

# EDITORS' PREFACE

Before his tragic death at only 22, Srečko Kosovel (1904-1926) created an extraordinarily rich poetic opus, ranging from mellow, late symbolist poems, celebrating the beauty of his native Karst landscape, to radical experiments with poetic language, parallel to futurism, constructivism and dadaism; it encompasses the articulation of profound and painful existential experience and direct political messages prophesying the brotherhood of humanity and all things under the stars.

In September 2004, to honour the centennial of the poet's birth, the Slovenian Comparative Literature Association and the Department of Comparative Literature and Literary Theory at the Faculty of Arts organised a symposium, as part of the Vilenica International Literature Festival. We would like to thank the organisers of this important event for kindly inviting, for the second year running, literary historians to Lipica, to the Karst, which every autumn hosts masters of the poetic word. The constructive contributions and the animated discussion that followed have confirmed our belief that Kosovel's poetics is exciting, contemporary and worthy of in-depth analyses. The contributors kindly responded to our invitation to expand their papers and adapt them for publication in a special issue of *Primerjalna književnost*. Besides the contributors, there are others who helped make this possible, to whom we extend our warm gratitude: Katarina Jerin and Ana Jelnikar translated not only the papers, but also quotations from Kosovel's; Philip Burt acted as lector; the two Slovenian texts were translated by Vera Troha and Niko Jež; Alenka Maček prepared the publication for print; Seta Knop contributed publication data. We would also like to thank the Scientific Institute of the Faculty of Arts, the Ministry of Culture, and the Slovenian Writers Association for their financial support for this publication, which we hope will make Kosovel's poetics more accessible to non-Slovenian readers and researchers.

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The studies on the following pages approach different aspects of Kosovel's creativity: the analyses of verse, imagery and avant-garde poetic para-gen-

res are followed by papers discussing the problems of situating the poet within literary history and the literary canon, the poet's attitude towards nihilism, and readers' responses; the two closing papers examine Kosovel's poetics by placing it in the context of the simultaneous Italian, and particularly Triestine, literary scene.

In his analysis of Kosovel's verse, **Boris A. Novak** argues that the young poet, who had an inborn ear for rhythm, but was not a skilful prosodist, overcame this shortcoming in his verse by turning his errors to his advantage. **Darja Pavlič** examines the imagery in Kosovel's poetry, and concluding that it is for the most part romantic, realist, and expressionist, whereas modern figures of speech are relatively rare. In her paper, **Božena Tokarž** focuses on the recognisable characteristics of the two poetic para-genres - the *cons* poems and *Integrals* - that Kosovel introduced. The discussion by **Janez Vrečko** explores the poet's guarded attitude towards Italian futurism and Balkan zenitism, characterising his famous *cons* poems as unique, and one of the pinnacles of European literary constructivism. In the hybrid co-presence of the Kosovel's diverse poetics, **Marko Juvan** has recognised an important symptom of modernism - modernist multilingualism, relativism, ambivalence, presentism and perspectivism. **Marijan Dovič** explains how a primary role in the canonisation of Kosovel was played by other actors in the literary system, because the author left no clear plans about his legacy. **Matevž Kos** maintains that Nietzsche was not a key person to open the doors to Kosovel's poetic world. Contrary to the philosopher, the poet argues for an emphasised ethical and moral stance, because people have repeatedly to choose between good and evil, right and wrong. In her paper, **Alenka Jovanovski** examines the communicative function of the aesthetic experience and explores how Kosovel directs the reader towards a socially active role. The contribution by **Katia Pizzi** focuses on a wide range poetry produced in contemporary Trieste, thereby assessing Kosovel's position within the context of the European avant-garde. On the basis of a comparative analysis of Kosovel's work, and the poems and letters of the Milanese poet Clemente Rebora (1885-1957), **Darja Betocchi** argues that we cannot speak of a proper expressionist movement in Italy.

The editors