Dualism of the Poet's Creature”), considerations of genre relations of tragedy and comedy, and the notion of genius (“Genre Problems of Kostić's Poetics”), the relation to the new phenomena in literature and art ranging from realism and naturalism to positivism (“New Spirit in the Ideas of L. Kostić”), as well as relations with Russian challenges (“Russian Paradox of Laza Kostić”). Highlighting the connection with the Bible, Homer, Pindar, Anacreon, Aeschylus, Sophocles, Euripides, Aristotle, Virgil, Horace, Dante, Boccaccio, Petrarch, Cervantes, Shakespeare, Camoens, Goethe, Walter, Byron, Blake, Balzac, Hugo, Novalis, Heine, Pushkin, Lermontov, Gogol, Chernyshevsky, Tolstoy, Burge, Bulwer-Lytton, Poe, Ten,

⁵ Ibid. 311.

⁶ Ibid. 23.

⁷ Ibid. 18.

Baudelaire, Firdusi, Kalidas, Plato, Aristotle, Kant, Hegel, Schelling, Schopenhauer, Nietzsche and others Radović made a comparative study in which the concept of influence still represented the focal point around which the research was organized, but he also expanded his interest in other forms of similarities and analogies.

In any case, with Radović's book *Laza Kostić and World Literature*, the great poet received a fundamental comparative study which, until this endeavour, remained dispersed in numerous individual observations and analyses, and besides that multitude, the general poetic and theoretical framework remained quite vague and unclear. Now, after this study, the interpreters of Kostić's work have more than a reliable and consistent cognitive foundation which as much as it answers a lot of questions so much it calls for further research.

Miodrag Radović is one of the rare Serbian theoreticians of literature who systematically dealt with the issue of literary value. In Serbian, even Yugoslav literary theoretical thought there are not many articles that are explicitly axiologically oriented, and one must remember the important initial insights of Bogdan Popović, Branko Lazarević, Nikola Milošević, Miodrag Pavlović, Zoran Konstantinović, Slovenian Janko Kos and others. In the Serbian literary criticism, spontaneous procedures are yet more frequent, even a very stern evaluation within practical-critical activity, but the theoretical reasoning on this issue is a relatively rare occurrence. Through his polemics *Literary Axiology* (1987), as well as the accompanying selection of translated texts published in periodicals (the thematic block in the magazine *Delo*, 1987, as well as the entire thematic issue of the magazine *Savremenik*, 1987), Radović provided a significantly higher theoretical level of axiological self-awareness in the Serbian literary criticism and literary science. This not only determined the framework for the development of theoretically oriented literary axiology as a discipline, but also provided an excellent basis for further consideration and verification of the fundamental postulates in the field of practical criticism.

In his study, with the subtitle "Problems and Theories of Literary Evaluation in the Twentieth Century", Radović considered the ways of theoretical thinking about the notion of value and the process of evaluation, all within a number of the mainstreams of literary theoretical thought during the 20th century. Dealing with these issues the author did not succumb to the error of meticulousness because he considered "a systematist with the ambition of a comprehensive principle would find himself in a hopeless position, even if he only attempted to provide a simple synchronous cross-section of problems in world science in one year – which for literary axiology was, for example, crucial year

of 1965.”⁸ Therefore, he determines himself for the procedure of the “reduction of complexity”,⁹ which means that the problem of literary evaluation and the values he went through within the framework of several dominant models of opinion on literature. There are more or less presented views of almost all most important literary theoreticians who have considered the problem of value, so the theoretical comprehensiveness moves in the methodological scope from the Russian formalism, structuralism, Anglo-American new criticism, phenomenology, Marxism, all the way to poststructuralism, while specific disciplines, such as general axiology, mythology, hermeneutics, comparative studies, together with their relation to the concept of values.

In this regard, Radović did not lead his discussion in order to come to insights and information that were considered reliable, objective and stable, but he strived to show that all these issues can be understood in very different ways. It could therefore be said that he had no ambition to prove literary axiology as a firm discipline: he, above all, wanted to show the “axiological controversy” in the way it was expressed during the twentieth century, within the various literary theoretical and methodological models of thinking. Such a relativistic conclusion is caused by the fact that the abovementioned controversy cannot be exposed in any way in the view of strictly determined and limited scientific areas, “among which one should not only include natural science, political economy or sociology, but also all humanistic, cultural and social sciences in general, and even so-called ‘futile doctrines of the most contradictory and non-existent things’, such as philosophy, morality, aesthetics, and literary theory: this controversy extends boundlessly, and even refers to all scientific and non-scientific knowledge.”¹⁰ The width of contextualization of the problem values and the evaluation disturbs all the minds who would like to guide their own thoughts flatly.

However, regardless of the lengthy and carefully led debate that tried to stay away from the dangerous assurance in the “error of spontaneity,” Radović’s conclusion is that it is an open question and that there can be no final answer to it. The concept of openness fundamentally determined the global thinking of the twentieth century, especially its second half, and the author of this study concludes: “Literary axiology in the second half of our century emerged onto the free space of the *Open*, through which the modern reader and critic must move with

⁸ Miodrag Radović, *Literary Axiology – Problems and Theories of Literary Evaluation in the Twentieth century*, Bratstvo-jedinstvo, Novi Sad, 1987, 9.

⁹ Ibid. 10.

¹⁰ The same quotations, Ibid. 18.

eyes wide open for various values, criteria, norms, and evaluations.”¹¹ These and such questions necessarily lead “to the continuous margin of the Script where the process of evaluation is taking place in the clues of the game between the *Difference* and the *Delay*, whose flicker we continually imply as the essential openness of the existence for literature and vice versa. Therefore, whenever we try to discern the traces of the axiological writing, we make a step out of the book, a step into the unknown.”¹² Radović is thus faced with space of inexpressibility in the act of evaluation, as well as with the cognition that within the literary text insights do not end but necessarily spread towards the text of the whole world in which literature is created. Thus, the author came quite close to the poststructuralist and postmodernist way of thinking and gave them convincing explanations within a specific problem of literary science.

Despite his determined orientation to follow the course of contemporary theoretical thoughts, Miodrag Radović was occasionally inclined to reach for some of the most prominent traditional forms of research. That challenge, reduced sometimes on the research of the life and work of a certain creator, Radović especially resorted to when he undertook to testify about the people to whom he felt completely personal, purely human debts. We have already mentioned Miodrag Radović’s affection for his teachers and professors, where Raško Dimitrijević particularly had a very special place in that respect. Even in his debut, in his study *Dostoevsky’s Poetics of Dreams*, Radović would write in a footnote that “Raško Dimitrijević, though, did not publish any works on Dostoyevsky, but speaking of him, said much more important things than those who wrote several books about him”.¹³ It is hard to imagine a better praise which one the student might say in one sentence about his professor. Nevertheless, in order to validate his judgment with much more abundant argumentation, Radović wrote an entire book, the *Inspired World or Magic Word of Raško Dimitrijević*¹⁴ (1998), and in that book he showed with fondness and love, above all, a man, a professor and an orator, but also a diary keeper, an epistolary writer, a translator and a public worker. From that book, which includes selected texts by Raško’s contemporaries (such as Vojislav Đurić, Dobrica Ćosić, Nikša Stipčević, Matija Bećković, Dragan Nedeljković, Miroslav Egerić, Slobodan Vitanovi, etc.), can very convincingly be seen the width of his interests, the way he communicated with his friends and like-minded people, as well as

¹¹ Ibid. 235.

¹² Ibid. 237.

¹³ M. Radović, *Dostoevsky’s Poetics of Dreams*, 6

¹⁴ M. Radović, *Inspired World or Magic Word of Raško Dimitrijević*, Matica srpska Library, Novi Sad, 1998

the particular charm of his spoken word and thought. All this marks that quality, due to which the students from many other studying groups came to his lectures, those who often had nothing to do with studying literature.

Sometimes, this kind of quite intimate tone of Radović's presentation could have been felt in his theoretically much more firmly based discussions. Thus, in the book entitled *It's Nice to Read This Book*¹⁵ published in 2001, the author gathered different texts created on different occasions and using different theoretical and methodological procedures. One set of topics is related to the theoretical concepts such as reading, value and evaluation, influence, intertextuality and transtextuality, or disciplines such as the theory of literature, comparative studies and hermeneutics. The second round is related to comparative and theoretical aspects in the studies of Radović's professors or older colleagues, such as Dragiša Živković, Miroslav Pantić, Ivo Tartalja, Petar Milosavljević, for example. The widest circle of topics represents theoretically the most innovative forms of literary, comparative or critical reading and the interpretation of the individual work or the entire opus of the Serbian writers, starting with Njegoš, through Laza Kostić, Marko Miljanov, Stefan Mitrović Ljubiša, Momčilo Nastasijević, Dobrica Ćosić, Milorad Pavić, Danilo Kiš, Ćeda Vuković, to Matija Bečković. A carefully chosen, specific theoretical problem and the gradualism of the analytical procedure enabled Radović new understanding and new insights that greatly enhanced the scope of Serbian literary science.

A special attitude towards people whom he personally owed something is felt even more in the book *Comparative Quartet* (2014). It is a study which examines the cognitive scopes and results of four very important Serbian comparatists: Miodrag Ibrovac, Dragiša Živković, Zoran Konstantinović and Dragoljub Dragan Nedeljković. In each text there is a basic encyclopaedically processed writer's biography, followed by a discussion of the work in which the author very skilfully inserts quite personal relations he nurtured with the comparatists who were close to him. Miodrag Ibrovac was seen as a polychistor, as well as a pupil and a follower of the work of Bogdan Popović, Jovan Skerlić, Gustave Lanson, Jules Renard, Paul Van Tieghem, Fernand Baldensperger, and as a productive novelist and comparatist, also as a researcher within the model of French comparative school who left an excellent study about José-Maria de Heredia about the reception of Serbian oral songs in France and other European countries, about French-Yugoslav relations, etc.

¹⁵ M. Radović, *It's Nice to Read This Book*, ITP „Zmaj” – Cultural educational community, Novi Sad – Podgorica, 2001.

Dragiša Živković was a theoretician and literary historian, and in comparative studies he relied on Paul Van Tieghem and Viktor Zhirmunsky putting in the focus of his interest “similarities without influence” and typological-analogous connections. He was able to combine older and more recent methods of comparative studies, from thematic criticism, studying the contacts and comparisons among the writers, classification of the writers according to the movements and epochs, checking conventions and identifying the stylistic formations, such as the term of Biedermeier, which he introduced into the interpretation of Serbian literature. All the advantages of his methodical procedures were most evident in the debates on Sterija, Zmaj and Laza Kostić. In studying the Serbian literature, Živković was constantly seeking after and finding “European frameworks”, through which he indirectly and subsequently proved the accuracy of Miodrag Ibrovac’s observation that “every literature is comparative”.¹⁶

The work of Zoran Konstantinović Radović sees through interesting biographical facts that a young officer of the Army of the Kingdom of Yugoslavia, who was a prisoner in German camps and a participant of the National Liberation War, immediately after the Second World War starts Germanic studies in Zagreb (with Zdenko Škreb), and finishes them as well as his Ph.D. in Belgrade with Pera Slijepčević), then works at Belgrade University, and in 1970 moves to Innsbruck, where he establishes comparative studies at the university, and remains there until his retirement in 1990. Radović describes Konstantinović’s position with the following words:

In a spiritual sense he was broadly educated cosmopolitan, and throughout his whole life represented the idea of Yugoslavism. Neither Europeanism nor Yugoslavhood stopped him from being self-conscious patriot and a Serb. However, it is precious that in his attitudes he had a sober and vigilant critical distance towards Europe, Germany and Yugoslavia. This distance provided him the independence of opinion and freedom of expression.¹⁷

Owing to the intellectual freedom he won, Professor Konstantinović could have allowed himself the right and obligation, during the bloody events of the disintegration of the SFR Yugoslavia, to point out to the malicious actions of Germany and Austria in those events. In comparative studies he attained the highest level of achievements among all the Serbian researchers and gained the highest international recognition, and in his research his focus gradually shifted from studying

¹⁶ Miodrag Radović, *Comparative Quartet*, Academic Book, Novi Sad, 2014, 36.

¹⁷ *Ibid.* 83–84.

the connections, influence, similarity to imagology and studies of mentality.

In the opus of Dragan Nedeljković Radović sought to highlight the way he went through from the initial insights into the Slavic studies, more precisely into Russian studies and then due to his long stay in France where he methodologically founded his comparative research following the lead of Paul Van Tieghem, and the result of which was his doctoral dissertation about Romain Rolland and Stefan Zweig. Analyzing the insights and contributions of Nedeljković's discussions on Russian literature, Radović points out to the fact that the author had in mind the question of the relationship between Russia and Europe at all times. This knowledge was essential to Nedeljković during the time when, after the breakup of the SFR of Yugoslavia and entering the transition period, it became urgent to obtain useful facts about the position of the Serbs in relation to Europe, especially in relation to some of the basic centres of European and world power. Professor Nedeljković spent a lot of his intellectual strength and power in order to convey some useful information, so in that period, from the beginning of the nineties of the twentieth century, a whole series of his debates, essays, orations and other popular genres, including narratively diversified memoirs were created. Thus, the Slavist and the comparative studies expert at the end of his life and his literary activities specially developed a form of "Literature of Warning," as Dejan Medaković called it.¹⁸

Interpreting the comparative work of Zoran Konstantinović and Dragan Nedeljković, Radović slightly crossed the procedures: as on Konstantinović's life there are not so many sources of information, Radović reached out just for such an attempt of reconstruction and interpretation; Nedeljković's life has many sources of information, including a very close relationship between Nedeljković professor and Radović student, but the author of the study nevertheless decided to carefully read and interpret the most important Nedeljković's books. Throughout the whole study *Comparative Quartet* Miodrag Radović had in mind the state of comparatistics at the time when Serbian comparativists lived and worked, and that situation was increasingly marked by the crisis of comparatistics, as René Wellek said about it. If we summarize the views of the four Serbian comparativists, then we would, beside immediate nominating, but in the spirit of Radović's insights-say something like this: Ibrovac and Konstantinović remained consistently in the field of comparativism, with Ibrovac remaining faithful to the French concept, while Konstantinović expressed a pronounced tendency towards methodological innovation as a way out of state of crisis; Živković and

¹⁸ Ibid. 83–84.

Nedeljković did not pay too much attention to the crisis state of discipline, so they gave results in the national histories of literature—Živković in the Serbian, and Nedeljković in Russian, but both did so with a strong view of the integrity of the European and world comparative context. In any case, Radović's choice of researchers to whom he devoted his attention was extremely well-chosen and exemplary grounded, and completely harmonized with the epigraph of the whole study, i.e. with the words of Sreten Marić: "Am I such (an ideal) comparativist—I do not know. But in that discipline, as in many others, there are as many roads as the right travellers. Quite a few."¹⁹ With a good selection of topics, that is, the personalities of the researchers, as well as a good set of concrete questions, Radović made an important insight into the most important trends in the development of Serbian comparative studies with its leading representatives. But a great deal of it remained untouched and unexplored. Radović's book *The Comparative Quartet* represents, without doubt, one of the most important contributions to the never-written history of Serbian comparative studies: this work was not finished by Miodrag Radović, but will certainly be done by a dedicated, diligent young researcher, or perhaps a whole team of experts in this field.

The theoretical and methodological diversity of all of Radović's books and studies is such that can clearly testify about the extremely curious, research-tireless and dynamic nature of this comparativist and a literary researcher. He was constantly thinking and exploring, seeking some new models of thinking and interpreting literature, as well as new ways of understanding the world as a whole. To clearly understand his first-rate scope, it is enough to note that he is the author of the study *Laza Kostić and World Literature* and *Literary Axiology*—just these two studies are enough to fully conceive the entire life of the researcher and all the cognitive results of his work. And when everything else he did and wrote is added, then it is clear that the exemplary work of this comparativist and theoretician is such that it serves as an exceptionally good orientation to the other labourers of Serbian literary science.

Reading challenges and editorial-translation jobs

In addition to his books and studies, Professor Miodrag Radović did a number of other, very important and useful projects, and in that sense are simply unforgettable several thematic collections of papers he prepared. The first among them, and certainly one of the greatest and most enduring of teaching and university significance, is the one *The Art of Poetry Interpretation* (1979), which he did together with his

¹⁹ Ibid. 7.

professor and friend Dragan Nedeljković. This collection of papers was created by the composers who claimed that in our science and culture “we do not have the anthology of lyric poetry analysis”, and that this is one of the reasons why “at schools of all levels lyric poetry is the least professionally interpreted”.²⁰ So called great cultures in this respect are far better, and the composers of the collection of papers refer to a great number of authors and their anthologies (Benjamin Vize, Kurt May, Gustav Ridler, Jean Paul Weber, Jean Pierre Richard, Cleanth Brooks—Robert Pen Warren, Georgij Fridlender, Henryk Markiewicz, Jan Prokop) who offered with their own books specific incentives for the publication of this collection of papers in the Serbian language. The choice of texts was primarily determined by the intention to focus on some of the European leading poets from different languages and national cultures, from Dante, Villon, Ronsard, Shakespeare, Gongora, via Goethe, Schiller, Coleridge, Novalis, Wordsworth, Shelly, Keats, Heine, Leopardi, Mickiewicz, Pushkin, Poe, to Baudelaire, Laza Kostic, Mallarme, Verlaine, Eminescu, Rimbaud, Yeats, Valéry, Rilke, Blok, Nastasijević, Cesarić, Apollinaire, Eliot, Pasternak... Similarly, the composers tried to present the methodological pluralism of the interpretative procedures, and they did so by presenting conceptually very different texts, by authors like Erich Auerbach, Benedetto Croce, Dámaso Alonso, Roman Jakobson (2 texts), Robert Pen Warren, Clint Brooks, Cecil Bowra, Wolfgang Kaiser (2 texts), Emil Steiger, Miodrag Pavlović, Gustave Cohen, Yuri Lotman, Efim Etkind and others. From this collection of papers, the teaching of literature, especially on the university level, and consequently teaching at all other levels—had a great benefit. And although the composers of this academic journal desired the creation of a whole series of similar, thematic and genre-specific works, vast production of this kind in Serbian literary science did not follow. It is important, however, to point out that in the same period, in the same publishing house Nolit, within the same edition of “Literature and Civilization”, edited by Jovan Hristić, several other similar collections of papers were made which were directed towards specific genres (*Modern Theory of Novel*, 1979, by Milivoj Solar, *Modern Theory of Drama*, 1981, by Mirjana Miočinović, *Theory of Tragedy*, 1984, by Zoran Stojanović),²¹ but

²⁰ See “Preface”, in: *The Art of Interpreting Poetry*, comp. by Dragan Nedeljković and Miodrag Radović, Nolit, Belgrade 1979, 11.

²¹ Even before the publication of these collections of papers, the same editor provided in the same edition with the same publisher some sort of similar but quite different collection of papers, such as: *The Birth of Modern Literature: Poetry*, comp. by Sreten Marić and Đorđije Vuković, Nolit, Belgrade, 1975; *The Birth of Modern Literature: Drama*, comp. by Mirjana Miočinović, Nolit, Belgrade, 1975. Later, various attempts were made with other publishers, but never reached such a high standard of making similar manuals necessary for the successful teaching of literature.

after this series, not much advancement was made from these extraordinary beginnings.

Within the scope of his basic research projects, Miodrag Radović, needless to say, also performed comprehensive theoretical preparations and elaborations, and he was very often able to compose and publish an entire thematic block of relevant texts. Thus, for example, in the research of Laza Kostić's relationship with world literature, he primarily opened the question of influence and related comparative categories, so Radović made a very important thematic issue of the magazine *Polja* entitled "Theory of Influence, Action and Reception" (1987).²² By the introductory discussion "Fear of Influence", and even more with the selection of texts by various authors (Gustave Lanson, Paul Van Tieghem, André Gide, Wolfgang Clemen, Haskell Block, Ervin Kopen, Claude Pichois, Ulrich Weisstein, Anna Balakian, Joseph Strelka, John Bening, Maria Mog-Grinewald, Geran Hermeren, and the texts of Harold Bloom and Claudio Guillén are omitted which are available to Serbian readers in the books that are translated), the composer, with the help of several translators from the French, German and English languages (the theme issue also contains wide bibliography), pointed out to the basic comparatistic ideas and models of studying which endured during the development of this discipline in the twentieth century.

Dealing with the problems of literary axiology Radović made two extremely valuable thematic collections of papers; by doing this he undoubtedly raised the theoretical level of this discipline in the Serbian literary science. Already, the mere naming of this discipline in studying literature is primarily his merit, since the notion of axiology before Radović's book was used primarily in the philosophical context, but not in the context of the Serbian literary science. The first collection of papers under the title "Literary axiology" was published in the magazine "Savremenik" (1987),²³ and in addition to Radović's introductory text, "Axiological controversy today", there were also translations of thirteen texts from German and English, including the following authors: Oskar F. Walzel, Walter Miler-Zajdel, Northrop Frye, René Wellek, Roman Ingarden, Emil Staiger, Wolfgang Kaiser, Robert Weinman, Eric Donald Hirsch, Marie Kruger, D. B. Fokkema, Norbert Mecklenburg and Günter Fetzer. The second set of texts translated from German and English appeared as a thematic block in "Delo" (1987).²⁴ Under the title "Literary Evaluation Today," followed by Radović's introductory text "The Axio-

²² *Polja*, no. 335, January 1987, 1–52.

²³ *Savremenik*, no 1–3, January–March 1987, 131.

²⁴ *Delo*, no 5–6, 1987, 7–131.

logical-Hermeneutic Circle”, six authors: Morris Weitz, Erik Lunding, Helga Hultberg, Jochen Schulte-Zase, Henri H. H. Remak, Rin T. Segers are included. In addition to the basic Radović’s study, *Literary Axiology* and these nineteen additional texts, with the articles by various authors already published in translated books (R. Wellek, R. Ingarden, H. Henrik Markievicz et al.), as well as the entire books on general axiology (A. Tanović, M. Životić et al.), the problem of evaluation in a theoretical sense appears for the Serbian readers in a much richer, more extensive and analytically more neat form than it was the case before the appearance of these important axiological articles.

But, phenomenologically seen, prior to evaluating and prior to determining the influence and similarities, the act of reading should be done properly. Therefore, Miodrag Radović published a series of articles in the literary magazine *Književna kritika* (No. 3, 1989),²⁵ entitled “Contemporary reading theories”. Radović presented series of texts of those theoreticians who put the reader’s position at the centre of the critical attention and the series of procedures which are under his jurisdiction. In that choice, the central place is occupied by the methodological orientations of Anglo-American reader-response criticism, deconstructions, reception theories, affective stylistics and related orientations, combined with the experiences of phenomenology, psychoanalysis, and the like. And although some of the leading people within these movements in the literary theoretical thought are missing (for example, Jacques Derrida, Paul de Man, J. Hillis Miller, Harold Bloom, Robert Jauss et al.), this chrestomathy points to first-rate theoreticians and critics, carriers of the innovative tendencies after a firm structuralist model of thinking and writing. Terry Eagleton, Norman Holland, Stanley Fish, Wolfgang Iser, Karlheinz Stierle, Jonathan Caler, Jovica Aćin and Geoffrey H. Hartmann are presented here with their texts. During the eighties of the twentieth century, and also much later, these theoreticians were and remained in the West extremely important phenomena that focused on searching for various forms of methodological pluralism, which Miodrag Radović also obviously advocated. This can also be seen from the preface to this selection, from the text entitled “Providential Easiness of Reading”, but moreover from the entire choice of theoretically intonated texts.

Professor Radović made a very interesting collection of papers on the problems of rhetoric in our time which he also published as a book entitled *Literary Rhetoric Today* (2008). In the preface of “Literary rhetoric—new and old,” Radović points out that the positions of old,

²⁵ *Književna kritika*, no 3, May–June 1989, 5–114.

ancient rhetoric and its legacy should be clearly distinguished from the new rhetoric that was created after Nietzsche, Ferdinand de Saussure, Perce, Paul de Man and others, adding: "Today, neo-rhetoric is considered the theory of discursive practices in significant contact with formalism, structuralism, and semiology."²⁶ In such an area of understanding literature, rhetoric will no longer be in charge of establishing "a system of rules for the production of texts", but its focus of study is shifted to the exploring of various different sign systems and functioning of various signifying practices."²⁷ For that reason, and completely in the spirit of semiotic and poststructuralist models of thinking, we're talking about a completely new perspectives of literature, but they are generally recognized by those who are dealing with contemporary literature. Therefore, Radović, referring to the opinions and interpretations of Roland Bart, reiterates the thesis that the new rhetoric is primarily a "vital zone of literature" and "the love dimension of writing."²⁸

In the very choice are presented : Cvetan Todorov, Wayne Booth, Gerard Genette, Paul de Man, Jean Besier, J. Hillis Miller and Niall Lucy, but it is interesting that among the selection there is no common piece of the work *General Rhetoric* of the research group from Liège, and there are no individual works by members of this group (Jacques Dubois, Francis Edeline, Jean-Marie Klinkenberg, Philippe Mignot, Francois Pira and Adeline Trino), despite the fact that Professor Radović was very well-acquainted with the French intellectual scene, and even this group of theoreticians, which he also mentioned directly in the preface. Radović's collection of papers *Literary Rhetoric Today*, certainly, contributed to the reaffirmation of rhetoric as a separate discipline in Serbian culture, but also as a form of possible access to literary work and literature as an institution. Both this one, as all the above-mentioned thematic collections of papers, was extremely stimulating in raising the level of theoretical awareness of Serbian literary researchers. In this regard, we can conclude that Miodrag Radović's intellectual effort was not only well focused on the right topics and problems, but that these collections of papers came at the right time: not just when the new ideas were presented in full swing, but certainly at the time when the results of those presentations could have been summed up with some certainty.

Among the editorial-author works of Miodrag Radović, one should also mention a kind of crown proof of the cognitive powers of Serbian comparative studies contained in the praiseworthy *Comprehensive*

²⁶ *Literary Rhetoric Today*, ed. Miodrag Radović, Službeni glasnik, Belgrade, 2008, 15.

²⁷ *Ibid*, 16.

²⁸ *Ibid*, 18–19.

Dictionary of Comparative Terminology in Literature and Culture (2011). This dictionary of terminology was edited by Bojana Stojanović Pantović, Miodrag Radović and Vladimir Gvozden, and besides the editors, the authors of the texts are also Zorica Bečanović Nikolić, Sonja Veselinović, Vladimir Gvozden, Biljana Dojčinović Nešić, Jasmina Jokić, Bogdan Kosanović, Sofija Košničar, Ljiljana Matić, Jovan Popov, Goran Raičević, Nikola Strajnić, Kornelija Farago and Mihal Harpanj. Despite the fact that, in all likelihood, Bojana Stojanović Pantović had a key initiative for creating this dictionary, it is more than obvious that some of Radović's favourite topics left a noteworthy mark on how to outline and process particular entries of the glossary.

In the fact that in the dictionary became prominent “a critical and polemic dimension in the contextualization of certain entries, which, despite their specialist character, can have a series of interpretations, from quite traditional and conservative—to contemporary, postmodern interpretations”,²⁹ it must, among other things, be recognized as Radović's commitment to consider all of the intellectual dramaturgy that occurred before, during, and after delivering those questions and answers that lie at the heart of every knowledge. In this encyclopaedic manual, Radović wrote only twelve entries (Antigone, Byronism, Bouvard-Pécuchetism, Evaluation / Value, Comparative poetics, Mentalities, Myth, Robinson Crusoe, World Literature, Faustus, Reader, Reading), but they cover some of the important topics of his books and discussion or some of the topics that he was dealing with as a university professor. Already at the end of his teaching career, he together with his younger colleagues, mostly from the Faculty of Philosophy in Novi Sad, and among them were several of his former students, became a part of the team who made a very useful and usable encyclopaedic manual for comparativists and literature researchers.

Miodrag Radović edited several collections of essays, such as the one dedicated to Prof. Dr. Radomir Ivanović, *Liber amicorum* (2001). In addition, he constantly left the traces of his focused and passionate reading, but he rarely composed the anthologies of poetry and literary texts. Nevertheless, as part of his editorial work, Miodrag Radović also dealt with the creation of a lucid, very provocative and important anthology entitled *Bee Epiphany* (2017) subtitled “Bee in the Flower Garden of Poetry”. In addition to the dominant lyrical songs, in this flower garden there are elements of the thematic chrestomathy / reading-book which include a variety of knowledge about that topic. Otherwise, this choice was preceded by a significantly shorter anthology / chrestomathy,

²⁹ See “Preface”, in: *Comprehensive Dictionary of Comparative Terminology in Literature and Culture*, a group of authors, Academic Book, Novi Sad 2011, 7-8.

published by Radović, together with Nikola Strajnić, under the title *Bee and Honey in the Flower Garden of World and Serbian Poetry* in the magazine *Krajina* from Banja Luka in 2002. In the new, significantly expanded edition, Radović in the preface of the “Honey Metaphor” explains the key principles of understanding the very phenomenon of bees, the bee colony, beekeeping and honey but where he also explains the basic principles on which the selection of the texts he included were based. Starting from the thesis that “the bee lives poetically, that bee creates poetry, the bee maintains poetic answer to the world”,³⁰ Radović observed how the awareness of this truth appeared in different cultures. He was especially interested in the ancient world, both Greek and Roman, but also the appearance of modern poetic responses to such challenges: if Vergil in his *Georgics* said important things about the bees, then the “*Georgics* of modern times” was written by Maurice Maeterlinck, in his book *Life of Bees*.³¹ In his chrestomathy Radović mostly introduced poetic texts, but also essayistic and scientific ones, looking after the life of bees, presenting bee colony poetry as the world relevant to the man of our time, but also for the man who lived a long time ago.

The anthologist divided the entire material into specific cycles (the author calls them wreaths), which monitor various aspects of bees and honey as a phenomenon, and include different possibilities of understanding of this specific world. There are thirty-six of these wreaths in total: the first wreath presents the texts that testify about the “Godsend Bee”, and the book ends with the wreath “Male Bees-Drones”. At the forefront of the anthology, even before the author’s preface, there is the poem “Toast to the Bees,” by Dobrica Erić, and finally, in the section called “Epilogue”, there are texts that testify about the apocalyptic indicators related to the bees: folk song “Prince Lazar’s Marriage” suggests that the disappearance of the bees is one of the signs of “the end of the world”, as confirmed by the warning of the French Beekeepers’ Association from 1994 in which it is literally said: “If the bee disappears from the globe, man will have only four years left.”³² It should be noted that the anthology of Bee-Epiphany was the last book published by Miodrag Radović during his life, and by such a choice of topic it seems that he wanted to send a specific symbolic message. We can come to this message by pointing out that Radović linked a good deal of his intellectual effort to exploring the post-structural and postmodern form of theoretical

³⁰ Miodrag Radović, *Bee Epiphany: Bee in Flower Garden of Poetry*, City Library Novi Sad – Foundation “Laza Kostic”, Novi Sad 2017, 18.

³¹ *Ibid.*, 22-23.

³² *Ibid.*, 385.

thinking, and it is characteristic for him to examine various forms of the dissociation of logocentrism and the examination of the forms of writing based on such a dissociation. Now, towards the end of his life, such an intellectual sought refuge in the strictest logocentrically organized order of the living world, and that is precisely the bee colony and everything related to the life of bees. And in this development, one needs to recognize that specific Radović's comparative and literary theoretical, but also existential dramaturgy.

Miodrag Radović also focused great deal of his work on translation, where he was very systematic and paid a lot of attention to the selection of the work he translated. In this regard, his translation work is very interesting, and thanks to him, Serbian readers are offered a whole small, extremely interesting library of relevant studies and books, translated mostly from the French. With Zoran Stojanović, Radović translated the *Anthropology of Death* (1980) by Louis-Vincent Thomas; with Dejan Kuzmanović *Sociology of Social Movements* (1983) by Alain Turenne; with Pavle Sekeruš *My Life* (1990) by Leon Davidovich Trotsky; with Vojin Matić *Material* (1992) by Vilhelm Jensen; with Sanja Pribičević *Lyrical Drama of the Slovenian Modernism* (1997) by Slobodanka Vladiv Glover; with Frida Filipović the book *History of Philosophy: Philosophical Amazement* (1998) by Zana Hersh. He himself translated the books *White Mythology* (1990) by Jacques Derrida; *Symbolism in Greek Mythology* (1991) by Paul Dill; *Roland Barthes by Roland Barthes* (1992); *The Transparency of Evil* (1994) by Jean Baudrillard; *Erasmus among Us* (1994) by Leon-Ernest Alken; *The Work of Art: Immanence and Transcendence* (1996) and *The Aesthetic Relation* (1998) by Gérard Genette; *For another Middle Ages: Time, Work, Culture of the West* (1997) Jacques-le-Goff; *Dostoyevsky and the Jews* (2010) by David Goldstein, as well as a whole series of the texts by different authors and from different languages (mostly from French, but occasionally from English and German). Speaking about the translation results of Miodrag Radović, one should never forget the fact that he, the truth is much later than Miodrag Ibrovac, translated the poem "Santa Maria della Salute" by Laza Kostić to French.

Miodrag Radović is, without a doubt, one of the most important representatives of university criticism in Serbian culture from the end of the twentieth and the beginning of the twenty-first century, especially the part of that intellectual group that has constantly striven for theoretical innovations, and the transition from the structuralist to a poststructuralist model of opinion on literature. Therefore, an obvious injustice was done

to him by the fact that he was mentioned only as an interpreter of the work of Laza Kostić and that he received unjustly little space in the extensive study of Predrag Palavestra *The History of Serbian Literary Criticism* (2008).³³ This study, in truth, dealt with the history of literary criticism in the narrow sense, but it largely engulfed the space of theoretical thinking, especially when that opinion was directly reflected on the process of the interpretation and evaluation of literary works. For we can say that Radović wrote about various Serbian writers from different epochs, but always searching for and most often finding new theoretical perspectives for critical reading.

As a professor of world literature, Miodrag Radović dealt with the most important writers who created from the times of the Sumerian-Chad culture and Gilgamesh, the Jewish culture and the Bible, Greek and Roman antiquity, through the Renaissance to the modern era, down to this day of electronic communications. Radović also dealt with literary theoretical thinking focused on the accentuated innovations and the efforts to build a change of paradigm in the way of thinking about literature and its interpretations. Finally, the least important, but not that much unimportant to be ignored, Radović also appeared as a critic writing about the Serbian writers and our contemporaries. This circle of writers about whom he expressed his critical opinion was not very broad, but not very narrow either. As a critic, he was not solely determined to literature researchers such as Nikola Milošević, Dragan Nedeljković, Sreten Marić, Dragiša Živković, Zoran Konstantinović, Sava Babić, Nikola Strajnić, Radomir Ivanović, Miroslav Pantić, Čedomir Mirković, Miroslav Egerić, Rene Wellek, nor to the thinkers like René Girard, Karl Popper and others. He also wrote about poets like Milorad Grujić, Predrag Bogdanović Cija, Jovan Zivlak, Milan Orlić, Petar Cvetković, Dragan Jovanović Danilov, Vuk Krnjević, Milan Đorđević, Vlasta Mladenović, Veroljub Vukašinić et al., and he was also able to enter into the polemics with representatives of neo-avant-garde concepts, such as Vujica Rešin Tucić. He also expressed his opinion about prose writers like Ivo Andrić, Dobrica Ćosić, Milovan Danojlić, Danilo Kiš, Milorad Pavić, Mirko Kovač, as well as Milosav Đalić, Miro Vuksanović, Gojko Nikolić, Svetozar Vlajković, Čeda Vuković, Dubravka Ugrešić, Guillermo Martínez. In any case, a lot has been done at Radović's writing table, enough for future researchers to plunge, not only in the texts left by this precious workman, but also to ask themselves what kind of person he was and what impelled him to this type of dedicated research mission.

³³ See Predrag Palavestra, *The History of Serbian Literary Criticism*, the Matica srpska, Novi Sad, 2008, 660-661.

Life path: between the head and the heart

Miodrag Radović was born on the 30 March 1945, in Kamenjača near Trstenik. After finishing the Grammar school in Kruševac, he enrolled the Faculty of Philology in Belgrade in 1964, where he graduated with his work “The Literary Views of Charles Baudelaire” at the Department of General (World) Literature and the Theory of Literature in 1968. He took his postgraduate studies at the European University Centre in Nancy, and his master thesis “The Function of Dreams in the Novel *Crime and Punishment* by F. M. Dostoyevsky” was defended at the Faculty of Philology in Belgrade in 1974. His doctoral dissertation “The Poetics of Laza Kostić and its Sources in the Western European Literature” he also defended at the Faculty of Philology in Belgrade, in 1980. He worked at the Matica srpska Library from 1970-1972, and then from 1972-1975 as a lecturer for Serbo-Croatian language and Yugoslav literature at the University of “Jean Moulin” in Lyon and from 1979-1981 at the University of Rhine. In 1976, he was chosen for the position of a teaching assistant at the Faculty of Philosophy in Novi Sad, on the subject of World Literature, and then he was elected to all titles: for the assistant professor in 1981 and for full professor in 1990. In the period from 1985 to 1987 he was granted a scholarship of the Humboldt Foundation, so he attended the Institute of German Philology at the University of Munich, where under the mentorship of Walter Miller Zajdel worked on the project “Literary Axiology”. He could speak French, German, English and Russian. Thanks to the special engagement of Professor Radović, at the Faculty of Philosophy in Novi Sad was founded the Department for Comparative Literature in 2000, and as the head of the Department he retired in 2013. He died on a very hot Thursday, on Arandelovdan, on the 26 April 2018.

The life path of Miodrag Radović can be described, above all, as one great intellectual Odyssey; the way his life path was like was his spiritual path and the theoretical-research evolution: wandering and searching. The very least it was a straightforward way of balanced development: on the contrary, it was full of primrose paths, vacillating, rises and falls, in “strays”. Radović himself best depicted himself as a theoretician and researcher when he compared his theoretical-researching adventure with the wanderings of the seafarer Odysseus, and his heart with Penelope who waits for the return of Odysseus.

These three complex sentences, I think, very accurately and faithfully reflect the life, intellectual and literary destiny of Miodrag Radović. These sentences, however, have not been written by me who is writing this text and who signs the text of this obituary; these sentences were

written by the one we are talking about, they were written by Miodrag Radović, speaking about the poet, Laza Kostić, whom he truly loved, deeply respected and enchantingly interpreted. In these three sentences I just changed the name of the person in question, and I put the “theoretical-researching” compound instead of the word “poetic”, which stands beside the nouns of evolution and adventures. A small modification, but a big change in the semantic orientation of these words that are perfectly correct when we are talking about both of them, both Laza Kostić and Miodrag Radović. That way, we clearly point out the nature of Radović’s obsession with Laza Kostić: describing Kostić’s work and his life’s destiny Radović recognized the typical new-age, modern, modernist, even postmodernist phenomena without which we cannot understand the world we live in. At the same time, he recognized and interpreted himself, his own secrets, confusions and tremors about which he cannot and does not dare speak publicly and openly. Because of this, his comparative and literary theoretic dramaturgy simply had to contain such dynamics and these developmental currents.

We might say that the complex reality we live in was a valuable and desirable object of knowledge for Radović’s mind, but also too powerful and devastating challenge for his heart. A true observer could clearly see how much his heart quivered with beats that are not quite in accordance with the rhythm of fierce thoughts and contradictory intellectual impulses. And he knew all that, and sometimes he could also say something that resembled some kind of verbal excess. Not so long ago, I plunged into that heart for a moment, and was really worried. Professor Miodrag Radović came to the Matica srpska in the middle of the very hot summer of 2017, and suggested to the president of the institution, who was his former student who took the World Literature exam in front of him, to promote the collection of poems by Veroljub Vukašinić (who was also his student). The president immediately accepted the suggestion, because he also respects Vukašinić’s poetry, even wrote about it, but suggested that the programme should be postponed after the summer heat passes, which is also the practice of the Matica srpska. To this counterproposal professor Radović got somehow angry, saying that in the meantime he might die! And in that anger, he left! And when the hot summer was over, I asked Professor Radović whether we would make that promotion of Vukašinić’s collection, and he answered that he already arranged everything in another place. I stood in amazement because it seemed to me that, in that case, he showed quite a boyish impatience. What really worried me was that kind of haste! I believed it was not some kind of ominous sign, asking myself in wonder. That hot summer, Professor Radović survived, but the next summer heat of 2018 took his life, his mind and his heart!

Miodrag Radović was a brilliant intellectual, a powerful theoretical mind, and a vivacious interpreter of literary works, but along with all these precious characteristics, Penelope's heart that always quivered in him, which, somewhat frightened and somewhat yearning, waiting for Odysseus's wandering *ratio* and adventurous lifestyle enthusiasm to return home, and find calmness and joy again in her. In that constant expectancy and in that constant shift of apprehension and silence, anxiety and tranquillity, this heart could no longer endure the world as it is. In that inhospitable world where there was no space for hospitality, following up Derrida's debate *On Hospitality*, but also following up the traditional Serbian, Slavic, and Indo-European customary practices, Radović came to this insight.³⁴ Therefore, faced with that unfortunate knowledge, Radović's heart wondered somewhere over there, between wakefulness and the dream:

Oh, heart of mine, heart resentful,
may 'bolt take you from this realm,
why not let me while still living,
discern yourself in the knitting
'tween wakefulness and the dream!

In this metaphysical space, somewhere between wakefulness and the dream, his soul is now seeking eternal serenity!

May the soul of the departed Professor Miodrag Radović rest in peace!*

Translated from Serbian by
Ljubica Jankov

³⁴ See Miodrag Radovic, "On Hospitality in a Negligible World", in: *Contemporary Man and Contemporary World 2*, Matica srpska – Matica Srpska Library, Novi Sad 2016, 29-37.

* Fragments of this text were spoken at the commemorative gathering on the occasion of the death of Miodrag Radović, at the Faculty of Philosophy in Novi Sad, on the 20th September, 2018.

“REMEMBERINGS” BY VASILIJE KRESTIĆ

Vasilije Krestic, *Rememberings*, Matica srpska, Novi Sad 2016

After so many valuable books and discussions, Vasilije Krestić decided to publish his memoirs for which he used the Serbian word “rememberings”. Memoirs are usually written by statesmen and prominent politicians, who believe that they can to a certain extent, enhance and even change the idea that the established historical facts create about them. Mainly there are two motives for writing memoirs: the first one is to embellish the notion of your own self, and the other one is to settle accounts with one’s opponents and political rivals. The first kind is almost worthless, whereas the other one can be extremely interesting, since the skillful writer knows well that he can mar his opponents in the best possible way if he cites reliable and true, but unpleasant and disastrous facts about them.

Krestić’s memoirs do not belong to either of those two types. They are actually a record of the history of events that Vasilije Krestic experienced and about the people with whom he worked or confronted in the profession and science. The only exception is the introductory part in which he wanted to show that he is a member of one of the oldest Serbian families in Vojvodina and that he is a Lala (a longstanding local) from Banat according to his origins. Thus, we learn that his ancestors lived in Banat before the Great Migration of the Serbs in 1690, that some of his ancestors moved to Russia, and that during the 18th and 19th centuries some of them were merchants, officers, priests, and later lawyers and engineers. He gives special tribute to his great-grandfather Mihajlo Krestić and his grandfather Vasa Krestić, after whom he was named, and then about his father, mother and brother. As a historian, Vasilije Krestić knew that in the monograph on Đala or the northern part of Banat the Krestić family can only be mentioned next to so many other compatriots and countrymen, and that he is the only one who can present them in his memoirs more thoroughly and save them from the oblivion. And he did it with really touching care and praiseworthy attention.

What already at the beginning of these memoirs captures the curiosity of the reader, are the refined language and distinctive writing style, which

sometimes sparkles with inspired and striking words. Thus, on the occasion of a terrible misfortune which happened to the young and untrained youngsters from Đala in the military on the Sremski Front, he describes it as “a time of sorrow, despair, mourning and bitterness” (49), and on the occasion of the trouble that happened to him at Gymnasium in Novi Kneževac he added that this was his “first encounter with evil times and dishonest people” (55). To those who are better informed on political philosophy and anthropology, Krestić’s portraits of such moral monsters as Thomas Granfil, Slobodan Berberski Lala and Ljudevit Drkulec would already be enough to develop a theory of anthropological pessimism.

But what is crucial in these memoirs was the starting principle that Vasilije Krestić was guided by during the time he was writing them. This is the principle of truth, that is, the historian cannot and must not ignore the relevant factual truth at all costs. Krestić built this starting point as a young historian and confirmed it in confrontation with Professor Vasa Čubrilović, who tried to stop him from presenting impartial and undisputed scientific facts based on evaluation and qualification of Serbian-Croatian relations. According to Krestić himself, Čubrilović was “ready to compromise, to conceal the truth, (...) he advocated the thesis that a historian should not adulterate the facts, but sometimes he should be able to withhold the truth” (113).

Vasilije Krestić would not even think of this other possibility. In his works, even in these memoirs, he followed the principle governed by all the great historians, and which Polybius pithily expressed when he said: “A good man should love his friends and his country, and together with his friends to hate their enemies. But when one deals with history, one should forget all that, and often celebrate and shower one’s enemies with praises when their deeds demand it, and often rebuke and unmercifully scold people closest to one when the mistakes in their actions indicate it. Namely, just as a whole living creature becomes disabled when eyesight is taken away from it, so history remains just a useless story when the truth is taken away” (*Histories*, I, 14). In addition, Vasilije Krestić, as a historian, knows very well that a complete and relatively permanent judgment of these memoirs of his, as well as of his entire work, are not imposed by our humble selves that speak today, but that this will be done in fifty years by the later historians, whose names we cannot even know at this time. Therefore, on the occasion of the Second Congress of the Serbian Intellectuals and the book *The Serbian Question Today*, which emerged from that gathering, he said that historians will pronounce their judgment on those who organized this congress, their intentions and public appearances (232). Unfortunately, this is not known not only to mere mortals but also to the most powerful politicians who, like our contemporary who in his hoop free narcissism, combines psychological portraits of both Nero and Kaligula, really believe that it is enough that almost everyone kowtow to them during their lifetimes and give them their impetuous votes in the elections.

I have already mentioned earlier that a historian should not cite all but the relevant historical facts, those facts which, according to his judgment, are important for the presentation of the historical events and the role of the people, and especially the prominent individuals among them. When they suffered serious bodily injuries and serious illnesses, such as Henry VIII's head injury in a knightly tournament, which somehow changed his personality, and the severe diabetes from which he died eventually, such facts are certainly important for understanding the role and politics of rulers and other powerful people, but they may be superfluous in the case of prominent historians.

One of the important topics that Krestić dealt with in his memoirs was the internal relations in the Serbian Academy of Sciences and Arts, and he specially dealt with the question whether this highest scientific and artistic institution should occasionally consider the serious and crucial political, economic and cultural problems with which the Serbian people and the state are faced. The motive for this was the incomplete SASA memorandum from 1986 and the statement by Nikola Hajdin, published in *NIN*, that he expelled politics from the SASA as a president.

Since the destiny of the Memorandum and the events caused by it is more or less known, I will firstly quote Krestić's well thought out judgment about it. "I consider that the appearance of the Memorandum is a starry moment of the Academy, that it proved that it matched its scientific and national obligations through that document, and therefore its reputation among people, when it was unscrupulously attacked from various sides, was on the highest level" (140).

In this concise statement, which also contains the beautiful phrase "the starry moment of the Academy", we find a far-reaching explanation of what the Academy is and what it always should be. When Krestić says that by the Memorandum Academy has risen to the stars themselves, we can only add that on November 11, 1948, it plunged to the very bottom when it condescendingly and sycophantically pronounced by proclamation the conceited and self-centered Josip Broz Tito as its honorary member. Somewhere between that bottom and the top winds the path of this Academy after the Second World War.

Vasilije Krestić further explains that the Memorandum was not written with the intention of being a national programme, which, like the *Načertanija* (Draft) by Ilija Garašanin, for the general public, and especially for the enemies, it should have been and remained a secret. The *Memorandum* was meant to be just a single response to the burning national and state issues at a very critical moment, when next to the Communist Party there were no other active political institutions. However, as he also mentions that when the Academy was founded in 1887, the principle of not interfering with politics was established, so the question arises about what kind of politics we are talking?

In my judgment, those great predecessors of ours had in mind contemporary politics, and above all, party oriented ones, which at that time had already taken

root and considerably divided the public. Of course, one should not interfere with such politics, and Vasilije Krestić himself says that he is “decisively ... against the reaction of the SASA to the current affairs” (149). In the politics, however, there are two, both conceptually and practically, separate layers which common sense is sufficient to distinguish. The first layer is current policy, which changes faster or slower, and which, of course, affects people’s lives, but does not reach the very foundations on which the people and the state are based in their spiritual and cultural-historical existence. The second one is a deeper layer of those crucial factors and characteristics which make people a nation, and the state firm and stable.

The adversity of our contemporaries, and even academics, is that they are not always able to separate those two substantially different layers of politics. When, let’s say, in the newspapers and on television, there are, at the same time, news about the candidates in the presidential election and their prospects of winning them, on one hand, and negotiations in Brussels with the government of the self-proclaimed state of the Albanians from Kosmet, on the other hand, it seems to them that both are matters of current affairs that should not be interfered with. The first is not only the current but also the party policy in which the SASA should not really intervene. The second one is, however, a crucial issue of keeping or selling out our territorial integrity and the sovereignty of Kosovo as the centre of our national and spiritual-historical identity. This is precisely what Vasilije Krestić had in mind when he claimed that Hajdin removed from the Academy only such Serbian policy, and introduced a policy of “tacit agreeing with everything the current government wants to do” (158), which, in my opinion, is a policy of the sycophant.

The great merit of Vasilije Krestić is the ultimate disclosure of the so-called Yugoslavism of Josip Juraj Štrosmajer and his alleged friendship towards the Serbs, due to which on January 30, 1869, he was elected an honorary member of the Serbian Learning Society. Štrosmajer’s Yugoslavism Krestić assessed “as a fake and hypocritical, which was Yugoslav only by name, but in its essence it was Croatian, even Great Croatian.” (195). And in his book *Bishop Štrosmajer in the Light of New Sources* Krestić analyzed in detail the correspondence between Štrosmajer and the Papal Nuncio in Vienna, Serafim Vanutelli, whose originals are kept in the Secret Vatican archive.

Thus, we learned that Štrosmajer, as a good Croat, had to hate the Serbs, and labeled them as “heretics, schismatics, Photios’s followers, Byzantines and sloths” (308), whereas also as a good Catholic he had to hate the Jews, passionately and wholeheartedly, and therefore call them “the worst of human kind, moral waste and weeds, who bear the inerasable brand of damnation on their forehead for the murder of Jesus Christ” (308). For Štrosmajer the Jews were “the worst mischief-makers, deceivers and sharks.” Therefore, “all the evil of this world came more or less from the corrupt Jews, who, in alliance with free masons, wanted to master the world” (308).

The witch hunt to which Vasilije Krestić was subjected because of his article “On the Genesis of the Genocide against the Serbs in the NDH”, published in September 1986 in *Književne novine* deserves special attention. On the fourth day after the publication, he was attacked in *Dnevnik II* of the RTS, followed by the harangue in the *Communist, Borba, Slobodna Dalmacija, Vjesnik, Oslobođenje, Oko, Danas, Večernji list, Glas Koncila, Marulić, Magyar Szó, Dnevnik* and other newspapers. In addition to the leading organs of public opinion, leading politicians from that period, such as Jure Bilić, Pero Pletikos, Vlado Gotovac, Dušan Mitević, Živko Kustić, Predrag Matvejević, the President of the Society of Croatian Writers Marija Peakić Mikuljan and others also joined that smear campaign.

On the validity of this criticism, maybe the subsequent testimony of Duško Mitević at the court hearing says it best, when he admitted that the accusation against Krestić at the session of the Presidency of the City Committee of the SKS he imposed “because he did not know the true meaning of the word genesis, which, according to its root, he concluded was about genetics” (200). Leading Croatian politicians, historians and writers were not as dull and stupid as our Duško Mitević. What struck and enraged them was the fact that Krestić using indisputable proofs showed and demonstrated that the idea of the genocide against the Serbs did not arise unexpectedly and at once in 1941, but that it was created and shaped for a long time during the nineteenth and twentieth centuries, and was expressed in denationalization, the Croatization and assimilation of Serbs in Croatia, Slavonia and Dalmatia.

Those who read Krestić’s historical monographs, and even memoirs, could get the wrong impression that Krestić is just a fighter for the truth, but not a national and political fighter. He, however, pronounced political and moral judgments, but only on the most serious national and state issues. Thus, on the occasion of negotiations conducted by the leadership of the SAO Krajina on October 12 1991 in Paris with Ambassador Henri Vainens, the coordinator of the then European Community, in which he himself personally participated, Krestić said that “Europe does not care for Serbs, even not as much as a master cares for his dog” (214). All those who advocate for the unquestioned entry of Serbia into the European Union at the cost of losing Kosovo and Metohija should know this, since Europeans, of course, keep dogs, and sometimes they even reward them with some larger amount of money for public administration reform, but they do not receive membership.

In more serious judgments about the nature of historiography, there are individuals who claim that the historians are reverse prophets, who foretell what had already happened. Krestić, however, was a true prophet when he wrote to Slobodan Milošević, declining membership in the SPS Main Committee, saying that the makeup of team of the Committee was not good and that “it will cause a fiasco not only for future parties, but perhaps Serbia as well” (207). Unfortunately, Krestić’s prophecy was fulfilled.

Finally, I would add something that suits my nature, which is prone to irony and even sarcasm. On the occasion of the transfer of Vasko Popa and Branislav Bukurov into the newly founded Vojvodina Academy of Sciences and Arts, Krestić states that they were “promised ... five times bigger bonus than the one that members of the SASA have” (271). Thus, we learned how a large sum of money in the two men from Banat can easily arouse Vojvodinian self-consciousness.

And these memoirs confirm that Krestić has been raised on the shoulders of the great historians of the past, and that he will be a role model for the young and honorable historians in the future.

Kosta ČAVOŠKI

Translated from Serbian by
Ljubica Jankov

THE UNEXPECTED EMERGING OF *LUZITANIJA*

Dejan Atanacković, *Luzitanija*, Besna kobila, Belgrade, 2017

It is not easy, and probably not even possible to retell in a few sentences what the novel *Luzitanija* by Dejan Atanacković is about, in a story that is diversified and coherent, realistic and phantasmagoric, naturalistic and allegoric at the same time, in the story in which each reader seeks and finds the paths (one of the features that distinguishes top literature from the one that it is not: the second one usually offers us just one path, to a single predetermined goal). Following one of the possible paths through the labyrinth of *Luzitanija*, trying to reach the real meaning of the secret which it hides in itself, we might start from apparently firm fulcrums such as the historical characters of Dr. Dušan Stojimirović, the manager of the Belgrade mental hospital, or the American officer Edward Ryan, or the English aristocrat Sir Thomas Lipton; we can, then, reliably and indisputably albeit somewhat simplistically, but remaining on the safe side, point out that the plot of the novel takes place during the First World War, and according to that fact we might hastily conclude that *Luzitanija* is a historical novel.

But it is not. Not because somewhere in the distant, for us even more distant world the end of history was proclaimed a long time ago, not even because in this world for us history begins every day all over again. No, *Luzitanija* is not a historical novel first of all because we have been receiving convincing—sometimes quite brutal—testimonies that the past has been more uncertain

than the future for decades: that what we believe reality is becomes an illusion in a moment, that the great ideas for which we live (here and there even die) turns impertinently easily into big illusions. History is, to put it briefly, more miraculous and more fantastic than any fiction: Dejan Atanacković knows that, and therefore did not fall into the trap of writing a historical novel (as, moreover, neither did he fall in any other).

His first novel is, in fact, in its significant part a utopia, the story of an ideal, almost perfect small republic built in the mental hospital on Guberevac, in which the doctors and the patients live peacefully and equally, in harmony and love, in the middle of the war's pandemonium. The asylum for the insane becomes an asylum in a much higher sense: a shelter from the devastating consequences of the human traits on which the seed of the wars grows best: namely, stupidity. Because stupidity, and not insanity, is the opposite of sanity: insanity is just one way of opposing chaos, hopelessness, and nonsense. Insanity is a form of resistance—true, a desperate one, but undeniably effective. The Republic of Luzitania testifies about it in this novel, a utopian community which is unique, among other things, for the fact it is set in the past. The authors of utopias are usually turned to the future—but not in the cases when, as the author of *Luzitanija* does, speak out of it, enriched by the unwanted cognition that the past was better, or that, if nothing else, it offered hope.

But this does not mean that there is no hope in this novel, on the contrary: true art never ends up in the morass of despair. So, hope is hidden here, in the very beauty of the narration, in a polished, aestheticized sentence, which sparkles with humorous detail even in the most onerous moments, and on the other hand, it can imperceptibly hue the comic scene with melancholy. That melancholy is nostalgic: it is a nostalgia not so much for the past as it is for the better days that are just about to arrive, the days we could and dared dream of a long time ago, nostalgia for the time of innocence in which trepidation was not stronger than hope—nostalgia, why not, for one in many ways utopian country in which many of us have lived the best years of their own, but also its life, a nostalgia for a better future that has never come.

For that very future, people disguised as animals, and animals that do not succeed (nor want) to become people, seek and long in this novel, reconsidering their own corporeity and corporeity in general in a complex and striking way—until now, it seems, unprecedented in the Serbian novel. By their very appearance, those beast-headed people and those anthropomorphic animals speak with a symbolism and logic that strongly resists the incurable human need to subdue to the terror of reason everything that exists and everything that lives, which is often just a clumsily disguised other face of nonsense. One of the most important tasks of art is the obligation to oppose this terror. And they oppose it, each in its own way, the numerous heroes of this novel: manifold (from the homeland and pure consciousness) relocated Mr. Teofilović, who

does not know what he is dreaming about and what is happening to him, but steadfastly knows where his grave is, and he rushes, uncontrollably rushes to the grave through the war trenches and underground corridors of a wounded Europe, appropriately dressed in a life jacket with the name of the ship whose tribulation he was a reluctant witness; and then Vasily Arnott, a taxidermist who knows how to infuse patriotism into stuffed animals—according to needs and orders; and the melancholic Nestor, who, in a mindless funeral ritual, tirelessly walks across war devastated Serbia, leaving behind his creepy invisible trail, and many others—amongst which an unnamed major, commander of an infantry regiment made of soldiers whose “lives no longer exist” determined to try to offer a completely ordinary, and therefore a magnificent life, instead of a glorious death, at the cost that his carefully prepared speech remains nothing else but the rhetorical basis of subsequent, politically-like and desirable mythomaniac constructions.

Therefore, *Luzitanija* is a novel that strongly, primarily using irony and the absurd together with subtle and sharp humour, opposes the disastrous false myths, the ones about foolish self-sacrifice as the act of supreme patriotism, those who turn the greatest defeats into ever greater victories—or, simply, those who over time, became imperceptibly worn off and transformed into their own opposite. Instead of such myths (perhaps instead of any myths—because the sophisticated ironic narration of *Luzitanija* opposes all mythopoeic pomp), Atanacković offers us probably the most powerful weapon of any true novelist: it offers us its magnificence—the story, as the material from which the dreams are made, and as a reality better and more humane, eventually even more real than the one we live in. Telling stories, the truth is, will never abolish history—but it can make it more bearable, at least while the enchantment of the narration is going on. In the novel *Luzitanija*, Dejan Atanacković convincingly proved that he knows the secret of creating such magic.

Zoran PAUNOVIĆ

Translated from Serbian by
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THE ACCOUNTS ARE ON THE TABLE

Gojko Đogo, *A Ball of Wool*, Pravoslavna reč, Novi Sad 2018

Even from the very title of this new collection it is obvious that the poet Gojko Đogo has not come out of his woolly symbolic space, by which he has marked his steady and subversive presence in our poetic and social history. From the basic picture of the white fleeces drying out in his Herzegovinian homeland from which the women's hands will knit warmth, through the chthonian-lined phraseological meaning of the wool, which points to mortal danger, to the image of the ball with the implied ancient Moirai that spin our lives' threads until they decide to break them, goes the woolen semantics which is activated here.

Only from the multi-valued figure of the wool motif can be seen the associative width and the allusiveness of the poetic discourse that Gojko Đogo spins, whose language is not uncontrolled even when untied, it remains sufficiently suppressed even when the allusive target is clearly recognized. "The poem is a kind of specific *secret-writing*, capable of expressing and implying more than that *secret-writing* meant or alluded to," says Jovan Delić, the author of the epilogue for the book *A Ball of Wool* in the earlier detailed study on Đogo, he points out: "Loosening the tongue and speaking your mind, means rebellion, victory over fear, readiness for the defence when in trouble."

This poet did not base the defence of his poetry before the Titoist court (which somehow does not stop accusing him!) claiming that he did not write what they accused him of, but that the accusation is pointless because the poetry cannot be reduced to one dimension of meaning. Later, Đogo added: "The fantasy and the mystery of poetry, paradoxically, contribute the most to its blurred clarity that allows it to testify about the world truthfully." The paradox of blurred clarity allows the truth of testimony in its essential many-sided aspects and not in political unilateralness.

If we have pointed out the continuity that speaks from the headline signals of the *Woollen Time*, the *Black Fleece* and, finally, *A Ball of Wool*, we know that continuity also implies evolution, transformation. What is the change, or twist, if any? If the coordinates of Đogo's poetic world are determined by the "phenomenological reduction" of images of the native and residential space, of Hum and Belgrade, if this world—to take the definition of the symbol of Branko Miljković—condensed the reality in space and time into what is essential and important, what has changed on the poetic experience path of Gojko Đogo?

The description continues to be reduced to associative-symbolic potent images, the language being concise and supported so much on the sporadic lexical colouring of native soil, so much onto playing with colloquial phrases of urban origin, relying on a general mythological and folklore background,

as well as on discrete dialogue with remarkable lyrical contemporaries. The fundamental change starts in the poetic perspective. The critical impulse becomes covered by the prevailing sense of reconciliation with the order of life that has been severely unmasked. The activist calms down, the blade of reconsideration and denial is redirected within itself. The poems are arranged in five cycles, with a prologue poem, and seem to be a long series of variations in which a once-struggling individual, who quivered to tell the devil that he is evil, gives up and turns into a series of strange characters or unattractive physiognomies even to his own self.

In Đogo's collection *A Ball of Wool*, we are following the entire catalogue of identifications of the weary, tired poetic Me. First, he appears as the "keeper of the flock," who howls together with the wolves, then he presents himself as Ahasver who has had enough of the world, then the alchemist who wastes his life on the park bench and cannot be transformed into a honey bee. He called himself an old raven; melancholic as a Gypsy horse in the sultriness, which has become too long, suspects his future form in the Vinča fossil shrimp from the Neolithic. That chain of self-defragmentation and self-polarization is expressed in the poem "A Self-portrait without Mirrors", giving the self-conflicted unity of man's inextricable ball of wool: "Half heaven half earth,/ fifty-fifty. / A monk and a pagan / a quietist and an anarchist / a narrow-minded patriot and a mondialist / Humljak and Hyperborean // (...) There is no such surgeon / who can this hunk of intestine/ untangle". "Nothing surely remained, in its earlier place, even through the winter blurred window, in the poem "Gloom", a river can be seen "which has never flown there before" and the carrier across the river waiting. Archaic images suggest the certainty of the end even in the title poem, for life is, from primordial times, shaped in the image of thread: "Comb fumble spin tie/ wind it up round the pebble in your chest/ year after year, from morning, till there is still thread / till the spindle turns . // The ball of wool grows and grows/ I diminish, / tight for it, hard for me."

Apart from transformations into other forms, the lyric uniqueness duplicates within itself, causing the friction within its own mindfulness, which until recently has assaulted onto a world-wide menagerie. This condition literally thematizes the poem "Me and me": "Do not call me in vain, / have bricked up the door, put out the fire, /I won't give you my body to move in, / I hardly expelled you. // If you sneak through the crack / I will choke you in the dark." In the poem "The Spring Walk", the lyric individuality does not recognize itself, and not only duplicates but even triplicates. In the poem "Two Old Butchers" he has difficulty with his own heart, an explosive "inheritance of the past war" and he himself becomes a Sisyphus Hill where every day an absurd effort takes place. He cannot hear the firebird, and it used to sing on his shoulder when he was young, and it singing its old song searches in vain for the one who stayed in the past. The lyrical Me, its resonant inwardness,

also splits into two birds' voices: the beautiful voice of the nightingale which takes him from the earth but "does not mean anything," and the ugly voice of the rook, the black monk, which is closer to him. The image of a lonely walker in the park cannot even connect the wild pigeons of his childhood with the street pigeons that shake out their trash onto the passers-by's heads—the pigeons are not the same because the boy is no longer a boy.

The poetic Me resists, we said, the song of the nightingale that takes him from the earth. The chthonic magnets also strengthened to the other symbolic embodiments of higher human tendencies and with them Đogo starts the conversation in the collection *A Ball of Wool*. In the poem "The View from Leotar", he implicitly polemicizes with the topoi of the spiritual height of Njegoš and Dučić, for as he climbs upwards, his view blurs: "In vain I run away of the deep vale / in *timor*, my lying eyes betray me. / The mist is blue up there, / the dark abyss opens down there. "Neither the translucent figures of Sophia, Faith, Hope, and Love are spared of the lecture, or at least the bitter confession of the old raven or the rook. He refuses to be the concealer any more of Sophia, mother of wisdom, so he advises her to sober up and to succumb to the shameful circus of the world. He approves for Faith more real reality and her forgiving the poet's infidelities and misbeliefs, but refuses to allow "beautiful homeless" Hope to seduce him further. In the delicate appeal of the key place in the Apostle Paul's "Hymn of Love", Love still prevails, regardless of all the losses and the ever faster rolling of the fatal ball of wool: "So, from the beginning, Love, you and me / losing and finding each other, / would not we together / in the darkness of my room / write another page / of our love story.// While the ball faster and faster / down the slope rolls."

The fighter retreats, the former Torch slakes, in the initial "Requiem to the past century" the accounts are on the table, although, as he says in the next poem, they are not worth collecting or digging through the archive. "I want to keep silent for a while, / and to sing a little in myself / to hum a little with myself", writes in the poem "The Answer to the Questions by the Journalist Z. H. R.", the final one in the collection *A Ball of Wool*. So now, the one who, only yesterday, in a public statement, said the following diagnosis: "Unfortunately, our elite is the most worm-eaten part of the society; distraught by the confusion of the contradictory ideas and beliefs, separated into camps and coteries, discordant and impassioned, it has no power to devise any program and project, nor to point to the path of rescue. One immersed in vassalhood and treachery, the other into apathy and dejection"(Road by the Road, 2017). It is difficult to add anything to this assessment, except that the fighters have the right to become despondent as well, when the eclipse becomes prevalent for a second and the moon represents the sun, until the revolutionary moment when they will hear again the lifesaving parole within themselves "And to this struggle no end shall ever be!" Because hope is there even when it's gone, wrote that same weary Đogo. In such a poetic paradox has been the key to our

survival so far, so it is the key of the reversal from the poet's late resignation and retreat into himself. That is what poetry is for, to say something but to long for and invoke something completely different.

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ANDRIĆ SEEN THROUGH THE WRITER'S EYES

Vladimir Pištalo, *The Sun of This Day (A Letter to Andrić)*, Agora, Zrenjanin, 2017

The literary work of Ivo Andrić has been and will be the subject of numerous literary and cultural studies, criticisms, analysis, reviews, as well as many other literary and non-literary observations, which is hardly surprising when we bear in mind the fact that this writer, with his rich and diverse creative opus, has been ruling the domestic and world literary scene for over a century. On the other hand, many will rightly ask what is yet to be said about Andrić that has not already been said or at least briefly mentioned. We will find the right answer in the book *The Sun of This Day (A Letter to Andrić)* by Vladimir Pištalo, which saw the light of day in 2017, thanks to the publishing house "Agora" from Zrenjanin: "In this book, I modestly wanted to show that writing about literature with passion and love is not merely possible. It's the only possible way." (*The Sun of This Day*, page 54).

Namely, Vladimir Pištalo shows us that in spite of everything that has been written about Andrić we are not anywhere near knowing what his work bears in itself, i.e. that his rich literary opus has still been a constant inspiration to new and different readings. In this case, the readings which through the dialogue with Andrić's work correspond with the author's own auto-poetic statement, because Vladimir Pištalo himself is, as Andrić was in the twentieth century, one of the most prolific, the most translated and most award-winning writers, of the new twenty-first century.

Using somewhat forgotten, epistolary form, combined with the collage technique, singing in two voices, supplemented, as he says, with spiritistic telepathy, Pištalo has a dialogue with the work of Ivo Andrić, as a writer with a writer, talking both about Andrić's and his own literary work, and focusing solely on the work itself: "I used only your work. I consider criticisms the gossips." (*The Sun of This day*, page 55). I will follow Pištalo's footsteps, and so will speak about this book only on the basis of its own self, feeling free to ignore everything that literary criticism has said about it so far.

Pištaló's observations on Andrić's, but also on his own literary opus, was put into several chapters: "Balkan Christ," "Counterpoint", "For the Love of a Woman", "Ironic Heroes", "Young Bosnia" and "Sundial". Each chapter begins with a Prologue, and ends with an Epilogue, followed by the chapter "And that really was" through which the author rounds up the impression of a certain segment of Andrić's, as well as his own, poetic statement. Such a composition by itself distances the work from a typical literary-historical or critical study on the work of a particular writer but, on the other hand, brings it closer to the literary work of its own which then requires its own readings and interpretations, which, I deeply believe, Pištalo himself wanted to achieve.

The thesis which the author runs through the whole book is based on a vision that Andrić is one of a few writers, maybe the only one, in whose work the figure and the background function solely and only in symbiosis, and he considers it typical for the counterpoint, which he then sees as a fundamental signpost in the further consideration of Andrić's work. Through the counterpoint he, thus, observes the general points of Andrić's prose, such as silence, passion, understanding, and game. This is all valid on the condition that the term counterpoint is accepted in the original meaning which it has in the theory of music, more precisely to consider it as a skill to connect two or more melodies so that when they are performed simultaneously, they sound harmonious.

The first commonplace of Andrić's poetics is certainly silence. Pištalo remarks correctly that Andrić protected his soul and his high criteria with silence, defending his characters, his "clowns and chimeras" by using it, but, on the other hand, he remained consistent with listing the arguments against silence for the rest of his life. It would be Andrić's first counterpoint, summed up in that well-known motto, "In silence is security," written in the story "Bridge on the Žepa". The second commonplace of Andrić's prose is certainly passion. As Vladimir Pištalo observes very nicely and accurately, Andrić's attitude towards passion is aligned with the writers of his generation (primarily referring to the work of Borisav Stanković): "Like many people of your generation you were scared of the darkness of your blood and heavy heritage. You mentioned an ancestor of yours who staggered drunk down the Sarajevo field. You believed that the brandy that our elderly drank when we were not even conceived, manages our stream of consciousness." (*The Sun of This Day*, page 48). Passions in Andrić's work, therefore, turn every particular event into an associative force that lasts only as long as the passion lasts. On such a well-founded belief he used to build all his characters, women and men, regardless of their religion and nation, so that would be the second counterpoint of Andrić's prose discourse. The third commonplace in Andrić's opus Pištalo connects to understanding, because Andrić equally understood the gossips and the slanderers, the imaginary invalids, the serf's hatred at the beyhood and the noble pride of boyhood itself: "You washed the feet of every single person

you described, through the act of great understanding... You understood the boundaries. You understood the bridges.” (*The Sun of This Day*, page 64). Ultimately, but not less important, as the fourth commonplace of Andrić’s prose, Pištalo singled out the game, because it is the game that makes an artist into an artist, and his work true art, it is at the same time the fourth, and we would also say the most important counterpoint of the creative opus of Ivo Andrić: “According to you art is more serious the more it looks like a game. As a true artist, you were *homo ludens* but they did not consider you as such. They did not recognize your playfulness because it was the opposite of what they were taught to respect.” (*The Sun of This Day*, page 116).

A special topic when it comes to the literary opus of Ivo Andrić is related to his attitude towards religion and nation manifested through the idea of Yugoslavism, so it is natural that Pištalo pays special attention to it in his book. Very inventively, the author of this book places his observations on this subject in a chapter called “Identity”: “About your national and religious identity was spoken more than about your literary work. I’m not sure that your arshines were the ones the people applied to you. In the world where love is more shameful than hatred, you have not given up any form of civility.” (*The Sun of This Day*, page 84). In his work, Andrić did not speak about religion but about people. For example, his Fata from the novel *The Bridge on the Drina*, as Vladimir Pištalo noticed, is not portrayed as a woman of a certain religion, but as an exceptional creature, an unattainable role model who arouses empathy in each reader with her tragic fate. Similarly, Andrić treated the characters of the Croats, the Serbs, and the Jews: “Your Mara is a Croat, but I cannot think of her as a ‘Croat’, but as a martyr for all the martyrs.” (*The Sun of This Day*, p. 88). It is this treatment of the characters that places Andrić among the supranational and timeless writers, and that is where his greatness lies. Pištalo, who recognizes Andrić’s view of the world in the idea of Yugoslavism, felt that very well: “In democracy, a man has the right to unpopular opinions. Your (now already universal) unpopular opinion was that the Serbs, the Croats, and the Muslims are one nation.” (*The Sun of This Day*, p. 98).

In spite of the fact that the history of literature, as well as the literary criticism, treated Andrić primarily as a prose writer, he tried his hand at poetry as well. This fact is not neglected even by Pištalo who has a dialogue with Andrić the poet in the chapter “Protolanguage”. Through Andrić’s poems “Lili Lalwana” and “Granlaria”, Pištalo polemicizes with his poetry, pointing out that he wrote as a real surrealist, although during his life he tried to deny the poetry of surrealism, made up of associative sequences: “Still, you wrote those two poems from the very associations that the words carry, from the sound itself.” (*The Sun of This Day*, page 112). In general, Andrić criticised the surrealists for that “sur-”, which he subsequently transposed to his prose discourse, criticising the “over-” with the writers who tried to turn their characters into the “overman”, following Nietzsche’s philosophy, while, on the

other hand, he supported the idea of a man, as he is, in his primordial nature: "All your heroes are a bit, ironic heroes. In Mustafa Madžar you ironized the idea of Nietzsche's overman. In 'Woman of Sarajevo' you mocked the imperative of Machiavellian success." (*The Sun of This Day*, page 192). Here we come to another commonplace of Andrić's prose, which Pištalo recognized and accentuated in a separate chapter. It is irony, as a specific literary form of portraying the characters. Andrić, as Pištalo remarks, through irony, restores dignity to his heroes and his to obsessive topics such as silence and the game. He even went so far that he set irony as the basic form of his own auto-poetic statement, which can best be seen in the novel *Woman of Sarajevo* and which can be read as an ironic self-portrait of Andrić himself.

Andrić's attitude towards women and the specificity of the female characters in his prose is a great theme that exceeds the frames of both Pištalo's book and this critical review. Nevertheless, Pištalo devotes a lot of space to Andrić and his attitude towards women both as literary and non-literary characters. If we tried to abridge this relationship for the purpose of this text, the conclusion would be that it was woven from pure longing: "There were triggers of Jelena's presence. There were signs. Sometimes she appeared quite vaguely in barely audible rustle of leaves, the crackling of the parquet. She was there on sunny days and was related to the light illusions." (*The Sun of This Day*, page 156).

The intertextual correspondence with Andrić's work, on the other hand, enables Pištalo to speak on some universal themes (such as creation), but also about his own poetics. When it comes to the creation, Pištalo was on the trail of Ivo Andrić as well as Momčilo Nastasijević (who were rather poetically close in spite of the fact that Andrić claimed he did not understand Nastasijević) and made the creation closely connected to the deific as a specific denominator of cosmos: "God's creation has not been completed. It continues through the medium of a man. Neither has the creation of the great artists been completed. It continues through the work of its followers. This is called tradition." (*The Sun of This Day*, page 166). Didn't Andrić himself talk about this in "Conversations with Goya", as well as Momčilo Nastasijević in his essay "A Few Reflections on Art".

When it comes to the poetics of Vladimir Pištalo himself, on several occasions in this book he underlines his own poetic attitudes which he conducts in his rich literary opus: "I translate the language of ideas to the language of images. I wish to explain them sensually and associatively, not mechanically and unconnectedly." (*The Sun of This Day*, page 55). In this type of key, we can read most of Pištalo's literary observations, such as his cult novels *Millennium in Belgrade*, *Venice*, and *Tesla, a Portrait among the Masks*.

To conclude, the book *The Sun of This Day (A Letter to Andrić)* by Vladimir Pištalo offers an entirely new reading of Andrić's rich literary opus, given through the dialogue of a writer with the poetics of another one, but

also through the reconsideration of his own poetic attitudes which leads to the only right key for the interpretation of a literary work, and that is, a work, without any external components, is best interpreted by its own self: “You were a writer, a man of the pen. When a man dies, in Egyptian mythology, his heart and a pen are put on the scales. If they found the heart heavier than the pen, the demon Amit would eat it. If the pen is heavier than the heart, the life has been lived purposefully and you passed your final exam.” (*The Sun of This Day*, page 294).

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Translated from Serbian by
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ANDRIĆ’S SPIRIT IN BOSNIA, WHAT IS IT?

Zoran Milutinović, *The Battle for the Past. Ivo Andrić and Bosniak Nationalism*, Geopoetika, Belgrade, 2018.

“It’s quite understandable that
the Islamists hate Andrić. It should be so.”

Z. Milutinović

It was just a matter of time when the study which will fundamentally and systematically deal with the most problematic part of the critical reception of the literary work of Ivo Andrić will be presented. A kind of constant in the effort to disprove the work of the Serbian Nobel laureate as a tendentious ideological image of Bosnia under the disguise of fine literature, at the expense of that part of the population of the country professing Islam, has lasted in the public space for more than fifty years. This type of criticism is, as a rule, written without the most basic knowledge and appreciation of the literary theoretical assumptions in the interpretation of a literary work, in some cases with their conscious neglecting of it, but with visible ideological tendencies, more or less sheltered behind the bombastic constructions of pseudo-scientific discourse, which have always been used unsuccessfully to mask a low level of the cognitive potential of politically motivated criticism, in this case, also carried away by scientific ambitions. The study of Zoran Milutinović *The Battle for the Past* is a detailed and competent metacritical analysis of the indicated problem and a model example of scrupulous argumentative resistance to the misuse of literature for the ideological purposes.

The tradition of thinking, or rather the continuity of reading the work of Ivo Andrić, was processed in Milutinović's book through the interpretation of the texts of its most prominent representatives, from Šukrija Kurtović, through Adil Zulfikarpašić, Muhamed Filipović and Muhsin Rizvić to Rusmir Mahmutćehajić. Milutinović also refers to the other representatives of similar approach to Andrić, but emphasizes the efforts of these few creators, who have most diligently participated in the construction of a specific notion of that writer as its leading creators. Milutinović talks about Andrić's work in the "discourse of Bosniak nationalism" or "Bosniak nationalistic discourse", consistently and most often using the syntagma "this Bosniak discourse" in order to dispel the confusion that it is a kind of some kind of general and ubiquitous understanding of Andrić among Bosnian and other Muslims: in the introductory chapter "Bosnian Ruždi", the names of the most prominent authors from the Muslim cultural milieu are immediately mentioned, which made a significant contribution to the interpretation of Andrić's prose, such as Midhat Begić, Midhat Šamić, and Hatidža Krnjević, as well as those who came out as the opponents of the abovementioned discourse—Amila Kahrović Posavljak, Haris Imamović, Tarik Haverić, Muharem Bazdulj and Nedžad Ibrahimović. (A subsequent review of Andrić's positive reception in Turkey is also precious.) Milutinović's book hence is not an ideological "counterblow", but a study written on the basis of reliable philological knowledge with also remarkable information in the field of philosophy, history, sociology and other humanistic disciplines. All the premises of a serious scientific work, which are cardinally lacking to the authors of the texts and books about which the *Battle for the Past* speaks, inherently indicate onto the structural defectiveness of the attempts of the aforementioned discourse to denounce Andrić ethically in such a radical way. However, in Milutinović's book there is also something that recently has been increasingly pervading metacritical speech of the Serbian literary science which is a powerful literary component, which in a certain way culminates in the *Battle for the Past* through the humour of surprisingly wide range and effect. Onto the seemingly harmless phenomenon of ever more drastic forms and reverberations of Andrić's disapproval, especially in the cyber-sphere, in which pseudo-scientific "evidence" spreads far faster than well-founded knowledge about the meaning and intentions of certain literary works, Milutinović responded with rigorous academic debate defending the dignity of the artist, paradigmatic for the native culture and the world's highest ranked writer; but at the same time, Milutinović responded to the comical situations of clumsy hermeneutics and absurdity as well as illogical and aprioristic way of thinking as a writer, avoiding academic dullness with extraordinary creative effect.

Already on the basis of the title and the subtitle of the chapter the *Battle for the Past*, such author's orientation is obvious: "Philosophical Dadaism of Muhammad Filipović", "The triumph of arbitrariness: on the couch with Dr. Rizvić", "In the Land of Academic Miracles", etc. The subtle allusiveness of

the subtitle “The Best Intentions of Šukrija Kurtović” speaks, according to the whole section, on “The Birth of a Discourse” as the beginning of a journey to the destination that, in accordance with the famous saying, are often led by the best intentions. Kurtović’s text “*The Bridge over the Drina* and *Bosnian Chronicle* by Ivo Andrić in the light of fraternity and unity” is a pioneer attempt of the ideological critique of the writer’s literary work, while Milutinović’s commentary is a demonstration of a simple and reliable method which the author of the *Battle for the Past* uses in his analyzes: he primarily checks the attitudes of Andrić’s self-appointed judges by using the elementary logic and finds that they do not satisfy the simplest presumption of reasoning by which the conclusion is derived from the premises, but that they search for the “evidence” of their own preconceptions, thus being trapped in the stunning contradictions. Kurtović’s remark that Andrić uses historical inaccuracies in his work (which Midhat Šamić checked and confirmed as authentic historical sources of *Bosnian Chronicle*) in order to misrepresent Bosnian Muslims. One of the episodes of this novel that Kurtović takes as an example, when the Vizier Ibrahim Paša shook out the cut off human ears and noses in front of the Consul Daville, in the continuation of Kurtović’s interpretation has been justified, since they, as it is pointed out, belong to the participants of the First Serbian Uprising, therefore they are not exactly unjustly punished people. There are certain similarities to the scene of welcoming the French consul, again made literary according to the remembrance from the memoir of Daville’s historical prototype, in which the Muslim women from Travnik express their protest to his arrival into the city by spitting and cursing from their windows, which Kurtović immediately evaluates, after yet assuming the event possible, as a “justified and likeable patriotic gesture” (26). On the basis of its poetic homologic character with socialist realism, Milutinović names such a type of criticism as a *Muslim realism* (later also called a *Musrealism*), which requires that reality in literature is presented not as it is or might be, but as it should be like in the ideal circumstances from the perspective of an ideological pattern. Milutinović sums up the unsustainability of Kurtović’s argumentation:

The devastating for his argument is that each time he accuses Andrić for betrayal the historical truth, in the next step what he claimed to be Andrić’s malicious fabrication he confirms himself: something is firstly historically wrong and impossible, and in the next step yet right and possible, to become eventually even likeable and justified (40).

Looking back at Kurtović’s publisher and promoter—Adil Zulfikarpašić, who, unlike his pretentious successors, will express the same attitude about Andrić through transparent and unequivocal thought that Andrić is “a skilled artist in written word and combining but a wretched soul” (42), Milutinović comes to the former bearer of the first-degree medal in the rank of similar

interpreters—Muhamed Filipović, who recaptured the prestigious medal to the unjustly neglected Kurtović with a famous sentence from the article “The Bosnian Spirit in Literature, What is it?” (1967) in which he claimed that Andrić’s literature “More divided Bosnia than many armies marching through it and shedding blood in it” (53). Although he does not fail to draw attention to certain exaggeration in Filipović’s observation, since, among other things, he talks about the army of Mehmed Fatih, the army of the Austro-Hungarian monarchy and the Nazi Vermaht, Milutinović concentrates on that part of the text that specifically answers the question asked in its title:

It is the contemplative spirit of immersing into something that’s been and gone, in the eternal, beyond the boundaries of ephemeral, into something on the other side of difficult, unstable and hard worldly living and being. That denial of the boundaries of time and space as the condition of humanity, that eternal traditional and traditionalist existence as a man, the people who they are, who they were and who they will be, all in an unbroken series. That spirit of laconic word and abstained motion, of stingy motif and pale colour, deprived of wealth and breeziness, deprived of hues and colours, massive, safe, steady, hard stone, that restrained and hardly visible somewhere at the edge of the line, in the reflection of the colour, at the end of the thought, on the sprouts of the vineyard, in the hidden and concealed places, in the miniature and generally in the invisible, sensually playful and lustful life spirit, desire, yearning, instinct (53-54).

While *Muslim realism* more easily found its terminological support in previous and complementary poetic-ideological normativism, more creativity was necessary for the elusive nature of this kind of discourse, so Milutinović created the phrase *philosophical Dadaism* for it. Although at first glance it can be seen just as one theoretical ingenuity, *philosophical Dadaism* opens up a perspective in which the analyzed corpus of texts becomes acceptable—it can be seen as a late offspring of one of the most radical currents of European historical avant-garde. The major part of the passages in Milutinović’s book remind of that artistic practice that tended to absolute negation, showing again that the world and even the art in it are a lot of *nothing*. Andrić’s analysts operate in the form of a Dadaist negation of literature, since the structure of their texts is as follows: a quote from Andrić—its negation through “Dadaist sentences that defy the syntax, ridicule logic and mock the idea that language must have a meaning” (54; See also :101, 117).

And other heritage of Western culture from the beginning of the twentieth century, which critics gathered in Milutinović’s study understand as the broadest context of the antimuslim concept personalized in Andrić, have found their application in the “unmasking” of that writer, as the authors often declare themselves referring to their task. Muhsin Rizvić, the author of the book *Bosnian Muslims in Andrić’s World* (1996), has followed the psychoanalytic method in the interpretation of Andrić’s texts. Namely, Andrić identified himself

with some of his heroes, whom Rizvić counted following preconceived notion of Andrić as an undisputed hater of Islam. There is no system in making Rizvić's list, despite the literary theoretical knowledge of the unreliability and in the end even the unnecessary revelation of the writer's reasoning for the purpose of objective analysis of a literary work. Andrić is, as Milutinović summarizes, "both the demonic Turk and the sexual abuser, and the virtuous dervish and hysterical consul's wife, and the cruel vizier, and the wise friar, the Serbian leading man, and the evil and disgusting Ottoman serasker, and the Croatian painter ..." (63). Although Milutinović claims that all these individual approaches to Andrić are only a variation on the topic of what Šukrija Kurtović initiated, the *Battle for the Past*, however, as it could have been realized so far, reveals a cognitive diversity that reaches the highest point of cognitive extravagance by Rizvić's book:

We suggest the readers the following experiment: what to do when dealing with facts that disprove your opinion? Two outcomes can be imagined: the majority, most likely, change the opinion that turned out to be wrong; some, perhaps, decide to ignore the facts so they can stick to their misconception. Muhsin Rizvić does neither of these things but openly acknowledges the facts that disprove the thesis on Ivo Andrić, which he presents in his book, but in spite of them, he continues to present and explain the opinion that these facts had disproved. Sometimes these facts are interpreted as Andrić's opportunism: Andrić is "always cautious in order not to ideally-politically go beyond his concept on Turkish reign that had left behind the traces of culture and spirit as well as monuments of permanent human value" (212). So, Andrić speaks respectfully of the Ottoman heritage, but does not make Rizvić to consider the modification of his thesis of Andrić as a hater of the Turks, Islam and Bosniaks, but sticks to the interpretation of that respect as a form of caution and opportunism (76).

On most of the interpreted authors Milutinović, at the beginning of each chapter, forms a narrative structure which he later varies in order to satirically unmask those self-appointed interpreters, primarily of Andrić's personality, and then his work, the not well-intentioned dilettantes in the field of literary science whose insights would not provoke more engaged reaction than casual parody if in action was not the ideological forgery of all the more amazing forms, increasing in number and volume. Andrić, even among the most ambitious projects of this kind, is most frequently just the cause: "The interpretation of Andrić's literature is not the subject of *Andrićism*" (195), concludes Milutinović the chapter about that, for the time being, latest book of the same genre. In order to outline the contours of the speaking subject of the capital work of Rusmir Mahmutćehajić, Milutinović reaches for more developed picturesque review, which will sound quite familiar to the former reader of *Andrićism* and much more than that:

Andrićism is more like a record of the storytelling—one of Mahmutćehajić's favourite expressions—rather than a logically structured book: as if someone comes to the same place seven nights in a row and to the assembled audience, nationally and religiously conscious younger teenagers and elderly gentlemen who did not have the opportunity to attend school regularly, but who have certain respect for the book and a learned man, especially if the narrator is *theirs*, and he talks about the things that comes to his mind at that particular moment. When it becomes late—not when one part of the complex argument is developed and proven, but just after a couple of hours, so everyone gets a little tired- the speaker and the audience go home, but the next day they meet again at the same place, so the speaker tells them again what he had told them yesterday. And so on seven times. And the speaker does not leave the impression of someone who comes to these meetings with a clear plan of what he wants to say, but rather it seems as if he speaks about the things that came to his mind at that particular moment. To his mind always come first *suffering* and *calvary* of Bosnian Muslims, and Muslims in general, so most frequently he speaks about it. Communism, Christianity, modernity, Europe, fascists, racists, the orientalist, Serbian nationalists, Croatian nationalists, travel writers from the West, Andrić and his “sorcerers” – not to mention the little people who live in the radiators and at night type encrypted messages – the conspiracy that has been organized against the Bosnian Muslims since the Viennese War in 1683, and they do not think about anything else but how to bring the new *suffering* and *calvary* to them. The elderly gentlemen in the audience then raise their index finger in the air and turn to the neighbour to add one more persecutor to that list, and younger teenagers grinding their teeth and pressing their fists, hardly preventing themselves not to get to the nearest computer to jump into the verbal war with the comments on one of the numerous Bosnian Internet portals, where together with their Serbian and Croatian equivalents represent the largest collection of juvenile neurotics that the world has seen since the Children's Crusade (111-112).

Successfully pasting in certain places even Andrić's style, Milutinović underlines several important characteristics of Mahmutćehajić's supplement to this back water of andrićology: the discursive disorientation between the language science, politics and theology, the absolute absence of systematism, the disregard of logic, arbitrariness, improvisation and basically quite an obvious intention to present Andrić in the obscene way to the semi-educated reader as the concentration of overall evil. The war, which has been updated on social networks about the majority of even the most appropriate articles about Andrić's life and work, testifies what kind of impact *Andrićism* and books similar to it tend and succeed to produce. There is something in the very scope of such books, which with their voluminousness want to verify their own “academic indisputability”, as Mahmutćehajić stated about his own work. *Andrićism* reached the epic number of pages by the intellectual futility, which relentlessly spins in its dervish trance. In Rizvić's book a fraud is outstandingly striking which is so characteristic for the research papers of

the negligent students: the font, spacing and margins are set in a way that the book, made up as an undergraduate school reading for the lower grades of primary school, reaches an authoritative seven hundred pages. Milutinović's expertise of this type of text seems to be the most appropriate way to demonstrate their scientific uselessness, since it combines top-level acrimony with a vivacious tone and the spirit of theoretical narration, and thus reveals the ridiculous sides of the most ordinary, though not well intentional amateurism.

Milutinović rightly awards Mahmutćehajić with an honorary front row seat among Andrić's interpreters of the same orientation: Mahmutćehajić's ability of performing hermeneutical acrobatics in the most unexpected places of Andrić's prose undoubtedly runs *Andrićism* for the peak of literature in which that work has been confidently enrolled, giving hope that the unsurpassable and therefore the final point of a reception of the missed horizon has been attained:

In the domain of civil engineering Andrić made another scandal which Mahmutćehajić subjected to careful hermeneutical semantic analysis. In the story "In Jail," Andrić wrote: "To almost each Turkish buildings has always been, more or less, added some new parts or the present ones has been divided with certain partitions and it hasn't been done to satisfy some kind of momentary, the first and the most essential need, regardless of the logic of the material, or the durability of the building" (221). By the mid of *Andrićism* where this quote can be found, it is already clear to the reader that such a careless statement will not end well for Andrić, but nobody is ready for the sentence that immediately follows that quote: "If we start from the identification of the Turkish and the Muslim, which is the starting point of this narrative, the above conclusion is a necessary consequence of feeling and understanding of the entire heritage of messenger Hval as a phenomenon without origin" (222). So, what Andrić says about Turkish buildings in provincial towns and villages in Bosnia, in fact, refers to global Islam, everything that is in any relation to that faith, theology, politics, culture, economy, laws—simply to all. Because, the legacy of the messenger Hval can be understood only holistic: whatever those who are lit by the light of Islam do, is always related with the whole heritage, so the extension of the shed in the backyard is equal to the manifestation of the essence of Islam as well as the theological debate. "With Christians and agnostics a shed can only be a shed; for Muslims, however, a shed is in direct communication with the *midst of humanity*: In that way is covered the totality of its tradition in which its all visible forms are exactly what in given allegation they are not—the entirety that springs from the deepest *midst of humanity*. In order to understand the contents of this tradition, it is necessary to recognize their foundation in them—a testimony that there is no god to God and the testimony that His Messenger was sent" (222). Extending buildings and making partitions is based on the pillars of Islam. There is no understanding of the shed without understanding God. Andrić, agnostic, did not understand that. He looked at the shed and did not understand anything because he did not see God in it (130).

The Battle for the Past abounds with all the more important accompanying motifs from the same repertoire, such as Njegoš's genocide, the Serbdom of Meša Selimović and a number of other controversies that have been hypertrophied throughout the duration of Andrić's disapproval. Milutinović's book is therefore a small encyclopedia, a textbook of "anti-Andrićism", which, besides the presented intellectual lessons and entertainment, will provide information on all dilemmas related to the indicated problem, widespread and carefully cultivated in various types of texts and public appearances. By the importance of the theme, the author's accuracy and the power of his argumentation, the perfect humor and brilliant style, the *Battle for the Past* is among the most important polemic books written in the Serbian language, somewhere between *The Anatomy Lesson* by Danilo Kiš and *The Spirit of Self-Denial* by Milo Lompar; and it will undoubtedly completely change the further course of the debate on Andrić and Muslims, although the reason for the debate after it no longer exists, if ever it did.

Vladan BAJČETA

Translated from Serbian by
Ljubica Jankov

NOGO'S INALIENABLE OTHERNESSES

Rajko Petrov Nogo, *Sonnet and Death*, Srpska književna zadruga, Belgrade, 2017

"Death. Eternal thought. A childhood friend.
The essential food of my days and nights.
A concealed germ of consciousness in our oblivion.
The only permanent and eternal presence in us."

Vladan Desnica

The latest book of poetry by Rajko Petrov Nogo is dedicated to the aesthetic conceptualization of the phenomenon of his own and other people's death. His consistent poetic reflection is caused by the bitter and painful experience layers; therefore, in the thematic-motivational assortment of Nogo's poetics this great artistic theme has a privileged place. Through the optics of the omnipresent or approaching death, different aspects of life are being seen both individual and collective, which are poetically rather adopted and seen as internal. However, in the collection of poems *Sonnet and Death*, awareness of the death becomes a constant smouldering inner anxiety to which it is

necessary to provide meaning in order to consider, even justify the life path to which the death is an inevitable starting point, though not the final end.

Nogo's subject, recognized last year as a troubled or paradoxical rebel, confesses quite a different state in the most recent sonnets, in a somehow quieter tone, with a mild repentance, but not more reduced stylistic means. There is a turning point after the initial despair and anger ("Now we are where we are Waiting in the river / Indignant old men hopeless in their abuse"). Hence, in Nogo's latest lyrical publications, the resignation becomes the prevailing mood, which extends the range to the author's immanent poetic sensibility. Postulating the new mental-spiritual state of the subject, faced with the inevitability of ending of biological existence, requires skill in selecting the poetic procedure, engaging various stylistic-language forms and their careful dosing within textual and semantic units. It is a strictly organized book of thirty-three symmetrically arranged poems in three unnamed cycles. The first and the third cycle consist of twelve songs, and the central one of seven. The collection includes a semantically overstrained prologue and epilogue poems: "It's mine" and "Close the Shutters and Fasten the Bolt". They have protruding metapoetic function.

The newly acquired or obtained, stoic attitude, contrition and reconciliation with the acknowledged, is the consequence of spiritual composure and deeper contemplative insight into the organization of the world. As such, it has a healing effect: "Is it a comfort to the one who suffers / That everything life brings is a gift // That the best is the way it is / We might have not existed at all (...) You are not the first whose birth brings suffering/ Nor the last one who slips / Through the valley of tears towards the gate of darkness ("Without Shadow").

Death is a certainty for Nogo, life companion and a condition of re-examining the teleological power of writing. In this domain of his author's poetics there is the analogy with Heidegger's insight that death is revealed as *the most personal the most untakeable unbeatable possibility*, thanking to which the modern subject also realizes its own existence. Without this ontic possibility, as an eternal, inconceivable uniqueness, there is no Nogo's lyrical self. Due to this knowledge, the poetic voice and self are mixed together. His being, the aesthetic existence that creates and artistically expresses itself, is more explicit only in the cognitive context of his own mortality. We are dealing with spontaneously created otherness, the correspondent to the challenge of death. Premonition of death and the sense of mortality reveal the value of living, the meaning of the very existence, even in the "frozen hollow world" ("Close the Shutters and Fasten the Bolt"). Death is "punctual" and unmistakable: the door needs to be open to it: "We will not even move from where we stood / Till now we've been winding from here we go straight" ("Lament Lullaby"). With this devastating knowledge, a fragile lyrical self must deal with. However, in this ontic attrition and loss, the advantage of higher knowledge is recognized, that we are present that we formerly, once existed.

To illustrate the connection with the phenomenon of death, the lifelong threat of loss or disappearance, Nogo (re) activates the *snow shirt* metaphor. It—as Jovan Delić elaborated in the afterword of the collection of poems “Sonnet as the death chanting”—is connected with the experience of freezing, the feeling of a permanent existential coldness: “As far as I can remember you’re next to me”. However, his knowledge is related to the flow of time, aging and physical transformations: “As me aging you work harder and harder / Whoever you call you spell out our names”. The closeness of death leads to a painful re-examination of the past and present existential status (“Extending the epic”). However, in death, we are all equal. Freezing, as a threatening principle, in the poetry denies the law of linear time, despite an “inexorable sequence,” whose philosophical consequence—the eternal repetition of the same, constant dying. Therefore, if death is the *most personal* possibility of a lyric self as here-being, thanking to which self-understanding takes place, then Nogo’s self must articulate this dying Other which is metapoetically wondering about its own existence in the poem and of sonnet as a possibility of aesthetic incarnation of the ever-present death. Nogo’s self is poetic self-conscious because it is constituted as being-for-death and being-at-death. So autopoetic thought comes out of a dramatic insight that death is the phenomenon of life and the phenomenon of the poem about the dying subject.

Confrontation with the death and figuring out the death is a poetic tribute that requires spiritual mobility, linguistic innovation, special lyrical forms, and developed poetic self-awareness. In order to respond to that challenge—equally initiated by the external circumstances (the death of a pet, Shar-Pei Ljubica) and contemplation—Nogo makes a special poetic mould with a precise metapoetic instruction. Afterwards he casts the sonnets in which he will meaningfully involve the obsessive poetic experience. However, in his latest book the poet wants to put the emphasis on the metapoetic explanation, thematization, and aesthetization of the very relationship between the sonnet and the death.

The sonnet, as suggested in the previous books, is identifying poet’s label. In the morphological domain, it is the poet’s alter ego, and at the same time it is the residential unit in the world where, as a man, according to Hölderlin, one can only dwell as a poet. In this “jail” (a core metaphor mentioned in the earlier poem “Njekoš in Venice”), a cell reserved for a dedicated poetic silencing, a willing or self-extorted place, perhaps in an existential constraint, where it is the easiest to contemplate on death, of others and of your own. The unique decoupled sonnet (in the symmetrical fourteenier, the symmetrical trochees and the asymmetric dodecasyllable, the sixteen-syllable, decasyllable, the octosyllable, the free verse, etc.), is a reflection of special linguistic feeling—equivalent to the delicate feeling of the world—which can bear the burden of great stories, painful topics even the theme of death. Sonnet becomes a measure of the description of human life—“Two quatrains, two tercets the Whole novel” – is his aesthetic summary. So, the death is in unbreakable alliance with the sonnet.

Sonnet is the physical manifestation of the death, its embodiment within the framework of the poetic, as well as aesthetic existences: “Death is at home in the sonnet” and “meekly singing from the sonnet” (Sonnet and Death). Nevertheless, in the Nogo’s poetic garden, the relationship between the death and the sonnet is deeply dialectical (“The path through snow has gone and while the snowbound nutter rises / You carve the end of story into snow and ice using secret script. / Blissful blizzard already rhymes death with a sonnet”) because his caring gardener suffers from the ontological uncertainty, which he projects both on life and the poem.

Therefore, the statement in the poem “Let’s go home” from the lyric poem *Over the Ashes* must be revised: “Let’s finally go home / It’s time to die”. When one’s own death actually comes close, and thus the confrontation with oneself, as the eternal incomprehensible otherness, this human call is much more difficult to bear, and articulate, even in the sonnet: “It was easy to say let’s go home.” Consistent with the obscure anthropological pessimism, resembling the Prophet’s, the Nogo perceives human existence as a continuous torture and suffering, and the last steps as a difficult temptation: “But before you get home/ you will suffer mate / And you are a man.” The second thoughts due to the imposed command were inevitable, for burden does not lie in our disappearing but in our dying, as it is not a problem to receive the listening, but to strengthen the faith. The poet’s fear is deeply hidden that death will not take us out from the jail sonnet to the light of knowledge and freedom, and that the sonnet, on the other hand, will not aesthetically overcome the existential finality of a man, regardless of the desire for perfection and all the effort to make it public. For this yearning remains within the aesthetic and ethic existence of the self, not guaranteeing ontological carelessness and harmless, and on the other hand basic, “joy of existence”.

For the theme of death and grave, as a final refuge, Nogo, poetically suffering from a chronic wintermare, connects snow, ice, and winter metaphors in this collection of poems. At the same time, he invokes solar symbolism and attributes of light and heat. They, according to traditional analogies, are bound to achieve the degree of (self) knowledge, and also have a mystical dimension. And on the solar, as a gnoseological promising principle, the idea of pre-eternal silence is following. Partially the invocation of light is connected with the thematization of the relation between the man, shade and shadow, and in addition to reflecting the desire for transcendental, it participates in the creation of the ethical coverage or the re-examination of Nogo’s special poetic loss. He is determined and founded by a connection with the ancestors, with the past ones—mainly mother and father—due to whose departure the death of the self is assumed as the inalienable ownership “All that was before me belongs to me.” Thus, due to the increased uncertainty, the dialogue with the otherworldly is intensified (“Who says that all connections with heaven are broken”), in which, according to the intimate poet’s predicament, his dear

ones live. Hence, in the great literary themes of *fatherhood* and *motherhood*, elaborated in the poems “All Your Waters and Waves”, “At the Final Step”, “Blessings”, “Heaven over the Golden Pine”, “Meeting” or “Father and Our Father” are incorporated metaphysical enthusiasm, using which poet could legitimize, at least seemingly, his stoicism: “Weightless we’ll wing where the ancestors await/ Although business is not bad here either, Say”. More and more intensely and emotionally all the more intense waiting for the re-encounter with them, in which “all the differences are silent” mediated by Christian topics, metaphors and imaginative scenes (“Mother is in purple and heavens are nine // Over the golden pine splendour”; “Here I am a year older than you / When we soon meet we’ll look like brothers”), partly alleviates the existential shudder of a dying self. The encounter with past shadows which already live in the poet’s mind, whose presence he constantly feels, is taking place in transcendence, so that the self would more easily bear the weight of its ontological status. That is why there is the indicative distinction between the man and the *shadow*, but also the *shade* and the *shadow*. They are set up as antipodes. Shade has a positive (Christianized) connotation, illuminates the darkened semantics of the shadow, its mystical side, with a negative ethical and ontological omen.

Look at the transcendence, maintaining connection with the sky, in the life of a lyrical self, however, took place, however, in drunkenness: “It’s nice on the other side, I used to lean often”. Drunkenness is a state when an individual comes out of the self and finds oneself at the crossroads of the worlds: “You aren’t aware whether you are on the ground or flying to heaven.” Hence, the “longing for brandy” is also suggested in the title with the comic element “Longing for Brandy”, in fact, the desire for staying in that space, inaccessible to a sober, rational man. At the same time, if brandy is the way to clear the view, to enable one to distinguish better the contours of the existence and anticipate the transcendence, then the longing for its beneficial properties as well as being a “stairway to heaven” is at the same time the way to forget of one’s own mortality.

But the awareness of one’s own mortality is supported by the central cycle dedicated to the deceased female dog Ljubica. The metaphor of the dog appears first in the framework of the first cycle of the poems “To the River” and “On the River”. In the second cycle, the metaphors have been developed and internalising of the poetic image set from the outside, but with the reversed semantic effect. That is the “Dog longing for people”, “Poor one sneaking in their vicinity” (“To the River”), i.e., after crossing, “The poor one not sneaking in their vicinity” (“On the river”). We see a similar procedure, for example, in the film *Jelena* Andrey Zvyagintsev where the symbolic figures in the prologue, which gradually take turns as the cadres sharpen, transpose into a plot and implement into a film story.

The poet, without fear of possible pathetic surplus, in the lyrical story line emphasizes the metaphysical dimension of his pet’s death. Her departure, in addition to generating this sudden pain, at the same time initiates a sense

of guilt and responsibility for the irreparable loss. Not being able to prevent the death of the precious being, the self postulates the philosophical premise of the inevitability of fate and the elementary agnostic excuse: “I did not leave you I do not know who took you from me”, because the helpless creature expected the human intervention, the gesture of love and dedication. However, it followed post festum- in the sonnet elegy, whose aesthetic scope should have substituted the betrayal of the trust. A silent rebellion was the only thing that was left to the stunned and left poet: “What all human sins are against God’s misdeed which is, as well as free will, before such fate insufficient. At the same time, this close death has a symbolic potential. With the departure of the female dog, the self anticipates its own finality as strange, but the inalienable otherness: “With so many bright shades your shade of shade walks with me”. If the female dog was the guardian, perhaps the archetypal protector of death, with her disappearance, and the forecoming shadow, windswept space is open in which the self is unprotected. This is *a posteriori* knowledge: the death of the Shar Pei represents a direct realization of the metaphor of the death shirt. Nogo leaves an open space for thinking whether the pain caused by the awareness of his own mortality was projected onto the pain of losing the precious being: “The deaf images of the dead book Alive is only the pain.”

Despite the experience of suffering, loss, waste, which required a persistent, lifelong attempt to be understood, the death for Nogo’s lyric self remains incomprehensible, strange Other, that he is always condemned to follow from his (poetic) experience: “Icy is up there Freezing is down there/ In the distance it’s not mine Out of the strange stranger sings”(“Lament Lullaby”). Being obsessed by the Otherness or the fear of Otherness, regardless of its origin (human, demonic or divine), it finds its formal refuge in the sonnet. For the poet, paradoxically, it turns out that the sonnet is the most natural poetic form of silent reconciliation with the custom of time in the post-sonnet poetic horizon. Because it is not purely a mere form, but a value by itself, the embodiment of a sublime idea of the aesthetic reassessment of mortality precisely when it is packed or stored in a scrupulous poetic frame which, due to the burden of tradition, requires a threefold responsibility—to its predecessors, contemporaries and its own inspiration. Frantic subject establishes self-control precisely in the strictest, the most reduced, the most rigid lyrical space, in which despair, fear, indignation, defeat, loss is transformed into resignation as an appropriate state of the believing individual whose natural succession—that is, age—death is close. This silent sonnet-framed resignation precisely outcomes the overall aesthetic value of the whole collection.

Jana ALEKSIC

Translated from Serbian by
Ljubica Jankov

WRITING POETRY FROM DIFFERENT EXPERIENCES AND MORE THAN ONE TIME

Miroslav Maksimović, *Pain*, Čigoja, Belgrade 2016

The latest book of poems by Miroslav Maksimović, *Pain*, in whose centre are fourteen sonnets dedicated to the slaughter of the innocent old men, women and children that happened seventy-five years ago in his mother's homeland—Pounlje, at first sight might appear as a certain variance from the poet's pivotal content. However, it should be said that the thematic interlacing in Maksimović's poetry began even earlier, with the book *Petrified* (2005), and especially with the collection *Drawing the Reality* (2012).

In *Petrified* (read—monuments in the city parks, as urban initiations of death), which are the planned sequel to one of the sonnets *Stone Lullabies* by Stevan Raičković, in which the poet Maksimović, through the common loneliness, managed to realize the causes and the consequences of not only his but also widespread alienation and distance from our original pre-eminence. But the poet also skilfully establishes the critical attitude towards the world and life, and even towards death as a part of life, through the prism of at least two or more parallel worlds of either doubled, interconnected or entangled in one time.

In *Drawing the Reality*, the poet relocates both in verse and life from the capital city into the originally preserved and insufficiently developed Golubačko-Danubian ambience, in which he perceives, feels and, in his authentic way, experiences the traces of time and the earlier being, more precisely another suppressed time which was preserved in the poet and which takes him to the tangled, to that ancestral, his, as well as ours. Moreover, the verses of the poem "Describing the Actress" ("my present fumbles the past, /to find the future / and the fortune of time") associate to the cyclicity of biblical providences, that only those who possess the past can hope for the future, while those who possess only past do not even have the present (Berdyayev), but just the illusion and the lie of the present time (Lacan).

In the book *Pain*, from a certain distance, his homeland habitat also reminds the poet of Eliot's reflection, which assumed that the hopeless, as well as those betrayed in the possibility of future—cannot preserve their past for long ("Each second, next second / becomes the past, our deserted house", the poem "Pain"). In that dialogue of eternal twinning and doubling, we conclude later, the most recent Maksimović's poetry takes place.

It is necessary to talk about his unexpected and unusual structure on the occasion of Maksimović's latest achievement. Namely, the poet's versified complement is composed of fourteen sonnets, followed by the poet's relatively extensive auto poetic text, called after Pounlje habitat ("Dear fear: after the ancestors' trace") and conceived as a subsequent explanation of the conditions

under which the book was directly created. Namely, through his testimonies and his literary knowledge, the poet wanted to get free from the ballast of the past—the innocent victims from August 1941, in the hamlet of Durdžići, in the “pit (cave) called Abyss”, in which after being killed the poet’s mother and her six brothers and sisters were thrown into. Then the two essays follow—the first by Milo Lompar, “On the Pain of Existence”, and the second essay—the depiction by Bogdan Rakić, “From Pain to Ideal Generality”.

It is also important to mention the fact that the author’s mother, the only one from her family who survived the afore-mentioned mass murder of the Serbs, only because they are the Serbs (“All gathered, the convocation, in the pit, and all left, helpless, alone./ Guilty for being born here”), she never once mentioned the event, wishing to forget it and expel it from her memory, and perhaps to protect the others—her children—from the memory of such a pogrom until 2000, when she experienced the brain stroke. After the illness, until her passing in 2007 (“shadow fell into the arms of darkness, / to lie among hers at the bottom of the Unlja’s pit”), she occasionally “began to give details on the day of the massacre (a stroke has erased brakes in her brain)”. After the stroke, it turned out that everything in her was still alive, traumatically unsettled, but alive, “which illustrated the vainness of her forgetting for protecting herself and her descendants.” For, though each of us has the right to “unremembering” and “personalization,” in our lives there is still something that cannot be undone by individual will.

Namely, seventy-five years later, the poet accepts the mosaic and “unsettled” memories of his mother about the mass murder in the area of Pounlje and updates them not only with literary experience (for example-Goran’s *The Pit*), but also with the experience he gained from other people’s testimonies over the past years. And with the recent (and the first) visit to the site of the pogrom in the village of Durdžići, it is obvious that the poet has completed several spheres and layers of experiences he used in the perception of this ignored pogrom, probably not to be recalled either in life or in memory. But he did that also for the sake of sparing the inmates from the very knowledge of such insane retaliation.

So, the poet Maksimović, appreciating the power of the experience, went into sonnets or the sonnets went into him, from his personal, original and subsequent experience, guided by the words and remembering of his mother, to the literary and historical experience, even the contextual one. It is his basic and starting point, composed of several different experiences and times, which are subsequently interconnected, interlaced, complemented, conjured up, overflowed, but which also offer significant and valuable verse-creation of non-poetic material, of what the terrible aforementioned crime was.

In his sonnets, Miroslav Maksimović did not offer a priori advantage to one of the aforementioned experiences, but through his poetic process, which inherits in itself refined sense of measure, he allowed the central part of the

poem, appropriately and suitably, therefore if necessary even after the semantic propinquity to take on some of his experiences .

As expected, the poet was forced to complement his poetic text with powerful emotions and persuasive images of pogroms, which, could not have even been supposed in advance (“Here the head broke, there the neck/ mother, sister, brother fell together. / An arm ripped off, hip broken / Girl’s waist cut for good” a poem “At Durdžić Grove”). This kind of mass and monstrous killing of children using axe (“It is the brightest in the moonlight / when cutting the neighbours”), using knife (“Human servant. But sometimes the ban”), the use of mallet and the unscrupulousness of the slaughterer are overloaded with emotions. Full of those impressive and powerful emotions, many of which are momentary, but with long meaningful echo as in Maksimović’s collection of poems *Pain*. But without the surplus of pathetic, which in these kinds of approaches is very difficult to avoid completely.

Due to the time distance, as well as, in the meantime, by repetition of the same and similar evil deeds, the poet has established both time and content verticalization that gives sonnets more valuable meanings and warnings. The confirmation of these attitudes, we find, for example, in the sonnet “Head”, in which we read the verse: “The head is George, rebellion roar out of urge,” which, invoking Karadorde, warns on the fate and the misfortune of the nation (formerly known as beheading) to which the poet belongs, which is particularly convincing in the final verse of the same sonnet, which concludingly and depressingly says: “The head chopped off. The head was Serbian.”

In the same, depressing context, we also interpret the sonnet “Pit”, in particular the verse: “Home of ours is the pit where we gather”, as well as the final two verses—the comfort of the second quatrain: “And in the evening, when gusle starts squeaking/ Miloš, Marko and fairies come to us”.

Although Đorđe, Marko, Miloš, and even fairies, have become symbols in our memory long ago, yet it is necessary to be sincere and point out that as the symbols of our suffering above-pit symbols and images also became real, which even the poet Maksimović could not predict, but by a muffled and calm statement (I could say—with dignified, appropriate to the poetic content), named and notified them as they are, which is why the very image of the blood on the hands holding the knife dizzily and forcibly associate to the violent death. The death of the innocent. As in the introductory sonnet, “I remembered it”: “I remember the blood, somehow dreamily reeking. / (As if it sleeps in the deep Unlja’s pit)”.

And as it usually happens, instead of the poet being released the ballast of the past in the form of the victim’s tragic hidden experience, just the opposite happened—the past chose him, strongly took him over (“The wound heals, being even deeper”—the poem “Pain”) and called him for its promoter. And that call cannot be denied. It can only be allegedly ignored and prolonged, but, in fact, you live with it all the time. And when the suppressed content sufficiently culminates and emboldens, it, uncontrollably, appears eruptively

and vertiginously through images or verses, which the poet himself confessionally admits by his additional explanation that those twelve sonnets “were created during just a few days of February 2016”, while the “Entering” and the “Exiting” sonnet (“I Remembered that”, “I Remembered that, II”) were written just a few years earlier (in 1998 and in 2008).

Aleksandar B. LAKOVIĆ

Translated from Serbian by
Ljubica Jankov

DEMORALIZED LITERATURE

Vule Žurić, *The Secret of the Red Castle*, Laguna, Belgrade 2015

The stories that Vule Žurić has published during the previous years on various occasions are united in this collection with a very significant motto: “You are selling sentences”; not only that the sentences, as a result of intellectual and aesthetic creativity, he equates with goods, and their author with the trader, but this moral is also an intriguing one because it belongs to Brecht, the re-creator of so-called critical art. In the context of domestic literature, whose fate is largely being tailored by the market (which knows the prices, but does not care for value), its meaning is disputable: does it make any sense to talk about critical art if the existence of its author depends on the sponsorship (publishing) business? Is there any intellectual honesty among Serbian writers (and critics), or is everything, even that, just the effect of marketing? Here are the questions around which the poetics of Vule Žurić are organized.

It is obvious, namely, that Žurić not only flirts with the demands of commercial literature but treats them as if they were legitimate. In this collection, there are examples of currently most wanted genres (fictitious biographies of distinguished personalities, gothic and criminal stories) while in terms of content prevails also widespread compilation procedure which ensures the interest of the widest circle of readers. By alternating pseudo-historical events (from the period of the “socialist revolution”) with those which are pseudo-entertaining (referring to culture and sport), the author creates the impression of their logical permeation (which is why the war sounds delightful, and football moving) which the context itself makes not only discontinuous but controversial as well. In fact, Žurić imitates the manner of contemporary media that attempt to present everything as a spectacle, erasing the difference between the level and the value of social meanings.

While, on the one hand, he satisfies the modes produced and imposed by the market, Žurić, on the other hand, parodies them; a careless reader will not even notice what has happened to him, so that while reading the stories, as if reading daily newspapers, he will catch their black humour, sparkling cynicism and caricature just from the surface.

This prose itself, however, takes place at greater depths: by applying the ossified genre and poetic conventions on materials that do not suit them at all, Žurić strives to divide the reader's attention between the action and the way of its conjuring, disguising them with each other; thus, for example, the work of the Supreme Headquarters is shown according to the pattern of horror, the metaphysical brain-teaser is formulated in the vocabulary of sports journalism, and nature "adapts to war conditions" so that the old philosophical and poetic theories about general analogies would be fulfilled. Emphasizing in that way the mediatory role of narrative, the author suggests that every discourse is not only strained but also exclusive: primarily by dealing with the elaboration and realization of its own norms, it can convey only the a priori meaning, reproducing itself, not the reality, which as a cognition tool, makes it completely worthless. Thereby, this prose implies the impotence of the contemporary writer/intellectual not only to organize, but also to present his own experience: one can always find the perspective from which his image is completely banal, wrong, if not foolish.

In addition, Žurić's interpretation of the past has shown that today's dominant intellectual practice does not make any difference between ideology and scenarios, that it replaces the epopee with spectacle, and that it neutralizes the very concept of moral achievement in advance as impossible or, even worse, unnecessary: football pitches are the arena of the epic conflicts, touristic caravans are trivialized echoes of the exile and migrations, while the glorification of the past has found its satisfaction in the barroom ethno-kitsch.

In all of this, however, the most effective is the complete absence of the author's anger or vindictiveness: he does not try to determine the guilt of the hero, but only by caricaturing, and through grotesque exaggeration, he gets closer to their true nature. By allowing us to follow them for a longer period of time, without knowing which of the giants he is talking about, by relocating them from the context where they usually appear (so Tito is making coffee, Šaban Bajramović is a goalkeeper, while Andrić is doing terribly with the sentences), he exposes them without masks they were hidden by their glory. But, on the other hand, as all the identities are arbitrary, compromised by the analogies with the material and animal world, a confusion is created in which no name means anything anymore (not even Romeo's!) and in which ghosts manage quite well, but people easily get lost. That is why Žurić's satires and parodies are, above all, sad, permeated with nostalgia for references, simplicity and tranquillity.

While skilfully imitating different narrative identities, from Bora Stanković, for example, to Rodoljub Čolaković, Žurić is in constant controversy with his own alter ego, his personal and creative principles. His literature seems post-apocalyptic, as if it is gathered on the ruins of culture, holding its own existence as a miracle, because, in essence, it is completely demoralized.

Vesna TRIJIĆ

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EVERYTHING HAS A PRICE

Laza Kostić, *Correspondence*, the second book, edited by Mladen Leskovac, Milica Bujas and Dušan Ivanić, Matica srpska, Novi Sad, 2017

When the reader finishes reading the second book of Laza Kostić's *Correspondence*, he can only say, if he has strength, just one thing: "uh"! (As if he was swimming upstream from Sremski Karlovci to Novi Sad—to use one of Kostić's comparisons.) How many personalities, fates, desires, missed lives, debates, misunderstandings, proving, dowries, mothers-in-law, promissory notes, intrigues, offerings of manuscripts, matchmakings there are ... And what only the editors would say after completing the second book? And the third one is waiting for them!

Even so, I will start this review with a remark. And the remark is addressed not to the second, but to the first book of Kostić's *correspondence*! I know it is not right when writing about the second book of *correspondence*, that I make the remarks on the first one—but, I admit, at the time I was reviewing the first book of Kostić's *correspondence*, far back in 2005, I did not know about a rude letter that Zmaj wrote to Laza Kostić. That is the letter published by Mihovil Tomandl in the *Historical Society Gazette* in 1934. Mladen Leskovac, I reliably know it, had in his hands the issue of *HSG*—Leskovac had four texts in that issue; and later when he worked on the bibliography of *HSG*, he registered that letter twice: once with Kostić's and the second time with Zmaj's name. But Leskovac forgot about that letter. And the first book of Kostić's *correspondence*, in which there is the correspondence with Zmaj, appeared without that letter. (The third book of Kostić's *correspondence* could have an Appendix—and there would be put all the missing letters.)

There is a good reason to mention all that, because next to the names of Laza Kostić and Svetozar Miletić, it is regularly mentioned that Laza Kostić

handed over his mandate to Miletić—which is not true. He handed over his candidacy to him, which is not the same. Because, according to Zmaj’s letter, a hunt was prepared against Laza—if he had refused obedience to the party, the candidature would be of no use to him at all. (They would eat him up!) By the way, that letter which Zmaj wrote was from 1875. And in July of that year, Svetozar Miletić casually entered the election race in today’s Bašaid, and lost it! The elections in Titel were held in August of the same year—and Zmaj performed his party job very well: Laza Kostić should have been persuaded to hand over the candidacy to Miletić. Miletić took part in the elections twice in the same year. And Laza Kostić began his tramping around the world.

And in this second book, wrongly, this story is mentioned in the context of handing over the MP seat—just to show that I have not missed the topic.

The second book of Kostić’s *correspondence* has thirty-five quires and more correspondents than the content of the book tells us. A total of forty-nine correspondents are mentioned in the content, and the book also includes letters written to Anica Savić and Marija Palanački. Those two more correspondents are printed in bold. (By the way, this cleverly created content requires two tape markers, namely, along with the pages on which the concrete correspondence is there are also pages on which comments are made related to that correspondence. And those comments follow the entire correspondence.)

The key figures of this correspondence are Miša Dimitrijević, Jovan Ristić, Ilarion Ruvarac, Milan Savić, Julijana Palanački, Joca Savić, Nikola Tesla ... Of course, in the background is Tona Hadžić as an episodic character—a correspondence with him was published in the first book of Kostić’s *correspondence*. Also, there are Zmaj and Simo Matavulj in the background, as well as dear Uroš Predić, as someone about whom only beautiful and warm things can be read.

In this book, there are, unfortunately, a few open letters as well. I made the remark about the first book of the correspondence—and I will repeat it here too. There is no place for open letters here—these letters live a different life.

The book begins with a tough correspondence with Miša Dimitrijević. The year is 1877, Laza Kostić’s father dies in Novi Sad; Laza Kostić is far away, in Cetinje; and all the care about the funeral, the last kiss for the deceased, the property, the arrived harvest and God knows what else—Laza Kostić would (generously, I am adding) leave to Miša Dimitrijević. (Thereby, our hero is firmly on the ground—he knows the prices of the harvest, in a word: he knows very well how to deal with money.)

Here we can see Laza as selfish, spoiled, demanding ... (Although we must immediately say that Laza Kostić constantly lacked the money to live—not to survive. And that is significant difference which is not easy for us to understand today.)

We will single out from this correspondence with Miša Dimitrijević a few of Kostić’s “impertinences”. When he mentions the woman who served,

or lived with his father, Kostić will say about her: “The minge-ring Jela”. Of course, in the letters this does not sound just as terrible as in this review. Laza Kostić made a nice transition from the missing, almost worthless, but to him, dear earring—onto the “minge-ring”. It was a set up for him.

Another Kostić’s “impertinence” (as they would say in Šajkaška) is a bit larger. Our hero persuades Miša Dimitrijević to tell Danica, Paja Gostović’s wife, that sometimes when she goes to bed with Paja, she imagines that she is with Laza, which would make him feel better, because in this respect he suffers terrible scarcity.

The basic tone of this correspondence gives away Kostić’s irony. Kostić is ironic even about his own destiny, but also about the fate of his people. When the plan connected to the establishment of the “First Montenegrin Steamboat Society”—to which the most prosperous Serbs promised financial help—Laza Kostić acridly writes: “Oh, what a pity, but if you disowned your poor brother, he would no longer come to beg from you”.

An example of Kostić’s irony, almost always, goes along with mentioning mother-in-laws ... Because, Laza Kostić had two mothers-in-law and both of them (as Serbian spelling would put today, *both of the two of them*) were first class you-know-whats... That is Kostić’s acute crisis of the mother-in-law. Pungent is also Kostić’s remark related to searching for a certain newspaper. “It seems that no Belgrade editorial keeps their newspapers. As if they want to say, that kind of Serbhood won’t last long, so why to bother ...” (How much today, our institutions care about Serbhood, will be quite easy to see, if we just peek into the price list of the SASA Archive. Everything has a price.) And so on and on.

When we look at the content of this book, the first thing that strikes the eye is the number of letters exchanged between Laza Kostić and Milan Savić. And that number, but even more the content of those letters, confutes Leskovac’s thesis, which he enunciated in one of his books claiming that Laza Kostić did not care for Milan Savić. Leskovac was the one who did not care for Savić. (By the way, today’s, smattering of time does not refer to Milan Savić any better. Trying to explain to the screenwriters of the TV series that the title “Dr.” in front of Milan Savić’s name—does not mean that he was a doctor, is really ridiculous).

The correspondence with Milan Savić is the central part of this book to a certain degree, and partly Kostić’s wish is fulfilled here. And he wanted, if some money had been left from printing the *Book about Zmaj*, to use it for printing the documents for the history of that book. The correspondence with Savić is a large part of the material for the documentary history for the *Book about Zmaj*—though it is more than that. However, we will not tarry on this correspondence; we will only “clutch” for this one passage, which will introduce us painlessly to the story of Laza’s marital life.

It is very well known, finally that is what Savić’s autobiography *Opportunities from My Life* reveals to us, that Savić did not like Tona Hadžić. And

Laza Kostić on the other hand adores Tona! And when in one letter Milan Savić complains to Kostić about Tona Hadžić (he used to work with Tona), Laza Kostić (from a safe distance from Tona) writes those precious sentences. (Valuable for the description of Laza's relationship with people.) Laza says: "I wonder how you can get angry with Tona. It's quite a simple thing. You do not need to ask from him more than he can give, and you know very well how much it is. Whoever has that in mind can live wonderfully with Tona."

Laza Kostić knows his wife's limits and this is seen from each line of this correspondence. By the way, we had a case of inventing a husband in Serbian literature (Isidora Sekulić); and here we have a marriage in which the husband did not sleep with his wife. (Or to put it in a gentler manner: Laza Kostić did not consummate his marriage.)

But everything has a price. When Milan Savić tells Kostić in 1901 that he (Savić) will speak at the Matica about Abukazem, Laza Kostić asks Savić for the invitation. Because you can't travel without reason. Julča is asked for everything. Nevertheless, it is revealed in his correspondence with Julča (who is ready, for Laza, to be called "even more Serbian"—Paula) that Laza Kostić is often absent from home. And he does not hurry to return home. From Krušedol, from exile, for example, he travels to Sombor via Subotica—partly in order to prolong his freedom a little, partly to have a bath in the steam bath in Subotica, and partly because he wants to come to Sombor during the day ... To be seen by everyone that he is coming to his Julča! (Namely, the train from Novi Sad to Sombor used to arrive at night.) I am telling the readers the story that Laza Kostić used to tell so convincingly to Julča. And I expect the readers to believe the story, as Julča and I believed. And freedom has a price. Otherwise, Laza would have taken Julča to all his journeys, but Julča does not know to comb her hair by herself. Alas. When he writes to her—after receiving 100 crowns and a letter from her—that her letter made him happier than if she had sent him 1,000 crowns—I immediately believed him. (By the way, Julča is poignantly illiterate.) Julča believed Laza about those "big things", but in "trifles" she ferociously controlled him. Each bill was to be brought to Julča. (Suffice it to say that Julča Palanački is the forerunner of the fiscal legers.) Although, when they live in Vienna, Milana Stefanović, Svetislav Stefanović's wife, when she heard how much the Kostić's pay for the lodging, acidly spoke through her clenched teeth: "spendthrift gentlefolk"!

These letters offer us, therefore, the universal key to male-female relationships. The thing is simple: anything that a man (in this case Laza) says, a wife should believe. And then there's no problem. (By the way, if banks ever introduce the award for the most consistent minus on the account—that prize could bear the name of Laza Kostić.)

Although, if Kostić's letters to his wife were read in the key of the twenty-first century—what we are trying to do here all the time—I am afraid that Laza Kostić would not last for more than a week nowadays! Who today would have

enough courage to write to his wife—“be healthy (i.e. thinner)” ... Or, who would be courageous enough to send a report on the weight of one’s own wife ... Or to advise her how many times during the day she should climb to the first floor ... (I will leave unsaid, I am even able to leave things unsaid, the comment of the already mentioned Milana Stefanović, when she saw Julča for the first time ...)

But, joking aside, that relationship with Julča has its own epilogue. It seems to me that from all the deaths which followed him in his life (and so many friends of his died), Laza Kostić experience the death of his wife with the most difficulty. Once again, we see that everything has a price.

By the way, if Laza Kostić had these “fiscal” experiences from his marriage with Julča, while he was working in the embassy in Russia—his life would certainly have a different course. Namely, he kept his bills so carelessly—that stigma largely had fallen upon him until he found them ... And then it was too late.

That work in the embassy and the correspondence with Jovan Ristić reveals to us a different Laza Kostić—dedicated to his work, entrepreneurial, diligent ... Conscientious, firstly. I could start here a story about the Serbian budget from 1880 (or, more precisely, from 1879), but I am afraid that I would slip into today’s, ostentatious circumstances. Namely, the world’s leading publication in this field published a lie that in our budget expenditures are higher than revenues, and Laza Kostić immediately reacts ... Patriotism and responsibility are thus found together.

As a leitmotif, Kostić’s desire for literary success runs throughout this book of correspondence—not only in our country and in Europe, but also in America. (It is the true desire of every writer.) The path to success, literary fame and money—he wanted to achieve through the theatre. Without the desire to laugh at the lies of our writers in the world—Laza Kostić does not fawn upon the world. Laza Kostić knows that there are the masters of world taste, but he does not want to adapt to that taste. It’s nicely seen from the letters of Joca Savić ...

Editing letters is a tricky and difficult job. The editors corrected the mistake made by Milivoj Nenin and Zorica Hadžić while they were editing Savić’s correspondence. They corrected it over the year of the death of Ilija Ognjanović Abukazem. They corrected Leskovac’s error in the correspondence between Laza Kostić and Julča Palanački—they corrected it over the year of the death of Ilarion Ruvarac. (Although it seems to me that someone has already corrected that mistake.)

Naturally, the notes following the letters are written only after reading all the letters with a certain correspondent, and later, if necessary, when all the correspondence is reread. And the editors know that. Hence, for example, they immediately know who “lief” is, to whom Laza Kostić sends regards in the letters. (It is clearly said later.) However, with his bosom-friend and its

identification they were not lucky enough. Namely, the editors speculate that Simo Matavulj could be the bosom-friend—but careful reading of the 95th letter of the correspondence with Savić reveals that this is not Matavulj! (I dare not say what I had read in order to find out who his bosom-friend was—however, I just managed to find out who it was not.)

But these are all the trifles that the reviewer of this book writes down out of fear of being accused of not reading the book carefully.

For, Laza Kostić, needs to be read carefully. If we carefully read him, we will not miss, for example, a single Stevan Ćurčić.

And now, consciously, I enter into contradiction. I complained about open letters—because they were already printed and live a different life. And here I rejoice in the reprinted text. The text that is reprinted, it is clear to the readers, is the text written by Stevan Ćurčić. With such a measure and with so much tactics, Ćurčić stood up for the unrewarded Laza Kostić, and yet again he did not harm the awarded ones, Zmaj and Ljuba Nenadović, with a single word.

This time of exclusiveness, unfortunately, does not know about such texts.

Milivoj NENIN

Translated from Serbian by
Ljubica Jankov

JANA ALEKSIĆ (b. Kragujevac, 1984) completed the basic and master studies at the Faculty of Philology, University of Belgrade, within the program 'Serbian Literature and Language with General Literature'. In 2016, at the same faculty, she defended her doctoral dissertation "Milan Kašanin kao tumač nove srpske književnosti" ["Milan Kašanin as Interpreter of Recent Serbian Literature"]. She writes poetry, essays, studies and literary reviews. Books of poetry: *24/7 ljubavi* [*24/7 of Love*, (as co-author), 2007]; *Topao kamen* [*Warm Stone*]; *Upijanje* [*Absorption*, 2017]; *Arijel anonim* [*Ariel Anonymous*, 2018]. Studies: *Opsednuta priča – poetika romana Gorana Petrovića* [*An Obsessed Story: The Poetics of the Novels by Goran Petrović*, 2013]; *Žudnja za lepotom i savršenstvom – teurgijska dimenzija književnoumetničkog stvaralaštva* [*Craving for Beauty and Perfection: The Theurgic Dimension of the Literary-Art Creation*, 2014].

IVO ANDRIĆ (Dolac near Travnik, 1892 – Belgrade, 1975) was an author and diplomat. In 1924, at the University of Graz, he defended his doctoral dissertation titled *Die Entwicklung des geistigen Lebens in Bosnien unter der Einwirkung der türkischen Herrschaft* [*The Development of Spiritual Life in Bosnia under the Influence of Turkish Rule*]. He took part in the activities of the movement known as *Mlada Bosna* ('Young Bosnia'), advocating the idea of integral Yugoslavianship, i.e. the unity of South Slavs. In 1919, Andrić was appointed civil servant in the Ministry of Religious Affairs in Belgrade; as soon as in early 1920, he embarked on a diplomatic career through the appointment at the Embassy to the Holy See. There followed new posts: official at the Consulates General of the Kingdom of Serbs, Croats and Slovenes in Bucharest (1921) and Trieste (1922), vice-consul in Graz (1923), Marseille (1926), Paris (1927) and Madrid (1928), secretary of the Brussels-based embassy (1929), deputy delegate of the Permanent Delegation to the League of Nations in Geneva (1930-1933), advisor at the Ministry of Foreign Affairs in Belgrade (1933-1935), Chief of the Political Section at this ministry (1935-1937), Assistant Minister of Foreign Affairs (from 1937), Minister Plenipotentiary and Ambassador Extraordinary of the Kingdom of Yugoslavia in Berlin (from 1939). Upon the outbreak of World War II in Yugoslavia (1941), he returned to Belgrade and his retirement followed very soon. Subsequent to the warfare,

his diplomatic career was resumed through the post of the President of the Society for the Cultural Cooperation between Bosnia-Herzegovina and the Soviet Union; in 1946 he became Vice-President of the Society for the Cultural Cooperation with the USSR and member of the Assembly of the Travnik District. As a participant in the First Congress of the Writers' Union of Yugoslavia (Nov. 17-19, 1946), he was elected President of the organization. Next year, he was elected member of the management board of the Yugoslav Association for the United Nations. In 1950, he was elected member of the Art Council of the Committee for Cinematography attached to the Government of the Federal People's Republic of Yugoslavia, and also member of the Literature Council attached to the Ministry of Science and Culture of the People's Republic of Serbia, as well as M.P. in the House of Nationalities in the People's Assembly of the FPRY. During the year 1954, Andrić became member of the management board of the Society for Yugoslavia-France Cultural Cooperation, editorial board for the "World Writers Series" of Matica srpska and management board of the Writers' Association of Serbia. He was awarded the Nobel Prize for Literature in 1961. Ivo Andrić wrote verse, fiction, lyrical prose and essays.¹ Poetry: *Šta sanjam i šta mi se događa* [*What I Dream of and What Befalls Me*, verse and prose poems, 1976]. Novels: *Gospođica* [*The Woman from Sarajevo*, 1945]; *Na Drini ćuprija* [*The Bridge on the Drina*, 1945]; *Travnička hronika: konsulska vremena* [*Bosnian Chronicle/ The Days of the Consuls*, 1945]; *Prokleta avlija* [*The Damned Yard*, 1954]; *Na sunčanoj strani* [*On the Sunny Side*, novel reconstructed, 1994]. Short prose and stories: *Put Alije Đerzeleza* [*The Journey of Ali Džerzelez*, 1920]; *Pripovetke* [*Short Stories*, 1924]; *Pripovetke* [*Short Stories*, 1931]; *Pripovetke* [*Short Stories*, 1936]. Lyrical prose: *Ex ponto* [1918]; *Nemiri* [*Anxieties*, 1920]; *Most na Žepi* [*The Bridge on the Žepa*, 1947]; *Nove pripovetke* [*New Short Stories*, 1948]; *Priča o vezirovom slonu* [*The Story of the Vizier's Elephant*, 1948]; *Lica* [*Faces*, 1960]; *Kuća na osami* [*The Secluded House / The House on Its Own*, 1976]; *Omerpaša Latas* [*Omer Pasha Latas*, 1976]; *Predeli i staze* [*Landscapes and Paths*, travel prose, 2002]; *Ljubav u kasabi i druge višegradske priče* [*Love in the Small-Town Milieu and Other Stories from Višegrad*, 2010]; *Panorama* [2011]; *Sunce* [*Sunlight / The Sun*, 2016]. Essays and other literary forms: *Njegoš kao tragični junak kosovske misli* [*Njegoš as a Tragic Hero of the Kosovo Thought*, 1935]; *Zapisi o Goji* [*Notes about Goya*, 1961]; *Ivo Andrić o Vuku Karadžiću* [*Ivo Andrić about Vuk Karadžić*, 1972]; *Goja* [*Goya*, 1974]; *Eseji i kritike* [*Essays and Critiques*, 1976]; *Bolívar: neprekidna sloboda* (*La libertad permanente*) [*Bolívar: Permanent Liberty (La libertad permanente)*, 1983]; *Sveske* [*Notebooks*, 1983]; *Diplomatski spisi* [*Diplomatic Documents*, 1992]; *Prevodilačka sveska* [*Translation Notebook*, 1994]; *Razvoj duhovnog života u Bosni pod uticajem turske vlada-*

¹ Some of the works by Ivo Andrić have been translated/referred to/known under two or more different titles in English. Hence the versions provided in such cases. – *Translator's note.*

vine [*The Development of Spiritual Life in Bosnia under the Influence of Turkish Rule*, doctoral thesis, 1994]; *Rađanje fašizma* [*The Nascence of Fascism*, 1995]; *Pisma (1912–1993): privatna pošta* [*Letters (1912–1993): Private Correspondence*, 2000;]; *Pisma Vojinu Durbešiću* [*Letters to Vojin Durbešić*, 2003]; *Znakovi pored puta* [*Signs by the Road*, 2009]; *Razgovori I ćutanja Ive Andrića* [*Conversations and Silences of Ivo Andrić*, interviews, 2010]; *Kako sam ulazio u svet knjige I književnosti* [*How I Entered the Realm of Books and Literature*, 2017]; *Večna prisutnost Njegoševa* [*The Everlasting Presence of Njegoš*, 2017]. Collected works: *Sabrana dela Ive Andrića I–X* [*The Collected Works of Ivo Andrić I–X*, 1963]; *Sabrana dela Ive Andrića I–XVI* [*The Collected Works of Ivo Andrić I–XVI*, 1976]; *Sabrana dela Ive Andrića I–XVII* [*The Collected Works of Ivo Andrić I–XVII*, 1981]; *Sabrane pripovetke* [*Collected Short Stories*, 2008]; *Priče Ive Andrića* [*The Stories by Ivo Andrić I–II*, 2010]; *Sabrana dela I–XX* [*The Collected Works I–XX*, 2011]. Numerous works of the Nobel Laureate have been translated in many languages and/or included in anthologies.

VLADAN BAJČETA (b. Bosanska Krupa, Bosnia-Herzegovina, 1985) graduated from the Faculty of Philology (Dept. of Serbian and General Literature), University of Belgrade with the bachelor's thesis "Poezija Vladana Desnice" ["The Poetry of Vladan Desnica"]. He continued studies at the same faculty to obtain master's degree with the research paper "Proza Stevana Raičkovića" ["The Prose of Stevan Raičković"] and Ph.D. with the dissertation "Književno djelo Borislava Mihajlovića Mihiza" ["The Literary Work of Borislav Mihajlović Mihiz"]. His major research interests concern the contemporary Serbian literature and literary theory.

MILOŠ CRNJANSKI (Csongrád, Hungary, 1893–Belgrade, Serbia, 1977) was a history teacher, author, journalist and diplomat. His diplomatic career included the following posts: cultural propaganda attache (1928–9) and press attache (1935–8) in Berlin, press advisor at the Embassy of the Kingdom of Yugoslavia to Italy (Rome, 1938–41), Portugal (Lisbon, 1941) and U.K. (London, 1941–5). Upon the end of World War II, he stayed in London to live there as a journalist. His return to Yugoslavia took place in 1965. Crnjanski wrote poetry, fiction, plays, travel literature, essays and literary critique. Books of poetry: *Lirika Itake* [*The Lyrics of Ithaca*, 1919]; *Odabrani stihovi* [*Selected Verse*, 1954]; *Itaka i komentari* [*Ithaca and Commentaries*, 1959]; *Lament nad Beogradom* [*Lament for Belgrade*, 1962]; *Tri poeme* [*Three Long Poems*, 1965]; *Lirika* [*Lyrics*, 1968]; *Odabrani stihovi* [*Selected Verse*, 1972]; *Stražilovo* [1973]; *Sabrane pesme* [*Collected Poems*, 1978]; *Lirika: izbor* [*Lyrics: A Selection*, 1981]; *Pesme* [*Poems*, 1983]; *Lirika Miloša Crnjanskog* [*Lyrics by Miloš Crnjanski*, 1994]; *Sumatra* [1998]; *Lirika Itake i sve druge pesme* [*The Lyrics of Ithaca and All Other Poems*, 2002]; *Pesme* [*Poems*, 2013]; *Komentari poezije* [*Commentaries on Poetry*, 2013].

Novels: *Dnevnik o Čarnojeviću* [*The Journal of Čarnojević*, 1921]; *Podzemni klub: detektivski roman* [*Underground Club: A Detective Novel*, 1921]; *Seobe* [*Migrations*, 1929]; *Seobe i druga knjiga Seoba* [*Migrations and The Second Book of Migrations*, 1962]; *Kap španske krvi* [*A Drop of Spanish Blood*, 1970]; *Roman o Londonu (I–II)* [*A Novel about London (I–II)*, 1971]; *Kod Hiperborejaca (I–II)* [*With the Hyperboreans (I–II)*, 2015]. Short stories: *Priče o muškom* [*Stories about Manliness*, 1920]. Plays: *Maska* [*The Mask*, 1918]; *Konak* [*The Royal Residence*, 1958]. Travelogues: *Sveta Vojvodina* [*The Holy Voivodeship*, 1919]; *Naše plaže na Jadranu* [*Our Beaches by the Adriatic*, 1927]; *Boka Kotorska* [*The Gulf of Kotor*, 1927]; *Ljubav u Toskani* [*Love in Tuscany*, 1930]; *Knjiga o Nemačkoj* [*A Book on Germany*, 1931]; *Najlepši putopisi Miloša Crnjanskog* [*The Most Appealing Travel Writing by Miloš Crnjanski*, 2003]; *Putopisi-pripovetke* [*Travel Short Stories*, 2013]. Books of essays, studies and reviews: *Sveti Sava* [*Saint Sava*, 1934]; *Knjiga o Mikelandelu* [*A Book on Michelangelo*, 1981]; *Politički spisi* [*Political Writings*, 1989]; *Politički portreti* [*Political Portraits*, 1990]; *Nova Evropa* [*The New Europe*, 1991]; *Eseji i prikazi* [*Essays and Reviews*, 1991]; *Ljubav u Toskani i drugi nežni zapisi* [*Love in Tuscany and Other Tender Records*, 1997]; *Pisma ljubavi i mržnje: Pisma Marku Ristiću* [*The Letters of Love and Hate: Letters to Marko Ristić*, 2004]; *O nacionalizmu i srpskom stanovništvu* [*On Nationalism and Serbian Population*, 2012]; *Moji engleski pesnici* [*My English Poets*, 2013]; *Eseji* [*Essays*, 2013]; *Ispunio sam svoju sudbinu* [*I Have Fulfilled My Destiny*, interviews, 2017]. Collected works: *Sabrana dela I–II* [*Collected Works I–II*, 1930]; *Sabrana dela I–X* [*Collected Works I–X*, 1965–6]; *Izabrana dela: Pesme – Putopisi – Eseji* [*Selected Works: Poems – Travel Literature – Essays*, 1967]; *Izabrana dela I–XIV* [*Selected Works I–XIV*, 1983]; *Dela Miloša Crnjanskog u 12 tomova* [*The Works of Miloš Crnjanski in 12 Volumes*, 1993–2006]; *Antologija Crnjanski: izabrane stranice Miloša Crnjanskog* [*A Crnjanski Anthology: Selected Pages by Miloš Crnjanski*, 2007]; *Biblioteka Sabrana djela* [*Complete Works Series*, 2008]. Works by M. Crnjanski have been translated into many languages. His verse and prose have been included in a large number of anthologies.

KOSTA ČAVOŠKI (b. Banatsko Novo Selo near Pančevo, 1941) is a jurist, political scientist, member of the Serbian Academy of Sciences and Arts. He has been producing scholarly studies and monographs. Books published: *Filozofija otvorenog društva. Politički liberalizam Karla Popera* [*The Philosophy of Open Society: Karl Popper's Political Liberalism*, 1975]; *Mogućnosti slobode u demokratiji* [*The Possibility of Freedom in Democracy*, 1981]; *Ustavnost i federalizam. Sudska kontrola ustavnosti u anglo-saksonskim federacijama* [*Constitutionality and Federalism: Judicial Control of Constitutionality in Anglo-Saxon Federations*, 1982]; *Stranački pluralizam ili monizam – društveni pokreti i politički sistem u Jugoslaviji (1944–1949)* [*Party Pluralism or Monism: Social Movements and the Political System in Yugoslavia (1944–1949)*,

co-authored by Vojislav Koštunica, 1983]; *O neprijatelju* [*About the Enemy*, 1989]; *Revolucionarni makijavelizam* [*Revolutionary Machiavellianism*, 1989]; *Stranački pluralizam ili monizam – posleratna opozicija, obnova i zatiranje* [*Party Pluralism or Monism: The Postwar Opposition, Its Reconstruction and Extirpation*, co-authored by Vojislav Koštunica, 1990]; *Tito – tehnologija vlasti* [*Tito: A Technology of Rule*, 1991]; *Slobodan protiv slobode* [*Slobodan vs Freedom*, 1991]; *Pravo kao umeće slobode. Oglad o vladavini prava* [*Law as the Art of Freedom: An Essay on the Rule of Law*, 1994]; *Uvod u pravo I. Osnovni pojmovi i državni oblici* [*Introduction to Law I: Basic Concepts and Forms of State*, 1994]; *Na rubovima srpstva* [*On the Borders of Serbdom*, 1995]; *Ustav kao jamstvo slobode* [*Constitution as Guarantee of Freedom*, 1996]; *Uvod u pravo II* [*Introduction to Law II*, co-authored by R. Vasić, 1996]; *Zatiranje srpstva* [*Extirpation of Serbdom*, 1996]; *Lutka u tuđim rukama* [*A Puppet in Alien Hands*, 1998]; *Hag protiv pravde* [*The Hague vs Justice*, 1998]; *Od protektorata do okupacije* [*From Protectorate to Occupation*, 1998]; *Od slova do duha Dejtona* [*From the Letter to the Spirit of Dayton*, 1999]; *Brčko – podela Republike Srpske* [*Brčko – A Division of the Republic of Srpska*, 2000]; *Apsolutna i ublažena pravda u Eshilovoj Orestiji* [*The Absolute and the Mitigated Justice in Aeschylus' Oresteia*, co-authored by M. Stefanovski, 2001]; *Presuđivanje istoriji u Hagu* [*Adjudicating the Matters of History in The Hague*, 2002]; *Saga o Dosmanlijama* [*A DOSman² Group Saga*, 2002]; *Zgaženi ustav* [*Constitution Violated*, 2003]; *Okupacija* [*Occupation*, 2005]; *Badingova protiv Badingove – dva lica istog pisca u slučaju Slobodana Miloševića* [*Budding vs Budding: Two Characters of the Same Author in Slobodan Milošević Case*, 2006]; *Čemu Demokratska stranka* [*Democratic Party – What for?*, 2007]; *Haški minotaur I–II* [*The Hague's Minotaur I–II*, 2007]; *Povodi i odjeci – ogledi u „Srpskoj reči”, juli 1991 – decembar 1993* [*Some Occasions and Their Echoes: Essays (published) in “Srpska reč”, July 1991–December 1993*, 2007]; *Kameleon* [*The Chameleon*, 2008]; *Makijaveli* [*Machiavelli*, 2008]; *Izdaja* [*Treason*, 2009]; *Rasrbljivanje* [*Unserbianization*, 2011]; *Ustav kao sredstvo agitacije i propagande* [*Constitution as an Instrument of Agitation and Propaganda*, 2011]; *Srpsko pitanje* [*The Serbian Question*, 2011]; *Zloupotreba istorije u Hagu* [*History Abused in The Hague*, 2013]; *Da li sudije štite izdaju? – prilog istoriji srpskog pravosuđa* [*Do Judges Protect Treason?: A Contribution to the History of Serbian Judicature*, 2014]; *Veleizdaja* [*High Treason*, 2014]; *Nikola Milošević – karakter kao sudbina* [*Nikola Milošević – Character as One's Destiny*, 2015]; *Moć i prevlast – Tukididova politička misao* [*Power and Predominance: Thucydides' Political Thought*, 2015]; *Veleizdaja*

² *Dosmanlije* (in Serbian) is a pejorative label referring to the leaders of the DOS (Democratic Opposition of Serbia) coalition which overthrew Slobodan Milošević through the 2000 presidential elections and subsequently (Dec. 2000) won the parliamentary elections in Serbia. The said coined word is a blend of DOS and *Osmanlije* (Osman/Ottoman). – *Translator's note*.

u višestrukom povratu [*High Treason as Multiply Repeated Crime*, 2016]; *O pravdi i pravičnosti* [*On Justice and Justness*, 2017]; *Kosovo stožer Srpstva* [*Kosovo, the Pivot of Serbdom*, 2018].

JOVAN DELIĆ (b. Borkovići near Plužine, Montenegro, 1949) writes literary criticism and essays. Books: *Kritičarevi paradoksi* [*The Paradoxes of a Critic*, 1980]; *Srpski nadrealizam i roman* [*The Serbian Surrealism and Novel*, 1980]; *Pjesnik „Patetike uma” (o pjesništvu Pavla Popovića)* [*The Poet of “The Pathos of the Mind” (on the poetry of Pavle Popović)*, 1983]; *Tradicija i Vuk Stefanović Karadžić* [*Tradition and Vuk Stefanović Karadžić*, 1990]; *Hazararska prizma – tumačenje proze Milorada Pavića* [*The Khazarian Prism: An Interpretation of the Fiction by Milorad Pavić*, 1991]; *Književni pogledi Danila Kiša* [*The Literary Views of Danilo Kiš*, 1995]; *Kroz prozu Danila Kiša* [*Across the Prose by Danilo Kiš*, 1997]; *O poeziji i poetici srpske moderne* [*On the Poetry and Poetic Practices of the Serbian Modernism*, 2008]; *Ivo Andrić – Most i žrtva* [*Ivo Andrić: The Bridge and Sacrifice*, 2011]; *Ivan V. Lalić i njemačka lirika – jedno intertekstualno istraživanje* [*Ivan V. Lalić and German Lyric Poetry: An Intertextual Research*, 2011]. Delić edited a number of books by and on Serbian authors.

ŽANETA ĐUKIĆ PERIŠIĆ (b. Belgrade, 1956) has for many years been researching the life and work of Ivo Andrić. Currently, she is the managing director of the Documentation Centre of Ivo Andrić Foundation in Belgrade. She is author of the following books: *Kavaljer svetog duha. O jednom nedovršenom romanu Ive Andrića* [*A Cavalier of Saintly Spirit: About an Unfinished Novel by Ivo Andrić*, 1992]; *Jevrejski portreti u delima Ive Andrića* [*Jewish Portraits in the Works by Ivo Andrić*, 2005]; *Kulinarski putopisi – internacionalni kuvar* [*Culinary Travel Writings: An International Cookbook*, 2008]; *Pisac i priča – stvaralačka biografija Ive Andrića* [*The Writer and His Story: An Authorial Biography of Ivo Andrić*, 2012]; *Na početku svih staza – Andrić i Višegrad* [*At the Start of All Paths: Andrić and Višegrad*, 2015]; *Kavaljer svetog duha. O jednom nedovršenom romanu Ive Andrića* [*A Cavalier of Saintly Spirit: About an Unfinished Novel by Ivo Andrić*, 2017]. Dr. Đukić Perišić has edited a number of books by Serbian authors.

SLAVKO GORDIĆ (b. Dabrica near Stolac, Bosnia-Herzegovina) writes fiction, literary reviews and essays. From 1992 to 2004, he was Editor-in-Chief of *Letopis Matice srpske* (*The Annals of Matica srpska*) and in the period 2008–2012 Vice-President of Matica srpska. Books of fiction: *Vrhovni silnik* [*The Supreme Oppressor*, 1975]; *Drugo lice* [*Second Person*, 1998]; *Opit* [*The Experiment*, 2004]; *Rub* [*The Edge*, 2010]. Books of essays and critiques: *U vidiku stiha* [*Within the Horizon of Verse*, 1978]; *Slaganje vremena* [*Concordance*

of Times, 1983]; *Primarno i nijansa* [The Primary and a Nuance, 1985]; *Poezija i okruženje* [Poetry and the Milieu, 1988]; *Obrazac i čin – ogledi o romanu* [Pattern and Act: Essays on the Novel, 1995]; “Pevač” Boška Petrovića [“The Epic Poet” by Boško Petrović, 1998]; *Ogledi o Veljku Petroviću* [Essays on Veljko Petrović, 2000]; *Glavni posao* [The Principal Job, 2002]; *Profili i situacije* [Profiles and Situations, 2004]; *Razmena darova – ogledi i zapisi o savremenom srpskom pesništvu* [Exchange of Gifts: Essays and Notes on Contemporary Serbian Poetry, 2006]; *Savremenost i nasleđe* [Contemporaneity and Heritage, 2006]; *Kritičke razlednice* [Critical Postcards, 2008]; *Traganja i svedočenja* [Searching and Testifying, 2011]; *Ogledi o Ivi Andriću* [Essays on Ivo Andrić, 2013]; *Srodstva i razdaljine – ogledi i dnevnički zapisi* [Kinship and Gaps: Essays and Journalary Notes, 2014]; *Osmatračnica – književne i opšte teme* [An Observation Point – Literary and General Topics, 2016]. Dr. Gordić has edited a number of books by Serbian authors.

DRAGAN HAMOVIĆ (b. Kraljevo, 1970) writes poetry, essays and literary reviews. Books of verse: *Mrakovi, ruge* [Dark Moments, Mockery, 1992]; *Nameštenik* [An Employee, 1994]; *Matična knjiga* [Civil Register, 2007]; *Album ranih stihova* [An Album of Early Verse, 2007]; *Žeženo i nežno* [With Fervour and Tenderness, 2012]; *Zmaj u jajetu – naivne pesme* [A Dragon in the Egg: Naïve Poems, 2013]; *Tiska – pesme i poneki zapis* [The Rush: Poems and a Note Here and There, 2015]; *Meko jezgro – pesme s pratećom pričom* [Soft Kernel: Poems with Accompanying Tales, 2016]; *Popravljam uspomene* [I Mend Recollections, 2017]; *Bežanijska Kosa – pesme i venac malih priča* [Bežanijska Kosa:³ Poems and a Garland of Minor Tales, 2018]; *Izvod iz matične knjige* [A Certificate from the Civil Register, 2019]. Books of essays and reviews: *Stvari ovdašnje* [Local Affairs, 1998]; *Pesničke stvari* [Matters of Poetry, 1999]; *Poslednje i prvo* [The Ultimate and the Foremost, 2003]; *S obe strane* [From Both Sides, 2006]; *Leto i citati – poezija i poetika Jovana Hristića* [Summertime and Citations: The Poetry and Poetics of Jovan Hristić, 2008]; *Pesma od početka* [Poem from the Beginning, 2009]; *Raičković – pesnički razvoj i poetičko okruženje* [Raičković: The Poet’s Evolution and His Poetic Milieu, 2011]; *Matični prostor* [Home Territory, 2012]; *Put ka uspravnoj zemlji – moderna srpska poezija i njena kulturna samosvest* [The Way to an Upright Country: Modern Serbian Poetry and Its Cultural Self-Consciousness, 2016]; *Momo traži Kapor – problem identiteta u Kaporovoj prozi* [Momo in Search of Kapor: The Identity Issue in Kapor’s Prose, 2016]; *Preko veka – iz srpske poezije XX i XXI stoleća* [A Century and Beyond: From the Serbian Poetry of the 20th and 21st Centuries, 2017]; *Lica jednine* [Persons Singular, 2018]. Dr. Hamović has also edited a number of books.

³ *Bežanijska kosa* is a residential quarter in the Municipality of New Belgrade, the City of Belgrade, on the left bank of the Sava River. – *Translator’s note.*

SVETOZAR KOLJEVIĆ (Banja Luka, BiH, 1930 – Novi Sad, Serbia, 2016). Anglicist, wrote studies, essays, criticism and literature reviews, translated from English, academician. Published books: *Trijumf inteligencije* [*Triumph of Intelligence*, 1963]; *Humor i mit* [*Humor and myth*, 1968]; *Naš junački ep* [*Our heroine epic*, 1974]; *Putevi reči* [*Ways to say*, 1978]; *The Epic in the Making*, 1980; *Pripovetke Ive Andrića* [*Ivo Andrić's Novels*, 1983]; *Engleska književnost 3* [*English Literature 3* (group of authors), 1984]; *Videnja i snoviđenja* [*Visions and Dreams*, 1986]; *Hirovi romana* [*A novel of the novel*, 1988]; *Pripovetka 1945–1980* [*The Novel, 1945–1980*, 1991]; *Po belom svetu-zapisi i sećanja* [*In the White World – Records and Memories*, 1997]; *Postanje epa* [*Becoming an epic*, 1998]; *Englesko-srpski rečnik* [*English-Serbian Dictionary* (co-author I. Đurić Paunović), 1999]; *Engleski pesnici dvadesetog veka (1914–1980) – od Vilfreda Ovena do Filipa Larkina* [*English poets of the twentieth century (1914–1980) – from Wilfred Owen to Philip Larkin*, 2002]; *Engleski romansijeri dvadesetog veka (1914–1960) – od Džejmisa Džojlsa do Vilijama Goldinga* [*English Romanesque Twentieth Century (1914–1960) – from James Joyce to William Golding*, 2003]; *Vječna zublja – odjeci usmene u pisanoj književnosti* [*Eternal Eyes – Echoes of Oral in Written Literature*, 2005]; *Vavilonski izazovi – o susretima različitih kultura u književnosti* [*Babylonian Challenges – Encounters of Different Cultures in Literature*, 2007]; *Odjeci reči* [*Echoes of the Word*, 2009]; *Između zavičaja i tuđine – susreti različitih kultura u srpskoj književnosti* [*Between the homeland and the alien – encounters of different cultures in Serbian literature*, 2015]; *Džozef Konrad: čovek i umetnik* [*Joseph Konrad: Man and Artist*, 2016].

ALEKSANDAR B. LAKOVIĆ (b. Peć, Kosovo and Metohia, Serbia, 1955) is an author of poetry, essays, studies and literary reviews. Books of poems: *Noći* [*Nights*, 1992]; *Zaseda* [*Ambush*, 1994]; *Povratak u Hilandar* [*Chilandari Revisited*, 1996]; *Drvo slepog gavrana* [*The Blind Raven's Tree*, 1997]; *Dok nam krov prokišnjava* [*While Our Roof Is Leaking*, 1999]; *Ko da nam vrati lica usput izgubljena* [*Who Can Return to Us the Faces Lost along Our Way*, selected verse, 2004]; *Nećeš u pesmu* [*You Have No Place in Verse*, 2011]; *Silazak andjela – pokosovski ciklus* [*The Angels' Descent: Post-Kosovo Cycle*, 2015]; *Ko da nam vrati lica usput izgubljena* [*Who Can Return to Us the Faces Lost along Our Way*, selected and new verse, 2015]; *Glasovi neba pod zemljom* [*The Underground Voices of the Heaven*, 2016]. Studies: *Od totema do srodnika: mitološki svet Slovena u srpskoj književnosti* [*From the Totem to the Kins: The Mythological World of the Slavs in the Serbian Literature*, 2000]; *Hilandarski putopisi* [*Chilandari Travelogues*, 2002]; *Tokovi van tokova – autentični pesnički postupci u savremenoj srpskoj poeziji* [*Streams Beyond Streams: The Authentic Poetic Proceeds in the Contemporary Serbian Poetry*, 2004]; *Jezikotvorci – gongorizam u srpskoj poeziji* [*Language-Makers: Gongorism in the Serbian Poetry*, 2006]; *Dnevnik reči – eseji i prikazi srpske pesničke pro-*

dukcije 2006–2007 [*A Word Diary: Essays and Reviews on the Serbian Poets' Output 2006–2007*, 2008]; *Dnevnik glasova – eseji i prikazi srpske pesničke produkcije 2008–2009* [*A Sound Diary: Essays and Reviews on the Serbian Poets' Output 2008–2009*, 2011]; *Djordje Marković Koder – jezik i mit* [*Djordje Marković Koder: Language and Myth*, 2013]; *Dnevnik stihova – prikazi i eseji srpske pesničke produkcije 2010–2012* [*A Verse Diary: Reviews and Essays on the Serbian Poets' Output 2010–2012*, 2014]; *Dnevnik pesama – prikazi i eseji srpske pesničke produkcije 2013–2015* [*A Diary of Poems: Reviews and Essays on the Serbian Poets' Output 2013–2015*, 2016]; *Kod kuće nismo zaključavali: roman-album* [*We Didn't Lock Our House Door: An Album-Novel*, 2017].

MILO LOMPAR (b. Belgrade, 1962) is a historian and theoretician of literature, and author of studies. Books published: *O završetku romana (Smisao završetka u romanu „Druga knjiga Seoba” Miloša Crnjanskog)* [*On the Ending in a Novel (The Meaning of the Ending in the Novel “The Second Book of Migrations” by Miloš Crnjanski)*, 1995]; *Moderna vremena u prozi Dragiša Vasića* [*Modern Times in the Prose of Dragiša Vasić*, 1996]; *Njegoš i moderna* [*Njegoš and Modernism*, 1998]; *Crnjanski i Mefistofel (O skrivenoj figuri “Romana o Londonu”)* [*Crnjanski and Mephistopheles (About the Doppelgänger in “The Novel about London”*, 2000)]; *Apolonovi putokazi – eseji o Crnjanskom* [*Appollo's Guideposts: Essays on Crnjanski*, 2004]; *Moralistički fragmenti* [*Moralist Fragments*, 2007]; *Negde na granici filozofije i literature – o književnoj hermeneutici Nikole Miloševića* [*Somewhere on the Border between Philosophy and Literature: About the Literary Hermeneutics of Nikola Milošević*, 2009]; *Njegoševo pesništvo* [*The Poetry of Njegoš*, 2010]; *O tragičkom pesniku* [*About a Tragic Poet*, 2010]; *Duh samoporicanja – prilog kritici srpske kulturne politike* [*The Spirit of Self-Denial: A Contribution to the Critique of the Serbian Cultural Policy*, 2011]; *Povratak srpskom stanovništvu?* [*Regaining the Serbian Populace?*, interviews, 2013]; *Pohvala nesavremenosti* [*A Eulogy to Obsolescence*, 2016]; *Polihistorska istraživanja* [*Polyhistoric Inquiries*, 2016]; *Sloboda i istina* [*Freedom and Truth*, interviews, 2018]; *Crnjanski, biografija jednog osećanja* [*Crnjanski – Biography of a Sentiment*, 2018].

SVETLANA MILAŠINOVIĆ (b. Subotica, 1980) pursues researches in the 20th century Serbian literature and writes studies, essays and literary reviews. Books published: *Čitanje savremene proze* [*Readings of Contemporary Fiction*, co-authored by G. Sapožničenko, 2008]; *Eseji Momčila Nastasijevića* [*The Essays by Momčilo Nastasijević*, 2011]; *Kriza identiteta romanesknog junaka srpske moderne* [*Identity Crisis in the Hero of the Serbian Modernist Novel*, 2018].

IVAN NEGRİŠORAC (b. Trstenik, Serbia, 1956). Author of poetry, fiction, plays and literary reviews. From 2005 to 2012, he was the Editor-in-Chief of

Letopis Matice srpske; in 2012, elected President of Matica srpska. Books of poetry: *Trula jabuka* [*Rotting Apple*, 1981]; *Rakljar. Želudac* [*Dowser. Stomach*, 1983]; *Zemljopis* [*Soil-Survey*, 1986]; *Abrakadabra* [*Abacadabra*, 1990]; *Toplo, hladno* [*Hot, Cold*, 1990]; *Hop* [*Hop-Skipping*, 1993]; *Veznici* [*Conjunctions*, 1995]; *Prilozi* [*Adverbs/Contributions*, 2002]; *Potajnik* [*The Mole*, 2007]; *Svetilnik* [*The Torchbearer*, 2010]; *Kamena čtenija* [*Petrographic Readings*, 2013]; *Čtenija* [*Readings*, selected verse, 2015]; *Matični mleč* [*Bee Bread*, 2016]. Novel: *Andjeli umiru* [*Angels Are Dying*, 1998]. Plays: *Fredi umire* [*Freddy's Dying*, 1987]; *Kuc-kuc* [*Knock-Knock*, 1989]; *Istraga je u toku, zar ne?* [*Investigation's Under Way, Isn't It?*, 2000]; *Vidiš li svice na nebu* [*Do You See the Fireflies in the Sky?*, 2006]. Studies: *Legitimacija za beskućnike. Srpska neoavangardna poezija – poetički identitet i razlike* [*ID for the Homeless. Serbian Neo-Avant-Garde Poetry: Poetic Identity and Differences*, 1996]; *Lirska aura Jovana Dučića* [*The Lyrical Aura of Jovan Dučić*, 2009]. Negrišorac chairs the Editorial Board of *Srpska Enciklopedija* (*A Serbian Encyclopedia*) Book 1, Vols. 1-2 (2010-11) and Book 2 (2013).

MILIVOJ NENIN (b. Lok, Šajkaška, 1956) is a literary critic and historian. Books published: *S-aveti kritike, s-okovi poezije* [*Some Advice/Ghosts of Criticism, Juices/Fetters of Poetry*⁴, 1990]; *Svetislav Stefanović – preteča modernizma* [*Svetislav Stefanović – A Forerunner of Modernism*, 1993]; *S merom i bez nje* [*With Measured Approach or Otherwise*, 1993]; *Suočavanja* [*Encounters*, 1999]; *Stvari koje su prošle* [*Some Bygone Issues*, 2003]; *Stari lisac* [*An Old Fox*, 2003]; *Slučajna knjiga – kolaž o Todoru Manojloviću* [*An Incidental Book: A Collage about Todor Manojlović*, 2006]; *Srpska pesnička moderna* [*Modernism in the Serbian Poetry*, 2006]; *Sitne knjige – o prepisci srpskih pisaca* [*Brief Letters: About the Correspondences of Serbian Writers*, 2007]; *Slatka knjiga* [*A Delicious Book*, 2008]; *Sedam beležaka – mala knjiga o Crnjanskom* [*Seven Records: A Small Book on Crnjanski*, 2009]; *Savičenta – srpski književnici iskosa* [*Savičenta: Some Serbian Writers Seen Sidelong*, 2010]; *Sveti miris pamtiveka – fragmenti o Lazi Kostiću* [*The Holy Scent of Times Immemorial: Fragments on Laza Kostić*, 2011]; *Savić Milan* [2011]; *Sedam brežuljaka – knjiga o Crnjanskom* [*The Seven Hills: A Book on Crnjanski*, 2013]; *Slavni Šajkaš o Lazi Kostiću* [*The Glorious Šajkaš about Laza Kostić*, 2014]; *Slovo tvrdo – o prepisci Ilariona Ruvarca* [*Letters of Decidedness: About the Correspondence of Ilarion Ruvarac*, 2016]; *Svi moji banatski pisci – prikaze i prikazi* [*All My Banat Authors: Apparitions and Appraisals*, 2016]; *Svetislav Stefanović, opet* [*Svetislav Stefanović, Again*, 2016]; *Sreten Marić* [2017]; *Srpskih novina dodatak i drugi dodaci* [*The Inset of Srpske novine and Other Supplements*, 2017]. Dr. Milivoj Nenin has also been editor of books and anthologies.

⁴ Wordplay on the initial letters: *Saveti* ('advice') and *aveti* ('ghosts'); *sokovi* ('juices') and *okovi* ('fetters'). – *Translator's note.*

MIHAJLO PANTIĆ (b. Belgrade, Serbia, 1957) is an author of short stories, literary reviews, essays and studies. Books of short stories: *Hronika sobe* [*The Chronicle of a Room*, 1984]; *Vonder u Berlinu* [*Wonder in Berlin*, 1987]; *Pesnici, pisci & ostala menažerija* [*Poets, Writers & the Rest of the Menagerie*, 1992]; *Ne mogu da se setim jedne rečenice* [*I Can't Remember One Sentence*, 1993]; *Novobeogradske priče* [*New Belgrade Stories*, 1994]; *Sedmi dan košave* [*The Seventh Day of the Koshava Wind*, 1999]; *Jutro posle* [*The Morning After*, 2001]; *Ako je to ljubav* [*If That Is Love*, 2003]; *Najlepše priče Mihajla Pantića* [*The Most Appealing Stories by Mihajlo Pantić*, 2004]; *Žena u muškim cipelama – the Best of* [*Woman in Men's Shoes – the Best of*, selected short stories, 2006]; *Prvih deset godina* [*The First Ten Years*, 2006]; *Ovoga puta o bolu* [*This Time about Pain*, 2007]; *Sve priče Mihajla Pantića I-IV* [*All Stories by Mihajlo Pantić I-IV*, 2007]; *Priče na putu* [*Stories on the Road*, 2010]; *Hodanje po oblacima* [*Walking across the Clouds*, 2013]; *Ako je to ljubav* [*If That Is Love*, 2014]; *Vonder u Berlinu* [*Wonder in Berlin*, 2015]; *Sedmi dan košave* [*The Seventh Day of the Koshava Wind*, 2015]; *Ovoga puta o bolu* [*This Time about Pain*, 2016]; *Novobeogradske priče* [*New Belgrade Stories*, 2016]; *Kada me ugleda ono što tražim* [*When I'm Spotted by What I'm Looking For*, 2017]. Studies, reviews, essays, criticism, travelogues: *Iskušenja sažetosti* [*The Temptations of Conciseness*, 1984]; *Aleksandrijski sindrom 1–4* [*Alexandrian Syndrome 1–4*, 1987, 1994, 1999, 2003]; *Protiv sistematičnosti* [*Opposing Systematicness*, 1988]; *Šum Vavilona* [*Babelic Noise*, co-authored with V. Pavković, 1988]; *Deset pesama, deset razgovora* [*Ten Poems, Ten Conversations*, co-authored with S. Zubanović, 1992]; *Novi prilozi za savremenu srpsku poeziju* [*New Contributions to the Contemporary Serbian Poetry*, 1994]; *Puzzle*, 1995; *Šta čitam i šta mi se događa* [*What I Read and What Happens to Me*, 1998]; *Kiš*, 1998; *Modernističko pripovedanje* [*Modernist Storytelling*, 1999]; *Tortura teksta (Puzzle II)* [*Tortured by Text (Puzzle II)*, 2000]; *Ogledi o svakodnevici (Puzzle III)* [*Essays on the Quotidian (Puzzle III)*, 2001]; *Svet iza sveta* [*A World Behind the World*, 2002]; *Kapetan sobne plovidbe (Puzzle IV)* [*Room-Based Shipmaster (Puzzle IV)*, 2003]; *Svakodnevnik čitanja* [*Logbook of Reading*, 2004]; *Život je upravo u toku (Puzzle II)* [*Life Is Just Afoot (Puzzle V)*, 2005]; *Pisci govore* [*Writers Talking*, 2007]; *Drugi svet iza sveta* [*Another World Behind the World*, 2009]; *Neizgubljeno vreme* [*The Unwaisted Time*, 2009]; *Slankamen (Puzzle VI)*, 2009; *Dnevnik jednog uživaoca čitanja* [*Diary of a Reading Addict*, 2009]; *A Short History of Serbian Literature* (by a group of authors), 2011; *Biti rokenrol* [*Being Rock-'n'-Roll*, co-authored with P. Popović, 2011]; *Stan bez adrese (Puzzle VII)* [*An Apartment with No Address (Puzzle VII)*, 2014]; *Od stiha do stiha – svet iza sveta 3* [*From One Verse Line to Another: A World Behind the World 3*, 2014]; *Priče od vode – sve ribe Srbije* [*Stories Derived from Water: All of Serbia's Fish*, co-authored with M. Tucović, 2014]; *Osnovi srpskog pripovedanja* [*The Basics of Serbian Storytelling*, 2015]; *Šta čitam i*

šta mi se događa [*What I Read and What Happens to Me*, 2016]. Pantić has edited numerous books, anthologies and proceedings.

ZORAN PAUNOVIĆ (b. Bor, 1962), Anglicist and correspondent member of the Serbian Academy of Sciences and Arts, writes studies and essays, translates literary works from English into Serbian (W. Trevor, P. Auster, V. Nabokov, J. Conrad, J. Barnes, J. Joyce...). Books published: *Gutači blede vatre – američki roman Vladimira Nabokova* [*Pale Fire Eaters – Vladimir Nabokov's American Novel*, 1997]; *Istorija, fikcija, mit – eseji o anglo-američkoj književnosti* [*History, Fiction, Myth: Essays on Anglo-American Literature*, 2006]; *Modernistička studija nostalgije* [*A Modernist Study in Nostalgia*, 2008]; *Uliks Reload* [*Ulysses Reload*, co-authored by J. Đorđević, 2012]; *Prozor u dvorište* [*Rear Window*, 2017]; *Doba heroja* [*An Age of Heroes*, 2018]. Dr. Paunović has edited a number of books.

ALEKSANDAR PETROV (b. Niš, 1938) writes verse, prose, essays and literary reviews. Books of poetry: *Sazdanac* [*The Source of Creation*, 1971]; *Brus* [*Whetstone*, 1978]; *Slovenska škola* [*Slavonic School*, 1985]; *Poslednje Kosovo* [*The Ultimate Kosovo*, 1988]; *Istočni dlan* [*The Eastern Palm*, 1992]; *Kamen i zvono* / *The Stone and the Bell* [1992]; *Vatrar* [*The Firekeeper*, 2003]; *Privirea de aur / Zlatni pogled* [*Golden Sight*, 2004]; *Ah! Ah!* [2006]; *Peta strana sveta* [*The Fifth Cardinal Direction*, 2013]. Novels: *Kao zlato u vatri* [*Like Gold in Fire*, 1998]; *Turski Beč* [*The Turkish Vienna*, 2000]; *Lavlja pećina* [*The Lion's Cave*, 2004]; *Memoroman* [*Memonovel*, 2018]. Books of essays, studies and reviews: *Razgovori s poezijom* [*Conversations with Poetry*, 1963]; *U prostoru proze* [*On the Territory of Prose*, 1968]; *Poezija Crnjanskog i srpsko pesništvo* [*Crnjanski's Verse and the Serbian Poetry*, 1971]; *Poezija danas* [*Poetry Today*, 1980]; *Krila i vazduh – ogledi o modernoj poeziji* [*The Wings and the Air: Essays on Modern Poetry*, 1983]; *Manje poznati Dučić / A Less Known Dučić* [1994]; *The Poet's Time and Space / Vreme i prostor pesnika* [1994]; *Srpski modernizam* [*Serbian Modernism*, 1997]; *Li Čingov pesnički kosmos / Li Qing's Poetry Universe* [2004]; *Kanon – srpski pesnici XX veka* [*The Canon: 20th-Century Serbian Poets*, 2008]; *Pre prošlosti 1 – srpska književnost i književni život (1959–2011)* [*Preceding the Past 1: Serbian Literature and Literary Life (1959–2011)*, 2011]; *Pre prošlosti 2 – književna teorija, kritika i književnost sveta* [*Preceding the Past 2: Literary Theory, Criticism and World Literature (1959–2011)*, 2011]. Dr. A. Petrov has edited a number of books and anthologies.

RAJKO PETROV NOGO (b. Borija near Kalinovik, Bosnia-Herzegovina) writes poetry, reviews and essays. Books of verse: *Zimomora* [*Shiver*, 1967]; *Zverinjak* [*Menagerie*, 1972]; *Rodila me tetka koza* [*Auntie Goat Gave Birth to Me*, for children, 1977]; *Bezakonje* [*Lawlessness*, 1977]; *Planina i počelo* [*The*

Mountain and the Prematter, 1978]; *Koliba i tetka koza* [*The Hut and Auntie Goat*, for children, 1980]; *Na kraju milenija* [*At the End of the Millennium*, 1987]; *Lazareva subota* [*Lazarus Saturday*, 1989]; *Lazareva subota i drugi dani* [*Lazarus Saturday and Other Days*, 1993]; *Na kapijama raja* [*At Heaven's Gates*, 1994]; *Lirika* [*Lyrics*, 1995]; *Malo dokumentarnih detalja* [*A Few Documental Details*, 1998]; *Nek pada snijeg, Gospode* [*May the Snow Fall, O Lord*, 1999]; *Najlepše pesme Rajka Petrova Noga* [*The Most Appealing Poems by Rajko Petrov Nogo*, Djordjo Sladoje, Ed., 2001]; *Nedremano oko* [*Sleepless Eye*, 2002]; *Nije sve propalo* [*Not All Has Failed*, 2004]; *U Vilovome dolu* [*In the Fairy-Vale*, selected and new poems, 2005]; *Ječam i kaloper – glosa* [*Barley and Bible Leaf: A Gloss*, 2006]; *Ne tikaj u me* [*Don't Dig What Makes Me Tick*, 2008]; *Čovek se vraća kući* [*A Man Coming Home*, selected verse, 2010]; *U dolu šušti ječam – devet strofa jedne povesti* [*Barley Rustling in the Vale: Nine Stanzas of a Story*, selected verse, 2013]; *Preko pepela* [*Over the Ashes*, 2015]; *Sonet i smrt* [*The Sonnet and Death*, 2017]. Books of reviews, essays and studies: *Jesi li živ* [*Are You Alive*, 1973]; *Obilje i rasap materije* [*The Abundance and Dissolution of Matter*, 1978]; *Na Vukovoj stazi* [*In the Wake of Vuk*, 1987]; *Suze i sokolari* [*Tears and Falconers*, 2003]; *Soneti i poeme Skendera Kulenovića* [*The Sonnets and Long Poems of Skender Kulenović*, 2010]; *Zapiši to, Rajko* [*Write It Down, Rajko*, 2011]; *Zapiši i napiši* [*Put It Down and Write*, 2011]; *S mene pa na uštap – remoar* [*Once in a Blue Moon: A Remoir*, 2014]. There are also collections of Petrov Nogo's literary output: *Dela Rajka Petrovog Noga 1–5* [*The Works of Rajko Petrov Nogo 1–5*, 2003] and *Izabrana dela 1–7* [*Selected Works 1–7*, 2015]. He has edited a number of books, proceedings and anthologies.

RASTKO PETROVIĆ (Belgrade, 1898 – Washington, D.C., U.S.A., 1949) was a jurist, author, literary and art critic, and diplomat. His diplomatic service included the posts of a clerk at the Embassy of the Kingdom of Yugoslavia to the Holy See (1926), attache in Rome (1926–8), vice-consul in Chicago (1935–6), secretary of the Embassy to Washington, D.C., Deputy Consul General in New York City (1937) and Consul of Group Five in Chicago (from 1937). Books of verse: *Otkrovenje* [*Revelation*, 1922]; *Ponoćni Delija* [*Midnight Hero*, 1970]; *Pesme* [*Poems*, enlarged edition, 2012]; *Veliki drug* [*A Great Friend*, 2018]. Novels: *Burleska gospodina Peruna Boga Groma* [*A Burlesque of Lord Perun, God of Thunderbolt*, 1921]; *Ljudi govore* [*People Talk*, 1931]; *Dan šesti* [*The Sixth Day*, 1955]; *Sa silama nemerljivim* [*Formidable Forces*, 2005]. Prose: *Najlepše pripovetke Rastka Petrovića* [*The Most Appealing Short Stories by Rastko Petrović*, 2002]. Travelogues: *Afrika* [*Africa*, 1930]; *Sicilija i drugi putopisi: iz neobjavljenih putopisa* [*Sicily and Other Travel Essays: From Unpublished Travel Literature*, 1988]. Books of essays, correspondence, studies and critiques: *Mladićstvo narodnog genija* [*The Early Days of the Popular Genius*, 1999]; *Zverstva: o trenju između duše i tela* [*Bestial*

Acts: About the Frictions between Soul and Body, 2001]; *Prepiska* [Correspondence, 2003]; *Narodna reč i genije hrišćanstva* [The Word of the People and the Genius of Christianity, 2008]; *Izložbe* [Exhibitions, 2014]. Collected works: *Izbor I–II* [A Selection I–II, 1958–1962]; *Dela Rastka Petrovića III–V* [Works by Rastko Petrović III–V, 1961–1966]; *Izabrana dela I–II* [Selected Works I–II, 1964]; *Rastko Petrović* [Rastko Petrović, selection, 1967]; *Otkrovenje – poezija, proza, eseji* [Revelation: Poetry, Prose, Essays, 1972]; *Dela Rastka Petrovića I–VI* [Works by Rastko Petrović I–VI, 1974–1977]; *Izabrana dela I–II* [Selected Works I–II, 2008]. The works by Rastko Petrović have been translated into numerous languages, and his verse and prose can be found in many anthologies.

VLADIMIR PIŠTALO (b. Sarajevo, Bosnia-Herzegovina, 1960) is a fiction writer. Books published: *Slikovnica* [Picture Book, 1981]; *Manifesti* [Manifestoes, 1986]; *Noći* [Nights, 1986]; *Korto Malteze* [Corto Maltese, 1987]; *Kraj veka* [The End of the Century, 1990]; *Vitraž u sećanju* [Stained Glass Memories, 1994]; *Priče iz celog sveta* [Stories from around the World, 1997]; *Aleksandrida* [The Story of Alexander the Great, 1999]; *Milenijum u Beogradu* [Millennium in Belgrade, 2000]; *O čudu* [About a Miracle, 2002]; *Tesla, mladost* [Tesla, Youth, 2006]; *Tesla, portret među maskama* [Tesla, Portrait with Masks, 2008]; *Čajevi Marsa / Noći* [The Mars Teas / Nights, 2010]; *Venecija* [Venice, 2011]; *Sunce ovog dana – pismo Andriću* [The Sun of This Day: A Letter to Andrić, 2017].

SAŠA RADOJČIĆ (b. Sombor, Vojvodina, Serbia, 1963) writes poetry, literary reviews, studies, essays; translates from German. Books of verse: *Uzalud snovi* [Vain Dreams, 1985]; *Kamerna muzika* [Chamber Music, 1991]; *Amerika i druge pesme* [America and Other Poems, 1994]; *Elegije, nokturna, etide* [Elegies, Nocturnes, Etudes, 2001]; *Četiri godišnja doba* [Four Seasons, 2004]; *Panonske etide: izabrane i nove pesme* [Pannonian Etudes: Selected and New Poems, 2012]; *Cyber zen*, 2013; *Duge i kratke pesme* [Long and Short Poems, 2015]. Books of criticism, essays and studies: *Providni andjeli* [Transparent Angels, 2003]; *Poezija, vreme buduće* [Poetry, Future Tense, 2003]; *Ništa i prah – antropološki pesimizam Sterijinog Davorja* [Nil and Ashes: The Anthropological Pessimism of Sterija's "Davorje", 2006]; *Stapanje horizonata – pesništvo i interpretacija pesništva u filozofskoj hermeneutici* [Merging of Horizons: Poetry and Interpretation of Poetry in the Philosophical Hermeneutics, 2010]; *Razumevanje i zbivanje – osnovni činioci hermeneutičkog iskustva* [Understanding and Action – the Basic Factors of a Hermeneutic Experience, 2011]; *Uvod u filozofiju umetnosti* [An Introduction to the Philosophy of Art, 2014]; *Reč posle* [The Afterword, 2015]; *Jedna pesma – hermeneutički izgredi* [A Poem: Hermeneutical Excesses, 2016]; *Slike i rečenice* [Images and Sentences, 2017].

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