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TEMATSKI SKLOP / THEMATIC SECTION

Stiki in podobnosti med slovensko in ameriško poezijo

Contacts and Similarities Between Slovenian and American Poetry

Uredila / Edited by: Darja Pavlič

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Igor Divjak: **Tradicija Walta Whitmana v sodobni ameriški in slovenski poeziji**

Jelka Kernev Štrajn: **Pesem-kot-okolje pri Waltu Whitmanu in Otonu Župančiču**

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Michelle Gadpaille, Tomaž Onič: **Elizabeth Bishop and the Villanelle**

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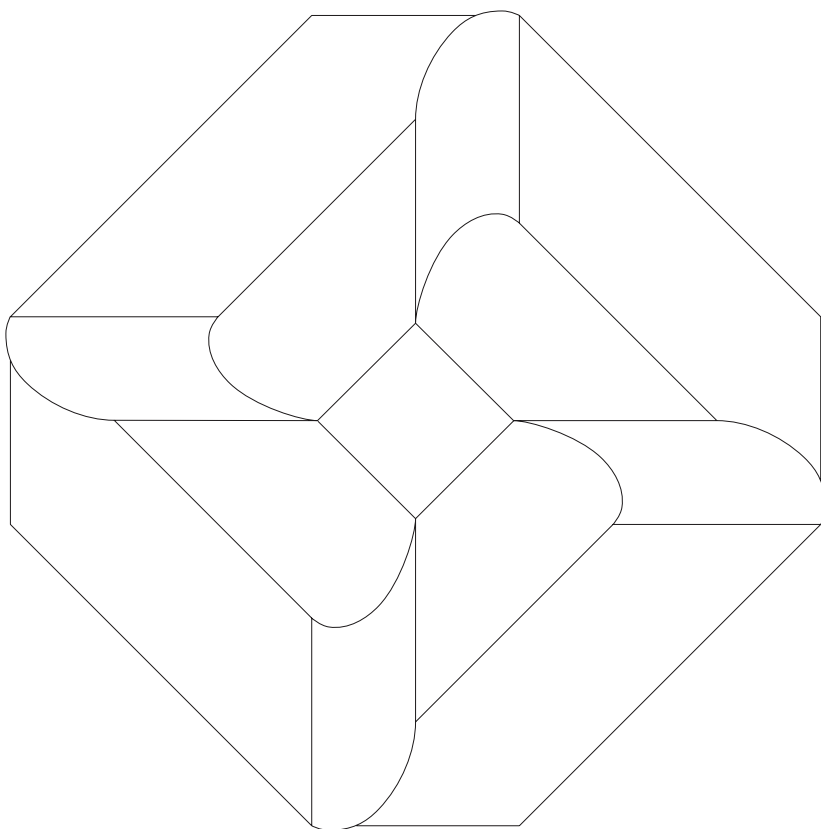
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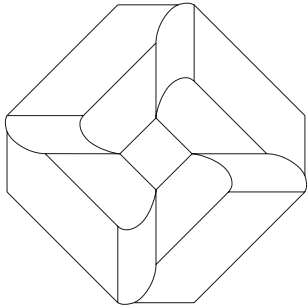


Tematski sklop / *Thematic section*

Stiki in podobnosti med slovensko in ameriško
poezijo

*Contacts and Similarities Between Slovenian
and American Poetry*

Uredila / *Edited by* Darja Pavlič



Stiki in podobnosti med slovensko in ameriško poezijo (predgovor)

Darja Pavlič

Namen pričujočega tematskega sklopa je z različnih vidikov osvetliti in ovrednotiti stike med poezijo v Sloveniji in ZDA ter prispevati h kompleksnejšemu razumevanju njunih tipoloških podobnosti. Metodološko izhodišče, skupno zbranim razpravam, je teorija medliterarnosti. Kot ugotavlja njen avtor Dionýz Đurišin v *Theory of Interliterary Process* (1989), so literarni pojavi povezani bodisi genetsko bodisi tipološko. Literarni stiki so pogoj za razvoj literature, razlikovati pa je mogoče med tistimi, ki so brez posebnega vpliva na literarni proces (zunanji stiki), in tistimi, ki imajo neposredni učinek na ustvarjalnost (notranji stiki). Raziskovanje tipoloških podobnosti med literaturami, ki se kažejo v rabi podobnih tem in literarnih postopkov, razkriva nekavzalne oblike medliterarnosti; razlogi za podobnost med literarnimi deli so v tem primeru gospodarski, politični, družbeni ali psihološki.

Čeprav je v slovenskem prostoru dokaj uveljavljeno prepričanje, da je ameriška poezija vplivala na sodobno slovensko poezijo, je poznavanje drugih vidikov oblikovanja medliterarne skupnosti slabo razvito in bi zahtevalo kontinuirano obravnavo. Slovenski pesniki, ki prihajajo v stik z ameriški kolegi, so v primerjavi z njimi običajno jezikovno bolj opremljeni, toda v vlogi (so)prevajalcev so vse pogosteje oboji. Raziskavo o tem, kaj s slovensko poezijo, razen tega, da jo prevajajo, počnejo Američani, bo treba še opraviti, medtem ko na zaobrnjeno vprašanje v tej številki *Primerjalne književnosti* odgovarja Irena Novak Popov. Kot ugotavlja, so si slovenski pesniki v zadnjih štiridesetih letih intenzivno prisvajali in domačim razmeram prilagajali subjektive drže, pesniške postopke, motivno-tematske, žanrske in jezikovne izbire (odprtost, pogovorni jezik, pripovedovanje osebne zgodbe, vključevanje popularne kulture, medijev in glasbe, urbana resničnost), ki so jih uveljavili ameriški pesniki.

Z vlogo Walta Whitmana pri prozaizaciji slovenske poezije se v svojem prispevku ukvarja Igor Divjak. Pri tem izpostavi, da je ameriški bard v prvi polovici 20. stoletja vplival na Otona Župančiča in Antona Podbevška, v drugi polovici in do danes pa neposredno prek prevodov in posredno prek bitnikov na mnoge slovenske ustvarjalce, tako da lahko ob upoštevanju drugih vplivov razvoj prostega verza pri nas

razumemo tudi kot nadaljevanje Whitmanove tradicije. Z razmerjem med Whitmanom in Župančičem se poglobljeno ukvarja Jelka Kernev Štrajn, to pa tako, da na njuno poezijo aplicira koncept *environment-poem* (pesem-kot-okolje), kakor ga je na podlagi Whitmanove poezije uvedel ameriški literarni teoretik Angus Fletcher, in koncept *času nepri-merno*, kakor ga je na podlagi Nietzschejevih pojmov volje do moči in večnega vračanja oblikoval Gilles Deleuze. Na tega izjemno aktualnega francoskega filozofa se naveže tudi Seth Michelson, ko naslovni lik iz Tauferjeve pesniške zbirke *Vodnjaki* zaradi njegove hibridnosti razloži kot metaforo za *postajanje*. Poleg domiselne interpretacije Michelson razvije tezo, da gre za figuro, ki vpliva na branja drugih pesniških del, in s tem posredno ponudi vsaj delen odgovor na vprašanje, kaj Američani počnejo s slovensko poezijo.

Prispevek Michelle Gadpaille in Tomaža Oniča se ukvarja z estetiko pesmi »Ena umetnost« Elisabeth Bishop, natančno razišče njen globalni vpliv (merljiv zgolj zaradi razširjenosti polisemičnega refrena) in prisotnost vilanele v slovenski poeziji, poleg tega pa analizira slovenski prevod omenjene pesmi. Iztok Osojnik je v središče svoje razprave postavil pesem »Teorija strun« Richarda Jacksona, ki jo je sam tudi prevedel. Njegova interpretacija izhaja iz Lacanove psihoanalize in predpostavlja, da se delovanje nezavednega tudi v poeziji pokaže v njeni deformaciji in ne v vsebini. Pesem »Teorija strun« tako vibrira med okruški sanj in potlačenim spominom.

Tematskih podobnosti med slovensko in ameriško poezijo se loteva Richard Jackson, ko analizira, kako so romantični koncept enosti obravnavali Prešeren, Kosovel, Detela in Osojnik na slovenski strani ter James Wright, Mary Oliver, Joan Murray, Wallace Stevens in Mark Strand med ameriški pesniki. Barbara Carlson proučuje slogovne in tematske podobnosti med pesnicama Meto Kušar in Jean Valentine, pri čemer ugotavlja, da jima je skupno globoko razumevanje duhovnih sil v središču obstoja. Razprava Dubravke Đurić se bolj kot s tematskimi ukvarja s slogovnimi vzporednicami med Šalamunovo zgodnjo poezijo iz *Pokra* in t. i. novo ameriško poezijo, predstavi pa tudi različne kontekste, v katerih sta nastali obe poeziji. V zadnjem prispevku Darja Pavlič raziskuje izpovedovanje osebnega izkustva v sodobni slovenski in ameriški poeziji, pri čemer opozori na univerzalnost in hkrati zgodovinsko pogojenost tega pesniškega postopka.

Contacts and Similarities Between Slovenian and American Poetry (An Introduction)

Darja Pavlič

The purpose of this thematic section is to illuminate and evaluate contacts between poetry in Slovenia and the USA from different perspectives, and to contribute to a more complex understanding of their typological similarities. The methodological starting point for the collected papers is the theory of interliterariness. As noted by Dionýz Ďurišin in his *Theory of Interliterary Process* (1989), literary phenomena are related either genetically or typologically. Literary contacts are a precondition for the development of literature, but it is possible to distinguish between those without particular influence on the literary process (external contacts) and those with a direct effect on creativity (internal contacts). Exploring the typological similarities between literatures, manifested in the use of similar topics and literary procedures, reveals noncausal forms of interliterariness, in which case the reasons for the similarities of literary works are economic, political, social, or psychological.

Although in Slovenia there is a fairly well-established belief that American poetry has influenced contemporary Slovenian poetry, knowledge of other aspects of interliterary community formation is poorly developed and requires continued consideration. Slovenian poets who come in contact with their American colleagues are usually better equipped linguistically, but both groups of poets increasingly appear in the role of (co)translators. The question of what Americans do with Slovenian poetry – other than translating it – has yet to be investigated, while Irena Novak Popov answers the inverted question in this issue of *Primerjalna književnost*. As she points out, Slovenian poets in the last forty years have intensively appropriated and adapted the subject's postures, poetic procedures, and motif-thematic, genre and linguistic choices (openness, conversational language, storytelling,

inclusion of popular culture, media and music, urban reality) asserted by American poets.

The role of Walt Whitman in the prosaisation of Slovenian poetry is dealt with by Igor Divjak in his paper. He emphasizes that, in the first half of the twentieth century, the American bard influenced Oton Župančič and Anton Podbevšek, while in the second half of the century and up to the present day, many Slovenian authors have been influenced directly through translations and indirectly through beatniks. Considering other influences, the development of free verse in Slovenia can therefore be understood partly as a continuation of Whitman's tradition. The relationship between Whitman and Župančič is dealt with in depth by Jelka Kernev Štrajn, by applying the concept of environment-poem to their poetry, as introduced by American literary theorist Angus Fletcher on the basis of Whitman's poetry, and by applying the concept of *intempestif*, as designed by Gilles Deleuze on the basis of Nietzsche's notions of willpower and eternal return. Seth Michelson also refers to this extremely topical French philosopher when explaining the title character from Taufer's collection *Waterlings* as a metaphor for *becoming* because of his hybridity. In addition to his inventive interpretation, Michelson develops the thesis that the figure of waterling influences the reading of other poetic works, and thus indirectly offers at least a partial answer to the question of what Americans do with Slovenian poetry.

The paper by Michelle Gadpaille and Tomaž Onič deals with the aesthetics of the poem "One Art" by Elisabeth Bishop, examining its global impact (measurable only by the prevalence of *polysemic repetend*) and the presence of *vilanella* in Slovenian poetry. The authors also analyze the Slovenian translation of the poem. Iztok Osojnik places Richard Jackson's poem "String Theory," which he translated himself, at the center of his discussion. His interpretation is derived from Lacan's psychoanalysis and assumes that the work of the unconscious also manifests itself in poetry, in its deformation rather than in its content. The poem "String Theory" thus vibrates between the dream fragments and repressed memory.

Richard Jackson deals with thematic similarities between Slovenian and American poetry, analyzing how the romantic concept of oneness was treated by Prešeren, Kosovel, Detela, and Osojnik on the Slovenian side, and James Wright, Mary Oliver, Joan Murray, Wallace Stevens, and Mark Strand among American poets. Barbara Carlson examines the stylistic and thematic similarities between the poets Meta Kušar and Jean Valentine, noting that they share a deep understanding of the

spiritual forces at the heart of existence. Dubravka Đurić's discussion deals with stylistic parallels between Šalamun's early poetry from *Poker* and so-called new American poetry, presenting the different contexts in which both poetries originated. In the last article, Darja Pavlič explores the revelation of personal experience in contemporary Slovenian and American poetry, pointing to the universality and historical conditionality of this poetic device.

Kaj Slovenci počnemo z ameriško poezijo?

Irena Novak Popov

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V zadnjih štirih desetletjih se je interes za ameriško poezijo zelo povečal: prevajamo klasike sodobne ameriške poezije, začenši z W. Whitmanom in W. C. Williamsom, nato W. Stevensa, pesnike beat generacije in newyorške šole, vse do mlajših, še ne kanoniziranih, pri čemer so prevajalci večinoma sami pesniki in pogosto tudi pisci uvodnih predstavitev. Pesniki, ki so v 90. letih 20. stoletja slovensko poezijo usmerili v postmodernizem in jo sproščali disidentske dediščine elitnega modernizma, so si prisvajali in na domače razmere prilagajali subjektive drže, pesniške postopke, motivno-tematske, žanrske in jezikovne izbire (odprtost, pogovorni jezik, pripovedovanje osebne zgodbe, vključevanje popularne kulture, medijev in glasbe, urbana resničnost), ki jih je uveljavila določena ameriška poezija, ter z njimi prenavljali domačo tradicijo. Namesto raziskave »vplivov« je s teorijo intertekstualnosti predstavljen način odzivanja, individualnega presnavljanja in preoblikovanja impulzov iz ameriške poezije v prijateljsko povezanem krogu ljubljanskih pesnikov Toneta Škrjanca, Primoža Čučnika, Gregorja Podlogarja in Ane Pepelnik. Njihove dinamične podobe izhajajo iz subjektivnega doživljanja urbane resničnosti, ki preplavlja govorca, do sodobnih družbenih pojavov imajo kritičen in ironičen odnos, igrivo eksperimentirajo z jezikom, posnemajo govorneni jezik ter duhovito preoblikujejo prevzete modele. Prisvajanje tujega poteka skozi filter avantgardnih postopkov (kolažiranje), filozofijo nedoločenosti, časovno odvijanje glasbe ali pa ga spreminjajo v gradivo recikliranja (remakea).

Ključne besede: sodobna slovenska poezija / ameriška poezija / prevajanje / prevodi v slovenščino / literarni vplivi / medliterarni transfer / Škrjanec, Tone / Čučnik, Primož / Podlogar, Gregor / Pepelnik, Ana

V zadnjih treh ali štirih desetletjih je v Sloveniji opaziti naraščajoče zanimanje za ameriško poezijo. Najbolj kompetentni raziskovalec stikov in podobnosti med slovensko in ameriško poezijo Samo Šalomon je v svoji neobjavljeni disertaciji *Prevajanje ameriške poezije po letu 1990 in njen vpliv na mlajšo slovensko poezijo po letu 1990* (2012) ugotovil, da večina prevodov sodi v to obdobje: med 1962 in 1990 je izšlo 9 knjig pesniških prevodov, med 1991 in 2010 pa 36. Kljub ekonomski krizi,

ki je drastično zmanjšala vse založniške projekte, se ta trend nadaljuje do danes, saj je po podatkih Cobissa po letu 2010 izšlo novih 24 knjig prevedene ameriške poezije.

V svoji raziskavi Šalamon opaža, da se izbor prevedenih pesnikov ne ujema povsem s kanonom sodobne poezije v ZDA, temveč kaže določene preference slovenskih prevajalcev, večinoma znanih pesnikov. Natančnejši pogled pokaže, da njihovih izbir ne vodijo poljubne osebne kaprice, temveč so posledica domačega literarnega konteksta. V tem se kaže splošno pravilo polisistemske teorije prevajanja oz. transfera v okviru interkulturnih relacij Itamarja Even-Zoharja: ciljni literarni sistem (slovenski) izbira modele in repertoar iz izvornega literarnega sistema (ameriškega) glede na lastne potrebe po prenavljanju in razvijanju novih modelov resničnosti, novih ustvarjalnih vzorcev in tehnik ter novega literarnega jezika (Even-Zohar 73–79). Zato bi bilo namesto enosmerne relacije, implicirane v konceptu »vpliva« ameriške poezije na slovensko, bolje opazovati prisvojitve in prilagoditve principov in elementov tuje književnosti, s katerimi so pesniki ustvarjali nov literarni repertoar, ki pred tem v domači tradiciji ni obstajal.

Prevajanje je imelo od samih začetkov središčni položaj v šibki in periferni oziroma slabo razviti slovenski literaturi, saj je bilo ključno sredstvo za oblikovanje žanrske raznolikosti in obvladovanja dovršenega literarnega jezika, v katerem bi bilo mogoče ubesediti tisto, kar naj bi zmogle razvitejše in kompleksnejše literature. Še do nedavnega je pomembnost prevodov potrjevalo dejstvo, da so delovali inovativno in nepredvidljivo, kajti nove generacije ustvarjalcev se niso zadovoljile s sprejemanjem norm in konvencij pesniškega izrekanja iz pretekle domače tradicije, temveč so črpale iz določenih tujih.¹

Stopnjevano zanimanje in specifično recepcijo ameriške poezije 20. stoletja pri sodobnih slovenskih pesnikih je mogoče pojasniti s številnimi razlogi. Večina jih izvira iz znotrajliterarne dinamike: resnobni, elitistični, simbolično in metaforično zakodirani modernistični poeziji (Dane Zajc, Gregor Strniša, Venó Taufer, Niko Grafenauer, Svetlana Makarovič), ki je na sledi eksistencializma, filozofskega nihilizma in absurda razkrajala ideološko enoumje, je od konca 60. let sledila preusmeritev v bolj igrivo, eksperimentalno, jezikovno sproščeno, nekonformistično, do avtoritet brezbrizno, vendar empatično in holistično poezijo neoavantgarde in dve desetletji pozneje postsocialistična razli-

¹ Po stoletjih transferov iz nemške in italijanske literature postane v 20. stoletju pomemben izvorni sistem frankofona: Baudelaire, Verlaine, Maeterlinck v obdobju moderne, Valéry, Mallarmé, Rimbaud, nadrealisti in dadaisti v različnih fazah modernizma.

čica postmodernizma. Tej idejno-estetski preobrazbi ustreza spreminjeno pojmovanje lirске osebe, ki se ne ozira na metafizično utemeljitev novoveškega subjekta in poudarja pesnika kot samorefleksivnega posameznika, kot družbeno bitje in družbeno funkcijo. Univerzalno pojmovanje človekove biti zamenjajo individualne izkušnje v specifični vsakdanji resničnosti, abstraktni način predstavljanja se spremeni v konkretnjšega, poezija prinaša raznolike človeške doživljaje v heterogenem svetu in fragmentirani družbi. Hkrati poteka proces preoblikovanja kulture nasploh: z globalnimi informacijami in komunikacijami postaja bolj svetovljanska, urbana, dinamična, občutljiva za drugost in drugačnost, v ospredje postavlja identitetno mnogoterost, zavest o nagli spremenljivosti, začasnosti in površnosti.

Med najbolj brani in cenjenimi ameriški pesniki v Sloveniji so Walt Whitman, Robert Frost, William Carlos Williams, Wallace Stevens, Charles Bukowski, Allen Ginsberg, Frank O'Hara, Gary Snyder, James Tate, Robert Hass, John Ashbery, Elisabeth Bishop, Sylvia Plath in Charles Simic. Prevajali in s spremnimi besedami opremljali so jih univerzitetni profesorji angleščine (Uroš Mozetič), poklicni prevajalci (Miha Avanzo, Primož Kuštrin) in predvsem pesniki (Veno Taufer, Tomaž Šalamun, Tone Škrjanec, Marjan Strojani, Aleš Debeljak, Uroš Zupan, Jana Puterle Srdič, Primož Čučnik, Ana Pepelnik). Skupina pesnikov in prevajalcev se je okrepila z novimi imeni v zadnjem desetletju, ko so se veliki založbi Mladinska knjiga z zbirko *Lirika* in manjšim alternativnim založbam, Kudu France Prešeren z zbirko *Mi pojemo v puščavi*, Škucu z zbirko *Lambda* in Ludu Šerpa, pridružili novi založniki, Sanje (prevod Sylvie Plath), Kud Logos (prevod Denise Levertov), Študentska založba z zbirko *Beletrina*, in ti so k prevajanju pritegnili vrsto mladih prevajalcev: David Bedrač, Andrej Hočevar, Jernej Županič, Milijana Cunta, Tanja Ahlin, Kristina Kočan. Pobuda za prevajanje določenih pesnikov so postala tudi osebna poznanstva, spletena na mednarodnih pesniških festivalih v Sloveniji (z gosti Vilenice ter Dni poezije in vina), ki so pripeljala tudi do projektov prevajanja in objavljanja slovenskih pesnikov v ZDA. Tak primer je brošura *Slovene Sampler*, ki jo je Ugly Duckling Presse objavil ob prireditvi Slovene Poetry Weekend v New Yorku septembra 2008. Pesmi P. Čučnika, A. Pepelnik, G. Podlogarja, T. Šalamuna in T. Škrjanca so prevedli Paul Killebrew, Phillis Levin, W. Martin, Peter Richards, Laura Solomon, Michael Taren in Matthew Zaprunder v sodelovanju s slovenskimi pesniki.² Rezultat osebnih stikov so tudi prevodi

² Prevajanje slovenske poezije v ZDA je sicer posebna zgodba, še mnogo bolj odvisna od medosebnih stikov in zavzetosti posameznih poznavalcev; pionirsko delo je opravil Richard Jackson.

mlajših, še ne kanoniziranih ameriških pesnikov, kot so Laura Solomon, C. D. Wright, Joanna Klink, Ani Gjika, Brian Henry, Brynne Rebele-Henry, Mary Jo Bang, Joshua Beckman in Matthew Zapruder.

Pomembna motivacija za globinsko razumevanje in trajno zanimanje za ameriško poezijo je prevajalčevo osebno doživetje Amerike. Ameriška izkušnja je transformirala poetiko ali vsaj sprožila močan ustvarjalen odziv pri Tomažu Šalamunu, Urošu Zupanu, Alešu Debeljaku, Gregorju Podlogarju in Primožu Čučniku, ki so v tej deželi dalj časa živeli, študirali, potovali in pisali. Prav neposredna izkušnja je poleg branja, raziskovanja in navezovanja stikov močno vplivala na vsebinske in formalne značilnosti njihovega pesništva. Tam so spoznavali ogromne prostore, divje, eksotične pokrajine, večkulturno družbo, moč kapitala, srečevali anonimnost, neobčutljivost, revščino in zanemarjenost v velemestih, opazovali posledice seksualne revolucije, površnih odnosov, doživljali izčrpavajoča samotna potikanja, obiskovali kulturna mesta ameriškega slikarstva, poezije in glasbe, spoznavali obrobni družbeni položaj pesnikov, ki ga kompenzira spoštovanje znotraj stanovskih/univerzitetnih krogov.

Za Tomaža Šalamuna, ki je v letih 1972–1981 v ZDA zasnoval šest pesniških zbirk (*Amerika, Turbine, Arena, Sokol, Praznik, Balada za Metko Kraševce*), je bila ameriška izkušnja iniciacija v individualnost in samozavest, osvoboditev od religioznih, zgodovinskih, političnih in ekonomskih zavor in pritiskov na srednjeevropskega intelektualca. Njegov pesniški subjekt se je v tem prostoru preobrazil iz prestrašenosti v začudenje, navdušenje in skrajno odprtost, kar ga je skoraj pripeljalo do izgube lastne identitete in maternega jezika. Brez ozadja prepoznavne nacionalne tradicije je že zelo zgodaj jasno zasnoval svoj trajektorij v mednarodnem pesniškem prostoru (Prvič ko sem prišel v New York City v zbirki *Praznik*, 1976), odločen, da izkoristi vse možne podpore (štipendije) in osebne zveze za preživetje in za posvetitev zgolj pesnjenju, ki je zanj hkrati izvor blaženosti in muke.

Dvajset let mlajši Aleš Debeljak, doktorski študent kulturnih študij na Syracuse University v New Yorku, v zbirki *Minute strahu. Fotografije s poti* (1990) niza impresije o neznani Ameriki onkraj blišča in sanj o demokraciji, toleranci, svobodi, individualizmu in blagostanju iz obdobja kontrakulture 60. let 20. stoletja. Pozitivna znamenja večkulturnosti in večnacionalnosti so izrinili anonimnost, množičnost in enolično življenje. Za razliko od Šalamuna, ki se giblje v univerzitetnih in umetniških krogih, Debeljak portretira običajne ljudi ali obrobneže, v katerih zaznava duh dolgočasja, obupa in tesnobe, ki so posledica nestabilnosti, začasnosti, bežnih srečanj, spodletelih odnosov in splošnega občutja

razkrajjanja celovitosti, vsemu temu pa dodaja negotovost, ambivalentna emocionalna stanja in spremenljiva razpoloženja lirskega subjekta.

Uroš Zupan v zbirki *Sutre* (1991) prihaja v Ameriko vnaprej opremljen z enciklopedično vednostjo o popularni glasbi, filmu in poeziji, ob katerih se je osebno formiral doma. Med popotovanjem preko kontinenta preverja fiktivne umetniške konstrukte in jih primerja z utripajočo realnostjo, pri čemer intimni poraz v ljubezni (postavljen na konec zbirke) postopno zamenjuje odprto sprejemanje in veselje ob drobnih detajlih vsakdanjega življenja. Zupanova verzna oblika in ritem spominjata na Whitmanova in Ginsbergova, o občudovanju W. C. Williamsa, F. O'Hare in pesnikov beatniške generacije pa pričajo posvetila, citati in prenekateri moto. Zbirka prinaša mnogovrstne perspektive: iz poezije izvirajoče upodobitve sodobne Amerike relativizirajo neameriški pogled, štiridesetletna distanca in duh postmoderne izpraznjenosti. Pesnikov s samoironijo izrečeni namen je razširiti zavest socialističnih otrok doma in jih nahraniti z ameriško kulturo, dejanski dosežek pa je duhovni razvoj gibljivega subjekta; ta izbira, kritično vrednoti in se sooča z novim, s političnimi usmeritvami, socialnimi in kulturnimi identitetami, ki jih nosijo marginalne ali subkulturne skupine, in na hitro osvaja ogromni, s simboli in vrednostmi prenapolnjeni prostor. V vodilno metaforo »življenje je pot(ovanje)« vgrajuje pridobivanje (odprtosti, brezmejnosti, prekoračevanja mej, stikanja razlik) in izgubljanje (zapuščanje, slovo, izguba ljudi, podob in glasov).

Primož Čučnik in Gregor Podlogar sta v skupni dvoglasni zbirki *Oda na manhatnski aveniji* (2003) – likovno podobno je prispeval Žiga Kariž – dokumentirala odkrivanje vsakdanje resničnosti New Yorka, pri čemer sta se osredotočila na beleženje neposrednih odzivov na večkulturno družbo, arhitekturo, promet, lokale, trgovine, tržnice in predvsem knjigarne. Njuno individualno in intimno razmerje do megalopolisa ni niti pretirana navdušenost niti pretirana kritičnost, saj že na začetku vesta, da ekonomija obvladuje vsa področja bivanja in da tudi v kulturi ne gre računati na revolucije, zato skušata sproščeno živeti v različnosti, se otresti manjvrednostnih kompleksov in ohraniti zanimanje za poezijo. Raznovrstni vtisi, nihanje razpoloženj in dinamika misli si utirajo novo jezikovno oblikovanje: vrzeli med besedami, fragmentiranje, trganje (*cut-up*) in vnovično povezovanje miselnega toka, vzporednost in prepletanje več asociativnih pramenov, igra z jezikom, zapisi alogičnih sanj, vizualna poezija. Podoba ameriške kulture je v tej poetiki skiciranih trenutkov enciklopedična, saj vsebuje številna poimenovanja ulic, avenij, trgov, zgradb, okrožij in pesnikov. Impozantni spisek ameriških pesnikov bi bil lahko študijski program amerikanistike, še

bolj nepričakovano pa je, da slovenska pesnika poznata poetične principe, individualne biografije in celo zgodovino ameriške poezije 20. stoletja.³ Tovrstna vednost (kulturni kapital) v zbirki deluje kot opozicija denarju (ekonomskemu kapitalu) in politični moči, enako kot je njuno raziskovanje protiutež potrošništvu in pesmi protiutež vsiljivim reklamnim oglasom, ki jih navajata.

Skicirano poročilo o moji predhodni raziskavi (Novak Popov 132–150) se je zdelo potrebno za to, da bi nadgradili metodo, ki jo uporablja amerikanist Samo Šalamon, namreč vplivanje prevodnega besedila/avtorja na prevajalčevo lastno pesniško produkcijo. Koncept vpliva pojasnjuje z naslednjo formulo: v prvi fazi razvijanja pesnikove identitete pomeni prevod (ki je hkrati interpretacija) učenje in prevzemanje (asimilacijo), ki lahko ovira njegovo lastno izvirnost in vodi v stagnacijo (posnemanje), če se mu ne posreči prestopiti v drugo fazo premagovanja, preseganja, reorganiziranja in dograjevanja prevzete dediščine, tudi prek oddaljevanja, zavračanja, napačnega (mimo)branja. Moje načelno vprašanje je, ali je mogoče podobnosti med segmenti dveh literarnih sistemov razložiti in ustvarjalno bogastvo zaobseči tako, da sestavimo popis formalnih postopkov in tematskih razsežnosti, razumljenih kot izposojene značilnosti, ali pa bi morali stremeti h kompleksnejšemu razumevanju obeh literarnih tradicij in opazovati izbiro sredstev, ki omogočajo inovacije in drugačno naravnost. Namesto enosmerno potekajočega vpliva, ki implicira hierarhični odnos dominacije izvirne literature in kolonizacijo ciljne, se zdi produktivnejši dvojni in dvo-smerni pogled, ki je soroden dialogu (izrečenemu ali notranjemu), transformativni interakciji z drugim.⁴ Razen tega noben sodobni

³ Pesem »Zgodovina ameriškega verza« je tudi ironična, saj zaporedje literarnih tokov in njihovih nosilcev predstavlja kot tekmovanje za predsedstvo ali »za visoke položaje tako v družbi kot na področju lepote«: Whitman, Williams, Stevens, Pound, Olson, Auden, Snyder, O'Hara, Ashbery, beat, newyorška šola, Ginsberg, Ferlinghetti, konfesionalni pesniki, Dickinson, Plath, Sexton, Rich, LeRoi Jones, L. Huges. Na drugih mestih Ode na manhatnski aveniji so posejana še imena drugih pesnikov: James Schuyler, John Wiener, Anselm Hollo, Philip Whalen, Ron Padget, Czesław Miłosz, Majakovski, Hlebnikov, Rilke idr.

⁴ Že Jurij Tinjanov je v razpravi O literarni evoluciji iz leta 1927, ki uvaja sistemsko pojmovanje literature in literarnega teksta, uvidel potrebo po reviziji vzročno pojmovanega vpliva. Namesto psihologije vplivanja je uvedel pojem konvergenca ter vpliv umestil v literarne razmere in v spreminjanje funkcij formalnih prvin: »Vpliv je mogoč tedaj in v takšni meri, ko so in kakršne so literarne razmere. V zvezi z določeno funkcijo oblikovne prvine vpliv dopušča umetniku razvoj funkcije in njeno fiksiranje. Če tega 'vpliva' ni, lahko analogna funkcija tudi brez vpliva pripelje do analognih oblikovnih prvin.« (Tinjanov 129)

ustvarjalec ni odvisen od branja, sprejemanja in prisvajanja zgolj ene tradicije, temveč se giblje skozi ogromno knjižnico, iz katere črpa tisto, kar v določenem času in kontekstu potrebuje za lastno ustvarjalnost. Namesto perspektive, izhajajoče iz ameriške poezije, in ugotavljanja njenega vpliva na slovensko predlagam obrnjeni pogled, z izhodiščem v slovenski situaciji in opazovanjem raznovrstnih načinov medliterarnega transfera modelov in repertoarja.⁵

Tovrstno preusmeritev je prispevala dinamična teorija intertekstualnosti, ki se je formirala skoraj sočasno z uveljavitvijo postmodernizma, v katerem so se namnožila najrazličnejša medbesedilna razmerja in se preskušali kompleksni večplastni besedilni agregati ali amalgami. V situaciji mnogostranske izmenjave avtor predpostavlja bralčevo prepoznavanje in razumevanje predhodnega besedila, strukture, koda, diskurza, s čimer se v njegovem sekundarnem, poznejšem besedilu sprožajo dodatne pomenske plasti, s prvotnimi bodisi skladne ali tuje. Najsi gre za namig, aluzijo ali za očitno signaliziranje, ima vabilo v dvojno dekodiranje specifične funkcije, ki jih je treba interpretirati znotraj dinamične celote: razkazovanje erudicije, vzpostavljanje sorodnosti, ustvarjanje podobnega koda ali vzporednih teženj, poudarjanje odkritja, oživitev pozabljene preteklosti, razgaljanje izrinjenih plasti, igranje v obširnem polju literarnih možnosti, izpostavljanje popularnosti, razširjanje vidikov ipd. Poezijo lahko uživam, tudi če ne poznam tradicije, ki je v njej absorbirana, pač pa je reducirano moje strokovno poznavanje, če zanjo ne vem. V dobi strokovnih hiperspecializacij je problem medliterarnih raziskav tudi v tem, da je posameznik komaj dovolj kompetenten za enako natančno in kompleksno obravnavo več literatur hkrati.

Zaradi problematizacije metode je treba navesti značilnosti ameriške poezije, kot jih je določil Šalomon in iskal v slovenski poeziji sodobnih slovenskih pesnikov prevajalcev. 1. pogovorni jezik vsakdanje komunikacije, ki lahko vključuje tudi sleng in vulgarizme; 2. tematska širina oz. demokratična odprtost brez hierarhizacije motivov ter uresničenje načela, da je poezija lahko narejena iz katerega koli jezikovnega in znakovnega materiala, tako da združuje heterogene kulturne pojave, vključno s filmom, stripom, likovno umetnostjo, neliterarnimi besedilnimi fragmenti in nepesniškimi elementi; 3. odprta forma (dolgi) prostih verzov s silovitim ritmičnim impulzom ali bližanje poetični prozi

⁵ Upoštevač polisistemsko teorijo gre v našem primeru za prenos modelov, ki so se v izvorni literaturi že premaknili s periferije v kanonizirani center, v ciljni literaturi pa so se umestili na periferijo sistema, vendar so z nepredvidljivim in inovativnim repertoarjem v dobrem desetletju postali produktivni in začeli delovati na center.

oz. pesem v prozi; 4. narativnost, v kateri prvoosebni pripovedovalec razpleta osebno zgodbo/zgodovino (avtobiografski diskurz).

Prosti verz namesto klasičnih metričnih vzorcev in kitic je v slovenski poeziji v rabi od začetka 20. stoletja naprej, zelo pogosto so ga uporabljali pesniki ekspresionizma (Vodnik, Kocbek, Vodušek, Seliškar, Klopčič, Bor), avantgarde (Podbevšek, Kosovel) in modernizma (Zlobec, Kovič, Zajc, Taufer, Vegri, Svetina, Dekleva, Medved). Avtobiografska govorica z različnimi stopnjami subjektivne lirizacije postaja priljubljena vse od 70. let dalje. Potemtakem lahko samo pesniški jezik, ki simulira realni (po)govor, in tematiko, ki sporoča posameznikove življenjske izkušnje v specifičnih okoliščinah, vključno z uvajanjem drugih medijev, razumemo kot postopke, ki prihajajo iz ameriške poezije. Tudi v primeru, da je taka razlaga sprejemljiva, so za njihov prenos, prisvojitve in prilagoditev v slovenski kulturni kontekst morali obstajati določeni vnaprejšnji pogoji. Na začetku omenjene razloge iz znotrajliterarne dinamike lahko dopolnimo z naslednjimi splošnimi družbenimi okoliščinami, ki so vladale od sredine 80. let 20. stoletja naprej: odpiranje in diferenciacija slovenske družbe v času radikalne politične in ekonomske tranzicije skupaj z relativizacijo vsakršnih dominantnih ideoloških vzorcev; preoblikovanje in nova stratifikacija kulturnega polja, ki dopušča pluralnost mentalitet, okusov, življenjskih slogov in individualnih resnic; pospešena dinamika med izčrpanimi, konservativnimi kulturnimi plastmi, ki niso več sposobne zadovoljiti potreb družbe na eni strani, ter vznikanje perifernih, popularnih subkultur z nepredvidljivimi modeli na drugi strani.

Drugi del prispevka bo kratka predstavitev štirih slovenskih pesnikov, odličnih poznavalcev in prevajalcev ameriške poezije, ki so sprva delovali na alternativnih subkulturnih prizoriščih in po dveh desetletjih dosegli institucionalno priznanje (Veronikina, Jenkova, nagrada, Nagrada Prešernovega sklada), se iz periferije literarnega polisistema prebili v njegov center in tako legitimirali drugačen repertoar in modele za proizvodnjo novih besedil. To so Tone Škrjanec (1953), Primož Čučnik (1971), Gregor Podlogar (1974) in Ana Pepelnik (1979). Povezujejo jih prijateljstvo, podoben življenjski stil, medsebojna podpora pri objavljanju in nastopanje na večmedijskih predstavah, na katerih se srečujejo pesniki in glasbeniki.

Tone Škrjanec (1953) je bil z diplomom iz sociologije najprej zaposlen v prosveti, nato kot novinar v težkoindustrijskem gigantu Litostroj in nazadnje programski koordinator v Kulturno-umetniškem društvu France Prešeren, kjer je deset let vodil pesniški festival Trnovski terceti,

od leta 2004 je neodvisen pesnik in prevajalec.⁶ Enajst zbirk poezije⁷ povezuje enovita razvijajoča se vizija: počasna, senzualna, tiha in blaga. Gradijo jo natančna opazovanja življenja okrog lirskega subjekta, ki je pozoren na drobne, komaj zaznavne pojave, sprožilce ugodja, veselja ali melanholije. Konstelacija stvari, prijateljev, žensk, obiskovalcev lokalov, mimoidočih, je postavljena na ljubljanske ulice, obrežje reke, v parke, hiše, bližnje gozdove ali na jadranske otoke. Škrjančev zadržani subjekt ne izreka kakih velikih načrtov, namenov, veličastnih idej, temveč se odziva na to, kar je v njegovi bližini prijazno, lepo ali čarobno, in uživa v dejstvu, da je živ, kot da je smisel bivanja vsebovan že v samem bivanju:

zapisujem. ne iščem resnice.
pišem o vsakodnevnih stvareh
kot o večnosti,
o drevesih, ljudeh,
objemanju in jemanju odtisov ustnic.
polaganju rok. o trenutkih.
(»O večnosti«; *V zraku* 103)

Negativni pojavi, bolezen, staranje, pritisk, nasilje, so predstavljeni z blago ironijo ali melanholijo, kot nekaj, kar bo minilo, s čimer nakazuje subjektovo pasivnost, odrekanje volji, zavračanje materializma (dela, hitrosti, pridobivanja lastnine) in družbenega angažmaja. Vendar to ne pomeni odsotnosti stališč ali indifference: množinsko izražanje vključuje krog podobno mislečih in občutljivih, redki drugoosebni nagovori pa prepričujejo o nevarno zapeljivih načelih:

Poslušaj tišino, če jo najdeš
kje skrito med oblaki. Položi
roko narahlo na žamet. Ne
pozabi na lepoto, ko hitiš.
[...]
Zavrni postopke uničevanja.

⁶ Poleg objav prevodov v revijah (Paul Blackburn, Jack Spicer, Anselm Hollo, Kenneth Koch) so v knjižni obliki izšli njegovi prevodi izbranih pesmi naslednjih Američanov: Charlesa Bukowskega (1990, 1997), Franka O'Hare (2002), Garyja Snyderja (2003), Timothyja Liuja (2004), Kennetha Rexrotha (2011), Johna Berrymana (2015), Edwarda Fosterja (2017) in Jacka Spicerja (2018). Prevaja tudi prozo C. Bukowskega, W. S. Burroughsa in P. Bowlesa.

⁷ Blues zamaha (1997), Sonce na kolenu (1999), Pagode na veter (2001), Noži (2002), Baker (2004), Koža (2006), Duh želve je majhen in zelo star (2009), Med drevesi – Among Trees (2010), V zraku so šumi: izbrane in zelo stare pesmi (2012), Sladke pogačice (2015), Dihaj (2017).

Kupi mehko majico. Naj bo to
tvoja nova domovina.
(Kupi mehko majico. *Sladke pogačice* 15)

Pesnik eksplicitno ne zagovarja nobenega filozofskega nauka, vendar čiste kompozicije njegovih opisov spominjajo na japonsko umetnost (sam piše tudi haikuje). Toda splošni vtis neposrednosti in samoumevnosti zmotijo nenadni prelomi, interpolacije nekega tujega elementa. Zaradi takih postopkov se okrepi zavedanje, da je besedilni svet z motivnimi drobcami iz urbanega okolja ali narave konstruiran, da je pisanje kolažiranje: »[P]oezija je limanje.« (»Esej o poeziji«, *Pagode* 61) Poleg zaznav, ki jih posredujejo vsa čutila (razen vida so pomembni tudi sluh, tip in okus) in ustvarjajo prevladujoč vtis, da svet teče subjektu nasproti, njegovo zavest zapolnjujejo »muzika« (le redko zaznamovana z imeni ali označena kot jazz in rock), prizori iz filmov in stripov (»Šanghaj«, »Cinema«; *Pagode* 45, 52), čeprav nikjer ni rečeno, da imajo kako transformativno vrednost, ki presega trenutek uživanja. Enake pozornosti so deležni pojavi in bitja iz narave (ptice, drevesa, cvetje, morski valovi, školjke, račke, srne, mačke), atmosfera, vsakdanji opravki (pripravljanje hrane), pohajkovanje, sedenje ob čaju ali pivu. Celo erotika ni oblikovana v velikih amplitudah, temveč predstavlja željo po telesnem uživanju (najvznemirljivejše so ženske prsi, boki in noge) in čustveni toplini. Resnoba se umika obilici naključij, ki sprožajo začudenje nad polnostjo sveta ter občudovanje narave. V govornem jeziku – s kršenjem pravopisnih pravil in redkimi nizkopogovornimi izrazi v začetnih zbirkah – je izražena fizična in duhovna navzočnost enkratnega, vendar neizjemnega posameznika, ki sledi načelu 'živi in pusti živeti'. Spokojnost, nematerialistični odnos, samoomejevanje, empatija, občutje, da je subjekt del dogajanja celotnega vesolja, so morda dediščina hipijevske kulture,⁸ ki so jo mladi izobraženi Slovenci prevzemali v 70. letih 20. stoletja, vztrajno nadaljevanje pri Škrjancu pa deluje kot alternativa današnjemu globalnemu konzumerizmu ali kot privid izhoda iz družbene in duhovne krize.

Škrjančeva umirjena poezija je očarala mlajše pesnike, še posebej

⁸ Šalamonova analiza prvih štirih Škrjančevih zbirk odkriva vplive Bukovskega, O'Hare in Snyderja. Vplivi naj bi bili odsotnost ideologije, odmik od kulta pesništva, enakovrednost motivov, navdušenje nad ženskimi telesi, urbanost, povezanost z naravo, narativnost, pogovorni jezik, prozaizirana oblika, imenovanje realij iz lastnega okolja, deskripcija skozi prvoosebni govor, nemetaforično podobje oz. »realizem podrobnosti«.

Primoža Čučnika,⁹ ki je njene lastnosti ovrednotil v predgovorih k zbirkam *Noži*, *V zraku so šumi* in *Dihaj* ter v eseju »Poezija je limanje« (Čučnik, *Spati* 77–81). Kot urednik je zbirke starejšega kolega sprejel v založniški program založbe LUD Literatura (*Noži*, *Sladke pogačice*) ter svoje založbe LUD Šerpa (*Baker*, *V zraku so šumi*). Sodelovala sta pri prevajanju pesmi Franka O'Hare (*Srce v žepu*, 2002) in pri večmedijskih projektih, kjer je branje pesnikov spremljala glasbena improvizacija in so posneti na zgoščenkah *Košček hrupa in ščepec soli* (2003), *Pri besedi z glasom in zvokom* (2011). Primož Čučnik, diplomant filozofije in sociologije, je urednik, vodja zasebne založbe, pesnik, esejist, kritik in prevajalec sodobne poljske in ameriške poezije.¹⁰ Njegov prvenec *Dve zimi* (1999) je na sledi (srednje)evropski simbolistični tradiciji posvečen opredeljevanju do bivanjskih, identitetnih, ontoloških in umetnostnih vprašanj, hkrati pa že zaznamovan z urbanim življenjskim načinom, prijateljstvom med umetniki in ljubeznijo do glasbe, kar je pesnik nadgrajeval v naslednjih zbirkah (*Ritem v rókah*, 2002; *Oda na manhatnski aveniji*; 2003; *Akordi*, 2004; *Nova okna*, 2005). Razgledanost po več umetniških področjih (poznavanje avantgardnih gibanj v Franciji, Rusiji in ZDA) se v besedilih prepleta z jezikovno igrivostjo in ironičnim prikazovanjem sodobne družbe. Tudi takrat, ko razločno pokaže osebni okus, ljubezen in nostalgijo, ohranja distanco skeptika ter jo povezuje z zavestjo bežnosti, začasnosti, negotovosti in nepredvidljivosti. Glasba je temelj njegove življenjske filozofije (časovna razsežnost enkratnih dogodkov) in nezaupanja v prevladujočo vizualno kulturo (razosebljeno, perfektno). Njegov nekako umaknjeni in dvo- meči lirski subjekt je odprt za impulze urbane kulture in globalne informacije, toda kritičen do družbenih posledic neoliberalnega kapitalizma (diskriminacije, nepravilnosti, ekonomskih migracij), do množičnih medijev (poenotenja, zavajanja, nadzora) in komunikacijskih tehnologij (raztresenosti, onesnaževanja s hrupom). Protiutež univerzalnemu racionalističnemu redu so narava, pokrajina, stare pesmi, postopki in

⁹ Pozitivnemu vrednotenju sta se pridružila Iztok Osojnik v spremni besedi k *Pagodam na veter* (videz preprostosti, zgoščenost, čistost, igrivost, pozitivna energija, privrženost uporništvu undergrounda in beata, urbano ozadje, izrekanje eksistencialnega in etičnega bistva zunaj/na margini kanonizirane paradigme modrnizma oz. Šalamunovega *Pokna*) in Peter Semolič v zapisu na zavijku zbirke *Sladke pogačice* (telesni temelj govornice in čutnosti, dialoškost, odprta strukturiranost, minljivost).

¹⁰ Joshua Beckman (skupaj z Jankom Lozarjem) 2003, John Ashbery (skupaj z V. Tauferjem in U. Zupanom) 2004; Elizabeth Bishop (skupaj z V. Tauferjem, A. Pepelnik in B. A. Novakom) 2007; Frank O'Hara (skupaj z T. Škrjancem). Prevodi Ashberya in Bishop so izšli v Čučnikovi založbi LUD Šerpa. Nazadnje je za revijo Literatura prevedel pesmi W. Whitmana, W. Stevensa in J. Ashberya.

reči (z boljšjega trga) ter otroške igre in igrače, kajti otroštvo vključuje sprejemanje, čudenje in tveganje brez zavedanja nevarnosti. Podoba kompleksne sodobne resničnosti je oblikovana v nesistematiziranih vtisih in refleksijah gibljivega subjekta, ki kolesari, drsa, šofira, se vozi z vlakom: »Vse moje izkušnje grejo naravnost v literaturo. [...] Tudi kar premišljevanje naredi / za ne ravno stabilno drsajočega, / gre naravnost v literaturo.« (Čučnik, *Nova* 27). Toda poezija je hkrati raziskovanje jezika, igrivo preskušanje pravil in konvencij, bodisi z mešanjem heterogenih glasov bodisi s komponiranjem ponavljalnih struktur (sektina, pantum). Tako so Čučnikove pesmi po eni strani podobne improvizacijam, po drugi pa nasičene s premisleki o veščini. Zelo pomenljiv je odmik od pričakovane obravnave umetnikov, ki so se ga dotaknili, do O'Hare, Ashberyja in Cagea.

Njegovo recepcijo poeta New Yorka je treba ovrednotiti na ozadju antiode »Amerika« iz druge zbirke. V dolgih prostih verzih kopiči kulturne dosežke in družbenopolitične pojave, ki jih kljub planetarni razsejanosti zavrača in vrača; začetni verz »Nisi mi dala veliko in še to ti vračam« se v drobcih refrensko ponavlja na koncu tercina (»a kaj imam od tega«, »poberi vse«, »odnesi«, »vračam ti«), besedilo pa zaokroža verz: »Amerika, / pol toliko mi nisi dala kot daješ poljskim pesnikom« (Čučnik, *Ritem* 12) in s tem razgrajuje navdušenje poljskih o'haristov, ki jim je pesem posvečena.¹¹ In vendar v »Sonetih na neodgovorjene klice 2« odklanja svarilo pred vplivom: »Ko se preseliš v New York, starejši svarijo: / 'Ne beri O'Hare, pisati boš začel kot on' // in oni vejo. A v resnici je dobro pisati / tako, če misliš, da je tvoje. [...] Če si z 'dušo in telesom' pesem, te ne briga, / kaj si misli Harold Bloom o tvoji senci.« (45) Duhovito preoblikovanje O'Harove pesmi »Zakaj nisem slikar« o procesu abstrahiranja v slikarstvu in konkretizacije v poeziji je narativna pesem »Zakaj nisem filozof« (Čučnik, *Akordi* 62–64) o procesu preoblikovanja pojmov v filozofskem (praznina, nič, zaporedje praznih črk) in pesniškem diskurzu (tišina, glasba, ritem). Iz Ashberyjeve pesmi »Instruction Manual« prevzame zamisel imaginarnega odmika od pisanja priročnika in si v prozni pesmi »Priročnik za sanje« v reportažnem

¹¹ Najpomembnejši poljski »o'haristi«, imenovani tudi generacija bruLion, so Marcin Świetlicki, Jacek Podsiadło in Miłosz Biedrzycki. (Njihovo poezijo je Čučnik vključil v ASKLOP, palindromu poljskega zapisa Poljske: antologija novejšje poljske poezije, 2005.) Po padcu komunizma so se soočili s tranzicijo in novo senzibilnost oblikovali v opoziciji do elite domače tradicije, po zgledu beatnikov in newyorške šole so poezijo inovirali z jezikom ulice, vsakdanjimi prizori, se spogledovali z množično kulturo, prevzemali protestniško držo, razkrinkavali tabuje, slavili svobodo, kar vse je izraz distance do intelektualnega kolektivizma in političnega aktivizma (Niżyńska).

stilu umišlja praznovanje otvoritve ljubljanskega tramvaja iz leta 1901 (Čučnik, *Delo in dom* 15–17). Nekateri motivni drobci in formulacije iz pesmi »At the North Farm« iz zbirke *A Wave* (1984) so preneseni v pesem »Ime je begunec« (Čučnik, *Kot dar* 79), s tem da negotovo prihodnost, nedoločljivo identiteto in vprašljivo izmenjavo med jazom in drugim iz predloge umesti v bolj konkretno situacijo begunca in njegove zamisli »druge dežele«.

Najpomembnejša za pesnikov razvoj je bila posvojitvev idej in postopkov avantgardnega skladatelja Johna Cagea,¹² ki je v raziskovanje zvočnih struktur uvedel princip naključja in za kriterij eksperimentalne glasbe postavil nepredvidljivost, umetnikovo radovednost, budnost in sprejemanje (neizločanje) ter tako dokazal neločljivost umetnosti od spremenljivega življenja. Namen pisanja glasbe je breznamenska igra, »vendar pa je ta igra potrjevanje življenja in ne poskus uvajanja reda v kaos ali vsiljevanje izboljšav v stvarstvo, temveč samo način zbujanja v prav to živo življenje, ki je tako čudovito, ko z njega umaknemo um in želje ter dovolimo, da deluje samo od sebe« (Cage, *Silence* 12). Čučnik se je preskusil tudi v pisanju Cageeve oblike mezostih,¹³ sprejel koncept konkretne glasbe iz okolja, večkrat navajal njegov izrek »giblujemo se v času in prostoru, naša ušesa so zdaj v odličnem stanju« (Cage, *Kompozicija* 172) in po sloviti konceptualni »skladbi« 4' 33", ki ob vsaki izvedbi dokazuje neobstoj absolutne tišine, naslovil svojo meditacijo o stanju duha na prelomu 20. in 21. stoletja: obubožanega časa nervoznosti, segmentiranja, nadomestkov, zaigranih čustev, redukcije raznovrstnosti, shematičnosti, zavesti neponovljivosti. V vseh navedenih primerih Čučnik duhovito preoblikuje prvotne predloge oz. izvirne modele ter jih podlaga z lastnimi izkušnjami, okoliščinami in etosom, tako da je eksperiment s prevzetimi besedili in poetikami v resnici le pretveza za ustvarjanje lastnih pomenov, pogosto suvereno in duhovito invertiranih od označenih ali nakazanih predlog.¹⁴ Sposobnost poglo-

¹² Za blok »Ur' musica viva' poesis« v reviji *Literatura* (2004) je prevedel dva odlomka iz Cageeve knjige *Silence*: »Kompozicija kot proces« in »Predavanje o ničemer«.

¹³ V glasbi posvečeni številki *Literature* je objavil sedem sklopov mezostihov na imena John Cage (»Pst«), Globokar (»Aha«), Conlon Nancarrow (»Pi-bip«), Eric Satie (»Din din«), John Zorn (»A-čih!«), Glenn Gould (»Bàh«), Pablo Casals (»Bàh I«) in Bojan Gorišek (»Renons«). Glasbeni izvor je označen z medmetnimi oz. vzkličnimi naslovi (Čučnik, »Pet taktov«).

¹⁴ V intervjuju »Zame se pesem vedno dogaja vsaj med dvema pesmima« je na vprašanje Igorja Divjaka o razvoju lastne poetike pod vplivom ameriških pesnikov, s katerimi se je ukvarjal, Čučnik priznal dolg O'Hari in Ahberyju. Pri O'Hari mu je blizu koncept pesmi, ki najde živ prostor med dvema oseba, in je posvečena prijatelju, znanцу, ljubljeni osebi (t. i. personizem); eksperimental je z njegovo tre-

bljene analize tega, kar bere in ima rad, se kaže v njegovi najnovejši študiji »Postavitev v središče in pridobivanje distance« (2018), v kateri razgrinja dediščino W. Whitmana, W. Stevensa in J. Ashberyja.

Ključni Čučnikov sopotnik na isti sledi, sostanovalec v New Yorku in soavtor *Ode na manhatnski aveniji* je Gregor Podlogar, filozof, pesnik, prevajalec mlajših ameriških pesnikov,¹⁵ sodelavec programa Ars na Radiu Slovenija, urednik slovenskega dela spletne strani za poezijo Lyrikline. Medtem ko so Čučnikove kazalke k tujim predlogam večinoma prikrite (tako kot so za začetnice skrita imena prijateljev, s katerimi dialogizira), so Podlogarjeve očitne, razpršene, pomensko manj določene, omejene na posamezne navedke in imena. Med njimi so tudi cineasti, fotografi, skladatelji, katerih dela je docela ponotranjil¹⁶ ali jih ravnokar prebira, z njimi komunicira prek e-pošte, razglednic in osebnih stikov.¹⁷ Njegov inventar referenc je obsežnejši, brez razvidnega vrednotenja, razen z nalogo, da razširijo kulturni kontekst v ozadju pesmi. Sklici in namigi so integralni del poetike urbane vsakdanjosti, ki se uresničuje kot posnemanje sprotnega beleženja zaznav, razpoloženj in refleksij mladega intelektualca v Ljubljani ali na potovanjih (Indija, London, Berlin, New York). Heterogeno podobje, izvirajoče iz realnih izkušenj (tudi branj in poslušanj) in vgrajeno v subjektovo identiteto, je gradivo asociacij, komparacij, metonimičnih označevalcev trajnih ali trenutnih stanj duha: »Majhni in kratki trenutki zadovoljstva.« (Podlogar, *Milijon* 37) in rabe jezika: »Razbite podobe še niso dovolj / za rojstvo novega.« (42) Podlogar izkorišča avantgardne postopke uki-

nutnostjo in konkretnostjo, ki pa »pri meni ni bila konkretna na enak način, ker sem slovenski pesnik.« Blizu mu je Ashberyjeva govorica, ki se pomika nad temo, jo podaja v fragmentih, necelo, vendar zaokroženo, pokaže, kako v abstraktnem, razpršenem, zapletenem svetu zaslišati sebe. Od obeh se je učil približevanja tekoči pogovornosti.

¹⁵ Za publikacije in spletne strani festivala Dnevi poezije in vina je prevedel posamezne pesmi Christiana Hawkeya, Laure Solomon, Paula Killebrewja, Anselma Berrihana in Matveija Yankelevicha (<http://www.stihoteka.com/arhiv>).

¹⁶ V zbirki *Milijon sekund bliže* je prisvojitvev O'Hare vidna v tem, da citate preoblikuje: »Nevihte Potrebujemo sonce iz tvojega žepa« (51), navaja, brez avtorjevega imena: »Mesto lahko govori samo z jezikom mesta« (60) ali povzema »In kot pravi Frank O'Hara, / zver, mesar in bedak živijo harmonično.« (42)

¹⁷ V kratkem samorazlagalnem esaju »Vzeto iz žepa: pet pesnikov, ki hodijo z mano« kot najljubše ameriške avtorje našteva Gertrude Stein, Franka O'Hara and Joshua Beckmana. Odgovor na vprašalnik S. Šalamona v letu 2008 vsebuje precej daljši spisek: O'Hara, Snyder, Ashbery, Whalen, Ginsberg in še desetine imen pesnikov, ki jih pozna in so vplivali nanj (Salomon, Dodatek X–XI), in med prevedenimi knjigami izpostavlja *Srce v Žepu*, *Pesmi z želvjega otoka* in *Avtoportret v konveksnem ogledalu*.

njanja kohezijskih sredstev, kot so fragmentiranje, reduciranje, kolažiranje brez veznikov in ločil, velike medbesedne in medverzne praznine, ter duhovito eksperimentira z vizualno in zvočno obliko besedila. S tem dosega vtis trenutnosti, nedorečenosti, zbežanosti v praznini ali preobilju možnosti »na globalnem odru medsvetovnih konstelacij« (Vovk). V pesmi »Kinooko« jih označi kot »kolažiranje kadriranje kakofoniranje« (29), zato je vsebino zelo redko mogoče povezati v prvoosebno naracijo. Vse bolj ogolel izraz (v zbirki *Vesela nova ušesa* 2010 sta dva razdelka minimalističnih pesmi) nakazuje poskus subjektivega osredotočanja v prenasičenem svetu, kjer »v hitrosti vse blede« (37), »Vsak govori zase« (45), »Veliko slik, malo besed« (Podlogar, *Vesela* 21) »vse je tako podobno, skoraj popolno« (ibid.). Odmikanje v zasebnost, omejevanje na zaznavanje in kontemplacijo sta kompenzirana s prikritim kritičnim odnosom do površnosti, komercializacije, uniformiranosti, pomanjkanja tišine, neslišnosti in marginalnosti poezije. Meditacija o smislu življenja preskakuje med političnimi in intimnimi izjavami, pri čemer je Podlogarjev lirski jaz emocionalno bolj izrazit kot Čučnikov, saj pogosto izpoveduje depresivna stanja, melanholijo, razočaranje, malodušje, dolgočasje, izgubljeno ljubezen, samoto, ki v posameznikovo raztrgano bivanje vnašajo univerzalni duh nelagodja. Tudi ta pesnik prisega na prijateljstvo med posvečenimi, zavezanimi specifičnim vrednotam (odprtosti, potovanjem, interesu za glasbo) in življenjskemu slogu (kolesarjenje, pitje čaja) ter sodeluje v projektih interakcije med pesniki, glasbeniki in računalniškimi programerji. Ritmična in melodična razsežnost tovrstnih nastopov je lahko prefinjena in krepi besedilni pomen pesmi (enakomerno tiktakanje npr. postopek odštevanja, zmanjkovanje časa in zapiranje svobodnih možnosti v pesmi »Oklepaj«). Njegov pesniški jezik je mešanica vsakdanjega kramljanja (brez vulgarizmov), drobcev strokovnih govoric in leksike iz sodobne tehnologije (e-pošte, interneta, mobilne telefonije).

Edina ženska v tej skupini, ki jo Igor Divjak, Peter Semolič in Urban Vovk neobvezujoče označujejo za ljubljansko šolo, je Ana Pepelnik, radijska spikerka in vokalna performerka, pesnica in prevajalka.¹⁸ Poetika vsakdanje resničnosti, novi impresionizem in pozornost za komaj opazne drobnarije (gre tudi za majhne stvari, kot so kavno zrno, sponka za papir, plamenček vžigalice, deteljica) so v njenih pesmih razviti do

¹⁸ V knjigah so izšli prevodi Elizabeth Bishop (Zemljevid 2007, skupaj z V. Tauferjem, B. A. Novakom, P. Čučnikom), Matthew Zapruder (Ameriška lipa, 2008), Joshua Beckman (Sunek 2012), Sylvia Plath (Ariel 2016), James Tate (Vrnitev v mesto belih slonov 2017, skupaj s P. Čučnikom), v Literaturi James M. Schuyler (2006), W. Whitman (2018, skupaj s P. Čučnikom) in Nathan Hocks (2019).

konca. Pesniška govorica je ali oponašanje klepetanja, pisma, zapisa na razglednici (z največ morfološkimi in sintaktičnimi značilnostmi pogovornega jezika), ali fragment pripovedi, zanimivo opažanje, spominski utrinek. Besedilni svetovi in sam lirski subjekt so minimalizirani, razpršeni v trenutke, hkrati pa paradokсно povezujejo intimo in popularno kulturo (stripe, risanke, popevke), ostanke narave v mestih in poezijo, potrto in odkrivanje lepote, bolečino in ljubezen, analitično igro s formo ali pomenom in medbesedilno navezovanje, naivnost in meditacijo, vrt in velemesto. Navidezno preprostost/naivnost zmoti to, da iz realističnih opisov bližine nenadoma prestopi v kozmično dimenzijo ali vanje interpolira nek imaginaren, sanjam podoben prizor. Nekatere pesmi iz druge zbirke *Utrip oranžnih luči na semaforjih* (2009) so kritike napeljale na odkrivanje ironične distance do razširjenega, že izčrpano konvencionalnega sklicevanja na ameriško poezijo. Pesnica svoje izbire odkrito signalizira: s citatom, ki uvaja njen prvenec (J. Ashbery), z oznako »remake« (O'Hara), s posvetilom (za Joshua Beckmana, za Nymana), z motom iz angleškega navedka predloge, ki jo preoblikuje (Wallace Stevens), z ležečo pisavo angleškega citata (William Carlos Williams). V četrti zbirki *Pod vtisom* (2015) je razvila umetnost recikliranja, nazadnje pa je ravno v času, ko je na novo prevajala pesmi Sylvie Plath (*Ariel*, 2016) iznašla samosvoj način izrekanja ženske stiske v zbirki *Tehno* (2017), ne z ekspresivnim metaforičnim podobjem, temveč z imenovanjem destruktivnih emocij in impulzivnim ritmom. Z medbesedilnimi oblikami usmerja tudi interpretacijo odnosa do poezije sploh in vrednotenja lastnih dosežkov v okviru literarnega sistema.¹⁹

»Trinajst dni za kosa« iz prvenca *Ena od variant kako ravnati s skrivnostjo* (2007) je sicer tako kot »Thirteen Ways of Looking at a Blackbird« sestavljena iz oštevilčenih miniatur in kosom kot povezovalnim motivom, a v resnici zelo drugačna od Stevensove predloge: bolj nežna in lahkotna, postavljena v pomladni čas z mavrico, soncem ali sivim nebom, osredotočena na češnjeve popke, odpadajoče cvetove divjega kostanja, krušne drobtinice, na kosovo vztrajno petje v dežju, trepetanje peruti, letenje v krogih, spletanje gnezda, spanje v drevesu. Te podobe delujejo kot delci doživljanja krhke lepote, simbolno vrednost umetelnega žvižganja, plesa (iz otroške ljudske pesmi) in črne barve kosa med svetlobo in senco pa nakazujejo citati v ležeči pisavi,

¹⁹ Na več mestih je opazna govorkina samokritičnost (neznatnost), spraševanje o lastnem prispevku v brezbrežno polje poezije. Morda je najizrazitejši primer pesem »Zate tomaž za nazaj«, posvečena umrlemu Tomažu Šalamunu: »In ti? kje si da mi poveš da je to / kar delam dobro. da je to kar dajem / lepo mehko udobno. Da je to / kar sem sprejemljivo / in da se najde prostor / tudi zame.« (*Tehno*, 33–34)

da je kos »vpleten v to kar vem«, poje »o lepoti namigovanj« in da smo pozabili »lepoto upogibanj«. Tudi ta motivno-tematska variacija kaže, da je obseg izkušenj v poeziji A. Pepelnik omejen na vsakdanjost iz prepoznavnih domačih ali tujih prostorov in pokrajin v natančno opredeljenem času, vendar je v besedilu vselej oblikovana na subjektiven način, s čutnonazorno jasnostjo, empatijo in lepoto, ki brišejo kulturno kodirane razlike med bolj in manj velikim in pomembnim. Enako pomenljiv del govorkine identitete so besede, stavki, misli, govornice iz prebranih knjig. Da bi izrazila ekistencialno relevantnost poezije, je pesnica uporabila tehniko »remake« oz. intertekstualno figuro cento: iz vsake prevedene pesmi Franka O'Hare, objavljene v zbirki *Srce v žepu*, je prepisala verz ali dva in iz njih kompilirala novo besedilo »Žep v srcu«. Ta postopek hkrati prenaša fragment izvirne pesmi in jo olušči izvirnega konteksta, tako da oblikovanje spominja na recikliranje oz. sestavljanje krpanke.²⁰ S tako rabo morda ponazarja, kaj dejansko ostane po branju del, ki so jih napisali drugi, in kako imajo njihovi verzi enak status kot frazemi, pregovori, rekla in retorični obrazci, ki krožijo v našem jezikovnem univerzumu. Enako tehniko je v zbirki *Pod vtisom* uporabila pri prevodih J. Tata, E. Bishop, J. Beckmana, M. Zapruderja, R. Hassa in več drugih slovenskih, poljskih in srbskih pesnikov (ne le tistih, ki jih je sama prevajala). Za pesnico so to ljudje, »ki so, ne da bi vedeli, spremenili moje poglede na svet, pa čeprav samo za mišjo dlako«. To prostodušno priznanje napeljuje na misel, da je vpis v drugega morda zadnji cilj ustvarjalne komunikacije, obenem pa znova aktualizira bogato zgodovino filozofskih in literarnih premišljevanj o tem, da zaradi časovnega odvijanja nobena ponovitev ne more biti absolutno identična s prvotno pojavitvijo.

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²⁰ Ponovna uporaba verzov se načelno ne razlikuje od izbiranja in kombiniranja elementov jezikovnega sistema v vsakršni individualni uresničitvi, pač pa je zaporedje verzov vnaprej določeno z zaporedjem pesmi v zbirki, iz katere so izločeni. Nova besedila A. Pepelnik so praviloma razpoloženska in čustvena, zaradi manka veziva mestoma tudi bizarna.

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What Do the Slovenians Do with American Poetry?

Keywords: contemporary Slovenian poetry / American poetry / Slovene translations / literary influences / interliterary transfer / Škrjanec, Tone / Čučnik, Primož / Podlogar, Gregor / Pepelnik, Ana

There is a growing interest for American poetry in Slovenia during the last four decades: the Slovenian translators have translated the classic poets, starting with W. Whitman and W. C. Williams, proceeding to W. Stevens, poets of the beat generation and New York school, and recently to younger, not-yet-canonized, where the translators are poets themselves and often also writers of introductory studies. Poets who in the 1990s redirected the Slovenian poetry towards postmodernism, loosening the dissident heritage of elitist modernism, appropriated and adapted to domestic literary context the subject's attitudes, poetic strategies, thematic and genre tendencies (openness, inclusion of popular culture, media and music, colloquial idiom, fragments of autobiographic narrative, urban setting) that had first been practiced in certain American poetry. My interest is focused primarily on friendly interconnected circle of Ljubljana poets and translators Tone Škrjanec, Primož Čučnik, Gregor Podlogar and Ana Pepelnik. Using intertextual theory instead of researching »influences«, I analyze how they have responded to, assimilated and transformed the impulses from American poetry they read, translated, presented and got acquainted with by means of productive interpersonal contacts. Their film-like dynamic imagery is made of subjectively perceived elements of urban reality, overflowing the speaker-observer, they assume ironic and critical attitude towards contemporary social phenomena, playfully experiment with language, insist on colloquial informality and cleverly adapt the transferred literary models to their own needs. The peculiarity of the Other is filtered through avant-garde procedures (collage-making), philosophy of indeterminacy, flowing of music, or even becomes the material for remaking/recycling.

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Poezija v prostem verzu: tradicija Walta Whitmana v sodobni ameriški in slovenski poeziji

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Razvoj slovenske poezije po letu 1950 se da razumeti kot prozaiziacijo in estetsko inverzijo, pisanje poezije v prostem verzu pa kot poezijo v prozi. Ker mnogi literarni zgodovinarji izum prostega verza pripisujejo ameriškemu pesniku Waltu Whitmanu, razprava uvodoma pojasni, na podlagi kakšnih ustvarjalnih načel je ta zasnoval svojo zbirko Travne bilke. Številni sodobni ameriški pesniki se imajo za Whitmanove naslednike, podrobneje pa je predstavljeno, kako to razume bitnik Lawrence Ferlinghetti. Walt Whitman je v prvi polovici 20. stoletja vplival na Otona Župančiča in Antona Podbevška, v drugi polovici in do danes pa neposredno prek prevodov njegove poezije v slovenščino in posredno prek bitniških pesnikov na mnoge slovenske ustvarjalce. Zato lahko v določeni meri in ob upoštevanju drugih vplivov tudi na razvoj prostega verza pri nas gledamo kot na nadaljevanje Whitmanove tradicije. Razprava prikaže, kakšne ustvarjalne rešitve so v prostem verzu našli Andrej Brvar, Esad Babačić in Uroš Zupan.

Ključne besede: sodobna slovenska poezija / ameriška poezija / literarni vplivi / prosti verz / poezija v prozi / Whitman, Walt / Brvar, Andrej / Babačić, Esad / Zupan, Uroš

Andrej Brvar v spremni besedi antologije pesmi v prozi *Brez verzov, brez rim*, ki jo je uredil za založbo Beletrina in je izšla leta 2011, poda svojo interpretacijo razvoja slovenske poezije po letu 1950. Njegove misli se ne nanašajo le na pesmi v prozi, ampak tudi na tiste napisane v prostem verzu, ki je v tem obdobju doživel izjemen razmah. Temeljni proces, ki so mu pesniki v tem obdobju podvrženi, je po njegovem mnenju prozaizacija poezije, to pa razume v tesni povezavi z estetsko inverzijo oziroma prenosom estetske funkcije s poezije na resničnost. Ker se je resničnost s tehnološkim razvojem, izboljševanjem standarda in uveljavljanjem popularne kulture vse bolj estetizirala, so se pesniki odzvali tako, da so se njihove stvaritve prozaizirale.

Brvar celo trdi, da je danes »tako rekoč vsa nastajajoča poezija poezija v prozi« (Brvar 353), pa čeprav je na videz napisana v razčlenjenih verzih, saj se jo da brez težav prepisati v prozo, ker so njeni verzi le simulirani. Priznava sicer, da so v obdobju postmodernizma pri nekaterih avtorjih znova oživele klasične oblike, vendar to pojasnjuje z izjemnimi zgodovinskimi okoliščinami. Poezija naj bi za določen čas spet postala osnovni narodni konstituent, za določen čas naj bi znova oživila tako imenovana prešernovska struktura. Ugotovitev je sicer problematična, treba bi bilo podrobneje preučiti estetske vzgibe avtorjev, kot so Boris A. Novak, Milan Jesih, Miklavž Komelj in drugi, ki so obudili klasične oblike, vendar pa to ne spremeni Brvarjeve osrednje teze, da je poglobljen proces, ki je obvladoval pesnjenje po letu 1950, prozaizacija. Konkretni primeri pesmi, napisanih v tem obdobju, nedvomno potrjujejo Brvarjevo misel. Pri svojem razmišljanju izhaja iz poetoloških izhodišč, ki jih je oblikoval v času slovenske neoavantgarde, katere pomemben tvorec je bil tudi sam s poezijo »ready madov« in montažnih kompozicij, ki so spodbijale ustaljeno predstavo o tem, kakšna naj bo pesniška umetnina.

V tem članku želim Brvarjevo misel o prozaizaciji slovenske poezije navezati na širši pojav moderne poezije v svetu in na kompozicijske rešitve, ki jih prinaša prosti verz. Če je moderna poezija prozaizirana, to namreč še zdaleč ne pomeni, da ne ponuja zelo raznolikih možnosti. Pisanje v prostem verzu je pesnike postavilo pred nove ustvarjalne izzive, njihove poetike so raznovrstne, tu pa bi rad na nekaj primerih pokazal, kaj pisanje v prostem verzu pomeni za pesniška izrazna in kompozicijska sredstva. Ob razmišljanju o tem pojavu se moramo vrniti precej nazaj, do pesnika, ki je po mnenju mnogih literarnih zgodovinarjev prosti verz izumil – Walta Whitmana. Svojo zbirko *Travne bilke* je prvič objavil leta 1855. Ta izdaja je zajemala le 12 pesmi, vendar pa je projekt *Travnih bilk* izpopolnjeval vse življenje, tako da je prerasla v obsežno zbirko do njegove smrti leta 1892. V Evropi je prosti verz prvi uporabil Arthur Rimbaud, ki za Whitmana najverjetneje ni nikoli slišal, vendar precej pozneje. Njegove *Illuminacije* so izšle leta 1886, torej dobrih 30 let po Whitmanovi zbirki. Boris A. Novak v knjigi *Salto immortale: študije o prevajanju poezije* o tem zapiše: »Kakorkoli že: če Whitmanu pripada zasluga za uvedbo prostega verza v svetovnem merilu, potem je Rimbaud prvi pesnik, ki je ta verzni ritem vpeljal v francosko in evropsko poezijo.« (Novak 167)

Whitman se je zavedal prelomnosti svojega eksperimentalnega početja. V pismu Williamu Douglasu O'Connorju 5. marca 1889 je zapisal:

Težko rečem, zakaj, toda zelo jasno čutim, da če karkoli lahko upraviči moje revolucionarne poskuse in revolucionarni izraz, je to tak ansambel – kot veliko mesto moderne civilizacije in celotna povezana in prepletena, paradokсна identiteta moškega, ženske. (Haviland Miller 299)

Izraz ansambel je pomenljiv za pesnikov ustvarjalni postopek. Njegov novi način verzne oblikovanja ni preprost prozni zapis, verzu dajejo ritem in zvočnost paralelizmi členov, anafore, epifore in iteracije, njegov dih in ton preveva bardovski zanos, energetski naboj pa dosega s kopičenjem kinetičnih glagolov, v angleščini zaznamovanih s končnicama *-ing* in *-ed*, katalogiziranjem in apostrofami živemu in neživemu svetu. Uroš Mozetič je v spremni besedi k svojemu prevodu Whitmanove poezije opozoril, da tu ne gre več za pojmovanje poezije kot skrbno organiziranega utelešenja lepote, temveč pesnik, ki piše v prostem verzu, »nasprotno uveljavlja popolno odprtost, izjemno dojemljivost ter brezpogojno nenapovedljivost« (Mozetič 115).

Whitman je izhajal iz ameriških transcendentalističnih pesnikov, predvsem Ralpa Walda Emmersona in Henryja Davida Thoreauja, ki sta zagovarjala misel, da mora posameznik sam vzpostaviti odnos do boga in metafizike, to pa doseže predvsem z uskladitvijo z naravo. Toda njun romantični koncept je radikalno spremenil. Njegove pesmi slavijo naravo v nebrzdani, izvirni energiji in jo povezujejo s pojmom duše, v katero se spaja vsaka posameznost. Ne zanima ga beg v naravo, njegov pojem narave zajema tudi sodobno civilizacijo, trgovino, industrijo, politiko in mestno okolje. Predmetne pojavnosti ne zavrača, ampak jo v polni meri vključuje v svoje pesmi, v svojem razmisleku o ameriškem jeziku *American Primer* je celo zapisal, da »popoln uporabnik besed uporablja stvari same« (Traubel 2). Iz tega prepričanja tudi izhaja najbolj prepoznavno vsebinsko in ritmično gibalno njegovih svobodnih verzov: katalogiziranje, ki ga opaja fascinacija nad pojavi ameriške družbe.

Ker hoče njegova poezija biti poezija vsega, kar mu ameriški novi svet ponuja, dosežke evropske in ameriške civilizacije povezuje s staroselskim izročilom Indijancev. Tako za svoje rojstno mesto New York, ki ga pogosto upesnjuje, oziroma njegovo osrednjo četrt Manhattan uporablja ime Manna-hata, ki pomeni otok mnogih hribov v jeziku indijanskega plemena Lenape, in tudi za Long Island uporablja indijansko ime Paumanok. Z uporabo indijanskih imen Whitman New York in Združene države Amerike spoji s svetom prvotnih elementov, naravo in kozmosom. V nekakšnem zarotitvenem obredu tako takrat še mlada ameriška demokracija – Whitman v svoje pesmi med drugim vključuje tudi dele *Deklaracije o neodvisnosti* – pridobi mitološko moč.

Pesnik svojo vizijo v na novo izumljenem prostem verzju podaja s preroškim glasom, ki lahko zavzame različne perspektive. V predgovoru k zbirki Whitman to razloži z naslednjimi besedami: »Pesnik je prerok, je posebnejš ... v sebi je popoln ... drugi sicer niso nič slabši, le da ne vidijo vsega, kar vidi on. Prav tako pesnik ne poje v zboru ... ne meni se za pravila ... on sam jih postavlja. Pesnik je oko ljudstva.« (Mozetič 107) Pesnikov preroški duh se lahko svobodno dvigne nad Združenimi državami ter zavzame katero koli vlogo. Čeprav je »Pesem o sebi« Whitmanov avtorski projekt, je hkrati tudi pesem vseh prebivalcev sodobne Amerike. Polifonijo svojega glasu razloži v 15. spevu »Pesmi o sebi«, kjer zapiše, koga vse vidi in slavi njegovo oko: tu so strojniki, graditelji cest, tiskarji, prostitutke, tovarniške delavke, kmet in njegova žena, pa tudi norci, krošnjarji, prostitutke, ministri in predsednik države. Whitman je s prostim verzom ustvaril mogočno pesniško orodje za nove čase, tako, ki lahko upesnjuje sodobni svet in družbo v vsej njuni kompleksnosti.

Kako pomembno mesto zavzema Walt Whitman v ameriški literarni zgodovini in kako močno je vplival na nadaljnje rodove ustvarjalcev, izpričuje navdušenje bitnikov nad njegovo poezijo. Ustanovitelj založbe City Lights iz San Franciscu, ki je promovirala bitniško poezijo, Lawrence Ferlinghetti, je v znani pesmi »Populistični manifest« novo generacijo ustvarjalcev celo poimenoval z izrazom »Whitmanovi divji otroci« (Ferlinghetti 56). Bitniki so bili očarani nad izročilom in vizijo ameriškega nacionalnega barda in v marsičem so obnovili in preinterpretirali Whitmanove pesniške postopke: od dolgih, improviziranih prostih verzov do preroškega glasu in obsedenosti s kozmično blaženostjo. Beseda »beat« je namreč spajala tako tolčenje in ritem, kot »beatitude« oziroma blaženost. Vseeno pa se od Whitmana v marsičem tudi razlikujejo.

Predvsem je čutiti razočaranost nad ameriškim sistemom, ki se je premnogokrat izkazal kot represiven aparat vladajočih elit. Ker pesnikova vizija demokratične družbe ni resnično zaživela, jim ni preostalo drugega kot kontrakulturni upor. Javna, uradno zapovedana morala je bila v času, ko je založba City Lights začela izdajati novo literaturo, še zelo toga. Ko je Ferlinghetti leta 1956 izdal znamenito zbirko Allena Ginsberga *Tuljenje in druge pesmi*, je bil aretiran zaradi izdajanja opolzke literature, ki slavi droge in homoseksualnost. Na srečo je imel sodni proces, ki je sledil, nasproten učinek od zelenega in Ginsbergova zbirka je postala izjemna uspešnica. Tudi svobodni trg, ki naj bi vsaj v teoriji omogočil enakopravno konkurenčnost vsem, ni dosegel želenega učinka, ampak je v praksi pomenil prevlado multinacionalk. Ko

Lawrence Ferlinghetti v svojem prostem verzu uporablja Whitmanovo tehniko katalogiziranja in našteva fenomene potrošniške družbe druge polovice 20. stoletja, si ne more pomagati, da ne bi bil ironičen, in Ameriko označi za »neuničljiv svet plastičnih stranišnih desk, tamponov in taksijev« (Ferlinghetti 15).

Drugače od Whitmana, ki je preroško slavil pojave sodobne civilizacije in ameriškega družbenega sistema, Ferlinghetti v svojih esejih jasno pove, da mora biti pesnik nasprotnik današnje civilizacije in državni sovražnik. Kot gonilno silo vladajočega ustroja namreč ne vidi drugega kot vojaško mašinerijo, ki hoče vladati svetu. Vseeno pa je Ferlinghetti Whitmanu soroden po skorajda utopični veri v moč poezije, vitalistični sli in optimizmu. V eseju »Ali lahko poezija zares spremeni svet?« tako nedvoumno zapiše: »In spoznamo, da vrhunska poezija spodkopava prevladujočo paradigmo in odločilno spodbuja status quo sveta in ga preobraža v nekaj povsem novega in drugačnega.« (Ferlinghetti 97)

Ameriška in slovenska kultura sta danes v globaliziranem svetu veliko bolj povezani kot nekoč in sorodnosti med ameriškim in slovenskim načinom življenja so tako v dobrem kot v slabem, kar sodobna družba prinaša, vse večje. Prosti verz je tudi pri nas že zdavnaj udomačen, prevodi ameriških pesnikov, ki v dobršni meri na tak ali drugačen način črpajo iz izročila Walta Whitmana, pa se v zadnjih desetletjih redno objavljajo v knjižnih izdajah. Knjižno izdajo izbranih odlomkov iz Whitmanovih *Travnih bilk* smo v slovenščini prvič dobili leta 1965 v prevodu Petra Levca v zbirki Kondor, leta 1989 pa so izšle izbrane pesmi Walta Whitmana v prevodu Uroša Mozetiča v zbirki *Lirika*. Za letošnje leto, v katerem obhajamo 200. obletnico rojstva ameriškega pesnika, pa sta napovedani kar dve izdaji *Pesmi o sebi*, ki jo bomo v slovenščini prvič dobili v celoti. En prevod je pripravila Ana Pepelnik, drugega pa Miha Avanzo.

Kljub velikemu vplivu Walta Whitmana in ameriške poezije (ta se močno naslanja na Whitmanovo poetiko v zadnjih petdesetih letih) na sodobno slovensko poezijo in kljub dejstvu, da je Whitman iznašel prosti verz, pa, ko govorimo o prostem verzu v slovenski poeziji, tega ne moremo vedno neposredno navezati nanj. Dejstvo je, da je Arthur Rimbaud, ne da bi Whitmanova dela sploh poznal, tega iznašel tudi sam, njegovi simbolistični verzi, ki v določenih elementih že napovedujejo evropsko zgodovinsko avantgardo, pa so prek evropske poezije prvih desetletij 20. stoletja močno vplivali na razvoj moderne poezije in z njo prostega verza pri nas. Zgodovinsko izpričano dejstvo je, da je Walt Whitman s prostim verzom in drzno vitalistično poetiko močno vplival na Otona Župančiča, kar je lepo razvidno v pesnitvi »Duma«

iz zbirke *Samogovori* (1908), na primer v znani podobi »škrjanček – pojoča raketa – je pesmi pršil«, v kateri podobno kot ameriški pesnik spaja svet narave s svetom moderne tehnologije (Poniž 148). Prav tako je Whitmana dobro poznal slovenski avantgardist Anton Podbevšek, ki ga je tudi prevajal. Sklepamo lahko, da marsikatera prevratna slogovna poteza pesmi iz njegove zbirke *Človek z bombami* (1925, napisana 1919) veliko dolguje tudi ameriškemu pesniku, ne le evropski avantgardi.

Župančič in Podbevšek sta tako močno zaznamovala slovensko poezijo prve polovice 20. stoletja, pa tudi še novejšo, da pri prostem verzu v moderni slovenski poeziji lahko vsaj posredno govorimo o Whitmanovem vplivu. Ob navezavi na tezo Andreja Brvarja o prozaizaciji sodobne poezije, ki je pretežno pisana v prostem verzu, smo pokazali, kakšne izrazne možnosti je ta razprl Waltu Whitmanu in sto let zatem Lawrenceu Ferlinghettiju. Pri nas je v drugi polovici 20. stoletja zagotovo posrečen spoj slovenske z evropsko in ameriško tradicijo ustvaril Tomaž Šalamun, vendar šalamunovska metoda igranja boga in ironična jezikovna igra, ki pogosto prehaja v lingvizem, ni najbližje Whitmanovi navezanosti na konkretno družbeno stvarnost in njegovi doktrini, da »popoln uporabnik besed uporablja stvari same« (Traubel 2). Zato bomo raje pogledali, kakšne kompozicijske možnosti je prosti verz ponudil trem sodobnim slovenskim avtorjem, katerih poetika je bližje Whitmanovemu izročilu.

Zagotovo je Whitmanovi poeziji med deli sodobnih slovenskih pesnikov najbolj podobna poezija Andreja Brvarja. Slovenska literarna zgodovina Brvarja umešča v skupino neoavantgardistov zaradi njegovih *ready-madov*, absurdnih navodil, ki jih mora bralec v praksi izvesti sam, in montažnih pesnitev, hkrati pa opozarja na njegovo izredno močno realistično in veristično komponento. Irena Novak Popov v *Novih sprehodih po slovenski poeziji* (2014) zapiše, da je Brvarju načelo »vse je pesem« omogočalo, da je »montiral drobce iz napaberkovanih družinskih zgodb in lastnega življenja, obkroženega z množico sorodnikov, sosedov, znancev, prijateljev in deklet« (Novak Popov 175).

Predvsem Brvarjeva poezija zgodnjega obdobja je zelo sorodna Whitmanovi tehniki katalogiziranja, le da so Brvarjevi katalogi precej bolj atomizirani od Whitmanovih, ti drobci so nanizani drug ob drugem, kot da jih nič ne bi povezovalo. Pa vendar so bili že zgodnji zapisi zelo daleč od lahkotne igre besed v svobodi. To je avtor dosegel z izbiro besed, ki so zelo telesne, težke in materialne, podvržene gravitaciji stvarnosti. Brvar je v teh hibridnih pesmih spajal najrazličnejše vrste in zapise, od družboslovnih besedil do časopisnihotic, vanje je umeščal celo kemijske formule. Najbolj pa od konvencionalne predstave

o poeziji v teh pesmih odstopa skoraj popolna odsotnost metaforike. Pozneje, leta 1998, je v nekem intervjuju o tem izjavil: »Kaj naj bi z metaforo človek, ki je tako do konca pogreznjen v zemljo, kot sem jaz? Kaj naj bi figura metafizičnega sveta, kar metafora pravzaprav je, v svetu brez metafizike?« (cit. po Divjak, »Zasledovanje« 901)

Zaradi navezanosti na zemljo in konkretno stvarnost se je Brvar pozneje odvrnil od montažne kompozicije, ki se mu je zazdela preveč larpurlartistična, prazna in agresivna. Za svojo ustvarjalnost je začel iskati nov temelj, ki pa je moral biti osvobojen vsake prazne idealitete in lažnega mesijanstva. Našel ga je v eksistencialnem čudenju nad stvarstvom. Brvar ni le pesnik, ampak tudi plodovit slikar, in njegove pesmi so bile vedno oblikovane kot vizualne podobe. Sčasoma je dopustil, da so se te osvobodile avtorjeve nasilne podreditve konstrukciji in postale mehkejše in bolj čutne, celo emocionalne. Ostale pa so zveste temeljnemu slikarsko-pesniškemu kompozicijskemu načelu zalezovanja resničnosti skozi slike.

Prosti verz Esada Babačiča je precej bolj kot Whitmanovemu vizionarskemu slogu blizu »Whitmanovim divjim otrokom«, kot jih je videl Ferlinghetti. Predvsem v njegovih zgodnjih pesmih je čutiti podoben kontrakulturni naboj, kot ga je Ferlinghetti izrazil z zahtevo, da mora biti pesnik nasprotnik države in civilizacije, če hoče doseči spremembo. Babačič je bil kot frontman skupine Via Ofenziva eden izmed glavnih protagonistov slovenskega punka, parole, podobne tistim, ki jih je pisal za besedila petih punkovskih pesmi, je vključeval tudi v zapisana besedila in jih spajal z liričnim glasom. Čeprav te kričeče, ekspresivne parole niso bile v skladu z zapovedano moralo, je pokazal, da imajo lahko estetsko veljavo in učinek.

Whitmanovemu izročilu Babačičeva poezija vse do danes sledi v veri v individualno svobodo in vključevanju jezikovnih registrov, ki so do tedaj veljali za nizke. Njegove pesmi temeljijo na skladnji pogovornega jezika, navdih pa črpajo tudi iz popkulture, predvsem iz novovalvske glasbe s področja nekdanje Jugoslavije. Posebno odliko pesniškim besedilom Esada Babačiča, otroka bosanskih staršev, ki sta se kot delavca preselila v Slovenijo, dajeta ironija in fatalizem, značilna za jug nekdanje skupne države.

Babačičeva poezija zrelega obdobja ni več tako kričeča in naivno uporna, kot je bila nekoč, postala je mojstrska in modra, včasih se zdi, kot da bi jo izrekal kak sufi. Babačič je pesniški jezik oklestil do skrajnosti in našel minimalni izraz, ki skozi pesem še poda zaris neke zgodbe, anekdote, včasih tudi šale. Tudi to je prosti verz, a do skrajnosti zgoščen, in tudi pri njem se v prostem verzu lirski princip kompozicije spaja z

epskim. Tematsko je Babačičeva poezija raznolika, pogosto upesnjuje klasičen dvoedini odnos, skrivnostna druga oseba, ki jo nagovarja, pa je včasih ženskega, včasih moškega spola. Veliko pesmi govori o zapletenem odnosu, ki ga je imel avtor z očetom, med njimi pa najdemo tudi za slovensko tradicijo nenavadne športne pesmi. Avtor vir navdihla zanje črpa iz dela, ki ga je opravljal kot športni novinar.

V zadnjih desetih letih, ki jih je močno zaznamovala gospodarska kriza, se je okreplil družbenokritičen ton Babačičevih pesmi. Včasih je v njih začititi grenkobo ob spoznanju, da se mladostne sanje o večji svobodi niso uresničile. Slovenska družba postaja vse bolj razslojena, vladajo ji prazni ideali, ki jih narekujejo globalne korporacije, večina državljanov pa je obsojena na čakanje v vrstah cenenih veleblagovnic. Vseeno pa pesnik s svojo ironijo in humorjem dokazuje, da njegova vera v moč poezije ni zamrla, z njo pa tudi ne upanje na možnost obstoja drugačne, bolj človeške družbene skupnosti.

Tretji sodobni slovenski avtor, ki ga želim v tem prispevku predstaviti kot nadaljevalca izročila Walta Whitmana, je Uroš Zupan. Zupan je na ameriško poezijo, predvsem na bitnike, precej bolj neposredno navezan. Veliko jo je bral in v pesniški zbirki *Sutre*, s katero je leta 1991 nastopil na naši literarni sceni, celo napoveduje svoj pesniški program kot odhod pred City Light Books, kjer naj bi uprizoril nekaj grouchomarxističnih gagov. Da je verz, v katerem misli pisati, dolgi, vzalovani, improvizirani prosti verz, napove v danes že antologijski pesmi »Psalm – magnolije v aprilskem snegu«: »Zame so verzi, divji, dolgi verzi, ki dirjajo kot konji v popotnikovem hrepenenju.« (Zupan 19) S takim udarnim nastopom in odprto pesniško formo je Zupan močno prevetрил tedaj prevladujočo predstavo o poeziji pri nas, ki je temeljila na temnem modernizmu, zakoreninjenem v baladni tradiciji.

Uroš Zupan je pesnik svetlobe in afirmativne pesniške forme, ki združuje metafiziko, eksotiko, banalno vsakdanjost, pesniško tradicijo in popkulturene fenomene. Podobno kot Babačič je v pesmih brez sramu uporabljal avtorski subjekt, čeprav je pred tem dolgo veljalo, da je v moderni poeziji avtorski glas tako rekoč prepovedan. Toda zdaj, ko se je vrnil, to ni več klasičen izpovedni subjekt. Zupan, tudi ko govori o čustvih in razmišljanjih, spaja to, kar bi se za klasično ljubezensko ali refleksivno poezijo zdelo nespojljivo, v pesmi »Hölderlinski stolp« na primer čakanje na svojo drago, gledanje nogometa na televiziji in razmišljanje o esejih Marjana Rožanca. Tak postopek podobno kot pri Brvarju morda ustvarja vtis popredmetenosti, vendar to še zdaleč ne pomeni, da so pesmi brezčutne. Zupan zna izjemno tenkočutno oblikovati atmosfero pesmi s skrbnim sopostavljanjem detajlov. Posredno

prek njih lahko izrazi tudi bolečino, ko se bivanje v predmetni pojavnosti v nekaterih pesmih približuje prazni igri in absurdu. Tu lahko njegovo doktrino navežemo na znano doktrino ameriškega pesništva »Show, don't tell!« (Pokaži, ne povej naravnost!).

Tudi Zupanova poetika je z leti, tako kot Babačičeva in Brvarjeva, postala nežnejša in mehkejša. Pogost motiv njegovih pesmi je spomin na otroštvo v Trbovljah, v katerem prepozna mitološka tla svoje umetnosti. Pozneje pomembno mesto zavzame družinsko življenje in rojstvo sina. A tudi v svojem zrelem ustvarjalnem obdobju je napisal nekaj izjemno živahnih in prelomnih, skorajda ekscesnih pesmi, kot je na primer »Jan Plestenjak je žalosten in zamišljen«, ki doživljajo velik uspeh predvsem na javnih branjih. Izmed treh omenjenih slovenskih avtorjev je Zupan doživel največji uspeh in je kot predstavnik tako imenovane ljubljanske pesniške šole v literarnih krogih najbolj vpliven.

Na koncu naj omenim, da je podobno kot pri Američanih tudi pri Slovencih prosti verz, ki ponuja nove možnosti ustvarjalne svobode, navadno povezan z zahtevami po večji družbeni svobodi in v polpreteklem obdobju so te privedle tudi do konfliktov z oblastjo. Naj spomnim na ukinitev revije *Perspektive* leta 1964. Mnogi avtorji, ki so objavljali v tej reviji, na primer Dane Zajc, Veno Taufer in Tomaž Šalamun, so primeren izraz za svojo prelomno poetiko našli v prostem verzu. Odmeven je bil tudi članek »Demokracija da, razkroj ne!«, ki ga je starejša generacija kulturnikov objavila 8. 11. 1968 v časopisu *Delo* z namenom, da bi zaustavila po njihovem mnenju nihilistično ustvarjalnost mladih. Seveda v nobenem primeru oblast ni nasprotovala prostemu verzu kot takemu, pač pa svobodomiselnosti in družbenokritični vsebini, izraženi v prostem verzu. V času po osamosvojitvi se je prosti verz dokončno ustoličil kot pesniško izrazno sredstvo in ne učinkuje več tako subverzivno kot nekoč. V sodobni potrošniški družbi je oblast izgubila zanimanje za poezijo, saj verjetno meni, da poezija nima družbene moči. Toda pisanje številnih avtorjev mlajših generacij v prostem verzu dokazuje, da vera v ustvarjalni izraz in možnost spremembe, torej več prave svobode in demokracije, ki jo ustvarjalnost prinaša, še ni izumrla.

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Poetry in Free Verse: The Tradition of Walt Whitman in Contemporary American and Slovenian Poetry

Keywords: contemporary Slovenian poetry / American poetry / literary influences / free verse / poetry in prose / Whitman, Walt / Brvar, Andrej / Babačič, Esad / Zupan, Uroš

The development of Slovenian poetry after 1950 can be understood as a process of prosaisation and aesthetic inversion, and the writing of poetry in free verse as poetry in prose. Since many literary historians attribute the invention of free verse to Walt Whitman, the paper strives to research on what creative principles the American poet has founded his collection *Leaves of Grass*. Many contemporary American poets consider themselves to be Whitman's successors, and the paper explores how the beatnik Lawrence Ferlinghetti understands this notion. In the first half of the twentieth century, Walt Whitman has influenced Oton Župančič and Anton Podbevšek, and in the second half until today, directly through the translations of his poetry in Slovenian language and indirectly through beat poets, many contemporary Slovenian

authors. That is why, considering also other influences, the development of free verse in Slovenia can be partly perceived as the continuation of Whitman's tradition. The paper examines the creative solutions found by Andrej Brvar, Esad Babačić, and Uroš Zupan.

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Pesem-kot-okolje pri Waltu Whitmanu in Otonu Župančiču

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Razmerja med Whitmanovo in Župančičevo poezijo so kompleksnejša, kot se zdi na prvi pogled. Zato članek ne raziskuje samo neposredno dokazljivih vplivov, ampak se posveča tudi afinitetam, ki niso nujno posledica neposrednega vpliva. Zanimive so predvsem razlike in podobnosti njunih naravnosti, opazovane v luči koncepta pesem-kot-okolje (ang. environment-poem), kakor ga je prav na podlagi Whitmanove poezije uvedel ameriški literarni teoretik Angus Fletcher, in koncepta času neprimerno (fr. intempestif), kakor ga je na podlagi Nietzschejevih pojmov volje do moči in večnega vračanja oblikoval Gilles Deleuze. Članek opazuje in ugotavlja manifestiranje teh konceptov in njihovo povezavo s konceptualno metaforo valovanja, ki pesnika tesno povezuje in upravičuje primerjalno branje. Pri tem članek izhaja iz teze, da vsak izviren ustvarjalni akt vsebuje določen element, ki ga nobena interpretacija ne more izčrpati. To je moment, ki sodi v vsakokratno sodobnost, a ga je hkrati mogoče izločiti iz te sodobnosti in ga obrniti zoper njo v upanju na čas, ki še pride; je tisto, kar iz umetniškega dela naredi enkratno eksperiment. Vzporedno branje obeh pesniških opusov z vidika pesmi-kot-okolja privede do spoznanja, da ne le Whitmanovega, ampak tudi Župančičevega pesniškega opusa, kljub njegovi raznolikosti, ni smiselno deliti na izrazito ideološko obarvane ali angažirane pesmi in na tiste, ki sodijo v »čisto liriko«.

Ključne besede: slovenska poezija / ameriška poezija / Župančič, Oton / Whitman, Walt / primerjalne študije / poezija narave / pesem-kot-okolje

Znano je, da med Whitmanovo in Župančičevo poezijo obstajajo določene sorodnosti, ki jih je slovenska literarna zgodovina že pred časom opazila; a najprej je treba opozoriti na to, kar je pesnik nekoč sam povedal Izidorju Cankarju: »V novejšem času sem bral Vearhaerena in Whitmana.« (Cankar 182).

O neposrednem vplivu Whitmanove poezije na Župančičevo pesnjenje sta doslej največ konkretnega povedala Lucien Tesnière in Henry R. Cooper. Vzporednice pa so opazili tudi nekateri slovenski literarni zgodovinarji, med njimi Janko Kos (335–345). Vpliv starej-

šega pesnika na mlajšega seveda ni zanemarljiv, toda s stališča sodobnih pogledov na književnost utegnejo biti zanimivejše tiste lastnosti obeh opusov, ki niso nujno posledica neposredno dokazljivega literarnega vpliva, pač pa prej proizvod spleta drugih okoliščin. Tako na primer pri Župančiču naletimo na številna pesniška besedila, za katera je iz tega ali onega razloga verjetno, da ni šlo za vpliv, pač pa samo za določeno afiniteto v nazorski naravnosti. Eden izmed značilnih primerov je pesem »Mož na hribu« iz *Samogovorov*, kjer so navzoče širše povezave s tematizacijo horizonta. Poleg tega je v tej pesmi mogoče opazovati številne whitmanovske postopke, kakor so neglagolske sintagme, elipse, ponavljanja, paralelizmi, naštevanje in lirska vprašanja: »Hej, oblaki preko polja – kam? / Kam je reka tebe volja – kam? / Rado bi v daljavo drevje? / Cvetje, listje raz vejevje – kam? // Deklica po strmi poti – kam? / krilo, ruta – kot peroti – kam? / konji splašeni z vetrovi ... / in na konjih mladi dnovi – kam?« (*ZD II* 9).

Whitman in Župančič sta temeljni, že davno kanonizirani figuri dveh precej različnih kultur. Oba veljata za barda svojih narodov, transcendentalista, vizionarja, njuna besedila tematizirajo tako patriotizem kot kozmopolitstvo,¹ njuna demokratična drža pa je tesno povezana s socialnim in nacionalnim vprašanjem. Zato njune literature ni mogoče oddeliti od nacionalnih vizij obeh narodov, vendar tako pri Whitmanu kot pri Župančiču težko zaznamo kakršnekoli nacionalistične podtone. To je opazil tudi Cooper, ki je v svojem prispevku o obeh pesnikih opozoril, da njuna poezija ponotranja in hkrati razrešuje napetosti med lokalnim in univerzalnim. Oba pesnika sta se s tem sprijemala tako na pesniški ravni kot tudi programsko (Cooper 18).

Opaziti je, da je Whitmanova poetika, čeprav je eno od njenih temeljnih določil fragmentarnost, tipološko precej enotnejša od poetike Otona Župančiča, čigar pesmi so sicer bolj sklenjene enote, vendar v njih zaznavamo zelo heterogene vplive (Kos 338). Tudi razlike med posameznimi ustvarjalnimi obdobji so pri Župančiču opaznejše kot pri Whitmanu. O tem govori že dejstvo, da je Whitman izdal eno samo zbirko pesmi, ki jo je nenehno dopolnjeval in spreminjal; zato ne zgrešimo, če rečemo, da je njegova knjiga rasla skupaj z njim. Poleg tega je napisal tudi dve prozni deli, *Specimen Days* in *Democratic Vistas*. Župančič je izdal vrsto zbirk (za odrasle in otroke), pisal pa je tudi prozo in dramatiko. Njegovo ustvarjanje je, podobno kot Whitmanovo, trajalo pol stoletja. Zaznamovalo ga je tesno prijateljstvo s Cankarjem in

¹ Seveda je v njuni poeziji najti še vrsto drugih tem, kot so vojna, ljubezen, pesnjenje, a se pričujoči razmislek iz razumljivih razlogov omejuje samo na nekatere.

drugimi pripadniki slovenske moderne, a vemo, da so se njegovi in Cankarjevi pogledi na vlogo umetnika in umetnosti pozneje precej razhajali. Tako lahko v neodposlanem Župančičevem pismu Cankarju (9. 1. 1909) preberemo:

Moja stvar je: narediti iz sebe človeka, zdravega krepkega telesa in duha, ki je dobre volje. To se pravi: ki je tako močan, da si upa bojevati boj, veseliti se, omagovati, trpeti, padati, vstajati, iskati resnice in skrivnosti z umom in srcem, z mislijo in voljo, z vero in skepsjo, z upom in strahom. [...] To je moja stvar: narediti iz sebe posodo, v katero gre ves svet, nebo in zemlja in vse, kar je, zato da more iz mene ves svet, nebo in zemlja in vse, kar je. (Nav. po: Pirjevec 4–5)

Nekoliko pozneje je takole razširil svojo misel:

Razvoj je temeljni princip življenja, razvoj mikrokozma od kaosa do kozma se ponavlja v nas – vse naše čustvovanje, misli, hrepenenje, v mladem srcu in glavi tako burna in tako zmešana, stremijo ravno tako po jasnini, po harmoniji; ravnovesje sil, ki so v tebi, medsebojno, in soglasje tebe s svetom, to je cilj, po katerem sem stremel od prvega. (Prav tam)

Iz pisem je razvidno, da Župančič programsko stavi predvsem na zdrav razum in harmonijo. Zanima ga, kako iz kaosa skozi medij besede ustvarjati kozmos, s čimer aludira na neke vrste demiurško dejanje, kar je izrazil tudi s pesniško besedo: »Alfa in Omega! Beseda! Bajna moč, / ki stari kaos si ločila v dan in noč. / skrivnostno izrekana vsevdilj / vzdržuješ svet in smer in zadnji cilj.« (»Naša beseda«) Gre natanko za to – kar je v svoji temeljiti strukturalni analizi zbirke *V zarje Vidove* opazila že Irena Novak Popov –, kako »iz amorfnega, neizoblikovanega kaosa z ustvarjalnim dejanjem izoblikovati urejen kozmos, ali drugače, s sredstvi poezije upesniti ustvarjanje samo« (420).

Ob tem je spet mogoče potegniti vzporednico z Whitmanom, a hkrati dodati, da je Župančič, kakor smo pravkar videli, vsaj v času pisanja navedenih pisem, razmišljal o poti iz kaosa v kozmos, za Whitmana pa je treba reči, da vseskozi razmišlja v obeh smereh hkrati, se pravi bolj nomadsko in divergentno. Kljub temu bi večji del zgoraj navedenih Župančičevih izjav zlahka pripisali tudi Whitmanu, ko ta na primer v »Pesmi o sebi« (»Song of Myself«) zapiše: »Mar sem v protislovju? / Nič zato, sem pač v protislovju. / V meni je podjetnost, v meni so množice.« (*Travne* 8) In prav ima, dejansko je v protislovju, saj se njegova poezija giblje kot val in odpira na vse strani, tako k transcendenci kot imanenci, skuša zajeti ves svet, a zna, po drugi strani, vsaki pesmi izrisati obod, povezati konec z začetkom, preteklost s prihodnostjo, smrt z rojstvom:

»Pojem o sebi in se slavim, / in kar sprejemam sam, boš sprejel tudi ti, / ker vsak atom mojega bitja je prav tako del tvojega.« (»Pesem o sebi«; *Travne* 102) In ob koncu pesnitve: »Ne izgublaj poguma, če me ne boš takoj našel, če me boš zamudil na enem kraju, me boš poiskal drugje, / ker nekje sem se ustavil in čakam nate.« (»Pesem o sebi«; *Travne* 190)

Whitman si je namreč vseskozi prizadeval, da bi bila njegova knjiga kar se le da večperspektivna, neizčrpana in nikoli zares dokončna. Raznolikost Župančičevega opusa je razlog, da je primerjalno branje v tem primeru precej zahtevno, saj je kljub njegovi izrecni izjavi o razvoju iz kaosa v kozmos opaziti vrsto pesmi, ki tematizirajo tudi gibanje v nasprotni smeri oziroma gibanje v vseh smereh. To velja tako za simbolistične pesmi kakor tudi za tiste, v katerih se morda že kažejo nastavki ekspresionizma (»Dies Irae«, »Vizija«, »Glad«, »Spokorna pesem«, »Naše pismo«) (prim. Kos 340). Poleg tega, če se še za hip zadržimo pri pismih, zbuja pozornost slog Župančičevega pisanja, kjer pade v oči nagnjenje k naštevanju, tako polisindetičnem kot asindetičnem, ponavljanju in paralelizmom, postopkom torej, na katerih temelji Whitmanov način pesnjenja, denimo: »Brž sta me preplavila spokojnost in spoznanje, ki / prekašata vse védenje o zemlji, / in vem, da je božja roka moja lastna zaobljuba, in vem, da je sveti Duh moj lastni brat, / in da so vsi možje, kadarkoli rojeni, prav tako moji bratje, / in ženske moje sestre in ljubimke ...« (*Travne* 6). Zgovorno je dejstvo, da naštevanja pri Whitmanu niso nikoli v funkciji reprezentativne klasifikacije, saj delujejo kaotično in zato nikoli ne pretendirajo na izčrpnost.

Župančič kaže sorodna nagnjenja, ki še bolj kot v navedenih pismih pridejo do izraza v nekaterih njegovih pesmih (npr. »Vran«, »Nespečnost«, »Stari Kiš«, »Žebljarska«, »Kovaška«, »Z vlakom«, »Duma«, fragment »Jerala« in še bi lahko naštevati). Podobno velja za sintaktične strukture (npr. priredja), ki se ponavljajo in s tem vzpostavljajo neposreden stik z bralstvom, saj je samo bralno dejanje pravzaprav še ena ponovitev. Ponavljanja podobno kot naštevanja zavirajo linearen razvoj besedila, zato naletimo na vrsto primerov, kjer konci aludirajo na začetke ali jih celo podvajajo. Svojevrstna povezanost konca (»O spev slapov ubrani / iz dalje vsak večer!«) z začetkom (»O šum voda zvečer / iz dalje neprestani! / O spev slapov ubrani / v zvezda strmeči mir!«), je neodvisna od dolžine pesmi. Pesem pomensko odpira, a hkrati tudi prostorsko zapira. Oblikuje jo kot specifičen prostor oziroma okolje. To je razlog, da marsikatera od teh pesmi zbuja značilen občutek valovanja (»Tu, tu se žile življenja stekajo, / pota vesoljstva tukaj se sekajo, / ljubim jih s hrupom in šumom, ta velika mesta – skoznje v svobodo gre, skoznje v bodočnost gre cesta ...«) (*ZD II* 82)

ali, povedano bolj teoretsko, občutek večnega vračanja, vendar nikakor ne vračanja istega: Isto namreč ni »tisto, kar se vrača, kajti vračanje je izvirna oblika istega, ki se reče samo za različno, za množstvo, za postajanje. Isto se ne vrača. Samo vračanje je Isto tistega, kar postaja.« (Deleuze, *Nietzsche* 34).² Ne gre torej ne za izvor, ne za napredek, ne za končni cilj, namesto tega Deleuze postavlja postajanje. Večno vračanje pa je za Deleuza »gibanje postajanj, ki so definirana kot afirmativno in kreativno gibanje (Bahovec, »Nietzsche v treh formulah« 276–277). V tem je mogoče uzreti enega od poglobitvenih razlogov, zakaj skoraj vse Whitmanove pesmi – in številne Župančičeve – učinkujejo času neprimerno, so torej pred svojim časom, če izraz razumemo v pomenu, ki ga je na podlagi Nietzschejeve filozofije izoblikoval Deleuze in pri tem posebej poudaril, da pojma, ki ga označuje, ni mogoče enačiti ne z večnostjo, ne z zgodovino, ne s prihodnostjo, umestiti ga je mogoče nekam »vmes«, to je v neskončni Zdaj, v neskončno postajanje (prim. *Razlika* 43–45; *Kaj je filozofija?* 116). Ta »Zdaj« se navezuje na tisto lastnost umetniškega dela, ki omogoči, da to sproti izumlja pogoje svojega nastajanja, da torej ne reproducira pravil, temveč jih ustvarja sproti in se tako odpira postajanju.³

Postajanje in večno vračanje različnega oziroma mnogoterega sta temeljna koncepta, ki se pri vsakem od obeh pesnikov manifestirata nekoliko drugače, čeprav sta pri obeh tesno povezana s podobnimi pesniškimi postopki, sorodno nazorsko naravnostjo in, kar je bistveno, konceptualno metaforo valovanja. Če si dovolim malce svojevoljno parafrazo naslova Župančičeve zbirke *V zarje Vidove*, lahko rečem, da gre za pojav, ko se preteklost in prihodnost v večnem Zdaj nekako stikata, tako kot večerna in jutranja zarja v času poletnega solsticija, to je v času med 15. junijem (sv. Vid) in 24. junijem (sv. Janez Krstnik).

Ideja večnega vračanja mnogoterega še posebej ustreza primerjalnemu branju, saj zavrača redukcijo literarnega dela na zgodovinske okoliščine in pozornost usmerja na staro spoznanje, da vsak izvirni ustvarjalni akt vsebuje določen moment, ki ga nobena aktualizacija ali interpretacija ne more izčrpati. To je – kakor zatrjuje Nietzsche in nadalje interpretira Deleuze – tisto, kar sodi v vsakokratno sodobnost, a je hkrati

² V tradiciji nihilizma je Nietzschejevo večno vračanje razumljeno kot vračanje istega in enakega (Bahovec, »Deleuzova« 129).

³ S tem glagolnikom, ki pomeni proces v smislu metamorfoze, Deleuze aludira na Nietzschejev prelom s platonizmom in na nove povezave, ki jih je nemški filozof vzpostavil s heraklitsko tradicijo, grško tragedijo in Mallarméjevo poezijo. (Več o tem pojmu glej Sasso, *Vocabulaire*, geslo »Devenir«).

mogoče izločiti iz te sodobnosti in obrniti zoper njo v upanju časa, ki še pride (Deleuze, *Logika* 248); je tisto, kar iz umetniškega dela naredi enkratni pojav, odprt za eksperiment, ki utegne učinkovati tudi kot performativni akt.

Ameriški teoretik Angus Fletcher v svojem delu *A New Theory for American Poetry* (2004) takšno eksperimentiranje, ki ga poimenuje *environment-poem* (pesem-kot-okolje),⁴ odkriva v delih Whitmana, Clareja in Ashberyja, Whitmana pa proglasi za pesnika, ki je ta eksperiment uvedel v ameriško literaturo. Njegov pesniški glas dojemata v smislu okolja, kot glas, posebej namenjen temu, da nas obkroža (119). Pesem-kot-okolje torej dojemata kot prostor v pomenu chore in ne kot kraj v pomenu toposa. Značilnost tega prostora je, da ni nikoli statičen, da vselej implicira procese, povezane tako z organskim kot anorganskim življenjem. Kljub temu je opisnost pomembna sestavina pesmi-kot-okolja. Zato niti ne preseneča, da Fletcher v Whitmanovi poeziji opaža svojevrstno oživitvev nekaterih potez tradicije angleške in francoske opisne poezije narave sedemnajstega in osemnajstega stoletja, kakor so naštevavanje, opisovanje in nagnjenje k personifikaciji, katere funkcija naj bi bila povezovanje snovnih in duhovnih razsežnosti pesmi (36–39).⁵ Ali, če si pomagamo z ugotovitvijo D. H. Lawrencea, gre za srečanje med notranjimi in zunanjimi razsežnostmi pesmi, in to iz različnih zornih kotov, za nekakšno vmesno stanje, ki se dogaja, ko Whitman vse, kar mu pride na pot, brez sleherne hierarhične klasifikacije ovije v zven in svoje *Travne bilke* sredi sinestetičnega delovanja odpira bralstvu, ga poziva, naj vstopi (Lawrence 148–161). Vstopi v ta zaprti in hkrati odprti prostor, ki je, po Fletcherju, pesem-kot-okolje. Če si zdaj priključimo v spomin kako Whitmanovo pesem, »Potovanje v Indijo« (»Passage to India«) na primer, zlahka ugotovimo, da pesem, čeprav je prvoosebni pesniški govorec v izhodišču poudarjen – »Pojem o dnevih svojega življenja, / pojem o velikih dosežkih svojega časa« –, kmalu preide na opisovanje večje skupnosti, se širi v prostorskem in časovnem smislu ter oblikuje relacije med vsakovrstnimi udeleženci, kraji in časi: »Novega malika častim, / vas kapitane, popotnike, raziskovalce in vse vaše, / vas inženirje, vas arhitekta, strojnike in vse vaše ...« (*Travne* 118)

Whitmanov lirski govorec je torej osredinjen predvsem na vzajemno igro populacij, dogajanj, prostorov, emocij, afektov in vseh ude-

⁴ Izraz prevajam pesem-kot-okolje, čeprav bi se bolje slišalo okoljska pesem, a bi se utegnilo razumeti izključno v ekokritičnem smislu, kar ne bi bilo povsem ustrezno, čeprav drži, da je pojem nastal na podlagi spoznanja, da je napočil čas, ko naj bi občutljivost za okolje zahtevala svoj lastni literarni žanr (Fletcher 9).

⁵ Fletcher je bil strokovnjak za alegorijo, kamor sodi tudi personifikacija.

leženih v kozmični skupnosti. To niso le ljudje, ampak tudi živali in rastline, to je vse, iz česar sestoji organsko in anorgansko življenjsko okolje. Poudariti je treba, da so zanj te bitnosti, ki jim poleg materialne pripisuje tudi duhovno razsežnost, vse enako pomembne, saj so organizirane naštevalno-opisno in potemtakem izrazito nehierarhično.⁶ Paradoks pesmi-kot-okolja je v tem, da je ni mogoče proglasiti za poseben literarni žanr,⁷ ker je, kakor smo videli, ne določajo hierarhična razmerja, značilna za večino literarnih žanrov. V njej je tematiziran demokratičen pogled na svet, utemeljen na univerzalnem tovarištvu – Whitman rabi besedo *camaraderie* –, izraženem z intranzitivnostjo in srednjim glagolskim načinom, paralelnimi sintaktičnimi strukturami («morje me šepeta») (ang. »the sea whispers me«), gramatičnimi in logičnimi elipsami ter odklanjanjem kronološkosti. Posledica tega je, kakor ugotavlja Fletcher, da takšna pesem lahko doseže samo svoj obod, katerega krožna oblika proizvede rob, ne pa zaključka (120). Kot takšna uprizarja drsenje proti obzorju, ki sproti proizvaja širše povezave in čedalje bolj oddaljena obzorja: »Ti cesta, po kateri stopam in se razgledujem naokrog, / menim, da tu nisi le ti, / menim, da je še mnogo nevidnega tod okoli.« («Pesem o širni cesti«/»Song of the Open Road«) (*Travne* 27). Ob tem se sprošča določena energija, ki besede potiska proti končnemu sklepu, a tik preden ga dosežejo, ta energija uplahne. Tako nastane občutek plimovanja in odtekanja ali, drugače, valovanja, tako na ravni posameznega verza kot večjih pesemskih segmentov. To valovanje proizvaja učinek večnega vračanja, ki je, kot rečeno, eno od temeljnih določil pesmi-kot-okolja. Pri tem ne gre samo za zbujanje sinestetičnega občutka valovanja v smislu dviganja, upadanja, odtekanja, vračanja in nenehnega ponavljanja, kar se neposredno navezuje predvsem na vodo, a se dogaja tudi drugje, gre za vsa tista ponovljiva gibanja, kjer procesa ni mogoče ločiti od substance. Najpomembnejše pa je, da valovanje lahko opredelimo kot konceptualno metaforo pesmi-kot-okolja, praviloma delujočo na strukturni, idejni in mestoma tudi tematski ravni. Saj so valovi kot naraven pojav, povezan z vodami, dejansko tematizirani v številnih Whitmanovih pesmih, v »Mestu ladij«, denimo: »Mehkó, mehkó, mehkó / tesnó se k valu prižema naslednji val / in zopet drugi, ovijajoč, objemajoč, tesnó, tesnó [...] O noč, ali ne vidim svoje družice kriliti tam med valovi? [...] visoko in jasno dvigam svoj glas nad valove.« (*Travne*

⁶ Zato je Whitmanov glas izjemnega pomena za današnjo ekološko problematiko, saj njegovo poezijo in poetiko lahko opazujemo v funkciji nastajanja novega odnosa do okolja, bodisi naravnega bodisi urbanega.

⁷ Čeprav Fletcher, kot že omenjeno, govori o potrebi po novem žanru (9).

58) Toda to, opozarja Fletcher, da pesem dejansko govori o valovih, ni tako pomembno kot opažanje, da pesnik »piše v valovih« (154). Nedvomno je ravno ta lastnost Whitmanove poezije, ki je Fletcherja spodbudila, da je oblikoval koncept pesmi-kot-okolja, razlog za vznik neke nove, v prihodnost usmerjene naravnosti, ki jo zdaj za nazaj lahko uziramo kot vizionarsko in demokratično, a obenem tudi, in to je bistveno, predvsem kot času neprimerno in obenem manjšinsko v Deleuzovem in Guattarijevem pomenu tega izraza.⁸

Tudi pri Župančiču najdemo vrsto besedil, kjer odkrivamo valovanje kot konceptualno metaforo v smislu načina pisanja »v valovih«, a tudi nekatere tematizacije valovanja kot z vodo povezanega naravnega pojava, ki dejansko in metaforično evocira takó porajanje življenja kakor tudi smrt. Obenem lahko opazujemo, kako se to valovanje uveljavlja kot posebno ritmično gibanje, na katerem temelji dinamičen učinek besedila. Značilen primer je »Duma« (*Samogovori*), po mnenju nekaterih (Tesnière, Cooper) najbolj whitmanovska Župančičeva pesem: »V vélikih mest valovanju bil sam sem val, / O, in moje srce je utripalo / V taktu mogočnem, potisočrjenem; / V novo življenje planila je duša seljaka.« (ZD II 81; poudarila JKŠ) Zelo podobno učinkuje tudi odlomek iz pesmi »Z vlakom« (*Samogovori*): »Beži. Vse beži ... le v dalji planine! / Tam zemlja je naša zakipela, / zahrepenela, v nebo je hotela, / v višino se pognala kot val, / a v naletu pod zvezdami val je obstal – / tako stoji zdaj sredi višine / okameneli zanos domovine.« (ZD II 76; poudarila JKŠ) O »Dumi« je pesnik Izidorju Cankarju (181) povedal, da je pesnitev leta nosil v sebi po tistem, ko je napisal pesem »Z vlakom«. Zamislil si jo je kot neke vrste dialog med moškim in ženskim glasom, med kozmopolitstvom in domoljubjem, ne da bi eno prevladalo nad drugim: »Slišal sem pesem in čul sem glas pojoč, / glas moža, kot da je odgovor ženskemu glasu; čul sem, kako je zvenelo moje srce.« (ZD II 79)

Toda »Duma« ne opeva le ljubezni do domovine, ampak tematizira široko demokratsko naravnost, socialni angažma in globoko empatijo: »Hamburk, Hamburk! Kliče ji zvon ... / tam ji v smrt omahnil je sin.« (ZD II 679) Podobno sporočilo razbiramo tudi pri Whitmanu, na primer v pesmi »Ihtenje zvonov« (»Sobbing of the Bells«) ali v pesmi »Sedim in opazujem« (»I Sit and Look Out«): »Sedim in opazujem vse gorje sveta, vse zatiranje in sramoto, / slišim pritajeno krčevito ihtenje mladeničev, ki trpijo in se kesajo svojih dejanj, vidim mater, kako v revščini umira zapuščena, shirana, obupana ...« (*Travne* 70)

⁸ Več o tem pojmu gl. Sasso, *Le vocabulaire*, geslo »Litterature mineure«.

Valovanje v vlogi konceptualne metafore ne deluje samo na besedilnih segmentih, ampak določa tudi besedila v celoti, kakor je lepo videti, denimo, v Župančičevi pesmi »Večerna«:

O šum voda zvečer / iz dalje neprestani! / O spev slapov ubrani / v zvezda strmeči mir! // Podzemskih katedral / oboki in oboki ... / iz njih iz orgel zvoki / gneto se val na val. // Pramati! Melodij / vzkipeva ti naročje, / za prosto polnozvočje / bore se brez strasti. // Nepotekljiv je vir, / iz sebe sam se hrani ... / O spev slapov ubrani / iz dalje vsak večer. (*Dela* 154)

Če to pesem⁹ primerjamo s prejšnjima, opazimo, da tematizacija valovanja postaja čedalje abstraktnejša, a je še zmeraj razpoznavna. Toda Župančičev opus vsebuje tudi pesmi, kjer je metafora valovanja povsem neoprijemljiva, a vendarle nekako navzoča: po eni strani kot način pisanja »v valovih«, po drugi strani pa kot način delovanja misli. Značilen primer je pesem »Večerna impresija« iz *Samogovorov*.

Več kot očitno je, da so oba pesnika očarale različne pojavne oblike vode, le da Whitmana morda najbolj morje, čeprav tudi reke, Župančiča pa poleg morja predvsem reke, jezera in slapovi, kar se da razložiti z različnimi okolji, sredi katerih sta odraščala. Toda za primerjalno recepcijo je pomembnejše od tega dejstvo, da imamo pri valovanju kot literarnem konceptu in upesnjemem fizikalnem pojavu opraviti z določeno energijo, ki bralstvo sili, da se odvrne od reprezentacijske razsežnosti pesmi, odpre eksperimentu in tako omogoči vzpostavljanje novih relacij. To pa je možno samo z izstopom, vsaj začasnim, iz dialektike in zgodovine in osredinjenjem na afekte. V tem primeru pesnik nastopi kot nekakšen »zdravilec«, pesem pa v Zaratustrovi maniri afirmira življenje, a se hkrati odpira za novo mišljenje: »Oblike življenja navdihujejo načine mišljenja, načini mišljenja ustvarjajo oblike življenja. Življenje aktivira mišljenje in mišljenje po svoje afirmira življenje.« (Deleuze, *Nietzsche* 17) Ob tem je treba opozoriti – in to je bistveno – da pesniškega govornika kot zdravilca in tistega, ki afirmira življenje, ne kaže razumeti kot nekoga, ki želi utelešati kozmični razum, in uresničevati zgolj »razvoj mikrokozma od kaosa do kozma«, kakor je v zgoraj navedenem pismu zapisal Župančič. Gre za to, da skozi konceptualno metaforo valovanja tudi pri Župančiču motrimo značilno whitmanovsko gibanje, ki poteka v obeh smereh, od kaosa do kozmosa in nazaj, a se po navadi dogaja tako, da ne načne pesniške strukture. Razlog za to tiči v odločilnem mejnem položaju, ki ga tu, kakor že omenjeno zgoraj,

⁹ Ta pesem je nadvse nazoren primer konceptualne metafore valovanja, delujoče na strukturni, pomenski in idejni ravni.

razumemo kot neprimernost času, pojmovano v smislu večnega Zdaj, intenzivnega stika konca z začetkom, rojstva s smrtjo, kaosa s kozmosom, preteklosti s prihodnostjo.

Prav o tej stičnosti, čeprav jo razume povsem drugače, govori tudi Niko Grafenauer v svoji fenomenološko obarvani semantični analizi kratke pesmi »Večerna impresija«:

Kot šum nevidnih kril gre skozi mrak, / nevidnih kril, ki bi gorela v zarji; / pričakovanja poln večerni zrak / se giblje, kot oblaki pred viharji / v motnjavi burni begajo svoj vlak; / kar plahih senc obstane lov in beg / in iz noči se vsiplje noč kot sneg. (*ZD II 20*)

Grafenauer to stičnost poimenuje »trenutek čiste atemporalnosti bitja« in jo interpretira kot »tisti mejni položaj, v katerem se zgodi identiteta tega bitja, istovetnost življenja in njegove resnice, ki je smrt« (165). To pojmuje kot rezultat določene naravnosti, ki stori, da razum in voljo do moči kot osnovno vodilo pesnikovega življenja in delovanja zamenjata »nerazum in volja do nič« (Grafenauer 164). Ta mejni položaj oziroma stik je torej, tako Grafenauer, možno videti kot točko, kjer naj bi se razdvojeno (dia-bolično) stanje bitja prelevilo v simbolično, se pravi celovito bivanje (165). Toda obstaja tudi druga možnost, ki v tem stiku sicer lahko zazna učinek oksimorona (»in iz noči se vsiplje noč kot sneg«), a hkrati ugotavlja, da gre dejansko za aporijo, saj pesem kaže na logično, ne pa tudi na reprezentacijsko inkompatibilnost; toda to ji ne prepreči, da na reprezentacijsko razsežnost besedila ne bi vrgla sence dvoma.

V tem primeru stičnost, ki evocira brezčasnost večnega vračanja oziroma neprimernost času, ne pomeni, da se pesem odreka volji do moči. Prav nasprotno, šele ta volja, dojeta v smislu večnega vračanja različnega, proizvede to neprimernost času in bralstvu omogoči vstop v pesem na način pesmi-kot-okolja. Takšno besedilo se vzpostavlja kot koreodramski prostor, proizvaja nove vrednote, ki lahko v senci ničejanskega »nezgodovinskega oblaka«¹⁰ v marsikaterem primeru aludirajo na morda še neslutene, torej času neprimerne okoliščine. Toda teh – in tega ni moč dovolj poudariti – nikakor ne kaže istovetiti z ideologijami danes obstoječih nacionalnih demokracij, ki so vse reprezentativne, se

¹⁰ Nezgodovinski oblak (fr. *nuée non historique*) je pojem, ki ga je Deleuze oblikoval na podlagi Nietzschejevega razumevanja zgodovine. Ob tem poudarja, da pojem ne označuje nasprotja med večnim in zgodovinskim niti med kontemplacijo in akcijo, pač pa pomeni predvsem način, kako nekaj nastaja oziroma postaja. Nič, kar je pomembno, po njegovem ni osvobojeno nezgodovinskega oblaka (*Pourparlers* 229).

pravi utemeljene na izboru večine. Prav to je razlog, da je tudi nekatere Župančičeve izrazito simbolistične pesmi («Večerna», «Večerna impresija», «Zaprta park», «Zlata jutra») možno brati na način pesmi-kot-okolja. Nič manj pa tudi nekatere druge, denimo tiste, kjer se nacionalna tematika prepleta s socialno in osebno («Duma», «Z vlakom», «Goriškim izgnancem», «Tuji mož», «Gledam»). V vseh teh pesmih je razberljiva naravnost, ki jo je literarna zgodovina tako pri Župančiču kot pri Whitmanu prepoznavala kot voljo do moči in nas s tem postavila na razpotje: če se namreč odločimo za smer, znotraj katere je volja do moči dojeta v skladu z nihilistično tradicijo, to je v smislu volje po moči in volje do nič, se pravi negativno, potem teh Župančičevih pesmi, a prav tako tudi večine Whitmanovih, ne moremo brati na način pesmi-kot-okolja. Kakor hitro pa se obrnemo v smer, kjer je volja do moči pojmovana izrazito afirmativno, in sledimo Deleuzovi povezavi tega koncepta z večnim vračanjem mnogoterega ter tako opremljeni vstopamo v pesmi, opazimo, da se ne Whitmanova ne Župančičeva poezija ne utemeljuje v pojmovnih dualizmih pozne romantike, pač pa v moderni, tedaj še »mladi« nacionalni in demokratični miselnosti, ki se je začela oblikovati sredi devetnajstega stoletja. In opaziti je, da je pri obeh pesnikih zlahka razberljiva demokratična naravnost v smislu tovarištva,¹¹ povsem neposredno ubesedenega na primer v Whitmanovi pesmi »Zate, O Demokracija« («Zasadil bom tovarištvo nagosto kot drevesa vzdolž rek / ameriških, vzdolž velikih jezer in po širnih prerijah, / združil bom mesta v medsebojen objem ...») (*Travne* 74) ali v že omenjeni »Pesmi o sebi«: »Menim, da ena travna bilka ne pomeni nič manj kot dnevni obrat zvezd, / in da je mravlja enako popolna pa zrno peska in palčkovo jajce, / in krastača je največji mojster, / in vitica črnega ribeza bi bila nebeškimi salonom v okras.« (*Travne* 13) Odkrivamo pa jo tudi pri Župančiču, in to ne samo v »Dumi« in nekaterih že omenjenih pesmih, temveč tudi drugje, na primer v manj znani pesmi »Gledam«: »Gledam brezno, smreko in hrast, tiho zamišljene v svojo rast, večno zamaknjene v néba dih – / kakor da sam sem eden od njih ... // Gledam, dekle, ženó, možá, [...] Nem mimo njih gre néba dih – kakor da sam sem eden od njih ...« (*ZD III* 63)

Teza o demokratični naravnosti obeh pesnikov utegne mimogrede pripeljati naravnost v zagato navideznega protislovja, kakor hitro se vprašamo: Kako je možno, da se neka poezija odvrta od

¹¹ »Tovarištvo je,« zapiše Deleuze, »takšna spremenljivost, ki implicira srečanje z Zunaj, pomikanje duš na prostem, po 'veliki cesti'.« (*Kritika* 93) Nekaj zelo podobnega lahko trdimo za Župančiča.

pesniške reprezentacije in odpira afektu, obenem pa evocira tovariška, demokratična razmerja do ljudi, sveta in vsega, kar je? Zato se velja zamisliti nad tem, kar pravita Lawrence in Deleuze, ki v nasprotju z delom ameriške uradne literarne vede – ta je namreč Whitmana proglasila za enega najmočnejših ideoloških glasov ameriške demokracije – v Whitmanovi poeziji vidita realizacijo sicer demokratične, a hkrati ekstremne zavesti in nekega povsem novega glasu, celo radikalnejšega od tistega, ki ga odkrivamo v evropskih modernizmih z začetka dvajsetega stoletja (Lawrence 155). To je zanimiva, a obenem smela trditev, ki bi ji bilo mogoče pritrčiti ali ugovarjati le na podlagi temeljite raziskave. Gotovo pa je, da je pri Whitmanu tematizirana demokratična, na pojmu tovarštva utemeljena želja, da bi bralstvo pritegnil v dejaven odnos z nastajajočo pesniško knjigo. Značilen primer so verzi iz pesmi »Salut au monde«, denimo: »Kaj slišiš, Walt Whitman? / slišim delavca peti in slišim kmetico, / slišim glasove otrok in živali v daljavi, ko se dan budi, [...] slišim napev starih pesmi iz ust italijanskega čolnarja, / slišim, kako v Siriji srhljivi roji kobilic pustošijo žitna polja in travnike.« (*Travne* 34) Tu gre za svojevrstno ubeseditev »svetovnega tovarštva«, kakor je opazil že Cooper (17) in ob tem upravičeno opozoril na odlomek iz »Dume« (»Slišal sem pesem in čul sem glas pojoč ...«) in na vrsto drugih Župančičevih pesmi (»Z vlakom«, »Moje barke«, »Goriškim beguncem«). V njih opaza uresničenje tematskega modernizma slovenske moderne (18), modernizma, ki se izrisuje na ozadju nacionalnega in socialnega vprašanja. Ta teza se zdi utemeljena, a je treba dodati, da je radikalen glas teh pesmi mogoče zaznati samo, če jih dojemamo afektivno, to je na način pesmi-kot-okolja, utemeljeni na konceptualni metafori valovanja, odprti v vse smeri, v nenehnem gibanju in komentiranju vsega obstoječega. Ob tem je zopet mogoče potegniti očitno vzporednico z Whitmanom in hkrati zaznati tudi pomembno razliko v odnosu obeh pesnikov do naravnega okolja. Pri Župančiču bi zaman iskali vpliv evropske tradicije opisne poezije narave na način, kot je zaznaven pri Whitmanu. Poleg tega je treba upoštevati, da se je v drugi polovici devetnajstega stoletja v ZDA, povsem drugače kot v Evropi, sem in tja že pojavilo vprašanje o odnosu do narave – najbolj znan literaren primer je Thoreaujev *Walden* – o človekovem škodljivem vplivu na okolje, problemu ohranjanja divjine in stališčih, ki bi jih bilo treba zavzeti. Na Slovenskem in v tedanjem okolju Srednje Evrope, kjer se je pretežno gibal Župančič, je naravno okolje s svojimi bitnostmi še zmeraj imelo status nečesa, kar obstaja predvsem zavoljo človeka in je njemu na voljo.

Skleniti je mogoče, da pri Župančiču – vsaj kar zadeva del njegovega opusa – opazujemo sorodne postopke, naravnosti in učinke kot v *Travnih bilkah*, čeprav njegov verz v večini primerov ni tako dolg kot Whitmanov, a vseeno značilno valujoč. Poleg tega, kot že omenjeno na začetku, zbuja občutek večje nadzorovanosti in osredinjenosti, zato tudi demokratična razsežnost razmerja do sveta v Župančičevih environment-poems ni tako vseobsežna in izrazita kot pri Whitmanu. Toda tisto, kar ju najtesneje povezuje in upravičuje primerjalno branje, sta konceptualna metafora valovanja in koncept časa neprimerno, ki sta tesno odvisna od razumevanja ničejanske volje do moči in ideje večnega vračanja. Če namreč to voljo interpretiramo v skladu z nihilistično tradicijo, utemeljujočo se v postromantični subjektiviteti in njenih dualizmih, potem tako Župančičevih kot tudi Whitmanovih besedil ne moremo brati na način pesmi-kot-okolja. Kakor hitro pa jo dojamemo v njenem izvirnem pomenu, tako kot si jo je zamislil Nietzsche in pozneje interpretiral Deleuze, v obe poeziji, ne le Whitmanovo, vstopamo kakor v svoj življenjski prostor, na način pesmi-kot-okolja. Se pravi, da ne le Whitmanovega, ampak tudi Župančičevega pesniškega opusa, kljub njegovi tipološki raznolikosti, ni smiselno deliti na izrazito ideološko obarvane ali angažirane pesmi in na tiste, ki sodijo v »čisto liriko«.

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Environment-poem in the Poetry of Walt Whitman and Oton Župančič

Keywords: Slovenian poetry / American poetry / Župančič, Oton / Whitman, Walt / comparative studies / poetry of nature / environment-poem

The relationship between Whitman's and Župančič's poetry is more complex than it might appear at first sight. Thus, in addition to directly demonstrable influence, the article focuses on affinities that are not necessarily the result of direct influence. Of particular interest are the differences and similarities in the authors' attitudes, revealed by a comparative reception of both oeuvres in the light of concepts such as *environment-poem*, introduced by the literary theorist Angus Fletcher in relation to Whitman's poetry, and the *untimely*, as conceived by Gilles Deleuze on the basis of Nietzsche's notions of the will to power and eternal return. The article observes the manifestations of these concepts and their relations with the conceptual metaphor of wave motion which further links the two poets and supports their comparative reading. This reading proceeds from the premise that every original creative act involves an element that no interpretation can exhaust. This is an element common to each modernity, but at the same time it can be excluded from and turned against this modernity in the hope of a time to come; it is what makes the artwork a unique experiment. The parallel reading of the two poets in light of the concept of *environment-poem* leads to the conclusion that neither Whitman's

nor Župančič's oeuvre, despite the latter's diversity, can be reasonably divided into distinct categories of ideologically marked or engaged poems, and those belonging to a "pure lyricism."

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Waterlings Among Us: Poetry, Intractability, and the Possibilities of Democratic Politics

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*When the Slovenian poet Veno Taufer endeavors in his ekphrastic book of poetry *Vodenjaki* (1986; *Waterlings*, 2000) to explore the work of Neolithic sculptors along the Danube River in Lepenski Vir, he excavates and animates for his readership the crucial figure of the Waterling. Carved artfully from stone some 9,000 years ago, these statues, termed “Waterlings” by Taufer, represent hybrid humanoid figures. This hybridity is fundamentally important to the statues because it imbues them with their aesthetic vitality. That is, their affective energy as made material objects derives from the tension between the distinct figurative forms combining to comprise each statue. More deeply, that carefully crafted hybridity also signals the makers’ understanding of the importance of art to mind. These physical renderings of hybridity inspire metaphysical reflection on it. They compel the audience to consider the limits of form(s) and the power of artifice, with each statue encouraging its viewer to reckon how she, too, is a hybrid creature in and of a hybrid world. In other words, the Waterling becomes a metonym for a phenomenology, which this article explores.*

Keywords: Slovenian poetry / Taufer, Veno / hybridity / immanence / phenomenology

When the Slovenian poet Veno Taufer endeavors in his ekphrastic book of poetry *Vodenjaki* (1986; *Waterlings*, 2000) to explore the work of Neolithic sculptors along the Danube River in Lepenski Vir, he excavates and animates for his readership the crucial figure of the Waterling. Carved artfully from stone some 9,000 years ago,¹ these statues, termed “Waterlings” by Taufer, represent hybrid humanoid figures. More precisely, they appear to most people, including the editor of *Waterlings*, to be half-human and half-fish (ix), and that seems to be an accurate enough description in most instances, especially as these

¹ The editor of *Waterlings* cites these sculptures as 8,000 years old, but archaeologists now suggest the site to date to 9,000 BCE.

figures were discovered in the ruins of a riparian settlement. However, they also strike me at times as more of an admixture of humanoid and insectile features, reminding me, for example, of the Ancient Egyptians' scarab-people venerating Ra and the transformative power of the sun. It seems equally plausible, too, that these Waterlings might comprise a more fantastical fusion: of humanoid features with those of mythical creatures lost in time with the erosion of the culture of their creation. Regardless, or perhaps as such observations attest, what interests me most in the Waterlings is their formal hybridity.

This hybridity is fundamentally important to the statues because it imbues them with their aesthetic vitality. That is, their affective energy as made material objects derives from the tension between the distinct figurative forms combining to comprise each statue. More deeply, that carefully crafted hybridity also signals the makers' understanding of the importance of art to mind. These physical renderings of hybridity inspire metaphysical reflection on it. They compel the audience to consider the limits of form(s) and the power of artifice, with each statue encouraging its viewer to reckon how she, too, is a hybrid creature in and of a hybrid world. In other words, the Waterling becomes a metonym for a phenomenology. Each of these stone statues in all of its difference suggests how individuated creatures come into presence paradoxically through hybridity, and how existence writ large across the universe pivots upon this phenomenology of permanent transformation. Such is the power of the trope of the Waterling. He figuratively signals this struggle both to live and to witness the continuous transformation of forms. As such he reveals hybridity to be constitutive. It *comprises* him. He exists *between* forms.

To theorize this more fully, we might situate the figure of the Waterling within philosophical discourses on immanence and being. I am thinking here of the Waterling in relation to trajectories of phenomenological thought including Aristotle, Immanuel Kant, Edmund Husserl, Martin Heidegger, and others. For example, along those lines, we might think the Waterling through the "transcendental empiricism" of the phenomenology of the French philosopher Gilles Deleuze, who explores "something wild and powerful" in immanence, involving "the passage from one [sensation or form of presence] to the other as *becoming*" (25, emphasis added). In our case, that "becoming" is the wild and powerful emergence of the Waterling through and as hybridity. Accordingly, he is rendered figuratively in the statuary via the tension between forms. He is a figurative allusion to becoming, with his hybridity reifying the passage from one form to another.

Of further note, these statues are ovoid in shape, with the top third comprising the humanoid head of the creature, and the bottom two-thirds being the more piscine body. Thusly the creature becomes, with his human head and face seemingly emerging from his more animal trunk. As aforementioned, all of this is inscribed in the overall ovoid shape of the statue as a whole, lending it an egg-like form that accentuates the sense of the hybrid figure as radiating emergence, birth, and life as transformation. And a similar formal tension drives the poetry in *Waterlings*, wherein literary evocations of worlds of hybridity and becoming operate on multiple levels and in myriad figurations. These range from the formal hybridity intrinsic to the ekphrastic conceit of this book *in toto*, to its serialized meditations on the becoming of the Waterling's consciousness through hybridity as accreted in individual lyrical poems, which themselves can be read independently or in innumerable intertextual combinations and configurations, including in their given, enumerated order.

As in the statuary, the poetry² of the Waterling renders becoming without entrapping or enclosing immanence. The Waterling is always already between forms. Taufer brings him to presence via the paradoxical phenomenology of permanent transformation and hybridity. To build again upon Deleuze's work, we could argue, then, that the poetics of the Waterling "goes beyond the aporias of the subject and the object" (27), explicating instead how "[a]bsolute immanence is in itself: it is not in something, *to* something; it does not depend on an object or belong to a subject" (26). Rather, the becoming of the Waterling demonstrates how "substance and modes are *in* immanence" (26, emphasis added). The Waterling is a spontaneous reification of it, and what he communicates is the irruptive force and irrepressible mobility of this transformative energy.

More specifically, each statue signals becoming. This emerges from its portrayal of being in transition between forms, which are in constant motion and fusion. A good example of this comes in the poem "6," which follows in its entirety.

the water has borne away
my mother and my father

² Whenever examined through close reading, the poetry under consideration in this article is henceforth the English-language translation by Milne Holton and Veno Taufer of Taufer's original poetry. At this point in time, Michelson can only dream of having enough Slovenian to read and analyze the original poetry. He also wishes to apologize to the Slovenian readership, including Taufer, for his ignorance of the language.

we have left our children
drifting downstream

we have flooded our love
with water

the sky drinks up
all our fires

water turns the pages
of our books

all our hopes
are washed away

we await the flood.
come, water,
flow up to our throats
(95)

Here we might coin a clarifying analogy from the poem: Waterlings are in water as substance is in immanence. Moreover, that incarnation of immanence hinges upon its transience. Presence is constituted of impermanence. In this poem, the Waterling's parents have returned from individuated life to immanence, his children have been swept off by it, and he himself is left longing eschatologically to be inundated to dissolution by it. Such is his ontological anguish in being. Such is the ardor of becoming.

Moreover, the emotional timbre matches its ekphrastic referent. That is, the tone of this apostrophic poem parallels the tone of the statuary, where the humanoid faces tend to appear strained and pained while looking skyward in beseeching, terrified silence, their mouths carved as gaping frowns and their eyes wide with dread. Theirs is the anguished astonishment at all that they feel and witness, which is the agonizing phenomenology of constant transformation. They are both witnesses and *loci* of continuous becoming. Hence the importance of the metaphor of water in the poem. In the simplest terms, that water evokes connotations of flow, connection, and change. It is time and transformation, and it conducts life in the poem. Life exists in it. In more philosophical terms, we could understand the water as metaphorizing "life as the immanence of immanence ... no longer dependent on a Being or submitted to an Act ... [but] an absolute immediate consciousness whose very activity no longer refers to a being but is

ceaselessly posed in a life” (27). It is the kinetic energy of the Waterling. It is the conduit of his becoming.

Importantly, too, we cannot help but note the natural register of this metaphor of water as the signifier of the immanence of being. It thusly emphasizes the organic materiality of presence. This links the poem, and the poetry in *Waterlings* in general, to a longstanding genealogy of masterful poetry voicing similar existential epiphanies across millennia through natural metaphors for becoming. For example, Homer writes in *The Iliad*:

As is the generation of leaves, so is that of humanity.
The wind scatters the leaves on the ground, but the live timber
burgeons with leaves again in the season of spring returning.
So one generation of men will grow while another
dies.
(6.146–150)

Similarly, the nineteenth-century US poet Walt Whitman writes in an ecological register in “Song of Myself,” which is a kind of secular *Genesis or lay creation story, or meditation on (re)emergence and mortality*, that “I lean and loafe at my ease observing a spear of summer grass. // My tongue, every atom of my blood, form’d from this soil, this air” (5–6). And so, too, does the Waterling lean and loafe, noting that “through our mouths / grass pushes its tongues” (11).

This pointed emphasis on the tongue also reminds us that the Waterling, in both statuary and poetry, emerges from the material conditions of its articulation. As statue he has emerged from raw stone, signaling not only the material conditions of his emergence, with rock becoming art via the artist’s hand, but also the metaphoricality of form, with the Waterling being a hybrid creature. Thus the final statue, which itself transforms, whether weathered by time or handling, carries aspects of its maker, too. It conveys his visions of transformative performance, whether in transforming rock into art, or in rendering a humanoid figuration of embodied hybridity. Consequently, we might note how each statue represents a combination of artifice, material, and mind; it blends the maker’s craft with his stone and vision. Hence the final, hybrid figure comprises a fusion of not only taxonomical traits of humans and fish, but also subjective aspects of the artist in time, who comes to exist in and through the stone, too, and in relation to those twining and transforming special taxonomies, which he simultaneously reinscribes and challenges, inhering to and enduring with and through his art.

Through a similar logic the Waterling can symbolize a poetics. Like the sculptor, the poet is a maker who invokes the tropes of his artistic genre to reckon and influence our understanding of the continuously transforming world through his medium and mind. And like the Waterling, the poet gestures paradoxically towards muteness in so far as he struggles to speak because he aspires to articulate that which exceeds or escapes him. This is in fact Taufer's stated aim with *Waterlings*. As he explains in the introduction to the book, upon "[s]eeing these creatures [on exhibit in Ljubljana], I wanted to give their mute cry a voice" (ix). In other words, his poetic project is fundamentally impossible. He aims to animate ancient statuary from a vanished cultural context. How is Taufer to know the cause of the Waterling's cry, and how to give voice to it in all of his linguistic, cultural, and temporal distance from the statues' makers? Moreover, the Waterling statues are pointedly mute. By what paradoxical mode is a poet to evoke a language of silence? Such is Taufer's challenge as a poet, and it grounds the poetics of *Waterlings* in the impossible drive to enunciate silent and silenced speech.

In other words, Taufer's poetics is a striving to give voice to muteness. His book is a serialized disquisition on how to articulate the silent gape, and to testify not as but in place of the witness. He is between forms. His is reaching for a mode of representing the phenomenology of being of and in immanence. Furthermore, as evident in the exquisite poetry throughout the book, Taufer is well aware of the impossibility of his undertaking, and yet he persists in it, pushing himself beyond the philosophically plausible. In other words, this is an argument for the importance of poetry, particularly in so far as it can exceed philosophy. And this excess is born of hybridity. In short, it is not the analytical lucidity but the awestruck gaping at the instability of any analytic. It is in the human but not of his humanity.

Interestingly, here an antihuman insight into poetry from the contemporary English literary scholar Peter Dayan might help to clarify our newly configured understanding of this poetics of the Waterling. Dayan writes that "[p]oetry ... only comes into existence when humans forget to think in an exclusively human way, when they allow their voices and their ears also to be animal, to listen to the animal, to that which is not distinctively human; in a word, to forget to be philosophical" (2). And the poetry of the Waterling in all of his hybridity encourages precisely this. It exhorts us to exist beyond the philosophical via a reconnection with variegated animality. We are more than isolate, individuated humans, the poem tells us; we are hybrid creatures that transcend strict zoological taxonomization. We thereby can no longer abide

anthropocentric essentialisms, be they physical, temporal, cultural, or otherwise. And this is the political promise of the Waterling. He signals an opening to difference and change, which becomes a pathway to a fuller democracy to come, one born of change through commingling. As such the Waterling paradoxically embodies a plural singularity, or each is a singular plurality. Each statue materializes the existential vitality of the phenomenological, interpellating force of the intertwined, the community of communities. And this dilates time. The Waterling is forever becoming from, through, and in the immanence of being.

Moreover, he is mobile, both as trope and object. That is, paradoxically, this statue lost to time has resurged and is on the move. He is in flight in continuous transformation. He was not only rescued by archaeologists from his interment in Lepenski Vir, but also freed from stone by his sculptor, and by Taufer in lyrical poetry. Furthermore, thanks to Milne Holton's English-language translations, Anglophone readers can now discern the Waterling in verse transculturally, transhistorically, and translingually. And once apprehended through Taufer's poetry, that trope of the Waterling is indelible in the reader's mind, influencing her future readings in deeply meaningful ways.

For example, after reading Taufer we might recognize the Waterling in the poetry of Claudia Rankine. Of note, Rankine herself embodies a transformative poetics of mobilized hybridity. Born in Jamaica in 1963, she was educated in the United States, where she currently teaches poetry as a university professor, and she writes innovatively about the artifice of race. With exquisite control and creativity, she pays particular attention to the tensions between individuated and collective forms of being, tracing the fault lines between the ontological and the sociopolitical, which is to say their mutually constitutive imbrication. Her poetry is nothing if not an intensively anti-essentialist exploration of the violences conspiring to create and perpetuate the artifice of race. Here, then we might see a link to the poetics of the Waterling. She undoes specious essentialisms about race and gender, preferring instead to reposition the alien, the other, the abjected as consubstantial of presence, and not as a simple binary. Rather, she is unmasking plurality via a meditation on the multifocal plurality of immanence in being. And it is supra-philosophical, to recuperate Dayan's schematic.

Furthermore, via her poetic enunciations of hybridity (of thought, of language, of poetic form, of the self), she promulgates a radical politics of belonging and inclusivity. That politics demands a reformulated ontological and sociopolitical landscape privileging continuous motion, integration, and transformation, maintaining difference not

to excoriate, oppress, and exploit it, but rather to acknowledge and celebrate the complexity and beauty of emergence, however agonistic. In this manner she is poetically forging or sculpting new possibilities for being, both in one's self and in common with others. Such is the radical democratic possibility of her verse, and a good example of it can be teased from the following excerpt from her book *Citizen: An American Lyric*.

I they he she we you turn
only to discover
the encounter

to be alien to this place.

Wait.

The patience is in the living. Time opens out to you.

The opening, between you and you, occupied,
zoned for an encounter,

given the histories of you and you—

And always, who is this you?

The start of you, each day,
a presence already—

Hey you—

Slipping down burying the you buried within. You are
everywhere and you are nowhere in the day.
(140–141)

With its pronoun play, that first line alone launches a complex remembrance of how we come to be. And just as grounds are given to the reader, they are taken away. Rankine destabilizes precisely by meting out the artifice of poetry: she lays down line after line to form a structure that in all of its clarity and structure undoes any sort of easy apprehension of being. Rather, “you” are guided to new forms of mobility and exposure, to an opening outward to possibility. “You” are conducted by the diaphanous infrastructure of the poem toward a

multidirectional examination of temporality itself, which is the conduit of immanence. “You” slip both forward and backward along a temporal spectrum, given histories and encouraged to interrogate such temporal presuppositions as the “always” and the “start” of you, realizing through the poem the plurality of that pronominal singularity. You are a hybrid amalgamation of *yous*. “You” emerge from immanence “not in something, *to* something; [you] does not depend on an object or belong to a subject.”

With a similar focus, Taufer, too, reflects on this hybridity of being by exploring the precarity of an individuated human life. However, his qualifiers for marking the hybridity of becoming are distinct to Rankine’s. Where she unveils the violence of racialized taxonomies of being as a means of exposing the abridgement of subjectivity by subjectivation, Taufer examines the ephemerality of presence through an *ars poetica* on the impossibility of speech:

rising
 coming
 gaping
 or singing
 no voice no voice
 but all around us
 breathing
 breathing us in
 catching us overtaking us
 it breathes
 blazing cold
 smoke of the wind
 the tongue’s vapor
 (17)

Here the trope of repetition is especially important. It is instantiated not only in the repeated participles, but also the anaphora, as well as the variations, often pivoting on the collective personal pronoun “us.” In effect, all of this repetition importantly structures a narrative logic in this wisp of a lyrical poem, and it enacts that experience affectively for the reader. That is, through the participles, the poem conjures and conducts not only actions, but also a poetic rhythm that moves its reader through an existential meditation in protracted time. This is largely controlled by the trochaic monometer of the first three lines, which initiate a pattern of engaging the reader, of convoking his presence, from the first phoneme of each line. In other words, via its trochaic

form, each of those initial three lines begins with a stressed syllable, and with the monometer of each of those lines, the poem establishes its swift pace. Hence these crafty lines immediately invoke presence—the line’s, the speaker’s, the reader’s—only to dissolve it quickly, and this recurs across the quick, unpunctuated poem as the reader moves through it before returning to the silence of white space. This is the phenomenological metaphor of the poetic form. It is its “meter-making argument” (263), to develop an idea from the nineteenth-century transcendentalist US poet Ralph Waldo Emerson. But unlike Emerson’s philosophy, this poem is not transcendental, and here again repetition plays a crucial role.

More specifically, the only two lines of the poem containing multiple phrases are the fifth and ninth lines, which are “no voice no voice” and “catching us overtaking us,” respectively. To build upon Deleuze’s aforementioned logic, there is “no voice” because immanence is “a pure stream of a-subjective consciousness” (25); presence is in immanence, not of it. And immanence is always already “catching us overtaking us” because it “offers the immensity of an empty time where one sees the event yet to come and already happened, in the absolute of an immediate consciousness” (29). In poetic terms, it is the plane of white space in which the letters become, announcing participial eruptions of being that each trail away, dissolving to a-subjective silence. Such is the ontology of the grammar of the poem, and it interweaves with its meter-making argument. Both underscore the narrative of a voiceless voice that is “smoke of the wind” and “the tongue’s vapor.” The grammar, metrics, and narrative combine to audibilize the voiceless voice. They combine to structure the mouth of the immanence that breathes us in, catches us, and overtakes us all, our eyes wide as the grass pushes up through our gaping mouths, singing our transformation.

Of further note, that smoke and vapor of the poem symbolize material transformation, too. They conduct the song of being as sung by the Waterling statues and by Taufer’s ekphrastic project of transforming them into poetry. In both cases, the art embodies the hybridity it strives to reckon. In this manner, the poetry and the statuary alike undo the false binary of Cartesian dualism, consequently impugning its transcendental implications. In other words, the Waterling’s poetics of immanence configures via hybridity a paradoxical presence of form without form. The Waterling, whether in stone or poem, is the aforementioned in-between. He is the forever becoming. He is the generatively liminal, and he traces the “pre-reflexive impersonal consciousness” (25) of a Deleuzian transcendental empiricism. Or as Taufer writes:

where am i everywhere
 where am i a fiend
 where am i a god
 where am i a bird
 where am i a mouse
 where am i a fish
 where am i a stick
 where am i a hill
 where a flower-ball
 i am over under
 i am a hole
 i am here
 i am there
 i am over here
 and over there
 dancing everywhere
 where am i, song
 (57)

Following the logic of the poem, we are here and there, god and fish; we are song and dancing, and the singing dance is everywhere. We erupt in poetry just as we erupt in statuary, and this is the intractability of the creative force of the Waterling, who exists in the in-between. He is inextricable from the human, just as he is inextricable from the fish. He also is neither. He is over here and over there. His life is the immanence of immanence.

Thankfully, too, all of this can come to us through poetry. It is not philosophy but art that makes it present and appreciable, meaning we are reading Deleuze beyond Deleuze here. For example, we are reading the Waterling's phenomenology beyond philosophy in the famous rhetorical question from the Irish Nobel laureate William Butler Yeats, who asks, "O body swayed to music, O brightening glance, / How can we know the dancer from the dance?" (217). In US letters, we can now read the Waterling at play in the famous lines of the canonical Chicana feminist poet Gloria Anzaldúa on life along the US-Mexico border, where she writes "To survive the Borderlands / you must live *sin fronteras*³ / be a crossroads" (195); we can read the Waterling in Aracelis Grimay's tender, existential intimation of our concomitant interdependence and ephemerality in life on Earth such that "This is the only kingdom. / The kingdom of touching; / the touches of the disappearing, things" (17); and we can read the Waterling in Gwendolyn Brooks's depic-

³ The words "sin fronteras" are in Spanish, and they mean "without borders."

tion of the potential of collaborative work to create unexpected beauty as when “monstrous hand on monstrous hand, construct, strangely, a monstrous pearl or grace” (448), to offer but a few brief examples. And we are of course also always already reading Deleuze beyond Deleuze in *Waterlings*, from which this mobile trope first emerges to affect us all forever after thanks to Taufer’s artful conjuring.

That is, through his majestic collection, we have realized a way to reckon how we read and live, and each in ourselves and in common with others in sentience. Perhaps more importantly still, such poetry offers a paradoxical understanding that understanding exceeds us; it is supra-philosophical. We can know by feeling, but such feeling leaves us awestruck, with our mouths gaping, voiceless and astonished. We are *Waterlings*. We think through affect worlds, which are implicitly more powerful than rationality. And they are the realm of the poet. They are accordingly the realm of her many, interwoven readers, too, who together combine and recombine into new configurations of being in common, thereby forever practicing a democracy-to-come whose freedoms inhere to its striving impossibly towards immanence. Such is the magnitude of Taufer’s work.

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Vodenjaki med nami: poezija, neobvladljivost in možnosti demokratične politike

Ključne besede: slovenska poezija / Taufer, Veno / hibridnost / imanenca / fenomenologija

Ko slovenski pesnik Veno Taufer v svoji ekfrastični pesniški zbirki *Vodenjaki* (1986; *Waterlings*, 2000) raziskuje dela neolitskih kiparjev v Lepenskem Viru ob reki Donavi, za svoje bralstvo izkoplje in animira ključno figuro Vodenjaka. Ti umetniško izklesani kipi, ki jih je Taufer poimenoval »Vodenjaki«, predstavljajo hibridne humanoidne figure. Hibridnost je za kipe bistvena, saj jih prežame z estetsko vitalnostjo. To pomeni, da afektivna energija kipov kot ustvarjenih materialnih predmetov izhaja iz napetosti med različnimi figurativnimi oblikami, ki sestavljajo vsak kip. Še več, skrbno izdelana hibridnost prav tako nakazuje ustvarjalčevo razumevanje pomena umetnosti za um. Te fizične upodobitve hibridnosti navdihujejo metafizično razmišljanje o njej. Občinstvo prisilijo, naj razmisli o mejah oblik(e) in moči umetnosti, saj vsak kip spodbudi svojo gledalko, naj premisli, kako je tudi ona hibridno bitje v hibridnem svetu. Z drugimi besedami, Vodenjak postane metonimija za fenomenologijo, ki jo raziskuje ta članek.

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Elizabeth Bishop and the Villanelle: One Art, an Ocean, and Two Languages

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The genesis of this study lies in Elizabeth Bishop's famous poem, "One Art." A villanelle, it stands out luminously against the background of contemporary poetics, the lingering legacy of modernist free verse and the many branches of experimental post-modernist poetry in the United States. It stands apart, with Theodore Roethke among the few precursors, claiming a traditional fixed poetic form—the 6-stanza villanelle—as a valid medium for expressing the late-twentieth-century concerns of a scholarly, peripatetic, lesbian poet. Formally, it is an anachronistic appropriation; aesthetically, it is a triumph. The questions triggered by Bishop's poem and explored by this paper are three-fold: first, the adequacy of existing terminology for defining the refrain, where we propose the need for a new term: polysemic repetend. Our second question addresses the perceived global influence of "One Art." We then turn to the presence of the villanelle in Slovenian poetics and consider how Bishop has been translated, since we assume that the formal complexity of the metrical and rhyme arrangement will present a challenge for the translator (Veno Taufer). The study thus works towards a modest appreciation of parallel New Formalist aesthetics between American and Slovenian poetry.

Keywords: American poetry / Bishop, Elizabeth / villanelle / refrain / polysemic repetend / Slovenian translations / Taufer, Veno

To write a villanelle in contemporary America is to scratch the itch for formalism...¹

Introduction and aims

Bishop's poem, a villanelle, is called "One Art," but the artistry involved is, of course, neither single nor simple—though undoubtedly "singular" in the other sense of the word. The poem contradicts, in a

¹ Amanda Lowry French, *Refrain Again: The Return of the Villanelle*, 2004

way, the claim of its title, for it is manifestly not born of a single art, nor can it be critically analyzed without calling on several arts simultaneously: from music² to poetics, from Italian to French, English and Slovenian, and from prosody to translation theory. Moreover, the word “art” in the title shimmers with polysemic potential. In the OED, the entry for *art* lists fourteen senses for this substantive, some of which themselves contain sub-senses. Joining the esthetic to the pragmatic, “art” in its many senses destabilizes, even contradicts, the unified certainty of the numeral “one” that precedes it. One skill, perhaps, but just one art—impossible.

Like many outstanding poetic artifacts, Bishop’s “One Art” claims its interpretive space so completely that it is tempting to read it in isolation from its poetic context. Interpretations of this poem have tended to read it back into Bishop’s personal life (Spivack, Shapiro) and to see its meditation on the varied forms of loss as reflecting Bishop’s geographical and interpersonal movement away from the loved anchor—whether place or person. The aim is to fill in the opposite page: to read this poem back into its formal context, looking back to the poetic form/formula as exploited by previous writers, and then forward to check the poem’s potential echoes, even in Slovenian translation.

“One Art” has become known as one of the “top” American poems,³ one of the most frequently read, consulted and downloaded in our easy-access digital age (for the view from Britain, see Parini). It would not be hyperbole to claim that for the casual online reader, “One Art” represents American Poetry, right up there along with “Song of Myself” and “Stopping by Woods on a Snowy Evening.” It has become one of the few pieces of artistry that both the lay and academic reader can enjoy and admire. Brett Candlish Millier singles it out within its genre, calling the poem “the best modern example of a villanelle” (Millier 122), while David Shapiro and Kathleen Spivack both call it a masterpiece outright (Shapiro 77; Spivack 506). Herself a poet, Spivack praises it as

² The name “villanelle” originated in the word for a type of rural Italian music (French, *Refrain* 21; Kane 428), although no convincing argument has been advanced that the highly prescriptive poetic form shared that origin. Nevertheless, the repetitive, incantatory nature of the villanelle lends itself to musical treatment. See Leonard Cohen’s 2004 version of a tetrameter villanelle by his fellow Canadian, F. R. Scott, “Villanelle for Our Time.” When treated as lyrics, the repeated lines are less marked and resemble a traditional chorus by the end of Cohen’s performance.

³ See, for instance, Michael R. Burch’s *The Best American Poetry of All time; The Best Villanelles of All Time* and *The Top Ten Villanelles in the English Language*, available at site HiperTexts. The PoemHunter site also lists “One Art” in its top hits, with a user “rating” of 9.28.

“a poem so lovely that [it] is almost sacrilege to talk about it” (Spivack 506). Sacrilegiously, we will tackle the poem’s quality and potential trail of influence in the decades since. The issues addressed in this paper require the skills and languages of both authors and are three-fold:

- 1) Bishop’s achievement in her version of the villanelle—which necessitates an excursus into the question of genre and form, especially the definition of refrain.
- 2) Whether Bishop’s use of this unusual poetic form had an impact on American poetry written in the next two decades, or fostered a trend to the villanelle under the aegis of the New Formalism.
- 3) How “One Art” has been translated into Slovenian.

Individual achievement and genre innovation

Although Bishop once claimed that the poem “just came to her” as if in a dream (Millier 123), there still exist seventeen drafts of the poem (Millier 123; Spivack 506), which are housed in a collection at the Vassar College library (Spivack 506). Spivack, who knew Bishop personally at Harvard, is convinced that the surviving 17 drafts comprise only a partial record and that there were many more in the wastebasket.

This record gives ample evidence of the poet’s craft, of the “tremendous selectivity” that Millier identifies in the poem’s “minimal words” (Millier 127). Such meticulous craft, however, did not result in a poem that followed scrupulously the formal prescriptions of the villanelle. Setting aside for the minute that the villanelle is not genuinely medieval and lacks, as one scholar has proven at length, a truly “fixed” form (Kane), there is still something radically individual in Bishop’s stamp on the genre in “One Art.”

From the opening stanza of “One Art,” Bishop smoothly juggles her three great themes of loss,⁴ mastery and disaster:

The art of losing isn’t hard to master;
so many things seem filled with the intent
to be lost that their loss is no disaster.

By the final stanza, actual creative disaster has been narrowly averted, and mastery of loss and of the poetic medium has been snatched, seem-

⁴ Hirsch observes that the “compulsive return” of the villanelle is particularly suited to a poetry of loss (Hirsch 349).

ingly with an act of supreme authorial will, from the emotional and lexical chaos that threatens to overwhelm the geometry of the fixed form:

—Even losing you (the joking voice, a gesture
I love) I shan't have lied. It's evident
the art of losing's not too hard to master
though it may look like (*Write it!*) like disaster.
(Bishop, *Complete Poems*)

Neither the poem's colloquial tone nor its interpolated self-address or self-revision were new in Bishop's practice, since both characterize her poetic oeuvre (Millier 125–126). Even the villanelle form had been attempted before by Bishop, as early as 1949 or 1950 (French, *Refrain* 147, 171–72).⁵ Its rhetorical presentation as a kind of argument with oneself is predated by Dylan Thomas's "Do Not Go Gentle," which follows "the classic model of rational argument" according to French (French, *Refrain* 177, 182).

What, then, accounts for this poem's status? We will argue below that the complex answer begins with Bishop's evocation of common humanity, her fusion of the poetic and the human struggle, and the manifest wrestle with the demands of the fixed form. Bishop's poem constitutes in one sense an anti-villanelle, in its contest with the stubborn rhyme desert of the English language and the inflexibility of meter. Nonetheless, Bishop's voice here, however anguished, has not despaired or surrendered, which is the claim in the playfully titled villanelle "The Thing's Impossible" by Bruce Bennett. Post-modern negation allows Bennett to excuse the circularity of the repeated lines demanded by the form: "Don't write a villanelle to tell a tale. / The thing's impossible. You're bound to fail!" Conversely, Bishop persists, to wrest mastery from looming failure, in the process etching her emotional struggle in that technically flawed final line. The cry within the parentheses "(*Write it!*)" emerges through clenched teeth, to affirm for the reader that, though tragedy was near, no soap-opera disaster marks this experience and that the human will can after all exert control over a life course marked by loss and emotional chaos. The poem can, in short, be read as a "hurting song," a motif common to many country-music anthems.

While the popular readership may respond to this layer of meaning, there remains the fact of Bishop's formal generic deviation. In

⁵ Bishop was working on an earlier villanelle about an aviary in 1963 and 1964 (French, *Refrain* 172).

order to assess the poet's achievement in deforming and reshaping the once-obscure genre, we need to trace the history of the villanelle in the decades leading up to Bishop's adoption of the form.

The villanelle in the 1970s was still perceived as an artificial nineteenth-century form once exploited by the decadents such as Edmund Gosse and Ernest Dowson (French, "Edmund Gosse"; Alkalay-Gut 101) and largely neglected by modernists because of its perceived frivolity (Alkalay-Gut 101; Hirsch 349), effeminacy (French, "Edmund Gosse" 260) and decorative mysticism (Geckle 90). In the modernist novel *Portrait of the Artist as a Young Man* (1916), James Joyce gave his young hero Stephen Dedalus a villanelle to express his swooning adoration of a dream lady (Roos; Geckle) and its sordid consummation, but also to indicate that Stephen clung to outmoded language and forms and had far to go in his poetic craft. Joyce/Stephen's poem ("Are you not weary of ardent ways") is an example of youthful excess, filled with as much masturbatory subtext as earnest Mariolatry. Although it is among the most familiar examples of the villanelle form (and, along with its surrounding novel, widely translated into world languages—including Slovenian), it marks a dead end in the development of the form, a tribute to a mode that was even then vanishing before the onset of modernist free verse.

Certainly, the villanelle slumped in popularity during the period of high modernism (French, *Refrain* 147) but survived in isolated works by American poets such as William Empson, Weldon Kees and W. H. Auden, before a sudden mid-century invigoration involving individual masterpieces by Dylan Thomas and Ted Roethke.⁶ In our extensive research for this paper, an attempt was made to chart the occurrence of villanelles in an objective manner.⁷ Results certainly indicated that the 1930s and 1940s yielded few villanelles, while the 1980s saw a rise in their popularity and the 1990s an undeniable explosion of instances of published villanelles. Since the turn of the millennium, numbers have doubled, as poetry becomes digital and democratized in online forums. Nevertheless, these numbers cannot be taken as accurate indicators of absolute gains in popularity, since they say nothing about the ratio of villanelles to the incidence of other fixed poetic forms or to free verse, or to poetic activity in general. The rise in villanelle numbers could

⁶ See French (*Refrain*) and Kane for a survey of villanelle history, right back to the pseudo-medieval origins, through its artificial definitions in various poetic handbooks and adoption by the decadent poets, to its twentieth-century manifestation.

⁷ Research was carried out at the British Library Reading Room in Boston Spa, UK, making use of the British Library's extensive print and digital holdings.

plausibly indicate nothing more than the increase in journals that publish poetry, in online platforms for amateur poetry and in the teaching of the fixed form in creative writing courses.

More indicative are the anthologies of villanelles and of literary criticism on the topic of villanelles. Being less subject to the pressure of amateur online presence, such publications yield a less spectacular but more thoughtful outline of engagement with this poetic form over the decades. A chart of critical writing about villanelles reveals that the topic took off in the mid-1970s (Bishop's "One Art" appeared in 1976) and that critical interest increased after the turn of the century and has maintained that level since. Individual critical publications do stand out, such as Amanda French's 2004 thesis on villanelles, or Kane's rebuttal (2003) of the legendary pedigree of the villanelle.

Whatever the artificiality of the form's prescriptive definition, it entered the twentieth century as a fixed form, with two repeated lines and a definite, restricted rhyme scheme. Recent scholars have offered a useful "formula" (what Ellingsen calls an "algorithm") for understanding the "rules" of the six-stanza villanelle (Hirsch 349; Ellingsen 42; Jason 137). Moreover, in Slovenia, Boris A. Novak also lays out the pattern for a villanelle, in the extensive theoretical notes accompanying his poetry collection *Mojster nespečnosti* (58–59) as well as in several of his monographs of traditional set poetic forms, e.g., *Oblike duha* (514–517).⁸ Most villanelles of the late nineteenth century and twentieth century adhered to the pattern of two refrains that recurred identically (e.g. W. H. Auden, Weldon Kees and William Empson), thus reinforcing the case for a fixed poetic formula.

Nevertheless, the very existence of rules has been contested by critics and literary historians (see French *Refrain*; Kane 2003), while modern fans of the poetic form often endorse the formal prescriptiveness the villanelle offers, even while treating the rules more as guidelines.

The prime formal imperatives of the villanelle comprise tercets, end-rhyme with an ABA pattern and two "refrains" (the meter is variable, although iambic pentameter is common).⁹ We place the word "refrain" in quotation marks because it is immediately debatable whether the two repeated lines qualify as refrain in the standard poetic sense. Abrams's *Glossary of Poetic Terms*, for instance, defines refrain as

⁸ The New Formalism movement that has contributed to a revival of set poetic forms is, in the Slovenian context, referred to and contextualized by Novak Popov and Pavlič. Research into Slovenian poetics was partly completed by Denis Režonja, from the Department of English, Faculty of Arts, Maribor.

⁹ See Marilyn Taylor for an engaging summary of the villanelle imperatives.

follows: “A line, or part of a line, or a group of lines, which is repeated in the course of a poem, sometimes with slight changes, and usually at the end of each stanza” (306). The words “slight” and “usually” point to the problems in classifying Bishop’s repeated lines as refrains, especially the second refrain.

In the case of Bishop’s “One Art,” the treatment of the second refrain differs in exhibiting not slight, but *extreme* variation. At first glance, it seems that this villanelle has only a repeated rhyming word (*disaster*), rather than a refrain *per se*. However, this opens the question of what exactly IS the refrain, *per se*.

The terminology of repetition in the villanelle needs to be tackled from the perspective of both form and function. Critics and encyclopedic authorities distinguish burden, from chorus, from refrain,¹⁰ and a new term “repetend” was created by Laury Magnus at the end of the 1970s to capture poetic repetition that varied and extended meaning, while creating the illusion of time passing (Magnus 10–12; Hirsch 251). Explicitly linked to the villanelle in Magnus’s philosophical analysis, the repetend concept serves to capture the suppleness of the repeated lines in the most complex villanelles, because Magnus demonstrates how even “identical repetition” can bring about “important semantic changes” (12). A varied refrain appears in Roethke’s villanelle “The Waking,” where the line changes from “I learn by going where I have to go,” through “And learn by going where I have to go” ultimately to “And, lovely, learn by going where to go” (in Roethke, *Collected Poems*). Many recent poets have embraced the flexible second refrain explored by Roethke and extended by Bishop. In “One Art,” however, the modulations are extreme: from “to be lost that their loss is no disaster,” through “to travel. None of these will bring disaster,” and “I miss them, but it wasn’t a disaster,” to the grimly self-reflexive final line “though it may look like (*Write it!*) like disaster” (Bishop).

Clearly, Bishop deviates from exact repetition in a manner that feels different from the subtle, incremental changes in Roethke’s poem. Her second repetend displays syntactic, lexical and pragmatic variations, ones which, together with punctuation changes, effect semantic change. Other poets have inserted variant second refrains, with, for instance, slant rhyme instead of exact rhyme, or word-substitutions (see, for example Bennett’s “The Thing’s Impossible”). Scholar Philip K. Jason claims that “punctuational variation” is the most common means

¹⁰ See Chris Baldick’s *Oxford Dictionary of Literary Terms* (2008); it contains a brief entry for *repetend*, which is clearly distinguished from *refrain*.

by which contemporary poets modulate the repetend (Jason 143). Punctuation, however, is the subtlest of the variants, though implicated in both syntax and meaning, as in “One Art.” Despite extensive metamorphosis, Bishop’s multiply variable line remains identifiable as the second “refrain” of the villanelle. This capacity to retain identity or allusion while adopting new signification resembles the process seen in memetic variation in contemporary culture. In memes, a core feature of the original must be kept, but rider effects can be varied (Gadpaille). Similarly, the villanelle’s second refrain line has acquired the ability to absorb certain types and amounts of variety, without losing the effect of repetition and thus retaining the villanelle characteristics. Like a clever meme, then, Bishop’s poem evokes something familiar, only to re-purpose it with extreme variation that approaches parody.

Consequently, it is necessary to have a new term for Bishop’s kind of repetition effect; refrain is too general, repetend more specific but failing to capture the polyvalent nature of the lines we seek to describe. For, the repeating lines in a villanelle do not even occupy the same places in the tercet structure. They can be the first line, the last line or the second line. This distinguishes them from other types of refrain or chorus. Edward Hirsch, author of the *Essential Poet’s Glossary* and himself a poet, has used the term “rotating refrain” in reference to a similar effect in his own poetry (Segal). For critic John Hollander, the new refrain even takes on a meta-poetic character, “troping” the scheme of refrain (Hollander 74). With these theoretical concepts and Bishop’s “One Art” in mind, we thus suggest a new term—*polysemic repetend*—for the second repeated line in the contemporary villanelle.

Since, therefore, Bishop’s “One Art” demands new poetic terminology for its analysis, it is clearly innovative in its treatment of an unfashionable poetic form and can thus be suspected of exerting a schema-refreshing effect on its poetic successors.

Bishop’s impact on American poetry and the New Formalism

Scholars working on Bishop, or on the villanelle, repeatedly aver that her poem “One Art” exerted an influence on succeeding poetry and may even have initiated rather than merely heralding the New Formalism movement in American poetics. Amanda French maintains that “One Art” made the villanelle “contemporary, postmodern, popular” (French, *Refrain* 185). Willard Spiegelman, himself a distinguished

journal editor, spoke of Bishop's "legacy" along with that of James Merrill. To give New Formalism a foundation in fact, Spiegelman generated statistics by counting poems as either "formal" or "non-formal" over 40 years of magazine publication; in the end, he was unable to confirm a trend—in 1991—towards greater formalism in American poetry. Nevertheless, he still maintains that "it may be possible to trace at least some habits of the 'new' poets to the practices of Bishop and of James Merrill" (Spiegelman 157). French explicitly places "One Art" at an influential crux in American poetry: "After Elizabeth Bishop's 'One Art' of 1976 and the rise ... of New Formalism, the names of major, minor, and very minor American, British, and Irish poets who have written and/or published a villanelle become too numerous to catalogue" (French 262). That "One Art" was followed by this explosion of villanelles does not, of course, mean that it *caused* the trend; literary influence in the short term is an ephemeral thing, the subject of anecdote and subjective opinion on the part of those with various aesthetic agendas. Following Spiegelman, we thus conducted a survey and found that poems identifiable as villanelles (either by title or in the keyword search) had appeared in almost every literary journal or review in the United States in the 45 years since "One Art."¹¹ Before that, the appearance of villanelles was sparse and connected to particular journals, possibly to the individual taste of an editor. After the turn of the millennium, villanelles also began to appear in anthologies, viz. Kelly Deacon's *Rhyme, Rondeau and Villanelle* (2000). At the same time, the form took its place in the journals and anthologies associated with American New Formalism.¹²

¹¹ Journals that have published identifiable villanelles include, but are not limited to, the following: *Agni*, *Ambit*, *The American Poetry Review*, *Antipodes*, *Chicago Review*, *Christianity and Literature*, *Columbia: A Journal of Literature and Art*, *CrossCurrents*, *The English Journal*, *The Georgia Review*, *Harvard Review*, *The Hudson Review*, *The Iowa Review*, *Italian Americana*, *The Kenyon Review*, *The Langston Hughes Review*, *Massachusetts Review*, *Math Horizons*, *Mississippi Review*, *New England Review*, *The North American Review*, *Obsidian III*, *Ploughshares*, *Poetry*, *Prairie Schooner*, *Rhetoric Review*, *The Sewanee Review*, and *The Virginia Quarterly Review*. A few journals stand out for their support for this poetic form, especially *Prairie Schooner*, which was publishing villanelles in the 1930s and still doing so after the turn of the millennium. French made her own count and concluded that "over a hundred villanelles have been published in reputable literary journals and books since 1985" (French, *Refrain* 15). See Hirsch's *Essential Poet's Glossary* for a concise list of modern American villanelles (Hirsch 2017, 349).

¹² Journals associated with the movement include *The Reaper*, *The New Formalist* and *The Formalist: A Journal of Metrical Poetry* and *Measure: A Review of Formal Poetry*.

Moreover, if one ventures to the wild west of online poetry (sites such as PoemHunter), one finds that amateur villanelles are plentiful, though of varied quality. By 1980, Philip K. Jason could claim that there was “lively interest” in this particular poetic form (Jason 136), while by 2010, French found the term to be “a staple of poetry handbooks” (262). For poetry amateurs, there are even YouTube and wiki-How entries that teach the intricacies of the villanelle form.

Many contemporary writers have adopted the villanelle—*why* is something about which one can only speculate, without extensive interviewing of numerous practitioners. There are however a few hints in the topic and lexicon of the modern villanelles. In Deacon’s anthology, for instance, the 41 poems show evidence of influence by earlier villanelles (a response to Dylan Thomas called “Rage On”; Deacon 81). There is a proliferation of contemporary themes, but a tendency to use archaic lexis and syntax (words like *nay*, *methought*, and the use of *ye* and *thee*), indicating that some inexperienced twenty-first-century writers think of the villanelle as an ancient form, to be preserved and imitated rather than extended.

Contemporary deployment of the villanelle tends to be self-conscious, with many instances having the word “villanelle” as the title, in the title or as the subtitle. Examples include “The Unrhymed Villanelle” by Matthew Mead (1999), “Wedding Villanelle” by Mark Jarman (2008), “Little L.A. Villanelle” by Carol Moske (1992) and “Villanelle after Wittgenstein” by H. L. Hix (1991). This self-consciousness shows up additionally in meta-poetic themes, as in Elisavietta Ritchie’s “How to Write a Villanelle” (2002), which is itself a rough-cast villanelle, Helen Cerne’s “Villanelle: A Writer’s Hell,” or Bennett’s “The Thing’s Impossible” (2011), which highlights the poet’s struggle with the constraints of the genre. Also in evidence is a modern trend to vary the meter, everything from the more traditional pentameter and tetrameter to trimeter and a long, loose, Whitmanesque line, all of which are traceable in Kelly Deacon’s anthology. Deacon’s modern, amateur writers apparently found in the villanelle the support of form, alongside the permission to make individual variations, and that may be the key to the form’s contemporary popularity.

French mentioned handbooks as the provenance of the villanelle, and her observation is telling. With its prescriptiveness, it is an eminently teachable form, endlessly imitable, even by writers with little experience. American colleges and universities foster a subject called “Creative Writing”; it may be there that the villanelle is incubated, in myriad creative writing seminars across American campuses. Evidence

for this theory accrues from a search for “villanelle” in articles about college courses in composition and creative writing: Vertreace (1997); Schneiderman (2002); Rogers (2006); Taylor (2008); Northrop (2010) and Ellingsen (2011). There is thus some evidence, though not statistically relevant evidence, that the villanelle has become a teaching tool in American writing courses.

In 2017, villanelles in general and Bishop’s profile in particular were boosted by three publications: a critical monograph, Amanda French’s *Refrain Again: The Return of the Villanelle* and two magazine features, Frankel’s “Coming to Terms with Loss” in the *Atlantic*, and Roth Pierpont’s “Elizabeth Bishop’s Art of Losing” in the *New Yorker*. Capturing the attention of two premier American magazines for the 40th anniversary of the publication of “One Art” indicates the perceived significance of the poem and its anniversary. Critics certainly regarded Bishop and her villanelle as influential on a younger generation.

Translation of “One Art” into Slovenian

The Slovenian translation of “One Art” (“Ena umetnost”) appeared in a 2007 publication entitled *Zemljevid (The Map)* containing a selection of Bishop’s poems and short prose pieces from several collections including *North & South* (1946), *A Cold Spring* (1955), *Questions of Travel* (1965), *Uncollected Work* (1969), *Geography III* (1976), *New Poems* (1979)—published in the year of the poet’s death—as well as from the posthumously published *Edgar Allan Poe & The Juke-Box, Uncollected Poems, Drafts, and Fragments*. The poems and the few prose pieces were selected by Primož Čučnik, who also edited the volume, and were translated by Čučnik himself as well as by Boris A. Novak, Ana Pepelnik and Veno Taufer.

Translation of poetry can never be seen as an easy task, and in the case of “One Art” the translator (Taufer) seems to be facing a particularly demanding undertaking. On the one hand, there is the poem’s thematic complexity, leaning primarily on specific lexical choices (loss, mastery, etc.) that allow for broad interpretive potential, and on the other, there is Bishop’s use of the traditional villanelle form, including her creative variation of one of its refrains. We will address this complex translation challenge by perusing the most salient individual translation issues in isolation, yet with full awareness that the translator’s final output cannot accommodate these aspects detached from the others but—as is always the case—must embody them in one product.

Starting with the villanelle form, the aspects to consider include primarily the double refrain, the rhyming pattern and the iambic metrical scheme. Apart from the latter, which this discussion will prove a major and practically unfathomable translation obstacle, the other formal features are accomplished by the Slovenian translator with considerable success. Bishop's second refrain—previously named the *polysemic repetend*—is masterfully varied in the original, and it retains most of the variation in the target language as well. The syntactic switch between *disaster* as subject of the sentence and as direct object is absent from the translation; however, the pragmatic and lexical variation effecting semantic change is still there. The alteration of the first refrain at the end of the poem (“*too* hard to master” instead of “hard to master”) is successfully preserved, unsurprisingly, in all aspects other than the metrical.

The embracing rhyme pattern (aba) in the three-lined stanzas of the villanelle form, usually referred to as *enclosed tercets*, is varied in the last, four-lined one (abaa). This restriction would not seem unattainable in translation were it not combined with (1) the two villanelle refrains, the endings of which need to conform to this rhyme scheme, consequently requiring that the refrain endings rhyme,¹³ and (2) the mostly effective and powerful line-closing expressions or phrases that cannot be denied important semantic or thematic potential. Since in practice these allow little leeway in terms of lexical choices, they represent a considerable restriction for the translator. In “One Art” the refrain lines end with *master* and *disaster*, a rhyming pair that has no straightforward (rhyming) counterpart in Slovenian. Moreover, both concepts are central to the poem, so any semantic change or deviation induces a probable translation shift and affects the target language interpretive potential.

The Slovenian translator's solution of the rhyme-refrain situation is close to optimal; the two refrain endings are translated as *brez napora* (Eng. *effortlessly*; the equivalent of *isn't hard [to master]*) and *katastrofa* (Eng. *catastrophe, disaster*), effectively replacing source-text rhyme with target-text assonance, which in this situation is a rational decision. The assonance could be argued as imperfect because of the different quality of the vowels (*napôra, katastrofa*); yet, the issue is minor in view of the complexity of the translation problem and solution. Save for

¹³ The villanelle rhyming/repetition pattern is A1bA2 abA1 abA2 abA1 abA2 abA1A2, where repeated small letters denote rhyming lines, while A1 and A2 stand for the refrains, which also rhyme with all first lines and, obviously, with each other.

two epistrophes, however, assonance consistently replaces rhyme in all other instances (the middle tercet lines include *namena*, *dneva*, *streha*, *kontinenta*, *evidentna*, and the remaining lines connected to the refrains include *mora*, *znova*, *moja*, *ogromna*, *roka*).

Apart from the Slovenian refrain ending choice *katastrofa*, the other three salient themes (*loss*, *master* and *art*) are translated as (*izguba*, *mojs-triti* and *umetnost*). All four being internally interwoven, successful preservation of the interpretive potential of these four central themes (including *art* from the title) in Slovenian depends to a large extent on the target language lexical choices embodying the four concepts.

As the last formal aspect of the Slovenian translation of “One Art,” we will investigate the latter’s metrical and rhythmic characteristics, which are closely connected to its lexical aspect. The observation that almost all Slovenian expressions in the translated poem are longer than their English counterparts does not come as a surprise, since Slovenian texts are commonly longer than their corresponding English variants. The reasons for this can be mainly attributed to English being a predominantly analytical language, while Slovenian is chiefly synthetic. Moreover, English is more monosyllabic than Slovenian. In poetry, the length of words and lines is measured in number of syllables, and in the Slovenian translation of “One Art,” practically all words have a higher number of syllables than their English counterparts. Additionally, these numbers may vary, i.e., often increase, according to the inflectional suffixes that change with the declension of adjectives and nouns, conjugation of verbs, changing of modal structures, etc. Consequently, the translator faces the near-impossible task of fitting the relevant corresponding concepts into the iambic pentameter line in Slovenian.

This can be illustrated on the example of the first line, which is the first refrain and loaded with relevant thematic concepts: “The art of losing isn’t hard to master.” The expressions supporting these concepts are *art*, *losing*, (*not*) *hard* and *master*. Matching these with semantically or conceptually appropriate Slovenian translations yields the following options:

art (1 syllable)	vs.	u-met-nost (3 syllables)
lo-sing (2)	vs.	iz-gu-blja-nje/nja (4); or iz-gu-ba/be (3)
hard (1)	vs.	tež-ak/ka/ko (2); or te-ža-ven/vna/vno (3); or zah-te-ven/vna/vno (3)
ma-ster (2)	vs.	ob-vla-da-ti (4); or ob-vla-do-va-ti (5); or na-u-či-ti se (5)

Even though the existing translation of the first line is a combination of these and other translation choices, it is practically impossible to keep the number of syllables in the Slovenian verse the same or at least comparable to the original; in the existing translation there are 14, although these could be read in iambic pentameter with a conscious rhythmical adaptation (using three anapestic substitutions):

Moj-stri-ti u-met-nost i-zgu-be gre brez na-po-ra
 ~ - | ~ ~ - | ~ ~ - | ~ ~ - | ~ - | ~

If, on the other hand, we observe one of the less easily adaptable lines, i.e., the last line of the poem “though it may look like (*Write it!*) like disaster,” the syllable count yields 18 syllables, with one potential anapestic substitution that cannot approximate or be fitted into the iambic pentameter scheme:

če-prav mor-da je vi-de-ti kot (za-pi-ši to) kot ka-ta-stro-fa
 ~ - | ~ - | ~ - | ~ ~ | ~ ~ - | ~ ~ | ~ ~ | ~ - | ~

As illustrated with two sample lines, the metrical appearance of the translated poem cannot be fully satisfying, although the translator’s endeavours are palpable and must be appreciated. It is also evident that the thematic aspect of the poem and certain formal features have been given priority, at least to a certain extent on account of rhythm and meter. It cannot be denied that the metrical looseness of the poem, particularly when measured against the perfectly framed form of the villanelle, is a slight disappointment for the reader, considerably watering down the “stand-out” effect distinguishing it from other poems—which it has in the original; however, it will probably take several re-translation attempts that would favour and prioritize other features of the poem. We would like to close the translation analysis with a possible alternative suggestion for the translation of the opening line: “Umetnost izgubljanja ne terja mojstra,” which arguably improves the aspect of meter and adds some thematic accuracy to the concept of losing (in the existing translation, “[t]he art of losing” undergoes semantic change to become “the art of loss”), but it is sure to have other drawbacks, not immediately perceptible.

Conclusion

After aligning Bishop's poem with the critical literature and with a century's worth of villanelle production, we have established that there are a few firm conclusions. First, Bishop did alter the development of future villanelles by introducing such radical variation in the repetends. The *polysemic repetend* appealed to the American New Formalists, as well as to contemporary villanelle writers. Beyond that effect, we found no *quantifiable* evidence that her poem affected the popularity of the poetic form, despite general critical and anecdotal support for this idea. Nevertheless, Bishop's near-memetic variability in the refrains, does seem to have exerted a schema-refreshing effect on subsequent villanelle production. Additionally, there has been a growth in both critical and popular attention to the poet and, overwhelmingly, to "One Art," which has escaped academic textbooks to become a global cultural property. Slovenian New Formalism has accorded the villanelle form considerable importance, and the existing translation supports our analysis of the poem's intricate schemata.

As suggested in the opening part of section 3, the metrical aspect of the Slovenian translation of "One Art" is the principal challenge of this translation endeavour. Unfortunately, yet not surprisingly, this part of the translator's task was not as successful as other aspects of the poem. The metrical looseness of the translated poem, particularly when measured against the perfectly framed form of the villanelle, is a slight disappointment for the reader. Paradoxically, the formal perfection of the villanelle, its fixed geometry, thus constitutes both its major attraction and a nearly insurmountable challenge for global translators.

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Elizabeth Bishop in vilanela: ena umetnost, ocean in dva jezika

Ključne besede: ameriška poezija / Bishop, Elisabeth / vilanela / polisemični refren / literarno prevajanje / prevodi v slovenščino / Tauffer, Venó

Povod za nastanek tega prispevka je znana pesem Elizabeth Bishop »Ena umetnost« (»One Art«), ki kot vilanela izstopa v sodobni poetiki: združuje dolgotrajno zapuščino modernističnega svobodnega verza in številne veje eksperimentalne postmoderne poezije v Združenih državah Amerike. Podobno kot Ted Roethke tudi Elizabeth Bishop priznava tradicionalno šestkitično pesniško obliko z angleškim poimenovanjem »villanelle« ali »vilanelle« kot primeren medij za izražanje razmišljanja razgledane peripatetične lezbične pesnice poznega 20. stoletja. Formalno gre za anahronistično prisvajanje; v estetskem smislu gre za triumf. Vprašanja, ki jih odpira pesem Elizabeth Bishop in si jih ta prispevek zastavlja, so predvsem tri: prvo se dotika ustreznosti obstoječe terminologije za opredelitev koncepta refrena – tu avtorja predlagava vpeljavo novega termina: *polisemični refren* (angl. *polysemic repetition*). Drugo vprašanje se posveča globalnemu vplivu pesmi »One art«. Nato prispevek obravnava prisotnost vilanele v slovenski poetiki ter se posveti slovenskemu prevodu vplivne vilanele »Ena umetnost«, saj je bil glede na

formalno kompleksnost metrične sheme, rime in sistema refrenov za prevajalca Vena Tauferja nedvomno trd prevajalski oreh. Študija si tako prizadeva za razumevanje vzporednic v estetiki novega formalizma med ameriško in slovensko poezijo.

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Pesem »Teorija strun« Richarda Jacksona in interpretacija poezije kot nezavednega stroja

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Pesem »Teorija strun« kot prvo nagovarja odnos med poezijo in njenim tolmačenjem (na ozadju teorije, fizike, psihoanalize ali celo filozofije). V članku vpeljem nekaj konceptov, ki se osredotočijo na »madež« pesmi. Tega sproži jalovost iskanja pomena konvencionalne interpretacije pesmi. Da bi lahko posegel onkraj uveljavljenega načina tolmačenja, se naslonim na vprašanje notranjega zdaj-časa in nezavednega pesmi. Kako se zgodi pesem? Kdaj pride do njene uresničitve? Interpretativna aktualizacija pesmi mora izbrisati kakršnokoli konkretno individualnost. To, kar velja za nezavedno v Lacanovi psihoanalizi, velja tudi za poezijo: delovanje nezavednega se pokaže v njeni deformaciji, ne pa v vsebini. Torej vsaka subjektivnost (lirični subjekt), ki se ohranja, usmeri pozornost bralca na tako deformacijo, na madež, na krik v pesmi. Kako se madež oblikuje tako, da gre za pesem (jalove ljubezni, melanholijske), ne pa na primer za fizikalno teorijo ali za mistično kontemplacijo božanske luči? Pesem »Teorija strun« vibrira med okruški sanj in potlačenim, »zapackanim« spominom travmatičnega jedra, ki poganja ponavljanje nelagodja tesnobe in stresa. Upam, da bo moje interpretativno ukvarjanje s pesmijo »Teorija strun« izzvalo vznik eksistencialne Stvari, ki se nam bo ponudila kot dar v nezanosnem izmikanju. In prav to je tisto, kar pripisujemo učinku poetične diskurzivnosti.

Ključne besede: ameriška poezija / Jackson, Richard / literarna interpretacija / psihoanaliza / fenomenologija

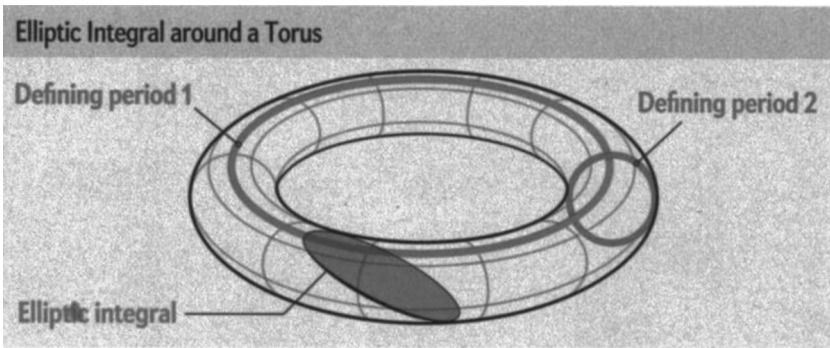
Vztrajno poskušaš. Vedno spodleti. Ni važno. Poskusi
še enkrat. Naj ti še enkrat spodleti. Naj ti spodleti bolje.
(Samuel Beckett, *Na slabše!*)

Vse drugo je jezik
Molčeče ženske, ki stopa poleg mene
(James Wright, »I Wish I May Never Hear
of the United States Again«)

[P]ogled, ki je [...] zmožen zaznati pravi pomen, prave
obrise madeža (podobe, kipa), v katerem se utelesi
neznosna resnica o meni.
(Andrej Medved, *Lacanovna zarečja* 239)

V članku obravnavam eno samo pesem. Ne gre za natančen in celovit prispevek k strogi akademski razpravi, temveč prej za razdrobljen niz vpogledov na različnih, med sabo ne vedno jasno povezanih, ravneh. To upošteva gre nedvomno za teoretično delo, saj starogrška vsakdanja raba besede *theoria* (θεωρία) pomeni »gledati nekaj«, »dojeti«, v bolj tehničnem pomenu pa je označevala kontemplativno ali spekulativno razumevanje naravnih reči, na primer takih, ki so jih obravnavali filozofi narave v nasprotju z bolj pragmatičnim vedenjem o zadevah, na primer retorike ali umetnosti. Sebe tokrat prej prištevam k prvi skupnosti kot k drugi, čeprav je Platon, eden od očetov antične filozofije v svoji idealni Politei pesnike raje uvrstil med druge in nas celo pregnal iz države, kaj šele izza akademskega katedra, česar pa sam ne nameravam storiti.

Kam bi torej učena bralka uvrstila moje razmišljanje? Naslov pesmi se nedvomno navezuje na teorijo, in celo na eno izmed najzahtevnejših in najbolj celovitih, kar jih danes poznamo. Kot piše Richard Jackson v svoji monografiji o času in poeziji, je treba naslov obravnavati nadvse resno. Teorija strun spada med najkompleksnejše matematične modele stvarnosti. Matematiki, kot so Edward Witten, Leonard Susskind, Gabrielle Veneziano in njihovi kolegi, veljajo za ene najboljših sodobnih teoretičnih umov. Njihove kalkulacije preigravajo dimenzije, ki daleč presegajo vsakdanje razumevanje štiridimenzionalnega sveta. Njihovi izračuni (na primer Calabi-Yau prostor) kažejo, da je treba izračunavanju v teoriji strun običajnim štirim dimenzijam prišteti še najmanj šest dodatnih, preračunavajo torej najmanj deset (devet prostorskih plus eno časovno) dimenzij. Zaenkrat brez končnega rezultata. Pri tem jim ne morejo pomagati niti najsodobnejši super računalniki. Primer, ki to ilustrira, je eliptični integral v torusu (*torus eliptic integral*) – integral na eliptični krivulji okoli torusa.



(Hippel 30)

Seveda meni ne bo uspelo rešiti naloge, toda za potrebe razlage strukture Jacksonove pesmi, ki jo preseka »eliptični integral«/madež/anamorfoza (udarec realnega, ki se izmika vednosti), mi morda lahko pomaga vsaj kot analogija.

Teorija strun bazira na zamisli, da najmanjši delci snovi niso točkasti kvanti energije, ampak drobne strune. Namesto delcev v štirih dimenzijah gre za drobne cevke, ki se med sabo spletajo v najrazličnejše kombinacije. Raztezajo se, se združujejo v pare ali pa se ukrivijo v majhne toruse, podobne onemu na zgornji ilustraciji. Vibrirajo v štirih dimenzijah, toda kot cevke v sebi skrivajo še druge dimenzije, in to je tisto, kar zahteva zapleteno nadgraditev kalkulacij standardnega modela.

Opisani model se ukvarja s prostorskimi dimenzijami v času. Čas je težava. Vemo, da v sodobni fiziki ne obstaja samo en, univerzalen in objektiven čas. To pojasni sloviti miselni eksperiment Alberta Einsteina o dvojčkih, od katerih eden ostane na Zemlji, drugi pa se poda na vesoljsko potovanje s svetlobno hitrostjo. Po vrnitvi vesoljskega potnika na Zemljo odkrijeta, da nista več enako stara, popotnik je precej mlajši. Čas je po Einsteinu relativen, spreminjajoča dimenzija, odvisna od hitrosti gibanja in položaja v prostoru. Zato se bo treba, če poskušam razvozlati strukturo pesmi, ki si je za naslov vzela teorijo strun, pozabavati z vprašanjem časa. Kaj je čas, edinstvena dimenzija, ki danes še vedno do konca nepojasnjena vztraja v spoznavnih naporih, da bi dojeli njegovo naravo?

Tubit in čas

Čas teče. Isaac Newton je izoblikoval model vesolja s časom kot absolutno objektivno dimenzionalnostjo. Po njem se vse v vesolju dogaja znotraj enega univerzalnega časa, ki ga meri kozmična ura (sonce, luna, poplave itd.). Ampak to ni nič povedalo o času kot takem. Že stari Grki so poznali najmanj dve pojmovanji časa, prvega so poimenovali po bogu Kronosu, drugega po bogu Kairosu. V grobem lahko prvega opišemo kot kronološki čas vsakdanjega minevanja, kot urni ali koledarski čas, drugega pa kot čas (srečnih) dogodkov, ki so tu pa tam doleteli posameznika ali skupnost. Se pravi sporadičen, preskakujoč čas usodnih trenutkov ali celo obratov, ki so na primer preusmerili ali na novo označili začetek štetja in vsakdanji potek časa (kakšna poplava, ustanovitev Rima, Kristusovo rojstvo, beg Mohameda iz Meke v Medino in podobno). Aristotel ga je na ozadju kontinuiranega gibanja telesa skozi prostor razumel kot fizikalni čas. Sveti Avguštin pa je čas opredelil metafizično kot čas duše, ki se (v spominu) razteza proti neskončnosti Boga. Ta je izven časa. Proti koncu 19. stoletja in v 20. stoletju je vprašanje o času preskočilo čez meje fizike v filozofijo in umetnost. Racionalno, epistemološko in fenomenološko je vzpodbudilo pojmovanja, ki so v opredeljevanju časa vlogo tistega, ki je razmišljal o času, vključili v enačbo časa. Pojem časa je nagovoril ontološko izkušnjo razumevanja sebe in vesolja. Newtonov čas je bil, kot rečeno, univerzalna objektivna kozmična danost. Tudi Kant ga je razumeval na enak način. Toda sčasoma je postalo jasno, da ne obstaja samo eno (pojmovanje) časa, da časa nista niti samo dva (trenutek in neskončnost), marveč da obstaja veliko različnih pojmov časa. Že Avguštin je o času razmišljal na ozadju spominjanja. Edmund Husserl, ki je čas obravnaval na ozadju strogega racionalizma aktov zavesti, se je časa lotil na ozadju zavesti (*Zeitbewusstsein*). Mimogrede, o filozofiji časa priporočam odlično in slavno knjigo Paula Riceourja *Le temps raconte* (*Pripovedovani čas*). Po njegovem učenem pouku obstajata dva glavna prispevka Husserlove fenomenologije časa: retenca (spomin preteklosti) in njeno nasprotje (anticipacija naslednjega trenutka/prihodnosti) ter razlika med retenco (primarnim perceptivnim spominjanjem v zavesti/spominu) in obnovljenim (ali sekundarnim) spominom. Prvo spominjanje se tiče sledenja dogajanju, ki se je začelo v preteklosti in se še ni končalo (npr. poslušanje enega od Beethovnovih godalnih kvartetov).¹ Drugi pa pomeni

¹ Ko Jean Louis Schefer v svoji razpravi *O svetu in gibanju podob* govori o filmu in njegovem učinku na gledalca, predstavi zelo domiselno razlago retence pri gledanju

spomin na nekaj, kar se je zgodilo v preteklosti in se pred časom spomina končalo (recimo vzpon na Everest). Tako retenca kot protenca izhajata iz vidika sedanjega časa tistega, ki se spominja. Tudi Friedrich Nietzsche je o času razmišljal na ozadju vračanja izkušnje dogodkov iz preteklosti (kot *ewige Wiederkehr des Gleichen* in *l'eternel retour de l'etre*). Kaj je to enako, ki se večno vrača v krogu? Walter Benjamin je to poimenoval »'Zdaj-čas' (*Jetztzeit*), živo izkušnjo mitskega časa, ki je že zdavnaj minil, a se je ob novem branju mita znova re-aktualiziral kot 'Zdaj' v aktu branja,« kot to pojasnjuje Ernst Bloch (*On Benjamin* 324). Benjamin govori o umetniškem, o času mita (to velja tudi za Nietzscheja), ki ni nič manj resničen kot katerakoli druga oblika časa. »'Zdaj-čas' se zasveti v strukturah, v katerih so bile zložene vsebine, rešene iz mita (to je, iz dokumentov o preteklih dejanjih osvoboditve).« (112) Vprašanje o sedanjem trenutku Benjamin poglobi na ozadju zgodovine v zapisih z naslovom *O pojmu zgodovine*, in sicer najbolj navdihneno v znamenitem fragmentu IX v zapisu o sliki Paula Kleeja *Angelus Novus*, ki ponazarja angela zgodovine, raztrganega med katastrofami, ki se nizajo iz preteklosti, in viharjem iz raja, ki ga žene v prihodnost. »Ta vihar je tisto, čemur rečemo razvoj.« (Benjamin 219) Tu Benjamin opozori na zanimiv vidik večnega vračanja enakega. Takole pravi: »Večno vračanje je poskus povezati dve nasprotujoči si načeli sreče; namreč tega o večnosti in onega o 'vedno znova spet'.« (*On Benjamin* 321) Torej gre pri vprašanju časa za vprašanje izkušnje sreče. Torej gre za neko posebno izkušnjo zdaj-časa, za neko posebno stanje, ki ga ustvarja večno vračanje enakega. Kakšno stanje sproži večno vračanje? Očitno ne prav vsako, ampak tisto, ki ga Benjamin označi kot srečno.

Hrvaški filozof Ranko Grlić Nietzscheja in »njegovo najtežjo misel o večnem vračanju« razume v luči vprašanja o vedno znova ponovljeni enaki izkušnji stanja, ki ga je Slavoj Žižek nekje opisal kot »ontološko.«² To ni kar tako. »Veliki duhovni naporji so stanja, v katerih se duh sem in tja dvigne, a v njih ne obstane. Le povzpne se do njih, pa ne kakor na prestol, za zmeraj, temveč le za hip.« (Pascal, fragment 351) Čas kot večno vračanje enakega, vračanje izkušnje zdaj-časa kot ontološkega stanja, ki se znova »zgodí« vsakič, ko pesnica ali bralka »mita« v svoji uspešni aktualizaciji prebije horizont vsakdanje govornice in pragmatične komunikacije, se pravi, ko sproži izkušnjo tostran vulgarnega časa minevajoče prisotnosti v udarcu Realnega (po Lacanu) oziroma v

gibljevih podob: »Gledalec je podaljševalec časa; tisti, po katerem 'trenutek še naprej obstaja' in ki podobo obdaruje z nečim, kar podaljša sam trenutek.« (55)

² Ontološko stanje ni nič subjektivnega v pomenu individualnega psihološkega profila. Najbrž ni pretirano, če ga označim za funkcijo jezika.

dogodku biti (*Ereignis*). To namreč pripade umetnosti, »v tistem dionizijskem, v omamnem praznovanju, v igri, v kateri se [...] zrcali sama struktura kozmosa.« (Grlič 84) »Človek je človek v svoji totalnosti, je nadčlovek, ko se kot umetnik svobodno igra in s tem istočasno izraža in odkriva bit bitja univerzuma: večno vračanje enakega. Samo tako večno vračanje enakega postane tudi večno vračanje resnično človeškega, tj. umetniškega.« (112) »To je veliko Opoldne, najvišja in temeljna misel Nietzschejevega umetniškega in filozofskega dojetanja umetnosti in vsega njegovega življenjskega opusa.« (113) Večno vračanje je ontološka izkušnja, imenovana zdaj-čas, ki se vedno spet sproža ob pisanju ali branju pesmi (obujenih mitov).

Martin Heidegger, filozof, ki so ga zaradi njegove vključitve v nacistično stranko in kratke pustolovščine kot rektorja na Freiburški univerzi v času nacizma začeli odkrito obsojati, prezirati in zavračati kot pomembnega misleca številni vidni intelektualci po svetu (je kaj podobnega doletelo tudi intelektualce, ki odkrito podpirajo zločine militaristične politike v Izraelu? Nismo imeli te priložnosti, da bi zaznali kaj takega. Spomnimo se samo silnega sovraštva, ki ga je doživela Hannah Arendt, ko je odkrito poročala o razmerah in ravnanju z ne-Judi v Izraelu v času Eichmannovega procesa), je v svojem glavnem delu iz prvega obdobja *Bit in čas*, objavljenem pred mračno politično avanturo z nacisti, v svoji destrukciji zahodnjaške metafizike kot pozabe biti in kritiki tehnično-znanstvenega nihilizma (kapitalizma, stalinizma in nacizma) – prav v »Freiburškem« obdobju je namreč že predaval o Nietzscheju in evropskem nihilizmu – vpeljal razumevanja časa, ki je pomembno za razumevanje »pesniškega časa« kot ontološke, eksistencialne bitnosti. Razlikoval je med časom-k-smrti (*Sein-zum-Tode*), časom končne umrljivosti, in večnostjo kozmičnega časa. Tu se moram odreči poglobljeni filozofski razlagi njegovega pojmovanja časa. Za to tu ni ne časa ne prostora. Njegova knjiga *Bit in čas* ima 500 strani zgoščene filozofiranja, če k temu priključimo verjetno najboljšo kritično obravnavo njegove filozofije časa v Ricoeurjevem *Le temps raconté*, skupno število strani naraste na 1000. Ampak naj vseeno poskusim na kratko opozoriti na nekaj osnovnih iztočnic, saj gre za pomembno dojetanje časa, ki se dozdeva nujno tudi za poglobljeno branje Jacksonove pesmi.

Heidegger opusti pojma subjekt ali človek in uvede pojem tubit (*Dasein*), ki ga sicer poznamo vsaj od Hegla dalje, uporabljali pa so ga tudi drugi filozofi, npr. Karl Jaspers in celo sam Jacques Lacan. Heidegger mu prida precej večjo težo in usodnejšo vlogo. Vprašanja o avtentičnosti – vztrajam pri tem, da je poezija avtentična jezikovna

dejavnost – individualne tubiti ni mogoče ločiti od njene eksistence in »historičnosti«. Po eni strani je tubit časovno zavezana smrti, »razpeta med rojstvom in smrtjo« in vržena v svet, med možnosti, ki jih ima na razpolago in jih mora vzeti nase. Po drugi strani je tubiti kot eksistenci dostop do sveta in teh možnosti vedno vzpostavljen prek zgodovine in tradicije. Rečeno posplošeno, ne da bi se spuščal v razpravo o svetovno-zgodovinskem (*Welt-geschichtliche*) ali o skrbi (*Sorge*), je rezultat Heideggerjevega razmišljanja sklep, da je bit tubiti čas, tako imenovana *Innerzeitlichkeit* (znotrajčasnost), bit kot čas, notranje časenje biti kot eksistence, ki traja (do smrti) v zunanjem zgodovinskem, vulgarnem času koledarja. »Bit tubiti leži v eksistenci tubiti.« Nikakor ne gre za abstrakten pojem. »Tubit je entiteta, ki sem v vsakem primeru jaz.« (Heidegger 46) Treba je biti previden, kako razumemo bit. Bit ni nekaj bivajočega, substanca, ni metafizična entiteta, ni Bog, Resnica, Lepota, Ideja, Duh, sestvo, bistvo, prvo počelo, izvirni vzrok ali kaj podobnega. Bit ni nič bivajočega. Wallace Stevens zapiše: 'On sam [ki ni] nič, zapazi / Nič, ki ga ni / in nič, ki je.' Nič potemtakem ni nič, ampak je.« (Jackson 13) Čas tubiti je bit in obratno, bit tubiti je čas. To je pomen znotrajčasnosti (*Innerzeitlichkeit*), ki je lahko tudi bitni čas neke preteklosti, imenovan tu-bivšujočnost (*Da-gewesen*) kot eksistence biti tubiti v preteklosti (motreno iz sedanjosti). V ponovitvi zdajčasnosti (*Jetztzeiten*) sta bit preteklega dogodka tu-bivšujočnosti (*Da-gewesen*) in bit tubiti v njegovi znotrajčasnosti-zdaj dogodek istega (*Gleichen*). Dogodki ontoloških razkritosti biti kot večnega vračanja zdajčasnosti (*l'eternel retour de l'etre*) so perforacija bitnega časa, ki prebada zgodovinski razvoj vulgarnega, koledarskega časa. Zgodovinska, vulgarna časovnost neke tubiti je stkana iz niza eksistenčialnih dogodkov znotrajčasnosti kot istine biti. Tudi zgodovinskost je entiteta, ki je v vsakem primeru jaz. »Stanley Kunitz pravi, da ima poezija lasten izvir, globoko pod sloji življenja – ti so istočasno tudi sloji zgodovinskega časa – v prvinskem sestvu [jazstvu]. [...] Ti sloji so po Kunitzu 'različni aspekti večne sedanjosti/prisotnosti (*present*)'.« (Jackson 5) V luči poetike Wallacea Stevensa je to sestvo/jazstvo nič. Nič biti kot eksistenca kot taka. Kot zapiše Bob Hass (in verjetno bi se na posplošen način strinjal z njim tudi Andrej Medved): »Najbrž je še najboljša razlaga iz Zen Budizma: Izkušnja *kenša* (vpogleda v svojo lastno naravo/sebstvo) je praznina. Tam spodaj ali kjerkoli drugje ni nobenega sestva. Ampak samo praznina in tišina.« (Hass 137) Iz nje prihajajo najgloblje misli, je rekel Nietzsche. In tu se hkrati pne tudi most med »biti-k-smrti« (končnim časom umrljivosti) in časom sveta (večnim kozmičnim časom).

Toda še vedno ni jasno, kaj je čas. Kaj je tisto, kar najavlja znotrajčasnost »madeža« v pesmi? S tem me namreč izziva pesem »Teorija strun«. Razlog za izlet na področje časa se bo pokazal nižje. To, kaj vse čas pomeni Richardu Jacksonu, je odlično prikazano v njegovi monografiji *The Dismantling of Time in Contemporary Poetry*. V njej obravnava šest oblik časa v poeziji. »Vprašanje časa je vprašanje igre med prisotnostjo in odsotnostjo, začetkom in koncem, večnostjo in časnostjo, metafiziko in zgodovino, stvarjo samo in njeno ponazoritvijo – nikoli končano brstenje pojmov, pogledov in perspektiv.« (Jackson 20) Gre za razsežnost časa v biti poezije. Opredeljevanje časa tubiti prek umetnosti je, kot rečeno, zaznamovalo tudi Nietzschejevo filozofijo. Človek »kot umetnik in človeško bitje živi v 'umetniškem' času, v času igre, ki komunicira z večnostjo, zasidran v realnosti, ki presega tok zgodovine, ker večno traja, toda hkrati ni čas čistega, z aktualnostjo neskaljenega posvečenega duha, temveč je stvaren, 'telesen', 'sočuten', lastni čas umetnosti in vsega kozmosa.« (Grlič 112)

Interpretacija in pesniško spreminjanje sveta

Premislek o pesmi združuje tri nivoje. Interpretacija naj bi jo razložila, teorija naj bi priskrbela intelektualna orodja za to, filozofija pa se ukvarja s temeljnimi problemi mišljenja, vedenja, pomena in razumevanja. Nobena interpretacija ni nedolžna, saj hkrati vedno tudi spreminja zatečeno stanje. Znamenito 11. Marxovo tezo o Feuerbachu o svetu, ki so ga filozofi do takrat samo pojasnjevali, dejansko pa ga bi morali spremeniti, je treba po Žižku obrniti na glavo: »Do sedaj so filozofi samo poskušali spremeniti svet, namesto da bi ga pošteno interpretirali.« (cit. po Dolar 104) Tudi Mladen Dolar upravičeno trdi, da interpretacija (teoretsko delo) kot materialna sila že pomeni spreminjanje sveta. Vendar se dozdeva, da to ne velja samo za objekt razlage (svet ali pesem), ampak predvsem za samo teorijo. Ali interpretacija preobrazi pesem? Ali sprememba doleti zgolj metodo in strukturo elaborata, ki izhaja iz pesmi, saj se nanaša nanjo, se pravi, da spremeni utečeni način literarnega tolmačenja? V tem primeru prav pesem sproži prestrukturiranje realnosti, ki jo spremenjena interpretacija izvede v dobro emancipacije ljudi, torej kot sprememba uveljavljenega načina tolmačenja kot tiste intelektualne okostenelosti, ki (družbeno) bit pesmi reducira, recimo, na pomen in smisel. Če upošteva dejansko stanje, uveljavljena teorija skrbi za redukcijo, ki v pesem od zunaj vnaša svojo resnico, ter jo tako podreja in izkorišča za svoje uveljavljanje. S tem jo utiša, ji

zvame suveren, emancipiran glas. V sodobni gonji proti humanistiki jo celo ta v svetu znanstveno-tehničnega kapitalizma preganjana sfera odrija na dno liste resnih uresničevalnih praks. Z izjemo političnega preganjanja so besedila v književnosti, glasbi in filmih zanimiva samo kot razvedrilna in neobvezujoča hrana (spektakel ali opij) za množice, se pravi kot dobičkonosno tržno blago. Temu se vse bolj (nezavedno) priklanja tudi etablirana literarna refleksija.

Poezija kot praksa je že dolgo odrezana iz akademskih ustanov, v najboljšem primeru se jo proučuje in poučuje kot nekakšno obrtno znanje. Pa še takrat poezije ne poučujejo pesniki, ampak akademsko avtorizirani »poznavalci« pesniške produkcije. To kliče po obratu in družbenem angažmaju, ki bi bil strukturno identičen z Benjaminovim razumevanjem solidarnosti. Nikakor ni dovolj, da solidarnost bazira le na humanitarni pomoči populacijam, ki so jih življenjsko ogrozile posledice nasilnega izkoriščanja, ali na simpatiziranju z njimi, radikalno je treba spremeniti oblastni odnos, pristop in strukturo pri svojem delu, tj. sistemski vzorec na področju lastnega del/ovanj/a (teoretiziranja in interpretacije). Treba se je iztrgati iz konformističnega vzorca recikliranja postopkov lažnega podtikanja poeziji tujih resnic, ki neopazno reproducirajo strukture tlačenja, ter svoje delo osvoboditi v pomenu Marxovega znamenitega razumevanja svobodnega dela. Svobodno delo ni mezdno delo, vsiljeno od zunaj, ampak se odziva na svoje lastne notranje vire, vzpodbude in svobodno voljo. Za Marxa je bila tak primer praksa kritične znanstvene zgodovine (študij in pisanje *Kapitala*). Poezije ni težko uvideti kot izdelka svobodnega dela in avtentične jezikovne prakse. Kot hiše biti. Biti kritičen v pomenu Marxove metode ne pomeni oblastnega ocenjevanja od zunaj zahtevane resnice, ki naj bi utelešala umetniški sijaj absolutnega duha, o čemer naj bi sodili filozofi, ampak prelom aktualizacije, »'ko se iz čiste naključnosti, iz golih domislekov pojavi nekaj substancialnega', scela resnega, celo absolutnega,« kot to na ozadju Heglove estetične misli zapiše Alenka Zupančič (177–178), torej dogodek zdaj-časa, razprtega v biti obravnavane pesmi kot ponovitve dogodka tu-bivšujoče istine tubiti uresničene pesmi in ontološke ekstaze, ki se je razplamtela ob izvirni stvaritvi pesmi. Tak dogodek naj bi se tudi odvil v zdaj izvajani interpretaciji kot ponovitvi bitnosti akta teksta v luči izvirnega pesnjenja (kot vrnitev dogodka *Da-gewesen* pesmi).

Od kod potreba po razlagi, interpretaciji pesmi? Mar ni dovolj, da se same razprejo v bralni aktualizaciji in brez pomoči tolmačenja sprožijo avtentične izkušnje pristnega ali celo usodnega dogodka onkraj pomena ali smisla v domeni ontološke ekstaze govornice? Ne, interpre-

tacija dejansko odpre prostor in čas ponovitvi primarne bitnosti, sama je taka ontološka praksa. Ali je v pesmi na delu kakšno vedenje, ki ni razvidno iz samega ustvarjalnega branja pesmi? Kaj je treba vedeti v pesmi? Ali pesem sploh ima opraviti z vednostjo kot s svojo nujno bitnostjo? Mar v ozadju takega pričakovanja ne gre za tiranijo vedenja in duhovnosti, ki se postavljata na čelo vseh drugih funkcij eksistencialne intelegibilnosti? Zagotovo. Celo Sokrat, oče zahodnjaške filozofije, je trdil, da je edino, kar ve, to, da nič ne ve. Ampak najbrž gre za tisti apel iz davnine, ki ga je označil slavni slogan v Delfih: *Gnōthi seautón* (*Spoznaj samega sebe*)? Namreč, pridi k nam, mi bomo poskrbeli za to, da boš vedel, za kaj gre v tvojem primeru, ob odhodu te bo čakal pripravljen orakelj, ti samo odloži kakšen kiliks iz zlata v skrinjo pri vratih svetišča. Ali ima poezija kaj opraviti z poznavanjem sebe, s sebstvom? Po mnenju pesnika Stanleya Kunitza da. Ampak sebstvo je izmuzljivo blago. Je sebstvo kaj takega, kar se tiče vedenja, kar se nanaša na smisel in pomen? Pesnik Phillip Levine v zvezi s poezijo opozarja: »Besede postanejo/ kot molitev, neke vrste nesmisel, / ki postane misel našega življenja'. [...] Kako naj se izognemo tematskemu omotu, ne-smislu simbolične, statične prisotnosti, do česar naj bi nas pripeljalo konvencionalnejše branje?« (Jackson 14) Da odgovorimo na to vprašanje, moramo seči k Freudu in Lacanu, v psihoanalizo.

James Wright in čas Drugega

Za nadaljnje ukvarjanje z zadevami »sebstva« se bom naslonil na premisleke iz poglavja Jacksonove monografije z naslovom *Čas in Drugi*, v katerem obravnava poezijo Jamesa Wrighta. Preden se posvetim pesmi »Teorija strun«, je namreč treba opraviti še nekaj dela.

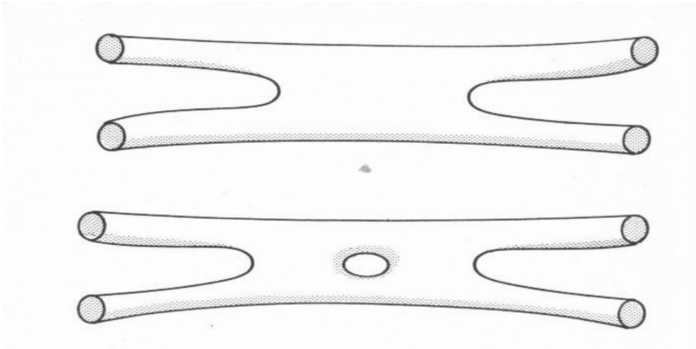
Čas in Drugi, kam naj bi to vodilo? Kdo ali kaj je Drugi? Je to predmet, ki ga pesnik jasno opiše v svoji pesmi ali se celo poistoveti z njim? Ali pa gre za drugačno funkcijo jezika v pesmi: »Funkcija jezika ni v tem, da nas informira, ampak v tem, da prikliče, invocira. To, kar iščem v svojem govoru, je *odziv* (kurziv I. O.) drugemu.« (Lacan, cit. po Jackson 102) Drugi pesmi sem torej jaz. »To, kar srečam v tem Drugem, je objekt želje, čigar identiteta se v napredovanju govora razvija iz [mojega] narcističnega 'zrcalnega stanja', in vodi 'časovno' dialektiko, ki odločilno zasnuje oblikovanje individualne zgodovine.« Nekaj stavkov naprej pa se Jackson vpraša: »Govorica, kot Lacan vedno pojasnjuje na Heideggerski način, je tudi 'poslušanje' Drugega. Govorica je priponka (*attachment*). Torej kaj je ta priponka pri Wrightu?« (102) Se

pravi, da je Drugi invokacija zapletene vzajemnosti, pri čemer se klic in poslušanje selita med mano, pesmijo in drugim pesmi, ki je nevidni objekt želje »narcističnega zrcalnega stanja« v pesmi, torej neka funkcija avtorske govorice.

In pojasni, kako je to izvedel Wright. »To, kar Coleridge imenuje 'prenos in transmisijo', Wright poimenuje s 'priponko'; ta kot prvo izvede ponotranjenje ('odstranitev' ali dekonstrukcijo zunanje stvarnosti), nato pa zavest projicira [umesti, piše iz njegove perspektive] v zunanji oziroma 'odstranjeni' objekt. [...] To ustvari večjo 'bližino' avtentičnega časa, ki jo dosežemo z negacijo sebe in pripojitvijo sebe na Drugega/Drugo (*Other*).« (103) In nadaljuje, da se te »točke pojavijo na mestu radikalnega preloma, odcepitve, obrata proč, kot kadar *mesec proti koncu novembra na polju gleda proč* [...] na kratko, ko se celo pisec, skoraj kot po naključju, kot smo videli, izvzame iz poteka pesmi in pozabi nase. V tem obratu proč se pojavi povsem drugačna dimenzija časovnosti [...] časovnost kot sled, ki zbledi, še preden bi se lahko sploh pojavila.« (103) To razmišljanje o izginotju določenih »virtualnih« razsežnosti v končnem izpisu napisane pesmi spominja na fizikalni pojem loma kvantne funkcije, ko se nek delec, ki se na kvantni ravni istočasno nahaja v več različnih stanjih, zaradi reakcije z zunanjim svetom, npr. pri merjenju ali 'opazovanju', pojavi reducirano v samo enem stanju. Nekaj podobnega, le v obratni smeri, se zgodi na ravni pesniškega jezika, kar kaže, da govorica zapisuje realnost skrite funkcije onkraj pomena ali smisla kot izginuli čas nekega »odrezanega« Drugega; skritega v madežu/sledi nevidne, izpuhtele objektivnosti. »Ta govorica 'drugosti' pa sama po sebi priskrbi za zvezo do nezavednega, saj je nezavedno, kot Lacan neutrudno ponavlja, strukturirano kot jezik – nezavedno je diskurz Drugega.« (110) Ta 'druga' funkcija »izpraznjene« govorice kot hiše biti razpre lastno 'notranjo' temporalnost, svojo znotrajčasnost znotraj vulgarnega, zgodovinskega toka časa.

Pojem Drugega ovija mreža vprašanj, ki se jih ne bom lotil. Kdo ali kaj ali kakšna struktura je Drugo? O tem poteka široka debata. Ali gre za drugega (žrtve), o katerem piše Emmanuel Levinas v svojo etiki, za tistega, za smrt katerega ali katere smo odgovorni? Ali pa Drugi pomeni odsotnost, ki je v Derridajevi topografiji sledi pustil za sabo izpraznjene markerje zgodovine dekonstruirane metafizike, pri Jacksonu označene kot »odstranjena priponka«? Kako potemtaka ta prisotni odsotni drugi, ta odstranjena priponka deluje v pesmi? »Drugega ne smemo poistovetiti z določeno osebo, vsekakor pa ima določeno funkcijo.« (Jackson 117) Bi lahko šlo tu za govorno gesto, kot je nakazal Wittgenstein?

Ampak tu bom zapustil razpravo o Wrightovi poeziji, rad pa bi še enkrat opozoril na nekatere koncepte, na katere sem naletel pri obravnavi Wrightove poetike. Številne Jacksonove naslonitve na Heideggerja, Derridaja, Freuda in Lacana nakazujejo, da je na delu vozle idej, ki povezujejo psihoanalitične in fenomenološke aspekte.³ Pripetost, odcepitev, Drugi, sled, dekonstrukcija, avtentični čas, nezavedno, diskurzivnost in tako dalje. V njegovi misli se neposredno križata dve sferi skritih razsežnosti: Heideggerjevo pojmovanje o času kot znotrajčasnosti tubiti in Freud-Lacanovo pojmovanje nezavednega kot posebne strukturiranosti in funkcije jezika (»brez-smisla«). Obe zaznamujeta jezikovni pojav pesmi tostran reprezentacije zunanjega (ali notranjega) sveta, ki izstopi iz vsakdanje funkcije govornice (kot komunikacije pomenov, naukov, slik, smisla in funkcionalnosti), čeprav hkrati tudi ostaja v vsakdanjem svetu, ki je tudi svet utečenega in konformističnega dojetanja izvora in predstave o poeziji.



(Kaku 163)

Pesem »Teorija strun«

Zgornja ilustracija prikazuje dva para strun, ki sta se prepletli, prekržali ali ovili druga okoli druge. Ni težko videti, da gre za cevaste formacije, torej za telo v štiridimenzionalnem času-prostoru. Toda v cevasti notranjosti se skrivajo dodatne dimenzije. Spodnji par strun z luknjo v sredini tvori torus (t. i. Calabi-Yau prostor), o čemer sem nekaj malega

³ Celovit in izreden primer sodobnega prepleta fenomenologije in psihoanalize prinaša že omenjena monografija Andreja Medveda *Lacanova zavečja*. Žal tu ni mesto, da bi njegove izpeljave tako teoretskih premislekov kot raziskav umetnosti (slikarstva), ki bi nedvomno omogočile še poglobiti izhodišča za interpretacijo Jacksonove pesmi, natančneje vpeljal v svojo analitiko.

zapisal na začetku, ko sem omenil težave matematikov, da bi uspešno izračunali integral poševne elipse na njegovo krožnico. To sem navezal v analogiji na »madež«, ki se pojavlja na sliki ali v pesmi, ampak več o tem v nadaljevanju.

S strunami/vrvicami je mogoče početi marsikaj. Kot strune jih lahko napnemo na kitari, harfi ali liri, jih povežemo v vozle, kot je bil tisti v slavnem mestu Gordija, jih spletemo v jeklenice ali ladijske vrvi, lahko jih uporabimo kot zapise, kot so to počeli Inki s kipuji (govorečimi vozli), jih stkemo v tkanine, z njimi lahko zvežemo in bičamo svoje sovražnike ali jih celo ubijemo z zadušitvijo ali obešanjem na vislice ali na veje dreves. V teoretični fiziki nam teorija strun pomaga na alternativen način formulirati razumevanje neskončnega tkanja vesolja ali pojasniti procese in pojave na kvantni ravni materije. Toda ne glede na obliko »kvantnih« strun te vedno nakazujejo, da imamo opraviti z mnogodimenzionalnimi svetovi. V cevastih strukturah strun se odpirajo dodatne, na prvi pogled nevidne razsežnosti. Jure Detela nekje zapiše, da so »nevidni zakoni tisti, ki odločajo, kaj bo pripuščeno v pesem«. Po Richardu Jacksonu taka struna daje *zvok, ki reže svojo pot skozi te spomine, skozi / kite izgubljenih besed*,⁴ osnovni ton njegovi pesmi, »pozvanjajoč« na mnogih ravneh. Na primer kot struna *raztegnjenega vetra, ovitega okoli teh besed* (morda v obliki torusa, Moebiusovega traku ali Kleinove steklenice). Struna vetra preveva celoten tekst, dozdeva se, da je pesem scela vibriranje vetrne strune. Že naslov opozarja, da gre za navezavo na fizikalni model, za analogijo, ki jo pesem uresniči na svoj način. Zamisel deluje kot iztočnica, ki pesniku omogoči nakazati nekaj skritega, podtalnega, nekaj, česar ni mogoče na noben drug način razviti v celoviti uresničitvi dodatnih platojev in elementov, ki se izmikajo neposrednemu popisu. Kot Wrightov »odstranjeni objekt«. Samo da je to, kar manjka, odsotno, še vedno tu, »časovnost kot sled, ki zbledi, še preden bi se lahko sploh pojavila« (Jackson 103). Od začetka branja postane jasno, da v ospredju ni običajno opisovanje vsakdanjega zunanjega (ali notranjega) sveta, ampak svet neke druge časovnosti, ki se najavlja v sanjah, v polju razbite govornice podzavesti/nezavednega. V notranjosti zvoka, ki reže besede. V pišu raztegnjenega vetra, ovitega okoli besed. Človeku ni treba biti dodobra seznanjen s Freudovimi interpretacijami sanj, da razume, da ima opraviti z značilno zmešnjavo črepij in okruškov vsakdanje realnosti, ki jih podzavestna mašina sestavlja v pokrajino lastnega jezika, v katero zakoni vsakdanje pragmatične pameti, sintakse in razumevanja nimajo dostopa. Pomena pesmi ni mogoče doumeti z iskanjem tega, kaj

⁴ Ta in vsi nadaljnji navedki v kurzivu so verzi iz Jacksonove pesmi »Teorija strun«.

je hotel avtor povedati, se pravi tradicionalno razumljenega pomena, ker ga ni. Gre za »glasbeno skladbo«, za film. Film o čem? Ali gre tu samo za interpretacijo sanj, je težava, ki naj jo razrešim, povezana zgolj s sanjami, ali gre še za kaj več? Nedvomno, tu so tudi spomini. Ne vemo, na kaj so vezani ti spomini, nedvomno gre za podtalen spomin, ki poganja dinamiko pesmi. Spomin, ki se igra slepe miši. V pesmi obstaja veliko drobcev in ravni, ki se pojavljajo v sanjah kot *v palimpsestih ali starih rokopisih, ki jih niti menihi ne morejo razvozlati*, ki poskušajo pozornost sanjača/pesnika speljati proč od realnega jedra sanj (Slavoj Žižek na nekem mestu pravi, da se lahko svojega Realnega dotaknemo samo v sanjah) in ga zamotiti s mnogimi nebistvenimi prizori (*drevesne vešče in žarnice*), toda v pesmi je na delu še ena sila, imenovana spomin. Slepo jedro tega spomina, skrito v vrzelih (ali kot vrzeli), ki spomin ohranja buden, čeprav zamegljen, nedoumen, celo preteč, nekaj z udarno močjo *bombe*. Kakšne *bombe*? Ali še bolj, kakšnih *bomb*? Očitno nekaj iz preteklosti, kar vztrajno tolče in kljuva. *Začetek se nikoli ne konča. / Konec je zapečaten, nedosegljiv*, dá vedeti pesem. Tisto nekaj vztraja v pesmi, v neprestanem spreminjanju, nadevajoč si *maske*, vedno znova izmikajoče se neposredni vidnosti, prepoznanju, jasnemu spominu. Je zgolj tu. Globlje od sanj. Nezavedna sila jih hrani in poganja. In jih seveda sproži zato, da jo zadovoljijo, da ohranjajo utrip skrite, nevidne prisotnosti/odsotnosti. Predvsem pa vzdržuje nezanosno tesnobo, ki preveva pesem.

Po Freud-Lacanovi psihoanalizi tesnoba in nelagodje hranita nezavedno zadovoljitev – perverzno naslado (*jouissance*). Mar niso prav te vrzeli simptomi, markerji utemeljitvenega dogodka tubiti, primarne travmatične izkušnje, potlačene v globino nezavednega, nikoli izbrisane, razrešene, pripoznane v izrazu nezanosne resnice o sebi? Travmatična ponovitev, večno vračanje enakega, nikoli ne privede na plan same primarne izkušnje, pač pa prinaša megleno, zabrisano, zapackano in neprijetno odsotnost praznega jedra tesnobnega spomina, preoblečenega v deformirane maske, ki pod nejasnimi madeži ohranja pri življenju izvorni trenutek potlačitve brez zavesti o realnem dogodku izvorne izkušnje. Te ne spoznamo, ne moremo je spoznati, ker je prazna bitnost, pravzaprav je nočemo poznati/vedeti, toda nezavednega ne samo, da ga ni mogoče »vedeti«, tudi nadzorovati in uravnati ga ni mogoče, in tudi tega se ne zavedamo. Zgolj izkušamo, da je nekaj na delu, vznika kot spomin nečesa usodno neprijetnega (z močjo *bombe*, *mnogih bomb*), toda ne vemo, za kaj gre. Sanje prevevajo divji in moreči prizori, ki sami po sebi ne pomenijo nič, so samo vozički za tesnobo, maske, *najboljši obrazi, iznajdene nove maske besed*, ki zastirajo izvorni obraz, toda nekako prek njih začutimo učinek realnega, pik neznanega jedra v njih; *plezalci*

vedo, skrivnost skalne stene / skrivajo dereze. »Nezavedno ni vsebina,« piše Lacan, »ampak forma deformacije« (Dolar 133). Nezavedno ima obliko madeža, anamorfoze, zamegljene projekcije, spodletelega samozavedanja. Kot nas opozori Žižek, »madež ni nereflektirani preostanek, ki bi ga lahko odpravili s samorefleksijo, z globljim vpogledom v naše psihično življenje, ampak je produkt samega samozavedanja, njegov objektni korelat« (*Cogito in spolna razlika*, cit. po Medved 52). Pojavlja se »kot slepa pega, madež⁵ na drugače povsem smiselni sliki, tuj, moteč zvok v glasbi (*cvileč krik*), kot packa v univerzumu pomena.« (Dolar 132) *Nikoli ne bomo videli, kaj smo.* To je Realno nezavednega, tudi v tej pesmi. Toda v pesmi moteča odsotnost spomina ni nič individualnega, ampak je neka oblika, ki se širi onkraj posameznikove zgodovine in se dotika sveta (celo veselja?), Ta spomin, ta nezavedna slepa pega *je hologram, preslikan iz ene generacije v naslednjo, [...] spomin, prilepljen v album srca.* Ne gre za osebno travmo, nezavedno v tem primeru ni nič individualnega, je deformirana oblika, prazna struktura biti. Čas biti je zdaj, toda ne gre za sedanji čas, ki ga poznamo iz vsakdanjega življenja, za zgodovinski ali vulgarni čas. Bit ni nič, zato tudi čas biti ni čas, je zgolj prazna eksistenca tubiti (tistega, ki je in je vedno jaz). »Aspekt« biti, če lahko tako rečem, njena prazna »vsebina, manko« je nezavedno, je znotrajčasnost, tista matematično izmuzljiva in neizračunljiva pojavnost, ki jo označuje eliptični integral okoli strunskega torusa. Vedenje ga ne doseže, nanj lahko samo opozorimo, ne da bi ga vedeli, saj ni ničesar, kar naj bi vedeli. Slepi smo. Kot nočna ptica, roparska sova. Ampak samo podnevi. Tam *zunaj se druga iz druge norčujeta / dve sovi, in to niso niti sanje / niti ni spomin.* Budna siva Minervina sova je bila vedno emblematična zaščitnica filozofije/teorije/spekulacije (in vse tri pomenijo pogumen pogled na nekaj, čemur se drugi raje izognejo). Atena je bila boginja modrosti, korajže, čistosti, znanja, matematike, moči, vojaške strategije in večšin. Tista, ki poseduje božanski um in umeva božanske resničnosti. Toda bila je tudi neusmiljena boginja goljufa-

⁵ »Protomadež« vseh madežev na slikah, na katerega se nanaša Lacanov koncept, je seveda tisti na sliki *Ambasadorja* Hansa Holbeina iz leta 1553. Ko spremenimo ravnino perspektive pogleda na platno, se izkaže, da prikazuje sliko lobanje, kar vnese povsem novo razumevanje celotne slike. Preprosto rečeno, da je vse, celo takšno bogastvo, znanje, umetnosti, visoke zveze, vplivi, slava in podobno, zgolj minljivo. Lahko rečem, da ponazarja enega od slavnih Heideggerjevih pojmovanj časa-k-smrti. Pravzaprav bi si samo problem madeža v umetniškem delu zaslužil obsežnejšo obdelavo, sploh njegovega pojava v modernem umetniškem ustvarjanju. V svoji že navedeni monografiji se tega celovito in z izrednim aparatom uspešno loteva Andrej Medved ob delih Marija Preglja, Gabrijela Stupice, Jakova Brdarja, Francisa Bacona, Emerika Bernarda in drugih, ne smemo pa pozabiti tudi na njegove izpeljave del Markiza de Sada in še posebej Antonina Artauda.

nja (spomnite se njene vloge v dvoboju med Hektorjem in Ahilom) in vojne, njen »dnevni lik« ni mogel prikriti njene »nočne« animalne narave. Še posebej na zgodnejših antičnih upodobitvah na črnih keramičnih posodah je imela pogosto poteze kače in ptice s krili (95–96). Ko je pozneje postala boginja modrosti, je sova od nje prevzela njene prikrite animalne attribute in postala nekakšen njen alter ego, njen drugi (nezavedni?) jaz. Mitični lik sove lahko pojmujeemo kot zrcalni odsev boginje in obratno (kot vzajemnega Drugega). *Dve sovi zunaj* v pesmi lahko ponazarjata (arhetipsko) dvojno simbolno podobo boginje (ene vidne in druge zastrte, ene nasilne in druge modro tihe), ki lahko vidi ponoči, v mraku, njen pogled prodre globlje kot običajni pogled, lahko vidi tisto, česar ne moremo videti in tako dalje, toda po drugi strani je neusmiljena zver. Toda tako boginji kot sovi je skupen »pogled, ki je zmožen zaznati pravi pomen, prave obrise madeža, v katerem se utelesi neznosna resnica o meni« (Medved 239). *Dve sovi se posmehujeta druga drugi* tako onstran sanj kot spomina. *Nihalo najprej reče da in potem ne*. Je to mogoče? Je mogoče cinično resnico, banalnost nasilja (spomnimo se na Hannah Arendt in banalnost zla)⁶ uspešno pretihotapiti mimo

⁶ Povzročiti skrajno zlo iz moralnega občutka dolžnosti (ali patriotskega koda časti) ni značilno samo za uradnike v nacizmu (in v drugih represivnih režimih), za birokrate Eichmannovega tipa v preteklosti, ampak na splošno velja kot temeljna vrednota za vojake, ki mučijo in ubijajo nedolžne civiliste, za policiste, ki streljajo na demonstrante in celo na otroke, pa tudi za vladne uradnike, ki ne da bi trznili z očmi, razdirajo družine, ločujejo otroke od njihovih mater in jih pošiljajo v begunska (koncentracijska) taborišča ali celo nazaj v države izvora, kjer jih čaka gotova smrt. Vse to počnejo pod parolo čuta dolžnosti in sklicevanja na zakone. In tako dalje. Vključno s slovenskimi uradniki, ki so sadistično brisali državljanstvo izbrisanim, ali tistimi, ki blokirajo podeljevanje azila beguncem iz vojnih področij ali družinskim članom, ki bi se radi pridružili svojim partnerjem v Sloveniji. Hannah Arendt ni nikoli oklevala razkriti te resnice in kritično razkrinkati prave narave takih politik in oblastnega delovanja, ne glede na nekatere svoje najboljše (judovske) prijatelje, ki so taka dejanja (npr. v Izraelu) upravičevali s takimi ali drugačnimi izgovori. Sámó dejanje je zločin ne glede na zakone in ukaze od zgoraj. In kaj lahko rečemo o zagovornikih militarističnih agresij v imenu demokracije in svobode, ki so ju vsilili tako imenovanim tlačnim žrtvam lokalnih diktatur (ki so jih pomagali celo samo vzpostaviti), na primer v Panami, Iraku ali Libiji. V času zalivske vojne, kot so jo poimenovali, sem imel priložnosti poslušati javno predavanje slavnega ameriškega filozofa Richarda Rortyja v Shaubühne v Berlinu, ki je slavil sovražno agresijo na Irak in izjavil, da so civilne žrtve sicer žalostne, vendar nujne abstranske žrtve demokratičnega razvoja. Popolnoma v sozvočju z doktrino Madeleine Albright, takrat zunanje ministricice ZDA, ki je na vprašanje o pobitih otrocih zatrdila, da je to bilo treba storiti in se je tudi izplačalo. Ne obstaja hujši vojni zločin in dejanje absolutnega zla kot pobijanje otrok zaradi političnih interesov. Tema nedvomno zahteva obsežnejšo obdelavo, ki jo tu lahko samo omenim. Več o zgodovinskem pogledu na to tematiko lahko zainteresirana bralka najde v moji monografiji *Somrak suverenosti*.

lažnih sanj ali sanj, razumljenih kot globoko simbolno sporočilo, kot vizijo, kot skrivno oznanilo ali pozabljeno zgodbo, kar so vse skupaj simptomi realnosti, ki je nobena utvara, noben simbolen red, noben Drugi, niti molitev, ne more zapolniti/izbrisati? Toda dozdeva se, da je to kljub vsemu mogoče. Nezavedno namreč tvori mehanizem potlačanja, ki nam pomaga živeti z lastno banalno krutostjo, z grozljivo izkušnjo in soočenjem z Realnim, z neznosno resnico v sebi (*s pomočjo kit izgubljenih besed*), namreč tega, da ni absolutne ljubezni *v tem pomanjkljivem svetu mask*. To najbrž niti ni najslabša možnost, za metafizika, verujočega in moralista je najslabše to, kar je: gola eksistenca moje lastne nesmiselne in pomena izpraznjene znotrajčasnosti in nezavedne deformacije, ki vsako interpretacijo, teorijo in filozofijo dekonstruira do gole tesnobne *jouissance* (skrbi [*Sorge*], užitka v nelagodju). Ta nezanesljive sanje, neuresničljiva verovanja, jalovo metafiziko in zaslepljujoče utvare izkorišča za svojo zadovoljitev. Sliši se pošastno. Madež,⁷ ki prekriva in razkriva to neznosno resnico o sebi v pesmi, se bere takole:

pojemajoč cvileč krik
 zajca, ki ga je odnesel kojot,
 zvok, ki reže svojo pot skozi te spomine, skozi
 kite izgubljenih besed

Zvok sproži boleče, globoko nelagodje kot odmev skritega udarca realnega jedra, kot neznosno resnico o sebi, skrito v (prazni moralistični) maski besed (ali pod njo). To etično naravnane pesnika, kar Richard Jackson nedvomno je, globoko pretrese, namreč kot soočenje z grozo lastne potlačene nasilnosti onkraj dobrega in zla, ne pa tudi onkraj sebe, ker se rana ne more (več) zapreti. Istina tubiti, razprtost realnosti časa smrti. Tudi smrti drugega, ubitega bitja, za katero naj bi odgovarjali (Levinas). V *memento mori* nezavednega/narave/usode onstran vulgarnega časa-prostora utvare, morale in metafizike, odprta perspektiva znotrajčasnosti, ki na ta način travmatično občutenje neznosne resnice samega sebe in nelagodni spomin nanjo preusmeri prek vrzeli vsakdanjo-

⁷ Madež v pesmi prikriva pulzijo, ki sproži sanje in sunke spomina, ki se ne spomni in ki se mu sanja ne, kaj je bilo v njem odprto *s cvilečim krikom zajca*, morda zaradi nekoč davno izkušenega dogodka preveč neznosne groze, ki jo je krik ponovno obudil, tj. nezavednega prepada, ki reže čez pesem. Cvileč krik namiguje na tisto manjkajoče nekaj, na odsotnost »podteksta«, ki hkrati da začutiti neznosno skrivnost, a je ne razkrije, morda zato, ker ni nič takega, kar bi podleglo razkrivanju, ampak zgolj udari kot nedoumno Realno, ki ga ni mogoče simbolizirati, kot simptom. Vsekakor se izmakne vedenju pesnika, čeprav je v pesmi na delu kot nekaj, česar ni, prisotno po svoji odsotnosti, kot pojemajoča sled, brez substance in brez »obličja«.

sti (ali pa vanje), da lahko pesnik/človek živi še naprej kljub neznosnemu pritisku izvirnega travmatičnega udarca. To poezijo Richarda Jacksona povezuje s poezijo Jureta Detele. Njegova »Pesem za jelene« se začne:

Jeleni! Naj pride v mojo pesem
zavest o nasilju? Kako le
zmorem zvestobo spominu na vas, ko
se mi svet transformira

v sporočilo ubijanja. (30–31)

Soočenje z nasiljem je globoko pretreslo etično bit tako Detele kot Jacksona. To doživetje na določen način spominja na katarzo, prelomni vrhunec antične grške tragedije. Soočiti se s hladno, brezčutno usodo in po pretresu tako z grozo kot sočutjem v obratu v katarzi nazaj vzpostaviti kolikor toliko znosno notranje ravnotežje in zmožnost soočiti se ter poravnati se z golo brezobzirnostjo veselja (polis), ki je daleč od popolnosti in srečne izpolnitve. Prvotna istina človekove usode kot znotrajčasnosti biti je smrt utvare (o krščanski ljubezni in usmiljenju). Ljubezen kot absolutno zanesljivo veseljsko načelo ne obstaja, lahko pa soočenje z istino v človeku vzbudi onkraj dobrega in zlega moraliziranja neko svobodno voljo in samoodločitev za ljubezensko naravnost do sveta, ne glede na njegovo primarno brutalno naravo zveri. Lahko bi rekli, da sta tesnoba in nelagodje odziv na prvobitni krik, udarec realnega primarnega travmatičnega dogodka, ki v psihoanalizi kliče po katarzičnem transferju in pripoznanju negativne *jouissance* kot nemogoče odveze, ki je njena realnost. To ne odpravi prazne etične istine veselja, ki ni ne kruto ne ljubeče, ne kaznuje niti ne nudi azila pred »zločinom«. In kot pesem jasno opozori, ne gre samo za osebno bitnost, ampak za nadosebno realnost. Napeta struna vetra, njen *vibrato*, bi bila potemtakem tisto, čemur pravim politično nezavedno takega učinkovanja. Namreč, če individualno delovanje tubiti preči etika (nezavednega), se ta na planu družbene emancipacije (polis) odvija kot politika. Človek bližnjega ne ljubi zato, ker bi bila v njem na delu kakšna kozmična sila, ampak samo kultura onkraj morale po njegovi ali njeni srčni zmožnosti, etični zrelosti in osebni odločitvi:

Nauči se ga [terorističnega morilca]
ljubiti, če se nadejaš, da boš
lahko preprečil smrt svojega srca,

pravi Jackson. Ti verzi so v kurzivi poudarjeni že v pesmi. Slišati so zelo krščansko in moralistično. Seveda, zakaj pa ne, če je to upravičeno in ne

gre za prazno sprenevedanje, konformizem ali slabo vest. Ampak najprej je treba zločinca (morilca) soočiti z njegovim zločinom in kaznijo.⁸ Tu pa smo na majavem terenu primarnega manka. Bog ga vsekakor ne bo kaznoval. Zabavna težava teorije strun v tem primeru je namreč v tem, da trenutno o njeni korespondenci z realnostjo veselja nimamo z izjemo teoretične spekulacije nobenega dejanskega dokaza, da tam zunaj obstajajo zakoni, ki jih zapisuje matematika. Morda jih še uspeva zapisovati, ampak razen učenega prepričanja, da gre v matematiki za univerzalne večne ideje, dokončnega fizikalnega dokaza za to še ne premoremo.

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⁸ Jean Louis Schefer piše: »Gledalec [bralec] ureja naslado zločina, ki ga podoba odlaga, ker je on sam čas brez rešitve 'akta tega imaginarnega zločina': žrtev, birič, optični stroj, gibanje naprave [besedila].« (56) Zakaj zločin? Zato ker je za človeka »svet dosegljiv le v fikciji moralne biti v njeni nasladi.« (55)

Richard Jackson

Teorija strun

V sanjah, ki jih sanjam, ni o njej ničesar
tam, kjer naj bi bilo. Uganka obzorja
se razleti. Mi zberemo koščke.
Gozdne vešče poskušajo zapolniti praznine med
vejami. Čebulice, ki smo jih posadili,
so vzklike.
Gre za sanje ali za spomine? Veter se razvleče
v tanko struno in ovije
besede. Oblaki
se nagubajo kot krep papir. Ne, to more biti spomin.
Nihalo sprva zaniha k *da* in potem k *ne*
iz treska bombe.
Kakšna bomba? Preveč jih je bilo, da bi jih prešteli,
preveč krajev, ki so jih uničile. Njene besede,
še ne izumljene. Sanje v snu
so kot palimpsesti antičnih rokopisov.
Celo menihi jih ne razvozlajo.
Sem rekel sanje? Je to preteklost
ali prihodnost? Vešče vztrajno zunaj na dvorišču
zakopavajo svoja antična vprašanja. No, prav,
gre za sedanjost. Ki drsi nad
prepadi spomina. Začetek se nikoli ne sklene.
Konec je zapečaten. Nadenemo mu
najboljši obraz, iznajdemo novo masko iz besed.
Plezalci vedo, da se skrivnosti skalne stene
skrivajo v drezah. Svet je vse,
kar je, je rekel
filozof. Vesolje je hologram, preslikan iz
ene generacije v naslednjo, je rekel drugi.
Tega, kar smo, ne vidimo.
Čez več tisoč let bo pepelnato sonce sežgalo
vse, kar bo preživelo, in kraje, kjer smo bili.
Luna se bo razpočila kot strok
ambrovca. To že niso sanje. Ampak
spomin, odtisnjen v srčni album.
Hartley je menil, da so naše sanje
smetišče srca. Zunaj se druga drugi posmehujeta
dve sovi, to niso niti sanje

нити не spomin. In nekdo daleč proč
je z avtom zapeljal v množico, da bi izrazil
nekaj, česar ni razumel. *Nauči se ga*
ljubiti, če se nadejaš, da boš
lahko preprečil smrt svojega srca, je pozneje molil
nekdo iz množice. In tako tudi je, ampak
šele zdaj začenjam razumeti, kako je vse
povezano. Preteklost je vedno samo nekaj, kar še traja.
Trenutki poniknejo v drugo zgodovino.
Na isti način v srcu pozvanjajo
lastne pozabljene zgodbe, kot ta večer, kaj je zbudilo
vse to – pojemajoč, cvileč krik
zajca, ki ga je uplenil kojot,
zvok, ki reže skozi te spomine, čez
splete izgubljenih besed, ki so pokazale,
kako ljubiti, končno, v tem pomanjkljivem svetu

Prevedel Iztok Osojnik

The Poem “String Theory” by Richard Jackson and the Interpretation of a Poem as the Unconsciousness Machine

Keywords: American poetry / Jackson, Richard / literary interpretation / psychoanalysis / phenomenology

The poem “String Theory” by Richard Jackson first addresses the relationship between poetry and its interpretation (theory, physics, psychoanalysis or even philosophy). I introduce a few concepts focusing on “the stain” of the poem, caused by futility of searching for the meaning of the poem and its interpretation. Notions of its inner timeness and of the unconscious are introduced to reach beyond the conventional interpretation. How does a poem happen? When does it happen? The interpretative actualization of the poem should eradicate any particular individuality. What goes for unconscious in the Lacanian psychoanalysis goes for poetry too: unconscious workings are in the form of deformation, not in the content. So whatever subjectivity (the lyrical subject) still persists in the poem it always directs one’s attention to such deformation, a stain, a scream in the poem. How does this stain articulate itself so that it is a poem (of futile love, melancholy) but not, e.g., theory of physics, nor any mystic contemplation of the divine light? “String Theory” vibrates between fragmented dreams as subconscious language that enables the satisfaction of the unconscious and suppressed “stained” memory, the traumatic nucleus, that keeps running the recurrence of the uncomfortable feelings and distress. Hopefully my interpretative reference to the poem “String Theory” could provoke the appearance of the existential Thing that will offer itself to us as a present by unbearably evading us and that is exactly what we ascribe to the function of poetical discursivity.

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Ennobling Interchanges

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This paper draws on the poetic concept of the oneness of the self and the world, as elaborated through Coleridge's reading of German romantic philosophers by the poet William Wordsworth. In his poem "Prelude" he rejects simple materialism and simple spiritualism, just as Schelling rejected the extreme views that the spiritual self creates the world or that the material world is created by the self. Wordsworth claims that things are half created and half perceived, and that there are ennobling interchanges between the world and the self. The notion of oneness, of the merging of inner and outer, perceived and the perceiver, has been influential on numerous and diverse poets. In the paper, I compare various modes of vision that attempt to reveal this oneness in Slovenian poets such as Prešeren, Kosovel, Detela and Osojnik on the one hand, and Wright, Oliver, Murray, Stevens and Strand among American writers. The question of influence is at least ambiguous, but what I am suggesting is some likenesses that seem to emerge from the act searching the world through writing.

Keywords: Slovenian poetry / American poetry / interchange / self and the world / oneness / Wordsworth, William

In "Book 14" of Wordsworth's 1850 *Prelude* the poet climbs Mt. Snowdon in Wales to see the sun rise. He fails at that but, as is often the case, discovers something more important when he breaks through the cloud cover and seems to be looking over a vast sea illuminated by the moon with a kind of visionary light. Beneath the clouds is a vast array of sounds: "[T]he roar of waters, torrents, streams / innumerable, roaring with one voice" (Wordsworth, *The Prelude* 14: 59–60), which are subsumed under the clouds. As he looks he realizes:

There I beheld the emblem of a mind
That feeds upon infinity, that broods
Over the dark abyss... a mind sustained
By recognition of transcendent power. (71–76)

Literally in those lines the mind both encompasses and is encompassed by the abyss of infinity and participates in a "mutual domination" and an "interchangeable supremacy" (51, 54). He has, after a life journey recorded in the whole poem, arrived at

A balance, an ennobling interchange
Of action from without and from within...,
Both of the object seen and the eye that sees. (12: 376–379)

Earlier he had experienced the mind as it submitted to “outward sense” or as the outward world was an “obedient servant” of the mind (222). Earlier too, he had realized, in preparation for this moment, that “we multiply distinctions” (2: 217).

This notion of *Oneness* is something Wordsworth arrives at through Coleridge’s reading of Schelling, Kant and Hegel: for Wordsworth the point is to avoid both a simple materialism and a simple spiritualism, and he struggles with this throughout the *Prelude*. Schelling in his identity theory similarly rejects the extremes of a spiritual self that creates the world and a material world that creates the self. Wordsworth sees a situation where things are “half created, half perceived” (*Poetical* 163). Like Schelling he moves away from mere correspondences to a poetic version of identity in the concept of the *Oneness* or ennobling interchange. Schelling, for instance, writes that one knows the world’s “true essence only in the link by which it eternally posits its unity as the multiplicity of things and again posits its multiplicity as its unity” (cit. from Bowie). This is precisely what Wordsworth experiences in the *Oneness* of the roaring waters and voices united in the simultaneous mind of the self and the clouds, the Other. As Schelling writes: “If it is to be as One then it must reveal itself in itself; but it does not reveal itself in itself if it is not an other in itself, and as *in* this other the One for itself” (*Ibid.*).

Over a century after Wordsworth, American poet James Wright, at the end of his collected poems, arrives at a similar vision. Earlier in the book—and his life—there were occasional moments, that occurred mostly in retrospect. In “A Snail at Assisi” he observes not the snail but its shell, and as the day progresses he imagines what became of it, and for a few brief moments, as he projects its life as his own, “My shadow and the shadow of the snail are one and the same” (279). But it is with the last poem, “Winter Daybreak Above Venice,” that he achieves a vision that echoes Wordsworth’s. As he looks from a mountainside the night covers his sight of what is below, much as Wordsworth’s clouds, and he too hears a myriad of sounds as he imagines a goatherder’s house and his sleeping goats, and the city awakening, and then

In turn, and somehow
Impossibly hovering in the air over everything

The Mediterranean, nearer to the moon
 Than the mountain is,
 Shines. (376)

Suddenly, the moon and stars flicker out and “the whole mountain / Appears, pale as a shell.” That sudden shift creates for him a new world that extends Wordsworth’s vision so that he is in the midst of a world where everything is interchanged:

Look, the sea has not fallen and broken
 Our heads. How can I feel so warm
 Here in the dead center of January? I can
 Scarcely believe it, and yet I have to, this is
 The only life I have. I get up from the stone.
 My body mumbles something unseemly
 And follows me. Now we are all sitting here strangely
 On top of the sunlight.

All—everything—he and his friend in the poem, Galway Kinnell, the reader, the people and things in the town, the mountain, moon and invisible stars, are all part of the unifying vision.

We should note here a distinction. When Walt Whitman celebrates himself it is as a participant in a “knit of identity” (Folsom, sect. 3) that seems beyond time in an ongoing “now,” and yet separate. His identity, or as he calls himself in section 24, a “Kosmos,” is achieved not by some vision of transcendence and unity but as what Ed Folsom calls “descendence,” a move where the soul descends and “energizes” both itself and the body (Folsom 21). While from the beginning he wants to *include* the reader as Other (“for every atom belonging to me as good belongs to you,” sect. 1) both self and other are distinct with their own “belongings.” It is in this sense that he “contains multitudes” (sect. 51). And at the end, while he becomes the blade of grass under the reader’s boots, he is also distinct and, after death, “will stop somewhere waiting for you” (sect. 52). Rather than a sense of *Oneness* Whitman opts for an expansion of the self that includes all his readers as part of himself.

On the other hand, from the perspective of Wordsworth, Prešeren or at least my own reading of Prešeren in translation, often expresses a similar desire to achieve a kind of *Oneness* with the world around him. As Žižek suggests, Prešeren’s poems “can only momentarily embrace a *Oneness* with the world” (120). In his great epic of the *Baptism at the Savica*, the hero, after the battle, looks out over Lake Bohinj which

seems, like Wordsworth's vision sea of clouds on Snowdon, calm on the surface, or Wright's sea of sky but also contains "armies" and various "denizens" beneath that surface. This doubleness of surface and depth is what unites it with the hero's own mind:

Does not, o Črtomir, this selfsame lake
Resemble you, as on its shore you stand? (Prešeren 119)

And the fact that the narrator, Prešeren, asks this personal question, just as he inserts himself at other points in the narrative, suggest also a *Oeness* of narrator, character and lake, of self and other in a way that is as complex as Wordsworth's vision. Indeed, Prešeren's intimate connection to Vrba, as we see in the "Sonnets of Unhappiness," which I take as his masterpiece, and which also underscores this desire for *Oeness*, if yearned for more than achieved.

Even later in the epic, as Črtomir visits the Savica falls, a similar scene occurs but here the vision takes the world around him and gathers it skyward into one whirlwind, just as his own mind turns heavenly as he is to be converted:

Our hero listens to the thundering falls
Next morning, thinking as the banks below
Are shaken by the water as it brawls
And roars, while undermining in its flow
The trees and cliffs and towering mountain walls
And in its wrath its foamclouds skywards blow! (129)

This is a crucial point in the narrative and reflects the tension, especially apparent in Wordsworth and Prešeren, between pantheism and Christianity, or between a material and a spiritual vision. In fact, the priest in the epic suggests that *Oeness* will finally be achieved between man and God, but in death (137). In the end, as Žižek suggests, Prešeren's hero is left not with a unity that embraces the world, but one that embraces its emptiness in himself, from his converted point of view, so for the narrator the poem creates an "undecided intermediate state" of momentary flashes (Wordsworth's term) of unity (Žižek 120).

Of course there are other moments in Prešeren such as in "The Minstrel" where the birdsong imitates man imitating the birdsong so that they feel as one (Prešeren 41). While these kinds of scenes are not as sustained, they appear occasionally as Wordsworth's "spots of time," that conflate space and time in the mind. This is a crucial point, I should add, for to have these moments of *Oeness* ever present would

be to lose the self: instead, these poets have momentary experiences, possibilities always deferred to the next moment once achieved. This creates one of the major tensions in both their poetries that work to avoid a simple religious point of view and establish a *Oneness* that is cosmic and secular, one that is focused on the mind and its “ennobling interchanges” with the world around it.

This search for *Oneness*, then, is an unending one, and requires the poet’s intense attention, as Mary Oliver explains:

I see something and look at it. I see myself going closer and closer
 Just to see it better, as though to see its meaning out of its physical form.
 And then I take something emblematic from it, and then it transcends the actual.
 (Cit. from McClatchy 409)

Once she feels that transcending reality she is able to imaginatively become part of it. It is a piecemeal process. Her poem, “Sleeping in the Forest” (403), begins with her worrying that the earth does not “remember me” but as she sleeps her “thoughts ... floated / light as moths among the branches / of perfect trees.” She seems then to rise and fall with her thoughts which she, in a sense, becomes so that in the end she has “vanished at least a dozen times / into something better.” And in “At Backwater Pond” she drinks and hears the world around her “deep inside me, whispering” (393). In “Whelks” [scallops], she looks for the edges of the world in the edges of the shells that “have snapped and crumbled,” a boundary that has broken down and “vanished” so that she herself attempts “to be / that wild darkness, / that long, blue body of light” (277). That is, to be both inside and outside, light and darkness thus achieving a *Oneness* that straddles the now invisible border.

But it is perhaps in “Pink Moon: The Pond” (419–420) that she expresses her process best. As she approaches the pond, an outsider, the sound of the frogs stills for a moment until

little by little the silence lifts
 until song is everywhere
 and your soul rises from your bones,
 and strides out over the water.

The soul itself keeps traveling, “unfolding / like a pair of wings.” The body that then follows the soul into the water as the music of the frogs moves

upward through your own throat,
not even noticing
you are something else
and that's when it happens –
you see everything
through their eyes

At that point body and soul, self and world become one for, as she writes, “everything is everything else.” Thus the poem ends with a kind of transfiguration of herself:

the darkness coming down
called water,
called spring,
called the green leaf, called
a woman's body
as it turns into mud and leaves,
as it beats into a cage of water,
as it turns like a lonely spindle
in the moonlight, as it says
yes.

The self here is both “vanishing” as she remarks earlier in the poem, for she becomes a woman's body of mud and leaves, becomes part of the pond, part of everything—but also she is a contained self. That is why the poem is written in second person: the you is herself, the character in the poem, and as the experience of the poem goes, the reader who is at least partially addressed. Using second person allows her to begin out of herself, already starting to become part of that “everything [in] everything else.”

Like Oliver, Joan Murray writes that “the third dimensional forms and life you build within yourself” is part of “the root that is all about you” (132). In “The Builder” she writes how going down to the seas she wants “to pack it up to my arms / and let the blue globe of all that water fill my mouth / Rise up my head, my chest, bursts out of the sullen seed of my loin.” For her, the process is to be, as Wordsworth says, creator and created at once:

Like a wind passing slowly along the valley
That which passes by is narrow and is the woman
Is the autumn leaf leaped between one tree
And long looming of one bird to scan
One tree one land one river in no hour (14)

What she creates is an “inlocked” world where everything becomes one thing. Though she died at an early age, like Srećko Kosovel, she left behind an amazing array of poems and journals as she strove to achieve a “consciousness in the never-ending, the great wideness that one must blend withal” (142).

“It is autumn quiet inside me / and outside. Beautiful / wherever I turn my thoughts” (26), Kosovel himself writes in “Autumn Quiet.” It seems unlikely as in his later political and graphological poems that he would be striving after some sort of *Oeness*. Later in that poem he describes his life as something he must “imprint / with my sign.” The signs, his words and their shape on the page, are arranged to create a tactile quality and are precisely the way he achieves his own version of *Oeness*. I am reminded of Wordsworth’s note to “The Thorn” where he says “the mind attaches to words, not only as symbols of the passion, but as things, active and efficient, which are of themselves part of the passion” (*Poetical* 701). Taking the words into the self takes in also the world, allowing the poem to become one with it. “Everything is within me,” Kosovel writes in “The Whole World is Like” (141). And in “Open” he writes “My heart is open to eternity” (141).

Ultimately what he is after is what he calls “the unwritten, unthinkable, / never sensed Word” (108). Note that “Word” is capitalized, drawing attention to its status as graphic object and just as, in a more obvious manner, the vertically written “INTO THE MARSHES” in “Spherical Mirror” (50) suggests something beyond the simple referential quality of the words. It is as if one must touch the poem as one would a sculpture. With its two lines of words leading out from the column in the shape of a reversed letter “K” that suggest a reflection from a mirror, the graphic visualization is, as he says in the poem, a “mirror / to know yourself” (50). That is, the letters themselves reflect back the self that looks towards them—a version of the “ennobling interchange.”

Where Kosovel distinguishes himself is that the *Oeness* is often achieved in death, or in the kind of poetic madness that Shelley, Plato and Wordsworth describe. In “Above The Madhouse,” for example, a “Shadow-man” walks in a “moonstruck” garden, but also in a kaleidoscope of past financial dealings. That does not sound much like a striving to *Oeness*, in fact just the opposite. But the ending turns to suggest that the place is one of liberation for the man, the poet and the reader as Kosovel turns to address us:

This is freedom,
the horrible freedom
you have stepped behind the invisible walls
of expanded human consciousness,
which unfolds in a terrible
immensity. (43)

Here the wall that separates self and world, mind and cosmos, is breached as we move away, as Wordsworth did, from superficial, everyday things towards a larger vision of unity.

I have argued elsewhere (Jackson 164–182) for the way Jure Detela's concern for the ecological welfare of the world is akin to American poet W. S. Merwin, and I would assert here that he has much in common with Mary Oliver in their desire for *Oneness*. As with Kosovel there is a sense in which death brings some answers. In "Mama, How Do Dead People Feel?", the self is literally enclosed by the refrain:

I have always known
the dry leaf
on springtime branch
suffers for itself.
And during the days
when I have been
far away from it
I've known nevertheless
that the dry leaf
on springtime branch
suffers for itself. (Detela 71)

Detela's placement here seems to put himself in the folds of the dry, curling leaf however distant physically he seems to be. It should be noted that this is not a subjective self but one that has given up distinct selfhood for a unity with the Other, here specifically the dead leaf. In "Harts" (the pun in English on "hearts" emphasizing the unity between animal and human), as with Prešeren, a unity develops only with the death of the deer which creates a "translucent" vision where their "bodies unite [the earth] with the sky" (47). In some of his shorter poems we find the kind of flash vision such as those in Wordsworth spots of time and in James Wright. Take, for example, the following quatrain:

In quiet music a sleeping head
leans into me and awakens

herds of stars that spray like droplets
as a horse runs across the stream. (Detela 49)

Here the language itself, the metaphors as opposed to Kosovel's graphics and typology, creates an ennobling interchange among the speaker, the earth, the sky, the horse and the unnamed Other. The language itself suggests a never-ending extension of associations that could potentially gather around the scene.

In Detela's poem, "Ion," the speaker notes how our material history "sees / only the planes which separate the / spaces which limit living expansion" (73). But it is language of freedom, he says, countering the imprisoning language of history, a language from "every cell" of his body that "reveals a premonition of infinite / distances. Without leaving my body" (73). In "Antigone's Poem" the speaker realizes that her perspective, her life that has "flown together as one / image" is a pattern that suggests that "I have been forever dead / and my body is a pattern of the whole earth." That pattern is also based on her brother's corpse which is "buried everywhere, / wherever I am." The world here, through her imagery, her language is an extension of herself, is one with it.

Now it is true, as Miklavž Komelj says, that Detela cherished "the importance of understanding different creatures, not trying to identify with them, and acknowledging the infinite distance between us and them" (cit. from Detela 123). And it is clear in Detela's own "A Poem For Jure Detela" that his "search for / the meanings of the world in voices" also reveals "the solitude of // horror before another's suffering" (95). Still, without attempting a deconstruction, I have argued here that, like Wordsworth, there is a struggle in which one must maintain the self and yet be aware of the other as Other. Similar to Kosovel he finds a point of unity, while maintaining the distance we saw in "Ion" and the leaf poem, through the medium of language. Like Wordsworth, and frankly with all visions of *Oeness*, the experience is never sustained yet always striven for.

Wallace Stevens in his "The Idea of Order at Key West" listens for much of the poem as he tries to establish the connections among an unnamed "she" who sings, the voice of the sea she sings beside and seems to imitate or even create, and the "Spirit" that seems to hover over the scene. He soon realizes that it is "her voice that made / The sky acutest at its vanishing." Then he realizes she has created the world he experiences and is now a part of:

She was the single artificer of the world
In which she sang. And when she sang, the sea
Whatever self it had, became the self
That was her song, for she was the maker. (106)

The result is that, in the end, even the observers, us and the poet, experience “more than that, / more even than her voice, and ours” among the sounds of sea, wind, voice and song.

The maker’s rage to order words of the sea.
Words of the fragrant portals, dimly starred,
And of ourselves and of our origins,
In ghostlier demarcations, keener sounds. (106)

As with some of his other poems such as “The Man with the Blue Guitar” and “The House Was Quiet and the World Was Calm,” language, song, poetry itself, becomes here a reality that unites self and world.

A radically different approach, yet still in the tradition of Kosovel, is displayed in the recent poems of Iztok Osojnik. Many of these are written as a kind of automatic writing to make use of language per se as he strives for the

creative freedom of words that do not care
and do not care for blissfulness of
standard English of Slovenian of any language that I use (Osojnik, “Sheaf”)

for it is any word, any sound, that gives him access to something larger. Rather than trying to get at a Wordsworthian *Oneness*, an “unsayable,” he opts to “spell out syllables, one after another, losing control” as the language itself takes over. In fact, he creates his own “language” based on what he calls “poetic incontinence”—“and my spell checker is gone words they roll in fashions that / are not to be predicted or even taken serious”(Osojnik, “Sheaf”). Yet the issue for him is similar to what Wordsworth faces with his “distinctions” and “boundaries.” In his recent book, *Wagner*, Osojnik writes:

why should one compose the shards together again
why not to keep living like that
on oceans, continents, seven seas
here today, tomorrow in some foreign land
trying to regain one’s composure (86).

To regain that composure is to use the “pigeon language of winds” he says in another poem (98).

The kind of *Oneness* he seems to be after is a Whitmanesque embrace of all he sees, reads, feels and thinks into one unique pigeon language. For example, in a selection from “Silvestro” in 2011, he starts in Ljubljana on the Butcher’s bridge listening to the “chattering noise of fishermen’s amulets” and then, in a Whitmanesque gesture, includes

my town the universe above
 my supernova bazaar of spices, odes, smells, scents, fragrances, stench
 aromas perfumes
 stinks, vinegar in barrels, and
 large black windows, meaning business (91)

The poem moves with its voracious appetite to suggest it could include the cosmos if time allowed. Like Wordsworth and Wright at the end of their poems, earth and sky exchange places, and each is defined by the other as the sense impressions become their own supernovas. As he says in a recent manuscript poem:

There was my
 Whitmanian ode to Hudson river, I leaned against the railings there, somehow
 feeling strongly
 the immense force of the river, the coldness of the waters
 its indescribable cosmic stream

The movement here, from railing to cosmos through the force of nature is Osojnik’s own version of the Wordsworthian and Whitmanesque striving for *Oneness*.

I have been demonstrating here that these poets offer various versions of an “ennobling interchange” during their versions of elusive “spots of time.” A poet like Wordsworth experiences it directly while a poet like Kosovel experiences it through language. Mark Strand, in “The Idea,” writes:

For us, too, there was a wish to possess
 Something beyond the world we knew, beyond ourselves,
 Beyond our power to imagine, something nevertheless
 In which we might see ourselves. (269)

And yet this too, as with the other poets here, comes not consistently but “always in passing, in a waning light,” for some sort of separation always asserts itself – “it was ours by not being ours,” he goes on to say. This is similar to what he writes in “the Story of Our Lives,” where a couple is reading the story of their lives which is taking place

precisely as they read the words, the book and the life, language and reality become an inescapable one. “[T]here was no more to our lives / than the story of our lives,” the couple understands. As he notes in an interview about another work: “I started writing *The Monument* and it became less and less about the translator of a particular text, and more about translation of a self, and the text as self, the self as book” (Graziano 63). What all these poets work with, of course, are words that can barely express, and most often in flashes, a sense of *Oeness* that forges a place and link with the world around them. In the end, what all these poets are striving for in their own individual ways is what Wordsworth calls a

Visionary power [that]....
Attends the motion of the viewless winds,
Embodied in the mystery of words. (5 554–560)

The notion of *Oeness*, then, of the merging of inner and outer, perceived and the perceiver, has been influential on numerous and diverse poets. One can speculate that today it has had an important impact on the number of poets involved in the ecological movement. Philosophically, one can see the effects of such thinking on poets such as Uroš Zupan in Slovenia through the Romantic influence of Hölderlin, and Linda Hogan in the USA, though the latter is also influenced by Native American Mythology (the relation between Wordsworth’s ideology and Native American beliefs would be a whole other paper, as would be the strand of Romanticism in nineteenth century Germany). Other poets influenced by the notion of *Oeness* include Robert Frost among the poets of the last century as well James Wright and Richard Hugo later in the century. It is a commonplace that poets often arrive at theoretical stances before scientists and philosophers, and perhaps this continued influence and concern will help the conversation about our relationship to the world and its environment. To understand the world through this notion of *Oeness* is to understand the self, and to understand both of them is to help create a better world and a fuller self.

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Oplajajoče izmenjave

Ključne besede: slovenska poezija / ameriška poezija / medsebojno oplajanje / jaz in svet / enost / Wordsworth, William

Prispevek izhaja iz poetičnega koncepta enosti jaza in sveta, kot ga je skozi Coleridgeevo branje nemških romantičnih filozofov izoblikoval pesnik William Wordsworth. Ta v svoji pesnitvi »Preludij« zavrača preprosti materializem in preprosti spiritualizem, podobno kot je Schelling zavrnil skrajni stališči, da poduhovljeni jaz ustvari svet ali da materialni svet ustvari jaz. Wordsworth trdi, da so stvari pol ustvarjene in pol zaznane, med svetom in jazom pa prihaja do oplajajočih izmenjav. Ideja o enosti, o zlivanju notranjosti in zunanosti, zaznanega in zaznavajočega, je vplivala na številne različne pesnike. V članku

primerjam različne načine videnja, ki skušajo razkriti omenjeno enost, in sicer pri slovenskih pesnikih, kot so Prešeren, Kosovel, Detela in Osojnik na eni strani, ter pri Jamesu Wrightu, Mary Oliver, Joan Murray, Wallacu Stevensu in Marku Strandu med ameriškimi pisatelji. Vprašanje vpliva je vsaj dvoumno, toda kar nakazujem, je določena podobnost, za katero se zdi, da izhaja iz dejanja, ki svet raziskuje skozi pisanje.

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Invisible Strings: Exploring Connections Between the Poetries of Jean Valentine and Meta Kušar

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The epigraph in poet Jean Valentine's book Break the Glass: "A pencil/for a wing bone" (by Lorine Neidecker) leads us to consider the way writing allows for transcendence. Similarly, in her work, Meta Kušar brushes out stars with a comb and then finds "an accomplice / combed / in this hollowed-out place..." From the two countries US and Slovenia of such vastly different sizes, these poets, both influenced by such luminaries as Emily Dickinson and Marina Tsvetaeva, have carved out intimate spiritually enriching spaces where consciousness meets the sublime. Focusing on Kušar's view of Heraclitus as a teacher who "understood invisible strings are stronger than visible ones," I will explore the thematic, literary and stylistic connections between these two literary stars, as well as some of their differences in how they cultivate a poetics of the invisible that illuminates the mysterious underworld of the human soul as it negotiates the political, philosophical and ethical realms of contemporary existence.

Keywords: Slovenian poetry / American poetry / comparative studies / Kušar, Meta / Valentine, Jean / poetics of the invisible / feminism

Noise abounds in the streets, in technology, in the media, in the political rhetoric. In a recent article "Disappearing Acts," Gal Beckerman in reviewing two new books on the value of invisibility and silence in our culture, notes that what is "unseen, undetected and overlooked" (20) is often where real meaning and power lie. Such invisible silences may act as an antidote or inner force against the "noise" that seems to grow louder, more insistent and pervasive in our time while saying less and less to our souls. Meta Kušar in a recent interview in *The Bridge of Voices* refers to Heraclitus as her teacher "who understood that the invisible strings are stronger than the visible ones" (Carlson and Jackson 78). It is through these strings that Kušar and American poet Jean Valentine's voices create a space as intimate and spiritually enriching as it is vast

with larger concerns of community, humanity, existence. And while one writes in English and the other in Slovenian, both move invisible strings within and between readers to resonate at new registers.

Jean Valentine introduces her book *Break the Glass* with the epigraph by Lorine Neidecker: “A pencil/for a wing bone” (3), leading us to consider the way writing allows for transcendence. Meta Kušar begins her poem “Second Table” with a pencil that “lifts the soul, attach[ing] the poem to the invisible womb.” For both the act of writing compels them to reach out of themselves and into the unknown source of creation.

Valentine begins an earlier book *The Cradle of Real Life* with “The Pen” that “writes by itself,” and whose thought is

lying on the thought of the table
a bow lying across the strings

not moving
held (247)

In “Second Table” Kušar’s pencil germinates the poem’s lines into a living body: “When it springs to life, the pencil tip / lays a germ amid the lines.” Kušar sees matter as spiritualized and poems as living nature, “a stalk / turning green” (Ljubljana 87).

For Valentine too, poetry is a living entity. She says in an interview: “My goal is to take out everything that doesn’t feel alive. And to get to a place that has some depth to it. Certainly I’m always working with things that I don’t understand with the unconscious, the invisible. And finding a way to translate it” (*Break the Glass* back jacket). In “*Bury Your Money*” from *Shirt in Heaven*, she writes, “Great captivities tap / in our sleep,” though what such captivities are remain invisible in the material public world. Something confined but voracious within us knocks: “[G]reat famines bury the ear and the mouth, / though captivities cut parts away.” To feel a sense of the divine we must “Be naked, John Cage said / *Music is continuous, only listening is intermittent*” (26).

We might view both poets as flowing-beneath-the-surface-of-culture, carrying their insights in deep images flecked with the surreal, creating a sense of being both grounded in time and eternal. Both subvert expected outcomes, reaching for the unknowable. They often come at this in different ways. Valentine’s lyricism comes through terse often muted fragments. She allows for white spaces, silences and pauses in her arrangements, as though spreading the poem across the page like shell pieces that hold memories, music and other lives within each fragment.

In “The Japanese Garden” from *Break the Glass*, Valentine looks at the Japanese garden with its precise number of wet green stones, bamboo and ferns that quickly becomes imagined as an underwater scene with the birds as fish. In the final lines she turns to the reader:

And you,

masked reader: the glance
of your underwater lamp,

your blackwater embrace—
not bought or sold. (13)

Maybe this scene is meant to estrange our perception of what is before our eyes. Maybe the reader, which includes herself, is the one both giving and receiving as a result of looking more deeply. The perception of being embraced by the strange or unseen holds enormous trust in the mystery that cannot be unpacked or made into a commodity. Kušar too estranges but often in a more direct emphatic tone:

Language senses depth
And the dark of a rose.
And a calm that doesn't prize honors.

If I get only a whiff of unity,
I drive misfortune away. (63)

Kušar feels her way more directly. While both employ different tones, they recall Emily Dickinson, not only in so far as the act of writing allows for spiritual revelation and rupture from social, literary and religious constraint, but also in their ambiguity. Stevie Edwards, in her article “A Room Without Men: Toward Outlining a Feminist Perspective,” describes how an elliptical poetry may at times be a resistance to male dominated patriarchal poetry which has traditionally favored rationalism, explanation and grammar (57). As these two came of age at a time which did not explicitly explore the inner lives of women, both cultivate a poetic expression that both empowers and celebrates this intimate space that at times seems to resist or repel easy access.

Dickinson becomes a powerful under-voice for Kušar in her view of the spiritual force that is stronger than any human construct or system. As she writes in poem “28” from *Ljubljana*:

Logic doesn't come first, though it eases things.
Somewhere between courage and worship
My learning breaks
Over the brim.
Although massive palaces pile up permanence for themselves,
Cold will crack them till they bleed. (59)

Spirit breaks through unapologetically. In poem “75” she evokes Dickinson on the shallowness and corruption of a worldly attention, but with a cutting tone:

It echoes down the corridor.
To win! To win
To clamor for fame!
One devastated vision. (109)

The poem itself goes on to focus on the female as giver of life that endures unrecognized as “this black moonlight does not dare honour the woman / calmly giving birth under the dome.” What will restore us? She says in poem “76,” “solitude will restore the rooms its desire,” but wonders what a flower or vine such as ivy sees “when it climbs out of the grave?” (109)

Like Kušar, Valentine focuses on the force beneath the surface. In “Open” from *Shirt in Heaven*, she “lay[s] down under language” (20) and enters that liminal between death and birth. In that invisible under-space, the speaker is receptive. Only when language left, “the Comforter, came into the room,” the blood and mouth “all buttoned away” as she says goodbye to all the “Makers of horses, books, clothes” (20), subverting the Christ figure as “King” in Dickinson’s “I heard a Fly buzz—when I died—” (265).

I heard a Fly buzz—when I died—
The Stillness in the Room
Was like the Stillness in the Air—

Between the Heaves of Storm—
The Eyes around—had wrung them dry—
And Breaths were gathering firm
For that last Onset—when the King
Be witnessed—in the Room—

I willed my Keepsakes—Signed away
What portion of me be

Assignable—and then it was
There interposed a Fly—

Valentine's whisper goes directly into the ear. In "Bardo" from *Shirt in Heaven*, she begins by addressing a homeless person. But when their eyes meet, it is as if this person morphs into her spiritual teacher, allowing her to remove all the coverings and enter the elemental.

You were picking through a trash bag,
taller than you.
Taking out anything worth something.

Our eyes met. I thought
What keeps us here? Two-legged?
You looked right through me. (18)

The word "bardo" (in Tibetan Buddhism) denotes the transitional state between death and rebirth, but as Sogyal Rinpoche tells us "*bardos are occurring continuously throughout both life and death*, and are junctures when the possibility of liberation, or enlightenment, is heightened" (11). A juncture is a point at which two bodies are joined. It is also a pause, a space allowing presence, clarity and compassion to penetrate.

Valentine is continually seeking such a space to counter the brutality of the world, natural or otherwise. In "The Just-Born Rabbits" from *Break the Glass*, she finds the furless newborns in the garden "huddled blind, translucent, hardly here." After a double stanza break, she writes matter-of-factly: "I called John (a farmer), and asked him what to do: // *Put your boot on them. Now you've been there, / The mother will never come back.*" The poem ends with a paradox and acquiescence to the unknowable as well as another double stanza break to give pause and attention in a blank space before the holy: "*—life from whom/death also springeth green / —thy leave to sleep* (31). She goes from flat to psalm-like, not only as a way toward consolation, but also to illuminate further understanding of the wholeness of vision in this view of bardo as a paradox containing death in life and life in death.

The characters in Valentine's poems are often those vulnerable, misunderstood, hidden or lost in some way or other, sustained by unseen sources. In "The Helicopter," from *Shirt in Heaven*, note how the universe opens from "the little girl [...] crying, her mother, a girl herself, / [...] giving birth, [as] the forest dropped birdseeds of milk" (23). She compares the mother to the artist Joseph Cornell "who came to us empty-handed" (23), but whose boxes breathe the universe. Such

further drawing from the deeper world is reminiscent of the image in Tomas Tranströmer's poem "Fire-Jottings," of how he with his lover, "milked the cosmos and survived" (171). She finds similar soul nourishment in Lucy, the ancient hominid whom she addressed in a sequence of poems at the end of *Break this Glass*. Lucy becomes a kind of soul mother "filling [her] center-hole / with bliss" (64), representative of one that transcends death to feed the starving soul.

Valentine is a poet attuned to and nurtured by the view that most of reality is hidden from our senses. In *The Physics of God*, author Joseph Selbie quotes near-death researcher Kevin Williams in comparing reality to boxes: "There are many realms that take up the same space as the physical realm much like boxes within boxes. The physical realm is but one of the boxes in the hierarchy of boxes" (126). Valentine's poems often have the feel of not only a Cornell box but also a matryoshka doll with hidden realities nested inside.

While Valentine's language is muted and spare with elliptical images, Kušar stacks lines unbroken by white space to create, in Stanislava Repar's words, "associative labyrinths" (176) that convey a feisty defiance; she has a high-spirited ego, almost in opposition to the ostensibly ego-less surface of a Valentine poem. In her poem "Fortress" from *This Hollowed-Out Place That Barely Exists*, she compares love to a pair of tweezers probing matter. At the same time when such tweezers "grab hold of trash / they get bent," the idea being that the mind is corruptible depending on what it explores. But she will not "bow down to oppressors. / I'll push them away." Trash becomes an oppressor. When she proclaims, "Let God receive them! / Where does it say I have to do it alone?" (73), she leaves it to God in a voice that is both empowered by and accepting of a higher spiritual force, the fortress becoming the invisible.

In Kušar's work we might sense at times the influence of Tomaž Šalamun in both his image-layering and subversion, although Kušar's is a strong feminine voice that, as Repar notes, does not "hang on the climbing rope of 'man's investment' but is self-confident and disobedient ... focused on her own destiny" (177). Her layers accrete to summon the sublime underneath

to find the accomplice
 combed
 in this hollowed-out place
 that barely exists. (*Hollowed-Out Place* 75)

Valentine's layers are more unspoken as they too seek to uncover what was woman's history. In "He Says to me, Ireland" from *The Door in the Mountain*, Valentine acknowledges the void in recorded history as she says:

But I want those women's lives
 rage constraint
 The poems they burned
 in their chimney-throats
 The History
 of the World Without Words
 more than our silver or your gold art. (266)

Kušar views poetry as bread. The process of *kneading*, the word, which in English contains a wonderful double-meaning "needing or necessity" also represents the connective tissue between women and generations of women:

Like my mother and other women before her,
 I knead dough slowly and want it to rise well.
 I don't want to be rushed.
 Even if deserted streets chilled me to the bone. (*Ljubljana* 105)

Kneading the dough is also questioning and knowing that "If my questions run dry, / What's really mine won't come to me" (105).

Kušar conflates the personal, historical, political and metaphysical in expressing the "smallness" of being ignored or passed over, a common plight of women throughout history.

I know the smallness
 That a poem falls into when
 No one bothers to see your fingers.
 Or look you in the face!
 Because they don't know why words exist. (61)

Her concern reaches further out into human destruction and survival as "a blind kangaroo hurling himself against the fence," to characterize the anger, desperation and helplessness against all forms of destruction the human inflicts on the world. For "Between Athens and Amsterdam lies / affliction" (107). And evil that is denied is eventually exposed, and in this way Kušar fears for beauty, and yet belief in the essential "dripping from the white mountains" is ever-present. Her ending on the color white acknowledges its paradoxical nature as being both blank and infi-

nite with color, as well as symbolic of the one-ness or unity of all things. Perhaps this is the “white path down through the garden” (101).

Kušar’s final poem in *Ljubljana* is prescient, if not tongue-in-cheek in the way it addresses the contemporary political moment in parable-like if not satiric terms of a nobleman and his estates being ruined by “nomads” who do not know about his tumultuous life. When the nobleman steps vigorously inside a monastery, she wonders at the nomads’ lack of awareness. “Don’t they know about the passageways between the walls and air?” resonates, as he is also the barbarian who “ruins all the ladies and their gifts.” She draws from the passageway, the hidden pathway, to exclaim, “What a thought! / to link him with the remnants of the heavenly world” (111). In this way Kušar asserts her truth with bold irony.

Valentine feels a similar sense of injustice goes to the core of our being. Julie Carr in an essay on Valentine (“On Saying No: Valentine and Dickinson Break the Glass”) notes that “Valentine’s outrage emerges from her awareness that oppression and violence do not only insult and injure the body, they also harm the spirit, and are thus insults levied directly at God” (229).

Both poets also feel a connection to Marina Tsvetaeva, who felt many souls resided in her, and whom in reading we might find “that spiritual forces compete in every line she ever wrote” (xi). Tsvetaeva called her desk transcendent instrument (53) akin to Valentine’s pen and Kušar’s table. Kaminsky, in his afterword to *Dark Elderberry Branch*, mentions that Tsvetaeva had “a frenzied wish to become lost” (35). That sense of being lost is also one of being lost in language—Tsvetaeva questioned her native language “What is one’s native language? ... [P]oets speak in enigma—as children do ... slants, gaps ... empty pockets” (37). Tsvetaeva wrote out of unimaginable hardship and loss even as she yearned for artistic expression, finding spiritual meaning in the ordinary: “To know the spirit is my beloved” (3). At the same time, she blesses her daily labor, sleep, night,

And the coat, your coat, my coat,
half dust, half holes.
And I bless the peace

in a stranger’s house—the bread in a stranger’s oven. (3)

To bless the coat is to bless what protects and keeps us warm. Only it has holes, which she blesses as well. And peace not in her house, but in a stranger’s house as warm bread, an image that places nourishment in

the warmth of stranger. For Tsvetaeva, estrangement and ruin can also lead to connection.

This blessing of a stranger's intimate space recalls Valentine's capacity for empathy extending to the heart's core, where there are no divisions. For example, in this one from *Shirt in Heaven* addressed to Tsvetaeva, "Her last year" where Valentine bids Tsvetaeva to rest her mouth, music, her "walking around" and to drink and eat, even while Valentine sees her eating stones, bones, mud and light. First, Valentine doesn't recognize anything, "Not a sign, a cut, a knife, a dark wood, a net." After a double stanza break she writes the opposite, "I recognize everything. / The sign, the cut, the knife, / the dark wood, the net." (9). In the imaginative act, Valentine becomes the other, and boundaries dissolve. And this echoes with Kušar's call for oneness with a wider lens as in poem "50" from *Ljubljana*:

Black masters check your heart
In the same way white masters do.
They line us up carefully.
There is just one voice calling. Here and there. (83)

Such is the reaching out of one into otherness and unity as she writes in poem "58": "Who nowadays would still build a hearth that does not end at the threshold? / Who comes to my feast of all colours and cultures?" The poem goes from stewing blueberries to horses enduring in battle because "While Easter buns are sizzling in the oven, / death gives off a pungent smell ... cut[ting] through the months. The length of all things." It is as if the poem moves through the world and her heart at the same time, "only the heart / has it his own way, because blood is visionary, / when not poisoned" (91).

For Valentine, real vision lies in the view that what is essential is the presence between us, the relation. That is the crucial encounter, drawing from Martin Buber's view, "All actual life is encounter" (62),¹ and that rather than holding love, we dwell in our love as a cosmic force (66). Valentine continually reckons with such a force on multiple levels. She addresses the "god of empty rooms, god of / one unable to speak" (Shirt 10) for Paul Celan. She knows she cannot "hold the finch who flew into the window" (11), for it flies into Osip and Nadezhda Mandelstam's faces. She casts out of herself into "speechless rising and setting" feeling with another: "Do I concern you? Am I there?" (12). Her empathy is personal and out of her own suffering her words seem

¹ This is also the epigraph to Valentine's *The Cradle of Real Life*.

to stream from heart-blood toward another as John Clare in his madness and loneliness with

love and nowhere for it
to go but your
sweet open eye to the wounded
eye of the beloved
then the bony aloneness (16)

Writing in lower caps with no punctuation, she enacts with tenderness and humility entrance into another's pain.

In conclusion, while their form and language may differ: Valentine offering a more open arrangement of spaces and silences, understated language as well as elliptical imagery where the self may lay low, and Kušar moving in stacks of lines with abrupt imagistic shifts and a more direct, emphatic voice to sound the vitality and potency of her concerns; both Valentine and Kušar share a profound understanding of spiritual forces at the heart of existence, which they seek to illuminate. Both recall at times Dickinson and Tsvetaeva, cultivating ambiguities that resist easy access, while celebrating intimate albeit cosmic spaces of enlarged vision and heart. And both perceive the underlying unity that we are all one sounding through unseen but connected strings. Neither Valentine nor Kušar amplify their voice in their respective language. Rather, they embrace with verve, vision and grace what Thomas Merton sought, a "genuine and deep communication," (243) in order that we may find sustenance for our souls that might otherwise be lost in the noise. For here "The door is fallen down / inside my open body / where all the worlds touch" (*Little Boat* 11).

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Nevidne vezi: proučevanje povezav med poezijo Jean Valentine in Mete Kušar

Ključne besede: slovenska poezija / ameriška poezija / primerjalne študije / Kušar, Meta / Valentine, Jean / poetika nevidnega / feminizem

Epigraf »A pencil / for a wing bone« (»Svinčnik / za lopatico«) v pesniški zbirki *Break the Glass* pesnice Jean Valentine (gre za verz Lorine Neidecker) spodbuja k razmisleku o tem, kako pisanje omogoča transcendenco. Podobno v svojem delu Meta Kušar razčese zvezde z glavnikom in nato najde »zaveznika / počesanega / v tej votli deželi«. Pesnici, ki prihajata iz dveh po velikosti tako različnih držav, kot sta ZDA in Slovenija, in na kateri so vplivale ikone, kot sta Emily Dickinson in Marina Cvetajeva, sta ustvarili intimne in duhovno oplajajoče prostore, v katerih se zavest sreča s sublimnostjo. Avtorica se osredotoča na pogled Kušarjeve, da je Heraklit učitelj, ki »je razumel, da so nevidne vezi močnejše od vidnih«, ter proučuje tematske, literarne in slogovne povezave med tema dvema literarnima zvezdama, pa tudi nekatere razlike pri ustvarjanju poetike nevidnega, ki osvetljuje skrivnostno podzemlje človeške duše med obvladovanjem politične, filozofske in etične sfere sodobnega obstoja.

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Early Tomaž Šalamun and American Experimental Poetry

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I discuss early Tomaž Šalamun's poetry with the focus on book Poker published in 1966 as a Cold War product realized within the geopolitical and geocultural context of socialist Yugoslavia. The study shows how transnational flows shape the work of this important Slovenian poet specially under the hegemonically influential poetry field of American poetry and its counterpoetic streams well known by the title of now iconic Donald Allen's anthology New American Poetry from 1960. At the beginning of this paper, I outline the different contexts in which Šalamun's poetry and American experimental poetry is written, contrasting the Cold War socialist and capitalist poetry cultures. This is a moment in which the fields of art and poetry went through dramatic transformations that involved questioning the traditional approach to art and poetry. I explain the importance of T. S. Eliot for poetry production at that time. Then I focus on Šalamun's early poetry of Poker. In my discussion I compare reism in Slovenian poetry and the objectivist impulse in American poetry. Finally, I compare Šalamun's writing procedures with the procedures engaged in by the Beat poets and the New York school, as well as by the early language poetry.

Keywords: Slovenian poetry / Šalamun, Tomaž / American experimental poetry / literary influences / reism / Cold War

A national field of poetry does not develop in isolation but always in relation to other national poetry fields. Any national field of poetry is always influenced by global hegemonic poetry models. In the period between the mid-1960s and the beginning of 1970s, American poetry became globally the most influential, especially in the scope of the complex embraced by the notion of New American Poetry, well known thanks to Donald Allen's famous anthology published in 1960 by the same title, which included the Beats, the New York poetry school and the Black Mountain poets, among others. This is important to stress because at the basis of my approach is the belief taken from transnational literary studies which emphasizes that any local poetry scene establishes itself as a hybrid, by mixing influences from outside with

local traditions and poetical constellations (Ramazani). National literary studies with their approach of methodological nationalism (Đurić, *Globalizacijske* 27; Juvan 68–69) usually reduce these outside influences so that the development of national poetry is explained as a self-contained and self-managing autonomous system. For me in this paper these outside influences will be even more important. I am interested in pointing to the way that poetry written in one national language (Slovenian) is created as an open system which functions within the broader transnational system of poetry practices. This means that a field of national poetry is always already constituted by transnational flows. The new ways of communication conducted via the Internet and new media make us aware of this fact more than ever was the case earlier (Stein).

In this context, I will consider Tomaž Šalamun's early poetry as represented in the book *Poker* (published in 1966) as a Cold War literary production created within the Socialist Federal Republic of Yugoslavia which was politically positioned between the capitalist West and socialist East. This period was characterized by two transnational moments:

1) formation of countercultural reactions to mainstream politics and culture in the USA, and elsewhere. The American counterculture was against the hegemony of corporate capitalism and its conservative worldview and lifestyles. In Slovenia as part of socialist Yugoslavia, the counterculture criticized the rigidity of the socialist regime.

2) In connection to what is described above, the formations of radical artistic and poetic practices appeared in the capitalist as well as in the socialist cultural context.

Cold War culture and the transnationalism of the counterculture

The Cold War period was defined by separation and political opposition between western capitalist and eastern socialist countries, divided by the so-called Iron Curtain. In this narrative, socialist Yugoslavia occupied a politically, culturally and economically medial position between them. The Cold War politics, as well as post-Taylorist production in the West “altered family structures and housing patterns, religious beliefs and media technologies, the demographics of urbanization and developments in psychology” (Halton 11). The welfare state and society were formed, which was a result of and resulted in the consumerist revolution with its processes of democratization. At

the same time these processes of modernization resulted in the greater homogenization of society. The counterculture in USA tried to imagine an alternative modernity beyond democratized consumerist desires foregrounding different social margins as possible models of new ways of life (Belgrad 31–32). On the other side, Yugoslavia was geopolitically positioned between two political blocks, and from the end of the 1950s developed a hybrid economic system of market socialism. From the 1950s to the 1970s, American culture was at the peak of its imperialist global impact of the “American Age” as Henry Luce had described it in 1941 in the magazine *Life*. Luce predicted the spread of corporate liberalism which took place after the Second World War (Belgrad 30). In socialist Yugoslavia as an exotic other of the West, the 1960s was the period in which the Americanization of society gradually took place, governed, surveilled and managed by the Communist Party. Economically as well as in the domain of science and culture, the Yugoslav Socialist Republic of Slovenia was the most developed in socialist Yugoslavia. At that time consumer and popular culture (Duda; Vučetić), as well as radical artistic practices including radical poetry were penetrating society (Đurić and Šuvaković). The Cold War of the 1960s faced the transnational countercultural moment, which embraced both these two different cultures. In the USA countercultural communities developed from the 1950s based on “countercultural politics, daily forms of resistance against pervasive social norms,” and beliefs that “Cold War politics, racial segregation, heterosexuality, and the valorization of commodity consumerism, could be transgressed” (Starr 42). In literary production, counterpoetics experimented with open forms and nonlinear narratives.

If we focus our attention now on poetry in the context of socialist Yugoslavia, the impact of American poetry was crucial for its transformation. After the short period of socialist realism, the translations of T. S. Eliot’s work in the 1950s marked the effort to establish a modernist poetry paradigm in Yugoslav poetry cultures. The first anthology of American poetry titled *American Lyrics (Američka lirika)* appeared in 1952, published in Zagreb, edited by Ivan Slamnig and Antun Šoljan, two important Croatian poets and translators. The anthology had a beautiful social realist cover, and included Eliot’s and Pound’s poetry, among others.

In this constellation of relations, radical Slovenian artistic and poetry practice appeared. Many interpreters, among them Tine Hribar, pointed to the importance of the anthology *Pesmi štirih (Poems of Four, 1953)* in which the poets Ciril Zlobec, Kajetan Kovič, Janez Mentart

and Tone Pavček reintroduced the “lyrical subject and with it relatively emancipated poetry” (Hribar 175). But Denis Poniž emphasized that this anthology was not revolutionary but rather symptomatic of the time of dramatic social changes and its search for a new poetic structure that would question the old one (Poniž, *Slovenska* 72). The next generation that appeared in the mid-1960s, according to Poniž, would be revolutionary in its radical anti-humanistic stance, i.e., its decentralization of the Men [*sic*] from the symbolic textural order of poetry production. Poniž stressed that the “hot spring of 1964,” when experimental poetry in Slovenia captured the interest of socialist socio-political structures, was the time when young writers and artists severely questioned the aesthetic norms advocated by the Central Committee of the League of Communists of Slovenia (ZKS) (Poniž, “Šalamunova” 80). In doing this, they were appropriating the international languages and ideologies of transnational flows. Along with Šalamun, other important actors of that poetry scene were Iztok Geister Plamen, Franci Zagoričnik, Ivo Svetina, Milan Jesih, Aleš Kermauner, and others. In other words, poetry was under the influence from then “contemporary European and American artistic streams, under which it broadened its content and formal ranges” (Poniž, *Slovenska* 144).

I will discuss Šalamun’s first book *Poker* published in 1966 as a hybrid work for which three influences are important in its construction:

- 1) T. S. Eliot,
- 2) The New American Poetry,
- 3) The Slovenian artistic and poetry scene; for example, reism was important for artists as well as for poets of the time.

First, Eliotian modernist ideology became mainstream after the Second World War in the Anglophone poetry world and beyond. As already stressed, this influence is obvious in Šalamun’s *Poker*, but the poet also went beyond it, as I will explain later. Second, the New American poetry, which was acknowledged by Donald Allen’s *New American Poetry* anthology from 1960, was important for Šalamun in presenting the counterpoetic developed within the American poetry scene, defined by Marjorie Perloff as *the other tradition* in American poetry and embracing the work of Gertrude Stein, Ezra Pound, William Carlos Williams, the New York poets, etc. (Perloff 17). And third, radical practices were actualized within the context in which the borders between different art-fields dissolve, which meant that poets and visual artists co-worked within the same field of artistic exchange. During the 1950s, such exchanges were important for New American poetry and its schools, especially the New York School and Black Mountain

College. New American poetry was developed within the context of the crucial impact of Marcel Duchamp, John Cage with his aleatoric music, Fluxus happenings with Allan Kaprow and the experimental dance of Merce Cunningham and his students, as well as of abstract expressionist painters (Silverberg 12–13). The early work of Tomaž Šalamun was performed within the context of the early 1960s in the atmosphere of constituting the neo-avant-garde of “first of all Neo-Dada, Fluxus, critical Pop-Art, Happenings, and Concrete poetry” (Šuvaković 23). The poetry of the New Americans operated within the counterculture, responding to the globalization of intense transnational flows, intensified thanks to new ways of transportation and communication. The Beats became the most internationally recognized and influential. In 1961 in the magazine *Naša sodobnost*, Ljudmila Šemrl wrote an article titled “Beat-Generation: moralni anarhisti” (“The Beat-Generation: Moral Anarchists”), and in the magazine *Sodobnost* the poet Mart Ogen in 1965 wrote the article “Beat generation in njeno mesto v ameriški sedanjosti in literaturi” (“The Beat generation and its Place in American Contemporaneity and Literature”) (see Španić). And in the poem “Flor Ars Hippocratica” (Šalamun 11) Šalamun mentioned Ferlinghetti, pointing to the context of New American Poetry as an important frame of poetry production and interpretation. So, Šalamun’s *Poker* could be understood as a part of the processes of internalization or, we could say today of the transnationalization of the Slovenian socialist poetry field. This transnational influence is evident: as some interpreters have pointed out, the title of this book is an anagram for Koper, the little Adriatic multicultural coastal town close to the Italian border where Šalamun lived at the time (Bandelj 229). If we stress this aspect, we could also say the title hides an ideological performance of cosmopolitanism in the language of poetry by which the poet intervenes into the local, provincial, national, geo-cultural and geopolitical frame of Yugoslav Slovenian socialist poetry culture. Therefore, in the late 1980s Tomaž Brejc wrote that with this book “Šalamun creates the paradigm of the open polyglot life of Slovenians in this [twentieth] century, of a finely mobile subject, which changes languages, the way one changes airplanes and taxis, newspapers and encyclopedias, money and news” (Brejc 24). Brejc is talking about the belief that art could symbolically prefigure reality and construct the subjects liberated from the ideological and material constraints of the Yugoslav socialist state.

The Eliotian model in Šalamun's *Poker* and beyond

As I have already stressed, in American and British poetry culture after the Second World War, the canonization of modernist poetry took place. The New Criticism, heavily influenced by T. S. Eliot's writing, established the interpretative model of close reading and the canon of great poets in which the central position was occupied by Eliot. Modernism in this version, as James E. B. Breslin explains, was domesticated (Breslin 10). Collage as the main poetry device was made weaker by post-war poets like Randall Jarrell and Robert Lowell, intervening with the techniques of framing by which disparate motives were harmonized in a coherent narrative (Đurić, *Jezik* 36). This model is connected with the social conservatism of the epoch (31–37). And the idea was that a poem operates through symbolically representing conflicting social forces arranged through the poem's "conflict structures," i.e., irony, paradox and wit, and which "could be ideologically resolved by the functional stasis of symbolic order" (Rasula 85). If we, on the other hand, look at the SFRY immediately after the Second World War, we see that socialist realism was established as the dominant model of making art and literary works. After Yugoslavia's break with the Soviet Union, this model was gradually rejected and translations of Eliot's poetry including the now iconic *Waste Land*, to which Ezra Pound, it is important to note, gave the final shape, was operative in going beyond socialist realism.

If we carefully read Šalamun's *Poker*, it becomes clear that the Eliotian model is the important axis in its constitution as a work of poetry. In the first part of the book, an Eliotian tone dominates. It is supported by the Eliotian-Poundian poetic ideology which places the Italian and French poetry cultures as the most important in the articulation of modern European poetry. The use of the French and Italian languages indicates this stance towards poetry, and it is explicated in the title: "Hommage kapi stricu Gvidu in Eliotu" ("Hommage to a Cap [and] Uncle Guido and Eliot"). At the same time, the very title also points to the fact that Šalamun established an ironic distance in relation to this great modernist model transnationally hegemonic at the time, a point to which I will return. Another aspect of Šalamun's poetic operations within the orbit of the Eliotian model is mixing the high and low language registers, which was also characteristic of many poets of the New American Poetry paradigm. Tine Hribar will point to this in regard to the poetry circle of poems titled "Stvari" ("Things") published in the magazine *Problemi* in 1965 and included in *Poker*.

Hribar nationalizes and personalizes this modernist device, writing that this cycle “[c]ontains an important Šalamunian mixing of the mundane and sublime” (Hribar 195). This device is performed in different poems in *Poker*, with recognizable Eliotian intonations, but it is important to note that in many of them we find an ironic slipperiness. I will connect this ironic slipperiness with the New American Poetry paradigm. Here I will point to the two characteristics of the New York School, that can be applicable in interpreting Šalamun’s poetic devices. In trying to question the fixity of the poem as a modernist icon, which meant that the poem is understood as a finished product with complex but clearly readable meanings, New York poets developed the strategy of non-hierarchical inclusiveness, referring to the tradition of Walt Whitman and William Carlos Williams. This inclusiveness operated on two levels, as is shown by Mark Silverberg, “they equally opened *form*, showing how any form of language can *become* poetic (depending on our attention to it)” (Silverberg 28). Mixing high and low, traditional and nontraditional in a second instance was realized thanks to parody, humor and self-parody (Silverberg 29). We also find these procedures in Šalamun’s *Poker*. For example, “Homage to a Cap [and] Uncle Guido and Eliot” begins with the verses:

Just like Clay became a world Champion
 because there was something wrong with his leg
 I’ll be a great poet
 because they double/crossed me
 with Frank’s blue cap
 sent for Christmas 1964
 and since then I’ve left him out of my prayers
 songs of songs of panšalamunian religion...
 (Šalamun in Cooper 289; translated by Henry R. Cooper, Jr.)

Silverberg stressed that the New York poetry belongs to the nonorganic production of literary work. The notion of the nonorganic, taken from Peter Burger, designates techniques of montage, collage, and assemblage which foregrounds a work of poetry as fragmented, unstable and indeterminate (Silverberg 31). We could say that Šalamun’s generation, appearing in the mid-1960s, foregrounds this counterpoetical non-organic approach to poetry production. Comparing Eliot’s *Waste Land* to what she called *the other tradition* of American poetry, Perloff states that while Eliot’s work, despite its collage form, has a coherent symbolic structure, and the work of poets like John Ashbury is not coherent discourse, which means that there are no “certain referen-

tial signposts” (Perloff 11). In the field of the new art, art historian Ješa Denegri coined the term *the other line* referring to the new art in socialist Yugoslavia at the time. In literature such a term was impossible for two reasons. First, poetry as a language art is more closely and directly connected to national identity, which divided Yugoslav poetry field according to national lines. Second, poetry in other parts of socialist Yugoslavia was conservative in comparison to Slovenia. But in Slovenia, thanks to the strong support of influential critics like Taras Kermauner and philosopher Tine Hribar, among others, this counter-poetics became mainstream in the 1970s.

Masculinity, femininity and the questioning of the lyrical “I” in the poetry experiment

From a feminist perspective, the field of poetry is constructed as one in which a male subject could express his feelings and his experience of the world. The feelings generally are negatively connected to the social construction of femininity; therefore, modernists masculinized the field of poetry, at the same time rejecting the lyrical “I” as a fundamental principle of poetry as institution. Eliot, to whom Šalamun explicitly and implicitly refers, as do other modernists before the Second World War, primarily Ezra Pound and Wyndham Lewis, advocated the rejection of “I” in poetry. Pound thought that a rhetorically structured ego in poetry jeopardized the ‘objectivity’ of a poem (Đurić, *Poezija teorija* 131–132). Eliot proposed the *objective correlative*, as “a set of objects, a situation, a chain of events which shall be the formula of that *particular* emotion; such that when the external facts, which must terminate in sensory experience, are given, the emotion is immediately evoked” (Eliot, internet). At that time modernists insisted on rejecting of authoritarian “I” in poetry along with the lyrical modes connected with the lyrical “I” (Đurić, *Poezija teorija* 202). Some formations of the New American Poetry inherited this modernist credo. On the one hand, experimental poetry, as Charles Olson proclaimed, gave up the “lyrical interference of the individual as ego” (Davidson 47). Olson called this imperative *objectivism*, while the same phenomenon was called *objectism* by Jack Spicer. Avoiding the ego was made possible “by regarding the poem as a form of materiality within the world” (Davidson 47). In his early poetry Šalamun approaches what we could questionably identify as a lyrical “I” in two ways. On the one hand in his poems it is the very language which speaks and not the lyrical “I.” On the other, we find

“an attempt of poetical self-divination” (Hribar 196). The lyrical “I” as one of the fundamental principles of poetry as an institution is always gendered – it is the male lyrical subject or the male lyrical voice which as an agent has a power to speak, and the male poet who has the power to produce high artistic value. On the other hand, experimental poetry researches linguistic codes and, in particular, poetry codes as a separate linguistic system within the broader system. In this process poetry became extremely polyvocal. Poetry juxtaposes linguistic fragments taken from different discursive fields. We can also identify Šalamun’s articulation of the phenomenon usually recognized as a lyrical “I” as a kind of *personism*, which Frank O’Hara advocated in a manifesto of the same title. As Silverberg explains, *personism* is “the social construction of personality, it shows that identity is never monadic nor predetermined but rather is socially constructed in a particular setting (spatial, temporal, textual) through language” (Silverberg 53). Questioning the coherence of the lyrical “I” as a construct of the lyrical genre, Šalamun demonstrates that this “I” is a rhetorical construct of the language – and this is a constructivist stance performed in the discourse of poetry. At the same time, we can speak of the self-mythologization or auto-erotization performed in poetry by Tomáš Šalamun who in his poems construes the male discursive position, which is usually a poetic dramatization of “hegemonic masculinity.” According to R. W. Connell, the notion of hegemonic masculinity refers to the “configuration of gender practice which embodies ... which guarantees (or is taken to guarantee) the dominant position of men and the subordination of women” (Connell 77). According to Michael Davidson, the poetry field is important for discussing “linkages between social and aesthetic formations of gender” (Davidson 4). Nancy M. Grace and Jennie Skerl explain the transnational importance of the Beats because these poets “responded to ... globalization and American hegemony, particularly by reacting against political/social conformity, class/ethnic barriers, sexual mores, consumerism and media dominance” (Grace and Skerl 4). But, although the Beats articulated gender politics in their poetry and in their counter-cultural lifestyle values, they remained within the gender regime of the mainstream conservative culture of the 1950s. Ginsberg writes that the Beats are a “boy gang” which may be said to have become the model of creativity (McNeil 178). Here I will point to Michael Davidson who wrote that the Beats generated a “‘homo-textual’ discourse of male bodying” (Davidson 14). Davidson took the Adrienne Rich term “compulsory heterosexuality” that refers to the obligatory social relations and power. Regarding this, he proposes the term “compulsory homosocial-

ity” to refer to the “ways same sex relationships were mandated during the 1950s and within which misogyny was often a component” (Davidson 16). He also uses Eve Kosofsky Sedgwick’s notion of “homosociality” referring to “a triangulated erotics between the men in which a woman serves as a shared object, a fulcrum of heterosexual legitimacy to mask repressed homosexual desire” (Davidson 16). This homosocial desire was important “in creating alternative subjectivities to the dominant ideologies of gender in the 1950s” (Davidson 16). Davidson’s notion of “homo-textual discourse of male bonding” refers to the discursive marginalization of women in the field of poetry at that time (Davidson 14). Showing that this is a transnational state of affairs, in the context of Slovenian poetry, Irena Novak Popov emphasized that in the construction of Slovenian literary tradition of women poets, we can separate them as “women’s voices within the male generation” of poets (Novak Popov 253). In his analysis of Šalamun’s poem “Duma 1964” Marjan Dolgan points out that the poet is critical toward the Slovenian sentimental poetry tradition: “Šalamun’s lyrical subject in his satire of Slovenian poets creates the flavor also by mentioning the female audience ... This mentioning is outwards antifeminist, because it is again in accordance with the ‘male’ logics of Šalamun’s poetry, but in fact he makes sharp his attitude against the mainstream effeminization of most Slovenian poetry written by male poets” (Dolgan 43). In this regard, the title *Poker* could be interpreted as a reference to a countercultural model of heroic liberated masculinity which inherited the liberation of the Wild West in the popular culture movie production of the 1950s. In that “pre-feminist era” (Holton 20) it is believed that rebellion in life as well as in art is exclusively a pursuit of male identity. As Holton states, regarding the Beats, it should be stressed that the conformism of the middle class which was on the rise in the USA from the 1950s, was racially and sexually restricted, in addition to restricting women, for this paradigm also excluded working class men, African-Americans, native people and other minority groups. This situation opened the space for searching for alternatives (Holton 21).

Šalamun, reism and the linguistic turn

Tine Hribar described Šalamun’s poetry as reistic, in which “words are things and nothing else. Things are words and nothing else” (Hribar 195). In order to point to the fundamental anti-humanist orientation of Slovenian poetry at that moment, Taras Kermauner wrote:

The importance of reism also lies in this: in the center of the poem is not a man [sic] with his history, feelings, heart, but language, a system of symbols, which acts as something real. ... At the beginning reism was to a great extent a negation of humanism, therefore it foregrounded only men's reality, objectivity, carnality, physical structure, and soon – in addition to reism, in its other half – in ludism, which reveals the truth of reism, it is shown that with a bigger insistence on thingness the greater liberty of men could be found, because he is not bounded by moral and metaphysical schemes of recent beliefs, but he freely goes into the processes of inventing new systems, connections and shapes. (Kermauner 11)

Besides reistic doctrine, Hribar stresses linguism, and points to the establishment of the self-contained word. Hribar points out that Šalamun's ludistic "Play is not just playing, but the battle to live or die. First of all, the battle with oneself. And with poetry" (Hribar 196). Brejc will write that Šalamunian reism is not so much a

philosophical discipline or arbitrary playing with things, but primarily an active strategy of word design, because out of the murmur of the plentitude of words, elastic words, which then mirror in themselves, establishing the text, but never the spoil of the romantic, symbolic metaphorizing: a word is read, put beside other words, mingling into the metonymic sequence and the sharp rethinking of their acting replaces the empty and charming "self-searching," "expressing" of lyrical subject ... (Brejc 20)

Poniž will state that Šalamun's early poetry, especially the poem "Zakaj sem fašist" ("Why I am a Fascist"), published in *Katalog 2*, rejects all poetic models developed in Slovenian poetry up to that time. He intervened at two levels. First, in the neo-avant-garde manner, Šalamun rejected poetic language in which metaphors are crucial as a device in generating poems. He went beyond poetic discourse which questions a structure in which the lyrical subject functions as an agent that gains power over the world by which "he" is surrounded. But Šalamun created a "radical rejection of an ideological reading and understanding of a literary text. In doing this, the poet also paraphrases other, nationally constitutive poetry and with irony points to its baselessness" (Poniž, "Šalamunova" 89).

Darja Pavlič places *Poker* within the frame of the transnational linguistic turn (Pavlič 192, 195–196). She characterizes *Poker* as a book of poetry partly based in reism's ideology, and the next book *Namen pelerine* (1968) is even more explicitly reistic. According to Pavlič, one of the themes is to demonstrate the productive power of language: "Signifiers without (easily) recognized referents in *Poker* are extremely rare: 'pagaje pagajrbum mezaluna,' it is also unusual that signifiers fol-

low each other organized by a principle of sound associations” (Pavlič 196). Paternu also stressed this poetic device describing it as “undoing the words or dissemination of words regarding their sounds or semantic playing with the ‘material aspect of words” (Paternu; see in Poniž “Šalamunova” 87). Pavlič also stresses the usage of parataxis, which will be the main device in language poetry, and this procedure could also be found in the work of most radical modernist Gertrude Stein.

Conclusion

Tomaž Šalamun is considered to be the most important Slovenian poet after the Second World War. I place his early work, the book *Poker* published in 1966, within the Cold War era. I considered it a transnational piece of work, symptomatic of that era. Šalamun’s work is shown as part of the internationalization/transnationalization of the socialist Yugoslav Slovenian field of poetry. In this field, the transformation of Yugoslav socialist society permitted the transformation of poetry, and in Slovenia this transformation was the most radical within the Yugoslav national poetry fields. The transformation was initiated by translations of T. S. Eliot’s poetry – the process that shows how the translation became an agent within the national field. But at the time when Šalamun’s generation appeared, American counterpoetics shaped within the complex of New American Poetry, especially the Beat poets and the New York School, became internationally influential. I have shown how the poetry field and the work of one protagonist – Tomaž Šalamun – is shaped by transnational poetry ideologies and devices. We could say that global tendencies in the field of poetry particularly impacted the national poetry scene of Slovenia in the context of Yugoslav socialism.

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Zgodnja poezija Tomaža Šalamuna in ameriška eksperimentalna poezija

Ključne besede: slovenska poezija / Šalamun, Tomaž / ameriška eksperimentalna poezija / literarni vplivi / reizem / hladna vojna

Razpravljam o zgodnji poeziji Tomaža Šalamuna s poudarkom na knjigi *Poker* (1966) kot izdelku hladne vojne, ki je nastal v geopolitičnem in geokulturnem kontekstu socialistične Jugoslavije. Študija prikazuje, kako nadnacionalni tokovi oblikujejo delo tega pomembnega slovenskega pesnika posebej pod hegemonsko vplivnim pesniškim poljem ameriške poezije in njenimi kontra-poetičnimi tokovi, ki so dobro znani po zdaj že ikoničnem naslovu antologije Donalda Allena *Nova ameriška poezija* (1960). Na začetku tega prispevka predstavim različne kontekste, v katerih sta napisani Šalamunova in ameriška eksperimentalna poezija, pri čemer primerjam socialistično in kapitalistično pesniško kulturo iz obdobja hladne vojne. V tem obdobju sta polji umetnosti in poezije doživeli dramatične spremembe, ki so vključevale prevpraševanje tradicionalnega pristopa k umetnosti in poeziji. Razložim pomen T. S. Eliota za tedanje pesniško produkcijo. Potem se osredotočim na Šalamunovo zgodno poezijo iz *Pokra* (1966). Primerjam reizem v slovenski poeziji in objektivistični impulz v ameriški poeziji. Nato primerjam Šalamunove pesniške postopke s postopki, ki so jih uporabljali beatniki in newyorška šola, pa tudi zgodnja *language poetry*.

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Osebno izkustvo v sodobni slovenski in ameriški poeziji

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V članku izhajam iz razumevanja lirike kot subjektivne literarne vrste, ki omogoča predstavljanje osebnih izkustev, tj. čustev, misli in čutnih doživljajev. Primerjava med slovensko in ameriško poezijo po drugi svetovni vojni pokaže, da je izpovedni način v obeh ostal stalnica do današnjega časa, pri čemer je lirski jaz v ameriškem prostoru deležen ostrejših in stalnih kritik. Delitev na konvencionalno (mainstreamovsko) in eksperimentalno poezijo, vse do pred kratkim značilna za ameriške literarnozgodovinske pregledne, se v Sloveniji ni uveljavila, saj eksperimentalna poezija tu ni razvila svojega literarnega sistema. Pojem hibridna poezija, ameriški poskus preseganja binarnega modela, pa je mogoče vseeno uporabiti tudi za nekatere slovenske pesmi. Kot primer pesmi, ki sledi romantičnemu ali lirskemu modelu, analiziram pesem »Lakota« Jureta Jakoba. Kot ameriški zgled hibridnosti predstavljam pesem »Exercise 34 (1/3/02 PM)« Catherine Wagner in jo primerjam s pesmijo »Tehno« Ane Pepelnik. V obeh gre za spoj izpovedovanja in nekonvencionalnega sloga. Na vprašanje, zakaj ima izpovedovanje osebnega izkustva v sodobni slovenski in ameriški poeziji osrednjo vlogo, odgovorim s predlogom, da ga prepoznamo kot univerzalen in hkrati zgodovinsko pogojen pesniški postopek.

Ključne besede: slovenska poezija / ameriška poezija / primerjalne študije / izpovedna lirika / osebno izkustvo / hibridnost / hibridna pesem / Jakob, Jure / Wagner, Catherine / Pepelnik, Ana

Terminološke in periodizacijske zadrege

Razlikovanje med pojmom lirika in poezija ni samoumevno ne v vsakdanji rabi ne v sodobni literarni vedi, saj oba izraza pogosto označujeta izpovedovanje lastnih čustev, misli ali čutnih doživljajev v verzni obliki. Lastnosti, ki jih je liriki pripisala romantika, so bile namreč sčasoma preslikane na poezijo, čeprav je ta v tradicionalnih tipologijah poleg lirične obsegala vsaj še pripovedno, včasih tudi didaktično poezijo. Prevlada lirike nad drugimi oblikami poezije je v 20. stoletju pripeljala do zavračanja eksperimentalnih oblik pisanja, in sicer

z argumentom, da v teh primerih ne gre za liriko/poezijo. Znano je npr. Friedrichovo zavračanje konkretne in vizualne poezije, ki jima v *Strukturi moderne lirike* odreče status lirike, v novejšem času pa je mogoče vrednostno delitev na poezijo in (eksperimentalno) nepoezijo zaslediti pri Haroldu Bloomu.¹

V slovenski literarni teoriji se definicije lirike tradicionalno naslanjajo na nemške romantične vire. Med njimi velja izpostaviti Heglovo *Estetiko*, kjer je liriko označil kot subjektivno literarno vrsto, v kateri pesnik izraža svoja doživetja in misli. Iz te opredelitve izhaja tudi pri nas uveljavljena delitev lirike na doživljajsko (*Erlebnislirik*) in miselno (*Gedankenlyrik*). Ameriški tradicionalni pogledi na liriko poudarjajo čustveni vidik, pri čemer izhajajo iz Wordsworthovega uvoda v drugo izdajo *Liričnih balad* (1800), kjer je liriko označil kot spontano prelivanje močnih čustev, a je v nadaljevanju tudi opozoril, da mora pesnik o doživetem dolgo in globoko premišljevati. Lirika je torej na osnovi romantičnih opredelitev obveljala za način pesnikovega samoizražanja, in čeprav je bil z uvedbo koncepta fiktivnega lirskega jaza (govorca, lirskega subjekta) avtorju odvzet status subjektivnega izvora lirike, izražanje izkustev po razširjenem mnenju ostaja bistven element lirike oz. kar poezije. Ta vidik upošteva tudi Werner Wolf v svojem novejšem poskusu opredelitve, ki temelji na Wittgensteinovem konceptu družinskih podobnosti; ena izmed devetih bolj ali manj prepoznavnih, ne pa tudi obveznih lastnosti lirike je namreč »(čustvena) perspektivnost in osredotočenost na subjekt, ne na objekt (poudarek na individualno zaznavo lirske osebe [agency] in ne na zaznane predmete)« (Wolf 39).

Primerjalni pogled na zgodovino slovenske in ameriške poezije po drugi svetovni vojni pokaže, da je izpovedovanje v obeh ostalo stalnica do današnjega časa, razlika pa je v tem, kako glasni in radikalni so (bili) nasprotniki tako ustvarjene poezije med pesniki, kritiki, bralci. V pregledih ameriške poezije po drugi svetovni vojni je praviloma izpostavljena dihotomija med konvencionalno (tudi mainstreamovsko) in eksperimentalno (avantgardno) poezijo.² Če je za prvo značilno, da je

¹ Kot opozarja Oren Izenberg, je razlikovanje med poezijo in nepoezijo implicitno prisotno v vseh Bloomovih delih, kot eksplicitna sodba pa je zabeleženo samo v knjigi Davida Antina *What it Means to Be Avant-Garde* (1993) (Izenberg 191). Antin v navedenem delu poroča, da je Bloom na predstavitvi knjige Marjorie Perloff ob omembi Johna Cagea in Davida Antina reagiral zelo burno: »Oba naju je izbrisala pravična jeza Harolda Blooma, ki je komaj slišal najini imeni, ko je dogodek označil za smešen in naju za nepesnika ter odvihral z odra.« (Antin) Ta in ostali prevodi iz tujejezičnih virov so, če ni drugače navedeno, delo avtorice članka.

² Izvori te dvojnosti segajo na konec 19. stoletja in začetek 20. stoletja, ko so se nekateri ameriški pesniki oprli na tradicijo britanske romantike (s poudarjanjem človeka

ostala v okviru romantičnih pogledov na liriko in zato cenjena med širšim bralstvom, je druga bolj ali manj dosledno zavračala koncept izpovedovanja lirskega jaza, bila sprva marginalizirana, a si je sčasoma izoblikovala lastno tradicijo in literarni sistem. Po obdobju *language poetry* (ta je bila v ospredju od 70. let do konca 20. stoletja) so najostrejši nasprotniki lirskega jaza postali pesniki, ki po zgledu likovnih konceptualistov svoje pesmi ustvarjajo s prisvajanjem (apropriacijo) najrazličnejših besedil.³ Med konceptualisti je osrednjo vlogo lirskega jaza v poeziji večkrat, ironično in politično angažirano, napadla pesnica Vanessa Place,⁴ pesnika Craig Dworkin in Kenneth Goldsmith pa sta uredila knjigo z značilnim naslovom: *Against Expression: An Anthology of Conceptual Writing* (2011).

Ker so idejo o razcepu med ameriško konvencionalno in eksperimentalno poezijo vse do pred kratkim utrjevale vplivne pesniške antologije, ne preseneča trdoživost krilatice o vojni antologij.⁵ Toda omeniti je treba tudi poskuse preseganja binarnega modela. Na njegovo nezadostnost je med prvimi opozorila Cole Swensen, sourednica antologije *American Hybrid: A Norton Anthology of New Poetry* (2009), z uvedbo oznake hibridna pesem. Kot ugotavlja, so njene lastnosti selektivno prevzete tako iz konvencionalne kot iz eksperimentalne poezije:

Današnja hibridna pesem lahko vključuje tako konvencionalne pristope, kot je pripoved, ki predvideva stabilno prvo osebo, vendar jo zaplete s prekinitvijo linearnega časovnega poteka ali z mešanjem običajnega skladenjskega zaporedja. Lahko pa v ospredje postavi prepoznavne eksperimentalne načine, kot sta nelogičnost ali razdrobljenost, vendar sledi strogim formalnim pravilom soneta ali vilanele. Ali pa je v celoti sestavljena iz neologizmov, vendar

kot naravnega bitja v naravnem svetu, introspekcije ter prepričanja o stabilnosti in suverenosti posameznika), medtem ko so drugi za svoje izhodišče izbrali francoski modernizem in avantgarde, ki so v ospredje postavile materialnost besedila (Swensen, »Introduction« xviii).

³ Po mnenju literarne zgodovinarke Marjorie Perloff, ostre nasprotnice konvencionalne poezije, je prav apropiacija (skupaj z muzikalnostjo) glavna lastnost sodobne lirike (Perloff, »Poetry«).

⁴ »Lirski 'jaz' je zlati standard poezije, domnevno neprožni ingot, za katerega se verjame, da je najčistejši od čistega, najbolj zanesljiv, stvar, ki dopušča poezijo in naredi semiokapitalizem povsem legitimem« (Place, »I Is Not a Subject«). »Lirika bi se morala prepoznati kot najboljša artikulacija 'jaza', kar jih lahko kupi kulturni kapital, in začeti to zaračunavati.« (Perloff in Place 64)

⁵ Vojna med antologijami se je začela z izidom knjige *The New American Poetry* (1960), v kateri je urednik Donald Allen predstavil pesnike (mdr. Franka O'Haro, Allena Ginsberga), ki so bili do tedaj odrinjeni iz osrednjih antologij, kakršna je bila *New Poets of England and America* (1957).

temelji na starodavnih tradicijah. Glede na lastnosti, ki so povezane s »konvencionalnim« delom, kot so skladnost, linearnost, formalna jasnost, pripoved, zaprta forma, simbolična resonanca in stabilen glas, ter na tiste, ki so običajno pripisane »eksperimentalnemu« delu, kot so nelinearnost, jukstapozicija, prelom, fragmentarnost, imanenca, številne perspektive, odprta forma in odpor do sklenjenega konca, imajo hibridni pesniki dostop do bogastva orodij. (Swensen, »Introduction« xxi)

Proces tovrstne hibridizacije v ameriški poeziji se je po besedah Cole Swensen začel s pesniki, ki sicer veljajo za začetnike različnih gibanj (omenja epifanično liriko, poezijo globoke podobe, newyorško šolo in *language poetry*), a so sčasoma razširili svoje načine izražanja in s tem hibridizirali svoje pesmi. Barbara Guest, najstarejša in »morda najpomembnejša hibridna pesnica« (xxii), vključena v antologijo *American Hybrid*, je bila v Allenovi antologiji iz leta 1960 predstavljena kot pripadnica newyorške šole. Med starejšimi avtorji izstopajo še John Ashbery, Robert Hass in pri nas verjetno manj znana Lyn Hejinian (sicer uveljavljena predstavnica *language poetry*); med mlajšimi pesniki, ki so bili v času izida antologije stari okrog štirideset let, velja zaradi nje-gove povezanosti s slovenskim prostorom omeniti Joshuo Beckmana (roj. 1971). Leta 2004 je bil s svojim prevodom Šalamunovega *Pokra* med finalisti za nagrado za prevode PEN ZDA, v slovenščino pa sta njegove pesmi prevajala Ana Pepelnik in Primož Čučnik.

Pojem hibridna pesem ni naletel na vsesplošno odobravanje. Marjorie Perloff v članku, objavljenem na spletnem forumu *Boston Review*, sicer tudi sama omenja »negotovo približevanje« med konvencionalno in eksperimentalno poezijo, do katerega je prišlo, potem ko je *language poetry* v poznih 90. začela upoštevati spolno, rasno in etnično raznolikost. Toda čeprav urednikoma antologije *American Hybrid* ne odreka dobrih namenov, se ji opis hibridne pesmi, ki ga razume kot zlitje lastnosti obeh modelov, ne zdi prepričljiv. Trdi namreč, da zblizevanje implicira arbitrarnost pesniške izbire, njeno neodvisnost od zgodovinskega trenutka ali kulturnega konteksta ter pesnikovih filozofskih pogledov. »A in B, z drugimi besedami, se ne da preprosto združiti, da bi nastal nov C (hibrid).« (Perloff, »Poetry«)

Raziskavi hibridne poetike v delih petih ameriških pesnic iz 20. stoletja se je v svoji monografiji posvetila Amy Moorman Robbins, ki vztraja, da ne gre niti za nov niti zgolj estetski pojav. Njena teza je, da so osnove hibridne poetike ustvarile radikalne pesnice (med njimi Gertrude Stein), za katere je bilo mešanje različnih formalnih in estetskih strategij del upora proti umeščanju v katerokoli šolo ali skupino, pri čemer je šlo pogosto za upor proti moški dominaciji v posameznih skupinah. Zagovorniki

hibridne poetike (mednje uvršča urednike antologije *American Hybrid* in revije *Fence*)⁶ po njenem mnenju preveč izpostavljajo njeno novost, pri čemer zanemarjajo zgodovino, kontekst in politične implikacije samih pesmi. Podoben očitek naslavlja na kritično avantgardno skupnost,⁷ ki sicer nasprotno trdi, da hibridnost ni nov pojav, v njej pa vidi zgolj razvodenelo avantgardo, ker naj bi si prisvojila njene postopke za nepolitične cilje (Moorman Robbins, *American Hybrid Poetics* 7).

Zgodbe o razvoju slovenske poezije v 20. stoletju ne omenjajo binarnega modela ali poskusov njegovega presejanja. V vsakem posameznem obdobju so ob prevladujočih, najbolj opaženih načinih pisanja sicer obstajali alternativni, prezrti ali celo potlačeni glasovi, vendar ti niso bili zmeraj eksperimentalne narave. Intimizem, ki se je po drugi svetovni vojni uveljavil kot nasprotje uradno zapovedane socrealistične poezije, je z izpovedovanjem prvoosebnega jaza sledil konvencionalnemu modelu romantične poezije. Po kratkem obdobju prevlade avantgardne poezije v 60. in 70. letih je postalo očitno, da tradicija upesnjevanja osebnih izkustev zaradi te epizode ni bila izkoreninjena, kvečjemu modificirana. V bolj ali manj prenovljenih oblikah je lirski jaz po letu 1970 ponovno vseprisoten, vendar po uveljavljenih pogledih zaradi soobstoja različnih poetik ni več mogoče izpostaviti smeri, po kateri bi poimenovali obdobje. Čeprav je mogoče trditi, da se eksperimentalna poezija v slovenskem jeziku ni razvijala kontinuirano in zato ni ustvarila svojega literarnega sistema, ostaja odprto vprašanje, kakšen je njen vpliv na sodobno poezijo in ali bi po zgledu ameriške poezije nemara lahko govorili o pojavu hibridne poezije tudi pri nas. Poleg pesmi, ki bi jih bilo mogoče zlahka uvrstiti v model konvencionalne poezije, so namreč v sodobni slovenski poeziji razmeroma pogoste pesmi, v katerih je mogoče prepoznati tako romantične pesniške postopke (lirski jaz, izpovedni način, avtobiografska doživetja, metafore in simboli) kot tudi take, ki so po svojem izvoru ali pogosti rabi povezani z modernizmom in bi jih vsaj pogojno lahko označili za eksperimentalne (tok zavesti, prosti verz, fragmentarnost, kršenje sintaktičnih pravil, intertekstualnost).

⁶ Revija *Fence Magazine* je bila ustanovljena leta 1998, kakor piše na njenem spletnem portalu, in sicer s »poslanstvom objavljati zahtevna besedila in umetnost, ki jih odlikujeta idiosinkrazija in inteligenca, ne pa zvestoba taborom, šolam ali klikam«. Leta 2009 je izšla antologija *A Best of Fence: The First Nine Years*, na katero se sklicuje Amy Moorman Robbins.

⁷ V njenem okviru posebej izpostavi Rona Sillimana oz. njegovo razlikovanje med »post-avant« avtorji ter »šolo ravnodušnosti« (*School of Quietude*); slednji naj bi Silliman očital, da nima poslanstva ali lastne politike.

Lirska paradigma v sodobni ameriški in slovenski poeziji

Marjorie Perloff v knjigi o modernizmu v 21. stoletju opozarja, da je lirska paradigma ostala stalnica v ameriški mainstreamovski poeziji, čeprav se to morda zdi presenetljivo glede na »ogromne politične, demografske in kulturne spremembe v obdobju po drugi svetovni vojni« (21st Century 155). Poetiko tovrstne poezije, za katero so na tematski ravni značilne »urbane teme, mešanje spominov in želja, frustrirano hrepenenje po ljubezni in odobravanju«, strne v petih točkah: 1) poezija je besedilo (mešanje medijev ni dovoljeno), razdeljeno na verze; 2) »moderna« pesem se mora kljub urejenosti na verze in kitice izogibati metru in shematično urejeni rimi; 3) lirika je razumljena kot izraz določenega subjekta (»jaza« ali »tija«), čigar glas povezuje posamezne reference in vpoglede; 4) »moderni« jezik ne sme biti umetelen ali formalen, ampak »naraven« in pogovoren; 5) čustva in misli morajo biti izraženi posredno, tj. z metaforo ali ironijo (158). V pesmih Delmora Schwartza, Antohnyja Hechta in Edwarda Hirscha, ki jih navaja kot primere, posebej izpostavlja uporabljene metafore in opozarja na pogosto oživljanje neživega sveta, medtem ko je človeški svet zaznamovan s smrtjo.

Še bolj strnjeno (in sarkastično) je lastnosti sodobne, nagrajevane, dobro izdelane pesmi predstavila v članku »Poetry on the Brink«:

- 1) Nepravilne vrstice prostega verza, z malo ali nič poudarka na gradnji vrstice ali besedi kot taki.
- 2) Prozna skladnja z veliko predložnimi zvezami in parentezami, prepletena s slikovitimi podobami ali celo ekstravagantno metaforo.
- 3) Izražanje globoke misli ali majhne epifanije,⁸ ki običajno temelji na določenem spominu in označuje lirskega govorca kot posebej občutljivo osebo, ki resnično čuti bolečino, bodisi zaradi imperialnih vojn na Bližnjem Vzhodu, poznega kapitalizma ali osebne tragedije, kot je smrt ljubljene osebe. (Perloff, »Poetry«)

Perloff kot primer pesmi, ki obnavlja opisani model, navede pesem »Vroči glavnik« (»Hot Combs«), v kateri večkrat nagrajena afroameriška pesnica Natasha Trethewey (roj. 1966) opisuje spomin, obujen ob naključni najdbi starih glavnikov v trgovini s šaro. Prvoosebni jaz se spominja čudne lepote materinega obraza, medtem ko si je ta z vročim glavnikom ravnala lase. Epifanija je izražena s trditvijo, da lahko tako

⁸ Izraz epifanija (razodetje) je običajen v teoriji kratke zgodbe. Povzet je po Jamesu Joyceu, ki ga je v svojem zgodnjem romanu *Umetnikov mladostni portret* razložil kot nenadno duhovno manifestacijo.

lepoto porodi samo trpljenje. Perloff opozori, da je čustveni vrhunec dvomljiv zaradi preveč enostavnega sklepa o povezavi med lepoto in trpljenjem, in navede še druge lastnosti (prosti verz, prozna sintaksa, jasen jezik, začinjen z »literarnimi« izrazi), zaradi katerih se zdi, da je pesem nastala v 60. ali 70. letih 20. stoletja, čeprav je bila objavljena leta 2000.

Lirika, razumljena kot izraz osebnega izkustva realnega avtorja ali fiktivnega lirskega subjekta, v sodobni slovenski poeziji nima gorečih nasprotnikov, kot so ameriški konceptualisti ali njihova akademska zagovornica Marjorie Perloff. Tudi moja vzorčna analiza izbrane slovenske pesmi s pomočjo kategorij, ki jih je izpostavila ameriška profesorica, nima namena problematizirati razširjenega načina pisanja, ampak zgolj opozoriti na tipološke podobnosti, ki se kažejo v sodobni slovenski in ameriški mainstreamovski poeziji. Med uveljavljenimi in nagrajenimi avtorji, ki se bolj ali manj približajo načinu pisanja, kot ga opisuje Perloff, po mojem mnenju izstopa Jure Jakob (roj. 1977). Avtor petih pesniških knjig je leta 2019 prejel nagrado Prešernovega sklada, in sicer za zbirko pesmi *Lakota*. V enem izmed intervjujev, ki jih je dal ob tej priložnosti, je povedal: »Vsa moja poezija je vezana na neko mojo osebno izkušnjo sveta, v katerem živim. Nekje se to neposredneje odraža, drugje pa na drugi ali tretji ravni, torej bolj zakrito. V vsakem primeru pa pišem iz svojega življenja. Pišem, kar živim.« V odgovoru na vprašanje o razmerju med pisanjem in razmišljanjem je opozoril na še eno emblematično razsežnost svoje poezije: »Pesem na čutno nazoren način preprosto pokaže neki uvid.« (Jakob, »Pesem«) Pesem »Lakota«, po kateri je zbirka naslovljena, odlično ilustrira avtorjeve opredelitve njegovega načina pisanja, v njej pa je mogoče prepoznati tudi glavne značilnosti, ki jih je navedla Perloff.

»Lakota« je napisana v prostem verzu, brez rime, posamezni verzi so različno dolgi in tudi kitice nimajo stalne oblike. Najopaznejše stilno sredstvo, s katerim je ustvarjen počasen, umirjen ritem pesmi, je nizanje različno dolgih povedi, pri čemer se enostavne povedi, ki so najpogostejše, po dolžini ujemajo z verzni konci, v večstavčnih povedih pa se verzni prestopi pojavijo samo izjemoma. Gradnja vrstic je torej v nasprotju z lastnostjo, ki jo je v svojem modelu izpostavila Perloff, preišljena, čeprav gre za besedilo v prostem verzu; drži pa, da beseda kot taka oz. njena zvočna plat, na katero je Perloff zelo pozorna, tudi kadar se ukvarja s konceptualno poezijo, ni v ospredju. Asonanca in konzonanca, sredstvi tradicionalne poezije, ki sta v eksperimentalni poeziji pogosto glavna načina za nizanje besed, se v »Lakoti« ne pojavita. Tudi besedni red je običajen, kar pesem skladensko približuje prozi,

za katero zaznamovani vrstni red ni tako značilen kot za tradicionalno poezijo. Parenteze, razumljene v retoričnem smislu kot vrinjene besede, besedne zveze ali stavki, ki ob govoru zahtevajo odmor, so tako kot predložne zveze razmeroma pogoste, pojavijo se npr. v prvi kitici:

V zidu, ob katerem raste [trta], se je naredila debela razpoka.

Planke skednja, po katerih pleza, so posivele. (Jakob, *Lakota* 19)

Na ravni jezikoslovne analize je posebne pozornosti vredna na videz očitna lastnost, da je Jakobova pesem besedilo. Perloff je v zvezi s prevladujočo lirsko paradigmo v sodobni ameriški poeziji izpostavila njeno tekstualnost, ker lahko sodobna poezija posega tudi po drugih medijih. S kriteriji besedilnosti, kot sta kohezija in koherenca, se sicer ni ukvarjala izrecno, vendar bi lahko njeno opozorilo na prozno skladnjo povezali tudi z jasnostjo in razumljivostjo besedila. Kohezija je v pesmi »Lakota« mdr. dosežena s ponovitvami motivnih drobcev (*trta, skedenj, gnezdo, kosovka, mladi kosi*) in paralelizmom (*bojim se*), koherenca pa s časovnim in posledičnim povezovanjem povedi. Tudi na ravni jezika je za »Lakoto« značilna jasnost, besede so nezaznamovane, razen redkih izjem, npr. pogovornega izraza *planke* in po subjektivnem občutku bolj knjižnih izrazov, kot so *negoden, podvizati se, biti zasačen*.

V okviru razprave o vlogi izkustva v sodobni slovenski in ameriški poeziji je najpomembnejša kohezivna lastnost Jakobove pesmi prvoosebni govorec, ki izpoveduje svoja čustva in misli. Ker pesnik sam opozarja na avtobiografsko ozadje svojih pesmi, se zdi toliko verjetneje, da v »Lakoti« pripoveduje o stvarnem doživetju. Pesem se začne z opisom trte, ki nakazuje njeno moč, dolgoživost in cikličnost dogajanja, saj trta vsako leto divje požene. V drugi kitici je dogajanje pomaknjeno v preteklost. Lirski jaz najprej opozori, da se je zgodilo mimo njegove volje, potem pa se spominja, kako je junija opazil mlade kose v gnezdu, spletenem v goščavi stare trte. Ko se je hotel umakniti, je ugotovil, da je tudi sam opazovan, stara kosovka ga je namreč »gledala kot zver« (20). Poleg omenjene komparacije na občutek krivde opozori tudi izjava: »Bil sem zasačen. / In ostal.« (20) Z občutkom krivde, ker je vdrl v živalski svet, je pojasnjena izjava z začetka druge kitice, kajti to, da se je zgodilo nehote, ob ponovnem branju izzveni kot opravičilo. Nadaljevanje pesmi je postavljeno v jesenski čas, ko so mladiči že odleteli, trta je obložena z grozdem, postaja hladno. Lirski subjekt se še vedno ukvarja s svojo krivdo, boji se, da bo trta s privoljenjem kosovke podivjala do neba ali da bo ptica nanj priklicala kazen. Prva prolepsa (pogled naprej) je po naravi fantastična; gre za slikovito pretiravanje, pri čemer motiv

skednja, ki naj bi ga trta iztrgala s temelji vred, spominja na motiv iz »Praprotnega griča« Dylana Thomasa: »In vsako noč [...] so zvezde odnesle kmetijo drugam.« (Thomas 525) Medtem ko je v Thomasovi pesmi fantastično dogajanje povezano z občutki radoživosti in vznesečnosti, je v Jakobovi pesmi v njem skrita nejasna grožnja lirskemu subjektu – zdi se, da gre za strah pred izgubo varnosti v predvidljivem, racionalno obvladljivem svetu. Druga prolepa izrecno omenja kazen, ki naj bi bila v tem, »da bom nekje zagledal / kako maček skoči na mladega kosa« (20). Lirski subjekt se torej boji, da bo kaznovan s še večjim občutkom krivde, ker je razkril, kje se nahaja gnezdo z mladiči. Toda skrb je precej površinska, takoj jo namreč izpodrine nova misel, komparacija, ki obudi spomin na to, kako je na njegov palec pred kratkim skočila sekira. Miselni tok se nadaljuje z novim asociativnim preskokom: črna barva nohta spominja na črnega kosa in na črno grozdje, ki je tako dobro, da ga nikoli ne bi nehal jesti. Pesem se konča s samostojnim verzom, ki zaradi delne ponovitve (spremenjena sta glagolski čas in vid) učinkuje kot refren: »Godi se mimo moje volje.« (21)

Zadnji, izpostavljeni verz pesmi »Lakota« je mogoče razumeti kot epifanijo, h kateri je usmerjena cela pesem. Z besedami Jureta Jakoba bi ga lahko opisali tudi kot uvid, ki ga pesem pokaže na čutno nazoren način. Podobe, s katerimi je opisano stvarno doživetje, niso eksplicitne metafore ali simboli, vendar se jih da brati v prenesenem pomenu. Trta, ki si vsako leto vzame več prostora, »neuničljivo glasni« (19) mladi kosi in lirski subjekt, ki ne bi nikoli nehal jesti sladkega grozdja, so vsak na svoj način lačni. Metaforična lakota, zapisana v naslovu pesmi in zbirke, nakazuje potrebo, ki ni zgolj telesna in ni odvisna od volje posameznika. Od interpreta je odvisno, ali bo v njej prepoznal metaforo za slo po življenju ali nemara določen filozofski koncept, npr. Bergsonov ali Deleuzov *elan vital*. Uvid, da je posameznik odvisen od nečesa, kar ga presega, izhaja iz spomina na opisano doživetje in razkriva občutljivost govorca. Tudi na tej ravni je torej mogoče ugotoviti podobnost med pesmijo »Lakota« in sodobno ameriško mainstreamovsko poezijo.

Hibridnost v sodobni ameriški in slovenski poeziji

Zapleteni svet sodobne ameriške poezije je Cole Swensen opisala z metaforo rizoma, sestavljenega iz razvejane mreže vozlov: »Nekateri vozli so lahko izjemno eksperimentalni, drugi izjemno konzervativni, toda mnogi so presek teh skrajnosti.« (Swensen xxv) Zaradi raznolikosti t. i. hibridne poezije je nemogoče ustvariti model, s katerim bi zajeli

vse njene pojavne oblike, ali predstaviti tipično hibridno pesem. Ker me v tem članku zanima vloga izkustva v sodobni slovenski in ameriški poeziji, se bom v nadaljevanju ukvarjala z dvema pesnicama, ki v svojih okoljih ne veljata za konvencionalni, čeprav v svoji poeziji razkrivata podrobnosti iz osebnega življenja. Kljub pomisleku, da pojem hibridna poezija zaradi ohlapnosti ni primeren za označevanje sodobne (slovenske) pesniške produkcije, ga torej sprejemam kot možno žanrsko oznako.

Catherine Wagner (roj. 1969) je pesnica in profesorica angleščine. Njene prve tri pesniške zbirke (*Miss America*, 2001; *Macular Hole*, 2004; *My New Job*, 2009) so izšle pri založbi Fence, zbirka *Nervous Device* (2012) pa pri City Lights Publishers; njene pesmi so vključene tudi v antologijo *A Best of Fence: The First Nine Years* (2008). Zaradi povezave z založbo Fence bi jo lahko označili za predstavnico hibridne poezije. Razlog, da ni predstavljena v antologiji *American Hybrid*, je morda v tem, da sta urednika upoštevala samo pesnike, ki so do leta 2005 že izdali po tri zbirke. Sicer pa so njene pesmi objavljene v številnih antologijah, mdr. v *Gurlesque: The New Grrly, Grotesque, Burlesque Poetics* (2010),⁹ v drugi izdaji *Norton Anthology of Postmodern American Poetry* (2013)¹⁰ in v drugi izdaji *Out of Everywhere: Linguistically Innovative Poetry by Women in North America and the UK* (2013). V različnih spletnih virih je označena tudi kot predstavnica gibanja nova iskrenost (*New Sincerity*).¹¹

Wagner se v dostopnih virih ne identificira z nobenim literarnim gibanjem, kar pa ne pomeni, da njihovih lastnosti ni mogoče odkriti v njeni poeziji. Zaradi upesnjevanja osebnih izkustev se zdi zanimiva njena odločitev za predstavitev gibanja, ki ga je poimenovala *emo*. V članku »US Experimental Poetry: A Social Turn?«, objavljenem v *Primerjalni književnosti*, je namreč predstavila štiri trende v sodobni ameriški eksperimentalni poeziji: konceptualno pisanje, flarf, novo

⁹ Arielle Greenberg, ki je skupaj z Laro Glenum uredila to antologijo, se je tudi domislila oznake *gurleska*. Z njim označuje »dela, ki prikazujejo ženskost na neresen ali odkrito posmehljiv način, pri čemer tvegajo, da so neprimerna, nenavadna, celo odbijajoča« (King).

¹⁰ V tej antologiji jo povezujejo z gurlesko, »burleskno 'dekliško' poetiko«, njena poezija pa je »med najbolj živahno osebnimi in samorazkrivajočimi v sodobnem času« (Hoover 821).

¹¹ Gibanje se je začelo z objavo na blogu, ki je bila sprva mišljena kot šala. Joseph Massey je leta 2005 objavil manifest »Eat Shit and Die: A Manifesto for The New Sincerity« (Ashton, »Sincerity« 95). Kot opozarja Ashton, manifest zavrača *language poetry* in njeno kritiko tradicionalnega lirskega govorca, da bi lahko »resnična oseba naredila svoj glas slišen in se izpostavila v procesu« (98).

vizualnost in pisanje, ki eksperimentira s čustvi. Zadnja oblika (s kratko oznako emo) se po njenem mnenju navezuje na pesniško gibanje nova pripoved (*New Narrative*). Kot navaja Wagner, je to afektivno, opravljivo, zelo osebno pisanje, ki se je razvijalo sočasno z *language poetry*, želelo raziskati odnose med osebnimi tenzijami in širšimi socialnimi in političnimi strukturami. Za nekatere mlajše pesnike, ki se navezujejo na novo pripoved in ne na *language poetry*, je značilno, da »zelo neposredno usmerjajo pozornost na telo, na čustveno izkustvo, na družbeno, pri čemer pa uporabljajo bolj domače označevalce «eksperimentalnega», npr. parataksa» (Wagner, »US« 243). Prvi del tega opisa bi se lahko nanašal tudi na njeno poezijo, medtem ko je v njenem odnosu do jezika čutiti večjo naklonjenost do eksperimentiranja, saj neprestano krši slovnična pravila, se poigrava z zvočnostjo besed in s pomočjo dvoumnosti ustvarja večpomenskost.

Pesem »Exercise 34 (1/3/02 PM)«, vključena v *Norton Anthology of Postmodern American Poetry*, je bila objavljena v zbirki *My New Job*, in sicer v prvem razdelku z naslovom »Exercises«. Kot v uvodu navede avtorica, je posamezne verze zapisovala v odmorih med nizi fizioterapevtskih vaj. Ta način pisanja lahko pojasni fragmentarnost, nenavadne verzne prestopne, elipse in miselne preskoke. Pesem se začne s podobo snega in sivega neba, na katerem je prvoosebna govorka opazila jato gosi. Motiv ptičjega leta skozi zasneženo pokrajino spominja na impresionistično liriko, vendar je njegova vloga drugačna, saj je zgolj uvod v dinamično nadaljevanje pesmi, kjer se lirski jaz osredotoči nase in svoje odnose, poleg tega je motiv predstavljen neobičajno. Prvi verz obsega samo eno besedo in je aliteriran z začetkom drugega in tretjega verza. Brati ga je mogoče kot samostojen verz ali kot začetek povedi: »Snow / starred when I looked straight up / sky dark grey, geese rose« (823). Glagol *starred* se lahko nanaša na sneg (sneg je nastopal v glavni vlogi/je krasil z zvezdami; zaradi zvočne in grafične podobnosti z glagolom *started* ni izključena niti besedna igra) ali na lirski jaz (jaz sem bila zvezda/okrašena z zvezdami). Beseda gosi (*geese*) je zvočno povezana z neologizmom negovorica, nečenča (*agossip*) iz šestega verza. Z govoricami lahko povežemo občutek vznemirjenosti, pa tudi vztrajno pojavljanje soglasnika s, ker vzbuja asociacijo na medmet *pst*, s katerim je pogosto pospremljeno opravljanje. Zvočno podobo tretjega verza poleg konzonanc (*s, r, g*) zaokrožajo poudarjeni široki vokali v nizu petih enozložnih besed.

Eliptičen in pogovoren način izražanja je značilen za drugo kitico, kjer so v ospredju čustva in telesni občutki prvoosebne govorka. Vznemirjenost iz prve kitice se stopnjuje z nujnim telefonskim klicem,

ki ji prinese vsaj na videz pomirjujoč odgovor na vprašanje, ali jo kdo ljubi – Karen jo. Zaradi visenja na računalniku jo izjemno (*like a bitch*) boli mišica pod ključnico. Razlog za čustveni nemir se skriva v izjavi, da ni počistila hiše, »odkar je Martin odšel« (824). Pesnica bivšega moža Martina omenja v številnih pesmih, v enem izmed intervjujev tudi pojasni, da sta se razšla, ker njen zakon ni deloval. V obravnavani pesmi je razhod iztočnica za razmislek o lastni vrednosti in identiteti:

Nisem se mogla videti, razen v ogledalu

ki 1) ni bilo jaz 2) je bilo jaz nazaj je bilo 3) plosko je bilo 4) me je delalo
nečimrno ali 5) me je spravljajo v zadrego, da bi šla ven, vse to je bilo znak
meni

ne znak mene¹²
(824)

Medtem ko se ti verzi nanašajo na izgubo lastne identitete v času pred razhodom z Martinom, je v sedanji čas postavljena ugotovitev, da mora »izkopati svojo pot izpod ruševin, proti krikom« (824). Tako kot v tem verzu ni jasno, čigavi so kriki in kaj je njihov namen (so to kriki prijateljic in kažejo smer rešitve? So kriki izraz bolečine, nemara strahu?), so dvoumni tudi drugi izrazi, npr. »checking myself out by talking to them« (824). Oba slovarska pomena glagola *check out*, odjaviti se in preveriti, je namreč mogoče vključiti v interpretacijo. Pesem se konča z metaforo o pajkovi mreži, ki jo je govorka lahko uporabila za razkuževanje rane in je odstranila (*abstracted*) njo samo. Ker je poudarjeno, da je bila to odrešitev, je konec, pa tudi pesem v celoti, mogoče interpretirati kot ironičen obračun z burnimi čustvenimi odzivi na zahtevno situacijo.

Konfesionalnost, s katero so zaznamovane nekatere pesmi Catherine Wagner, je prisotna tudi v sodobni slovenski poeziji. Primer izrazito izpovednega, vendar slogovno netradicionalnega načina pisanja je pesem »Tehno« Ane Pepelnik, s katero je že ob spletni objavi pritegnila veliko pozornosti in po njej poimenovala svojo najnovejšo knjigo pesmi. Pesnica in prevajalka Ana Pepelnik (roj. 1979) se je doslej podpisala pod pet pesniških zbirk: *Ena od variant kako ravnati s skrivnostjo* (2007), *Utrip oranžnih luči na semaforjih* (2009), *Cela večnost* (2013), *Pod vtisom* (2015) in *Tehno* (2017). Ker je sodobnost naklonjena avtobiografskemu načinu pisanja in so tudi pregovorno zadržani Slovenci vse bolj pripravljeni javno govoriti o svojih travmah, ne more pretirano

¹² »I couldn't see myself except in the mirror / which 1) wasn't me 2) was me backwards was 3) flat was 4) making me / vain or 5) making me embarrassed to go out, that was all a sign to me / not a sign of me« (Wagner 824)

presenetiti, da je v promocijskem zapisu na spletni strani Primus, kjer je *Tehno* mogoče kupiti, zapisano: »Če je prejšnja knjiga avtorice nastajala *Pod vtisom* življenja drugih knjig, je lep del nove nastal pod vtisom pepela avtoričine neposredne eksistence.« Med motivi, ki so obravnavani v knjigi, oglaševalec našteje: poporodno depresijo, misli na samomor, tesnobo. Upesnjevanje različnih, ne ravno navdušujočih vidikov materinstva v sodobni slovenski poeziji sicer ni novost (značilno je npr. za Petro Kolmančič), vendar *Tehno* izstopa tako na motivno-tematski kot stilni ravni.

»Tehno« je razmeroma dolga pesem, sestavljena iz tridesetih trivrstičnih kitic in zaključnega dvostišja. Napisana je v prostih verzih, ki se z intenzivnim ritmom približujejo glasbeni zvrsti iz naslova. Ritem je ustvarjen z menjavanjem različno dolgih povedi, z uporabo eliptičnih in združenih povedi, s ponavljanji in paralelizmi. Opazno vlogo pri členitvi besedila imajo nagovori, retorična vprašanja, verzni prestopi in odsotnost vejic. Pesem se začne *in medias res*, z napovedjo, o čem bo tekla beseda:

O tem kako se sploh ne čudim
da nič ne čutim. O samomoru.
Ki prepreči mojega. O hvaležnosti. (Pepelnik 20)

Iz nekronoloških izjav prvoosebne govorke se da postopoma izoblikovati zgodbo o tem, kako se je rešila iz depresije, ki jo je doletela po porodu drugega otroka. Iz otopenosti, v kateri je razmišljala o samomoru, ker ni videla nobenega smisla več, jo je zbudil samomor prijatelja Davida. Prav zaradi njegove smrti je spet začutila bolečino, zaradi te je lahko spet zagledala svoja dva otroka in fanta ter zaradi njih našla »lepe stvari« – ljubezen, upanje in vero. Tako kot v pesmi »Excercise 34« Catherine Wagner je tudi v »Tehnu« Ane Peplnik ena glavnih tem izguba lastne identitete:

Ljudje?! Mene ni bilo. Pa sem vseeno bila. Pa me ni bilo.
To je grozno. Ko sebi nisi. Ko si se izgubiš.
Ostaneš v kleti. V kleti dve. Ki je pod kletjo ena. (23)

Stilna primerjava obeh pesmi pokaže, da je za obe pesnici zelo pomembno ustvarjanje lastnega ritma na račun kršenja slovničnih pravil. Toda medtem ko se Catherine Wagner posveča besednim igram in glasovnemu slikanju, zvočnost besed pri Ani Peplnik ni v ospredju. Izbira slogovnih sredstev je povezana s tonom pesmi: v »Excercise 34« je čutiti vsaj sled humorne distance do lastnega položaja, v »Tehnu«

pa gre absolutno zares. Z vidika izpovedovanja osebnih izkustev sta Wagner in Pepelnik podobno brezkompromisni, saj obe z iskrenostjo presejata pričakovanja, povezana s tradicionalno liriko. Razkrivanje čustvenih stanj, ki se jih še vedno drži pridih tabuja, ima v ameriški sodobni poeziji korenine v gibanju, poimenovanem konfesionalizem. Med njegove predstavnice (poleg Roberta Lowella) štejejo Sylvio Plath, ki bi bila lahko tudi ena od vzornic Ane Pepelnik. V »Tehnu« namreč omeni njeno pesniško zbirko *Ariel*, ki jo je sama prevedla v slovenščino: »In potem sem / šla in vzela s police Ariel. In zdaj jo berem drugače.« (21) Zanimive vzporednice bi se odprle tudi ob primerjavi s poetiko Franka O'Hare (njegov personizem je po nekaterih razlagah dediščina romantične izpovednosti) in Tomaža Šalamuna, ki je v slovensko poezijo vnesel sproščeno kramljanje o svojih vsakdanjih doživetjih.

Izpovedovanje osebnega izkustva kot zgodovinski pojav ali kot fenomenološka stalnica

Perloff je sodobno prevlado konvencionalne lirike poskušala pojasniti s konkurenco med več tisoč pesniki, ki se potegujejo za objave v časopisih, kakršen je *New Yorker*, in za službe v šolah kreativnega pisanja (»Poetry«). O relativno velikem številu pesnikov lahko govorimo tudi v Sloveniji in morda je eden od razlogov za razcvet osebnoizpovedne poezije tudi pri nas povezan s šolanjem, kajti čeprav razen posamičnih delavnic ne poznamo institucionaliziranih oblik šolanja za pesnike, osnovne in srednje šole večinoma utrjujejo predstavo o poeziji kot načinu izpovedovanja lastnih čustev in misli. Odgovoru na vprašanje, zakaj ima izpovedovanje osebnega izkustva v sodobni slovenski in ameriški poeziji vlogo glavnega pesniškega sredstva, se lahko približamo tudi drugače. Različne pristope bom grobo razdelila na historične in univerzalistične. V prvo skupino spadajo poskusi povezati izpovedni način s posebnimi zgodovinskimi, ekonomskimi, političnimi ali družbenimi okoliščinami, v katerih pesniki ustvarjajo:

– po drugi svetovni vojni je bil slovenski intimizem zasnovan in dojet kot način nasprotovanja družbeno zapovedanemu kolektivizmu. V ZDA, kjer je individualizem ena najpomembnejših vrednot, je oblast v obdobju hladne vojne spodbujala (s štipendijami, gostovanji ipd.) izpovedno pisanje kot obliko propagande proti komunizmu.

– Izpovedovanje lastnega izkustva je odigralo pomembno vlogo pri konstruiranju identitete različnih družbenih skupin: gejev in lezbijk (v ZDA v 60. letih, v Sloveniji v 90. letih 20. stoletja in kasneje),

žensk (v slovenski poeziji po letu 2000), manjšin (v ameriški poeziji po letu 1970).

– Izražanje sebe je mogoče razumeti kot (neo)liberalno vrednoto. Jennifer Ashton, ki o izpovedovanju govori tudi v zvezi s konceptualno poezijo, je prepričana, da sodobna ameriška poezija »kot še nikoli prej opozarja na stopnjo, na katero sta tako lirski kot antilirski poeziji ostali zavezani liberalni (in zdaj neoliberalni) vrednoti osebnega izražanja« (Ashton, »Labor« 219).

Fenomenološki pristopi v nasprotju s historičnimi poudarjajo univerzalni pomen lirske poezije za človeštvo. Virginia Jackson in Yopie Prins sta v antologiji *The Lyric Theory Reader* zapisala, da »fenomenologija enači poezijo z mislijo in, navsezadnje, s pogoji za naš obstoj« (Jackson in Prins 382). Opozorila sta tudi na mnenje sodobne literarne teoretikarke Susan Stewart, ki trdi, da je zavest odvisna od poezije. Prav zgodovina poezije je po njenem mnenju »izoblikovala naš koncept prve osebe in zaradi te zgodovine nas bodo lahko razumeli tisti, ki bodo živeli v prihodnosti« (cit. po Jackson in Prins 382). Z vidika fenomenologije torej upesnjevanja lastnega izkustva ni mogoče zreducirati na zgodovinski pojav, ki bi se moral že zdavnaj umakniti pred bolj inovativnimi oblikami pisanja.¹³ Med teoretske smeri, ki pripovedovanju o lastnem izkustvu pripisujejo univerzalen pomen, spadajo tudi kognitivni pristopi v postklasični naratologiji. Monika Fludernik je svoj koncept izkustvenosti (*experientiality*) razložila kot »kvazimimetično evokacijo 'izkustva resničnega življenja'« (Fludernik 12). Čeprav sama lirike ne razlaga s konceptom izkustvenosti, se zdi za to nadvse primeren.

Sklep

Poezijo, ki temelji na osebnem izkustvu, v slovenski in ameriški literarni vedi povezujemo zlasti z obdobjem romantike, pri čemer prvi poudarjamo vlogo Prešerna in drugi pomen (angleškega pesnika)

¹³ Vanesse Place, ki opozarja na ekonomsko vrednost lirskega jaza v sodobni družbi, ta argument seveda ne bi prepričal, kar lepo pokaže naslednji citat: »Tudi Franco 'Bifo' Berardi, eden levičarskih teoretikov semiokapitalizma, zagovarja poezijo kot rešitelja singularne duše, in sicer zaradi njenih lastnosti ritma, omejevanja, jezikovnega presežka do natančne točke popolne singularnosti, temeljne 'nezamenljivosti'. Navaja Rainerja Marijo Rilkeja. Navaja njegove *Elegije*. Ne opazi, da je Rilke priljubljen tudi pri avtorjih priročnikov za samopomoč, teologih new agea in Hollywoodu, ko ta seže po poeziji. In je seveda najbolj prodajani avtor.« (Place)

Wordswortha. Po drugi svetovni vojni se je v Sloveniji na romantično tradicijo navezal tok intimistov, medtem ko so predstavniki nove avantgarde izpovedovanje zavrnilo kot preveč tradicionalen postopek. Toda po kratkem obdobju intenzivnega razcveta eksperimentalne poezije, ki je s svojo impersonalnostjo izzivala zagovornike humanizma, je prvoosebni, pogosto avtobiografski govorec spet postal običajen. V ZDA je po drugi svetovni vojni izkustvo odigralo pomembno vlogo tako pri tradicionalno usmerjenih pesnikih (od konfesionalizma do najmlajših predstavnikov mainstreamovske poezije) kot v okviru nekaterih eksperimentalnih poetik (beatniki, personizem), po obdobju razcveta *language poetry* v 70. in 80. letih pa se je uveljavilo z novimi gibanji in pesmimi, ki jih je mogoče umestiti v t. i. hibridno poezijo. Zapleteni podobi sodobne slovenske in ameriške poezije sta, kot sem skušala pokazati, primerljivi na ravni izpovedovanja osebnega izkustva. Prevlado tega postopka je po mojem mnenju najbolje razlagati s kombinacijo pristopov, ki zagovarjajo njegovo univerzalnost in zgodovinsko pogojenost. Zgodbe, ki konstruirajo »jaz«, so obenem večne in zmeraj znova določene z okoliščinami, v katerih nastanejo.

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Personal Experience in Contemporary Slovenian and American Poetry

Keywords: Slovenian poetry / American poetry / comparative studies / lyric poetry / personal experience / hybridity / hybrid poem / Jakob, Jure / Wagner, Catherine / Pepelnik, Ana

In this article I proceed from the understanding of lyric poetry as a subjective literary type that enables the presentation of personal experiences, i.e. emotions, thoughts and sensory perceptions. A comparison between Slovenian and American poetry after World War II shows that the confessional mode in both has remained a constant to this day, with the lyrical self in the American space receiving harsher and constant criticism. The division into conventional (mainstream) and experimental poetry, until recently characteristic of American literary-historical reviews, has not been established in Slovenia, since experimental poetry has not developed its literary system here. However, the term hybrid poetry, an American attempt to transcend the binary model, can still be used for some Slovenian poems. As an example of a poem that follows a romantic or lyrical model, I analyze Jure Jakob's poem "Hunger." As an American example of hybridity, I present Catherine Wagner's poem "Exercise 34 (1/3/02 PM)" and compare it to Ana Pepelnik's "Tehno." Both are a fusion of confession and unconventional style. When asked why the confession of

personal experience plays an important role in contemporary Slovenian and American poetry, I respond with the suggestion that we recognize it as a universal and historically conditioned poetic tool.

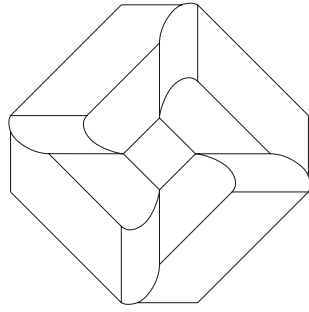
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Razprave / Articles



Parenetična retorika v govorih *In Matthaeum* Janeza Krizostoma: diatriba, lalija, protreptik

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Razprava na primeru rabe literarnih žanrov moralne ekshortacije v govorih Janeza Krizostoma (347–407) problematizira odnos med klasično in krščansko retoriko v pozni antiki. Najprej identificira prvine diatribe, lalije in protreptika kot retoričnih zvrsti parenetične in simbolevtične (psihogoške) narave – ki jih je deloma že poznala klasična grška retorika, deloma pa se razvijejo v krogih poznoantičnih (helenističnih) filozofov in retoričnih teoretikov – in so najbolj vplivali na Krizostomovo ekshortativno eksegezo. V drugem delu razprave avtor v treh reprezentativnih homilijah In Matthaeum (Hom. 1, 7, 23) pokaže, v kakšni meri so obravnavane zvrsti vplivale na Krizostomovo elocutio. S tem poda nov pogled glede vpliva poganske retorike na največjega retorja krščanske antike, ki po eni strani za podajanje moralnega nauka prevzame prvine številnih zvrsti, po drugi pa z njihovo pomočjo izoblikuje svojski slog, s katerim nagovarja svoje poslušalstvo.

Ključne besede: zgodnjekrščanska literatura / krščansko govorništvo / Janez Krizostom: *Commentarium in Matthaeum* / klasična retorika / retorične oblike / pridiga / ekshortacija

Uvod: krščanstvo in klasična retorika

Veščino retorike pogosto razumevamo kot veščino govora in prepričevanja.¹ Če bi prva definicija sicer lahko veljala tudi za leposlovje, vidimo, da je osrednja karakteristika govorništva sposobnost prepričevanja, tj. navduševanja ali spodbujanja poslušalcev. S pomočjo analize ekshortativne, parenetične komponente na konkretnem primeru retorične dimenzije govorov o Matejevem evangeliju največjega krščanskega antičnega retorja Janeza Krizostoma (347–407) je moč bolje razumeti govorne prvine, ki spodbujajo in prepričujejo, a so obenem daleč stran od strogega, golega, prisilnega moraliziranja.

¹ Za številne pomembne sugestije se zahvaljujem doc. dr. Mateju Hriberšku in prof. dr. Janezu Vodičarju.

Zavoljo temeljitejšega razumevanja parenetičnih tehnik pri Krizostomu je najprej treba očrtati razmerje med tradicijo klasične antične retorike in novo vzpostavljajočim se krščanstvom, predvsem v 4. stoletju (Maxwell 42–64; Schatkin 179–180; Kinzig 633–670). Odnos med krščanstvom in retoriko spada v izjemno široko in kompleksno raziskovalno področje odnosa med krščanstvom in klasično kulturo. Kot dva pilastra, ki podpirata celotno zgradbo današnje Evrope, stojita grška in rimska civilizacija, kar se odraža tudi v zgodovini retorike. Grki so temelje govornišva, poleg zlate dobe, dobili z Aristotelovim delom *Retorika*,² medtem ko se je umetnost govora do konca izpilila v rimskem kontekstu, predvsem s Ciceronom³ in Kvintilijanovim delom *Šola govornišva* (Hriberšek 245–314).⁴

Krščanstvo v svojih začetkih ni imelo niti velike potrebe niti želje po (posvetnem) znanju retorike (Kennedy, *Klasična retorika* 154–200). Novozavezni spisi imajo v prvi vrsti značaj narativnega kerigmatičnega poročila, ki se seveda oplaja pri različnih judovskih ter grških miselnih tradicijah, a kar se tiče retorične elokventnosti, to ni poglavitna kvaliteta Nove zaveze. Tudi 2. in 3. stoletje puščata le malo sledov krščanskega ukvarjanja s teorijo govornišva, kar pa se spremeni v začetku 4. stoletja z eksponentnim razmahom krščanstva. Vedno več ljudi začne hoditi v cerkve, da bi poslušali govornike-bridigarje, ki pa so se morali za tovrstno službo posebej izobraziti, kar je pomenilo, da so se mnogi odpravili na poganske akademije, kjer so dodobra spoznali grški sistem izobraževanja (t. i. *paideia*). Znameniti govorniki tega obdobja, katerih dela so se ohranila, so bili predvsem veliki Kapadočani (Bazilij Veliki, Gregor iz Nazianza, Gregor iz Nise) ter morda največji govornik krščanske antike Janez iz Antiohije, ki so mu kasneje dodelili naziv Zlatousti (Krizostom, gr. Χρυσόστομος).

Množice ljudi, ki so prihajale poslušat krščanske bridigarje, so bile obenem vzgojene še v poganskem duhu, kjer je v tistem času prevladovala druga sofistika (v širšem smislu prva štiri stoletja po Kr.), katere predstavniki so bili še zadnji cvet antičnega poganskega govornišva. Znameniti predstavniki so bili Temistij in predvsem Libanij, pri katerem se je učil tudi Janez Krizostom (Hoof 168, 180, 218, 296; Cribiore 10; Kennedy, *Klasična retorika* 183). Trenja, ki so se pojavljala pri tem prehodu iz poganske antike v zgodnje »državno« krščanstvo, mestoma niso bila majhna. Že sam Krizostom na primer se v govorih večkrat bori proti ploskanju in mahanju, kar so bili ljudje navajeni početi pri

² Glej Aristotel, *Retorika*.

³ Glej Mark Tulij Ciceron, *O govorništvu*.

⁴ Glej Kvintilijan, *Šola govornišva*.

poslušanju drugih, posvetnih govorov. Gregor iz Nazianza pri svojem slovesu iz prestolnice Konstantinopla leta 381 celo zapiše pikro pripombo o takih ljudeh: »Govornikov hočejo, ne pa duhovnikov« (Or. 42,24 (PG 36,488B); Hubbel 263).

Žanri moralne ekshortacije

Pred podrobnejšo obravnavo parenetičnih sestavin v govorih Janeza Krizostoma je treba najprej predstaviti samo literarno zvrst krščanskega govora oz. pridige ter nato predvsem klasičnih žanrov za podajanje moralne ekshortacije, da bi tako lahko analizirali vpliv v Krizostomovih govorih.

Krščanska pridiga (gr. ὁμιλία, lat. *tractatus*) in govor (gr. λόγος, lat. *sermo*) sta se v antiki začela ob zgledovanju pri različnih retorično-literarnih vrstah. V 2. in 3. stoletju so krščanske govore najbolj zaznamovali grški poganski filozofi, ki so v literarni vrsti diatribe, posebej značilni za kinike, podajali moralni nauk in vzgojo za vrline. Kasneje, v 4. stoletju, se krščanski govorniki vse bolj začnejo zgledovati po retoriški literaturi svojega časa, med katero sta imeli največji vpliv literarni vrsti enkomij (gr. ἐγκώμιον, lat. *encomium*) in pogrebni govor (gr. ἐπιτάφιος λόγος), podoben evlogičnemu panegiriku (gr. πανήγυρις).

Že Origen je razlikoval med govorom in homilijo, ki je bila sestavljena kot komentar Božji besedi, in tudi Krizostomova razlaga Matejevega evangelija je bila podana v obliki govorov. V splošnem vseh 90 govorov, ki sestavljajo najzgodnejši v celoti ohranjen grški komentar k evangelijem, sledi zelo jasni dvodelni strukturi. V prvem delu govorov Krizostom podaja dokaj dobesedno, stvarno razlago posameznega odlomka, v skladu z antiohijsko eksegetsko tradicijo, ki se je razlikovala od bolj alegorične, duhovne razlage aleksandrijske šole.⁵ V drugem delu govorov (t. i. τὸ ἠθικόν) pa se posveča konkretizaciji odlomka za neposredno poslušalstvo, kar vključuje aplikativno interpretacijo bibličnega sporočila na povsem konkretne probleme v njegovi skupnosti. Predmet analize bodo torej ti drugi deli govorov, ki predvsem na koncu vsebujejo zelo direktne spodbude h krščanskemu življenju.

Že pri priljubljenih filozofih pozne antike lahko zasledimo, da so pri poučevanju svojih učencev uporabljali različne žanre za moralno spod-

⁵ Navedena bipartitna razdelitev služi kot shematični prikaz zgolj v ilustrativne namene. Če je dolga leta veljala za sprejeto, smo v zadnjih desetletjih priče raziskavam, v katerih poznavalci patristične eksegeze odkrivajo veliko večjo kompleksnost in nezadostnost navedene delitve.

bujanje (Maxwell 11–41).⁶ To značilnost je pri svojem retoričnem izobraževanju spoznal tudi Janez Krizostom in jo zatem – ustvarjalno, ne zgolj slepo – prenesel in vtikal v svoje govore. V nasprotju s Puechom, ki je pri Krizostomu helenistični vpliv ocenjeval zgolj v formalnem smislu, je verjetno bolj prav reči, da je Krizostom prevzel tudi nekaj helenističnih prvin morale (de Mendieta 381).

Diatriba in lalija

Sam pojem diatriba (gr. διατριβή) je široka oznaka za javne govore, ki so jih imeli predvsem kiniški in stoiški filozofi, uporabljala pa se je tudi za bolj strukturirana »šolska« predavanja. Diatribe so v splošnem helenistična literarna zvrst filozofske (moralne) narave, kot določena zvrst *dialexis*. Med strokovnjaki sicer ni soglasja, ali je diatriba kot formalni žanr sploh obstajala, vendar se tudi največji kritiki strinjajo, da lahko govorimo o diatribičnem stilu v govorih.⁷ Ena glavnih značilnosti diatribe je raba fiktivnega dialoga, kar pri poslušalcih vzbuja občutek aktivnega sodelovanja v dvogovoru. Druge, manj značilne lastnosti so še uvodi z aforizmi ali pozornost vzbujajočimi slogani, ritmična struktura govora, aliteracije, paromojoza (gr. παρομοίωσις), anafore in epifore, homojotelevton (gr. ὁμοιοτέλευτον). Učinek dialoškega tona je dosežen na več načinov: preko neposrednih nagovorov poslušalstva, pogosto v drugi osebi ednine; z uporabo φησί brez subjekta za uvajanje vprašanj ali ugovorov navideznega sogovornika; govornikov odgovor z različnimi interjekcijami, čustvenimi odzivi oz. pripombami; s konstrukcijo celotnega namišljenega dialoga z nasprotnikom (Uthemann 140–151; Cook 74–75).

Če diatriba kot samostojna retorična zvrst v klasični retoriki ni bila omenjana, temveč velja za bolj splošen pojem, lahko kot o sorodni tipični literarni zvrsti govorimo o t. i. laliji (gr. λαλία). O tem obširno govori spis iz 3. oz. 4. stol., *Peri epideiktikon*, pripisan Menandru

⁶ Nedavno je Cook zgolj na splošno izpostavil vpliv dveh žanrov: diatribe oz. lalije in protreptika (74–81), vendar pa v njegovi študiji umanjka temeljita analiza konkretnih govorov.

⁷ Diatriba je, kljub izpričanemu naslovu *Diatribai* del Biona iz Boristen (Diogen Laertski, *Vitae Philosophum* 2,77) in Epikteta, sodoben pojem, ki temelji na formalni oznaki ljudsko-filozofskih govorov kinika Telesa iz 3. stol. pr. Kr., kot je to pokazal Wilamowitz v knjigi *Diokles von Karistos* (1881, 292–319). Usener v študiji *Epicurea* (1887) in Wendland v članku »Philo und die kynisch-stoische Diatribe« (1985) sta diatribo uveljavila kot splošen pojem oz. žanr.

Retorju s konca 3. stoletja po Kr. (*Peri epideiktikon* II.4; Russel in Wilson 114–127).⁸ Laliya je literarna zvrst kratkega govora, epideiktične in simbolevtične (svetovalne) narave, za katero je značilna raba čustev in predvsem nezahtevna formalna struktura, saj tovrstni govori velikokrat dajejo občutek neurejenosti glede tematik, preprostega stila in odsotnosti stroge strukture. Z diatribo jo povezujejo preprost, enostaven stil, vzbujanje čustev pri poslušalstvu z emotivnim jezikom ter dajanje nasvetov in grajanje, zato lahko ti dve obliki obravnavamo kot en žanr (Cook 75–76). Ena ključnih značilnosti je raba glagolske oblike $\varphi\eta\sigma\iota$ (sln. »pravi«, 3. os. ed.) brez subjekta kot navidezna interjekcija hipotetičnega sogovornika, kar pri poslušalstvu sproži občutek vključenosti v dialog, saj ta retorična figura ustvari iluzijo, da je govornik pravkar vzel pripombo nekoga iz občinstva in odgovoril nanjo *ad hominem*. Imaginarni sogovornik torej nastopa v službi bolj prepričljivega učinka govornika, saj preko odgovarjanja na ta pomislek v resnici odgovarja in pobija pomisleke poslušalstva.

Raba diatribe je pri Krizostomu, kot že pri predhodnih potujočih filozofih, v funkciji podajanja moralnih spodbud, saj jih na ta način lahko nagovori neposredno in naslovi na njih ostro kritiko (Kennedy, *Greek Rhetoric* 294; prim. Cioffi 3–45). Dialoški stil govora, ki je značilen tudi za poznejše bizantinske govornike, ima namen tudi vzbujati avtoriteto tistega, ki ima govor in poučuje. Ta intratekstovni dialog tudi vzpostavlja brezčasni učinek Božje besede, ko je uporabljen za svetopisemsko razlago, saj je na ta način pridigar posrednik Besede in jo aktualizira neposredno in razumljivo za določeno skupnost. Diatriba torej služi večjemu učinku govora na poslušalce.

Protreptik

Podobno kot žanr diatriba je tudi protreptik (gr. $\pi\rho\acute{o}\tau\rho\rho\epsilon\upsilon\iota\varsigma$, $\lambda\acute{o}\gamma\omicron\varsigma$ $\pi\rho\tau\rho\rho\epsilon\pi\tau\iota\kappa\acute{o}\varsigma$, lat. protrepticon) ohlapna, široka retorična zvrst, ki se uporablja za podajanje moralnega učenja, opominjanja ali spodbude in ki pri poslušalstvu vzbuja trdno odločitev za spremembo življenja. Kot diatriba ima tudi protreptik svoje korenine že v diskurzu filozofov, ki so ob koncu svojih govorov poslušalstvo skušali pridobiti zase in za svoje nazore (Cook 79–81). Literarna zvrst protreptik, kot celostna ekshortacija, vsebuje dramatične, ostre črno-bele prikaze pozitivnih in negativnih življenjskih drž z namenom, da bi prebudila poslušalstvo

⁸ Russel in Wilson ne podpirata teorije o Menandrovem avtorstvu, marveč trdita, da je delo nastalo v času Dioklecijanovega vladanja († 316 po Kr.).

in ga spodbudila k jasnemu, odločnemu moralnemu življenju. Kritika ljudstva je uporabljena kot retorični prijem in ne odraža nujno realnega stanja. Ko poudarja razkorak med posvetnim, mesenim oz. grešnim življenjem ter svetim, duhovnim, krščanskim življenjem, to po zgledu filozofskih protreptikov uvaja z namenom vzbujanja privlačnosti radikalnih odločitev za krščansko življenje.

V (eks)hortativnem delu govora, v širšem smislu imenovanem protreptik, Krizostom uporablja številna retorična sredstva, da bi občinstvo spodbudil: retorična vprašanja, direktna navodila, kratke povedi (vse to so retorične figure, tipične tudi za diatribo in lalijo) (Mitchell 186, 192, 386, 390).

Podoben pojem je pareneza (gr. *παραινεσις*, lat. *paraenesis*), ki ga uvrščamo med zvrsti za podajanje etičnih spodbud.⁹ Nekateri avtorji, kot je Hartlich, razlikujejo protreptik in parenezo v smislu intenzivnosti, da je slednja bolj svetovalne narave, prvi pa spodbuda k jasno določenem pozitivnemu moralnemu cilju (Fiore 162–163). Parenetična zvrst je širšega obsega kot protreptična, vendar je pogosto zelo težko potegniti jasno ločnico med njima, saj obe temeljno zaznamuje ekshortativen značaj, zato ju obravnavamo povezano.

Perenetična retorika v Krizostomovih homilijah *in Matthaeum*

Vpliv poganske govorniške tradicije na Janeza Krizostoma je že dolga desetletja predmet podrobnih študij in tudi razhajajočih se mnenj (Kelly 6–8; Hubbel 261–264; Mayer in Allen 26–33; Mayer 114).¹⁰ Čeprav Krizostom v svojih govorih večkrat opozori na nevarnosti in zgrešenost poganske retorike in se večkrat distancira od svojega nekdanjega učitelja Libanija,¹¹ lahko v samih govorih zasledimo obilico

⁹ Glej izjemen zbornik z naslovom *Early Christian Paraenesis in Context*, posvečen obravnavi pareneze z različnih vidikov: konceptualni premislek, pareneza v judovskem in grško-rimskem svetu, pareneza v Novi zavezi in zgodnjekrščanskih besedilih (Starr in Engberg-Pedersen).

¹⁰ Eden zanimivejših nedavnih poskusov je monografija Davida Rylaarsdama z naslovom *John Chrysostom on Divine Pedagogy: The Coherence of his Theology and Preaching*, kjer predvsem v zadnjem poglavju (228–282) analizira Krizostomove homiletične metode.

¹¹ Malosse (273–280) lepo povzame dolgoletne razprave o odnosu med Krizostomom in Libanijem in izrazi dvom, da je Zlatousti resnično obiskoval Libanijevo pogansko retorično šolo. O tem sicer poroča Sozomen (*Historia Ecclesiastica* 8.2), vendar škofa v Libanijevi obsežni korespondenci iščemo zaman.

stavčnih struktur, uporabe retoričnih figur in drugih slogovnih okrasov, ki so sad ravno njegovega retoričnega izobraževanja. Interpretacija razmerja med krščanstvom in poganstvom pri Janezu Krizostomu je v strokovni javnosti že dolgo razpeta med stališčem, ki ugotavlja oster prelom med tema dvema kulturama in pa med prepričanjem, da ravno Krizostomovi govori združujejo podajanje jasnega krščanskega sporočila s pomočjo poganskih retoričnih veščin (Ameringer 120–128).

Vprašanje kakšen vpliv na invencijo in dispozicijo v Krizostomovih govorih je imela poganska retorična tradicija, ostaja odprto. Za razliko od daljših enkomijev, npr. epitafov (gr. ἐπιτάφιος) ali kraljevski govor (gr. βασιλικός λόγος), ki so bili značilni predvsem za Aristida, so nekateri Krizostomovi govori krajši, sestavljeni svobodneje, formalno tesneje sledijo Libaniju in Temistiju in jih v skladu z Menandrom lahko klasificiramo kot lalije, govore.

Krizostomov komentar Matejevega evangelija, *Homiliae XC in Matthaem*,¹² je sestavljen iz devetdesetih govorov, ki jih lahko literarno-teoretsko klasificiramo v literarno vrsto eksegetskega govora, ki formalno vsebuje lastnosti lalije, vsebinsko pa je razdeljen na eksegetski in ekshortativni del (Farrugia 33–45). Zavedati se je treba tudi problema, da so bili lahko govori v živo podajani v drugačni obliki, kot so nam na voljo danes v zapisani literarni obliki. V nadaljevanju je podan poskus retorične analize sklepnih delov treh izbranih homilij.

Homilija 1: »Odprimo vrata svojega duha«

Prvi govor je posvečen uvodu v eksegezo Matejevega evangelija in je razdeljen na osem delov (PG 57,13–24). Besedilo je poučnega značaja, napisano zelo slikovito in razgibano. Govori o evangelijih, ki so preprosti, tako da jih more razumeti vsak človek in so od Boga navdihnjeni. Nova zaveza pomeni avtorju predvsem notranje dogajanje in življenje po Duhu. Zunanja pojavnost postane manj pomembna, z Novo zavezo se poudarja notranja usmerjenost, poudarjajo se vrednote in kreposti, ki morajo biti v človekovem srcu in ne »zunaj« na kamnitih ploščah. Tisto, kar je bilo v Stari zavezi na kamnitih ploščah, mora v Novi zavezi preiti na duhovne plošče in postati notranji vzgib vsakega delovanja. Apostoli so zato žive knjige Svetega pisma, ker v njih deluje

¹² V *Patrologia Graeca* je natisnjena Fieldova kritična izdaja iz leta 1839, kasnejša izdaja žal ne obstaja. Prevodi odlomkov se deloma opirajo na neobjavljeni osnutek prevoda dr. Antona Čepona iz l. 1944.

Duh, Kristusov Duh. Nasproti temu podaja dela nekaterih filozofov, ki so dolga, zapletena in preprostemu človeku nerazumljiva ter za njegovo zveličanje nepotrebna.

Homilija je napisana zelo dialoško, saj se avtor obrača na posameznega vernika in ga poučuje. Krizostom mu želi približati skrivnost, ki se skriva v svetih besedilih, zato najprej zbudi poslušalčevo pozornost z vprašanji, na katera namerava tudi odgovoriti. Poudarja spoštovanje do Božje besede, ki so besede živega Boga in nam odstirajo nedoumljive razsežnosti Božje ljubezni in usmiljenja. Zato moramo v tempelj Besede vstopiti tiho, mirno in brez hrupa, da bi slišali Gospoda. Resničnost svetih besedil je neizpodbitna in verodostojna, zato tudi navidezne neskladnosti ne smejo zmanjšati naše pozornosti.

Homilija je kot celota napisana v parenetičnem slogu, kar se še posebej odraža v zadnjem, osmem delu, kjer Krizostom spodbuja k zavzetemu preučevanju Svetega pisma, ki nam mora pomagati v našem življenju. Ko prihaja h koncu govora, se ponovno obrača na poslušalca in ga v diatribičnem slogu nagovarja:

Kaj se na tem svetu dogaja, to ti natančno veš [σὺ ... μετὰ ἀκριβείας οἶδας], novo in staro in preteklo; in lahko našteješ vladarje, pod katerimi si prej služil kot vojak, sodnike pri tekmah, zmagovalce in vojskovodje, kar ti nič ne more koristiti. Niti v sanjah ti pa ni prišlo na misel, kdo je vladar v tem mestu, kdo tam zavzema prvo, drugo, tretje mesto, ali koliko časa se vsak tam mudi, ali kaj sijajnega je moral za to storiti. Tudi o postavah, ki so v tistem mestu, se ti ne ljubi poslušati drugih. Kako moreš torej, povej mi [εἰπέ μοι], pričakovati, da boš dobil obljubljene dobrine, če se niti ne meniš, ko govorijo o teh stvareh? (PG 57,23)

Jasno je razvidno, kako Krizostom vzpostavi zelo direkten odnos s publiko preko opisovanja njihovih misli, prepričan. Večkrat uporabi neposredni nagovor in celo neposredno vprašanje, ki ni niti retorično niti navidezno, temveč izrazito diatribično. Na občinstvo se večkrat obrne z 2. osebo ednine, kar pa zatem spremeni v 1. osebo množine, ko preide na eksplisitno ekshortativni del.

Toda, če tega prej nismo storili, storimo vsaj zdaj [νῦν γοῦν ποιῶμεν]. Saj bomo, če Bog da, stopili v mesto, ki se od zlata blešči in ki je še dragocenejše od vsega zlata. Zato poiščimo natančno njegove temelje, oglejmo si njegova vrata, ki so narejena iz safirjev in biserov. Saj imamo najboljšega vodnika [χειραγωγὸν] v Mateju. Skozi njegova vrata zdaj vstopimo in pokazati moramo veliko vnemo [δεῖ πολλῆς ἡμῖν τῆς σπουδῆς]. Kajti če koga vidi, da ne pazi, ga spodi iz mesta. To je namreč najbolj kraljevsko in sijajno mesto, ne kakor naša mesta, v katerih je trg ločen od kraljevskega dvora, kajti tam je vse kraljevski dvor. (PG 57,23)

Pomembna je identifikacija govornika z občinstvom, kar Krizostom vzpostavi ravno z rabo prve osebe množine, da bi ne zapadel v alienirano moraliziranje, marveč se z soudeležbo približal poslušalstvu. Z metaforo nebeškega Jeruzalema, nebeškega mesta, ki je več kot zgolj komparacija, uvede tudi ostro bipolarno razlikovanje med tusvetnim in onstranskim, da bi vzbudil hrepenenje po slednjem; to odraža tipično značilnost protreptičnega govora. V nadaljevanju ne ostaja zgolj pri moralnih spodbudah k vstopanju v skrivnosti Svetega pisma, temveč golo ekshortacijo nadgradi s temeljnim smotrom tega truda:

Odprimo torej vrata svojega duha [ἀναπετάσωμεν τὰς πύλας τῆς διανοίας] in odprimo ušesa, s svetim strahom prestopimo prag, da na kolenih počastimo kralja, ki je notri. Kajti že prvo srečanje more gledalca zbegati. Zdaj so nam vrata sicer še zaklenjena, ko pa jih bomo videli odprta (in to se bo zgodilo, ko bomo razrešili težka vprašanja [τῶν ζητημάτων λύσις]), tedaj bomo videli veliko bleščečo luč. Kajti ker ga vodi oko duše, obljublja ta cestinar, da ti bo pokazal [σοὶ δεῖκνῶναι], kje sedi kralj in katere vojne čete mu stojijo ob strani [...]. (PG 57,23–24)

Janez Krizostom skonstruira pravi dramski lok, ki se izteče dialoško, zopet z osebnim nagovorom v drugi osebi ednine. Nato sledi sklepni del, ki ima povsem protreptične značilnosti, saj parenezo – poleg tega, da prikazuje smoter študija Svetega pisma – podaja tudi preko potencialnega nagovora:

Ne stopajmo [ἀναπετάσωμεν] torej noter s hrupom in ropotom, temveč s skrivnostnim molkom [μετὰ σιγῆς μυστικῆς], kajti če že cesarjev odlok v gledališču šele tedaj preberejo, ko je nastal popoln molk, koliko bolj se spodobi, da so v tem mestu vsi mirni in da so njihove duše pripravljene poslušati. Tukaj ne bomo spoznavali [ἀναγινώσκεσθαι] pisma kakega zemljana, temveč vladarja angelov. Če bomo pripravljene, nas bo vodila z veliko natančnostjo milost Svetega Duha, in bomo prišli prav do kraljevskega prestola ter postali deležni vseh dobrot po milosti in ljubezni našega Gospoda Jezusa Kristusa, kateremu slava in oblast z Očetom in Svetim Duhom, sedaj in vselej in na veke vekov. Amen. (PG 57,24)

Homilija 7: »Pridružimo se tudi mi modrim, vzdignimo se«

V sedmem govoru Janez Krizostom podaja razlago odlomka o obisku modrih ob Kristusovem rojstvu (Mt 2,4–9; PG 57,73–82). Govor sledi Krizostomovi eksegetski metodi, ko najprej ekshortativno razlaga samo svetopisemsko besedilo, nato pa poda še konkreten moralni

nauk za poslušalce. Najprej poziva poslušalce, naj se tudi sami pridružijo modrim in naj se kar najbolj oddaljijo od poganskega življenja, da bodo mogli videti Kristusa. Kajti modri ga tudi ne bi bili videli, če se ne bi bili oddaljili od svoje dežele. Za tem tematizira problem zahajanja v gledališča in nečistega odnosa do žensk. Spodbuja predvsem moške, da bi ljubili svoje žene, ne pa izgubljali svoje časti že z naslajanjem ob »plavalkah« v gledališču. Za svoj čas je Krizostom izjemno prodoren, saj želi moškim in ženam ohraniti dostojanstvo in kvaliteten zakonski odnos. Nikakor ne nastopa puritansko in ne želi odrekat »užitkov zakona«; želi obvarovati pred razpadom odnosov.

V prvih štirih delih Krizostom razlaga sam odlomek, medtem ko se v zadnji dveh posebej obrača na publiko in aktualizira evangelijsko sporočilo. Peti del začne z ekshortacijo v 1. osebi množine:

Pridružimo se tudi mi [ἀκολουθήσωμεν καὶ ἡμεῖς] modrim in oddaljimo se kar najbolj mogoče od poganskega življenja, da bomo mogli videti Kristusa. Kajti tudi oni ga ne bi bili videli, ko se od svoje dežele ne bi bili daleč oddaljili. Pustimo posvetne skrbi [ἀποστῶμεν τῶν γηϊνῶν πραγμάτων]. Tudi modri niso videli zvezde, dokler so bili v Perziji, ko pa so Perzijo zapustili, so zagledali »Sonce pravice«; celo zvezde ne bi bili več videli, če se ne bi bili pogumno odpravili od tam. Vzdignimo se torej tudi mi [ἀναστῶμεν οὖν καὶ ἡμεῖς], in četudi se vsi bojijo, hitimo vsaj mi k hiši, kjer biva dete. (PG 57,78)

Odlomek odraža tudi eno temeljnih značilnost patristične etike nasploh, ki ni volitivna in intelektualistična, kar vodi k elitističnemu in individualističnemu pojmovanju morale, temveč Krizostom izraža t. i. ekleziološko etiko, ki je komunitarna (Poon 136).

V nadaljevanju zopet vidimo, da Krizostom zamenja osebo in se obrne neposredno na fiktivnega poslušalca v drugi osebi ednine. Z aliteracijo različnih vlog retorično nagovor učinkuje zelo osebno, saj upošteva raznolikost svojega poslušalstva.

Tako tudi ti zapusti [ἀφεις τοίνυν καὶ σὺ] judovsko ljudstvo, vznemirjeno mesto krvoločnega tirana in ves posvetni blesk ter pohiti v Betlehem, kjer je hiša duhovnega kruha. Če boš pastir in boš tja prišel, boš videl dete v prenočišču. Če pa boš kralj in tja ne boš prišel, ti ne bo nič koristil tvoj škrlat. Če boš poganski modrijan, ti to ne bo v nasprotje, da boš le prišel s tem namenom, da bi počastil Sina Božjega in se mu poklonil, ne pa zato, da bi »ga z nogami poteptal«; in da boš to storil s trepetom in veseljem, kajti to dvojce se lahko oboje združi. Toda glej, da ne postaneš podoben Herodu in da ne rečeš: »Da se mu pridem tudi jaz poklonit,« in potem prideš, da bi ga umoril. (PG 57,78–79)

Odlomek konča s sunkovitim preobratom, ko uvaja nasprotno možnost (ne)etičnega ravnanja. Šesti del kasneje znova začenja z vzklikom, ki uvede namišljen dialog:

Povej mi vendar [εἰπέ γάρ μοι]! Če bi ti kdo obljubil, da te bo peljal v kraljevo palačo in ti pokazal kralja, sedečega na prestolu, ali bi si morda izbral gledališče namesto tega? In vendar od tega ne bi mogel imeti nikakršne koristi! Tu od Gospodove mize pa teče reka duhovnega ognja, ti pa se za to ne zmeniš in tečeš v gledališče, da gledaš plavajoče ženske, ki postavljajo v sramoto svoj spol, Kristusa pa pustiš samega sedeti pri vodnjaku. (PG 57,79)

Nato nadaljuje z grajanjem poslušalstva zaradi obiskovanja gledališč in kopališč, kar pa že povezuje že s popolnim nasprotjem, tj. evharistijo, liturgijo. Oštevanje, značilno za diatribo, konča s tem, ko poda tudi konkretne rešitve za spremembo ravnanja: »Da pa ne bom samo grajal, poiščimo tudi način poboljšanja [ἀλλὰ γὰρ ἴνα μὴ μόνον ἐπιτιμῶμεν, φέρε καὶ τρόπον ἐπινήσωμεν διορθώσεως].« (PG 57,80) S tem aplicira številne nasvete, kako lahko možje bolj ljubijo svoje žene in se posvetijo njim, ne pa da zapadajo v skušnjave nečistnic. Govor sklene z izjemno osebnim parenetičnim slogom:

Za sedaj hočem tu končati svoj govor, da vam ne bom preveč nadležen. Če boste pa v teh stvareh vztrajali, vas bom s še ostrejšim nožem globlje ranil, in ne bom nehal, preden bom razgnal hudičevo gledališče in preden bom očistil občestvo Cerkve. Tako se bomo znebili [ἀλλαγησόμεθα] sedanje sramote in uživali sad prihodnjega življenja po milosti in dobrotljivosti našega Gospoda Jezusa Kristusa. (PG 57,82)

Homilija 23: »Izberimo z vso odločnostjo večno, nebeško«

V tem govoru Janez Krizostom razlaga odlomek o Kristusovih krajših navodilih apostolom (Mt 7,1–21; PG 57,307–320). Sklepni, deseti del govora je namenjen primeri o kreposti krotkosti, ki je nasprotje ošabnosti. Z njo antiohijski govorec izjemno prepleta narativno zgodbo s diatribičnim namišljenim dialogom, ki je sestavljen iz neposrednih (retoričnih) vprašanj:

Predstavljajmo [ἀγάγωμεν] si spet drugega človeka, ki ima veliko oblast in vsem ukazuje, ki ima velik ugled, svojega glasnika, sijajen pas, žezlonosce in številne služabnike. Ali se ti ne zdi [οὐχὶ δοκεῖ] to veliko in blagovanja vredno? Sedaj pa tudi temu postavimo nasproti drugega, ki je potrpežljiv, krotak, ponižen in širokosrčen. Mislimo si sedaj, da ga sramotijo in tepejo, on pa da

prenaša mirno in celo blagoslavlja tiste, ki tako z njim ravnajo. Kdo tedaj v resnici zasluži občudovanje, povej [εἰπέ μοι]? Ali oni, ki je prevzeten in nadut, ali tisti, ki je ponižen? Mar ni eden izmed teh podoben nadzemskim močem, ki so brez starosti, drugi pa milnemu mehurčku ali vodeničnemu človeku, ki je ves napihnjjen? In ali ni podoben oni duhovnemu zdravniku, ta pa smešnemu dečku, ki se napihuje? (*In Matt. 10; PG 57,320*)

Nadaljuje z aliteracijo številnih kratkih vprašanj, ki se nanašajo na imaginarnega sogovornika, čemur sledi diatribična, moralno črno-belo prikazana graja:

Kaj velikega si domišljaš, o človek [τί γὰρ μέγα φρονεῖς, ἄνθρωπε]? Mar zato, ker se pelješ visoko na vozu? Ali zavoljo tega, ker te peljeta dva mezga? Pa kaj bi to [καὶ τί τοῦτο]? Saj lahko vidiš, da se tako godi tudi z lesom in kamenjem. Ali morda zato, ker si lepo oblečen. Toda glej samo tega, ki ga namesto lepih oblek krasijo kreposti! Tedaj boš videl, da si podoben gnilemu senu, drugi pa drevesu, ki rodi čudovit sad in razveseljuje gledalčevo oko. Ti nosiš na sebi le hrano črvov in moljev, ki te bodo na mah oropali okrasja, ko bodo planili nate, kajti obleka postane plen črvov, zlato in srebro pa se spremenita v prst in prah in spet v prst in v nič drugega. Kdor pa je ozaljšan s krepostmi, nosi obleko, ki je ne morejo uničiti, ne le molji, ampak tudi sama smrt ne. In čisto po pravici! Kajti dušne kreposti nimajo svojega izvora v zemlji, marveč so sad duha. Zato ne podležejo razjedajočim črvom. Taka oblačila so v nebesih, kjer ni moljev ali črvov in nič takega. (*In Matt. 10; PG 57,320*)

Govor sklene s presenetljivim obratom, v katerem uvede etično antitezo.

Povej torej [εἰπέ μοι], kaj je prijetnejše? Biti bogat ali reven, mogočen ali nepoznan, živeti v izobilju ali stradati? Očividno: biti čaščen, razkošno živeti in biti bogat. Če torej hočeš resnično premoženje in ne samo premoženje po imenu, zapusti zemljo [τὴν γῆν ἀφεις] in vse zemljsko in hrepèni samo po nebesih [μεθορμίζου πρὸς τὸν οὐρανόν]. Kar je tu doli, je senca, kar pa je onstran, ostane vekomaj. Tega nam nihče ne more vzeti. Izberimo z vso odločnostjo to zadnje [ἐλώμεθα τοῖνον αὐτὰ μετὰ ἀκριβείας ἀπάσης], da se bomo otresli zemljskega hrupa in da bomo hiteli v oni mirni pristan, obloženi z bogatim tovorom in z nedopovedljivim bogastvom miloščine. To nam naj bo vsem dodeljeno po milosti in dobrotljivosti našega Gospoda Jezusa Kristusa, kateremu čast in oblast na veke vekov. Amen. (*In Matt. 10; PG 57,320*)

Sklep

Analiza izbranih Krizostomovih homilij o Matejevem evangeliju pokaže, kako močan vpliv na njegovo oblikovanje govorov je imela klasična retoriška tradicija, posebej diatriba (lalijs) in protreptik. Zlasti zaključki govorov so nazoren pokazatelj, kako prefinjeno je Krizostom sestavljal govore, ki so prave retorične mojstrovine. Avtor uporablja različne neposredne nagovore, vzklike, retorična vprašanja, kratke povedi in vpeljuje namišljeni dialog s poslušalci – vse to so tipične značilnosti podobne filozofske retorike, ki je cvetela v obdobju pred nastopom anti-ohijskega retorja in pri katerih se je sam tudi šolal (Mayer 131–133).

Krizostom je uporabljal ornamentiran jezik in subtilen slog z namenom, da bi lažje in bolj uspešno podal osnovno sporočilo (Burns 119), kar pa ne pomeni, da so njegovi govori sofistično pametovanje ali retorične vaje. Nasprotno, s svojimi homilijami želi Božjo besedo razlagati svojim poslušalcem na razumljiv način ter jih spodbuditi, da bi ob poslušanju Božjega razodetja spremenili svoje življenje. Uporablja t. i. $\mu\kappa\tau\omicron\varsigma$ $\tau\rho\acute{o}\pi\omicron\varsigma$, mešano metodo za podajanje spodbude, ko glede na poslušalce aplicira bolj nežno, pozitivno ali pa bolj neposredno, grobo govorico, kar je bila stalnica v grški literaturi.¹³ Ni dolgočasen, marveč vključuje živahne alternacije med sočutnimi in ekshortativnimi toni, saj je njegov cilj v poslušalcih graditi prenovljeno etično zavest, čemur igriva in konkretna retorika zgolj služi (Willey 175; Baur II 84, 117).

Homilije Janeza Krizostoma vključujejo razlago odlomkov Božje besede, vendar svoj višek doživijo v ekshortativnem delu, zato jih bolj kot eksegetske lahko imenujemo psihagoške homilije. Ta značilnost jih uvršča v žlahtno tradicijo platonistične etike in majevtične psihogogije, ki učinkuje preko dialoga in ne zgolj preko imponiranja norm; pri poslušalcih želi vzpostavljati osebno nagovorjenost, preko katere bo v njih možen etični obrat.

Krizostomova retorika ni nekakšen krščanski moralizem v antičnih retoričnih shemah, temveč preseneti s svojo inventivnostjo govornega ustvarjanja in izraza. Najprej se ta kaže že z samo izvirno interpretacijo svetopisemskih odlomkov. Tipičen $\varphi\eta\sigma\acute{\iota}$, ki je značilen za diatribo, Krizostom pogostoma uporablja, ko navaja posamezne svetopisemske odlomke, v čemer je razvidna določena razlika od tipičnih značilnosti klasičnih retoričnih zvrsti. Krizostom sledi tudi maksimi, da mora biti krepost najprej navedena teoretično, čemur nato sledijo praktični primeri, ki vzbujajo posnemanje. Če je to skupaj pospremljeno še s prefi-

¹³ Prim. »ἄλλον μελιχίους, ἄλλον στερεοῖς ἐπεεσοῖς« (Homer, Il. 12.267).

njenimi retoričnimi figurami, ki govora ne delajo stilno preobloženega, temveč subtilno podajajo parenetično vsebino, potem je jasno, zakaj si je Janez iz Antiohije prislužil vzdevek Χρυσόστομος in zakaj Sozomen poroča o anekdoti ob Libanijevi smrti, ko naj bi ga prijatelji vprašali, kdo ga bo na njegovem mestu retoričnega učitelja nadomestil, na kar je odgovoril, da bi to moral biti Janez, če ga kristjani ne bi bili ukradli zase (*Historia Ecclesiastica* 8.2).

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Parenthetic Rhetorics in the Orations *In Matthaeum* of John Chrysostom: Diatribe, Lalia, Protrepticus

Keywords: Early Christian literature / Christian homiletics / Ioannes Chrysostomus: *Commentarium in Matthaeum* / classical rhetorics / rhetorical devices / exhortation

The article examines the relation between classical pagan and Christian rhetoric in the late antiquity through the case study of literary genres of moral exhortation in the homilies of John Chrysostom (347–407). First, it discusses the elements of diatribe, lalia and protrepticus as rhetorical forms of parenthetical and counselling (psychogogical) character which were partly already known from the traditional classical Greek rhetoric and partly developed by the circles of late antique Hellenistic philosophers and theoreticians of rhetoric and style. The second aim of the article is to show in what measure these genres are present in the Chrysostom's *elocutio* in the homilies *In Matthaeum* (*Hom.* 1, 7, 23). By doing this, the author presents some new insights on the influence of pagan rhetoric on Chrysostom, who uses some of the pagan literary forms to shape his moral exhortation, but he does this in an original style.

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Sir Gawain and the Green Knight: Not Really a Chivalric Romance

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Medieval English romance Sir Gawain and the Green Knight is unique not only in its form, content and structure, but also in the poet's skillful use of conventions that play with the reader's expectations by introducing elements that make the poem exquisitely ambivalent and place it in the fuzzy area where reality and fiction overlap. Although the poem seemingly praises the strength and purity of chivalry and knighthood, it actually subtly criticizes and comments on their failure when practiced outside the court and in real life. This is particularly noticeable when the poem's symbolism, its hero, and the society he comes from are read against historical context, i.e. as reflections of the realities of medieval life. Accordingly, Sir Gawain and the Green Knight can be read as a poem that praises chivalry and knighthood more by way of commenting on their dissipation than through overt affirmation, as the future of the kingdom, its rulers and society, with its faulty Christian knights, is far from bright, given the cracks and flaws that mar its seemingly glossy façade.

Keywords: English literature / medieval romance / *Sir Gawain and the Green Knight* / love / knighthood / chivalry

Sir Gawain and the Green Knight is one of the best medieval English romances and also one of the most unconventional. The collection of poems is considered a unique phenomenon, given that it was written by a singular author in English before the fifteenth century; its rich illustrations make it one of the earliest illustrated literary English manuscripts (Spearing 37). The poet's exquisite skills are praised in terms of

the poem's "elaborate, symmetrical structure" and "balance, contrast, and antithesis," as noticed by Howard, whereas Kinney borrowed the poet's term "play" to emphasize the wonderful nature of this intricate, aesthetically pleasing text, as the poet tends to play with the readers' expectations by introducing some scenes or motifs "only to ironize or undercut them" (Howard 44; Kinney 457, 464).

The poem's specificities inspire the reader to seek new interpretations, but also to question the conventional features of the genre, which may lead to new conclusions that, in turn, question the existing interpretations and bring about new ones. For example, the period when the Gawain poet lived has been dubbed the "alliterative revival" as a number of alliterative poems of that period appear to have been modelled upon the Anglo-Saxon alliterative line. However, some authors, like Fox, have questioned the "revival" part and called it an exaggeration as this metric feature did not disappear for a period, but it only "took on new strength" after 1350, "like the English language itself" (2). Among the most notable features are the poet's language and style—he has a lot in common with his contemporaries, but there are more traits that single the poem out as uniquely different. On the one hand, as Brewer noted, the Gawain poet, like Langland, used the alliterative verse, was deeply devout and had a sense of humor, but courtly love was not the focus of his interest; on the other hand, he was courtly like Chaucer, but not as ironic or interested in secular comic tales, which is why it is believed that he wrote for an audience different from that of his two contemporaries (Brewer 5–6; Fox 4–5).

Literature reveals a lot about the time it was written in but one needs to be careful not to see it as a reliable reflection of reality, and in this sense the Arthurian tradition is no exception. Yet, its popularity and numerous adaptations have given rise to a number of prejudices and misconceptions about chivalry and knighthood. Medieval romances, and French ones in particular, including those by Chrétien de Troyes, significantly contributed to the incomprehensibility of historical facts and ideas about aristocracy, chivalry and their mutual relations which are, so to say, mostly based on mist, as King Arthur never existed, or his existence has not been confirmed yet, so the entire corpus of stories and legends that often seep into various versions of history is based on imagination. As Helen Fulton remarked, Arthur is a simulacrum, a copy with no original as there are only textual Arthurs, "reformatted copies of earlier ideas of Arthur, referring always to each other but never to an originary Arthur" (1). Arthur functions not just as a necessary heroic constituent of the plot, but also as a junction of cultural, historical and

hierarchical expectations, which are connected to the authority figure that serves crucial roles in both the actual and imaginary dimensions.

Sir Gawain and the Green Knight is no exception, as it tells a story about such copies with no originals, relying on textual predecessors such as Geoffrey of Monmouth's *Historia regum Britanniae*, as evident from the conventional beginning that relates the origins of Britain with Brutus and also from numerous other similarities, such as the arming of Sir Gawain that resembles the arming of Arthur, including the shield with the image of Mary. Like Geoffrey's text, which also relied on another textual predecessor, *Sir Gawain and the Green Knight* cannot be used as a historically reliable source, and yet, to borrow Thorpe's words about Geoffrey's work, the "material is unacceptable as history; and yet history keeps peeping through the fiction" (19). For example, the detailed description of Sir Gawain's preparation is a realistic presentation of the medieval knight, as the "primary function of chivalric knighthood was to proclaim an élite, and the most effective manner of doing so was through the visual image" (Coss 99). At the same time, the description and accompanying illustrations show that the poet was versed in armor, its parts and its use, which is why the poem is an important source for the study of late fourteenth-century armor (Lacy 172–173). The similarities, however, go beyond the surface.

The poetic representation is somewhat divided between images of reality and the attachment to the past. On the one hand, at the time when the poem was written England was facing numerous challenges, such as the war with France, depopulation caused by the plague, the Peasants' Rebellion, and the dissolution of feudalism, which all coincided with the idea that the Church should be reformed and, most importantly—and this is what keeps "peeping" through the fiction of *Sir Gawain and the Green Knight*—with aspirations for freedom of thought and a reconsideration of traditional values and authorities. The images and descriptions of contemporary court life and chivalry, as remarked by Bennet, may not necessarily reflect personal experience, and although the events occur in the time of Edward III, the poem is "more evocative of the court of Richard II than of his grandfather" (85). On the other hand, the poet's language, style and rhetorical devices show clear attachment to the past. If familiar with historical context, while comparing what had been with what was, the reader may notice what had changed, particularly in terms of the dissipation of certain important ideals and values, in spite of their apparent strength, purity and magnificence.

The values that were questioned include the idea of chivalry, aristocracy and their relations, mutual ones, as well as relations with reli-

gion. As noticed by Rider, most romances center around an aristocratic society that is not faithfully replicated therein “but it is nonetheless linked in recognizable ways to their interests, longings, ambitions, concerns, and values” so that it was easier to the medieval audience, and contemporary alike, to identify with it. Furthermore, romances commonly begin with the encounter between a society and the other world, whereas the nature and consequences of such encounters depend on the state of the aristocratic society described—most commonly, it is portrayed “in a state of peace and plentitude,” and the plot involves a celebration that is interrupted by an intrusion from another world (Rider 115–116). In this sense, *Sir Gawain and the Green Knight* is a typical romance with a conventional beginning; however, the events that unfold and the symbolism embedded in them reveal rather unexpected flaws and cracks in King Arthur’s reputation and the façade of his seemingly perfect, rich and beautiful court.

To begin with, the conventional introduction, invoking the legendary history of Britain as depicted in Geoffrey’s *Historia* relates the court with Troy, the magnificent kingdom “brittened and brent to brondez and askez” (2)¹, ² and thus, immediately, the poet foreshadows Camelot’s dismal and inevitable destiny to fall one day. The arrival of the Green Knight is another grim token. He is a manifestation of otherness and, at the same time, he is the twisted double—the literalization of the aristocratic society’s flaws and fears, the image of what it despises, although, under the glossy surface, it is not very different from what the Green Knight represents. Accordingly, Rider adequately saw this poem as an example of the otherworldly intervention that disrupts the seemingly peaceful and stable world, and as such, serves as the trigger that exposes the “pre-existing problems or tensions within the central aristocratic society which it cannot resolve on its own, or in order to bring to light faults in that society which might otherwise go unnoticed and uncorrected” (118).

The society, the court and knighthood as depicted in the poem are far from the ideals commonly praised in medieval romances, but they are also considerably different from those found in popular culture and contemporary adaptations, which, not uncommonly, stem from mis-

¹ The numbers in brackets following the quotes from *Sir Gawain and the Green Knight* refer to the number of the line(s) of the poem in the edition: Tolkien, J. R. R. and E. V. Gordon, eds. *Sir Gawain and the Green Knight*. Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1967.

² “fell in flame to firebrands and ashes” (17). The numbers in brackets following the translation of the quotes refer to the number of page(s) of the poem in the edition: Tolkien, J. R. R. *Sir Gawain and the Green Knight*. London: Harper Collins, 2006.

conceptions about medieval knighthood and chivalry rooted in their literary representations. Namely, Ser Gawain is not flawless because he is representative of the equally flawed society led by a king that is far from the idealized representations of the heroic and chivalric Arthur, the legendary role model for all Christian knights and symbol of a united Britain.

In Wace's and Geoffrey's portrayal, Arthur is a tough and stout man with numerous virtues, whereas the Gawain poet ridiculed him for "joly of his joyfnes" that is "sumquat childgered" (86).³ His stature is more like that of a child than of a grown-up man, and the Green Knight, who is "[o]n þe most on þe molde on mesure hyghe" (137)⁴ only highlights his physical inferiority, as reflection of his childish "ʒonge blod and his brayn wyld" (89).⁵

Arthur's inferiority is particularly noticeable when he stands before the Green Knight and takes his axe.

Now hatz Arthure his axe, and þe halme grypez,
 And sturnely sturez hit aboute, þat stryke wyth hit þoʒt.
 Þe stif mon hym bifore stod vpon hyʒt,
 Herre þen ani in þe hous by þe hede and more. (330–333)⁶

When Arthur swings the axe, the Green Knight remains unimpressed, which means that he does not see the king as a serious threat or a worthy knight and opponent. Interestingly, the Gawain poet's portrayal of King Arthur as knight evokes the original, old English meaning of the word *cnicht* (boy, youth, servant). As Pearsall remarked, in addition to being described as "childgered" or "boyishly enthusiastic" but possibly also "child-sized," he is no match for the challenger. It seems at first that Arthur is practicing sweeps, but the phrase "mayn dintez" (336)⁷ suggests that he is already trying his blows on the Green Knight and since he is several feet shorter, this is "actually a description of him trying vainly" (Pearsall 251–252). Additionally, the Green Knight looks down on the whole court and sees the present courtiers as "berdlez chylder" (280).⁸

³ "his youth [...] so merry" / "moods of a boy" (19).

⁴ "the mightiest on middle-earth in measure of height" (21).

⁵ "young blood and wayward brain" (19).

⁶ "Now Arthur holds his axe, and the haft grasping / sternly he stirs it about, his stroke considering. / The stout man before him there stood his full height / higher than any in that house by a head and yet more" (26).

⁷ "strength of his blows" (27).

⁸ "beardless children" (25).

Pearsall posed an important question about whether Gawain really thinks he is going to be called later to keep his promise, or if he simply thinks, as Arthur does (line 374), that if he hits the Green Knight right, there will be no next challenge, so his call to replace Arthur could “seem like a piece of hypocritical flattery and opportunism” (Pearsall 252). Here, however, one should have in mind the conventions of chivalry and knighthood, and that it is they, actually, along with their ideals, that are the true target of the poet’s subtle and skillful criticism, not the individuals themselves. When Gawain offers to take the king’s place in the challenge, he praises the court’s knights by saying that

vnder heuen I hope non hazerer of wyllle,
Ne better bodyes on bent þer baret is rered. (352–353)⁹

This, obviously, is an act of chivalry, but it immediately follows Gawain’s eloquently expressed criticism that it is not suitable for a king to accept such a challenge “Whil mony so bolde yow aboute vpon bench sytten” (351).¹⁰ When the Green Knight asks who the leader is, the present knights remain silent “not al for doute / Bot sum for cor-taysye” (246–247).¹¹ They are waiting for the king’s reaction and reply. However, knights were responsible for all the service due to the king, combats and warfare included, so remaining silent and seated on the benches while the king and his court are insulted and challenged may be a dire signal of the degradation of knightly values, predominantly demonstrated through the stature and conduct of the court’s king and his vassals. They all readily agree with Gawain’s proposal to take the king’s place in the tryst and although other knights are present, they refrain from offering to be the king’s champion.

The poet’s criticism of the court is not a poetic invention, nor is it removed from reality. It is more a reflection of the real picture of knighthood and knightly life, its development and problems that, at the poet’s time, had already started tainting their glossy surface. As mentioned, real-life knighthood was far from its idealized representations in literature. Real-life medieval knights actually had modest incomes and sustained themselves from rents and peasant labor. Already in the twelfth century, William of Malmesbury described them “as a class full of greed and violence,” and in the thirteenth cen-

⁹ “on earth there are, I hold, none more honest of purpose, / no figures fairer on field where fighting is waged” (27).

¹⁰ “while many bold men about you on bench are seated” (27).

¹¹ “Not only ... for dread; / but of some ‘twas their courtly way” (24).

ture there was a decline in the number of knights due to the related costs of knighting ceremonies and the knight's equipment—there were even cases of individuals wishing to avoid knighthood (Coss 46, 62–68).

With this in mind, it is hardly surprising that the literary representations of even the most prominent representatives of knighthood, including the legendary King Arthur and Sir Gawain, often thought to be the most valiant of all Arthur's knights, are less than or far from idealized. Whiting noted that only the readers who know Sir Gawain solely from *Sir Gawain and the Green Knight* would be surprised to read about his dissipation and loss of reputation in other works. Whiting summed up the principal reasons for the loss of Gawain's reputation, which are (1) the process of "epic degeneration" that can be seen on Gawain as well; (2) the cult of courtly love and his custom to depart immediately if a girl rebuffed him, or later anyway if she welcomed him; and (3) the Grail, whose finding required the qualities of "consecration, chastity, spirituality" and "discriminated pacifism," none of which Gawain possessed, sometimes even illustrating their opposites (Whiting 74–75).

There is no search for the Grail in the poem, but the first two reasons for this are clearly visible. Epic degradation is obvious even within this single text if one compares Gawain's conduct at the beginning and at the end of the poem. During the first meeting with the Green Knight, when Sir Gawain offers to represent the court in the challenge, he is the embodiment of prowess and loyalty, and three other qualities that Mathew specified as "persistently inculcated"—*largesse*, *franchise* and *cortaysie*; however, as he noticed, although these ideals represented an essential part of England's fourteenth-century knightly class, "it is not possible to tell how far they remained accepted by them" (70–72). As Coss remarked, there are major formulations of chivalry by representatives of the church and in romances, however, "to what extent the content of these corresponded to how the thirteenth- or fourteenth-century county knight actually felt is far from clear" since the church wished to have the knightly forces under control, and the romance was the fictive representation of the world (108).

In the Gawain poet's fictive representation of medieval reality things are far from ideal. The Green Knight, during the first encounter, is rude and insults the court, whereas Gawain remains calm, composed and courteous. The explanation is often sought for among the ideals of knighthood. As Fox noted, if Gawain

descended to the Green Knight's own level of violence, he would have already failed the test, since he would have admitted that civilized courtesy was no more than a trinket, and that it must be abandoned in an emergency. (9)

He remains civilized and courteous, but it is questionable whether he passes the test. In the poem, Gawain is later associated with five virtues, *fraunchyse*, *felaʒschyp*, *clannes*, *cortaysye*, and *pit * (652–654).¹² If compared with the real-life idea(l)s of knighthood, Gawain is depicted as the embodiment of *almost all* qualities that John of Salisbury wrote a knight should possess: “[O]bedience, and then physical strength, endurance, courage, and sobriety and frugality of life” (Coss 46). However, *not all* of them. Sir Gawain's *pit * is under question as he later accepts the green girdle and thus shows that, when it comes to life, he relies more on magic than on the Blessed Virgin's protection, although this is subject to discussion as he never practices or uses magic; nevertheless, he accepts the present with the hope that the magic woven into it will save him from decapitation. While not explicitly mentioned in the poem, frugality of life is another quality he lacks. Namely, he cuts off the Green Knight's head with no hesitation as the only life he actually wants to avoid wasting is his own, and possibly his king's, although the latter is questionable, as noted by Pearsall.

When he takes the green girdle, the symbol of pagan magic, Gawain shows that he is not loyal to his faith and, therefore, to his court. He hides the girdle from his host and refuses to give a gift to the lady when she visits him in his chamber, which to an extent shows the lack of largesse. Moreover, when he arrives to the Green Chapel, almost all his virtues vanish into thin air with the appearance of the mighty opponent. Not only does his wincing before the axe demonstrate a lack of courage, but his conduct before and after the Green Knight's swings shows a lack of *fraunchyse* and *cortaysie*, which is why the Green Knight criticizes him:

Bolde burne, on þis bent be not so gryndel.
No mon here vnmanerly þe mysboden habbez,
Ne kyd bot as couenaunde at kyngez kort schaped. (2339–2340)¹³

By the Green Chapel, the Green Knight is the one who demonstrates *cortaysie* and *fraunchyse*, and another virtue that Gawain lacked dur-

¹² “free-giving,” “friendliness,” “chastity,” “chivalry,” “piety” (36).

¹³ “Fearless knight on this field, so fierce do not be! / No man here unmannerly hath thee maltreated, / nor aught given thee not granted by agreement at court” (87).

ing their first meeting—the frugality of life. The Green Knight spares Gawain’s life even though he has all the reasons to hack his head off, not only because Gawain agreed to it but also because he failed to honor the word given before Arthur’s entire court. The Green Knight, who initially appears to be rude and uncouth, eventually becomes the embodiment of the virtues that knights of old times (should) possess. In the twelfth century, according to Orderic Vitalis, they were “reluctant to kill fellow knights, pitying knightly prisoners and allowing them free on parole” (Coss 49), which again are the traits that Gawain failed to demonstrate in the very heart of knighthood, in Camelot, when the Green Knight appeared with his challenge. Although the visitor requested to exchange the blows, Gawain was not reluctant and showed no pity. Furthermore, he does descend to what at the beginning appears to be, as Fox calls it, “the Green Knight’s own level.” During their second meeting, when instead of kings, queens and courtiers only the terrible giant is present, Gawain shows that he is willing to abandon civilized courtesy as a trinket just to save his life. Without the noble audience, Gawain no longer needs to make an effort to adorn his actions and words with a veil of courtesy; or perhaps it is fear for his own life that takes over. Whichever the case, he fails in his *cortaysie*.

Gawain is also not immune to the second reason for the loss of reputation that Whiting specified—courtly love, although his proneness to it is greatly obscured by the bedroom scenes of temptation that foreground his chastity and courtesy in dealing with the delicate situation that demands from the knight to avoid insult to the lady at any cost, but also to honor the hospitality of his host, the lord of the castle. His conduct, seemingly, is not in line with the reputation he has among the courtiers of Hautdesert who hope “þat may hym here / Schal lerne of luf-talkyng” (926–927).¹⁴ However, his skill to avoid the lady’s advances demonstrates considerable experience in courtly love and love talk, and proves that he is not as naïve as he presents himself to be, confirming Kinney’s conclusion that he is “quite in keeping with Gauvain of French courtly romance” (467). He successfully resists the lady’s advances and at the same time proves his courtesy. Moreover, some authors like Bloomfield pointed to the possible connections between the bedroom scenes and the critical attitude towards the idea that sexual virility contributed to military achievements, so the Gawain poet, like Thomas Bradwardine, is perhaps “trying to combat this idea by showing us hero chaste as well as courageous” (15).

¹⁴ “Who hears him will, I ween, / of love-speech learn some art” (44).

Yet, Gawain might not be as chaste as it seems because there are details that hint at his appetites and potentially cast a shadow over his immaculate chastity. For example, following his arrival and dinner at Hautdesert, when everyone is going to the evening prayer, Gawain is so enchanted with the beauty of the lady of the castle that Sir Bertilac has to stop him from going after her to her private niche for prayer.

De lorde loutes þerto, and þe lady als,
 Into a cumly closet coyntly ho entrez.
 Gawan glydez ful gay and gos þeder sone;
 De lorde laches hym by þe lappe and ledez hym to sytte (933–936).¹⁵

One would not expect from a perfect knight to have lecherous thoughts at such a location as the chapel. And yet, he is so enchanted that he looks where she will go and then starts after her, so unconscious of what he is doing that the lord of the castle has to take him by the hand and lead him to—or, perhaps it would be better to say, put him in—his place. Although the lady's advances in Gawain's chamber leave an impression of predatory behavior, Gawain is actually the first to openly show his interest, and only after the sermon "[b]enne lyst þe lady to loke on þe knyȝt" (941).¹⁶

Later, during the temptation in the chamber, Gawain is more careful and no longer acts on impulse. However, his reluctance to accept the lady's advances could be based on something more than courtesy. Namely, during the Middle Ages adultery was a serious offence and, when caught, women were disgraced, their lovers mutilated or killed, and adultery with the lord's wife was regarded as treason (Gies and Gies 90).

On the third eve of his stay at Hautdesert, when the lord invites him to his room after everyone had left,

Gawan gef hym god day, þe godmon hym lachchez,
 Ledes hym to his awen chambre, þe chymné bysyde. (1029-1030)¹⁷

This is a rather intimate atmosphere in which the two of them talk and Gawain answers to the lord's questions about the motives of his

¹⁵ "The lord leads the way, and his lady with him; / into a goodly oratory gracefully she enters. / Gawain follows gladly, and goes there at once / and the lord seizes him by the sleeve and to a seat leads him" (44).

¹⁶ "Then the lady longed to look at this knight" (45).

¹⁷ "Good-day then said Gawain, but the good man stayed him, / and led him to his own chamber to the chimney-corner" (47).

arrival by saying that he seeks to find the Green Chapel. When the lord explains that the place he is looking for is near and talks him into accepting to stay until the morning of the New Year, he gaily invites the ladies to join them.

Denne sesed hym þe syre and set hym bysyde,
 Let þe ladyez be fette to lyke hem þe better.
 Ðer watz seme solace by hemself stille;
 Ðe lorde let for luf lotez so myry,
 As wyȝ þat wolde of his wyte, ne wyst quat he myȝt. (1083–1087)¹⁸

The identities of these ladies are never revealed. They could be the lady of the castle and her old chaperon, but it is more likely that these are some other ladies. If one of them were the lady of the castle, after spending a lot of time together in pleasant and intimate conversations—“Such comfort of her compaynye caȝten togeder / Ðurȝ her dere dalyaunce of her derne wordez” (1011–1012)¹⁹—it is highly unlikely that Gawain would not interact with her on this occasion. The lord later loudly speaks the terms of their agreement to exchange the gifts so that everyone can hear and he mentions his wife in a way that implies that she is not present: “When ȝe wyl, wyth my wyf, þat wyth yow schal sitte” (1098).²⁰ After the agreement has been confirmed, the partying seems rather relaxed.

Pay dronken and daylyeden and dalten vntyȝtel,
 Ðise lordez and ladyez, quyle þat hem lyked;
 And syþen with Frenkysch fare and fele fayre lotez
 Pay stoden and stemed and stylyly speken,
 Kysten ful comlyly and kaȝten her leue. (1114–1118)²¹

These “lordez and ladyez” have a good time drinking and conversing, “with Frenkysch fare and fele fayre lotez” so Gawain is here in the

¹⁸ “The lord then seized him and set him in a seat beside him, and let the ladies be sent for to delight them the more, / for their sweet pleasure there in peace by themselves. / For love of him that lord was as loud in his mirth / as one near out of his mind who scarce knew what he meant” (49).

¹⁹ “in companionship took such pleasure together / in sweet society soft words speaking” (47).

²⁰ “when you wish with my wife, who with you shall sit” (49).

²¹ “they drank and they dallied, and they did as they pleased, / these lords and ladies, as long as they wished, / and then with customs of France and many courtly phrases / they stood in sweet debate and soft words bandied, / and lovingly they kissed, their leave taking” (50).

company that is familiar with the French manners and courtly love and he is not excepted from them. They kissed “ful comlyly” and although the kissing is in the same line with “kaʒten her leue” it does not necessarily mean that the two events immediately take place one after the other. Given their indulgence in the French manners, this could be yet another example of the poet’s verbal subtleness.

Gawain’s failure to remain true to all knightly virtues could be interpreted as criticism of the entire system, the court and knighthood in general, skillfully cloaked in ideals and virtues that fail when practiced outside the court and in real life. Behind the walls of the court, knights can be chivalrous, courteous, brave and pious at celebrations, tournaments and in other formal and *controlled* situations. Outside this zone of comfort, when the rules can change arbitrarily, and when the opponent is unpredictable and not as protocolary as at court, the ideals of knighthood, embodied in the knights of the Round Table, can easily fail the test. Therefore, the Green Knight’s words and insults from the beginning of the poem, seemingly undue and rude, ring quite true near the end.

Although the poem has some unexpected twists and turns in the form of elements that clearly criticize the ideals, it is by all means a romance if we agree with Bloomfield that “not all romances are straightforward tales of adventures,” that it is not a simple but a fairly complex genre and that “there are many varieties of romance.” Bloomfield called this poem “witty, ironical, and religious” and he believed that it was meant to entertain and teach a sophisticated audience (16–18). The Gawain poet was not as explicitly critical as his contemporaries Chaucer and Langland, but the sophisticated readers, his intended audience, could recognize in the poem, as well as in real life around them, signs that knighthood and ideals of chivalry had become rough around the edges. Benson saw the Gawain poet’s attitude toward romance, and his relation to his own time, as “ambivalent” and, as he pointed out, “the sophisticated man of the fourteenth century had only to look about him to see that the romance ideal no longer fit for the life he knew” (30–31). The obviousness of such a state, however, does not mean that the poet should not be sophisticated in his literary efforts, particularly in work intended for the sophisticated contemporaries, to whom Sir Gawain actually served as an instrument to show that the idolized virtues and principles have been debased to mere “trinkets.” The contemporary reader, however, may find the poet’s subtleness elusive to an extent, not only because the intended message is conveyed through one individual who is the embodiment of the entire society, but also due to

the misconceptions stemming from the representations of such society in popular culture.

The green girdle, Sir Gawain's token of shame and imperfection, and its acceptance by all the knights of Camelot, emphasizes the debasement of ideals to trinkets. Sir Gawain leaves Camelot with an image of the pentagram and he returns to it with the symbol of his failure and that "watz acorded þe renoun of þe Rounde Table, / And he honoured þat hit hade euermore after" (2519–2520).²² The chivalric code started forming during the twelfth century but was formalized in the fourteenth, particularly during the Hundred Years War and owing to Edward III who founded the Order of the Garter, whose credo is written at the end of the poem. However, one should have in mind that the credo was added later, and although its meaning easily prompts the reader to relate it to the girdle, it is doubtful, as Andrew and Waldron have noted, whether the connection was intended (300). For Friedman and Osberg, the assumption of such a connection is problematic since the credo was added later, however, "it is relevant to inquire why a near contemporary reader should have thought it was about the founding of the Order of the Garter" (314). Perhaps the reader who added it later wanted to emphasize that the poem *should* be read as the confirmation of the chivalric code and not of its dissipation, particularly when one has in mind the subtle criticism woven into its lines.

And not always subtle. The readers easily get the impression that Sir Gawain leaves the castle with the girdle tied under his armor, probably due to the fact that he initially hid it from Sir Bertilac (Friedman and Osberg 312). On the morning of his leave from Hautdesert, "His cote wyth þe conysaunce of þe clere werkez" (2026),²³ and as noted by Malarkey and Toelken, the girdle that was wrapped over the surcoat with the pentagram symbolizes "his defection from the virtues of the pentangle," meaning that the girdle supersedes them both spiritually and physically as he rides to his "moment of truth" unaware of the externalization of his moral condition (19–20).

It is important to notice that in the culture of chivalry and knight-hood there is no privacy, so what is not seen does not exist—only what is visible and public or, in this case, worn in the open, can serve a purpose. This is the principal reason why Gawain has to take the girdle to Camelot, as the wound inflicted by the Green Knight will eventu-

²² "was reckoned the distinction of the Round Table, / and honour was his that had it evermore after" (92).

²³ "his coat-armour, with the cognisance of the clear symbol" (77).

ally heal and become invisible. As pointed out by Campbell, the hero of the monomyth “is honored by his society, frequently unrecognized or disdained,” and he and his world suffer from “a symbolical deficiency,” and he typically achieves a macroscopic triumph (37–38). The Gawain poet locates these deficiencies most obviously in the childish King Arthur, whose boyish behavior and stature present not only an inferior king, but also a morally corrupt society. While the girdle that Gawain brings to Camelot undoubtedly transforms the society, it remains unclear whether the transformation is intended to regenerate it or push it further down the path of dissipation.

The externalization of the pagan symbol and its dominance over the Christian one, as much as the pentagram as the Christian symbol and its ties to Christianity are rather problematic, shows that Gawain has more faith in magical powers than in those of his Christian faith. He never openly calls for or relies on the protection of the pentagram, and near the end of the poem its importance almost dissolves in contrast to the emphasis put on the girdle.

The image of the Blessed Mary on Sir Gawain’s shield is not the poet’s invention and it can be interpreted as the symbol of piety. Geoffrey’s Arthur also had a “a circular shield called Pridwen, on which there was painted a likeness of the Blessed Mary, Mother of God” (Geoffrey of Monmouth 193). As noted by Hardman, the Virgin Mary’s protection is not required in battle “but in the encounters in the bedroom” (255). The presence and position of the image may serve as yet another subtle indicator of shaken faith and compromised knightly virtues. The image of Mary is on the inner surface of Sir Gawain’s shield so that it would always be in his range of vision, but this is also a less visible surface and it could be an allusion to a less knightly trait. Namely, as pointed out by Coss, already in the latter part of the twelfth century there was an increase in the number of knights who rarely fought, and these knights “without skill and practice in arms” as Nigel de Longchamp of Canterbury wrote, were called “Holy Mary’s knights” (Coss 44). The knights who remain seated on the benches when the Green Knight challenges their king, and Sir Gawain, who wears the shield with Holy Mary’s image on it, could be a direct allusion to such honorific knight-hood that fails to demonstrate its strength and reputation in practice.

The foregrounding of the pagan symbol of the pentagram infused with Christian symbolism and the backgrounding of the Christian symbol of the Blessed Mary could be the reflection of the poet’s attitude towards the official Church. Religion is another matter worth considering from the point of view of historical and literary circumstances.

Christianity was deeply rooted in all aspects of medieval life due to the power and influence of the Church as the feudal force and the center of literacy. Again, Chaucer and Langland are well known examples of the church receiving critical treatment in Middle English literature, but the Gawain poet, although subtler, is also critical, which is not surprising as chivalry and religion were deeply intertwined.

Fantasy worlds are reflections of the reader's objective reality, "its mirror images, although twisted and reshaped by imagination" (Jakovljević and Lončar-Vujnović 112), and similarly, the "fictional literature of medieval Europe sometimes reflected the realities of medieval life, sometimes distorted them, sometimes provided escapist release from them, and sometimes held up ideals for reality to imitate" (Kieckhefer 1). The combination of the real and the fantastic makes the representation of the reflection more credible.

As Tolkien noted,

The "Faerie" may with its strangeness and peril enlarge the adventure, making the test more tense and more potent, but Gawain is presented as a credible, living, person; and all that he thinks, or says, or does, is to be seriously considered, as of the real world. (4)

One might notice then that the Green Knight is no less real. The depiction of the key elements and symbols of chivalry and knighthood—such as Sir Gawain being the representative of Camelot, the central society being the reflection of the actual world, and the presence of their opposites, such as the Green Knight as the representative of the forces outside Camelot, its reflection in the image of its twisted double—reveal the true nature of the reflection and, in this case, the world as the reflection of the reflection. Camelot and Hautdesert are the obverse and the reverse of the same world. Sir Bertilac's castle and his lady are the secret sharers of the Christian court, its dark and corrupt reflections associated with magic, paganism and wilderness that reveal all that is wrong under the glossy and imperfect surface of *pité* and *cortaysye*.

As Benson pointed out a long time ago, a romance is not supposed to end the way *Sir Gawain and the Green Knight* does, meaning that "the glorious affirmation of the hero's virtues and of the ideal he represents is conspicuously absent" (29). At the end, all knights of the Round Table accept the girdle as a reminder that failure to resist unchristian forces could happen to each and every one of them, but it could also mean that they all want the protection of pagan magic in case it can protect, by any chance, one's head from a deadly axe. And the future of the kingdom and its Christian knighthood is rather grim, as the

poet reminds the reader at the end when he mentions Troy again and invokes its fate described at the beginning. If mighty and magnificent Troy fell, so will Arthur's Camelot, and Britain, and Christianity, and eventually every other power in the world, in the never-ending cycle of birth, life, death and re-birth, embodied in "þe endeles knot" (630),²⁴ with no beginning and no end; and just like "vche lyne vmbelappez and loukez in oþer" (628),²⁵ so are all the elements of the story in the poem intertwined: the court and the wilderness, the past and the present, the present and the future, Christianity and paganism, real-life knights and those rendered by poetry.

Sir Gawain and the Green Knight is the poem which praises chivalry and knighthood, more by way of showing what has been lost than by means of their overt affirmation. Through skillful use of Christian symbolism and the notable absence of a moral to the story, the Gawain poet created an ambivalent, even subversive story and thus made an atypical romance (Jakovljević 224). This, in turn, permits the reader the freedom to interpret it in his or her own way, despite the credo at the poem's end that suggests affirmative interpretation, or warns not to submit to its negation.

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²⁴ "the Endless Knot" (35).

²⁵ "each line overlaps and is linked with another" (35).

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Sir Gawain in Zeleni vitez: ne ravno viteška ljubezenska zgodba

Ključne besede: angleška književnost / srednjeveška književnost / viteško pesništvo / *Sir Gawain in Zeleni vitez* / ljubezen / viteštvo / kavalirstvo

Angleška srednjeveška ljubezenska pesnitev *Sir Gawain in Zeleni vitez* je edinstvena ne le po obliki, vsebini in zgradbi, temveč tudi po pesnikovi spretni rabi konvencij, v kateri se poigrava z bralčevimi pričakovanji tako, da uvaja prvine, ki naredijo pesnitev čudovito dvoumno in jo umeščajo v področje, kjer se – nejasno razmejeni – prekrivata realnost in fikcija. Čeprav pesnitev na prvi pogled slavi moč in čistost kavalirstva in viteštva, ju v resnici podvrže subtilni kritiki in komentiranju njenega neuspeha v resničnem življenju zunaj dvora. To je še posebej očitno, ko simboliko pesnitve ter njenega junaka in družbo, iz katere izhajajo, beremo v zgodovinskem kontekstu, tj. kot odraz dejanskega srednjeveškega življenja. V skladu s tem je mogoče pesnitev *Sir Gawain in Zeleni vitez* brati kot besedilo, ki kavalirstvo in viteštvo bolj kot z odkrito naklonjenostjo časti s komentarjem na njuno postopno razblinjanje, saj gre za čas, ko je prihodnost na zunaj sijočega, v resnici pa načetega kraljestva, njegovih vladarjev in družbe ob dejanjih vse prej kot brezmadežnih krščanskih vitezov videti precej temačna.

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Molièrova Celimena ali neodvisna ženska

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Celimena v Molièrovi komediji Ljudomrznik je izjemen lik ženske, ki v klasični literaturi predstavlja pravi novum. Konverzacijsko briljantna, duhovita in očarljiva salonska gospa se udejstvuje v družabnem življenju mondene družbe, kjer priteguje številne občudovalce. To svobodo ji omogoča vdovski stan, ki jo je osvobodil patriarhalnega gospodarja, vzbuja pa tudi pomisleke. Še posebej pri protagonistu igre, Alcestu, ki nad uprizorjenim dominira s kritičnim odnosom do sveta. Navkljub ljubezni je kritičen tudi do Celimene, ki domnevno uteleša napake mondene družbe. Njegovi sodbi o Celimenini prilagojenosti, h kateri sodita tudi nezanesljivost in zlaganost, sledi večina tradicionalnih komentarjev, ki jo opredeljujejo kot obrekljivo koketo, s tem pa relativno banalno, nepomembno figuro. V nasprotju s tovrstnim poenostavljanjem je mogoče ugotoviti, da je Celimena kompleksna figura, ki ji Molièrova komedija, tudi fabulativno podrejena njeni zgodbi, namenja veliko pozornost in možnosti, da svoj izraz razvije v različnih dimenzijah. Ob bleščeči duhovitosti v družabnih portretih izkaže kritičen odnos do sodobnikov, v različnih soočenjih izostren odnos do resnice in samoljubja, v celoti pa pronicljivost pogleda na medosebna in družbena razmerja. Prispevek se ukvarja z raziskavo vprašanja, ali Celimena ob nedvomnem zavračanju podreditve, s katero ji grozi Alcest, izkazuje tudi neodvisnost duha, ki je enakovredna njegovi. Celimena je tako lik, ki ponuja bistveno vzporednico Alcestu, po drugi strani pa jo je mogoče vzeti kot paradoksn dvojnico samega Molièra. Presenetljivo je, da jo je feministična kritika docela zanemarila.

Ključne besede: francoska dramatika / Molière: *Ljudomrznik* / dramski liki / ženske / Celimena / Alcest / feministična literarna veda

Celimena iz *Ljudomrznika* je izjemen lik, ki izstopa med ženskami, reprezentiranimi v Molièrovih komedijah, pa tudi v literaturi do tega časa nasploh. Kot mlada vdova aristokratskega stanu predstavlja eksistenco neodvisno žensko, ki je osvobojena neposredne oblasti patriarhalnega gospodarja. Sama uravnava svoje življenje in svojo svobodo uresničuje z udejstvovanjem v razvejanem družabnem življenju, v kate-

rem se uveljavlja kot privlačna in konverzacijsko briljantna protagonistka mondenega sveta, ki priteguje številne občudovalce. Poleg tega je tudi gospodarica svojega doma, v katerem se odvija komedija in kjer sama dominira kot gostiteljica oziroma gospodarica salona. Do neke mere dominira tudi nad dogajanjem igre, ki je fabulativno podrejena njeni zgodbi, čeprav jo – z izstopajočimi moralnimi stališči in kritičnim odnosom do sveta – problemsko obvladuje ljudomrznik Alcest, njen protagonist. Celimena je (ob treznem Filintu) njegov poglobitveni drugi: ker potencialno uteleša blišč in bedo mondene družbe, ki jo protagonist sovraži in obtožuje lažnosti in pokvarjenosti, in ker jo navkljub vsem pomislekom ljubi. Ni povsem gotovo, da tudi ona ljubi njega, čeprav sta povezana v nezanesljivem razmerju; izmika se njegovi posedovalni želji in vztraja pri druženju s številnimi občudovalci. Ti jo bodo na koncu obtožili zlaganosti, jo osramotili in zapustili, vendar kljub temu ne bo sprejela Alcestove snubitve, povezane z zahtevo po umiku v samoto. Komedija, ki ne ponudi srečne razrešitve, se konča nenavadno pesimistično. Nenavadna je tudi ta Celimenina odločitev, ki njeno samoto uveljavi kot izbiro.

Obrekljiva koketa

Celimeno standardno opredeljujejo kot koketo, natančneje obrekljivo koketo. Tako je opisana že v sami komediji: še preden se prvič pojavi, jo v I. dejanju s temi besedami predstavi Filint. V komentarju, ki je bil objavljen kot predgovor k prvi izdaji igre, je z oznako *coquette médisante* že opredeljena kot predstavnica tipa ženske, ki je v družbeni realnosti časa dobro znan; vendar tu zato še ni diskvalificirana. Pozneje je koketa pridobila čedalje bolj negativen prizvok, Celimena pa je z njim ostala zaznamovana za zmeraj.

Oznaka je prav toliko točna, kot je tudi zavajajoča, pravzaprav omejujoča. Celimenino kompleksno in enigmatično podobo, ki ji komedija namenja veliko prostora in možnosti, da se razvije v različnih dimenzijah, zvede na nekaj enostavnega, relativno banalnega, pa tudi moralno spornega. Mogoče bi bilo sicer reči, da je Molière s *coquette médisante* ustvaril univerzalen ženski tip, ki je enakovreden velikim moškim protagonistom njegove komediografije. Vendar je nikoli niso obravnavali enakovredno tem likom. Prav nasprotno, kadar so njemu tipu pripisal univerzalno vrednost, so ga pretvorili v zaslon za projiciranje mizoginih predsodkov (najočitneje Jasinski, ki je ob njej razdelal celovito fenomenologijo kokete in jo označil kot utelešenje

»večno ženskega«). V dolgi recepcijski zgodovini *Ljudomrznika*, ki so ga interpretirali zelo različno, je Celimena praviloma zreducirana na vlogo Alcestove nezanesljive ljubice, pri tem pa največkrat zanemarjajo tako njeno vlogo v kritični predstavitvi družbe kot vprašanje njenega obvladovanja lastne pozicije, še posebej pa njeno svobodo. Poglavitni razlog za to je gotovo fascinacija, ki jo je dolgo vzbujal Alcest: liku ljudomrznika je Molière dal posebno težo, saj mu je pripisal izrazita stališča v odnosu do sveta (sorodna lastnim). A ta se zares izostrijo šele v dialogu z drugimi, kjer s pretiravanjem in izrazitim samoljubjem izkaže svojo komičnost. V predromantiki pa je bil preinterpretiran v tragično figuro samotnega upornika proti pokvarjenemu svetu (simptomatično mesto v tej preinterpretaciji predstavlja Rousseau v *Pismu gospodu d'Alembertu* leta 1758). Ob tem so vsi drugi liki komedije zbledeli v nepomembnost predstavnikov pokvarjenosti, nezanesljiva Celimena pa je padla najgloblje od vseh. Figura ženske, ki si prizadeva za občudovanje številnih moških, se je večini zdela preveč banalna, da bi ji izkazali pravo pozornost. Vsekakor so ji namenjali manjšo vrednost kot Molièrova komedija. Za večino interpretov, pa tudi v splošni percepciji Celimena ni dosti več kot Alcestova zabloda, poglaviti vir njegovih nesreč, ženska, ki ne razume globine moške misli in njegovega odnosa do sveta, niti ne pozna prave vrednosti ljubezni; zato pa je prazna, puhla in predvsem nepomembna. Taka je tudi v večini slovenskih komentarjev (posebej pri Javoršku).

V drugi polovici 20. stoletja so se sicer pojavili komentarji (Guicharnaud, Brody, Mesnard, Norman, Dandrey), ki so izpostavili druge dimenzije Celimene, zlasti pomen njenih kritik, ki imajo osrednjo vlogo v Molièrovi komediografski strategiji; v zadnjih desetletjih opozarjajo tudi na njeno vztrajanje pri ženski svobodi (Chupeau). Celovite obravnave pa vendar še ni bila deležna. Posebej preseneča, da še ni bila temeljito obravnavana s feminističnega stališča.¹ Razmisleku o nenavadni kompleksnosti tega enkratnega lika je namenjen ta prispevek.

Poglavitni razlog za nezanimanje feministk je verjetno ta, da Celimenina svoboda v igri nikoli ni eksplicitno tematizirana, čeprav je pogoj, morda celo smoter njenega življenjskega načina in ravnanja. Njena neodvisnost je dejstvo, ki temeljno določa dogajanje celote, naravo vseh razmerij v igri, še posebej pa njeno razmerje s protagonistom in njegov odnos do nje. A čeprav se s Celimeno in vprašljivostjo njenega ravnanja

¹ Edina mednarodno referenčna knjiga o ženskah v Molièrovi komediografiji (Lalande) sicer opazi njeno svobodo, a se presenetljivo posveti predvsem Alcestu. Pravo izjemo tu predstavlja krajši članek slovenske avtorice Svetlane Slapšak.

ukvarjajo vsi, o njeni neodvisnosti ne govori nihče. Lahko bi sklepali, da Molièra ni zanimala; da je vprašanje o ženski svobodi izrinila osredotočenost na vprašanja, ki jih s kritičnim odnosom do sveta postavlja Alcest. Vendar je očitno, da se njegov problem lahko zares razvije samo ob ženski, ki mu stoji nasproti s svojo individualno neodvisnostjo; v tem smislu je njena svoboda pogoj za zaostritev njegovega problema s svetom. O njej sicer ne govori niti sama. Tudi drugače zelo malo pove o sebi (v nasprotju z Alcestom, ki o sebi govori kar naprej). Celimena govori suvereno in bravurozno, s svojo elokventnostjo obvladuje situacijo in sogovornike (vse do katastrofičnega konca), tako na družabnem srečanju kot v dialoških spopadih, kjer seže tudi do nepričakovanih globin. Vendar se nikoli zares ne razkrije. Če že spregovori o sebi, to stori preko obrata, ko se brani pred kritikami in napadi. A tudi ko brani pravico, da sama odloča o svojem življenju, govori posredno. Nikoli ne bo razpravljala o ženski svobodi. Lahko bi tudi sklepali, da se kot ženska, ki spretno obvladuje razmerja v svojem svetu, zaveda, da lastno svobodo lahko uresničuje samo tako, da o njej ne govori. Zato tudi mi o njej lahko razpravljamo samo tako, da jo razbiramo v nizu njenih različnih soočanj.

Celimenina svoboda seveda ni popolna, prav nasprotno. V vsakem pogledu je samo pogojna, tudi začasna. Položaj, ki ji ga omogoča vdovski stan (tudi ta je omenjen samo enkrat, problematiziran pa nikoli), je nezanesljiv; čeprav legalen, je na meji regularnega. Družba pričakuje, da se mu bo odpovedala z novo poroko, četudi ji tega ne zapoveduje (prim. Biet). V patriarhalno urejenem svetu pravzaprav nima lastnega mesta, zato potrebuje zaščito, ki ji jo nudijo različni moški. Na številnih mestih v igri se izkazuje, kako zelo je odvisna od nezanesljive naklonjenosti občudovalcev in od manipulabilnega pogleda javnosti. V družabnem življenju je sicer deležna navidezne enakopravnosti, na koncu pa bo brutalno izkusila mizoginijo družbe, ki ne dopušča poigravanja z moško superiornostjo. Svoboda, ki si jo je dovolila z izstopom iz patriarhalne podrejenosti, je vseskozi tvegana in vprašljiva. Že od vsega začetka pa njeno neodvisnost radikalno postavlja pod vprašaj Alcest.

Alcestov odnos do Celimene je na poseben način zapleten, zaznamovan je z njegovim odnosom do sveta, obenem pa predstavlja njegov simptomatični vozle. Pravzaprav ni mogoče enostavno zatrditi, da ji ne priznava enakopravnosti. Vendar je do nje kritičen, v njeni koketnosti in obrekljivosti namreč vidi pripadnost mondeni družbi, ki jo sam prezira in sovraži, obtožujoč jo pokvarjenosti in lažnosti. Ljubi jo temu navkljub, proti svoji volji in razumu. Kot že v 1. prizoru pove svojemu zaupniku, dobro vidi njene številne napake, ljubezni pa se ne more

upreti², »močnejše je od mene« (I, 1³). V poteku igre ljubezen pogosto imenuje »moja slabost«, njeno silovitost pa opisuje predvsem z željo po tem, da bi se je osvobodil. Obenem verjame, da bo z njo Celimeni »očistil dušo«, jo iztrgal družabnemu življenju in občudovalcem, ki zbudajo njegovo ljubosumnje. Ko govori o modnih napakah, ima do neke mere prav – Celimeno in njeno uresničevanje svobode to obremeni z vprašljivostjo, ki se je nikoli ne bo zares rešila. Ob stavi na moč ljubezni se tudi zdi, da je presegel sklicevanje na patriarhalno avtoriteto. Vendar ni mogoče spregledati problematičnosti, ki se kaže v želji po spreminjanju ljubljene, »očiščenje duše« pa je tudi sumljivo. Njegova ljubezen je neločljivo povezana s pričakovanjem, da se mu ženska prilagodi, opusti svoje navade in sprejme njegove nazore; da se mu podredi.

Kot se bo še pokazalo, podreditev od Celimene pričakujejo vsi. Alcest, ki jo hoče iztrgati iz njenega sveta in jo docela predrugačiti, izstopa s svojo načelnostjo; a pravzaprav gre zgolj za radikalizacijo modusa, ki ga moški svet namenja ženski. Vendar pa ni naključje, da se najresneje zaplete z njim. Niti to, da gre izmed njenih razmerij samo v tem morda za ljubezen.

Celimena, ki je Alcestu v vsem nasprotna, se njegovim zahtevam izmika. Zato so jo pogosto obtoževali, da je ljubezen zanjo samo igra, a to ni zares gotovo. Poigravanje ji služi predvsem za to, da se izogne podreditvi. To se jasno pokaže, ko na začetku II. dejanja stopi na prizorišče in prevzame suverenost nad lastno podobo. Nikakor se ne želi odpovedati družabnosti in številnim obiskovalcem, čeprav tudi sama ve za njihovo izpraznjenost (na to opozori že takoj). S koketnostjo in obrekljivostjo, ki v pronicljivi spretnosti presegata prilagojenost modnim navadam, se brani pred Alcestovimi zahtevami. Na ljubosumne očitke odgovarja z dvoumnimi izgovori, pri tem pa ohranja nenavadno suverenost. Malodane mimogrede ga spomni na pomen tega, da mu je priznala ljubezen, ki jo zaradi žaljivosti njegovih dvomov potem tudi umakne. Vendar pa je potrebna velika mera patriarhalnih predsodkov, da bi v tem prepoznali zlaganost in manipulacijo, celo zlobni makiavelizem, kot so njeno ravnanje interpretirali mnogi. Ob nobeni njenih izjav ni

² Njegov opis ženske, ki ima moč, da vzbuja ljubezen navkljub svojim napakam, bo temeljno zaznamoval Celimenino podobo v recepciji Molièrove komedije, posredno pa lik ženske v velikem delu evropske misli. Le redki komentatorji razen tistih s psihoanalitsko usmeritvijo (npr. Orlando) pa so segli do uvida, da Alcest Celimene ne ljubi navkljub, pač pa prav zato, ker je takšna, kot je. Sam na to nikoli ne pomisli.

³ Citate iz besedila v prevodu Aleša Bergerja označujemo v skladu z načinom, ki je uveljavljen ob dramskih besedilih, z rimsko številko za dejanje in arabsko za prizor.

mogoče trditi, da laže;⁴ pravzaprav ga vztrajno opozarja, da ima za svoje ravnanje lastne razloge, on pa nima pravice, da bi posegal vanje. Njeno izmikanje neposrednemu odgovoru je ekvivalentno protislovnosti njegovih izjav, pravzaprav odgovor na to protislovnost. Alcest, nepomirljen z lastno strastjo, ji namreč že na samem začetku grozi z razhodom, takoj zatem zagotavlja silovitost svoje ljubezni, zdaj jo kritizira, potem se spet opravičuje ... Gotovo stavi na iskrenost, ki je njegova poglavitna zahteva, ob tem pa se njegov govor raztrešči v nasprotja. Celimena jih z izmikanjem njegovi ostrini pravzaprav nevtralizira, ne da bi se odpovedala njemu ali svojemu življenjskemu načinu. Nepričakovan, a predvidljiv prihod gostov, ki njen dom spremeni v salon, prekine njun spor in ga odloži na pozneje.

Obrekovanje in kritičen pogled na družbo

Srečanje elitne aristokratske družbe, ki se sredi drugega dejanja zbere na njenem domu, Celimeno prikaže v vsem blišču in problematičnosti njenega mondenega življenja. V tako imenovanem »portretnem prizoru« (II, 5) razkaže svojo duhovitost, očarljivost in družabno spretnost in se uveljavi kot protagonistka. Prizor obenem predstavlja emblematično podobo mondenega sveta.⁵

Poglavitna, pravzaprav edina vsebina te družabne zabave je obrekovanje znancev iz visoke družbe, ki onemogoča vsako resnejšo temo pogovora. S kritiziranjem odsotnih, ki služi laskanju prisotnih, se uresničuje potrjevanje elitnosti, v kateri Celimenin salon tekmuje z drugimi saloni, prav tako kot njeni gostje tekmujejo med sabo in z obiskovalci drugih. Kritičnemu pogledu je mogoče izpostaviti kogarkoli, kot je tudi laskati mogoče komurkoli; oboje služi predvsem oblikovanju razmerij pripadnosti in izključevanja. Oba markiza, ki nastavita smer pogovora, s puhlostjo potrđita izpraznjenost te zabave, preplavljene s samoljubjem.

Celimena pa v njej doseže presežni zasuk, ko z občudovanja vredno bravuroznostjo obrekovanje povzdigne v umetnost slikanja portretov. Portreti so bili v tistem času modna mala literarna oblika (o tem Dandrey), predstavljana v salonski družbi, prisotna pa tudi v resni literaturi (iz njih je La Bruyère razvil znamenite *Značaje*). Posluževal se jih

⁴ Guicharnaud, avtor izjemne monografije o Molièrovi veliki trilogiji, je bil verjetno prvi, ki je v analizi igre vztrajal pri njeni iskrenosti in ovrgel tradicionalno interpretacijo, da je »kronična lažnivka«. Zavrnil je tudi oznako *coquette médisante*.

⁵ Logiki funkcioniranja elitne družbe, kot jo je v tem prizoru strukturiral Molière, je mogoče slediti v dolgi tradiciji vse do Prousta in še po njem.

je tudi Molière, ki jih je v komedije vstavljal na različne načine: z njimi je predstavljal like ali pa širil podobo uprizorjenega sveta. Tako delujejo tudi v *Ljudomrzniku*, kjer zagotovijo široko sliko ničevosti mondene družbe. Celimeni služijo predvsem za to, da z njimi zabava zbrane goste. Pred njimi izoblikuje celo serijo portretov (sedem, osmega usmeri na Alcesta), ki jih odlikujejo duhovitost, izjemna govorna veščina in pronicljivost pogleda. V različnih figurah predstavljajo podobe hipertofranega samoljubja, praznih veličin, ki za nabrekli videz skrivajo nesposobnost komunikacije in spoštovanja drugih. Predstavi pa jih z virtuozno izvedbo, ki njen nastop povzdigne v pravo artistsko predstavo. Z njo se postavi v središče družabnega sveta in se obenem uveljavi kot izvrstna artistka, komediografka in komedijantka, performerka pravzaprav.

Njen uspeh potrdijo gosti, ki jo nagradijo z navdušenim občudovanjem, tega pa z ogorčenjem prekine Alcest. Nasprotuje ji iz načelnih razlogov in do neke mere ima prav, ko obrekovanje obtožuje lažnosti. Vendar je njegova kritika očitno povezana z ljubosumjem ob njenem uspehu in je torej tudi sama namenjena izpostavljanju lastne vrednosti. Še bolj problematično je, da so njegove sodbe o sodobnikih, čeprav zavezane visoki morali, pogosto zelo blizu njenemu obrekovanju. Filint ga celo opozori, da bi njene portretirance sam obtoževal istih napak. Z gnevom ga navdaja isto, kar ona izpostavlja z duhovitostjo. Z njegovo intervencijo se kritika usmeri na prakso kritiziranja, sama proti sebi. Celimena to dobro razume, ko skritizira tudi njega (in tako izdelava portret prisotnega, s čimer preseže obrekovanje odsotnih) in natančno izpostavi njegovo zavozlanost, ki seže do samonanašanja. A čeprav ji uspe, da ponovno zavzame suverenost in obnovi zabavo, problema to ne razreši. Predvsem je ne odreši obtožbe, ki njen artizem poniža na vsesplošno grehoto, eno osrednjih napak mondenega sveta.

Tradicionalni molieristi, ki praviloma spoštujejo Alcestovo načelnost, so njegovo kritičnost ostro razločili od Celimeninega obrekovanja. Njenim portretom so sicer priznali duhovitost, obenem pa očitali frivolnost (Arnavon), pomanjkanje moralne dimenzije (Guicharnaud); da pri portretirancih opaža samo videz, naj bi pričalo o njeni osredotočenosti na površino (Gossman); da jo moti dolgočasnost, pa o potrebi po stalni zabavi (Defaux); nekateri jo obtožujejo celo, da zaradi ljubosumja kritizira boljše od sebe (Jasinski).

V nasprotju s tem je prvi komentator *Ljudomrznika*, Jean Donneau de Visé, ki je verjetno pisal v soglasju z avtorjem,⁶ Celimeninim portre-

⁶ Njegov komentar, *Lettre écrite sur la comédie du Misanthrope*, je bil objavljen kot predgovor k prvi knjižni izdaji komedije, po mnenju mnogih proti Molièrovi volji; do

tom priznal poseben pomen in jih povezal s samo zasnovo igre. Izrecno je izpostavil njeno vlogo pri oblikovanju kritičnega pogleda na sodobnike, ki da je osrednji cilj komedije. *Ljudomrznika* je označil kot igro, v kateri je Molière hotel »kritizirati napake stoletja«, v ta namen pa je iznašel dve idealno izbrani osebi, ki skupaj zmoreta kritizirati vse: ljudomrznika in obrekljivo koketo:

Občudovati moramo, kako je Molière, ki je v tej igri hotel govoriti proti navsem stoletja, ne da bi komu prizanesel, ob sovražniku ljudi na ogled postavil obrekljivko [...] Mizantrop bi sam ne mogel govoriti proti vsem ljudem, ko je avtor našel način, da mu pomaga obrekljivka, je našel tudi tega, da v eni sami igri izpolni še zadnje poteze portreta stoletja.⁷

Oznaka »portret stoletja« se je uveljavila v razpravah o *Ljudomrzniku*, kot tudi Donneaujeva ugotovitev, da ta nenavadna komedija, ki ne vzbuja glasnega smeha, zato pa sledi pravilu o plemeniti zabavi, vzbuja »smeh v duši« (*rire dans l'âme*).

Za nas je posebej pomembno, kako vidno mesto v tej sočasni razpravi o Molièrovih namenih zavzema Celimena. Skupaj z Alcestom je postavljena v središče dramaturške strukture, ki zagotavlja kritiko »vseh ljudi«, skozi to pa predstavitev stoletja. V kritičnem odnosu do sveta torej oba lika stojita skupaj. Donneau pri tem nikakor ne spregleda, da sta Alcest in Celimena komična (pravzaprav objekt komedije) in zato tudi sama izpostavljena smehu in kritiki, obenem pa ju predstavi kot osebi, ki igri zagotavljata komični material, oziroma njeno snov. S svojimi kritikami oba stojita na mestu, s katerega Molière kritizira svet.

Donneau se ne ukvarja s problemom, ki tiči v dvojnosti njune pozicije: s paradoksom, da je duhovito predstavljanje modnih napak, ki je naloga komedije, tudi samo modna napaka. Mogoče je reči, da ta problem reflektira, ne da bi ga tudi razrešila, cela komedija *Ljudomrznik*, ki jo je zato mogoče razumeti kot meta-komedijo (Defaux), in celo da je z nerazrešenostjo tega vprašanja povezan njen nenavaden pesimistični zaključek. Pri tem ni brez pomena, da so tudi Molièra pogosto obtoževali obrekovanja. In če je Celimeni mogoče očitati, da s kritičnimi portreti streže predvsem potrebi po ugajanju, bi bilo isto mogoče očitati

danes pa je prevladalo mnenje, da je komentar preveč pronicljiv, da bi ga Donneau napisal sam in je pri njegovem nastanku skoraj gotovo sodeloval Molière.

⁷ »On doit admirer que, dans une pièce où Molière veut parler contre les mœurs du siècle et n'épargner personne, il nous fait voir une médisante avec un ennemi des hommes. [...] Le misanthrope, seul, n'aurait pu parler contre tous les hommes ; mais en trouvant le moyen de le faire aider d'une médisante, c'est avoir trouvé en même temps celui de mettre dans une seule pièce la dernière main au portrait du siècle.« (636)

tudi avtorju, ki je cilj svojih komedij označil s formulo »ugajati s kritiziranjem človeških napak« (*Kritika Šole za žene* 94). V smislu te zahteve so njene kritike, ki vzbujajo navdušenje pri obiskovalcih-gledalcih, celo bližje avtorjevim kot protagonistove. Na to je opozoril že Brody, ki je v razpravi, ki se na več mestih sklicuje na Donneauja, zapisal: »Njen uspeh v nekem smislu odseva uspeh njenega avtorja, čigar talent in naloga sta bila, kot pri njej, da s kritiko družbe zabava. [...] Celimenini portreti, tako kot Molièrove komedije, dosežejo estetsko zmagoslavje nad zlom, ki jih je sprožilo.« (572) Z Molièrom so jo vzporejali tudi drugi (Mesnard, Riggs, Dandrey, Vernet), Norman pa je celo poglavje v knjigi naslovil z vprašanjem: »Ali je Celimena Molière?«

Če je Celimeno mogoče ugledati na mestu Molièrovega alter-ega, to radikalno spremeni njeno vlogo, ki je v tradicionalni molieristiki postavljena izrazito nizko. Najprej postavi pod vprašaj domnevo, da s koketno obrekljivostjo ustreza navadam mondenega sveta oziroma da se mu prilagaja. Da Celimena s svojim življenjskim načinom hodi po ozkem robu (kot velja tudi za Molièra)⁸ in je vselej na meji tega, kar je ta svet pripravljen tolerirati, se bo kmalu potrdilo. A čeprav so obtožbe na njen račun do neke mere sorodne tistim, ki jih je doživljal Molière, jo bo kazen nazadnje zadela predvsem zato, ker je ženska. Natančneje, ker si je dovolila poigravati se z moško naklonjenostjo.

Koketa in krepostnica ali Kje je resnica?

Da je Celimenin položaj vprašljiv in njeno ravnanje za družbo problematično, v osrednjem prizoru igre izpostavi njena tekunica Arsinoa. Vredno je opozoriti, da se osrednji dialoški spopad v komediji o ljudomrzniku (ekvivalenten uvodnemu, kjer protagonist svoja načela predstavi v soočenju z zaupnikom), zgodi med dvema ženskama, tudi njegova osrednja tema je vprašanje o poziciji ženske v družbi. Nemara to priča, da se mizantropija najizraziteje izkaže z mizoginijo. Pomenljivo je tudi, da se prav tu pokažejo nekatere konkretne dimenzije sveta, o katerem Alcest sodi načelno in z vzvišene distance.

Arsinoa in Celimena se soočita kot krepostnica in koketa, dve možnosti ženske, ki sta si v vsem nasprotni. Obojestransko sovražnost obe ovijata v lažno prijateljstvo, sklicujeta se na tuje izjave in sodbe javnosti (spet obrekovanje), operirata z mimikrijo in večkratno podvojeno igro ter tekmujeta v umetnosti. Presenetljivo pa je, da si v

⁸ Blaž Lukan je Molièrovo komedijsko trilogijo označil kot »sprehod po robu«.

tem načinu, ki na prvi pogled priča o njuni zlaganosti, odkrito povesta, kaj si mislita druga o drugi. Nekateri komentatorji njuno soočanje zato opisujejo celo kot »podaljšan trenutek resnice« v igri, ki jo zaznamuje lažnost vseh in vsakogar.⁹ Ob Alcestovi zahtevi po resnici, ki ji je sam le redko zvest, ima to poseben pomen, saj kaže, da zapletene govorne strategije v izrekanju resnice lahko sežejo dlje od njegove programske iskrenosti.

A čeprav tekmici razkrijeta svoje predstave o drugi in v sovražnosti izkažeta nekakšno iskrenost, ni gotovo, da njune sodbe ustrezajo resnici. Zaznamovane so z ljubosumjem in tekmovalnostjo, oblikujejo se v izkrivljenem zrcalnem odsevu, v katerem je vsaka resnica samo pogojna. Med njima pa je pomembna razlika. Arsinoa se sklicuje na Celimenin videz, ki da je dvoumen, njena resnica negotova (morda je grešna, morda brezgrajna), a zato problematična. Celimena, ki tudi sama operira s podvojenostjo izjav, pa nasproti temu postavi jasno razliko med videzom in resnico, ko zatrdi, da tekmičino razkazovanje kreposti zakriva v vsakem pogledu grešno ravnanje. Nasproti zapletenemu manevriranju z domnevami in dvoumnostjo izpostavi dvojnost samo, hipokrizijo. Oblast navideznega, ki določa celo igro, je tako vsaj za trenutek presežena. Ni naključje, da se to zgodi ob hipokriziji, ki je najbolj daljnosežna in nevarna varianta mimikrije (poleg tega pa Molièrova priljubljena tema: kot mehanizem, ki z vsiljevanjem morale pravzaprav proizvaja grešnost, obenem pa je povezan z vzvodi moči oziroma oblasti). Kot ni naključje, da je ta trenutek edino mesto v komediji, kjer v dialog prodrejo motivi iz socialne realnosti (s služabniki, ki jih Arsinoa pretepa in jim ne plačuje), pa tudi edino, kjer je omenjena spolnost (*amour de réalité*).¹⁰

Celimena pri tem izreče misel, ki je za umetnico obrekovanja nepričakovana. Ko tekmici oporeče pravico do razsojanja o sebi, jo opomni, »da dolgo treba gledati je vase, / in šele potlej lotiti se graje« (III, 4). S to izjavo obrekovanje podredi nujnosti spoznavanja samega sebe. Zahteva po samospoznanju je klasična in dobro znana, najstarejše filozofsko vodilo. Če se z njo implicitno sklicuje na moraliste svojega časa, Celimena izpriča zavest, s katero presega igro duhovitega in manipulativnega obrekovanja, tudi lastnega. V nadaljevanju spregovori o vsesplošni zagledanosti vase (v originalu izraziteje: *ce grand aveuglement où chacun est pour soi*), slepem samoljubju, ki da bi ga kritika lahko obrzdala.

⁹ Npr. Brody, ki je izvrstno analiziral strategijo njunih zaporednih portretov.

¹⁰ Potrditev domnevne ljubezni z *réalité* od Elmire pričakuje Tartuffe, kar Arsinoa poveže s svetohlincem.

Skozi celo igro se zdi, da jo narcizem¹¹ docela obvladuje; da vse podreja želji po občudovanju. Tu pa se pokaže, da se sama zaveda narcizma, ki obvladuje njen svet in njo samo, tudi njegove problematičnosti. Zaveda se tudi potencialnega pomena kritike, celo na lasten račun. Celimena se zmore soočiti z resnico, ne le tujo, ampak tudi z lastno.

Ta zavest jo dviguje nad uprizorjeni svet in sogovornike, ki so vsi po vrsti (z Alcestom na čelu) temeljno zaznamovani s samoljubjem, zato pa nesposobni sprejeti kritiko na lasten račun, nesposobni tudi sleherne refleksije samih sebe. In če se na prvi pogled zdi, da Celimena svojo sposobnost za refleksijo razvija predvsem zaradi pragmatičnih namenov, se bo v nadaljevanju igre pokazalo ravno nasprotno: izostrena zavest o svetu ji v praktičnem smislu ne bo zares pomagala (ne bo je rešila pred teknico, niti v obrambi lastne pozicije). V tem smislu je mogoče trditi, da ima predvsem »spoznavno«, oziroma moralistično, filozofsko vrednost. Porážena Arsinoa si v nadaljevanju srečanja dovoli odkrito brutalen napad in jo obtoži, da družabni uspeh dosega s kupčevanjem z ljubeznijo. Še pravkar je govorila, da je Celimenina resnica negotova; zdaj trdi, da je nesporno grešna. Potrdila za to nima v njenem ravnanju, pač pa v splošnem pravilu, da je ženska v družbi lahko uspešna samo, če sega do nedovoljenega. V nekem smislu ima Arsinoa celo prav: uspeh, ki ga je v moškem svetu dosegla ženska, sam po sebi že priča o tem, da krši pravila te družbe. Hipokritična krepostnica, ki si prizadeva za podoben uspeh, se krivde brani z opozarjanjem na žensko čistost, s tem demonstrativno potrjuje avtoriteto patriarhalnega reda. Ženska, ki uspeva brez nadzora moškega, pa je sumljiva in sporna. Neodvisna ženska je za družbo problematična in zato vselej blizu obsodbi.

Kaznovanje kokete

Mreža intrig, ki zaradi družabnega uspeha obkroža Celimeno, je pravzaprav banalna. Oblikuje se kar znotraj njenega salona, med občudovalci, ki stremijo po njeni potrditvi. Vsak od njih pričakuje, da mu bo naklonjenost povrnila z ljubeznijo – ga z izborom postavila nad tekmece in se mu podredila. Bolj kot izpolnitev čustva je tu v igri prestiž, samoljubje, s katerim se Celimena očitno poigrava. Ko se vmeša še Arsinoa, ki prestreza njena pisma in jih predaja v neprave roke, je katastrofa neizbežna. A čeprav gre samo za preplet ljubosumnosti in tekmovalnosti posame-

¹¹ Narcizem je moderni Freudov izraz za to, kar je bilo kot samoljubje (*amour propre*) velika tema 17. stoletja, zlasti pri La Rochefoucauldu.

znikov, ki v nenačelni koaliciji operirajo z umazanimi potezami (kraja pisem, dogovor med tekmečema), se v njem vendar izkažejo pravila mondene družbe, zlasti pa mesto, ki jo ta namenja ženski.

V velikem prizoru kaznovanja, ko zrušijo Celimenin ugled in jo obsodijo na sramoto in samoto, so zbrani vsi liki, strukturiran pa je kot demaskiranje. Z javnim branjem njenih pisem, v katerih naklonjenost obljublja zdaj temu zdaj onemu, vse druge pa kritizira, Celimeno obtožijo zlaganosti in ljubimkanja na vse strani.¹² Prav toliko kot njo pa prizor razgali tudi njene goste.

Ko v enem pismu laska moškemu, ki ga v naslednjem grdo obrekuje, da bi godila drugemu, Celimena razkrije svojo varljivost. S priznanjem, da se ob občudovalcih dolgočasi, razkrije še neko drugo zagato, ki pa tu ostane preslišana. Težko pa se strinjamo, da s tem razgali tudi svojo dotlej skrito resnico (kot trdi komentar v novi izdaji Pléiade, ki se v tem vrača k tradicionalnim interpretacijam). Varljivost mondenega obrekovanja, ki se prilagaja naslovniku in trenutni konstelaciji razmerij, je vsem znano pravilo (potrjeno že v portretnem prizoru). Da se Celimena poigrava z zapeljevanjem in polovičnimi obeti ljubezni, je bilo tudi očitno (prav zato zahteve, da izbere). Dlje od poigravanja, ki pravzaprav zanika resen angažma, ne seže niti v pismih – ne do priznanja, kakršno je izrekla Alcestu, še manj do *amour de réalité*, o kakršni je bilo govora ob Arsinoi. Njene dosedanje občudovalce razbesni pred tekmeči razgaljeni dokaz, da jih je spremenila v objekt svojega poigravanja, skupaj s tem, da so se sami znašli na mestu objektov kritike.

Avtor izrecno poskrbi za to, da izpostavi komičnost njihovega ranjenega samoljubja in jih vse po vrsti osmeši. Z obljubami, da bodo tolažbo hitro našli pri drugih damah, užaljeni občudovalci sami potrdijo, da vsesplošno zapeljevanje sodi v naravo tega sveta, ki ljubezen pojmuje kot igro za družabni ugled. A moški, ki hiti od ene do druge salonske dame, ima povsem drugačne pravice kot ženska, njej nikakor ni dovoljeno, kar suvereno prakticirajo moški. Navidezne enakopravnosti, ki je prevečala Celimenin salon (in mondeni svet), je tu konec. Ženska, ki se je z duhovitostjo in očarljivostjo postavila nad moške občudovalce, mora biti kaznovana.

¹² Motiv je Molière prevzel iz romana Madeleine de Scudéry *Artamène ou le Grand Cyrus* (1649–1653): tu je lik Artelinde, ki hkrati zapeljuje več moških in doživi osramotitev z navzkrižnim razkritjem pisem. Celimena naj bi nekaj dolgovala tudi liku Done Elvire iz tragikomedije *Le Favori*, ki jo je Molière uprizoril leta 1665. Avtorica tragikomedije, Marie-Catherine Desjardins, imenovana tudi Madame de Villedieu, je znana kot prva francoska dramatičarka, ki so jo uprizarjali v profesionalnem gledališču. Povzeto po opombah v izdaji Bibliothèque de la Pléiade.

Zdi se, da se komedija distancira od te kazni, čeprav glede tega ni eksplicitna (eksplicitnost ni njena deviza, vseskozi je dvoumna). Komičnost občudovalcev, ki so se prelevili v maščevalne sovražnike, upravičenost kazni gotovo postavi pod vprašaj. Celimena je prejkone grešni kozel nezanesljivega in krutega mondenega sveta. Vprašljivo pa je zlasti, ali njen varljivi odnos do občudovalcev pojasnjuje tudi odnos do Alcesta. V nadaljevanju sama oboje razloči. Vprašanje je pomembno zato, ker odnos do protagonista, ki s kritično presojo temeljno opredeljuje njen svet, slejkoprej govori o njeni resnici.

Celimena in Alcest

Njuno razmerje, določeno z njegovo kritičnostjo in njenim izmikanjem podreditvi, je negotovo. Zaostrilo se je že pred »razkrinkanjem«, in sicer v njenem soočenju v 3. prizoru IV. dejanja. Tu ima osrednje mesto prav vprašanje resnice.

Če se je Alcest že dotlej pritoževal nad Celimeninim obnašanjem, jo tu naravnost obtoži zlaganosti in nezvestobe. Odločenost, da se ji odpove, podkrepi s snubitvijo sestrične Eliante – kar predstavlja lep ekvivalent njegovim dvomom o Celimenini stanovitnosti. Te domnevno potrди neko njeno pismo, ki se je na nenavaden način znašlo v njegovih rokah; z očitno zlonamernostjo, ki jo je prepoznal tudi sam, mu ga je predala Arsinoa. Tudi tu gre za pismo, ki naj bi pričalo o nezvestobi (prizora odslikavata in dopolnjujeta drug drugega).

Pismo samo je vprašljivo, povsem negotovo. Ne le, da ga je Alcest pridobil na problematičen način, ki ga vpleta v mrežo umazanih intrig, niti tega ne ve, komu je bilo v resnici namenjeno. Navkljub temu verjame, da priča o Celimenini resnici z gotovostjo, ki mu je v živem odnosu z njo nedosegljiva.¹³ Obenem priznava, da potrjuje njegove sume: nezanesljivemu sporočilu zaupa zato, ker je že vnaprej verjel, da je nezvesta. O čem v resnici priča to pismo, nikoli ne bomo izvedeli. Celimena, ki njegovo ljubosumno besnenje sprejema z nejevoljo, pozneje tudi jezo, namreč odločno zavrne zahtevo, da bi ga pojasnila. Z nepričakovano ostrino mu odreče pravico do vpogleda v svoje skrivnosti, ko pravi: »Vzeli ste si kar preveč pravice, da z mano v takšnem tonu govorite.« (IV, 3; v originalu še ostreje: *Je vous trouve plaisant, d'user d'un tel empire, / Et de me dire, au nez, ce que vous m'osez dire.*) To je

¹³ Riggs piše o tem, da Alcest ne zaupa intersubjektivnim odnosom in stavi na vrednost zapisanega dokumenta.

edini moment v komediji, ko se Celimena, ki situacijo sicer obvladuje s poigravanjem, postavi z odločnim *Ne* in zavrne patriarhalno nadziranje in obvladovanje. Z zavračanjem pojasnila pa obenem potrди svojo enigmatičnost. Pismo ostaja njena skrivnost, z njim je do neke mere nespregledljiva tudi sama. Suma, da je v pismu nekaj nedovoljenega, se ne bo odrešila, potrjen pa tudi ne bo. Stvar je nenavadna, še posebej, ker je to eden redkih momentov v Molièrovem opusu, kjer pomemben element zgodbe ostane nepojasnen. Celimeno to uveljavi kot najbolj enigmatično med njegovimi liki.

Mogoče bi bilo domnevati, da noče odgovoriti, ker ustreznega pojasnila, ki bi jo razbremenilo obtožbe o nezvestobi, nima. Da ga s spretno manipulacijo zavede v dvome, ker skuša z ustvarjanjem varljivega videza nedolžnosti prikriti resnico. A zgodi se ravno nasprotno. Alcest, razdvojen med obtoževanjem in željo po spravi, jo sam prosi za videz: »Potrudite se pokazáti, da ste zvesti, / in jaz potrudil se bom to verjeti.« (IV, 3) Gnan od strasti, ki jo obvladuje želja po podreditvi ljubljene, kategorično zahtevo po resnici sam zaobrne v željo po varljivosti. Pri tem se niti ne ove, da je razločevanje resnice in videza onemogočil z avtoritarnostjo svojega pogleda, ki ženski odreja pravico do svobode. Celimena mu te noče žrtvovati. Ko zavrne njegovo prošnjo za laž – to je njen drugi *Ne* v tem ključnem prizoru – pa ponovno potrди svoj iztanjšan odnos do resnice, ki ga je izkazala že v soočenju s krepostnico. Vrednost resnice nemara pozna bolje od Alcesta, ki se ponša s prepričanjem, da je njen edini zagovornik v svetu, preplavljenem z lažjo. To prepričanje je sám zaznamovano z lažjo, saj temelji na samovšečnosti, ki ga je zaslepila za lastno problematičnost.

Te se ne ove niti ob Celimeninem *Ne*. V njenem opozorilu na iskrenost prepozna samo novo varljivost in jo označi kot »prevejanko« (*traîtresse*). Do te mere je prevzet s svojo strastjo in sam s sabo, da niti ne sliši njenega sporočila, ki o resnici govori z opozarjanjem na zagate njenega razmerja. »Ne ljubite me, kot naj bi se ljubilo« (IV, 3), proti koncu prizora pravi Celimena. Z zagotavljanjem silovitosti svoje ljubezni, s katerim odgovori na to, Alcest samo potrди njeno ugotovitev: izpove namreč željo, da bi izgubila vse, premoženje, prijatelje in mesto v družbi, da bi ji lahko sam vse povrnil. Nemara je prava resnica njegove ljubezni to: želja po izničenju ljubljene, ki bi jo sam ustvaril na novo.

Mogoče bi bilo celo reči, da se z družabnim linčem Alcestova želja uresniči: Celimena je z ugledom in občudovalci izgubila vse, kar ji je omogočalo družabno življenje, in je zdaj na dnu; potrđila se je tudi njegova sodba o mondenem svetu. Še več, ko se družba razide, Celimena prvič v igri prizna svojo krivdo, Alcestu in samo njemu prizna pravico,

da jo obtožuje. Z odpovedjo suvereni samozavesti in govorom o »zablodeli duši« (V, 4) pokaže povsem nov obraz. Vendar bi težko sklepali, da s tem sama prevrednoti svoje dosedanje ravnanje. Bolj kot priznanje grešnosti je to priznanje poraza. To potrdi s končno odločitvijo: čeprav prizna krivdo nasproti Alcestu, njegovega načrta »rešitve« ne bo sprejela.

Alcest, ki se je v prizoru kaznovanja molče distanciral, po razhodu družbe povzame isti kritični ton, ki ga je izkazoval že dotlej. Dramatični prizor, ki je Celimeno oropal suverenosti in samovšečnosti, ni spremenil njegovega odnosa: še vedno se ne more odpovedati ljubezni, ki jo razume kot svojo slabost, krivdo pa ji je pripravljen oprostiti, ker jo pripisuje modi časa. Morda res verjame, da je prava Celimena druga, njena koketna obrekljivost pa samo navada, s katero se prilagaja. Morda verjame tudi, da se bo svetu zdaj lažje odpovedala; a v resnici se je sam odločil že prej (o odhodu je razmišljal že v prvem prizoru, odločil pa se je po porazu na sodišču). Pripravljen jo je še naprej ljubiti, a samo pod pogojem, da se odpove svetu in z njim odide na sólo, kot temu sam pravi, v puščavo (*mon désert*).

Tega Celimena ne more sprejeti. Pripravljena se je poročiti z njim, če se odpove zahtevi, v puščavo pa ne more.

Ta snubitev je nenavadna, saj v njej ni v ospredju ljubezen, pač pa izbor življenjskega načina. Alcest sicer govori o ljubezni, po zavrnitvi govori celo o zvezi, ki naj bi osmislila in izpolnila življenje v celoti (v izvorniku: *Pour trouver tout en moi, comme moi tout en vous*), in Celimeno obtoži, da ne pozna njene prave vrednosti. Vendar odločitev za ljubezen sam onemogoči, ker jo pogojuje z odločitvijo za svojo izbiro, ki je v resnici ekstremna. Ni brez pomena, da o izpolnitvi govori šele potem, ko je že izgubljena. Kot ni brez pomena, da samoto tudi sam pojmuje zgolj v negativnih kategorijah: kot zanikanje mondenega sveta, ki pa sólo nima nobene pozitivne vrednosti, osmislila bi ga morda šele ljubezen (da gre za brezupno izbiro, potrjuje tudi Filint). Za Celimeno taka izbira lahko pomeni samo odpoved. Ne samo, da bi jo oropala vsega, kar je doslej oblikovalo njeno življenje (in kar je pravzaprav že izgubila), postavila bi jo v nič – pravzaprav v totalno izročnost Alcestu.

Skozi celo igro se je zdelo, da se ne moreta sporazumeti, ker to preprečuje družabni vrvež. Zdaj, ko ostaneta sama, pa stopita bolj narazen kot kdaj prej. Kot Alcest tudi Celimena radikalizira svojo izbiro, saj njegov pogoj zavrne v situaciji, v kateri je izgubila vso oporo, ki ji jo je zagotavljal uspeh. Nepripravljenost na puščavo pojasni s slabostjo svoje duše. Ko Alcest zavrne možnost, da se odpove svojemu pogoju in se poroči z njo, je drugič poražena. S prizorišča odhaja kot ženska, ki je izgubila vse – razen vrednosti lastne odločitve. Vendar je pora-

žen tudi Alcest. Izpraznjeno prizorišče, ki označi konec igre in sprevrže vsa komedijska pričakovanja, priča, da tudi on nima prave rešitve. V porazu sta si enakovredna.

Ženska neodvisnost

Mogoče je reči, da šele z zavrnitvijo Alcestove snubitve Celimena zares potrdi svojo neodvisnost. Poražena, osramočena in zapuščena, priznavajoč svojo krivdo in celo slabotnost, še vedno zmore zavrniti podređitev. Ta odločitev – ki jo sprejme v trenutku, ko vse govori proti njej – priča, da je Celimena sama svoja. Z neodvisnostjo, ki ji jo je omogočil vdovski stan, se je udeleževala v mondenem svetu, frivolnost njenega kroga pa je vseskozi vzbujala dvome o pravi vrednosti njene neodvisnosti, za katero bi lahko tičala slabo reflektirana prilagojenost modnim navadam in podrejenost lastnemu narcizmu. Prava resnica Celimene se lahko izkaže šele ob kritičnem Alcestu, ki ob vsej svoji problematičnosti predstavlja najresnejšo refleksijo tega sveta. Zato ni naključje, da se resno zaplete prav z njim, čeprav ji ravno on grozi z najhujšo podređitvijo. Razmerje s samosvojim Alcestom priča, da njeno ravnanje presega prilagojenost.

Ali gre v tem nemogočem razmerju za ljubezen? To je veliko vprašanje, ob katerem se odpirajo številni dvomi, ki zadevajo tudi iskrenost Alcestove ljubezni. Gotovo pa njuno razmerje ni naključno, saj se izkazuje, da drug drugemu postavljata pravo mero. Več, da sta si v svoji različnosti ekvivalentna in v svoji konfliktnosti tudi sorodna.

Alcest se vzpostavi s kritičnim odnosom do sveta, ki osredotoči igro in zaznamuje celoto uprizorjenega. Celimena se v tem svetu nasprotno giblje z lahkoto in užitkom, vendar pa njegove napake dobro vidi tudi sama. Posvetili smo se njenim portretom, v katerih izkazuje kritičen pogled na sodobnike, ki je enakovreden Alcestovemu. Njegova kritika je sicer načelna in univerzalna, vendar posplošena, pogosto neutemeljena, saj jo širi vseprek in spregleduje razlike (zaradi malenkosti npr. napade Filinta, ki mu ponuja zahtevano iskrenost), zato pa tudi smešna. Njene kritike znancev so nasprotno usmerjene natančno in vselej zasledujejo njen cilj. Res služijo predvsem vzpostavljanju zavezništva; vendar pa so v razbiranju izkrivljenosti mondenega sveta bolj pronicljive, kar potrjuje tudi njihova duhovitost. V kritičnem pogledu na svet se v resnici dopolnjujeta (in v strategiji komedije skupaj ustvarjata portret stoletja). Ljubosumni Alcest tega ne vidi, v njenem obrekovanju prepozna samo malovredno zabavo, ki ga moti tem bolj, ker služi narcizmu. A njegova

generalizirana mizantropija, ki niti ne skriva prepričanja o lastni vzvišenosti, hrani narcizem, ki je prejkone večji od njenega.

To se pokaže tudi v njeni refleksiji prakse obrekovanja. Že ko osmeši Alcestovo posplošeno kritiziranje, Celimena izkaže jasno zavest o vrednosti obsojanja drugih, ki jo še bolj izrazito razvije v soočenju s tekmico. Tu izpostavi pravo vrednost, ki jo kritika lahko doseže, ne v generaliziranem obtoževanju vseh, pač pa s presojanjem samega sebe – v samospoznavanju. Takšnega uvida, s katerim bi kritiko usmeril na samega sebe, Alcest nikoli ne zmore. Vseskozi, še posebej v svojih porazih, izkazuje neznansko, docela nereflektirano samoljubje. Nesporno je samoljubna tudi Celimena, vendar se lastnega samoljubja zaveda in mu zna postaviti mejo; zato je na koncu sposobna tudi priznati svojo napako. Alcest pa nikoli ne prizna lastnega deleža v zablodah sveta. V svojem samoljubju celo pričakuje priznanje drugih. Čeprav prezira družbo, v kateri domnevno živi proti lastni volji, si želi priznanja prav te družbe, ki jo strastno kritizira: od slovite zahteve *Je veux qu'on me distingue*¹⁴ v uvodnem prizoru do konca, ko mu tudi poraz – na sodišču in v ljubezni – priča o izjemnosti njegovega poštenja.

Alcest seže najdlje, ko kritizira dogajanje na sodišču in na dvoru ter potencialno spregovori o problematičnosti političnega ustroja (zato so mnogi v njem razbrali upornika in kritika monarhije). A pri tem v ospredje vselej postavi lastni problem. Njegova kritika javnih institucij in delovanja družbe se najbolj razplamti, ko govori o krivicah, ki so jih prizadeli njemu samemu; obtožbe nasprotnikov pa se iz domnevno javnih zadev spuščajo v globine silovitega obrekovanja. Problematičnost sodišč in javnih institucij pozna tudi Celimena, ki pa si ob latentni kritiki ne dovoli upiranja, nasprotno, tudi tu si prizadeva za zaščito svojih občudovalcev (v prvem nastopu sprejemanje obeh markizov opravičuje z njuno pomočjo na sodišču in vplivom na dvoru). V nasprotju z Alcestom, ki zavrača splošno prakticirano prilagajanje družbenim normam, skrbno pazi na to, da bi svojo pozicijo zaščitila z naklonjenostjo vplivnih moških. Kot ženska, ki v javnih institucijah nima lastnega mesta, v skrbi za svoje interese dosti drugega manevrskega prostora niti nima. V to razliko ju ne postavlja samo njuna individualna izbira, pač pa predvsem spolna razlika, saj moški v tem svetu lahko operira s povsem drugačnimi mehanizmi kot ženska.

Kot se izkaže, pa ima tudi njeno laskanje mejo. Morda se zdi, da njena pisma samo stopnjujejo logiko laskanja in praznih obljub, ki jih krepi s kritiziranjem tekmecev. A tu je še nekaj drugega: ko prizna

¹⁴ »Razloči naj se me!«

zlovoljnost in dolgočasje, ki jo navdajata ob občudovalcih, prestopi mejo družabnega poigravanja in intrigiranja. Obenem izstopi iz evforije, ki jo domnevno obvladuje, in pokaže, da do lastnega družabnega življenja goji distanco. To je kritična distanca, ki priča, da ji mondena zabava z vsem občudovanjem, ki ga je v njej deležna, ne zagotavlja pravega zadoščenja. Njena resnica je nekje drugje. O tej nikoli ne govori. A če bi ji morda lahko očitali, da je nima oziroma da je prazna, se nasproti temu izkazuje, da še toliko večja praznina zeva v Alcestovem programskem (in pogosto bombastičnem) govorjenju o svoji resnici. Mogoče bi bilo celo ugotoviti, da je njena nezvedljivost na konformizem daljnosežnejša, prav zato, ker nanjo ne opozarja z glasnim razkazovanjem.

Na prvi pogled se zdi, da je Alcest, ki se je načelno postavil nasproti družbi in razmišlja o umiku iz nje, človek neodvisnega duha, Celimena, ki si prizadeva za družabni ugled, pa prilagojena modnim navadam. Natančnejši premislek pokaže, da sta oba, vsak na svoj način, vpeta v logiko tega sveta, ki jo s svojimi individualnimi stališči in izbiri tudi presegata. Oba zasledujeta svojo neodvisnost: on z načelnostjo in nepripravljenostjo na sprejemanje obstoječega; ona z navideznim sprejemanjem, ki pa ga presega z lucidnim razumevanjem družbenih odnosov, ki sega do njihovega jedra. Samo to ji omogoča, da se v tem svetu giblje vsaj do neke mere svobodno in vzdržuje neodvisnost duha, ki ga izkazuje tudi z bravurozno elokventnostjo. Vsakemu od njiju uspeva, da na svoj način doseže kritično distanco, ki ju začasno dvigne nad družbo (oba sta deležna spoštovanja in občudovanja), a ju potem tudi pokoplje. Za svojo neodvisnost sta oba kaznovana, vsak na svoj način izgnana. Na koncu sta oba izobčenca, *outcast*. Ta vzporednost kaže, da v strategiji komedije kazen ni obtožba, pač pa poraz možnosti avtentičnega odgovora svetu.

Celimenina svoboda, naj je še tako vprašljiva in pogojna, je za žensko njenega časa vendar izjemna, prav tako suverenost, s katero jo uresničuje ob vztrajanju pri svoji neodvisnosti. Pravzaprav ni nenavadno, da so v naslednjih stoletjih, opredeljenih z meščansko moralo in rigidno patriarhalnostjo, v njeni svobodi prepoznavali predvsem pokvarjenost. Ženska, ki izpolnitve svojega življenja ne najde v sožitju z ljubečim moškim, se je tu zdela sumljiva in nevarna. Z odmikom od tovrstnih predsodkov pa lahko ugotovimo, da je Molière ženski priznaval drugačno vrednost in pomen. Poleg duhovitosti, družabne spretnosti in očarljivosti Celimenino kompleksno podobo določa avtonomna in jasna zavest o sebi in svetu, neodvisnost duha, ki ji *Ljudomrznik* sledi kot največji vrednoti. Njen avtor ji je priznal neodtujljivo pravico, da sama odloča o svojem življenju.

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Molière's Célimène, or an Independent Woman

Keywords: French drama / Molière: *Misanthrope* / dramatic characters / women / Celimena / Alcest / feminist literary criticism

In Molière's comedy *The Misanthrope*, Célimène represents an exceptional woman figure which is a novelty in the classical literature. A master of brilliant conversation, she is a witty and charming salon lady who takes part in the mondaine social life where she attracts numerous admirers. This freedom is made possible by her status of a widow without a patriarchal master, a status that is also problematic; it causes concerns particularly for Alcest, the protagonist who dominates the piece by his critical attitude toward the world. Despite his love for her his criticism is also aimed at Célimène who in his eyes embodies the vices of mondaine society. His assessment of Célimène's conformism, coupled with her fickleness and falsity, was echoed by the majority of traditional commentaries that deemed her to be a slanderous coquette, hence a relatively banal and less important figure. Countering such simplifications, the paper tries to establish Célimène as a complex figure: Molière's comedy, whose plot is largely centred on her, devotes her a lot of attention and offers ample possibilities for the deployment of her expression in different dimensions. The brilliant wit of her social portrayals displays her critical attitude to her contemporaries, various confrontations testify to her incisive relation to truth and to amour-propre as well as her lucid view of interpersonal and social relations. The paper explores the question to what extent Célimène, clearly rejecting subordination that Alcest threatens to impose, displays an independent spirit which equals his. Célimène is thus a figure who presents an essential parallel to Alcest and at the same time can appear as a paradoxical double of Molière himself. It is surprising that she has been largely neglected by the feminist scholarship.

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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 satire *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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Translating the Untranslatable: Walter Benjamin and Homi Bhabha

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*Since Homi Bhabha introduced the notion of ‘cultural translation’ in the penultimate chapter of his *Location of Culture*, translation no longer implies the overcoming of existing differences between cultures. In his peculiar interpretation, it becomes a process that initiates cultural differences in the same way as life, for instance, incessantly diversifies its creatures. As these differences follow from translation, rather than precede it, cultures are conceived as hybrid and in-between rather than pure and autonomous entities. It is this characteristics of cultures that, in Bhabha’s understanding, renders them untranslatable. A culture cannot assimilate into another culture without maintaining its internal difference and it cannot liberate itself from another culture without having embodied this culture’s trace. In the final analysis, his idea of “cultural translation desacralizes the ... assumptions of cultural supremacy” by undoing the asymmetry between languages that for long centuries accompanied the Western practice of translation. The thesis that I want to propose is that, in this context, Bhabha’s engagement of the notion of untranslatability, introduced by Walter Benjamin in his 1923 essay “The Task of the Translator”, acquires a special significance. It establishes a clandestine ‘elective affinity’ between the two thinkers who, doomed to cope with the traumatic constellations of their respectively post-imperial and postcolonial age, attempt to disengage these ages’ political asymmetries.*

Keywords: translation theory / interculturality / cultural differences / intranslatability / post-imperialism / post-colonialism / Benjamin, Walter / Bhabha, Homi

The rise of the indistinct: Two affiliated post-ages

Since Homi Bhabha introduced the notion of ‘cultural translation’ in the penultimate chapter of his *Location of Culture* (303–338), translation no longer implies the overcoming of existing differences between cultures. In his peculiar interpretation, it becomes a process that initiates cultural differences in the same way as life, for instance, incessantly diversifies its creatures.¹ As these differences *follow* from translation,

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rather than *precede* it, cultures are conceived as hybrid and in-between rather than pure and autonomous entities. Since the translation as their generator eludes identification, the differences between them are neither absolute nor reducible to a common identity. Exempting the translation from the bifurcations that it continuously generates, Bhabha renders it untranslatable. To underline its promotion to the condition of the im/possibility of all its constituent parts, he replaces *languages* as its *objects* with *cultures* as its *reproducers*. This argumentative move automatically eliminates the key dilemma of traditional translation theory: either the translator assimilates his or her language to that of the source text or makes the target text function as part of an altogether different linguistic setting. By insisting on the resistance that one culture offers both to its assimilation into the other culture and to its complete separation from it, Bhabha disengages binary logic. A culture cannot assimilate into another culture without maintaining its internal difference and it cannot liberate itself from another culture without having embodied this culture's trace. This is why no culture brings the process of translation to a successful closure. Instead, this process cuts through distinct cultural identities by making them essentially indistinct. As a result, Bhabha implies that the post-colonial world turns the colonial world's hierarchy upside down, establishing indistinction as its norm instead of distinction. In its global multinational network, hybridity, liminality, and in-betweenness rule the day.

In addition, such a globalization of translation undermines the 'self-evident' opposition that has dominated reflection on this notion over many centuries of colonialism. By extending the translation from the linguistic to the cultural domain, Bhabha seems to be reminding us that, from the outset, the practice of translation accompanied European colonialism with its habitual asymmetries between the rich and the poor or the civilized and the barbarous cultures. By undoing these asymmetries as the instruments of domination, he is in fact interrogating the colonial power relationship. In his own words, his idea of "cultural translation desacralizes the ... assumptions of cultural supremacy" (228). The thesis that I want to propose is that, in this context, his engagement of the notion of *untranslatability*, introduced by Walter Benjamin in his 1923 essay "The Task of the Translator", acquires a special significance. It establishes a clandestine 'elective affinity' between the two thinkers who, doomed to cope with the traumatic constellations of their respectively post-imperial and postcolonial age, take recourse to the weak messianic strategy that systematically postpones its redemption. The latter has a long tradition in European modernity *strictu sensu*, which

dates back to early German Romanticists who were equally “stranded in their present,” longing to reconnect with their castrated past via its scattered ruins (Fritzsche 55–131).² The redrawing of international borders in the aftermath of the German Empire’s breakup induced an irreparable loss of security. The Romanticist identification of the foreclosed possibilities of the past and their restoration of its neglected itineraries were defensive responses to the disappointments induced by the French Revolutionaries’ investment in historical progress. Their triumphant history penetrated deeply into the lives of its many participants with devastating effects.

In the similar atmosphere of an unchained history after the crumbling of an empire, what drives Bhabha to evoke Benjamin’s notion of untranslatability? We should remind ourselves that, in the post-imperial constellation, this notion disengaged the ruling conception of *language*, which reflected European *imperial* asymmetries in the same way that the prevailing conception of *translation*, at the post-colonial time into which Bhabha intervenes, reflected European *colonial* asymmetries. Thus, what might have attracted Bhabha in Benjamin’s notion are the emancipating political implications in its background. The untranslatable is the element that offers resistance to the translational mechanisms of victorious history, which promotes Bhabha’s turn to Benjamin as an example of how his “insurgent intersubjectivity” (Bhabha 230) comes into being. However, the notion of the untranslatable only appears at one spot in Benjamin’s essay and is difficult to understand without considering his whole argument as being scattered across several essays. The respective point reads that “translations prove to be untranslatable” due to the “all too great fleetingness with which meaning attaches to them” (“The Task” 82, trans. modified, *allzu großer Flüchtigkeit, mit welcher der Sinn an ihnen haftet*, “Die Aufgabe” 61). It deserves attention that the German term *Flüchtigkeit* is associated with the notion of the *Flüchtling* (escapee or migrant), which significantly takes center stage in Bhabha’s essay mentioned above. Benjamin seems to be suggesting that meaning remains a subversive migrant in any language that tries to domesticate it. Placed amidst its national identity, it introduces transnational displacement into its place, or indistinction into its distinction. In other words, before an act of its *inter*-lingual translation, any language’s meaning undergoes an *intra*-lingual escape, which makes its identity indistinct. Its internal fleetingness offers resistance

² In his more extensive genealogy, Agamben traces weak messianism back to St Paul, see *The Time That Remains* 88–112.

to all acts of its translation into another linguistic identity, rendering it restrictive.

Insisting on such internal “untranslatability” of national languages, Benjamin might have established a spontaneous association with the untranslatability of the dispersed Jews as the perennial migrants of European cultures into every established national identity. For centuries they were caught “in a constant state of flux” (“The Task” 78), which destined them to “homelessness” “throughout the world,” as Gustav Mahler remarked in the sinister atmosphere of their renewed dispossession (Beller 207) that, *nota bene*, also gave birth to Benjamin’s essay. At the time, however, the same inherited homelessness endangered the awakened national languages that, in the compartmentalized post-imperial Europe, were fiercely vying for their own political identity. For long centuries, they were likewise deprived of it. Benjamin’s notion of untranslatability opposes the idea of their national self-determination as the antidote to this homelessness in the same way that it opposes the rising Zionist idea of Jewish national self-determination. Instead, by *transforming their painful lack of distinct identity into a rare privilege*, he turns their homelessness into an appointment for a revolutionary mission. Benjamin’s contemporary Karl Kraus, before he turned Zionist, equally trusted that the Jews were “fated to dissolve entirely into their surrounding cultures, and nevertheless still to remain a ferment in them” (Kraus 23).³ Like him, Benjamin was convinced that the inflicted *internal exteriority* to any host culture forced the Jews “to come to terms with things in a way others, generally, were not [forced]. There was thus, in a sense, a special role for Jews, one might say a secular version of the chosen people” (Beller 217). Like the migrant meaning at the heart of national languages, they were invited to permanently revivify their hosts’ identities by introducing indistinction into their distinction.

Significantly, speaking of cultural translation, Bhabha renders the impact of Indian migrant families on the British post-colonial surrounding in similar terms of a persistent renewal. Their cultural untranslatability permeates the cultural milieu of their hosts with “hybrid sites of meaning” (234), which culminates in “an empowering condition of hybridity; an emergence that turns ‘return’ into re-inscription or re-description; an iteration that is not belated, but ironic and insurgent” (324). In Bhabha’s view, this is “how newness enters the world”. In both

³ Here, and in what follows, all translations from German are mine unless otherwise indicated.

typically remedial arguments, the humiliating condition of migrants, bereft of distinct identity properties, translates into a life-affirming force. To be sure, neither Benjamin nor Bhabha invented this compensatory argument. Already early German Romanticists, embittered by the dissolution of the German Empire through Napoleon's victorious rise to power, had turned the long-term dispossession of German identity through the supremacy of French culture into a source of national pride. In their significant thesis on the German identity in permanent making, its lack of distinction was transformed into an advantage (Biti 57–68). This consoling self-glorifying maneuver of turning the lack of an autochthonous national tradition into an advantage in comparison to France or England was almost commonplace in the culturally inferior Germany around 1800 (Herder 551; Schlegel 26; Wiedemann 545ff.; Koch 234; Albrecht 308).

Benjamin's notion of the untranslatable and its implications

With the inborn instinct of all deprived agencies, which tend to interlock in order to strengthen their resistance, Benjamin's and Bhabha's arguments establish "affiliative solidarity" (Bhabha 230) with the Romanticist remedial logics. However, in counter-distinction to Bhabha, who in post-colonial circumstances is preoccupied with the *migration of people*, Benjamin focuses on the *translation of languages* in post-imperial circumstances. In order to understand his idea of untranslatability in the whole range of its implications, we must first take a closer look at the distinction he draws, within a given language, between its intended object (*das Gemeinte*) or particular *referent* and its mode of intention (*die Art des Meinens*) or *structure of reference*. He engages it throughout his argument, consistently applying it to both artworks and languages. In both, the structure of reference, genuine to their respective memory archives, outdoes the referent, which an artist or speaker establishes by his or her particular communicative intention. Benjamin already states in the first paragraph of his essay, in which he addresses the nature of artworks, that, despite the artist's intentions, "no poem is intended for the reader, no picture for the beholder, no symphony for the listener" ("The Task" 75). The structure of reference genuine to these artworks – or what semiotics has thereupon termed *signification* – goes far beyond the referent or *denotation* intended by their respective producers. Applying this distinction between signification and denotation to languages, Benjamin claims that they converge

in the referents of their particular words but diverge in their structures of reference, inasmuch as these by far exceed these referents. The languages cannot control their structures of reference because, firstly, these are “in a constant state of flux” and, secondly, continuously supplement each other (78). Benjamin’s elusive signification thus anticipates Lévi-Strauss’s concept of the *floating signifier* (Lévi-Strauss 63–64), which was recently designated by Giorgio Agamben to have been the “guiding concept in the human sciences of the twentieth century” (*State of Exception* 37).

What makes artworks and languages untranslatable is precisely their elusive signification, even if their transmitters ceaselessly translate it into particular denotations. Nonetheless, each materialized meaning excludes from its horizon a vast surplus of non-materialized ones that envelop this meaning. In Benjamin’s view, this envelopment of unemployed meaning possibilities determines the reception of the given meaning behind the back of the intention that established it. As the artworks and languages cannot take into possession that which they translate but remain exposed to its untranslatability, their meaning involuntarily reaffirms this untranslatability by itself becoming “fleeting.” However, the level of this fleetingness depends on their ability to activate their originals’ “untranslatable element” or unemployed meaning possibilities. As the resolute advocate of the suppressed life options, Benjamin entrusts the translator with the task of such mobilization. If he or she succeeds in fulfilling this task of translating the zone of indistinction beyond the original’s distinct meaning horizon, the latter experiences its rebirth or return to life.

Following this line of thinking, Benjamin warns that the translational activity retains its “possibly foremost significance” if it is not focused “exclusively on man” but rescues from oblivion that which men “proved unable to translate” (76). That is to say, the untranslatable that obliges the translator exceeds the structures of reference of *human* languages. That which they cannot translate is *bare life* (*bloßes Leben*; “Zur Kritik der Gewalt” 202–203) as a dense network of relations, which operates beyond these languages. This network comes to expression in all of its manifestations in the form of their escaping origin that undermines their distinction and sovereignty.⁴ Recently, Agamben resumed it in his political philosophy, rendering bare life

⁴ This is why Benjamin, for example, in *The Origin of German Tragic Drama*, interprets the German word *Ur-sprung* (which in everyday usage means “origin”) etymologically as a “primordial leap” (out-of-control) (*Der Ursprung* 226).

(*la nuda vita*) (*Homo Sacer* 4, 9, 10, 18, 27–28) as the underground ferment of the revolutionary change of given political formations. Its “zones of indistinction” operate as the reservoirs of “pure potentiality” that precedes and blurs human political divisions. Accordingly, within the constellation of European modernity, “bare life has the peculiar privilege of being that whose exclusion founds the common being of men” (10; trans. modified, *la città degli uomini*). However, it structures the human world from an ‘outside’ that adheres to it only “through a disjunction and an anachronism” (*Nudities* 11).

Anchored as they are in bare life, modern political formations demonstrate “the topological structure of the state of exception”: “*being outside, and yet belonging*” to the juridical state (*State of Exception* 35). Concerning this structure, Agamben unhesitatingly draws an analogy with the above-addressed excess of signification over denotation: “Just as between language and word, so between the juridical norm and its application there is no internal nexus that allows one to be derived immediately from the other” (40). Both passages entail “a ‘trial’ that always involves a plurality of subjects” (39–40), remaining controversial and conflict-ridden. This is how Benjamin’s notion of the untranslatable establishes an unmistakable link with the political state of exception. Although residing outside its translations, the untranslatable haunts them by inducing their destabilizing, floating, and meandering.

Miming as the medium of indistinction

This consistently inappropriate translation of the untranslatable – or *miming* – as it cannot but eternally postpone its verification, marks the very core of Benjamin’s weak messianism. The divine world, because it is forever lost, occupies a constitutively ecstatic position toward the human world. It only belongs to this world through its *exemption* from it in the same way that the sovereign, in the state of exception, belongs to the juridical order only in the peculiar form of his *ecstasy* (Agamben, *State of Exception* 35). As Derrida pertinently rendered it, the weak messianic “negative theology consists in regarding every [human] predicate ... as inadequate to the essence ... of God”; “only a negative ... attribution can claim to approach God”. “God’s name would fit everything that cannot be ... designated, except in an indirect and negative way” (Derrida, “How to Avoid” 146). Which particular form does this translation of the untranslatable take in Benjamin’s complex understanding of language?

If we now return to the argument of “The Task of the Translator,” Benjamin commits the translator to the above-delineated hidden network of relations, or life. To activate it, s/he must establish a correspondence between the “involuntary memories” of both the original and target languages.⁵ By bringing them into such mutually enriching dialogue, s/he rescues the “language of truth” (80) as their absent origin from its distortion by these two languages (82). Rescuing it means *miming* its mode of revelation (*Offenbarung*) in these languages’ mode of communication (*Mitteilung*). Benjamin thus endows the translation with the “special mission” (78) of “a transformation and a renewal” of both languages (77). The more a human tongue mimes the mode of revelation instead of applying the mode of communication, the more space it opens up for its various translations. To Agamben, its successful translation “entails a ‘trial’ that always involves a plurality of subjects” (*State of Exception* 39–40). In the formulation of Barbara Cassin, “the untranslatable is what one keeps on (not) translating” (Cassin xiv). In the spirit of weak messianism, the longing of human tongues for the language of truth endlessly postpones its materialization.

Benjamin does not address miming explicitly in “The Task of the Translator,” but instead introduces it in two later essays, “The Doctrine of the Similar” and “On the Mimetic Faculty.” Therein he opens a genealogy of his “translational” conception of language, stating that the *sensuous* miming of others, which characterized the pre-modern behavior of humans, gradually gave way to the modern ability to perceive *conceptual* similitudes. Even if the development from the immediate sensual miming of things to the linguistically mediated non-sensual resemblances implies a historical overcoming, Benjamin nevertheless ultimately interprets language as the “most perfect archive” of seemingly deactivated resemblances. Because it stores, confronts and relates one to another, “the essences of things, their most fleeting and refined substances, even aromas,” it is for him “the highest implementation of mimetic faculty” (“Über das mimetische Vermögen” 209). As one of his most astute recent commentators Samuel Weber rightly noticed, Benjamin insists that the language of communication, despite its efforts to part ways with the language of revelation, nevertheless stays “with that from which it parts” (Weber 197). The sensuous miming never

⁵ Following Bergson, Freud and Proust, Benjamin introduces a distinction between the voluntary and involuntary memory in his essay “On Some Motifs in Baudelaire” (158). In his understanding, the official *belonging* of any agency to its present time and space’s agencies is systematically subverted by its suppressed *longing* for those of distant times and spaces.

stops returning into the conceptual representation, the untranslatable repeatedly breaks into its translation.

In Benjamin's understanding, a linguistic sign is never just an abstract bearer of reference without simultaneously being a material bearer of similitude. Its longing for the language of truth subverts its belonging to a human tongue.⁶ When he describes the sudden manifestation of similitude that swallows up the discrete forms of linguistic signs like a "flame" or a "flash" (*Aufblitzen*; "Über das mimetische Vermögen" 213), we cannot resist associating his imagery with Freud's image of the flickering-up (*Aufleuchten*) of involuntary memory traces in human apperceptions. Both "flashes" are bound to "a time-moment [*Zeitmoment*]" that "slips past" ("The Doctrine" 66). In the alien milieu of communication, these remnants of the language of revelation present themselves "to the eye as fleetingly and transitorily as a constellation of stars" (66). It is the ethical task of the translator to meet their subterranean longing for redemption by making them join one another in an extraterritorial and extemporal "now-time" (*Jetztzeit*). Benjamin conceptualizes it as an uncanny fusion of divergent historical epochs, the far-removed fragments of which enter curious "elective affinities" and reverberate with one another ("Über den Begriff" 258).

Repeatedly foregrounding such indistinct composites, Benjamin gradually establishes the untranslatable as the final criterion for its translations. As it announces itself merely "in an indirect and negative way," the more indirect and negative a given manifestation comes to be and the more intense feeling of unhomeliness it induces, the higher the reputation it enjoys in his opinion. In the outcome, Benjamin's concept of the untranslatable amounts to an apology of *floating signifiers*, i.e. expressions that – in his own plastic rendering – envelop their content "like a royal robe with ample folds" the king's body ("The Task" 79). He estimates their chances for the afterlife as much better than the chances of established and distinct agencies. This holds for not only languages and artworks but creatures as well. For example, in his 1934 essay on Kafka, Benjamin presents the writer's peculiar figure of Odradek as at the same time a most bastardly and most mobile "receptacle of the forgotten" ("Franz Kafka" 132). By his monstrous outlook, Odradek epitomizes the "distorted" "form which things assume in oblivion" (133). However, portrayed as being permanently on the

⁶ In fact, while reference has to be attributed to a human tongue's *voluntary* memory, which makes it belong to a distinct agency, similitude grows from its *involuntary* memory, which makes it long for the indistinct ones.

move and with an “indeterminate residence,” he “stays alternately in the attic, on the staircase, in the corridors, and in the hall”. He is so “extraordinarily mobile and uncatchable” that the “family father” is concerned he will, as his family’s most shameful representative, finally outlive it (“Die Sorge” 130).

Among the artworks, Benjamin likewise favors those deprived of aesthetically distinctive identity, in which the “return of the repressed” induced an “expressionless” appearance. “This only completes a work, which destroys it into a bundle of pieces, to the fragment of a true world, to the torso of a symbol,” he claims (“Goethes *Wahlverwandschaften*” 181). This uncanny, disaggregate composition of the work of art (*das Bruchstückhafte am Kunstwerk*; “Zentralpark” 690) as developed in his analyses of various narratives, finds its further elaboration in his conception of allegory from *The Origin of German Tragic Drama*. In this book, the “torso” of the work of art from the essay on Goethe (“Goethes *Wahlverwandschaften*” 116) transforms into a “desolate confusion of execution sites” (*Der Ursprung* 401), by which baroque dramas testify to the misguidances of history. In such a devastated world, the work of art cannot be anything other than a patchwork of remnants, which postpones its completion for an unpredictable future (355, 362).

The rule of the state of exception

We can therefore infer that, when Homi Bhabha, in his post-colonial rendering of today’s world, favors indistinct terms of hybridity, liminality, and in-betweenness (Bhabha 12–13), he spontaneously attaches himself to Benjamin’s traumatic experience of the post-imperial world, which establishes “the state of exception” as its “rule” (“Über den Begriff” 254). Since then, the state of exception became “the dominant paradigm of government in contemporary politics” (Agamben, *State of Exception* 2), paving the way for Bhabha’s interest in Benjamin. In the aftermath of the First World War, Benjamin sensed that the law exempted itself from the public realm into an impenetrable zone of anomie located beyond human control. His contemporary, Carl Schmitt, defined the state of exception as follows: “[T]he sovereign stands outside of the normally valid juridical order, and yet belongs to it, for it is he who is responsible for deciding whether the constitution can be suspended *in toto*” (*Political Theology* 7). In other words, to make the law, his authority does not need to underlie it. We can, therefore, define the post-imperial state of exception as an “included exclusion” of

its sovereign agency, which makes the operation of the law perilously capricious in the eyes of its subjects.

Benjamin composed his essay on Kafka during the Weimar Republic in French exile. In 1925 Carl Schmitt remarked that “no constitution on earth so easily legalized a coup d’état as did the Weimar Constitution” (*Staat, Großraum, Nomos* 25), which explains the Republic’s regime of a presidential dictatorship and Hitler’s subsequent seizure of power. In Kafka’s works, as the Republic’s banished citizen Benjamin did not fail to notice, the whimsical holders of power uphold its rules only for themselves in order to freely betray and corrupt them (114). Put in these terms, his notion of the untranslatable acquires an eminently political dimension, connoting the uncanny return of the despotic prehistorical law in the democratic world of history. In the shadow of 9/11, Agamben reminded us that “World War One (and the years following it) appear as a laboratory for testing and honing the functional mechanisms and apparatuses of the state of exception” (*State of Exception* 7). All of a sudden, with the breakup of empires, the distinct identities of many people were reduced to bare life. They were calmly eliminated from the historical “facts” of the world without any established guilt on their part.

In this historical context, it deserves attention that the famous first sentence of Wittgenstein’s *Tractatus* (1921) “The world is all that is the case” – or, more accurately, what the elusive and changeable constellation of its “facts” states is the case – reflects the same uncanny sense of the utter contingency of world affairs. Wittgenstein’s two key hypotheses – “[t]he sense of the world must lie outside the world” (*Tractatus* 6.41) and “[i]f there is a worth in the world ... it must lie outside it” (6.53) – refuse to accept the “lie” of the so-called facts as the necessary “order of the world,” to put this in the vocabulary of Josef K. from Kafka’s *Trial* (*Der Prozeß* 233). Like Kafka’s Josef,⁷ Wittgenstein instead assumes the existence of an excluded transcendental “order” of which the given worldly “order” is but a distorted manifestation. He reinforces this assumption also through his dictum “Ethics is transcendental” (6.421), which relegates ethics to beyond the boundaries of the politically given world. Through the statement “Ethics and aesthetics are one,” parenthesized in the same paragraph, he attributes to art the

⁷ On the very eve of his court ordered execution, Josef K. asks himself: “Were there objections that had been forgotten? There must have been some. The logic is irrefutable, but it cannot resist someone who wants to live” (*Der Prozeß* 241). He therefore equally attaches his hopes to the unexplored potentialities of the world as Wittgenstein, Benjamin, and some other prominent contemporaries do.

ethical task of saving this transcendental order of oblivion by exploring innumerable possibilities unimplemented by the “factual” world.

Haunted by the feeling of unhomeliness in such a world imposed by history, Benjamin likewise experiences its political distribution of “facts” as discriminating. It dispossesses some of its inhabitants in favor of others, bereaving them of human rights and forcing them into a subhuman existence. These enforced subalterns become the sources of his ethical commitment. They are, as Benjamin formulates in the essay on Kafka, “neither members of, nor strangers to, any ... groups of figures, but, rather, messengers from one to another” (Benjamin, “Franz Kafka” 117). The true redemption comes from their “intermediate worlds” as the containers of that which the historical world has pushed into oblivion. Captured in the swampy ground of fluctuating experiences, the suppressed remnants of the prehistoric time, they break out from the restricted mythic space of an exclusively human history into the wider areas of subhuman creatures beyond the boundaries of the imposed “fate.” “Everything forgotten mingles with what has been forgotten of the prehistoric world, forms countless, uncertain, changing compounds, yielding a constant flow of new, strange products” (131). Since the condition of oblivion deforms these in-betweens, writes Benjamin, we feel guilty when we confront them in the attics, broom closets, and corridors in the same way as we used to feel “before the court of justice” (133). Indeed, before the “court of justice” of the post-imperial world, these “zones of indistinction” summon us to redeem their inhabitants (134).

In *The Origin of German Tragic Drama*, Benjamin likens such zones to “the room of a magician, a physicist, a nursery, a junk room, and a pantry,” which are cluttered, disordered, and contain all manner of things without any recognizable meaning or context (*Der Ursprung* 363). However, their seemingly amateurish accumulation of fragments, rubbish, and emblems, “without a strict idea of a goal,” in fact expects a “wonder” from the “figural center” that it demarcates (364). From its peculiar “mixture of old elements,” it imagines that a “new whole” will emerge (355). Explaining in a letter to Max Brod from November 1917 why his notebooks contain heterogeneous literary fragments without any recognizable ultimate goal, Kafka likewise expresses his “hope that a whole will be made up of these bits, an instance of appeal on whose breasts I will be able to beat when I am in need” (*Briefe* 195). If it is anywhere in the world, then hope for something new resides in these indistinct mixtures. After all, they are epitomized in Benjamin’s own notebooks, which were filled with most diverse quotations. Their main

task “consisted in tearing fragments out of their context and arranging them afresh in such a way that they illustrated one another and were able to prove their *raison d’être* in a free-floating state” (Arendt 47). The U.S.-American anthropologist Elizabeth Povinelli has recently taken up this weak messianic thread by stating that new forms of life persevere as these zones’ moments of “miraculization,” which never stop disturbing ruling biopolitical formations (Povinelli 10).

The equivocation of in-betweens

In his essay “How newness enters the world,” addressed in the introduction, Bhabha reiterates the delineated Benjamin’s messianic engagement of the “zones of indistinction.” However, in postcolonial circumstances, he focuses on the new category of in-betweens, detecting them at the boundary between the colony and metropolis. These are colonial migrants and minorities who, in the Western countries as their new domiciles, lead “borderline existences” (Bhabha 218) and live “hybrid hyphenations” (219). Since incommensurable elements make the basis of their cultural identifications – “where difference is neither One nor the Other but something else besides” (219) – they expose the limits of any claim to cultural difference of the metropolis’ residents. Their indistinct, neither-nor spaces re-inscribe with their “innovative energy” (220) the forgotten past in the metropolis’ present, redrawing its boundaries and opening it toward a different future. By dramatizing through “the indeterminacy of [their] diasporic identity” (225) and their in-between positions “the activity of culture’s untranslatability” (224), they ultimately manage to revise the entire “problem of the global space” (223). Within its “body of the law,” that is to say, they establish “a series of caesurae and divisions” (Agamben, *State of Exception* 35), thus turning the global space into the state of exception. Their borderline negotiations hybridize and saturate it with the contingent and indeterminate (Bhabha 225).

In the same way that Benjamin analyzed Kafka’s works, Bhabha analyzes Salman Rushdie’s *Satanic Verses* to illustrate such disjunctive rewriting of the global space from the perspective of its in-betweens. According to Benjamin’s reading of Kafka, in Jewish tradition, the representative of the official doctrine is the Halakhah, the collective body of Jewish religious laws that has to be duly transmitted through the Haggadah, its narrative implementation. Yet instead of faithfully reproducing the doctrine, Kafka’s scattered Haggadah denounces

its “sickness.” In lieu of serving it, his parables “unexpectedly raise a mighty paw against it” (Benjamin, “Some Reflections on Kafka” 143–144). Analogously, as Bhabha spells out, Rushdie subverts the Koran and contests its authority by relocating its truths into the world of minor and migrant “enunciatory positions and possibilities.” Like Kafka’s, his cultural translation is desacralizing and insurgent (Bhabha 226), stressing the foreign “mode of signification” in the midst of the dominant culture (227). With its “indeterminate temporality of the in-between,” the foreign becomes “the unstable element of linkage” to other in-betweens, i.e. of the negation of the dominant culture through negotiation with the dominated ones (227). While establishing themselves through the subject positions that articulate alternative practices and values, minor and migrant agencies forge an “insurgent intersubjectivity” and “affiliative solidarity” (230). Like Benjamin, Bhabha invests his hope in such new commonality that emerges from the linkages between these “unstable elements” across the global space. He accordingly speaks of the “third space” which, negotiating incommensurable differences between the cultures of different epochs and locations “creates a tension peculiar to borderline existences” (218). Its “non-synchronous temporality” that “expands our sensorium to some new dimensions” significantly recalls Benjamin’s “now-time” (*Jetztzeit*) that, with the same effect, establishes affinities between bits and pieces of different times and spaces (Benjamin, “Über den Begriff” 258).

However, by reading the interlocking operations of Indian migrants as a sort of universal emancipation, Bhabha suppresses how they originate in biased phantasms. All subalterns exempt themselves from the frustrating communities which they *belong to* by forging imagined alliances with spatially and temporally distant others which they *long for*. Yet, such a self-exemption from the historical law of common belonging into an indeterminate prehistorical law that one is longing for is an equivocal operation. The distant others are by definition inarticulate, which makes them spectrally threatening in the migrants’ located perception. Therefore, the migrants first have to ‘familiarize’ them by attributing them desirable qualities that enable their assimilation into the community-to-come. The consequence of such ‘preliminary taming’ of the inarticulate others is that a sort of self-assertion inheres to any self-exemption from the rules of the community of belonging. In contrast to Bhabha’s perception of the migrants’ identifying operation as self-denying, what is actually at stake is an operation of “inverse ventriloquism” (Anderson 198). It is not the unknown others who speak through the migrants’ selves but their unknown selves – which they

hide in front of both the others and themselves – who speak through the others whom they identify with. This means that they dispossess the others of their distinct identities with the covert aim of making up for their own analogous dispossession by the community to which they politically belong. Because distinct identities would oblige the distant others to their particular locations, the migrants blur them to make these others fit their desired liberation.

As the migrants' turning of the distant others into the "floating signifiers" of their desire inadvertently repeats the dispossessing operation that turned them into the migrants, it presents itself as a remedial rather than emancipating undertaking. The proliferation of the hybrid, liminal, and indistinct in-betweens, characteristic of both Benjamin's and Bhabha's idea of worlding, makes up for the loss of distinction that was politically inflicted upon this proliferation's carrier group, i.e., the subjects of hyphenated identities. They were deeply frustrated by the *translatio imperii* into the nation-states after the dissolution of the German Empire (1918), respectively the British imperial rule in India (1947). Their new countries did not represent the interests of all their peoples equally but rather selectively and unevenly, which means that in both post-imperial Germany and postcolonial India, the former imperial discrimination of 'marginal' and 'inappropriate' population was invigorated instead of being abolished (Brubaker 51–52; Agamben, *State of Exception* 14–16; Loomba 10–12). Such developments spawned both intellectuals' efforts to search for an alternative, "untranslatable" commonality that would overcome both the imperial and post-imperial, colonial and postcolonial discrimination. In the vocabulary of Gilles Deleuze, both equally victimize a "bastard," "inferior," "missing" people that "ceaselessly stirs beneath dominations," doomed to be "always in becoming, always incomplete" (Deleuze 4). It is in the name of this "always incomplete" people – or "pure potentiality" in the underground of ruling distinctions that it putatively represents⁸ – that Benjamin and Bhabha project a community in becoming. In the interpretation of Deleuze and Guattari, "[t]o become is not to attain a form ... but to find the zone of proximity, indiscernibility, or indifferenciation where one can no longer be distinguished from a

⁸ According to Agamben's famous interpretation ("Bartleby" 243–245), which connects on the previous one proposed by Deleuze (Deleuze 68–90), the exemplary representative of "pure potentiality" is Hermann Melville's figure of Bartleby. Through his notorious hesitation, he engages miming operations to outmaneuver various 'fundamentals' by means of which his political space's appointed guardians eliminate potentiality from it (249).

woman, an animal, a molecule” (1). Allocating the “bastards,” along Benjamin’s and Bhabha’s lines,⁹ the ethical task of making indistinguishable all that is distinguished, Deleuze and Guattari conceive them as the forces of emancipation and liberation.

However, fifteen years later, Deleuze cautions that the *fundamental equivocation* of their undertaking might disturb the envisaged emancipation. On the one hand, the “bastards” democratically expropriate dominating agencies, but on the other, in introducing through their devastating “delirium” a worldwide “displacement of races and continents,” they simultaneously “erect a race” which is “pure and dominant” (Deleuze 4). “[T]here is always the risk that a diseased state will interrupt the process of becoming ... the constant risk that the delirium of domination will be mixed with a bastard delirium, pushing literature toward a larval fascism, the disease against which it fights” (4). Deleuze’s fear concerning the “diseased” state as exemplified in the permanent state of exception echoes the dilemma from the book on Kafka, concerning the final effect of his deterritorializing narrative technique: is it liberating or enslaving, revolutionary or fascist, socialist or capitalist? How to disentangle these two inextricable aspects reliably? The dangers inherent in all-equalizing deterritorializations of identities are exemplified in capitalism, Stalinism, and fascism (Deleuze and Guattari 57) or, as we might now add, various unleashed populisms from more recent time. Once the prehistoric forces of amalgamation break into the historic word of distinctions, it is impossible to prevent the overturning of the envisaged emancipation into mastery, which makes their advocacy a risky enterprise.

To summarize, the questions that have to be raised concerning the deterritorialization of distinct identities amount to the following: Does everyone benefit equally from its all-engulfing whirl, i.e. curi-

⁹ Next to the works of Deleuze, Guattari, and Agamben, Benjamin and Bhabha’s blurring of distinctions powerfully resonates in the recent work of Emily Apter, who introduced their concept of translation into the vocabulary of comparative literature. Speaking in the name of globalization’s victims, she equally privileges literature of exilic consciousness (“Comparative Exile” 92) or one that emerges from a translation failure, mistranslation, the *contresense*, the unsayable, the inexpressible, and the nonsensical (*Against World Literature* 9–11). She also only authorizes such a translation of life into its manifestations that fosters and proliferates life’s interminable labyrinths. Inasmuch as such translation “belongs fully to no one” but life that negates all property, it is for Apter “a model of deowned literature” (15) or “screwed-up literature” that turns the world of properties upside down (18). Along with Benjamin, Bhabha, Deleuze, and Agamben, she celebrates literature to the degree to which it exempts itself from the world’s distinct presence into its remote and indistinct “outside”.

ous tourists and travelling intellectuals parallel to exiles, expatriates and refugees? If the proper human only emerges when it is displaced into the indistinct and inhuman, what about those humans whose obliteration of identity distinctions takes the form of territorial dispossession? What about those who are delivered to an utter deprivation of belonging, confronting the imperative to either leave their proper place or become riveted to the land they have been dispossessed of (Butler, *Parting Ways* 21–24)? The desire which they have to *belong* is, by such deterritorializations, forced to acknowledge the impossibility of ever truly belonging (Probyn 8). From this point of view, the longing for a community-to-come is an agent of globalization, which kidnaps the right of belonging to given communities. It creates “at least as much trouble as possibility” and contributes “as much to exploitation and poverty as to wealth creation and economic participation” (Alexander 159). Its inclusiveness rests on exclusion, its tolerance on the long history of imperialism and colonialism accompanied by atrocities (Brown 37–38). Making up for the frustrations that were inflicted on them by their post-imperial, respectively postcolonial, states, Benjamin and Bhabha advocate such a commonality in the permanent state of exception, disregarding its concomitant perilous effects. For it does not deactivate but rather reanimate, strengthen, and expand the ill-reputed sovereignty. It is precisely the suspension of law, which it executes, that makes room for its reemergence in an illegitimate, extra-legal form, characterized by violence.

In the permanent state of exception, the sovereignty acquires the grotesque form of the whimsical, unpredictable, and tyrannical operations of its populist executors. Since their actions are no longer subject to review by any higher judicial authority, their managerial power is invigorated (Butler, *Precarious Life* 61). In the new form of political legitimacy with no built-in structures of accountability, populist sovereigns usurp the right to suspend rights, which makes their relation to law exploitative, instrumental, and arbitrary. The population is managed through a deconstitution or “spectralization” of its humanity, which increases the disposability and “consumability” of the managed “items” (Bales 25). Ultimately, far from eliminating the compromised sovereignty, the state of exception, through its invention of the *translation of the untranslatable*, inaugurates a potentially disastrous populist technique for its re-legitimation and rejuvenation. Contrary to what Benjamin and Bhabha envisioned, it acts as the agent of the recuperation of that which it claims to be dethroning.

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Prevajati neprevedljivo: Walter Benjamin in Homi Bhabha

Ključne besede: prevod / teorija prevajanja / medkulturnost / kulturne razlike / neprevedljivost / postimperializem / postkolonializem / Benjamin, Walter / Bhabha, Homi

Odkar je Homi Bhabha v predzadnjem poglavju svoje knjige *Location of Culture* uvedel pojem 'kulturnega prevoda', prevod ne implicira več preseganja obstoječih medkulturnih razlik. V njegovi dokaj posebni interpretaciji postane prevajanje proces, ki spodbuja vznik kulturnih razlik na enak način kot denimo življenje nenehno diverzificira svoje stvaritve. Ker te razlike ne pridejo pred prevodom, temveč iz njega izhajajo, so kulture razumljene kot nekaj hibridnega in vmesnega, ne pa kot nekaj čistega in avtonomnega. Prav ta njihova značilnost pa jih po Bhabhovem pojmovanju dela neprevedljive. Kultura se ne more asimilirati v drugo kulturo, ne da bi ohranila svojo notranjo raznolikost, prav kot se ne more osvoboditi od druge kulture, ne da bi utelesila sled te kulture. V končni analizi njegova ideja »o kulturnem prevodu odvzame svetost [...] domnevam o kulturni prevladi«, s tem ko ukinja asimetrijo med jeziki, ki je stoletja spremljala zahodno prevajalsko prakso. Teza, ki jo zagovarjam, je, da pridobi v tem kontekstu njegova uporaba pojma neprevedljivosti, ki jo uvaja že Walter Benjamin v svojem eseju »Prevajalčeva naloga« iz leta 1923, poseben pomen. Z njo namreč Bhabha vzpostavi skrivno »izbirno sorodnost« med obema mislecema, obsojenima na soočanje s travmatičnimi konstelacijami, v primeru prvega postimperialne, v primeru drugega pa postkolonialne dobe, ki skušata odmisлити politične asimetrije svojih dob.

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