

Orwell's *1984* in Pekić's *1999*: Intertextual Relations

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This paper examines intertextual relations between two dystopian novels – Borislav Pekić's anthropological account entitled 1999 and George Orwell's 1984. In postmodernism, the literary movement which Pekić's oeuvre belongs to in terms of poetic principles, intertextual dialogue is very active and dominant. I argue that Orwell's novel serves as a proto-text or an inspiration for Pekić in constructing his own narrative. This is particularly reflected in the conceptual organization of key elements of the narrative structure such as chronotope and characters. The dominant spatial structure taken over from Orwell is the Golden Country, a pasture where all important events in the novel take place. Similarly, the prominent temporal determinant, i.e. the year 1999, becomes a symbol just as it is the case with 1984. As regards the constructs of the plot, i.e. the characters, it is proposed that Pekić's Arno and the mole emerge as counterparts to Orwell's Winston and O'Brien. The chronotope of meeting, along with the resonant sentences "We shall meet in the place where there is no darkness" and "We shall meet when flowers bloom again," is a constant in both narrative structures. Regarding personality traits, Pekić's last man in the world, i.e. Arno, is well-matched with Winston, Orwell's last man. Both are modelled as aloof, lonely in their lives and ideas, and as individuals juxtaposed with the group. Furthermore, Pekić treats the motifs of love, history and rats similarly to the way Orwell does. Love fails to ensure the survival of humankind, historical facts are misrepresented, while the motif of rats metaphorically represents danger in both texts.

Keywords: English literature / Serbian literature / comparative studies / dystopia / dystopian novel / intertextuality / Orwell, George: *1984* / Pekić, Borislav: *1999*

The years in which Borislav Pekić¹ wrote were marked by notable shifts in the arts, especially in literature, with postmodern poetics playing an active role in the creation of literary texts. Reading (through) the narratives from this author against the backdrop of postmodern literary theory calls for the interpretation of phenomena such as the “poetic narrator” (Jerkov 30) and the corresponding “poetic reading,” self-reference, the narration of poetics, intertextuality, documentarism, disruption of chronology and logic in narration, time, vision of the world, fragmentation, metafiction, the questioning of “historical facts,” hybrid genres and parody.

Pekić’s literary output has attracted the interest of numerous critics. Due to its polyvalence, his oeuvre has been looked at from many perspectives, some of which we briefly mention here: Pijanović examines poetic laws in constructing Pekić’s entire novelistic work; Stojanović points out citationality as one of the essential constants of his poetics; Baturan gives prominence to documents, considering various forms of their incorporation into a text; Milošević deals with *mythomachy*, approaching all Pekić’s works from this angle and pointing out that “Pekić’s artistic criticism is always targeted at a single form of mythical vision of the world, which this unrelenting critic debunks without any compromise”² (5); Mustedanagić scrutinizes the issue of grotesque – a stylistic mechanism shaping the picture of the world in Pekić’s novels; Ahmetagić investigates the analytical myth and the Biblical subtext; whereas Cvijetić explores Orwell’s dystopia and how it resonates through Pekić’s prose.

Following an insight into relevant literature on Pekić’s body of work, we conclude that, despite being the subject of some of the previous studies (Mustedanagić, Stojanović, Pijanović, Cvijetić, Lazić), the issue of intertextual relations between Pekić’s *1999* and Orwell’s

¹ Borislav Pekić was one of the most prominent South Slavic writers of the twentieth century. In 1965 he published his first novel *The Time of Miracles*, which was followed by the novel-chronicle *The Pilgrimage of Arsenije Njegovan*; the novellas *The Rise and Fall of Icarus Gubelkian* and *The Apology and the Last Days*; the satiric *How to Quiet a Vampire*; the fantasy novel in seven volumes entitled *The Golden Fleece* (1978–1986), for which he won the Njegos Award; genre-novel *Rabies*; the anthropological novel *1999*, for which he received a science fiction award and *Atlantis I–II*, which earned him the Ivan Goran Kovačić prize; a collection of Gothic stories entitled *The New Jerusalem*. In 1984 he published *Selected Works* in 12 books, whereby the twelfth volume consists of essays and diaries. His autobiographical prose *The Years the Locusts Devoured* was published in two volumes – the first in 1987, and the second in 1989.

² This and other translations from the non-English sources are made by the author of the article.

1984 has not been delved into in detail, which is why this paper will attempt to shed light on the points linking the two narratives, as well as to expound on comparisons and contribute to the existing literature by providing parallels that have not been identified so far. The present study aims to explain how Orwell's text served as an inspiration or a starting point for the development of this narrative of Pekić's, while providing a succinct synthesis of the above, which has not been attempted so far. It should be noted, however, that Orwell's novels will not be placed in a broader intertextual context, as this would require a separate study.

On intertextuality

The introduction of the term intertextuality (see: Juvan) into the discourse of literary theory can largely be attributed to Kristeva, so 1968 is taken as "the official beginning." Kristeva developed her theory relying on Bakhtin, emphasizing that he was "one of the first to replace the static hewing out of texts with a model where literary structure does not simply *exist* but is generated in relation to another structure" (64–65, emphasis original), while also pointing out that each text is constructed as a mosaic of quotations which are absorbed and transformed into another text.

This view is also maintained by Barthes, who examines the possibility of analysing literature as a dialectical mode of writing which takes place within a single text (as cited in Bužinjska 172). In his view, the mode of writing a text hides in itself, beneath the surface of the word, reruns, parodies, reverberations of other modes of writing, which is why we should no longer speak of intersubjectivity in literature, but rather of intertextuality.

Kristeva, Barthes and Foucault declare "the death of the author" and herald the end of text autonomy, claiming that it is not the author who is the narrating entity, but rather discourse as a whole speaking through the author, predetermined by earlier works and ideas (as cited in Maširević 421). Thus Foucault (23) believes that "the frontiers of a book are never clear-cut," but that a book "is caught up in a system of references to other books, other texts, other sentences: it is a node within a network."

Intertextuality as a literary device found its full expression in post-modernism. Although this concept was also present in literature and literary theory earlier (Stojanović 9; Juvan 17–19), postmodernists

treat it in a completely new fashion, by which it becomes one of the key principles of this vastly controversial poetics. Juvan (99) suggests that “intertextuality and related expressions (quotation, double coding, hybridization, palimpsest) have also been driven to the surface by postmodern art and its aesthetic reflection. In fact, most theorists consider intertextuality as one of the constituent characteristics of this movement.”

A large number of postmodern texts are dialogic in nature, or “a game of citations, open imitations, borrowings, and variations on the themes of others” (Epstein 50). Lešić notes that in postmodernism the writer’s wish to communicate with other writers has become stronger than ever, and is the reason why a postmodern text often displays features of a “metatext,” which “represents a reply to other texts, as their own version, or just like a quote, like an homage, like an adaptation or like a parody, which has become exceptionally popular just now” (Lešić 424).

Texts displaying intertextual processes tend to be read closely in an innovative way. These processes are mostly twofold, so they give rise to a new reading of the intertext and the prototext. “Thus tradition, which to a certain extent forms new texts, becomes at the same time innovated with new ones” (Stojanović 37).

Taking into account the writer : work : reader relationship, Kristeva assigned an active role to the reader by viewing them as an accomplice or continuator of an intertextual dialogue (as cited in Bužinjska), whereas Riffaterre (626) proposes that an intertext is “the corpus of texts the reader may legitimately connect with the one before his eyes,” pointing out that those texts are brought to mind by what the reader is reading.

Pekić makes extensive use of intertextuality, often establishing a controversial relationship towards prototext, given that he deconstructs and reinterprets myths, but also texts of different genres.

He is favourably disposed towards intertextuality, underlining that he sees other texts as a free corpus, as something that can be incorporated into his experience on a case-by-case basis: “[A]s soon as it is in one’s experience, it may also become an intransigent part of ‘my work.’ I do not see it from the standpoint of a lawyer, but from the viewpoint of an artist” (Pekić, *Kaverna* 13).

Pekić and Orwell: 1999 and 1984

The novel *1999* is a part of the anti-utopian trilogy (*Rabies, Atlantis* and *1999*), which corresponds to the broad spectrum of literary and non-literary texts. Using a novel approach, the narrative addresses a number of themes, characters and situations that are directly linked to the literary heritage.

With regard to intertextual relations, in *1999* Pekić reinterprets, demythologizes and deconstructs many myths, among which the following phenomena are read in a new light: classical and biblical (the myths of Sisyphus, Pan, Genesis and Apocalypse, Utopia, Prophet, Fatum), as well as the contemporary myths of science and technology. Attention is also given to the deconstruction of the myths of the past and the future, whereas intertextual relations with Orwell and his *1984* make up a separate group.

The author himself puts forward ideas that inspired him to establish intertextual relations:

By all means, apart from the idea of the final 1999, the book also includes a number of other “driving” ideas: that of Plato about “several mankinds,” according to Solon’s report from Sais; the idea of the Golden Country taken over from Orwell; the Manichaic idea of the eternal conflict between the light (Spirit) and the dark (Matter); the idea of Messianism, permeated through all major characters of all stories, and somewhat differently understood than in “The Times of Miracles” etc. (Pekić, *Through 1984* 219–220)

Pekić engages in the (re)interpretation of the ideas mentioned above, but also of other model texts that he uses to construct his narratives, in his own unique way.

This paper will attempt to prove the hypothesis that *1984* is fit for the construction but also for the interpretation of *1999*. There are a number of linking threads that represent an unbreakable bond between the two texts that turn out as a dialogic polemic. The present study highlights a number of elements of the narrative structure which, in our view, may have served as an inspiration for Pekić to create and construct his text, since those issues are addressed in a similar fashion in Orwell’s novel (see Table 1). The following comparison also includes some general or universal themes (the theme of aloofness, the individual-collective relationship etc.), whose interpretation by the two authors will be of particular interest to us.

Orwell	Pekić
Chronos: 1984	Chronos: 1999
Topos: the Golden Country	Topos: the Golden Country
The motif of the last man – Winston	The motif of last man – Arno
The motif of meeting: “We shall meet in the place where there is no darkness”	The motif of meeting: “We shall meet when flowers bloom again”
The motif of rats	The motif of rats
The attempt to develop a rapport: Winston: O’Brien	The attempt to develop a rapport: Arno: the mole
The harbinger of false salvation: O’Brien	The harbinger of false salvation: the mole
The motif of aloofness/loneliness	The motif of aloofness/loneliness
Special treatment of love	Special treatment of love
Individual : totalitarianism (Party)	Individual : collective
Winston : O’Brien	Arno : robots
Falsification of history: Winston changes historical facts	Falsification of history: Robots conceal data on human histo- ry, which has vanished from memory

Table 1

The issue of genre: dystopian context

Narrative complexity in terms of genre is reflected in all Pekić’s literary output. He assigns a genre to all his works, at the same time providing a key to close reading.³ The novel *1999* is a multi-coded text, which is here looked at from different angles, while the author marks it as “an anthropological account.”⁴ In parallel with the initial determination of

³ Accordingly, subtitle functionality emerges as an important trait of Pekić’s poetics (Sekulović 323). Vukićević Janković further notes that “such a procedure requires us to perceive the addition of subtitles to a text as a special sign of its sense, but also of its poetic essence, or as a signal that combines the text’s meaning dispersion with its form” (193–194).

⁴ “It seems that by choosing the subtitle “anthropological account” the writer wanted to encompass the development of humankind and civilization over a longer

the genre, this novel is interpreted as: SF – a novel subtly constructed with the science fiction code, a philosophical novel, animal fiction, an apocalypse novel, dystopia – “whose main feature is discarding the idea of progress and the most profound doubt about all utopian notions” (Damjanov 480).

South-Slavic scholars generally study *1999* within the framework of anti-utopia (e.g. Cvijetić, Lazić, Pijanović, Stojanović, etc.), whereas Orwell's *1984* is generally classified as a dystopia. In fact, the distinction between the terms “anti-utopia” and “dystopia” has been rather vague, which is why many literary theorists have used them interchangeably. For instance, Kumar tends not to draw a distinction between anti-utopia and dystopia, but rather “uses anti-utopia as a generic term, which includes what is sometimes called the dystopia” (as cited in Claeys 279), while referring to anti-utopia as a negative response to utopia. According to Sargent, both anti-utopia and dystopia refer to a non-existent society, but anti-utopia is intended to be seen as a criticism of utopianism or of some particular eutopia, whereas dystopia acts as a criticism of a particular contemporary society, which implies that dystopia is more specific in nature than anti-utopia. This view is supported by Sisk, who makes a clear distinction between the two terms by noting that “anti-utopias merely criticize more generalized utopian ideals, while dystopias aggressively target contemporary social structures without direct reference to utopia” (5). In line with the terminological and conceptual dichotomy proposed by Sargent and Sisk, we will refer here to Pekić's *1999* as a dystopian novel.

In dystopia (or anti-utopia) – an imaginary bad place – events take place in a future that is portrayed as the present. Dystopia as a system is also characterized by authoritarian, totalitarian or repressive (political) regimes, where every portion of life is under control. Unlike the principle of hope in utopia, in anti-utopia (dystopia) “the concerns and fears of the author comes to the fore in light of potential deviations in the social, mental and ethical development of humankind” (Jović 486). The said qualities are well characteristic of the novels explored by the present study and thus represent another thread that links them.

The novel *1984* is regarded as a symbol of totalitarianism – a universal story which is applicable to all times, a dystopian picture of society where everything is subject to control, to the all-seeing eye of Big Brother, with the assistance of telescreens and microphones, by which the author alerts the reader to the risk of technological development,

period of time, without sticking to the strict methodology of history and its continuous reliance on sources” Lazić (99).

and to the threatening picture of the world that should never and must never become. Although Winston as an individual is at the centre of events, the story spreads to the whole world, to all negative characteristics it should not assume.

By contrast, Pekić's dystopian world is a world ruled by robots as the ideals of technological advancement, leading to the extinction of humanity and nature. Robots have full control over everything, even over "the last man in the world." It is the world in which the bad sides of our civilization have been maximized. Technological advancement brings along the collapse of humanity, while robots cover the tracks of the human civilization by altering history.

Below are discussed some important links that permeate through these two novels and are part of anti-utopian/dystopian poetics, including: the destruction of the myth of progress, placing the events into the future while narrating in the present, emergence of an ideal (utopian) structure (the Golden Country), the abolition of history due to continuous reevaluation of the past and the functional needs of the present, attrition of opinion, repression of sexuality, anti-humanism and all-out depersonalization (Cvijetić 42).

"As it was, so shall it be ... Or it was 6 July 1999"

Following the determination of genre, the first thread of the novel's intertextual dialogue is the year, which is semantically marked in the very title, the initial place of the text's narrative structure. The title sends a signal and places importance on the year, while graphically it corresponds to the model novel. Asked about the reason he opted for 1999, Pekić responds:

Nostradamus predicted the annihilation of this human civilization for July 1999. It is then that the first human civilization collapses. The few survivors mutate into a super-individualistic civilization of absolute welfare, maintained by robots, while people never meet each other for thousands of years. One mutant, however, an archaeologist, finds the remains of an ancient ideal civilization ... (Pekić, *The Japanese* 163)

The reader sees 1999 – and the time in it – in two ways. At the time of the writing of the book, the year 1999 represents the (uncertain) future. From the viewpoint of the time of writing, 1999 is designated as the end of the world and as the collapse of civilization, and it always recurs in the novel with the same purpose.

This symbol year, which dominates all of the five stories, is a metaphor for certainty that the world will come to an end (Stojanović 88). Every new civilization is born and dies (in the year 1999), which is why at the symbolic level this is also a story about archetypal birth and death, i.e. a never-ending cycle, as one time circle closes after each demise of humankind while another is formed in parallel. Arno from every story wonders whether he is the last man of a bygone world or the first man of a world being born. What is particularly interesting is the fact that the author chooses 1999 to be the year of the apocalypse, given that it represents the borderline between the old and the new millennium.

Conversely, *1984* was written in 1948 (published in 1949) and back then it represented a distant (dystopian) future. However, from the then perspective (but also from the contemporary one), *1984* depicts the present, conveys the universality of the message relating to the totalitarian way of life and the totalitarian regime. Rupel (230) notes that – when we speak today of “Orwellianism” or about 1984, we think of a particular period of time, a historic phenomenon, which does not solely pertain to an individual or a stratum of society, but to the whole world.

This year is symbolically marked in Pekić's novel as well. The present study explores it within the chronotope that concludes the novel, where the timeline is exactly 1984 – the year in which Pekić, by no coincidence, published his novel. Thus, he writes about his (dystopian) future in 1984, the year which represented a dystopian future for Orwell as well. In the fourth story of the novel, Pekić employs a moment which is close to the present time, except that the reader knows that the depicted humankind is of android, robotic nature. The year in which the events take place is 1984, but 1999 also gets a prominent position, particularly through the prophecy of Nostradamus.

In the novel, we observe the difference between the mythical and historical conceptions of time. The mythical time in the form of circulation (*uroborus*) and repetition (the beginning of a new cycle) is the fundamental model governing all the stories. Pekić himself notes that there is a dichotomy with respect to this text, and that he “is optimistic because he perceives time as being an everlasting repetition of archetypal contents; he is pessimistic, because such contents are generally the same and uncertain in terms of values” (Pekić, *Literature* 278). Yet, the contemporary reader finds it much more difficult to perceive historical time, as it is spread over millions and billions of years passing through the five stories. According to Lazić, a major step forward into the future and then a gradual return to the past – which, in fact, is the present for the reader – “might be considered a historical projection to the mythical super-time, in which the flow

of time is no longer important” (103). In the robotic civilization, however, the only certain time is 1999, and everything is about it, everything is seen against it – what was and what will be.

“It was an old pasture, cropped by rabbits and burrowed by moles”

The dominant spatial structure in Pekić’s novel is the pasture or the Golden Country. Together with the year 1999, it is one of the connective elements, which leads the text to be interpreted as a novelistic structure (the same – apocalyptic – chronotope emerges in each of the five stories).

In every story, the pasture is modelled based on the same principle: the same or similar appearance of nature; the main characters see it as a refuge; the dialogue between Arno and the mole; permanence and immutability as salient characteristics. The pasture develops a special kind of rapport with all the characters who visit it, i.e. with the last people in the world. We examine the unbreakable link between these characters and the pasture in the light of the natural : artificial dichotomy, since this link emerges as the last portion of nature on earth that robots want to destroy – driven by their own creed that artificial implies perfect and that everything that is natural represents a potential threat to them. The pasture is also a metaphor for the entire world, for what has left from it following the advancement of technology and machines: a portion of nature that comes under attack in order to be annihilated. From the viewpoint of robots, it is also “another,” “someone else’s,” “a dangerous” world (Mocna 512).

For Orwell’s hero, the Golden Country also presents deliverance, an escape from the world surrounded by microphones and telescreens, a portion of nature which offers him the possibility to be alone, without witnesses, together with his girlfriend Julia. “The pasture in 1984 functions as an isolated, protected space which is out of the reach of totalitarian states. This little oasis of liberty in an illiberal environment thus becomes a utopia at the micro level within the predominant anti-utopian space of the entire country” (Lazić 117–118). Winston sees this space in his dream and the scene is later translated into reality. This utopian space delves into his mind after torture as well – always as a space carrying positive virtues. It represents a counterweight to the telescreen reality – with its big eye and ear, and, just like in Pekić, it evokes “the other,” enclosed world.

Suddenly he was standing on short springy turf, on a summer evening when the slanting rays of the sun gilded the ground. The landscape that he was looking at recurred so often in his dreams that he was never fully certain whether or not he had seen it in the real world. In his waking thoughts he called it the Golden Country. It was an old, rabbit-bitten pasture, with a foot-track wandering across it and a molehill here and there. In the ragged hedge on the opposite side of the field the boughs of the elm trees were swaying very faintly in the breeze, their leaves just stirring in dense masses like women's hair. Somewhere near at hand, though out of sight, there was a clear, slow-moving stream where dace were swimming in the pools under the willow trees. (Orwell 34)

The Golden Country, as Mustedanagić notes, reminiscently evokes the Garden of Eden, the myth of the Golden Age, and only there do Pekić's characters succeed in recovering from the feeling of loneliness, blending with the remains of nature and anticipating the secret of existence.

Orwell's idyllic Golden Country is moved towards the perspective of a future, post-civilization and post-apocalyptic time, where it receives a scientific and science-fictional subtext. It presents a link with the destroyed human civilization and its literature, and appears as the only metaphor of deliverance in the novel. (183)

The pasture recurs in each of the stories and all the key events take place there. Speaking of the "thematized" space, Bal points out that "[s]pace thus becomes an 'acting place' rather than the place of action. It influences the fabula, and the fabula becomes subordinate to the presentation of space" (113). The pasture thus becomes a key spatial structure – a *stable* structure (Bal) which marks all the important events, while Pekić generally gives it an initial place in the mere structure of the story. He names the initial story after it and incorporates a (slightly altered, in his own interpretation) quote from *1984* into the introductory motto of the novel and of the first story. In this way, the author marks the importance of this symbol in multiple respects.

It was an old pasture, cropped by rabbits and burrowed by moles. In the tepid, soft air of the evening, in a landscape filled with delicate rays of the long summer sunset, where everything was made perfect by a man's hand up to sheer artificiality, it looked unexpectedly, even obnoxiously – natural. Forgotten, derelict, sad, as someone who had been unjustly missed by a common wonder. He, Arno, could not explain the attractiveness of its ugliness to anyone. (Pekić, *1999* 17)

Throughout the entire text, the pasture is modelled as exceptionally unattractive and derelict, whereby the natural is represented as ugly, while the artificial is depicted as beautiful and perfect. The same

situations recur on it: Arno's escape from robots (the quest for a refuge), the conversation with the mole, love. Always accompanying are an old nag, a dandelion and a stream. In the first story, the "disfigurement of the pasture" is achieved by comparing it to a children's cemetery. "He admitted to himself that the pasture with all those low molehills looks like a derelict children's cemetery. In fact, the pasture used to be a cemetery. And they used to be – the dead" (Pekić, 1999 48). Here, the symbolism is complete, as Arno and his girlfriend would indeed be dead, considering that the apocalypse and the changing of humankind are on their way.

"The last man in the world" also finds salvation on the pasture.

In only one place on the planet did he have the feeling that he came across life. It was not human, he was sure about that. It might have been either plant or animal life.

It happened in the Golden Country, the only nature reserve by his own will, somewhere in the south of the island where he lived.

It was an old pasture, cropped by rabbits and burrowed by moles. ... The Golden Country was the last nature in the world. (Pekić, 1999 166–167)

The Golden Country takes prominent places of the narrative structure, i.e. the boundaries of the text, which are linked together by means of this motif. The transposition of the pasture scene closes the circle, since the quote from the beginning is also found at the end, thus completing the picture. The motif of pasture appears in the dream of Orwell's hero, while in 1999 the Golden Country represents an archetypal place, which reflects the collapse of one and the creation of another humankind (Lazić 118). Pijanović (255) sees it as a space with an extended semantic effect, but also as an arche-sign, a mythical symbol, a topos that becomes a paradigm for reading the possible meanings of a new text, which enables the expansion of the reader's receptive horizon.

"I am the last man in the world"

Pekić uses the motif of the last man in the world, reflected though Orwell's Winston, as the principal tool or the organizational principle by means of which he constructs his stories. In particular, in the locked frame of each new story – *the Announcement* – there exists the "last man," who at the same time wonders whether he is the last man in the world coming to an end or in the world that has just been cre-

ated. Apart from the main or "supreme" Arno, who we recognize in the *Announcements*, the author also brings Arno from the story *The last man in the world* to the fore.

Winston is also the so-called last man, but deformed; in fact, the entire humankind is reflected in him. Mustedanagić (182) sees the last man as ugly, in a stage of decomposition, morally degraded and distorted, a man reflecting the humankind that we may bid farewell to, according to both Orwell and Pekić.

"And do you consider yourself a man?"

"Yes."

"If you are a man, Winston, you are the last man. Your kind is extinct; we are the inheritors. Do you understand that you are alone? You are outside history, you are non-existent." His manner changed and he said more harshly: "And you consider yourself morally superior to us, with our lies and our cruelty?" (Orwell 272)

"You are rotting away," he said; "you are falling to pieces. What are you? A bag of filth. Now turn around and look into that mirror again. Do you see that thing facing you? That is the last man. If you are human, that is humanity. Now put your clothes on again." (Orwell 274).

Pekić's last man from the story *The Last Man in the World* is also a representative of humankind, composed of only one person and robots. He announces that "humans lived and that I am a Human. For I, Arno, know what uncertainty is" (Pekić, 1999 147).

He also knows that this is the last death on the Earth. For he, Arno, is the last man.

Robots did not know that he was aware of that. Fearing for his sanity, they protected him from realizing that he was the only man alive in the world. Out of consideration for their attention, he pretended that he was not aware of that, and that he still believed that the world was inhabited by mutant enclaves of which his was just the biggest one. (Pekić, 1999 154)

The motif of loneliness and aloofness is a linking thread between the two characters. In *1984*, communication among people was not allowed; otherwise, they could be held responsible for thoughtcrimes. Winston is alone in his ideas and has no one to lean on, as he would be betrayed easily. He is an individual who thinks differently from the rest, and thus cannot survive in the world of rules, but has to conform to crowd norms and collective behaviour. All the time he is alone in the

idea of overthrowing the Party. At one point O'Brien tells him he is a lunatic for thinking differently.

That is what has brought you here. You are here because you have failed in humility, in self-discipline. You would not make the act of submission which is the price of sanity. You preferred to be a lunatic, a minority of one. ... Reality exists in the human mind, and nowhere else. Not in the individual mind, which can make mistakes, and in any case soon perishes: only in the mind of the Party, which is collective and immortal. Whatever the Party holds to be the truth, is truth. It is impossible to see reality except by looking through the eyes of the Party. ... You must humble yourself before you can become sane. (Orwell 251)

In the world of tight rules, it is impossible to be out of the ordinary without being punished. Winston remains alone in his idea, prevented from putting them into action, as he is under the watchful eye of O'Brien. He symbolizes an individual in relation to O'Brien, who is a representative of totalitarianism and who is backed by the Party and the collective under its control.

Arno also experiences the feeling of loneliness, apathy and aloofness. "The last man in the world" is poisoned by loneliness. He finds no reason to continue to live. The motif of dying recurs as a constant. It is emphasized throughout the whole text that Arno *was dying*, i.e. that this was a continuous process. Opposite of the last man are robots, as collective heroes, who want to be considered on par with people.

He has always been alone. He used to be alone when there was life on the planet. To be in a mutant world was to be alone. He who was the first, was also the last. There was not just one world. There were as many worlds as there were people. As many dimensions as there were worlds. And in every of those dimensions there was one human being. Perfect and miserable. At the same time the first and the last human in the world. (Pekić, 1999 165)

The link between the main heroes is emphasized by means of rats, a special motif in constructing the two narratives. The mole comes to take Arno to "where there are no rats," which directly makes the reader think of the rat from Orwell's story – which O'Brien uses to convert Winston, confronting him with his biggest fear, just when he is supposed to betray what he cares about the most – his love, i.e. Julia. "In your case," said O'Brien, "the worst thing in the world happens to be rats" (Orwell 285).

On the other hand, the mole tells Arno "Everyone should have their own rat," metaphorically suggesting that it came to bring it where there is no danger.

"I came to take you
Where?
Where there are no rats." (Pekić 1999 32)

"We shall meet when flowers bloom again"

The leitmotif that permeates through the entire text is the continuous meeting of the two heroes, heralded with the sentence "We shall meet when flowers bloom again." This leitmotif invokes the resonant sentence from *1984* – "We shall meet in the place where there is no darkness." The place where Orwell's heroes meet is the notorious Room 101, while Pekić's heroes meet in each of the stories, specifically on the pasture. The notorious Room 101 is an anti-utopian space which represents an antipode to the utopian ideal of the Golden Country (Lazić 113).

Orwell's heroes meet several times throughout the text, and their meeting is always semantically marked. In the initial encounter, O'Brien tells Winston that if they ever meet, it will be in a place where there is no darkness. Through regressive symbolization and reading back, we conclude that this is a reference to the Ministry of Love, without windows and with lights never turned out, where the flow of time is disrupted by not knowing what time of day; this affects the prisoner's mental state, as (paradoxically) it is in the Ministry of Love that prisoners become subject to torture. Winston is hoping for an encounter with O'Brien, believing that they share the same ideas of a rebellion against the Party. Seemingly, an attempt is made to establish rapport between the two characters. O'Brien, however, deceives Winston, while Winston believes he is his like-minded friend. O'Brien thus emerges as a harbinger of false salvation: the moment he sees O'Brien in the Ministry, Winston believes he is saved; however, it turns out O'Brien is in fact his tormentor, who has never given up the principles of the Party. Similarly, the mole, just like O'Brien, is a harbinger of false salvation, as in the fourth story we become aware of its mechanical nature (Cvijetić 131).

The subsequent meeting between Arno and the mole, which takes place in each story in a new temporal structure, is heralded with the symbolic sentence "When flowers bloom again." In interpreting the meeting between Arno and the mole, we shall briefly refer to Bakhtin's view of the chronotope of meeting, or the motif of meeting: "In any meeting the temporal marker ('at one and the same time') is insepa-

rable from the spatial marker ('in one and the same place')" (87). A similar phenomenon is also observed in *1999*. The meeting of the main characters always happens at the same time (in the year 1999) and in the same place (the pasture). Bakhtin proposes that the motif of meeting may become a very deep symbol, and that this chronotope often has a compositional role and is related to the motif of parting. Pekić's heroes meet and part in each of the stories, which accentuates the futility of any human hope of salvation.

As Mustedanagić suggests, the mole, as the truth bearer, is one of the symbols recurring as leitmotifs in *1999* (185), and conveys the same message in each of the five stories. It symbolizes the underworld where she comes from and where she belongs to, "the Spirit of the Earth (the Spirit of the Earth is in fact the Spirit of Nature, and the Spirit of Nature – the Spirit of the Universe"; Pekić, *Komentari* 296), while the human is *above*, on the ground. The mole is characterized by wisdom and comes in the first story to take Arno away, as there is a sign that Something (the apocalypse) will happen, and that he must go where everything comes from, *down under*. According to the dictionary of symbols (Chevalier and Gheerbrant 320), the mole is an initiator in the unseen world and death, and this initiation, when achieved, protects from disease and heals. Pekić justifies the choice of the model, as one of the fundamental elements of the structure, as follows:

The mole is, therefore, with its primitiveness, as the oldest of creatures on earth belonging to our humankind as I see it, carries inside itself the highest life values, the highest endurance and that is the reason why it lasts, while human civilizations collapse, throughout millions of years, one after another, until they are converted into an animated image of themselves, and embark on a journey of new hope, but a journey of completely different human beings. (Pekić, *Comments* 300)

Asked by Arno when they would meet again, the mole responds: "I will come back when flowers bloom again – it said loudly, not knowing why, as if it was repeating something he had already heard" (Pekić, *1999* 123).

Every Arno feels as if he had been on the pasture, as if he had listened to the mole's words, which we argue to be related to memory that stems from collective unawareness – as though bygone events were repeating themselves. Interestingly enough, the mole always chooses to appear in spring, when nature awakens to new life. The place of their meeting always turns out to be the Golden Country, as only in this portion of nature is it possible to witness life and the meeting of Otherness.

The mole also appears in cycles in the Epilogue – the *Interplay*, but this time alone, as there is no one out there to confirm what drops of water those are. Through its appearance at the end, the author also offers us the possibility to see the world from the mole's perspective, but also to note that it carries the memory of the big flood.

A flash of lightning just lit up the sky.

“Not again,” the mole thought and disappeared in the earth. (Pekić, 1999 381)

“People referred to everything he felt as love and he obediently stuck to that interpretation only to continue to be alone”

The theme of love is present in several stories from 1999, and deconstructed completely, reduced to absurdity, as it is no longer about love which can bring peace and prosperity, and which can herald the propagation of the human species. Any propagation is doomed; the only certain thing is the shift of human civilization. In the first story we get the impression that Arno has no feelings for the girl he spends time with:

He fell to his knees, looking in the direction of the city, along the road that his girlfriend would normally take. She would arrive on her loud motorcycle that he hated. She would bring the radio he feared. She would always wear the dresses he could not care less about. She would say the words he dreaded. She would think the way he could not understand. People referred to everything he felt as love and he obediently stuck to that interpretation only to remain alone ... (Pekić, 1999 24)

The loves accomplished in the other two stories are meaningless and absurd: the intimate fusion does not bring what it was supposed to, the propagation of the species does not occur, as all the characters end their lives tragically. Stojanović sees this fusion as “the last act of humankind in an attempt of meaningless reproduction” (81).

The absurdity of love is also one of the themes in Orwell's novel. The love between Winston and Julia is made meaningless, as they are under the watchful eye of Big Brother, doomed to hiding. Their relationship is forbidden, as the Party has a special vision of love: one needs to be granted permission and everything that happens between two people in love is a matter of the Party and may only be in the service of the Party. The love between Winston and Julia does not succeed, they

betray each other and everything becomes meaningless. Love is left at the bottom of the ladder during the torture of Winston. The transformation into a new man – a man who loves Big Brother – which takes place in the Ministry of Love, also demands a betrayal of the idea of love, i.e. a betrayal of the only woman he loves.

Totalitarianism means complete substitutability and complete betrayal. That is why the following song has a prominent place in the novel: *Under the spreading chestnut tree I sold you and you sold me*. The mutual betrayal by Julia and Winston is a fundamental requirement from O'Brien and the Party regime. Just like love and any 'horizontal' loyalty stand in the way of the Party. Only when these can be cleaned out is it possible to shape a person according to the party image and programme. (Rupel 242–243)

The issue of sexuality is treated similarly in both novels. "In 1999 the world's government eliminated the need for another human being, for sex impulse, joint logic and feelings related to the species as a whole" (Cvijetić 121). In Orwell, sex impulse is also treated in a special way: it is considered dangerous as it gets out of the Party's control and should therefore be destroyed, if possible.

What was more important was that sexual privation induced hysteria, which was desirable because it could be transformed into war-fever and leader-worship. The way she put it was:

When you make love you're using up energy; and afterwards you feel happy and don't give a damn for anything. They can't bear you to feel like that. They want you to be bursting with energy all the time. All this marching up and down and cheering and waving flags is simply sex gone sour. If you're happy inside yourself, why should you get excited about Big Brother and the Three-Year Plans and the Two Minutes Hate and all the rest of their bloody rot? (Orwell 137)

"There was no official history"

Postmodernism rejects stable value systems and absolute truth, with one of the most important features being the questioning of so-called "historical truths." Representatives of postmodern literature nurture a reconstructive relationship with history, which they examine critically, while some even declare "the death of history" (Lucy 85). The question arises whether the past – and therefore history – is the same as it is showed to us and as we "read" it.

Hutcheon points out that history is not made obsolete, but rather re-examined, as a human construct: "And in arguing that history does not exist except as text, it does not stupidly and 'gleefully' deny that the past existed, but only that its accessibility to us now is entirely conditioned by textuality. We cannot know the past except through its texts: its documents, its evidence, even its eye-witness accounts are texts" (16).

We find the idea of falsification or distortion of historical facts in Orwell as well. Winston works in the Ministry of Truth on altering facts (whereby truth becomes a lie). History is rewritten on a daily basis and adapted to the Party and its requirements.

Every record has been destroyed or falsified, every book has been rewritten, every picture has been repainted, every statue and street and building has been renamed, every date has been altered. And that process is continuing day by day and minute by minute. History has stopped. Nothing exists except an endless present in which the Party is always right. I know, of course, that the past is falsified, but it would never be possible for me to prove it, even when I did the falsification myself. After the thing is done, no evidence ever remains. The only evidence is inside my own mind, and I don't know with any certainty that any other human being shares my memories. (Orwell 158)

Pekić treats history in a similar fashion: he offers an interpretation of historical events based on human and robotic projections. The key issue which is called into question is the validity of history, i.e. which history is *the real one*: human or robotic. Accordingly, robots want to *delete* human history, placing their own at the forefront, while consigning human history to oblivion. They control events, rewrite history, cover the tracks of truth; furthermore, by controlling the past they exercise authority over the future (Cvijetić 126).

In each of the stories an attempt is made to decipher history. Thus Arno the archaeologist, explains that there is no official history and that all traditional teachings about the causes of the collapse of human civilization are wrong. "He could not rely on robotic information either, and when he asked them to tell the truth, it is questionable how much they knew it at all" (Pekić, 1999 111).

Robotic information is always presented as misleading and never completely reliable. It was not allowed to explore history, except if it concerns the causes of the fall of the First Humankind so as to better understand the Fundamental Truths of the Second Fall. Robots prohibit any discussion about human history.

There was no history except for what he knew, but not because it was thought that history had never existed, but because nothing is known about it. History is still being told to the first humankind, but over these twenty-five years of its short span, the first humankind has noticed that those stories are becoming increasingly sporadic, increasingly volatile, increasingly unreliable. Robots would change them as though they were programmed to take all value, all credibility away from them.

He would remember, for example, a convincing story that robots were made by people. Now, however, it is claimed that robots came into being simultaneously with people as a more perfect form of the same type of existence. (Pekić, 1999 115)

Robots continuously alter stories about people and their history. They want to suppress the myth that it was people who invented them. After the death of Arno – the archaeologist, Arno – the robot wants to wipe out every vestige of the New Jerusalem, which is found in the archaeological notebook, since the Second Humankind does not record anything, thus rejecting history. Arno, the robot, burns the manuscript, deletes the New Jerusalem from his memory, keeping only its name in his mind.

In the third story, however, it is emphasized that human history is dangerous for robots, and that it is first forbidden and then forgotten, as it could restore the mislaid purpose to people and raise their awareness of their capacity that robots have claimed for themselves. Arno, the last man in the world, believes that robots only reproduce human history and that such a civilization may only find its purpose in death.

The above presented excerpt from the two novels suggests that the issue of history is misleading and that the so-called historical knowledge may not be discerned in full. And just as Orwell falsifies, so does Pekić employ a similar model (which is especially prevalent in post-modernism) to deconstruct the theme in each of the stories.

Conclusion

This study argued that George Orwell's *1984* served as an inspiration and a prototext for Borislav Pekić's dystopia *1999*. We attempted to show that the intertextual dialogue is very intense and that it occurs in those segments relating to the organization of chronotope, characters, motifs of love and the questioning of historical facts. The dominant spatial structure taken over from Orwell is the Golden Country or pasture, where all important events in the novel take place. In addition

to topos, there is also chromos: the year as a salient symbol in the text (the years 1999 and 1984). As regards the constructs of fabula, i.e. the characters, we have demonstrated how Pekić's Arno and the mole act as antipodes to Orwell's Winston and O'Brien. The chronotope of meeting, along with the resonant sentences "We shall meet in the place where there is no darkness" and "We shall meet when flowers bloom again," is a constant in both narrative structures. Pekić's last man in the world, i.e. Arno, is well-matched with Winston, Orwell's last man. Both are modelled as aloof, lonely in their lives and ideas, and as individuals juxtaposed with the group.

With this novel, Pekić yet again confirms that intertextuality is a very productive method used in the poetics of postmodernism and that "old" texts are read again through "new ones." This presents a special quality that requires an active and engaged reader, by which the writer–work–reader relationship is additionally strengthened.

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Orwellovo 1984 v Pekićevem 1999: medbesedilna razmerja

Ključne besede: angleška književnost / srbska književnost / primerjalne študije / negativna utopija / distopični roman / medbesedilnost / Orwell, George: 1984 / Pekić, Borislav: 1999

Prispevek preučuje medbesedilna razmerja med distopičnima romanoma – antropološko pripovedjo Borislava Pekića z naslovom 1999 in romanom 1984 Georgea Orwella. V postmodernizmu, literarnem gibanju, ki mu po svojih poetičnih načelih pripada Pekićevo delo, je medbesedilni dialog zelo dejaven in dominanten. Zagovarjam tezo, da najde Pekić v Orwellovem romanu prototekst oziroma navdih za izgradnjo lastne pripovedi. To se še posebej odraža v konceptualni organizaciji ključnih elementov pripovedne strukture, kot so kronotop in literarni liki. Prevladujoča prostorska struktura, ki jo avtor povzema po Orwellu, je Zlata dežela, pašniki, kjer se odvijajo vsi pomembni dogodki v romanu. Leto 1999 postane kot pomembna časovna determinanta simbol, podobno kot se je zgodilo z letom 1984. Kar zadeva sestavne elemente zapleta, torej like, nastopata po nekaterih interpretacijah Pekićeva Arno in krt kot vzporednici Orwellovih Winstona in O'Briena. Kronotop srečanja, skupaj s sorodnima stavkoma »Srečala se bova tam, kjer ni teme« in »Srečala se bova, ko bodo zopet cvetele rože«, je stalnica v obeh pripovednih strukturah. S svojimi osebnostnimi potezami se Arno, Pekićev zadnji človek na svetu, dobro prilega Winstonu, Orwellovem zadnjemu človeku. Oba lika sta vzpostavljena kot vzvišena, osamljena v življenju in idejah ter kot skupini zoperstavljeni posameznika. Poleg tega Pekić obravnava motive ljubezni, zgodovine in podgan podobno kot Orwell. Ljubezen človeštvu ne zmore zagotoviti preživetja, zgodovinska dejstva so potrjena, metaforični podganji motiv pa v obeh besedilih predstavlja nevarnost.

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