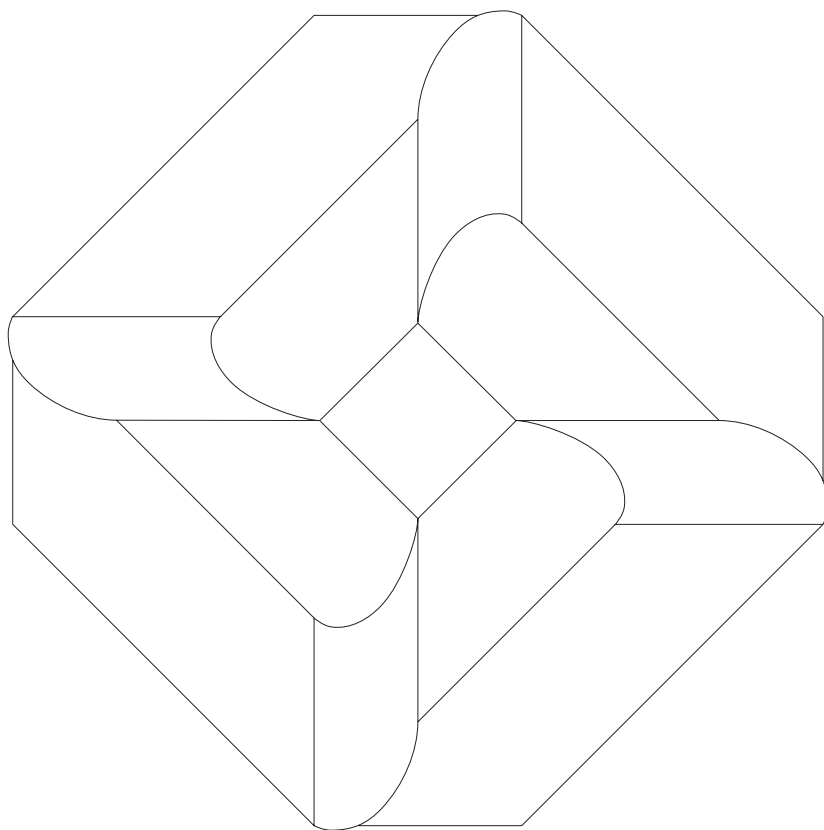
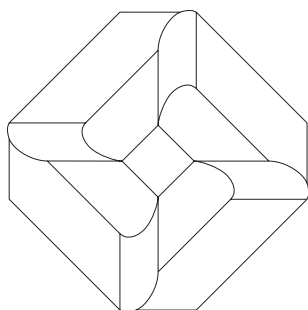


# *Primerjalna književnost*



## Razprave



# Formiranje Kosovelovega konstruktivizma – spopad med kompozicijo in konstrukcijo

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*Razprava analizira spor Kosovel – Černigoj, ki je izšel iz nesporazumov med Kandinskim in konstruktivisti na INHUK-u, se prenesel na spor med Kandinskim in Moholy-Nagyem na Bauhausu, od tu pa s Černigojevim prihodom v Ljubljano tudi na Kosovela. S pojmom kompozicija in konstrukcija osvetljujemo Černigojevo ljubljansko razstavo in tržaški konstruktivistični ambient, ki ga je Kosovel že leta 1924–1925 konceptualno zasnoval v pesmi Kalejdoskop in formuliral s sintagmo: 'metafizični materializem'. Spor med suprematizmom in konstruktivizmom, ki ga je razreševal že Lisicki, je doživel razrešitev tudi v Trstu leta 1927 s Štepančičevimi mobilni in z Malevičevim Belim kvadratom, obešenim pod strop ambients. To je pomenilo stik z izvori konstruktivizma, kar je Kosovel s svojimi koni »x, y, z« itd. dosegel že leta 1924–1925. V tem duhu je bil tržaški konstruktivistični ambient tudi hommage umrlemu pesniku in teoretiku Kosovelu, saj je ta na področju literature s koni dosegel to, česar Černigoju ni uspelo na likovnem področju.*

Ključne besede: slovenska književnost / slovenska umetnost / konstruktivizem / literarna avantgarda / Kosovel, Srečko / Černigoj, Avgust / Trst

Med Černigojem in Kosovelom je prišlo do dopisovanja že v času Černigojevega študija v Nemčiji in se je začelo vsaj marca 1923, ko ga je v pismu bratu Srečku omenila Karmela (gl. Rojc 105), tu pa zvemo tudi, da je Černigoj željno pričakoval Kosovelovih pisem (109). V edinem ohranjenem pismu, poslanem v Nemčijo, je Kosovel na začetku leta 1924 Černigoja mentorsko 'poučeval', da je »danes vsa umetnost v stadiju gibanja, dinamike, muzike. Njena edina misel je trajanje [...]«, govoril mu je o »zidanju slike« (zidanje je Kosovelov slovenjeni izraz za konstruktivizem) (ZD III, 535), kar bi lahko pomenilo, da mu je pojasnjeval svet, s katerim se je Černigoj takrat srečal na Bauhausu in ga prepričeval o pravilnosti njegove odločitve za to šolo. Še več: prav na temelju Kosovelovih spodbud je Černigoj morda sploh odšel na Bauhaus. Kot se je to utegnilo zgoditi pozneje tudi z Grahorjevim odhodom v Sovjetsko zvezo.

Čeprav je Kosovel Černigoju januarja 1924 odsvetoval prihod v Ljubljano (gl. ZD III, 535), morda zato, ker si že v pisnih nista bila edina v pogledih na konstruktivizem, je ta maja istega leta vseeno prišel, da bi tu skupaj s Kosovelom napravil »eno revolucijo«. V »Ljubljano sem prišel čisto socialistično, komunistično navdahnjen« in v Kosovelu »čutil sorodno borbeno osebnost.« (Gerlanc 3–4)

Srečanje s Černigojem v Ljubljani naj bi pomenilo za Kosovela živo sočudenje z evropskim avantgardističnim kontekstom, predvsem pa tudi preverjanje in poglobljanje lastnih, že izdelanih stališč, ki so zadevala probleme moderne poezije in umetnosti na sploh. Ker je »na nacionalno umetniški ravni v slikarstvu in grafiki nastopil slovenski konstruktivizem namesto ekspresionizma« (Golubović 221), je Kosovel sprva verjel, da bosta morda prav s Černigojem preseгла »kretenske kračice« ekspresionizma (ZD III, 523), ki ga je tudi Černigoj primerjal z »nemškim idiotizmom«, in da bosta z »eno revolucijo« segla na novo, konstruktivistično področje. Tem bolj je zato nenavadno, da Černigoj ni že v Ljubljani udeležil »načela gibanja«, kar mu je v tem času, torej leta 1924, kot adept »giblјive filozofije« vzel za zlo tudi Kosovel.

Če je res, da je v Ljubljani Kosovel v pogovorih s Černigojem »koncepte konstruktivizma vztrajno pobijal« (Krečič 43), je pobijal njegova produktivistična in zgodnjekonstruktivistična, še zmeraj slikarsko-kompozicijska stališča, kar so kot »pomankljivost« pri Černigoju opazili tudi Delak, Thea Černigoj in leva kritika z Meliharjem. Navsezadnje je celo Černigoj sam nehote priznal, da je šlo na prvi razstavi le za verbalne opredelitve prostora in časa, ki jim razstavljeni objekti niso sledili. Saj je profesor fizike Nardin »edini razumel, ko smo govorili o prostoru in času« (Krečič 37–38).

Kosovelu torej ni šlo za pobijanje konstruktivizma, ampak za zavračanje Černigojevih konceptov o tem gibanju, ki jih je Černigoj (in morda tudi Krečič) razumel kot pobijanje konstruktivizma v celoti, saj konstruktivizem v sebi nikakor ni bil enotno gibanje. Černigoj je nehote sam razkril razloge za njune nesporazume, ko je zapisal, da je Kosovel v debati z njim »vedno trdil, da je najpravilnejši dokaz delo, in vedno poudarjal 'delajte, delajte'« (Černigoj, »Nekrolog« 58), saj se je Kosovel prav s trdim študijem dokopal do spoznanj, ki jih bo, ob odločilni in izjemno ustvarjalni podpori Stepančiča, Černigoj šele čez dve leti uveljavil v Trstu.

Nenavadne izjave, ki jo je Černigoj zapisal ob Kosovelovi smrti, da mu je bil »tekom kratkega bivanja v Ljubljani S. Kosovel najhujši sovražnik – seveda to moram pripomniti – sovražnik, ker se je bal mojega vpliva« (»Nekrolog« 58) seveda ne smemo jemati dobesedno. Z njo je namreč poskušal Černigoj opravičiti lastno 'zamudništvo' in se pred tržaško javnostjo postaviti v ospredje. Černigoj je namreč v nekrologu poročal tudi, da se

mu je Kosovel »izogibal povsodi, pa se mi je včasih vendar posrečilo, da sem ga takorekoč ujel v zajnko. Branil se je takšnemu lovu in sunku dokler se je dalo, ko pa sva končala z debato, mi je podal roko z besedami: 'Borba je edina zmaga, na svidenje!'« (58). Ker je Kosovel veljal za strastnega razpravljalca in užival v diskusijah s prijatelji ter jih k temu pogosto sam izzival, je težko verjeti, da bi bežal pred njimi. Očitno pa je v Černigoju videl nekoga, ki ga za nobena ceno ni bilo mogoče spraviti na 'pravo pot', zato se mu je raje izogibal.

Vse navedeno kaže, da se Černigoj in Kosovel v Ljubljani nista ujela, saj se je Černigoj v Ljubljani le dotaknil poti v konstruktivizem, medtem ko je Kosovel v letih 1924 in 1925 dozorel v njem in o tem jeseni 1925 tudi predaval na šentjakobskem odru v Ljubljani in se deklariral za konstruktivista. Tudi po zaslugi Kosovelove teoretske rigoroznosti se je Černigoju to dogodilo šele v Trstu, ko se je s svojo konstruktivistično ustvarjalnostjo dokopal do Kosovelove 'gibljive filozofije'. Černigojevo poročilo v *Tanku* potrjuje, da je končno sprejel Moholy-Nagyve ideje o sintezi prostora, časa in luči, o hkratnem delovanju sluha, vida in razuma. To pa so elementi, ki jih je Kosovel že dve leti prej upesnil v znameniti pesmi Kalejdoskop (gl. Vrečko, »Svet.«, »Gib.«).

Zanimivo je, da je Černigoj v svojih spominih kot pridobitev lastnega teoretičnega znanja označil le svoj študij v Nemčiji in ga imenoval »evropsko izobrazbo. Svoje tržaško delovanje (ljubljsko je kar izpustil) je označil kot »delovanje v slovenskem okolju« (Krečič 47). Prav dejstvo, da je namerno izpustil svoje ljubljansko obdobje, ki je bilo po Kosovelovi zaslugi poleg Bauhauusa zanj v študijskem smislu najpomembnejše, kaže, da se tega ni želel spominjati, saj so bila zanj soočenja s Kosovelom trda in neizprosna.

## II

Černigoj je na prvi konstruktivistični razstavi avgusta 1924 v Ljubljani razstavil arhitekturne kompozicije iz lepenke, reliefe in skulpture. Vse to so spremljali izdelki z odpada in vsakdanjega življenja, kot denimo motorno kolo, star pisalni stroj, hlače ameriškega delavca, ter produktivistična gesla, »veliki pokončni, poševni ali pa tudi narobe postavljeni napis« (Delak, »Avgust« 20): »Izobrazba delavca in kmeta je nujno potrebna, Kapital je tatvina. Umetnik mora postati inženir, inženir mora postati umetnik« itd. Tako izobešenim parolam kot utilitarnim, modno oblikovanim predmetom iz vsakdanjika (oblačila, pisalni stroj itd.) je bilo skupno to, da so sledili edinemu »pozitivnemu cilju produktivistične umetnosti, ki je skušala

umetnost kot obliko proizvodnje osvoboditi izolacije v kapitalizmu in jo spojiti s sodobno znanostjo in tehniko» (Schaumann).

Iz povedanega že lahko sklepamo, da je le neznamenit del Černigojeve razstave izhajal iz zgodnjih konstruktivističnih temeljev, večji del iz produktivistično zasnovanih predmetov in gesel, kakršne med drugim srečamo pri Kušnerju v INHUK-u in v njegovi zahtevi po umetniku-konstruktorju, po tem, da mora inženir-konstruktor postati inženir-umetnik. Od tod je vodila pot v Maschinenkunst, strojno umetnost, ki so jo želeli v Sovjetski zvezi pripisati tudi Tatlinu. O inženirju-umetniku je 1922/23 pisal tudi Lunačarski. »Zato so bile Černigojeve stvaritve blizu 'tehničnim' konstrukcijam, tj. funkcionalno oblikovanim predmetom tehnične in materialne kulture, kar je bilo kot postopek blizu konceptom in stališčem ruskih produktivistov« (Golubović 224).

Takšna radikalna produktivistična stališča so bila tuja Kosovelu, ki se je bil v tem času že oklenil Tatlinovega, Erenburgovega in Lisickijevega pojmovanja konstruktivizma, katerega cilj ni bila gola utilitarnost, ampak 'organiziranje življenja' in predvsem novo razumevanje prostora in časa. Erenburgov in Lisickijev *Vešč*, ki ga je Kosovel lahko prebiral v ljubljanski Ruski matici, je namreč zavračal ekstremni utilitarizem INHUK-a in težnje Majakovskega po negaciji umetnosti, se pravi, odrekel se je načelom produktivizma in zahtevi po odpovedi poeziji. Erenburg in Lisicki sta v *Vešču* skušala nadomestiti razmerje »umetnost-proizvodnja« z razmerjem »umetnost-kreacija«, ki ni reduciralo predmeta le na njegovo funkcionalnost, ampak je poudarjalo prostorskost in gibanje. Hkrati je Kosovel poznal tudi Leninovo kritiko Proletkulta, ki je negirala produktivistično umetnost. Zato je lahko suvereno zavračal Černigojevo parolarstvo in pomanjkanje prostorsko časovne paradigme v razstavnih eksponatih.

Krečič ugotavlja, da je v Černigojevih reliefih »določen element dajal kompoziciji (podč. J. V.) izrazitejši poudarek, ji določal točko ravnovesja v sicer načeloma asimetričnih ureditvah« (Krečič 37). Po našem mnenju je Černigoj prav zaradi iskanja 'ravnovesja' zdrsnil iz območja konstrukcije v območje kompozicije. Kaj to pomeni, bomo razložili pozneje.

Vprašati se moramo, ali je šlo na prvi Černigojevi razstavi za razvijanje Tatlinovih predrevolucijskih prostorskih reliefov in kontrareliefov, oziroma za postopke, ki so bili temeljni v postoktobrskem slikarskem konstruktivizmu (gl. Golubović 221 (podč. J. V.)), ali pa za približevanje arhitekturi, ki je že v Rusiji, še bolj pa na Bauhausu postajala metonimična za vso tedanjo ustvarjalnost? Pokazali bomo, da Černigoju v Ljubljani še ni uspelo združiti Malevičevega suprematističnega razumevanja ploskve s Tatlinovim transparentnim časovno-prostorskim konstruiranjem prostora, utemeljenim v njegovi konstruktivistični arhitekturi, za kar se je že leta 1921 zavzemal Lisicki.

Kosovel je zahteve po gibanju kot sintezi prostora in časa, o kateri je že januarja 1924 pisal Černigoju (ZD III, 535), sredi leta 1925 sijajno povzel v svojih dnevnikih v načelu »gibljive filozofije« (ZD III, 651) in drugih številnih omembah 'načela gibanja' in prostora ter v misli, ki je bila doslej pri raziskovalcih popolnoma spregledana: »Umetnost nima za ljudi le neposrednega pomena [...] ampak še posredni pomen. Gibanje je to, ki izhaja iz umetnikove individualnosti v individualnost čitatelja, vzbudi tam zopet gibanje in od tu se giblje v individualnost nečitatelja. Kakor vsaka ideja in gibanje, hoče objeti i umetnost vse življenje in se razliva po skritih virih v vse ljudi in vpliva na vse« (ZD III, 809). Čeprav gre najbrž za nekoliko okoren prevod iz ruščine, je vprašanje, če je mogoče navedene probleme osvetliti jasneje in natančneje, kot je to storil Kosovel sam, ko jih je strnil v misel: »Ne gledati, ampak sodelovati.« (ZD III, 771)

Sledeč tem napotkom so leta 1925 tudi v slovenskem prostoru nastajale Kosovelove »besede, ki rasto v prostor« (*Int.*, 282) skupaj z njegovo »gibljivo filozofijo« (ZD III, 650), z inženirskimi izrisi začetnice njegovega priimka, tu so zrcalne pesmi, kalejdoskopska metoda itd., saj po Kosovelu prav z »gibanjem« pesem ni enolična in oživi« (ZD III, 705). Pri Kosovelu širi moderno poezijo v prostor »nevihtni ozon«, sintagma, prevzeta iz tedanje znanosti. Vsega tega pri Kosovelu ni mogoče razumeti, ne da bi poznali ozadja, na katera se je naslonil: ne le pri Tatlinu, ki je v Spomeniku III. internacionali izhajal iz enotnosti vsebine in oblike, tudi po Lisickem je treba konstrukcijo opazovati z vseh strani, gibanje je način fokusacije na objekt, priprava za njegov vstop v življenje in za zlitje z njim.

Kot rečeno, je prva Černigojeva razstava po Kosovelu kazala docela neenoten koncept, ki je spodjedal njen deklarativni konstruktivistični značaj. Le nekatere arhitekturne ploskve v razstavljenih Černigojevih arhitekturnih kompozicijah so bile »oprte ob eni sami stranici«, zato jih je Krečič imenoval »'viseče' prostornine« (36). Verjetno je Černigoj s tem skušal slediti svojemu učitelju Moholy-Nagy, ki se je s t. i. 'gibljivim gledanjem' intenzivno ukvarjal s preseganjem gravitacije. Na poznavanje predvsem Moholy-Nagyeve prostorske filozofije kaže Černigoj s tem, da je slikarski postopek v reliefih razširil z novimi kompozicijskimi sredstvi – z obrnjenim fonemom 'g' in s horizontalno presekanim morfemom 'jublj'. Narobe obrnjena črka 'g' bi se lahko nanašala na konstruktivista Nauma Gaba. Morda je šlo za osrednjo črko v priimku Černigojevega najljubšega profesorja na Bauhausu Moholy-NaGya, ki je intenzivno preučeval pojem gravitacije, zato je črka obrnjena na glavo. Še najbolj verjetno pa je šlo kar za začetnico pojma 'gravitacija', ki v breztežnostnem stanju obrnjena lebdi, kar je bila temeljna zahteva konstruktivistov. Iz podobnih razlogov je verjetno Černigoj obrnil tudi nekatere proletkultovske parole, ki jih je na prvi

razstavi obesil v telovadnici Srednje tehniške šole. Kosovel, ki je to spremljal, pa je po temeljiti preučitvi predvsem Lisickijeve in Nagyeve teorije prostora takšno prizadevanje komentiral v svojih dnevniških zapiskih (gl. »Umetnina – arhitektonski problem (tehnika)« (ZD III, 703); »Vse je arhitektura / pesništvo, muzika / slikarstva ni več« (ZD III, 718); »Razvoj k prostoru« (ZD III, 769); »prostor, prazen prostor« (ZD III, 779); »gibanje, gibanje, gibanje« (ZD III, 780); »Črke rasto v prostor« (*Int.* 283), itd. itd.

Počez prerezana beseda 'jublj' bi se po našem mnenju lahko nanašal na 'I**JUBL**Jeno' Karmelo – Kosovelovo sestro. »Med Karmelo in Černigojem se je spletla močna prijateljska vez in ljubezen in morda bi se celo poročila, če Karmelini starši tega ne bi močno branili« (Krečič 29). Zato ni nemogoče, da ne bi katerega svojih del posvetil tudi ljubljeni ženski, a so mu Karmelini starši ljubezen 'spodrezali', 'presekali', 'pristrigili', zato prerezan napis. Lahko pa bi bil napis tudi del zapisa mesta, kjer bo imel razstavo, torej *Ljubljane*, ki se, kot bi rekel Kosovel, pogreza v močvirje.

Četudi ne moremo dokazati, da bi obrnjena črka 'g' ali horizontalno presekana 'jublj' lahko imele gornje pomene, kot nihče ne more dokazati, da jih nimajo, pa se moramo strinjati, da se za gledalca, ki ne pozna omenjenih ozadij, v procesu umetniške funkcionalizacije ta reducirani jezikovni material spremeni v čisti abstraktni objekt. »Namesto 'slikovne konture', ki je ustvarjala referenco (pomen), je nastopila montaža oziroma kolaž heterogenih segmetov fature, ki so bili po načelu 'kontrasta' vzporejani drug ob drugem, ali pa naloženi drug na drugega« (Hansen-Löve 6).

Melihar je kot levo usmerjeni kritik v tej prvi Černigojevi razstavi res videl »prikaz umetnosti v službi revolucije«, ocenjeval jo je »kot akcijo, ki radikalno podira meščansko predstavo o umetnostnem izdelku kot predmetu večnih estetskih vrednot, namenjenemu okrasu prostora in intimnemu uživanju« (Krečič 38), hkrati pa ji je očital abstraktnost in s tem nekomunikativnost, in kar je najvažnejše, Černigoju je oponesel »premajhno samoniklost v primeri z ruskimi izdelki« in si to razlagal tako, da je na Černigoja v preveliki meri vplivala literatura, izhajajoča iz Marinettija in naslednikov *Sturma*. Melihar je namreč iz osebne skušnje poznal ruske konstruktivistične 'izdelke' in ti so mu omogočili, da je kljub njihovi abstraktnosti 'zaživel v njih' (ne pa 'ob njih'; op. J. V.), prevzeli so ga s svojo prostorskostjo (gl. Melihar 48). V ozadju takega gledanja je bilo pojmovanja Lisickega o »praznini, ki se spremeni v prostor«, saj po Lisickem »prostor ne obstaja za oči, ni slika: v njem se živi.« Skladno s tem morajo obiskovalca razstave skozi prostor voditi in ga spodbujati jasno konstruirani odnosi, ki ustvarjajo znakovno napetost in dinamiko. In prav tega je Melihar pogrešal pri Černigojevem še zmeraj galerijskem konceptu, s tem pa demantiral samega sebe, ko je skušal v razstavljenih izdelkih videti



tudi kritiko statusa tradicionalnega umetniškega dela. O takšnem konceptu razstave pa je bil Kosovel v polemikah s Černigojem seznanjen že vnaprej. Ni se zgodilo tisto, kar bo postalo osrednji dogodek v Trstu leta 1927, ko so »prvič poizkusili, da predmetov niso razstavili, ampak so jih pustili na nitkah viseti s stropa. S tem so predmeti izgubili svojo zemeljsko težo in s tem se je zvišal duševni moment« (Nürenberg 88–89). Ta postgravitacijski premik bi se morda zgodil že na tretji razstavi v Ljubljani, ko bi Černigoj opustil propagandno pragmatično pedagoške okvire in afirmiral konstruktivistična načela. Do tega ni prišlo, ker je bil Černigoj zaradi političnega delikta izgnan iz Kraljevine SHS in je odšel v Trst.

Povedano kaže na to, da ni šlo le za Kosovelovo kaprico, ko se ni udeležil odprtja ljubljanske razstave, ampak je moralo biti pomanjkanje konstruktivističnih elementov v medsebojnih diskusijah prevetreno tudi med Delakom, Černigojem, Kosovelom itd. Če ne bi bilo tako, o tem gotovo ne bi pisala tudi Černigojeva žena Thea.

### III

Po Krečiču bi mogli za nekatere Černigojeve objekte »po bogastvu in drznosti prostorske plastike najti primere izključno zunaj naših meja v najbolj dejavnih centrih Rusije in Zahoda« (36). Začuda se Krečič ob omembi »'visečih' prostornin« ni skliceval na nekaj, kar je že leta 1924 in 1925 na Slovenskem nastalo iz istih pobud, na Kosovelove »hiše«, ki »vstajajo / kot da velika so / platna kvadratna, / platna trikotna, / [...] in da se majejo / in da vstajajo« (Na ulici, *Int.* 208). »Hiše nihajo / in ne padejo / na osteh stolpov / so akrobatik« (Ljudje s križi, ZD I, 306). »Glasovi so kakor stavbe« (*Int.* 283). V Kosovelovih dnevnikih lahko preberemo: »Nova arhitektura za človeka« (ZD III, 715). »Vse je arhitektura / pesništvo, muzika / slikarstva ni več« (ZD III, 718) itd. Te in druge podobne Kosovelove verze in misli povezujemo s Chagallovimi, Hlebnikovljevim in Vodkinovimi 'visečimi hišami', s filozofijo gravitacije Fedorova, z učenjem Ela Lisickega, Moholy Nagya, Hlebnikova, Tatlina, Čičerina, Selvinskega itd., kakor sta jih morda skupaj s Černigojem v diskusijah premlevala s Kosovelom. Hkrati pa so morali biti navedeni problemi predmet ostrih diskusij med obema, saj je Kosovel sledil Lisickijevi, s tem pa tudi Gropiusovi bauhausovski ideji, da je treba uresničiti enotnost likovnih umetnosti pod vodstvom arhitekture, to pa povezati s praktičnimi življenjskimi nalogami, medtem ko je bil Černigoj še zmeraj zvest načelu kompozicije Kandinskega in Maleviča. Konstruktivisti so zase govorili, da »ne komponirajo, ampak konstruirajo novo umetnost, s tem pa tudi nov

življenjski prostor, novo realnost, novo zavest in nov človekov svet. Šlo jim je za konstrukcijo in rekonstrukcijo sveta« (Gropius 202). Arhitektura je prevzela model estetske eksistence z »etičnim središčem«, v kateri so se formativna načela avtonomne umetnosti prenašala v življenjski prostor. V arhitekturi gre namreč za neločljivost socialne, tehnične in umetniške prakse, kar ji daje univerzalen pomen. »Končni cilj vse ustvarjalne dejavnosti je zgradba [...] Skupaj si zaželim, zamislimo in ustvarimo novo zgradbo bodočnosti, ki bo združevala vse – arhitekturo, kiparstvo in slikarstvo – v eni sami obliki« (Gropius 202), kot so Hlebnikovljeve risbe organskih hiš in naselij, suprematistični modeli geometrijskih idil v arhitektonih in planitih, projektantske prakse funkcionalistov in racionalistov takoj ponudili prizore nekega popolnega sveta.

Hotenja Bauhauusa se iz povedanega niso pokrivala s takratnim konkretnim političnim programom, temveč so bila poskus, kako revolucionirati družbo s pomočjo umetnosti in arhitekture. V tem smislu je predstavljal Bauhaus izraziti poskus t. i. duhovne, 'bele' revolucije z optimalno projektnim nabojem, ki se je ostro razmejevala od politične, 'rdeče', utopične. Černigoj ob prihodu v Ljubljano še ni ločeval med obema, zato se je, »komunistično navdahnjen«, zadovoljil z ideološko nabitimi razstavnimi eksponati, ne pa z njihovo prostorsko konstruktivnostjo, kar se je skoraj ponovilo v Trstu leta 1927 s poskusom postavitve Leninovega doprsnega kipa. Kosovel se je kot kritični intelektualec nenehno spraševal, kakšna je usoda poezije po zmagi revolucije, pisal o partijskih dogmatskih coklah in se skladno s tem zavzemal za belo revolucijo na belih barikadah itd.

Tudi tu sta si bila s Černigojem diametralno nasprotna. 'Za nazaj' ta v precejšnji meri neuspela Černigojeva prizadevanja pojasnjuje in osvetljuje članek Černigojeve žene Thee Roter. S pojmovnim materialom Erenburgovega in Lisickijevega teksta v dvojni ruski številki *Zenita* Thea Černigoj opisuje inovativne lastnosti Talinove umetniške prakse:

Tudi ruski slikarji [...] so prenehali slikati na dvodimenzionalnem platnu ter začeli obravnavati materijo v prostoru. Na ta način je nastal relief in kontrarelief. Začetnik te smeri umetniškega pokreta je bil Tatlin. Že l. 1914 je komponiral reliefe, ki so izprva še kubistični, toda že sestavljeni iz različnega materiala, železa, stekla, mavca itd. (Černigoj-Roter 5–7)

Zdi se nenavadno, da je ta članek Thee Černigoj izšel šele leta 1926, saj je moralo biti Tatlinovo delo predmet diskusij med Černigojem in Kosovelom že leta 1925 ali celo leta 1924, kar je med drugim razvidno iz Kosovelovega pojmovanja gibanja v umetnosti, t. i. 'gibljive filozofije' in iz manifesta Mehanikom ter pojma umetniškega stroja in 'človeka stroja' (gl. Vrečko, »Tatlin«). Postaviti pa smemo domnevo, da je bil članek Tee

Roter Černigoj immanentna kritika Černigojeve ljubljanske dejavnosti in hkrati apologija ter napoved tržaške.

Je po vsem povedanem presenečenje, da je leto prej, jeseni 1925 pisal o tem istem kot Tea Černigoj tudi Kosovel, le da s skrajno radikalnih in intelektualno priostrenih stališč. »Človek pa ne more več najti prostora v sliki. Išče prostor globino v sliki [...] Futurizem, konstruktivizem, dvodimenzionalni predmet na 2 dim ploskvi. Trodimenzionalni predmet na 2 dim ploskvi. Iskanje globine in lomljene ploskve, slikarstvo  $\equiv$  arhitektura. Razvoj k prostoru. Vsaka beseda je svet zase. Gibanje med temi svetovi. Predavanje o besedi« (ZD III, 769) (gl. Vrečko, »Tatlin«).

Spodbude za takšno razumevanje časa in prostora, za ugotovitev, da slikarstva ni več in so samo še antislike, mobilni kot gibanje med svetovi in besedami, ki »rastejo v prostor« (*Int.* 283), »gibanje, gibanje, gibanje« (ZD III, 780), »med menoj in svetom prostor, prazen prostor« (ZD III, 779), izenačenje vsega z arhitekturo, pa je dobival predvsem iz izvornih Lisickijevih, Nagyevih in drugih člankov. Ne da bi izpeljal konsekvence, je že Zadravec predpostavljal, da je »[...] umetnostno radovedni Kosovel [verjetno] prebral kakšen Nagyev estetsko teoretski esej, ki mu je bil dosegljiv v reviji Der Sturm« (Zadravec 209).

Černigojevi spomini na Bauhaus so samo dopolnitev zapisov iz Kosovelovih zapiskov in odmevov v posameznih verzih. Tam je poleg Kandinskega poslušal še predavanja Moholy-Nagya. »Ruski konstruktivisti so v tem času naredili name močan vtis«, pravi Černigoj. »Tako so me zanimale njihove konstrukcije z žicami, pa les, pa tiste mehanične stvari, torej predvsem njihova antislika. Pri njih o sliki sploh ni bilo več govora.« »Tedaj sem prvič dojel in dobil spodbudo za ustvarjanje v luči časa in prostora, torej v odvisnosti teh dveh kategorij. Moholy-Nagy me je pripravil do razmišljanja o problemu, kot je časovnost in prostor, kar je v določenem smislu problem arhitekture« (Černigoj, »Intervju«). Kljub temu je torej Černigoj na svoji prvi razstavi pokazal skulpture, prostorsko funkcionalne reliefe, »kjer pozornost ni bila posvečena konstrukciji, ampak kompozicijskemu razmerju raznega materiala in obogatitvi likovnih postopkov z neslikarskimi elementi (kovina, les, steklo, mavec)« (Golubović 186).

Černigoj je podobno kot Kandinski na estetskih in s tem na kompozicijskih (podč. J. V.) temeljih poskušal s sintezo slikarstva, skulpture, arhitekture, (muziko in ples je poskušal v duhu Kandinskega vključiti, ko se je, ne po naključju, v Šoli za arhitekturo 'podružil' z gledališčnikom Delakom). To pa je na diskurzivni ravni pripeljalo do ostrega razločevanja med konstrukcijo in kompozicijo, eni najvažnejših teoretskih predpostavk v konstruktivističnem gibanju in določilo spor Černigoj – Kosovel.

## IV

V našem razpravljanju se s tem odpira za ruski konstruktivizem bistveno ločevanje med kompozicijo in konstrukcijo, o katerem je bil Kosovel v tem času že dobro poučen. Po Krečičevem mnenju naj bi bile razstavljene »arhitekturne makete [...] v bistvu (podč. J. V.) konstruktivistične« (Krečič 36). Previdnost, s katero je Krečič označeval Černigojeve arhitekturne kompozicije, je bila povsem na mestu. Pokazali bomo, zakaj.

Ugotovljeno je bilo, da na prvi Černigojevi razstavi, razen v dveh, v prostor segajočih objektih, časoprostorskega premika še ni bilo videti. Bili so začetki, rudimentarne, suprematistične arhitektonske idile, prepredene s produktivistično ideologijo. V tistem trenutku, sredi leta 1924, je bilo za Kosovela Černigojevo konstruktivistično ustvarjanje premalo domišljeno in zato neprimerno za javno prezentacijo; ko pa se je to le zgodilo, za Kosovela tudi nevedno ogleda.

Če želimo razložiti nesporazume med Černigojem in Kosovelom, se moramo dotakniti Černigojevega šolanja na Bauhausu. Sem se je vpisal ob koncu l. 1923 ali v letnem semestru 1924 na oddelek, ki ga je vodil Kandinski. Prek Kandinskega se je Černigoj približal programu moskovskega INHUK-a, in to s specifičnih stališč, na katerih je Kandinski program zasnoval, razumel in ga po preselitvi na Zahod razvijal in dopolnjeval na Bauhausu. »Brez poznavanja dejavnosti v INHUK-u je nemogoče razumeti ali pojasniti vrsto procesov v ruskem avantgardističnem gibanju« (Han-Mogomedov), pa tudi v berlinskem konstruktivizmu in pri nas, kar še posebej velja za spor Černigoj – Kosovel.

V Rusiji sta se razvili »dve pomembni obliki abstraktne umetnosti: prva metafizična, v obliki suprematizma, in druga fizična, v obliki (ruskega) konstruktivizma« (Rickey 18). Med velikimi imeni sta k prvi skupini pripadala Kandinski in Malevič, za oba pa je bilo značilno, da nista izpeljala ločitve kompozicije in konstrukcije in s tem kazala nepripravljenost, da bi kakorkoli funkcionalizirala svoja prizadevanja in se pridružila prostorskega konstruktivizmu. Tako je njuna ustvarjalnost ostala v pravem pomenu 'laboratorijska'. Ni jima uspelo prebiti meje med estetiki podrejeno uokvirjeno 'sliko' in 'konstrukcijo' kot oblikovanjem novega 'prostora' zunaj estetike in zunaj muzejev (Kosovel). Po oktobrski revoluciji nista uspela prestopiti v levo avantgardo, kjer so delovali lefovci, konstruktivisti, produktivisti, ki so po smrti Umetnosti z veliko začetnico verjeli v neposreden vpliv umetnikov na fizično in družbeno realnost. Kandinski in Malevič skupaj s futuristi-formalisti, brezpredmetniki, suprematisti niso verjeli v sintezo umetnosti in življenja. (gl. Hansen-Löve 25).

Drugo smer so predstavljali Talin, Rodčenko, El Lisicki in drugi. Propagirali so umetnost v službi množic, ki mora biti zato razumljiva vsem

in uporabljati industrijske materiale in tehnologije. Iz tega je izšel konstruktivizem, katerega ideje so najbolj razvidne v Gabovem Realističnem manifestu iz leta 1920. »Realizacija naših zaznav sveta v obliki prostora in časa je edini cilj naše slikovne in prostorske umetnosti« (Rickey 18). Hkrati pa jim je šlo tudi za razgradnjo tradicionalnega pojma umetnosti, Rodčenko je npr. napovedal 'vojno umetnosti' in stapljanje umetnosti in življenja ter prehod od umetnosti profesionalcev k množični umetnosti. Je naključje, če je imel Kosovel umetnino za »arhitektonski problem« (ZD III, 703)? Umetnost je bila razumljena kot »odkritje duha, kjer prihaja do sinteze racionalnega in imaginarnega, fizičnega z matematičnim«, beremo pri Elu Lisickem (*K. und Pangeometrie*, 103). S tem je treba povezati tudi Kosovelovo »giblivo filozofijo« in njegov »metafizični materializem« (ZD III, 656), ki je, mimogrede, zelo blizu »konkretni metafiziki« Florenskega, skoraj zanesljivo pa tudi Lisickijevi sintezi suprematizma in konstruktivizma, ki bo ob konsih doživela svoje praktično uresničenje tudi v tržaškem konstruktivističnem ambientu.

Kandinski je na INHUK-u trčil ob interese predvsem levih konstruktivistov. Reagirali so na to, da je Kandinski ustvaril program kot neke vrste sintezo suprematizma, Tatlinove 'kulture materiala' in lastnih teorij, a je »v tej sintezi ostal le pri lastnih teorijah« (Han-Mogomedov) in se popolnoma odrekel za konstruktivizem bistvenima elementom prostora, časa in gibanja. Naštete elemente so zato posebej izpostavili 'uporniški' konstruktivisti, Rodčenko, Ševčenko, itd. in želeli, da bi INHUK še naprej razvijal idejo o sintezi slikarstva, kiparstva in arhitekture. To je pripeljalo do razcepa v INHUK-u, do razcepa, ki je zaznamoval rusko avantgardo v celoti; Rodčenko, Stepanova in Popova so Kandinskega razglasili za subjektivnega psihologa, ki pri analizi umetnosti ni sposoben 'objektivne metode'. Ločili so se od 'teoretskega idealizma' Kandinskega in Maleviča, prišlo je do zavrnitve programa Instituta po zamisli Kandinskega in tudi do zavrnitve Malevičeve kandidature. In 27. januarja 1921 je Kandinski najavil svoj izstop iz INHUK-a, njegov novi predsednik pa je postal Rodčenko, Delovna skupina za objektivno analizo pa središče INHUK-a. S tem pa je lahko začela delovati tudi skupina arhitektov in umetnikov, ki so se ukvarjali s prostorskimi konstrukcijami. Po odhodu z INHUK-a je skušal Kandinski te zamisli prenesti na Bauhaus in tu znova trčil ob Gropiusovo delitev na umetnike in mojstre, soočiti pa se je moral tudi z radikalnim konstruktivizmom Moholy-Nagya.

Eden najpomembnejših dosežkov Delovne skupine za objektivno analizo je bila razprava z naslovom »Analiza razumevanja konstrukcije in kompozicije in njuna razmejitev«, s čemer je bila vzpostavljena distinkcija med pojmom 'kompozicija' in 'konstrukcija'. Diskusija o teh pojmih je načela

to vprašanje najprej v okvirih slikarske površine, potem pa je Ladovski, oster nasprotnik Kandinskega, opredelil glavne lastnosti kompozicije kot estetske kategorije in jih videl v hierarhiji in podrejenosti, medtem ko je konstrukcijo določala organizacija materiala in elementov, ki naj kot konstruktivno načelo prostorskega obvladovanja materiala dosežejo 'energjski efekt' celote. Konstrukcija je bila že sama na sebi kritika načela umetniškega dela kot neponovljivega estetskega objekta, zato konstruktivisti tudi niso podpisovali svojih izdelkov. S tem so se ločili od problematike 'umetniškega dela', pa tudi od slikarske podlage in ploskve in povezali prostorske umetnosti v celoti. V tem času je tudi Rodčenko deloval na svoji drugi in tretji seriji prostorskih konstrukcij, ki so demonstrirale njegovo pot od slikovne ploskovitosti k realnemu prostoru in se na ta način vse bolj opredeljevale do spremembe statusa umetniškega dela. Prav konstruktivizem je v svojih teoretskih izsledkih zaznal krizo statusa umetniškega dela. Novih 'laboratorijskih' izdelkov ni več poimenoval kot delo (*Werk*), ampak kot stvar (*vešč*). Naj opozorimo, da je na teh temeljih tudi Kosovel vzpostavljajl ostro razliko med predmeti (objekti), in stvarmi, saj mora po njegovem »objekt postati subjekt / Stvar človek« (ZD III, 718). Ta misel je v dnevniških zapiskih zabeležena pod ugotovitvijo, da je vse arhitektura, pesništvo, muzika in da slikarstva ni več in da je to povezano z »neizbežno potrebo vsega novega« (ZD III, 718–19). Kosovelova ustreznica ruskemu večšču je postala besedica kons, prav tako sestavljena iz štirih črk, hkrati pa pogosto označena z znaki x, y, z. Zakaj take oznake, nam pojasni Zamjatin: »Potem ko je Einstein izvedel geometrijsko-filozofski potres, sta končno poginila prejšnji prostor in čas. Vendar je že pred Einsteinom potres zabeležil seizmograf nove umetnosti, še pred Einsteinom se je zamajala aksoometrija perspektive, počile so osi X, Y in Z in se pomnožile v žarkih. V eni sekundi ne le ena ampak več sto sekund. [...] Prišlo je do spremembe ravnini v prostoru in času« (Zamjatin). Praznina se je spremenila v prostor, ko so vanj namesto predmetov vstopile stvari, ko je v prostoru praznino zamenjal čas (gibanje). To šele je bil realen prostor. Kosovelovi konsi x, y, z so zato eksplicitna polemika z evklidskim prostorom in najava novega einsteinovskega časoprostora.

S tem pa smo v okrožju problemov, ki jih je konstruktivizem videl v razlikovanju med kompozicijo in konstrukcijo in s tem v redefiniciji pojma umetniškega dela. V svojih konsih je Kosovel z avantgardističnim kolažem citatno polemiziral tudi z enim temeljnih načel tradicionalne umetnosti, z načelom organske kompozicije in zaprtega dela, oziroma teksta, saj ni šlo več samo za gola dejstva iz realnosti, ampak za njegovo prostorsko prezentacijo, ki je kot 'organična konstruktivnost' prav zato delovala potujitveno. V dnevniške zapiske je Kosovel zabeležil tole: »Resnica Dobrota

Lepota. Lepoto, okus, užitek moramo pri iskanju bistva umetnosti – izločiti. Lepota, okus, užitek, preveč relativne in variabilne za določevanje bistva umetnosti. Moramo jih izločiti (T)« (ZD III, 696). Koga bi označevala črka T v oklepaju, lahko le ugibamo, a misel je blizu Tatlinu in celotnemu krogu ruskih konstruktivistov ter njihovi kritiki statusa umetniškega dela.

Omenjeni spor med suprematizmom in konstruktivizmom se je potemtakem prenesel tudi med slovenske avantgardiste, saj se je Thea Černigoj opredelila zoper brezpredmetnika Kandinskega (Roter Černigoj 5–7), le da se je to zgodilo šele po obeh Černigojevih razstavah v Ljubljani, kar lahko razumemo kot opravičilo notranje neenotnosti predvsem prve razstave na Srednji tehniški šoli, obenem pa kot zavezo in svarilo za naprej, da bi Černigoj končno 'revidiral' svoj konstruktivistični nazor in to tudi pokazal v tržaškem konstruktivističnem ambientu.

Iz tega bi lahko sklenili, da je bil tudi 'prijateljski spor' med Černigojem in Kosovelom utemeljen v mednarodnem avantgardističnem dogajanju, s tem pa v dveh različnih, med seboj sprtih konceptih pojmovanja konstruktivizma. Medtem ko se je Černigoj leta 1924 in 1925 še lovil, saj je bilo za njegovo dejavnost v Ljubljani, ki jo v letu 1924/1925 zaznamujeta dve razstavi in ustanovitev Šole za arhitekturo, značilno tudi, da se umetnik ni toliko ukvarjal »s samo ustvarjalnostjo kot z njenim pragmatičnim in pedagoškim vidikom« (Golubović 185), je Kosovel leta 1925 ustvaril vrsto izjemnih prostorskih konsov, med njimi Sferično zrcalo, Sivo, Kaj se vznemirjate in predvsem enciklopedično pesem z naslovom Kalejdoskop, ki je v celoti sledila konstruktivističnim principom Moholy-Nagya, zasnovanim v njegovem znamenitem Svetlobno prostorskem modulatorju (gl. Vrečko, »Gib.«, »Svet.«).

Po našem mnenju je v Kosovelovi pesmi Kalejdoskop programsko napovedan Černigojev in Stepančičev konstruktivistični kabinet v Trstu, ki bi se na tretji razstavi morda dogodil že v Ljubljani, če Černigoj ne bi bil izgnan iz Jugoslavije. Kosovel je doumel Moholy-Nagyeve, Gabove, Tatlinove in ideje Ela Lisickega že leta 1924 in 1925, Černigoj jih je s Stepančičem uresničil šele leta 1927. Tudi to je zgodovina konstruktivizma na Slovenskem, ki je bila očitno izredno dramatična. In s Kosovelom tudi sočasna evropskim dogodkom, medtem ko je Černigoj leta 1927 že lovil avantgardo za rep, a kljub temu pomembno prispeval k sintezi suprematizma in konstruktivizma (gl. Vrečko, »Gib.«, »Svet.«).

Za našo raziskavo je posebnega pomena podatek, da je bil na Bauhausu asistent Kandinskega Laszlo Moholy-Nagy, ki je v začetku leta 1923 prišel sem na Gropiusovo povabilo iz berlinskega ateljeja Ela Lisickega. Moholy-Nagy je s svojim prihodom reorganiziral šolo na konstruktivističnih temeljih (Golubović 221) in s tem po sporu na INHUKU-u znova ogrozil

Kandinskega, saj je v svojem razvoju zelo hitro prešel od kompozicije h konstrukciji, kar se s Kandinskim ni zgodilo.

To pa pomeni, da je šlo za vzajemno posredniško vlogo med Černigojem in različnimi idejami ruskega konstruktivizma. Zaradi dveh tako različnih učiteljev, Kandinskega in Moholy-Nagya, je Černigoj tudi v Ljubljani ostal razpet med neangažirani esteticizem Kandinskega in radikalni prostorski konstruktivizem Moholya-Nagya. Zastopal je esteticistična stališča, vezana na kompozicijo in abstrakcijo, Kosovel pa leva, vezana na semantično dominantno in konstrukcijo. Prav to je pripeljalo do spora s Kosovelom, ki je takrat že intenzivno študiral Tatlina, Lisickega, Nagya in 'za nazaj' prebiral *Zenit*, *Sturm*, *Vesč* itd. Kot rečeno, to dejstvo napeljuje na dvojen in zato ne dovolj radikalen avantgardistični značaj Černigojevih objektov, razstavljenih na prvi razstavi v Ljubljani. Znano je, da je prav Lisicki prvi uveljavil prehod »od suprematizma h konstruktivizmu« (Zadova) in da so njegovi PROUN-i s svojimi prostorsko-časovnimi predstavami presegli slikarstvo, postali so nekakšne »celice na poti iz slikarstva v arhitekturo« (Lisicki Arhiv116). Tako je tudi na evropskih tleh uveljavil konstrukcijo nasproti kompoziciji in postavil arhitekturo za 'merilo vseh stvari'.

## V

Umetnostna zgodovina je ugotovila, da sta Černigoj s svojimi scen-skimi osnutki in Stepanič s svojimi mobili šele v Trstu 1927. leta prešla k samim izvorom konstruktivizma (gl. Krečič), k njegovim časovno prostorskim opredeljenostim, česar pa Kosovel ni več doživel, saj je umrl spomladi leta 1926. V ospredju so bile konstruktivistične prostorske študije in njihova aplikacija v arhitekturi, slikarstvu in kiparstvu. Tržaški konstruktivistični ambient je dosegel cilje, kakršne je že leta 1924 od Černigoja zahteval Kosovel in jih 'programsko' opisal v pesmi Kalejdoskop (gl. Vrečko, »Gib.«, »Svet.«).

Po Krečičevem mnenju so se v zreli tržaški fazi pokazala »Černigojeva lastna spoznanja« (Krečič 45). Ker je bil v Ljubljani ob srečanjih in diskusijskih spopadih s Kosovelom Černigoj prisiljen artikulirati svoja stališča, je v Trstu začel objavljati svoja programska besedila, v katerih mu je pojem konstrukcije služil kot oznaka za fundamentalni prehod od dvodimenzionalne površine kubistične in futuristične slike h prostorskim konstrukcijam. Njegovi prispevki v tržaškem Učiteljskem listu na začetku leta 1926 kažejo, da je »poljudno in v glavnem teoretično neoporečno opredelil novejšo umetnostne smeri«, v sestavku »Vzhod in Zahod v umetnosti« pa je šlo za »čisto apologijo ruskega konstruktivizma« (Krečič 45).



Kadinski je gotovo vplival, da Černigojeva razstavljenjena dela tudi v Trstu niso dosegla Stepančičeve konstruktivistične radikalnosti. To je videti že iz prvega manifesta, objavljenem v *Mladini* 1926. Tu je Černigoj ob drugem uporabil po Krečiču »precej nejasno pojmovanje 'sinteze'« (Krečič 49), ki naj bi prežemalo celoto manifesta. Zadeva postane jasna, če vemo, da je pojem 'sinteza' na Bauhausu uveljavil Kandinski in z njim označeval novo sintetično oz. monumentalno umetnost, zgled zanjo pa je videl v scenografiji kot scenski sintezi. Ta naj bi izhajala iz analize umetniških izraznih sredstev (barva, zvok, gib, beseda, oblika), iz združevanja teh elementov v konstrukciji in iz podreditve obojega kompoziciji, kar je kot izrazito estetski pojem pri levih konstruktivistih povzročil močan odpor in celo razkol znotraj INHUK-a. Prostorske umetnosti z arhitekturo in kiparstvom so bile izrinjene na račun časovnih umetnosti: glasbe, plesa in poezije, ki naj bi jih sintetiziralo slikarstvo. Pot k takšni sintetični umetnosti je Kandinski videl v scenografiji.

Rodčenko kot vodja upora proti Kandinskemu pa je želel uveljaviti sintezo slikarstva, kiparstva in arhitekture in pri tem tudi uspel. Kandinski se je bil prisiljen umakniti iz INHUK-a. Odšel je na Bauhaus in tam nadaljeval z idejo svoje sintetičnega oz. monumentalnega koncepta umetnosti, katerega krona naj bi bila kompozicija, ne pa konstrukcija. Černigoj je bil deležen tega učenja in ga posvojil. Se je Černigoj zato v Ljubljani na ulicah neznanim ljudem predstavljal kor 'sintetik'? Je zato Černigoj že v Ljubljani, ob prvi priložnosti, postal zenitistični scenograf, kandidiral za scenografijo Cankarjeve drame *Za narodov blagor* in Kogojevih Črnih mask, pozneje v Trstu je v duhu Kandinskega forsiral scenografijo in za slovenski Ljudski oder pri Sv. Jakobu za vsaj osem predstav napravil gibljive ploskovite scenske in kostumske osnutke. Nekatero scenske postavitve je razmestil tudi v dvorano in na galerijo, kar je po Krečičevem mnenju nakazovalo »pot h konstruktivističnemu umetnostnemu ambientu, ki ga je pozneje tudi izvedel« (Krečič 48); to Krečičevo izjavo je treba jemati z rezervo, saj je dejansko šlo za znane avantgardistične poskuse preboja gledališke rampe.

Černigoj se je v omenjenem prvem manifestu oklepal omenjenih stališč Kandinskega, zato se je lahko povsem jasno zavzel za »celokupno stremljenje časa in prostora v katerikoli enoti bodisi v arhitekturi, slikarstvu, kiparstvu, pesništvu, glasbi ali plesu« in s tem ponovil besede Kandinskega iz njegovega programa za INHUK, kjer ga je poskušal najprej realizirati, po neuspehu tu pa še na Bauhausu, se pa zato razšel s takrat že splošno sprejetim stališčem ruskih konstruktivistov Tatlina, Lisickega, Nagya in drugih.

Vse navedeno je Černigoju v tržaškem konstruktivističnem ambientu branilo, da bi končno uresničil Gropiusovo bauhausovsko idejo o

enotnosti likovnih umetnosti pod vodstvom arhitekture in jo povezal s praktičnimi življenjskimi nalogami. Černigojevi uporabi pojma 'sinteza' se je pridružila tudi njegova sinonimna uporaba pojma 'monumentalnega', kot je oba pojma sinonimno uporabljal tudi Kandinski. To seveda ne pomeni, da »Černigoj preprosto ni pristajal na nobeno pravovernost« (Krečič 50), ampak da se ne intelektualno ne ustvarjalno ni dokopal do pojmovanja konstruktivizma, ki so ga uveljavili ruski in berlinski konstruktivisti, medtem ko sta to z vso odgovornostjo storila Kosovel in Stepančič. Resignacija, kar nihilomelanholija obeh ustvarjalcev, je odsev neustreznega razumevanja njunega dela, ki v veliki meri traja še v današnji dan.

V svojem drugem italijanskem manifestu – izšel je v katalogu k tržaški razstavi – je Černigoj razložil, kaj njemu in njegovi skupini, Carmelichu, Stepančiču in Vlahu, pomenijo pojmi, kot so »gibanje«, »prostor«, »čas« in »sinteza«, in prvič poudaril, da jim gre za »totalno sintezo gibanja v prostoru«. »Naša dejavnost je v tem, da spravimo objekt v gibanje z barvo, gradivom in formo«, to ustvarja taktilne celote v času in prostoru in v nasprotju z larpurlartističnim slikarstvom povezuje umetnika in opazovalca (Černigoj, »Grupa« 88–91). A te ideje ni uresničil Černigoj, ampak Stepančič. Iz kataloga k razstavi je videti, da so kabinet obvladovale tri Stepančičeve 'prostorsko dinamične konstrukcije', nad katerimi je lebdel Malevičev beli kvadrat. Ob tem je bilo videti tudi »Černigojeve študije za gibljive scene. Nakazani koncept razstave so dopolnjevale še druge Černigojeve konstrukcije, projekti za stavbe ter njegova barvna konstrukcija« (Krečič 53).

To pa pomeni, da je v tržaškem umetnostnem ambientu najdlje segel Stepančič, »ki je konstruktivizem globlje dojel in bil najbolj dosleden v njegovi abstrakciji« (Krečič 45), kjer Stepančičeva dela očitno niso izhajala le iz Černigojevih spodbud, ampak so v svojem radikalnem pojmovanju prostora, časa in gibanja zajemala pri izviru konstruktivizma. Le tako je lahko ustvaril svoje prostorske mobile in z njimi v racionalno oblikovanem prostoru vzpostavil aktivni soodnos, dinamično razmerje. Prostor in čas sta bila končno evidentirana, ambient-prostor je postal 'elastičen' (Delak, »Moderni« 90).

Končno se je leta 1927 tudi pri Černigoju dogodilo ustrezno ločevanje in s tem avtentično razumevanje pojmov konstrukcije in kompozicije, ki jo je konstruktivizem kot krucialni problem razrešil že na začetku svoje dejavnosti, leta 1921, Kosovel pa v letu 1924 in 1925. To je videti v Černigojevi oceni tega dogodka, Grupe konstruktivistov v Trstu, ko je konstrukcijo povezoval s »prostorom, časom in lučjo [...], ki daje življenje bitju, oni emocionalni enoti, ki jo umetnik imenuje konstrukcijo (kompozicijo v časovno-prostorskem trenutku)« (Černigoj, »Grupa« 90). Prav to

je bilo za Černigoja odločilno spoznanje, ki je končno pritrnilo, da je imel Kosovel v njenih ljubljanskih diskusijah prav.

Kosovel je zapisal v istem dnevniku, kjer je za predavanje Kriza na šentjakobskem odru koncipiral svojo definicijo konstruktivizma: »Dočim je impresionizem hotel obris, ki naj izzove štimungo, ekspresionizem, ki naj ravno tako nasilno vpliva na človeka« (ZD III, 740). Gre za ugotovitev, da sodita oba omenjena stila skupaj, v isti koš, ker še zmeraj ustvarjata tradicionalna umetniška dela po načelih kompozicije in pri tem nasilno izzivata štimungo v človeku. Zato ju je Kosovel povezal z »umetnostno komponiranim« (ZD III, 741), s tradicionalnim pojmom kompozicije, medtem ko je bil konstruktivizem povezan s konstruiranjem in s tem z »analizo materije / žive forme« (ZD III, 752), »nasilnim oblikovanjem celic«, kjer je pojem celice uporabljen v enakem smislu kot pri Lisickem, nasilnost pa je treba razumeti kot nasprotje uglajene kompozicije in kot bistveno lastnost konstrukcije.

Pri tem se je Kosovelovo skicozno razmišljanje nanašalo na znana dejstva iz konstruktivističnega gibanja. 1921. leta je namreč nastala že omenjena razprava »Analiza razumevanja konstrukcije in kompozicije in njihova razmejitev«, ki je posebnega pomena za zgodovino pojma konstruktivizem. Grübel je v svojem *Ruskem konstruktivizmu* to temeljno razpravo spregledal. Zato je bila temeljna komponenta konstruktivizma vgrajena v delu, v njegovi usmerjenosti v bodočnost, v imenu katere je bilo možno estetsko in etično prevrednotenje preteklosti in sedanosti. V tem smislu je Kosovel opredelil konstruktivistično zasnovan objekt z natančno sintagmo: s »filozofijo predmeta« (geometrija in fizika) (ZD III, 657), kjer je neevklidska geometrija premagovala fizikalne zakonitosti gravitacije. Nakazali smo že, da je Kosovel morda prav zaradi navedenih razlogov začel namesto pojma konstruktivizem uporabljati pojem konstruktivnost, da bi svojo dejavnost ločil od Černigojeve, slikarsko kompozicijske.

Posebej je treba poudariti, da je Černigoj na razstavi v tržaškem Ljudskem vrtu za svojo konstruktivistično grupo po naporih pogajanjih z upravo pridobil poseben oddelek in tako ustvaril možnost za umetnostni ambient, s tem pa udeležil svojo zahtevo, da naj se nova umetnost ne dogaja več »v galeriji-muzeju in cerkvi« (Delak, »Moderni« 83), pa tudi ne v telovadnici. »Neposreden vzornik za ta korak mu je bil El Lisicki, ki je napravil svoj umetnostni ambient leta 1923« (Krečič 52). Krečič je postavil misel, da je »nekaj teh ambicij imel Černigoj nedvomno tudi že z razstavo leta 1924 v Ljubljani« (Krečič 52), ki naj bi se kazale v sami ureditvi ambience, kar pa po našem mnenju ne drži, saj je šlo tu še za izrazito galerijsko postavitev, na kar je lucidno opozoril že kritik Melihar. Šele s t. i. tržaškim konstruktivističnim ambientom je bilo prvokrat doseženo, »da študije

materialov niso razstavili, ampak so jih pustili na nitkah viseti s stropa. S tem so predmeti izgubili svojo zemeljsko težo ...» (Nürenberg).

Černigojevo zadnje delo, ki je nadaljevalo konstruktivistični spopad z gravitacijo, je bil fotokolaž Teater Masse, objavljen v *Sturmu*, kjer je v chagallovskem in hlebnikovljevskem duhu položil 'lebdečo' zgradbo 'na množico'. Lebdeča, atektonična stavba ni nikakršna »fantastična arhitektura«, ampak le Černigojev konstruktivistični vrhunec. Kosovel bi se zdaj sprivil s prijateljem, saj so končno njegove »hiše vstale«, »kot da velika so platna kvadratna / platna trikotna« (*Int.* 208).

Še več je mogoče reči: Tržaški konstruktivistični ambient (še boljše kabinete) je po našem mnenju pomenil tudi hommage pokojnemu prijatelju Kosovelu, saj je z italijanskim napisom na vhodu v »magični kvadrat« »movimento cos-truttivista«, predvsem z načinom, kako je delil zadnjo besedo, citiral Kosovelovo besedo 'kons' – v slovenščini bi se deljena beseda glasila »kons -truktivizem«. Tudi način, kako so razstavljali tržaški konstruktivisti, je spominjal na Tatlina in Kosovela hkrati. S kocko je citiral enega geometrijskih likov znotraj Spomenika III. Internacionali, pa tudi Kosovelovega »človeka v kvadratu vrat« in »človeka v magičnem kvadratu«. Zato smemo ambient razumeti tudi kot spomin na preminulega prijatelja, ki zdaj ni bil več njegov 'smrtni sovražnik'.

Kljub nekaterim odličnim slikarskim rešitvam je Černigojev 'konstruktivizem' ostajal na ravni intuitivnega, medtem ko bi smeli Stepančičeva dela iz tržaškega konstruktivističnega kabineta označiti z 'intelektualnim konstruktivizmom'. Z njim bi bil verjetno v celoti zadovoljen tudi Kosovel. Morda bi tudi za Černigojeva scenografska prizadevanja rekel, da so končno dobila 'podlago' – leta 1925 so bila še »brez vsake podlage in ideje« (*ZD III*, 540).

Glede na vse povedano pa je prinesel tržaški konstruktivistični ambient tudi svojevrstno rešitev in pomiritev v sporu med suprematisti in konstruktivisti, na kar do danes ni bilo opozorjeno. Bel kvadrat, obešen na nevidne vrvice, je lebdel, levitiral pod stropom in s tem je to Malevičevo delo prvič v zgodovini izstopilo iz konteksta slikarskega dela, obešenega na steno. Če predpostavimo, da je bil poleg treh mobilov tudi lebdeči beli kvadrat Stepančičevo delo, potem to pomeni, da je bil Malevič prav znotraj tržaškega konstruktivističnega ambienta prvič razrešen zgodovinskega bremena, ki mu ga je sicer povsem upravičeno naprtil Tatlin, ko je njegovo delo označil za »vsoto vseh zmot v zgodovini slikarstva.« S tem dejanjem je bilo ikoni modernega slikarstva, Belemu kvadratu na belem ozadju, odvzeto breme slikarske kompozicije in ga postavilo v območje konstrukcije, kar je s teoretsko sintezo suprematizma in konstruktivizma poskušal El Lisicki že leta 1921. Stepančiču je uspelo prebiti mejo med estetiki podrejeno

uokvirjeno 'sliko' in 'konstrukcijo' kot oblikovanjem novega 'prostora' zunaj estetike in zunaj muzejev (Kosovel). Statičnost Malevičevega dela je poslej »rasla v prostor« in se prelevila v gibljivo konstrukcijo. To pa so dejstva, ki tržaški konstruktivistični ambient postavljajo med najpomembnejše dogodke v zgodovinski avantgardi na sploh. Spor, ki se je začel v INHUK-u med Kandinskim in Rodčenkom, se nadaljeval med Kandinskim, Moholy-Nagyem in Gropiusom na Bauhausu in se prenesel tudi na spor Černigoj – Kosovel v Ljubljani, je bil končno razrešen. Willetova teza, da pod črto Dunaj – Budimpešta ni bilo avantgard, je doživela celovit poraz.

Kritik Melihar bi v tržaškem konstruktivističnem ambientu končno lahko 'zaživel' v teh izdelkih (ne pa 'ob njih'), prevzeli bi ga s svojo prostorskostjo in 'gibljivo filozofijo'. Kosovelov »prepih vetrov« iz pesmi Kalejdoskop bi praznino spreminjal v prostor, saj so obiskovalca skozi prostor vodili in ga spodbujali dinamični konstruirani odnosi. Kosovel je napravil sintezo med suprematizmom in konstruktivizmom že v svojem 'metafizičnem materializmu'. Šlo je za pojmovanje narave, ki ni bila več obsovana po človekovem pohlepu. Nastopila je sila vetra namesto strojev! Prepih vetrov! Maschinenkunst – kot naravi sovražno strojno umetnost – je zamenjala Kunstmaschine – umetniški stroj, ki deluje z obnovljivimi viri, z energijo vetra. Tatlinova vizija o rešitvi sveta, udejanjena v Letatlinu, je doživljala temeljno podporo.

Je po vsem povedanem še mogoče trditi, da tem prizadevanjem ne bi bilo mogoče iskati »primere v sočasnem slovenskem umetnostnem snovanju« (Krečič 56)? Odgovor je jasen: iskati jih je treba vsaj že v letu 1924 in 1925 pri Srečku Kosovelu. Krečič imenuje tržaško dogajanje »vrhunec slovenskega konstruktivizma« (Krečič 55). V resnici se je s Kosovelovimi konsi v Ljubljani dve leti prej tak vrhunec dogodil že na polju literature. Ker Krečič tega ni upošteval, je Kosovela označil le za eksperimentatorja, modernista, ekspresionista na nacionalni, cankarjanski poti, ker se (po Krečiču) ni znal otresti patosa velikih tem (gl. Živadinov).

Naša raziskava kaže, da ni bilo tako. Kosovel je »konstruktivno« izkušnjo že leta 1924 in 1925 prenesel na poezijo in o njej 'obveščal' tudi Černigoja. Ta je ujel korak z njim šele leta 1927 v Trstu, ko je ob sodelovanju Stepančiča uveljavil kinetično umetnost kot osnovno obliko dojemanja časa in prostora. Šele tu skulptura ni bila več tridimenzionalna, ampak je z vnosom časa, z gibanjem in ritmom postala štiridimenzionalna. (Rickey 191). Z mobilni in z lebdečim kvadratom so se konstruktivistična prizadevanja pokrila s Kosovelovo zahtevo, da je »vse arhitektura«, da »slikarstva ni več« (ZD III, 715, 718), medtem ko je Černigoj še zmeraj želel revolucionirati s postavitvijo Leninovega kipa, pa so mu to preprečili. V tržaškem konstruktivističnem ambientu bi Kosovel podprl Stepančiča, vsekakor pa bi razstavo obiskal.

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## The Formation of Kosovel's Constructivism: A Conflict between Composition and Construction

Keywords: Slovene literature / Slovene art / constructivism / literary avant-garde / Kosovel, Srečko / Černigoj, Avgust / Trieste

Černigoj and Kosovel corresponded from 1923 onwards. For Kosovel, Černigoj's arrival in Ljubljana represented a confrontation with the European avant-garde context and testing of his own, already formed, artistic viewpoints. In addition to his Bauhaus education, the Ljubljana "school" tied to Kosovel was also important to Černigoj; it unveiled the meaning of post-gravitational art to him and in this way ensured a synthesis between suprematism and constructivism in the Trieste Constructivist Ambient.

In Ljubljana, Černigoj was not yet able to combine Malevich's suprematist perception of surface and Tatlin's transparent spatiotemporal construction of space, which Lissitzky had already tried to achieve in 1921. In mid-1925, Kosovel excellently summarized his demands for movement as a synthesis of time and space (he had already written to Černigoj about this in January 1924; ZD III, 535) in his diaries following the principle of "moving philosophy" (ZD III, 651) as well as in a number of his other comments on the "movement principle" and in his conses. At the discourse level, this resulted in a sharp distinction between construction and composition, one of the most important theoretical postulates of the constructivist movement. The concepts of composition and construction are used to elucidate Černigoj's Ljubljana exhibit and the Trieste Constructivist Ambient, which Kosovel conceptually outlined in his poem "Kalejdoskop" (Kaleidoscope) as early as 1924 and 1925, and formulated with the syntagm "metaphysical materialism." Because Černigoj was not willing to change his viewpoints, at least not before he left Ljubljana, the "friendly dispute" between him and Kosovel can only be explained with international avant-garde developments – that is, with two different, conflicting concepts of constructivism. This originated in the fact that at the Bauhaus school Černigoj had two very different teachers (Kandinsky and Moholy-Nagy) and thus even in Ljubljana he continued to be torn between Kandinsky's disengaged aestheticism and Moholy-Nagy's radical spatial constructivism. He supported the views related to composition and abstraction, whereas Kosovel supported leftist views connected with the semantic dominant and construction. This can also be seen in Černigoj's use of the terms "synthesis" and "monumental," which were also used

synonymously by Kandinsky. All of this prevented Černigoj, even in the Trieste Constructivist Ambient, from finally fulfilling Gropius' Bauhaus-idea of a unification of the arts under the primacy of architecture.

In 1927, thanks to Stepančič, the Trieste Constructivist Ambient achieved the goals Kosovel demanded of Černigoj in 1924 and described in his poem "Kalejdoskop." In addition to the mobiles, a white square also floated beneath the ceiling hung by strings; through this, for the first time in history Malevich's work stepped out of the context of a painting hung on the wall, and was thus relieved of the historical burden of a painting composition. From then on, its static nature "grew into space" and turned into a movable construction. These are the facts that place the Trieste Constructivist Ambient among the most important events in the historical avant-garde in general. The dispute that developed at the INHUK between Kandinsky and Rodchenko, and then continued between Kandinsky, Moholy-Nagy, and Gropius at the Bauhaus school, and was also transferred to Černigoj and Kosovel in Ljubljana, was finally resolved. With this, Stepančič managed to break the barrier between the framed "painting" subjected to aesthetics and the "construction" as a formation of new "space" outside aesthetics and museums (Kosovel). This represented a contact with the roots of constructivism, which Kosovel had already achieved through his conceptions in 1924 and 1925.

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# Natrgani in preobrnjeni čas med stranmi sodobnega romana\*

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*Članek razpira problem časa v Pavičevem romanu Unikat in Amisovem romanu Časovna puščica. Pri obeh obravnava časa določa tako vsebinske elemente kot zunanjo strukturo romana, literarno upovedovanje pa bistveno temelji na elementih iz sodobnih fizikalnih in filozofskih teorij.*

Ključne besede: literatura in filozofija / sodobni roman / čas / filozofija časa / Pavič, Milorad / Amis, Martin / primerjalne študije

Že od začetkov človekovega čudenja pomeni vprašanje o času eno od osrednjih človekovih vprašanj, v temelju povezano z vsemi ostalimi. Zato so večji premiki v pogledu na čas vedno odraz pretresov v širšem duhovnozgodovinskem kontekstu in kot taki bistveno odražajo sočasno samozarumevanje spoznavajočega subjekta in njegov odnos do okolja.

Specifičen preobrat v načinu spoznavanja in samem razumevanju sebe in svojega okolja je nedvomno značilen tudi za t. i. postmoderno, kar je oznaka za zadnje duhovnozgodovinsko obdobje. Definicija postmoderne je že po svoji naravi problematična, tako zaradi pomanjkanja distance, ki je za dokončno in nedinamično definicijo nujna, kot zaradi same notranje lastnosti postmoderne, saj jo bistveno določajo dinamičnost, prehajanje in gibanje razlike kot njeni konstitucionalni elementi, zato se že od njenega osnovanja naprej govori tudi o prehodu, prestopu ... postmoderne.

Ena najodmevnejših razprav o postmoderni – *Postmoderno stanje* Jeana-Francoisa Lyotarda iz leta 1979, ki opisuje, kot v uvodu zapiše avtor, »stanje vednosti v najrazvitejših družbah« (7), izpostavlja postmoderno znanost kot tisto, ki je ne zanimajo več celovite zgodbe, enotno urejene pod poveljstvom izbrane resnice, temveč nasprotno – množica informacij. Tako se bistveno izoblikuje kot diskontinuirana, katastrofična in paradokсна. Lyotard kot ključni v tej igri informacij izpostavlja heteromorfijo jezikovnih iger in nujno lokalni konsenz o pravilih. Temelj vseh sistemov

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spoznavanja predstavljajo jezikovne igre z informacijami, ki so v danem trenutku sicer popolne, a se nikoli ne izčrpajo ali fiksirajo na poziciji minimalnega ravnotežja. Sorodna je oznaka Toma Virka v delu *Strah pred nainnostjo*: »Relativizacija resnice, legitimacija paradoksa, ontološka desubstancijalizacija – vse to so torej ne le dognanja posameznih disciplin, temveč globlja določila duhovnozgodovinske podlage dobe« (35).

Na ravni fizike te premike najbolj jasno in radikalno predstavlja kvantno mehanski opis sveta, ki zahteva opustitev ideje o lokalnosti in realnosti.<sup>1</sup> Če je bil v okviru Einsteinove teorije relativnosti čas sam relativiziran in je bil kot absoluten opisljiv le še prostor-čas, je čas kvantnega sveta, torej čas kvantnih pojavov pred meritvijo, še mnogo bolj neintuitiven. Večina interpretacij opušča usmerjeno puščico časa, tri aspekte časa in absolutno vlogo zdaja, nekatere pa, predvsem v okviru povezovanja z relativnostno teorijo v tako imenovano teorijo kvantne gravitacije, tudi čas sam.<sup>2</sup> Premiki na področju fizike in fizikalnega dojetja časa vključujejo tudi polje kozmologije, ki še konkretnje razpira vprašanje o začetku časa in njegovi puščici. Tako se usmerjenost fizikalnega časa, ki jo opisuje drugi zakon termodinamike, največkrat navezuje na izjemne pogoje ob nastanku vesolja, s poudarkom na inflaciji (izjemno hitrem širjenju vesolja), s tem pa naravo »našega« časa bistveno povezuje z njegovim »začetkom«.

Na ravni filozofije tem premikom predhaja Heideggerjev poizkus izstopa iz evropske metafizike. V središču njegovega filozofskega sistema je prav njegova filozofija časa – skupni premislek biti in časa. Njegov premislek časa pa bistveno vključuje tudi kritiko znanstvenega pristopa k času – Heidegger aporijo med dvema pogledoma na čas (ki ju glede na filozofsko tradicijo lahko na primer poimenujemo zunanji in notranji ali pa fenomenološki in kozmološki čas) preseže s tem, da enega izpostavi kot izvirnega, drugega pa kot izpeljanega. Prav ta poizkus presega časovne aporije nekateri filozofi, sicer bistveno navezani na njegovo filozofijo, npr. Ricoeur in Derrida, izpostavijo kot problematičen. Odgovor o času, ki v samem temelju ne vključuje časovne aporije, je že a-priorno le delen. Pripadnost gibanju in pripadnost skrbi sta dve v svojem bistvu nezdržljivi odločitvi in šele aporija, ki jo zasnujeta, omogoča celovit dojem časa in stvari v času. Ta bistvena aporetičnost časa je tako v središču večine vodilnih filozofij časa, od Derridajeve in Ricoerjeve do Deleuzove in Lacanove. Derridajev in Deleuzov dojem časa, ki sta poleg Heideggerjeve filozofije biti in časa glavni filozofski izhodišči pričujoče razprave, pri tem temeljita predvsem na, sicer sorodnih, a konkretnje ne-povezanih konceptih razlike. Ti sta bistveno povezani s tipično postmodernimi elementi, kakršni so opuščanje hierarhije in absolutnosti, relativizacija resnice, legitimacija paradoksa in ontološka desubstancijalizacija.<sup>3</sup>

Nenazadnje so vsi ti elementi, označeni kot »postmoderni«, tudi bistveni del vsakodnevnega kratkočasnega, ki ga bistveno določajo množica neprečiščenih informacij in njihova manipulacija, pri čemer načeloma imeti dostop pomeni več kot imeti (potrebno) informacijo, količina pa več kot kvaliteta.

Literatura pri tem nastopa kot specifično ogledalo svojega časa. Elementi s posameznih področji (na primer filozofskega in fizikalnega), ki sicer kljub svoji sorodnosti pogosto ostajajo nepovezani, so prenešeni v nov kontekst, kjer, povezani z bistveno literarnimi elementi, kompleksno in poglobljeno upovedujejo resnico svoje dobe. S tem pa bistveno tudi njeno dojemanje časa in njeno specifično »biti-v-času«.

V nadaljevanju se bomo tako spustili v analizo dveh sodobnih romanov: Pavičevega *Unikata* in Amisove *Časovne puščice*, ki ju bistveno določa prav specifičen prikaz časa, Pavičev čas se razcepi v (najmanj) sto različnih koncev, medtem ko Amisov čas teče v obrnjeni smeri. Pri obeh avtorjih igra s časom ni sama sebi namen, temveč v navezavi na sočasne premike z drugih področij omogoča odstiranje nekaterih bistvenih, čeprav pogosto v skritosti puščanih dimenzij našega okolja, ki šele sedaj, z literarno analizo časa, prihajajo k besedi.

Obe deli sta kompleksni, aktualni in prepričljivi zrcali postmoderne, pri čemer njene značilnosti prikazujeta ob navezavi na sodobne (postmoderne) fizikalne in filozofske teorije. Hkrati pa sta oba romana tudi postmodernistična, torej romana, ki spadata v literarno smer postmodernizma. Predvsem Pavičevo delo je prepleteno s postmodernističnimi literarnimi postopki, ki še dodatno poudarjajo vsebinske postmoderne komponente, medtem ko so pri Amisovi *Časovni puščici* ti elementi manj potisnjeni v ospredje, a prav tako prisotni (*Časovna puščica* kot postmodernistična parodija klasičnega vojnega romana).

### **Milorad Pavić: *Unikat***

Za Pavića, kot radikalnega predstavnika postmoderne in postmodernizma, je večplastno poigravanje s temeljnimi elementi tradicionalnega sveta nedvomno značilno. Klasični postmodernistični elementi, ki spodnašajo tla kakršnimkoli ontološkim ali epistemološkim sistemom (s samonanašanjem in prepletanjem različnih ravni fikcije in realnosti), so v njegovih delih skorajda praviloma vpeti v »roman-igro«, celoto romana spreminjajočo v delno izven-fikcijsko igro (slovar, križanko, igro s kartami ...), ki celotno dekonstrukcijo absolutnega in resničnega radikalizira do skrajnosti. Takšen pristop je značilen tudi za roman *Unikat*, kjer se skozi igro, presegajočo zgo-

literarne plasti romana, izpostavljata, razstavljata in s tem tudi prevprašujeta prav sodobna, torej postmoderna, čas in odnos do časa.

*Unikat*, roman o mafijskih spletkah in preprodajanju sanj, se zaključuje s stotimi konci – izbira bralec.<sup>4</sup> Poleg kompleksne znotrajliterarne igre ga zaznamuje tudi prav tako zapletena zunajliterarna igra v realnem svetu. Prva srbska izdaja je namreč sledila avtorjevi ideji o unikatu in izšlo je sto različic romana (po štirideset vsake), vsaka z drugačnim koncem. Poleg tega je posebej izšel tudi *Modri zvezek* (*Plava sveska*), ki je vseboval vseh sto koncev. Že v naslednjem letu je na podlagi te srbske izdaje izšel tudi slovenski prevod, v katerega pa (podobno so se odločili tudi založniki drugje po svetu) je bilo vključenih vseh sto koncev. Naslednje leto je Dereta izdala tako imenovano prvo integralno Deretino izdajo – ta vključuje vseh sto koncev, hkrati pa je originalni tekst na mestih, kjer govori o specifični igri s konci, spremenjen: bralec nima na voljo več le enega, svojega konca, temveč izbira. Prav ta igra s stotimi konci (znotraj enega romana) najradikalneje izpostavlja sodobni, z znanstvenim in filozofskim bistveno povezani odnos do časa in je zato za našo obravnavo posebej zanimiva. Zaradi tega pri obravnavi romana izhajamo iz originala prve integralne izdaje.

Glavno izhodišče našega pristopa tako predstavljajo prav na novo napisani okvirni in povezovalni teksti.

Osnovni, nespremenjeni tekst *Unikata* in sto koncev oziroma t. i. epilog ali *Modri zvezek* v integralni Deretini izdaji povezuje pripis prvoosebnega pripovedovalca:

Nazadnje nam naj bo dovoljeno, da dodatku priložimo še sto zapiskov pokojnega višjega inšpektorja Eugena Stroša, ki jih je ustvaril v svojem »Modrem zvezku«. Ti zapiski, izpisani z zelenim črnilom, so obenem obljubljeni konci tega romana. Vsak bralec si lahko izbere svoj konec in tako dobi unikat. (178)

Primarno gre torej za bralčevo izbiro enega izmed ponujenih stotih koncev, kar avtor izrazito postmodernistično napoveduje tudi v okviru, ki je na videz zunaj besedilnega dogajanja romana (»predstavitev« romana na platnicah ...):

Navodilo za branje te knjige: Pisatelj je poslušal staro modrost, ki narekuje: konec delo krasi in ga izgublja. Zato ta roman ni kot ostale knjige. Za vsakega bralca se zaključuje drugače. Vsak bralec izbira svoj konec zgodbe, saj ta knjiga ponuja sto različnih koncev. Kot sto zlatnikov, ki jih je revež iz stare zgodbe dobil za čarobno ptico. Torej, izbira je vaša, ostalo prepustite ostalim. Bodite zadovoljni s svojim koncem, tujega ne potrebujete. (7)

Pozor! Ob nakupu takšne knjige boste dobili namesto enega vseh sto njenih koncev. (Platnice)

Tovrstna izbira koncev je bistveno povezana z izrazito sodobnim – postmodernim – dojemom časa. Integralna izdaja *Unikata* temelji na hkratnem, ontološko in epistemološko enakovrednem obstoju stotih koncev, izbira enega, ki jo zahtevata le navada (običajno branje) in pragmatizem (enotnost, zaključenost zgodbe), pa je povsem prepuščena (naknadnemu) opazovalcu. Pavičeva igra tako na več mestih spominja na neintuitivni svet kvantne mehanike, ki je eden najsodobnejših fizikalnih opisov narave.

Zanimivo vzporednico ponuja eden izmed osrednjih »problemov« kvantne mehanike – kolaps valovne funkcije. Posamezne lastnosti osnovnih elementov kvantnega sveta, na primer njihovo lego, spin ..., pred meritvijo opisuje verjetnostno valovanje oziroma valovna funkcija (delec je v superpoziciji več različnih stanj), po meritvi pa je izmerjena lastnost označena z določeno, izmerjeno vrednostjo, zaradi česar govorimo o kolapsu, zgostitvi valovne funkcije v enem od vrhov. Kolaps valovne funkcije (stik med opisom opazovanega fenomena kot valovanja in kot delca) je eden izmed najbolj problematičnih elementov kvantne mehanike, zato je večina interpretacij kvantne mehanike zasnovana prav okoli interpretacije kolapsa valovne funkcije.

Za vzporejanje s Pavičevim literarnim svetom je še posebej zanimiva ena od glavnih ontoloških razlag tega kolapsa – Everet-Wheelerjeva razlaga »mnogih svetov«. Interpretacija v osnovi sledi načelu Okamove britve (najpreprostejša teorija, torej teorija z najmanj entitetami, je tudi pravilna) in izgradi razumevanje kvantnega dogajanja v trenutku meritve v okviru (bolj ali manj) minimalnega števila elementov (izključi pojav kolapsa in karšnihkoli skritih spremenljivk). Valovno funkcijo razume kot realno, kolaps pa zanika, saj naj bi prišlo do uresničitve vseh možnosti, vsake znotraj svojega sveta. Osnovna in do danes vodilna veja te interpretacije razume vse vzporedne svetove kot realno obstoječe, izhajajoč pri tem iz valovne funkcije kot osnovne, realne fizikalne entitete. Koncept časa, ki se ob vsakem dogodku cepi v nove linije, tako odpre bistveno nove možnosti tudi v okviru premisleka časa in kot tak presega zgolj fizikalni okvir. Z vidika opazovalca, ki je del enega izmed svetov, ostali svetovi niso spoznatni, saj komunikacija med njimi ni mogoča. Tako kot v primeru stotih koncev gre tudi tu za soobstoj več dinamičnih možnosti, v odvisnosti od zunanjega (nad-)opazovalca pa se ena od njih »strdi« kot izbrana (kar zanimivo podčrta trk dveh realnosti z različnima ontološkima statusoma – literarne in bralčeve; tak trk je pogosto podlaga postmodernističnih »iger«). To povezavo še dodatno podpira dejstvo, da originalna integralna izdaja romana nima »le« zaključenega števila stotih koncev, temveč tudi niz praznih strani, ki jih lahko bralec dopolni s povsem svojim koncem (niz praznih strani zaključuje tudi prvotno izdajo, kjer sledi enemu koncu in pripisu, da ostalih devetindevetdeset najdemo na Pavičevi spletni strani).

Pavić tako tradicionalni čas branja kot najbolj zveste ponazoritve usmerjenega časenja zavesti preoblikuje v neusmerjen čas, čas več vzporednih zdajev. Roman tako nima več forme življenja, junaki se ne rodijo s prvo stranjo in umrejo z zadnjo, temveč – tako v fabuli kot gledano meta-fikijsko – umirajo večkrat, v vzporednih zdajih:

To ni napaka. Že davno mi je neka stara kneginja prerokovala, da bom umrl dvakrat. Enkrat kakor moški, a drugič kakor ženska. Zato ni čudno, da bom imel dva groba. To bi lahko bil moj ženski grob. (148)

Opozorilo: Kakor kajenje škoduje zdravju, tako škodi tudi branje teh stotih koncev. Na kratko, to je kot da bi vas doletelo sto smrti namesto ene. (165)

S sodobnim filozofskim in fizikalnim razumevanjem je bistveno povezano tudi Pavićevo razumevanje odnosa med posameznimi »elementi« – konci. Čeprav naj bi vsak nastopal kot samostojen in zadosten sistem informacij, bralec je celo vzpodbujen k temu, da si izbere enega samega, se konci bistveno povezujejo in določen konec nam je razumljiv šele v kombinaciji z drugim; če navedemo enega izmed očitnejših primerov: »Kot je nekje v tem dnevniku že zapisano, sem bil pred nekaj dnevi v banki »Plusquam city« in pregledal sef pokojne Lempicke.« (256) (Dnevnik je v tem primeru seveda inšpektorjeva beležnica stotih samostojnih koncev.) Takšen ontološki opis se nedvomno povezuje s postmodernim propadom metafizike prisotnosti, če si izposodimo Derridajev izraz. Zamenjuje jo manj toga igra, ki razkriva tudi učinke odsotnega – gibanje razlike, znotraj katerega se »vsak tako imenovani »prisotni« element, ki se pojavi na prizorišču prisotnosti, nanaša na nekaj drugega od samega sebe.« (13) Posamezni elementi se torej ne razkrivajo šele v individualni in absolutni pojavnosti, temveč tudi in predvsem v okviru svoje odsotnosti preko drugih, prisotnih elementov. Že samo besedišče, na katerem temelji takšna interpretacija, znova izpostavlja tudi povezavo s kvantnim svetom, tokrat s kvantno prepletenostjo, s fenomenom, ki je ključen tako za sodobno interpretacijo kvantnega sveta kot za najpomembnejše eksperimente in z njimi povezano »uporabo« znanosti v sodobni tehnologiji. V kvantnem svetu govorimo o prepletenih delcih, če zanju velja, da ju ni mogoče opisati posamično, z vsakemu lastno valovno funkcijo, temveč le s skupno valovno funkcijo, ki ju opisuje kot enoten sistem prepletenih delcev. »Stanje celote je določeno, stanje posameznih delov, vzeti individualno, pa ne.« (Schrödinger, 828) Tako je rezultat meritve določene lastnosti enega delca nujno v korelaciji z določeno lastnostjo drugega delca (na primer polarizacija dveh fotonov), čeprav sta delca lahko prostorsko zelo oddaljena in kljub temu da rezultat določene meritve v kvantnem svetu ni determiniran in je kot tak naključen, o sami realnosti izmerjene lastnosti pa potemtakem pred meritvijo

sploh ne moremo govoriti, saj jo opisuje valovna funkcija in je torej v superpoziciji več stanj (na primer superpozicija vertikalne in horizontalne polariziranosti pri fotonih pred meritvijo). Pred meritvijo tako ne moremo sklepati o posameznem rezultatu, medtem ko je korelacija med obema rezultatoma povsem deterministično določena.

Ker se Pavičeva igra s konci s fenomenom kvantne prepletenosti povezuje le v nekaterih elementih, je neposredna povezava (torej Pavičevo poznavanje in izhajanje iz tega fizikalnega opisa realnosti) težko dokazljiva. Pavičeva izrazito postmoderna (in hkrati postmodernistična) »igra« pa je nedvomno del postmodernega obrata v razumevanju realnosti, torej širšega konteksta, ki jo v nekaterih točkah nedvomno določa oziroma ji bistveno predhaja.

## **Manipulacija s subjektivnim časom**

Igra s časom procesa brani se povezuje tudi z manipulacijo časa nastopajočih likov. Ne gre le za notranji čas – za hitrejši ali počasnejši tek notranje ure, temveč se ta razlika kaže tudi v znotraj-svetnem času. Kot je za Paviča značilno, se globina dvigne nad površino, notranje nad zunanje – poli tradicionalne ureditve metafizike prisotnosti se preobrnejo. (»Metafizika vedno operira s pojmovnimi dvojicami, denimo: intelegibilno/materialno, govor/pisava, pomen/oblika, duša/telo, dobesedno/metaforično, narava/kultura, resno/neresno; pri tem večjo vrednost vedno pripiše tistemu pojmu, ki je na strani logosa in prisotnosti (v gornjih primerih vedno prvemu pojmu). Drugi pojem velja kot izvedeni« (Virk, *Moderne* 181)). Ni več enotnih meril, ki bi podajala objektivni tek časa ali formul, ki bi pretvorile lastni časovni razmik v nelastnega, kot je mogoče v okviru Einsteinove posebne teorije relativnosti.<sup>5</sup> Premiki, ki povzročijo razliko, namreč niso zunanji, temveč notranji.

Ko sva se zadnjič srečali, mislim, da sem jo vprašala nekaj takega kot: zakaj orgazem nekomu traja dalj, nekomu pa manj časa.

– Zato – je odgovorila – ker nekomu dalj, nekomu pa manj časa traja sedanjost, nekomu dalj, nekomu pa manj časa traja smrt. (Pavič 262)

Pripoznanje te dinamičnosti, razprtosti časa, odpre prostor za nevarno igro, tok časa ni več enoznačen in enoten, če se spusti pod to površino, je možna manipulacija, kaotična igra v temi intuicije, pri Paviču vedno povezana z značilnimi motivi s »temnega«, podrejenega pola – s hudičem, s telesnim, z vonji, z ženskim:

Jaz sem vedno obrnjena k prihodnosti kot h glavnemu sovražniku. Da bi se ubranila pred njo, stalno predvidevam, pustim svoji intuiciji, da lovi v nevidni prihodnosti, prisiljena sem, da ugibam, da si z naporom utiram pot skozi vse, kar se lahko pripeti in kar se bo neizogibno zgodilo v tej plimi prihodnjih staranj, mojih in tujih, ker vem, da starost ni ena, temveč da jih bom imela nešteto. Edini način, da se prevara prihodnost, je, da zanosiš. Moji možje pa ne razumejo mojih strahov. Kaj jih briga še nespočet otrok, Amerika, ki še ni odkrita? Oni živijo v sedanjosti in nočejo vedeti za nobeno stvar na tem še vedno nedosegljivem kontinentu prihodnosti, mojih mož ne zanima terra incognita. [...] – Čas obstaja samo na kalendarju, v življenju ima vsak svoj čas – si je mislil med iskanjem. In nikoli ni našel ne nje ne otroka. Morda sta se zato postarala njena dva moža [...]. (154–156)

Prav manipulacija s časom omogoča tudi vodilni motiv *Unikata* – manipulacijo s sanjami:

- Ti kupuješ lastne sanje? Ne razumem, kako je to mogoče.
- Teh sanj ne bi smel sanjati sedaj. Čez tri tedne bi jih moral sanjati. Jaz pa sem plačal, da sem jih sanjal že prejšnjo noč, torej vnaprej. (39)

Tudi sanje v odnosu do resničnosti v okviru tradicionalne metafizike prisotnosti predstavljajo »temnejši«, manj jasen, zapostavljen pol. Zanje so značilni dinamizem, obrnljivost globljega in površinskega, notranjega in zunanjega, zato imajo v Pavičevi literaturi v navezavi na ostale tipične motive privilegiran položaj – ne pušča se jih v ozadju, kot nepomemben stranski proizvod, niti se jih ne poskuša racionalizirati, temveč se spusti v njihovo igro – lovi se jih in se z njimi kupčuje:

In kar je še pomembnejše, v snu sta pomešani prihodnost in preteklost, ker v sanjah ni sedanjosti, da bi ju razstavila. Če iz tega sveta brez sedanjosti, torej iz sna, pogledate v vesolje, v ozvezdje, kjer plujejo odsanjane in neodsanjane sanje osebe, rojene v znaku, ki ga opazujete, lahko njene odsanjane in neodsanjane sanje vidite in preberete, kajti ne nagaja vam sedanjost, ki je niti tam, med zvezdami, ni. Tako trgovci s sanjami dobivajo svoje blago. Drugi spet pravijo, da je obratno, da v sanjah ni niti preteklosti niti prihodnosti, da je vse v sanjah ena večna sedanjost, ta ista, ki kraljuje tudi v vesolju. (176)

Tudi v okviru (racionalne) sodobne interpretacije sanj, osnovane predvsem na Freudovi psihoanalizi, za sanje velja, da nimajo absolutnega časovnega okvira, tok časa je vezan zgolj na zavest, torej ne na sanje kot bistveno povezane predvsem z nezavednim. Tok časa je le še element izražanja, del igre, sočasnost pa nakazuje le logično zvezo dveh elementov, ne pa hkratnega obstoja v zdaju znotraj okvira absolutnega časa. Tudi drugi zakon termodinamike (skupna vrednost entropije v zaprtem sistemu vedno narašča ali je konstantna) je pogosto obrnjen na glavo, in kdor ne



pomisli na to sredstvo popačenja v sanjah, je ob nalogi interpretacije sanj, trdi Freud, povsem nemočen. Ker sanje torej ne »tečejo« – tek je le del prezentacije, ne pa njihova notranja lastnost – same po sebi nimajo (trenutkov) sedanjosti (niti protencije ali retencije).

Pavić tako pravzaprav ohrani splošno sprejeto razlago sanj in njihovega časa, spremeni le, skladno s postmoderno prefiguracijo celotnega sistema, njihov ontološki status. Njegov prikaz sanj se na tem mestu približuje nekaterim sodobnim dojemom časa (ki so nujne posledice dejstev teorij relativnosti in kvantne mehanike), kakršna sta blok časa – najpogostejša sodobna znanstvena predstava o času; nekakšna časovna pokrajina, preko katere se enakomerno raztezajo aspekti časa – ali pa Barbourjeva brezčasna konfiguracija vesolja, kot jo avtor predstavlja v delu *The End of Time*. ker se mu zdi v okviru »usmerjenosti« (dejanskega) fizikalnega časa prvotno stanje z začetka vesolja z izjemno nizko stopnjo entropije kot vzrok enosmernosti entropične puščice v večini sodobnih kozmoloških modelov skrajno problematično, ponuja model, ki takšen razvoj izključuje. Predstavi podobo t. i. Platonije, kjer čas zastopajo le še časovne kapsule, brezčasovne točke, na podlagi katerih si ustvarimo podobo o času. Stanje entropije v različnih točkah je različno in točke z visoko stopnjo entropije so mnogo pogostejše, a kompleksna bitja, kakršen je človek, so vezana na posebne regije z nizko entropijo, gibanje v katerokoli smer od te posebne regije pa da občutek puščice časa (oziroma drugega zakona termodinamike). Vendar Barbour tudi to povezovalno linijo (oziroma gibanje) kot naknadno tvorbo omeji le na raven zavesti in pojasnjuje z njenim mehanizmom spajanja vzorcev in a-posteriorne tvorbe enega samega, iluzijo teka časa ustvarjajočega vzorca.

Tako tudi daljši premislek časa ene izmed glavnih junakinj *Unikata* združuje vse zgoraj predstavljene elemente: paradoksnost in mističnost časa, dinamizem in pretakanje njegovih aspektov, ne nazadnje pa tudi starogrško filozofsko dikcijo in postmoderne vidike, bistveno temelječe v propadu metafizike prisotnosti:

KROGLA ČASA. Čas je kakor duša – je napisala Lempicka na ta zid – ima svoje avre v obliki krogle, ki se nahajajo ena v drugi, na dnu pa ima (kakor ima vesolje Zemljo) svoje težko telo.

Zunanji dišeč in prosojni ovoj Krogle časa je večnost. Ta je s svetlobo povezana z Bogom, z enim glasbenim taktom pa s prihodnostjo, ki jo ima pod seboj kot naslednji nižji sloj ali ovoj v Kroglu časa. Ta ovoj-prihodnost je prav tako prosojen. Pod njim se nahaja prozoren sloj najgloblje, nezgodovinske preteklosti: to je nezgodovinsko telo časa in dotika se najbolj oddaljene prihodnosti, kakor se na Zemlji dotikata Vzhod in Zahod. Pod tem slojem se razprostira neprosojni sloj, ki vsebuje zgodovinsko preteklost ali zgodovinski čas, na dnu Krogle časa pa je

težak osebni čas našega življenja, neprosojno jedro sedanjosti, tisti, ki ga merijo in izgubljajo naše ure.

Sredi risbe Krogle časa je Lempicka nalepila na zid svojo ročno uro znamke »Chopard«, ki jo je ustavila v času smrti svojega ljubimca Distelija in je ni več nosila. (201)

Tokratna Pavičeva igra – z literaturo, njenimi junaki in bralcem – je v prvi vrsti igra s časom. Igra, ki uporablja postmodernistične mehanizme in konstruira samosvojo interpretacijo časa, slednja pa bistveno temelji prav na mehanizmih, ki jih uvedejo novi pogledi na čas v moderni (Einstein, Freud ...) in postmoderni (teorije poenotenja in interpretacije dejstev kvantne mehanike ali poststrukturalistična filozofija). Čeprav gre v prvi vrsti za igro, je ta igra primarno prepletena z aspekti časa na drugih bolj ali manj ultra-sodobnih področjih, to pa povzroči – prav tako značilno postmoderno – ves čas prisotno preobračanje resnice in igre, spreminjajočega se in ostajajočega. Igra s časom je ne nazadnje tudi resnica o času:

Ali je nekdo že napisal romana o primeru gospe Lempicke in njenega ljubimca Morisa Erlangena, preden sem prišel jaz, da bi rešil ta primer? Kakšna hitrost! Čas se v našem stoletju hitro stara. Vzideš v ponedeljek, a zaideš v soboto, lahko se prebudiš slaven, zvečer pa zaspíš pozabljen, nekdo pa ti je ukradel včeraj, medtem ko si trenil z očmi. (253)

## **Martin Amis: Časovna puščica**

Sprememb v sodobnem pogledu na čas niso povzročili samo pretresi na znanstvenem in filozofskem, temveč bistveno tudi na družbeno-političnem področju, ne samo na tleh teorije, temveč tudi v brutalno trdem izkustvu prakse. Druga svetovna vojna kot najširši in najglasnejši od mejnikov na tem področju s propadom velikih idealov tako v nacionalizmih kot v humanizmih in razgrnitvijo skrajnih dimenzij človeške narave postavi literaturo pred dvojni preobrat:

prvega ubesedi Adorno s svojim »pisati literaturo po holokavstu je barbarsko«, ki prevprašuje samo legitimnost njenega obstoja, drugi pa nasprotno od literature zahteva, da preseže pasivni molk, vpije neizrazljivo trpljenja in ga vrne spominu. Povojna leta tako zaznamuje široka produkcija »velikih« romanov, ki poizkušajo skozi besede premisliti nemisljivo grozo svetovne vojne. Grozo izkušnje in adornoško prevpraševanje legitimnosti literature presežejo prav specifični postmoderni elementi. (Bilban 105)

Paradokсна sočasnost doseganja distance, ki šele omogoči izrekanje, in spusta v sredino (ponovno) odprte rane, ki ga osmisli, je v nekaterih naj-

pomembnejših (po)vojnih romanih dosežena predvsem s skrajno izrabo elementov grobe ironije, cinizma in sarkazma. V ta krog se za klasičnimi deli, kakršni sta Hellerjev *Kavelj 22*, predvsem pa Vonnegutova *Klavnica 5*, ki že izrabi preplet pripovedovalčevega cinizma, na omejenost meječe navivnosti glavnega lika in postmoderne igre s časom, vključuje tudi Amisova *Časovna puščica*. Vsi trije romani, s prijemi, ki legitimizirajo obdelavo velike teme, tako niso le izrazito postmoderni, temveč kot nekakšne parodije (starejšega) vojnega romana vstopajo tudi v območje postmodernističnega, pri čemer je v Amisovem romanu, kot najnovejšem, ta aspekt še dodatno poudarjen, predvsem pa bistveno vezan na samo igro s časom.

Glavna determinanta narave Amisovega romana<sup>6</sup> – obrnjena puščica časa – je bistveno povezana s (sodobnim) fizikalnim pogledom na svet. Problem puščice časa je eno izmed osrednjih vprašanj na skupnem polju fizike in filozofije prav zato, ker za fizikalne zakone, v nasprotju z našim zaznavanjem sveta, velja obrnljivost v času. Primarni pristop k tej problematiki v romanu *Časovna puščica*, kjer ne gre v prvi vrsti za simetrijo odvijanja procesov v času, temveč za obrnitev časovne puščice, pa se povezuje s kozmološkimi teorijami o nastanku vesolja – z velikim pokom in možnostjo reverzibilnega procesa v prihodnosti. Najverjetnejši vzrok asimetrije sveta v času so začetni pogoji nastanka vesolja – veliki pok in inflacija vesolja sta z izjemno pospešenim širjenjem vesolja zagotovila njegovo gladkost, ravnost, uniformnost, prisotnost materije in usmerjenost časa (od »preteklosti« k »prihodnosti«); nekateri teoretski konstrukti, ki vključujejo krčenje vesolja, tako vsebujejo tudi idejo o obrnjeni puščici časa. Čeprav v fizikalnih modelih z obrnjeno puščico časa seveda ne gre za reverzno podoživljanje dogodkov kot v Amisovem romanu (nasprotno, večina pod pogojem obstoja zavedajočih se entitet predpostavlja njihovo klasično dojetanje časa, vezano na njihov sistem zaznavanja in zavedanja na t. i. časenje zavesti), je osnovna ideja romana z miselnimi poskusi s področja fizike nedvomno povezana. Navsezadnje se puščica tudi v zadnjem odstavku Amisovega romana (ponovno) obrne.

Ko Odilo zapre oči, vidim leteti puščico – toda narobe. S konico naprej. Oh, ne, takrat pa... Spet sva stran, na drugi strani polja. Odilo Unverdorben in njegovo goreče srce. In znotraj jaz, ki sem prišel ob nepravem času – ali prezgodaj ali potem, ko je bilo že čisto prepozno. (154)

Po drugi strani Amis v romanu problematizira prav simetričnost fizikalnih zakonov v času, z izjemo termodinamike, ki pa je za človeško dojetanje sveta v času ključna:

Voda teče navzgor. Prizadeva si doseči najvišjo raven. Kaj ste pa mislili? Dim se spušča. Stvari nastajajo v nasilju ognja. A je že v redu. Gravitacija nas še vedno pripenja na planet. (45)

Posebej je poudarjeno tudi pripovedovalčevo poznavanje relativnostne teorije in nekaterih elementov sodobne kozmologije, kar še posebej pride do izraza, ker gre za sicer poudarjeno ignorantnega fiktivnega pripovedovalca, ki ne izpostavlja posebnega poznavanja zgodovine, filozofije ...

Nisem popoln bedak. Ugotavljam, na primer, da sem opremljen s precejšnjo količino brezvrednih podatkov ali, če vam je ljubše, s splošnim znanjem.  $E = mc^2$ . Svetlobna hitrost znaša 300.000 kilometrov na sekundo. Ni počasna. Vesolje je končno, vendar brezmejno. (14)

Po sledi »mita« o vzratnem podoživljanju življenja, preden umremo, se Amisov roman začne tik pred smrtjo glavnega junaka, spetega s prvoosebni pripovedovalcem: »Predramil sem se iz najglobljega sna in se znašel obkrožen z zdravniki...« (9) – le da je opazovalec sveta in njegovega časa zunanji, objektivni in neveden, v opazovano okolje pa je umeščen kot referenčna točka, torej kot tisti, glede na katerega se čas vrti v drugo smer:

Čakaj malo. Zakaj se v hišo vračam zadenjsko? Se spušča mrak ali se dani? Kako – kako bo potekalo potovanje, na katero sem se podal? Kakšna so pravila? Zakaj ptice tako čudno prepevajo? Kam grem? [...] Glejte. Mlajšava se. Čisto zares. Postajava krepkejša. Celo višja postajava. [...] Vsak dan, ko s Todom prebervam Gazette, ga odneseva nazaj v trgovino. Natančno spremljam datume pri vrhu strani. Takole gredo. Po 2. oktobru pride 1. oktober. Po 1. oktobru pride 30. september. Kako si razlagate to?... O blaznejših pravijo, da se jim v glavi odvija film, ali pa pred seboj vidijo prizorišče, ki ga urejajo, umetniško krasijo in se gibljejo skozenj. Toda Tod je očitno duševno zdrav in svoj svet deli z mano. Dozdeva se mi le, da se njegov film vrti nazaj. (11–14)

Tovrstna izvzetost iz sveta, in z njo povezana igra s časom, zagotovita zadostno distanco za tematizacijo vrhunca (ne)človeškega, hkrati pa izpostavitve nekaterih eksistencialnih tem, ki šele sedaj v nesamoumevnem okolju pridejo iz neskritosti, še dodatno podčrta širino tega problema.

Višek cinizma in ignorance, hkrati pa tudi njuno najmočnejšo izrazno moč doseže roman s prihodom glavnega lika in »v njem naseljenega« fiktivnega pripovedovalca v Auschwitz. Če je bilo prej, ob hoji nazaj, bruhanju hrane in srkanju dreka, rezanju ran na urgenci in utišanju otroškega joka s klofuto vse skrajno nesmiselno in amoralno, zadobi svet v Auschwitzu smisel, ljudje pa izjemno moč, povezano z dobrim in pravičnim samim. (Bilban 105–106)

Ustvarjanje ni preprosto. Tudi grdo. Hier ist kein warum. Tukaj ni nobenega zakaj. Tukaj ni nobenega kdaj, nobenega kako, nobenega kje. Naši nadnaravni

cilji? Sanjati raso. Izdelovati ljudstvo iz vremena. Iz groma in bliska. S plinom, z elektriko, z drekom, z ognjem. (Amis 114)

Navsezadnje ima svet, tukaj, v Auschwitzu, novo navado. Smiselno je. (123)

V *Časovni puščici* pa ne gre le za enodimenzionalno kritiko vojnih zločinov druge svetovne vojne in genocida nad Judi, kompleksna igra s časom, ki hkrati pomeni tudi razpiranje samega problema časa, izpostavi tudi nekatere ključne probleme v odnosu med človekom in časom, oziroma človekovo postavljenostjo v čas:

»Osebo mislim, da samomor lahko zavržemo kot prazno grožnjo. Razmišljal sem o tem. Samomor ni nikakršna možnost, kajne da ne? Na tem svetu že ne. Ko si enkrat tukaj, ko se vkrašaš, ne moreš izstopiti, ne moreš stran. (29)

Z mislijo na samomor se razpre ena od glavnih lastnosti biti v času z obrnjeno puščico – življenje se ne odvija v pričakovanju pike, kot pri Heideggerju, (ali vprašaja kot pri Levinasu), temveč je že vnaprej zaprto med dva oklepaja, kar še povečuje nezno težo, nesmiselnost takšnega življenja – samolastnost tubiti in biti za smrt se zopet izkažeta kot bistveno povezani, eksistencialna podlaga Amisovega romana pa se v nekaterih bistvenih točkah poveže s Heideggerjevo tematizacijo tubiti v času: »Čas je mineval. Čas, človeška dimenzija, ki iz nas naredi vse, kar smo. Do te končne zamenjave.« (Amis 68) Tudi način Amisovega vpenjanja naravoslovnega pogleda na svet mestoma bistveno spominja na Heideggerjev odnos do fizike in tehnike v okviru njegove pozne filozofije. V svetu brez prepričavanja, brez zasnavljanja ali kakršnekoli samolastnosti, je fizikalno znanje tisto, ki ostaja – pri tem ni slučajna Amisova izbira izpostavitve dejstev, povezanih z relativnostno teorijo. Ne gre zgolj za njeno splošno popularnost in prepoznavnost, temveč tudi za njeno (prav v okviru laičnega konteksta) povezanost z nastankom atomske bombe (Amisova zbirka kratkih zgodb, kritičnih do človeške pošastnosti, je na primer naslovljena *Einstein's Monsters*), po drugi strani pa prav kontekst obrnjene puščice časa, temelječ na fizikalni problematizaciji usmerjenosti časa, razpre najgloblje eksistencialne probleme. Podobno diametralen je tudi Heideggerjev pozni odnos do sodobne znanosti in tehnike. V *Vprašanju po tehniki* dostopa k sodobni znanosti skozi vzajemno utemeljevanje novodobne fizike in tehnike, ki jo, izhajajoč iz grške besede *tebne*, opiše kot način razkrivanja. Temeljno počutje, ki določa karakter tega razkrivanja, je po-stavje, to pa v ospredje postavlja zrenje narave kot razpoložljivega obstanka. Kot glasnika po-stavja Heidegger postavlja svoji filozofiji sočasno fiziko: predstavi sodobno fiziko kot glasnika postavlja, katerega gospostvo, s postavljanjem na razpolago in s tem povezanim pozabljanjem stvari samih, grozi z

odtegnitvijo povrnitve v neko izvirnejše razkrivanje. A skupaj s Hölderlinom izreka Heidegger: »Kjer pa je nevarnost, raste / Rešilno tudi.« (353). Torej mora prav po-stavje v sebi skrivati rast rešilnega.

Po-stavje izziva najprej v divjanje postavljanja na razpolago, ki zastira sleherni pogled v dogodek razkritja in tako iz osnove ogroža razmerje do bistva resnice. Drugič pa se po-stavje po svoji strani godi v tistem dopuščajočem, ki pusti človeka trajati – doslej sicer brez vednosti, vendar v bodoče morda z večjo vednostjo – kot tistega, ki je potreben za varstvo bistva resnice. Tako se kaže vzhajanje rešilnega. (359)

Tudi v *Časovni puščici* so, sorodno Heideggerjevemu prikazu, skozi literarno obdelavo sodobnega fizikalnega odnosa do časa izražene najgloblje dimenzije eksistencialno-etične problematike, ki bi drugače ostale neube-sedljive:

Toda pozneje smo šli spet mimo in kazalca se nista premaknila nazaj. Kako le? Bila sta naslikana in nikoli se ne bosta premaknila nazaj. Pod uro je bila ogromna puščica, na kateri je s tiskanimi črkami pisalo: Tukaj prestopite na vlake proti vzhodu. Toda čas ni imel puščice, tukaj že ne. Zares, na železniški postaji v Treblinki so na zanimiv način priredili štiri dimenzije. Prostor brez globine. In prostor brez časa. (Amis 135).

## Zaključek

Tako v Pavičevem romanu *Unikat* kot v Amisovi *Časovni puščici* je bistveni del literarnega razpiranja lastne sedanjosti manipulacija s časom, ki presega zgolj obravnavo tematike časa na vsebinski ravni in narekuje tudi specifični zunanji podobi obeh romanov. Tako možnost izbire enega izmed stotih koncev v integralni izdaji *Unikata* kot obrnjena puščica časa v *Časovni puščici* temeljita na aplikaciji postmodernih teorij časa – predvsem fizikalnih in filozofskih, ki so ključne za pristop obeh avtorjev k problemu časa in smo jih v pričujoči razpravi v navezavi na literarni kontekst tudi podrobneje predstavili –, neobičajna struktura pa jima omogoča tudi specifičen premislek nekaterih onotološko-gnoseoloških ali eksistencialno-etičnih vprašanj, ki bi drugače ostala nepojmljiva ali zamolčana.

Pavič v okviru za svoj opus značilne zvrsti romana-igre s postmodernističnimi mehanizmi razkrajja kakršnokoli a-priorno absolutnost ali resnico, s tem pa tudi kakršnokoli ontološko ali epistemološko podlago. Pri tem konstruira samosvojo interpretacijo časa, ki se povezuje z drugimi romanesknimi elementi in jih hkrati, kot glavna podlaga igre in glavno gonilo romana, povezuje v celoto. Pri tem se njegova interpretacija, bistveno povezana s sodobni fizikalnimi in filozofskimi pogledi na

čas, od kvantne mehanike pa do teorij poenotenja, kakršna je na primer Barbourjeva, od psihoanalize pa do dekonstrukcije, oblikuje skozi samo literarno pripovedovanje in je z njim bistveno povezana. Pavičeva igra s časom je vseskozi tudi resnica o času, o našem času in o nas samih kot bistveno časovnih.

Amisova igra s časom pa poleg ontološko-gnoseoloških vprašanj, primarno povezanih s prevpraševanjem narave časa, v prvi vrsti razpira predvsem eksistencialno-etično tematiko. Obrnjena puščica zagotavlja potrebno distanco za izrekanje nečloveškosti druge svetovne vojne in hkrati radikalizira in podčrta posamezne motive, ki šele kot taki lahko nosijo brezčasno sporočilo o njeni absurdnosti. Pri tem je poleg literarne obdelave motivov ključno predvsem njihovo naslanjanje na fizikalno dojetje manj časa, povezano z drugim zakonom termodinamike kot specifično ireverzibilnim, in s kozmološkimi modeli, ki najpogosteje vključujejo tudi možnost obrnitve časovne puščice. Amisov odnos do fizike je dvojen. Izhaja iz njene kritike in jo povezuje s sodobnim, vase zaverovanim napredkom in pozabo stvari samih, predvsem pa z vojaško tehnologijo kot (nujno) podlago razsežnosti groznega druge svetovne vojne. Hkrati pa to kritiko presega in sámo fizikalno podlago vključuje v literarno upovedovanje kot nujni del, s pomočjo katerega šele lahko izrazimo vso grozo in absurdnost vojne, pri čemer nas razumevanje tudi odvrne od ponovitve. Ta dvopolarnost Amisovega odnosa do fizike ga bistveno približuje pozni Heideggerjevi filozofiji in njegovemu razumevanju fizike kot glasnice postavlja in njegovega postavljanja na razpolago, v nevarnosti katerega videva tudi rast rešilnega. Amisova literarna igra s časom, v katero so vpleteni elementi iz sodobne fizike in filozofije, je tako v prvi vrsti resnica o (našem) času in nas samih kot bistveno določenih s tekom časovne puščice.

#### OPOMBE

<sup>1</sup> Problem lokalnosti in realnosti v okviru kvantno-mehanskega sveta v želji izpodbijanja na novo se oblikujočega polja fizike izpostavijo Einstein, Podolsky in Rosen v prispevku *Can Quantum-Mechanical Description of Physical Reality Be Considered Complete?* Njihov dokaz o nepopolnosti teorije kvantne mehanike temelji na pojavu prepletenih delcev (ki je v pričujočem prispevku natančneje tematiziran v okviru obravnave Pavičevega *Unikata*), katerega kvantno-mehanski opis z valovno funkcijo zahteva opustitev klasičnih konceptov lokalnosti in realnosti. Deloma njihovo sklepanje ovrže že Bohr v svojem odgovoru, kjer izpostavi njihovo nedovoljeno povezavo elementov kvantnega in principov klasičnega sveta. Za potrditev ustreznosti kvantno-mehanskega opisa sveta pa je ključno predvsem Bellovo oblikovanje koncepta neenakosti, ki predvidi enostavno, kvantitativno ločitev med obema konceptoma – med klasičnim, temelječim na lokalnosti in realnosti, in kvantno-mehanskim. Na podlagi Bellove neenakosti so bili tako izvedeni številni eksperimenti, ki so dokončno potrdili ustreznost kvantno-mehanskega opisa s verjetnostno valovno funkcijo

in kot problematična elementa z omejenim dometom izpostavili lokalnost in realnost. (Einstein in dr.; Bell)

<sup>2</sup> Čas v kvantni mehaniki je absoluten, v teoriji relativnosti pa relativen, zato poskus združitve obeh teorij pripelje do tako imenovanega »problema časa.« Opis gibanja delca v klasični fiziki so sestavljali njegovi položaji v času  $q(t)$ . V kvantni mehaniki nam ostanejo samo še verjetnostne amplitude. Ker je čas zunanji, je valovna funkcija odvisna od položaja  $q$  in časa  $t$ , ne pa tudi od  $q(t)$ , medtem ko klasični prostor-čas teorije relativnosti ustreza  $q(t)$ . Ob zlitju obeh teorij tako izgubimo  $q(t)$  in  $t$  (v teoriji relativnosti ni absolutnega časa), kar ponazarja tudi Wheeler-DeWittova enačba kot (možna) enačba kvantne gravitacije, povezujoča opis sistema z valovno funkcijo in načela splošne teorije relativnosti. (Kiefer)

<sup>3</sup> Derridajeva dekonstrukcija časa v prvi vrsti izpostavlja ugotovitev, da smo na sledi časa, dokler kot temeljni del njegove strukture puščamo soodnos med dvema naravama/dvema pogledoma na čas ... Kolikor se ob želji po eksaktnem poprisotenju bistva časa odločimo za enega od pogledov na čas, izgubimo samo sled za časom. Čas je tako po svoji strukturi bistveno soroden daru (kot pokaže Derrida v delu *Dati časi*). Oba sta definirana na podlagi razlike – razlika je tista, ki hkrati omogoča njuno eksistenco in izpostavlja nemožno njune eksistence.

Deleuzova filozofija časa pa temelji na njegovih konceptih »razlike« in »ponovitve«. Ponovitev se pojavlja kot razlika, a kot razlika brez koncepta. Razlika je za vsem, a za razliko ni ničesar, zato ni možno razlikovati med modelom in različnimi kopijami, vse so ponovitve, ki prehajajo ena v drugo in ne izhajajo iz nekega osnovnega modela. Ta koncepta določata tudi sintezo časa – miselna zaznava procesa ponovitve razkrije formiranje časa. Tako v *Différence et répétition* izpelje čas (postopoma) iz njegovega rojstva, iz njegovega formiranja, in sicer na podlagi treh sintez, katerih različni dostopi k času pojasnjujejo tudi »končni« dojem časa kot bistveno aporetičnega. Ta koncept strne v *Logiki smisla* s protipostavitvijo dveh aporetičnih struktur Kronosa (časa sedanjosti) in Aiôna (časa preteklosti in prihodnosti).

<sup>4</sup> Kratka fabula Pavičevega *Unikata*: V osnovni zgodbi spremljamo androgina Sandro-Aleksa, ki se ukvarja s prodajanjem sanj. Ob grožnji mafijskega šefa, da mu bo odsekal enega od prstov (kar bi za astrologa-trgovca s sanjami s potrebnimi dvanajstimi prsti pomenilo konec kariere), če se za dolgove ne odkupi z naročenima umoroma. Z manipulacijo doseže, da umirajoča operna zvezda in njegova ljubica markiza Lempicka v zameno za bodoče sanje izvršita naročena umora. Operni pevec umre za rakom, markiza Lempicka pa je ustreljena ob izvajanju umora, zato je Sandra-Aleks primoran na sodišču kot del dokaznega gradiva prebrati prodane sanje. Sojenju sledi še umor mafijskega mogotca in pa lastnika banke, povezane z vsemi žrtvami. Inšpektor, ki primer raziskuje, pred svojo smrtjo oblikuje beležnico s stotimi konci romana.

<sup>5</sup> Einsteinova posebna teorija relativnosti z relativizacijo časa vpelje ločevanje med lastnim in nelastnim časovnim razmikom, torej med časovnim razmikom med dvema dogodkoma (na primer začetkom in koncem potovanja), kot ga izmeri opazovalec znotraj merjenega sistema, in časovnim razmikom, kakršnega izmeri zunanji opazovalec, katerega koordinatni sistem se giblje relativno na koordinatni sistem prvega opazovalca. V prvem opazovalnem sistemu se začetek in konec merjenja dogodita na istem kraju (merilna naprava je med merjenjem ves čas v središču opazovanega sistema), v drugem opazovalnem sistemu pa sta dogodka na različnih krajih. Prvi časovni razmik ( $T$ ), tako imenujemo lastni časovni razmik, drugega ( $T'$ ) pa nelastni časovni razmik. Oba časovna razmika povezuje enačba:  $T' = T / (1 - v_0^2/c^2)^{1/2} = \gamma_0 T$ ; pri tem je  $T$  lastni časovni razmik,  $T'$  nelastni časovni razmik,  $v_0$  relativna hitrost opazovanega telesa glede na opazovalca,  $c$  pa hitrost svetlobe v vakuumu. Nelastni časovni razmik je vedno večji ali enak ustreznemu lastnemu časovnemu razmiku, saj vedno velja  $\gamma_0 \geq 1$ . Zato lahko govorimo o podalšanju časa. (Strnad 53–100.)



<sup>6</sup> Kratka fabula Amisove *Časovne puščice*: V zadnji točki Todovega življenja se prične potovanje prvoosebnega pripovedovalca kot pasivnega opazovalca znotraj Todovega telesa v smeri obrnjene časovne puščice. Postarani in osamelji Tod se tako počuti vedno bolje, nasmejanim sosedovim otrokom jemlje igrače in jih unovčuje v trgovini, po upokojitveni zabavi prične delati v bolnišnici. Po zamenjavi osebnih dokumentov in opozorilu, da bi bila njegova identiteta lahko odkrita, se preseli v New York, kjer dela na urgenci: povečuje rane, lomi noge ... Z ladjo odpotuje v Španijo, kjer živi v vili pod novim imenom, denar pa zamenjuje za zlato; odpotuje naprej v Vatikan, nato pa na motorju do Auschwitzta, ki najprej deluje tiho in prazno, nato pa se začena polniti. Življenje končno dobiva smisel: ženske in otroke obujajo s pomočjo plina ali zdravijo z injekcijami zraka, može osvobaja delo, dokler se zopet ne združijo na Treblinki in odpotujejo nazaj domov. Po Auschwitzu nadaljuje s svojim delom, a patent se počasi pokvari, ljudje, ki prihajajo iz peči, so umsko moteni. Židje imajo vedno več pravic in vedno več moči, kar opazovalec/prvoosebni pripovedovalec povezuje z uspehim projektom Auschwitzta. Odilo kmalu spozna svojo umirajočo mamo in se po študijskih letih vrne k njej domov. Vedno mlajši je, vedno več se igra, kmalu se bo vrnil v mamo, zapre oči in puščica se obrne v drugo smer.

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## Torn and Reversed Time on the Pages of the Contemporary Novel

Keywords: literature and philosophy / modern novel / time / philosophy of time / Pavić, Milorad / Amis, Martin / comparative studies

This article examines the problem of time in the novels *Unikat* (Unique Item) by Milorad Pavić and *Time's Arrow* by Martin Amis. In both of them the examination of time determines not only the content elements but the outer structure of the novels as well. Literary storytelling is essentially based on elements from contemporary physical and philosophical theories. With help of postmodern elements, Pavić decomposes everything that is a priori absolute or real. The integral publication of his novel consists of one hundred different endings; the reader chooses among them. His literary interpretation of time is thus essentially connected with elements from quantum mechanics and post-structural philosophy. On the other hand, Amis' playing with time opens existential and ethical problems. An inverse time arrow keeps him at a sufficient distance to relate the inhuman dimensions of the Second World War and at the same time makes some motifs more visible. To accomplish this, the connection with contemporary physical interpretations of time and cosmological models, often including the inverse time arrow, is the most important along with the specific literary approach. Amis' attitude towards contemporary physics is thus essentially dual. On the one hand, he is very critical of physics, connecting it with contemporary self-confident progress and military technology, making possible the dimensions of the Second World War's horror. On the other hand, he goes beyond this criticism by integrating physics as an essential element in his storytelling, making it possible to express horror and the absurd. This kind of dual attitude towards physics brings him near Heidegger's philosophy after the turn. Pavić's and Amis' playing with time thus also represents the truth about (our) time and about ourselves as being essentially defined by being-in-time.

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# Foucaultovi pogledi na literaturo\*

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*Razprava tematizira Foucaultova razmišljanja o literaturi v kontekstu njegove misli, ki je razdeljena v štiri faze. Temeljna ugotovitev je, da Foucault v arheološki in genealoški fazi, se pravi od konca šestdesetih let naprej, v literaturi ne vidi več prostora emancipacije in transgresije, ampak samo še dispozitiv oblastne moči oziroma ideološki aparat »buržoazije«.*

Ključne besede: literatura in filozofija / Foucault, Michel / strukturalizem / literarna fikcija / avtorstvo

Je ne suis pas de tout un critique littéraire,  
je ne suis pas un historien de la littérature.<sup>1</sup>

Michel Foucault je nedvomno eno izmed velikih imen 20. stoletja, ki zaznamuje dogajanje v humanistiki tudi – in morda celo zlasti – v začetku 21. stoletja. Čeprav sodobna literarna veda s pridom uporablja njegove temeljne koncepte tako, da jih iz teoretskega polja, ki literature zvečine ne zadeva, (bolj ali manj uspešno) presaja na svoja tla, se pri tem malone nikoli ne vpraša, kakšen je v resnici pogled Foucaulta samega na literaturo. Le malokdo na primer ve, da se je Foucault na začetku svoje kariere poglobljeno ukvarjal z literaturo in temeljnimi problemi literarne vede. V tej razpravi v splošnem ugotavljam, da gre v tem oziru za »dva Foucaulta«: prvi, zgodnejši Foucault, vidi v literaturi nekakšen »protidiskurz«, ki omogoča radikalen izstop iz imperija zahodne metafizike; drugi, poznejši, pa v literaturi vidi samo še diskurz med diskurzi, ki je kot vselej institucionalno pogojen docela ujet v mrežo moči in oblasti. Prav »ta« Foucault je tisti, ki je najbolj vplival na dogajanje v literarni vedi od osemdesetih let 20. stoletja naprej – spomnimo se samo na nove historiste.

Razprava bo potekala tako, da bom ob vodilu Foucaultovih pogledov na literaturo razlagal tudi nekatere temeljne koncepte njegove misli. Čeprav so ti v humanistiki navadno precej omenjani in obravnavani, so pogosto razumljeni narobe. Zato ima moje razpravljanje poleg analize

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\* Temu članku bo sledil drugi z naslovom »Foucault in literarna zgodovina«, ki bo objavljen v eni izmed prihodnjih števil *Primerjalne književnosti*. Zato bodo nekateri vidiki Foucaultove misli, ki so bolj vezani na problematiko literarne zgodovine, obravnavani tam.

Foucaultove »filozofije« literature tudi propedeutični namen (pomožnega) uvoda v Foucaultovo misel.<sup>2</sup>

Sodobni akademski pogon Foucaultovo misel navadno deli v več faz, in sicer najmanj v dve metodološko različni fazi, na zgodnejšo, arheološko, in poznejšo, genealoško. Dreyfus in Rabinow<sup>3</sup> (1983) govorita celo o štirih fazah: o zgodnji heideggerjanski, o arheološki, genealoški in etični fazi. Sam se bom v splošnem držal te razdelitve samo zaradi udobnosti, saj je s tem Foucaultova misel preglednejša – in za to mi v pričujočem prikazu predvsem gre (zato tudi povsem puščam ob strani vprašanje, ali je takšno »razparceliranje« sploh pravično misli Foucaulta ali ne).

Zgodnjo heideggerjansko fazo bi nemara lahko pravilneje označili za kriptohideggerjansko, kolikor gre sicer za prepoznaven, čeprav nikjer jasno izražen Heideggrov vpliv, ki ga je Foucault sam priznal šele pozneje, hkrati pa bi jo, čeprav res samo tematsko, razdelili na njegovo ukvarjanje z razmerjem med norostjo in literaturo ter na bataillevske premišljevanje o transgresiji in blanchotovsko »mišljenje od zunaj« oziroma izkušnjo eksterioritete, ki naj bi bila za literaturo temeljna.

Gremo po vrsti.

## Norost in literatura

Foucault v *Zgodovini norosti* (1998) in v poznejših intervjujih ter različnih sestavkih, v katerih za nazaj razmišlja o svojem knjižnem prvencu, ugotavlja, da se je moderni pojem norosti vzpostavil v 17. stoletju, ko so začeli »norce« organizirano zapirati v posebna zavetišča, sanatorije in bolnice. Zlagoma naj bi prišlo do speljevanja norosti na nesmisel oziroma na ne-razum (*déraison*) – za razliko od srednjega veka in renesanse, ko so norosti kljub zatiranju včasih vendarle pripisovali dostop do resnice.<sup>4</sup> Norost je bila v »klasični dobi« (Foucault s tem izrazom zajema klasicizem in razsvetljenstvo) prek mehanizmov družbenega nadzora in represije vzpostavljena kot tista izkušnja, o kateri se ne sme govoriti, torej kot neki molk, tista govornica, ki mora biti izključena, da bi se lahko o njej vzpostavil »znanstveni« diskurz.

Za Foucaulta je zelo pomenljivo to, da so nekateri pesniki na začetku 19. stoletja začeli pri pesnjenju posegati po »nori« govornici, še več, nekateri so bili oziroma so postali »norcii«. Seveda ne gre za to, da bi skušal podati kavzalistično psihološko-biografsko razlago, ki bi se izrčpavala v tem, da bi preiskovala različna razmerja med dejansko norostjo in pisanjem poezije, ali pa nekakšno psihoanalizo avtorjev, kot sta bila, denimo, pozni Hölderlin in Nerval. Foucaultu gre, nasprotno, za diagnozo novega zgodovinskega položaja, ki se kaže v tem, da družba daje norosti, ki se vpisuje

v literarno govorico, neko novo razsežnost, ki je včasih malone razsežnost razodetja. Prav romantična poezija je namreč norosti, katero je »klasična doba« pahnila v molk, posodila glas. Toda ta nova govorica, na katero se je pripela norost, je govorica, v kateri ne odsevajo več nevidni liki sveta, temveč skrivne resnice človeka, njegove notranjosti. »Čudno sosodstvo [étrange voisinage]« (Foucault, *Dits I* 447) norosti in literature, o katerem govori Foucault,<sup>5</sup> torej ni v njuni »psihološki« sorodnosti, in sicer že zato ne, ker norost kot taka ne rodi nobenega »dela« – popolna norost je namreč konec vsakršne umetnosti.<sup>6</sup> Norost ni kot kakšen genij, ki bi ustvarjal umetnost, ampak označuje »prazno obliko, od koder to delo prihaja, se pravi kraj, na katerem umetnost ne preneha biti odsotna, kraj, na katerem je ne najdemo, ker je tam nikoli ni. V tem bledem območju, tem temeljnem skrivališču, se razgrinja dvojčična nekompatibilnost dela in norosti« (prav tam). Toda vsaj od Hölderlina in Nervalja naprej, zlasti pa pozneje pri Rousselu in Artaudu, je pomemben tudi kraj, na katerem se zblížujeta govorica (še zlasti nora govorica) in literatura. Pri tem ne gre za kako posebno izjavljanje oziroma strukturiranje govornice, ki bi se tako zgostila v literaturo, ampak za nekakšno praznino, vrzel, ki se dolbe znotraj govornice same. Sama ta luknja je bit literature: »V tem smislu bit literature, kakor se proizvaja od Mallarméja naprej in prihaja vse do nas, doseže območje, kjer se od Freuda naprej nareja izkušnja norosti« (prav tam).

Kaj to pravzaprav pomeni? Do 19. stoletja je bila literatura močno institucionalno določena. Napisati roman je, recimo, vselej pomenilo ugajati določenemu krogu ljudi, uprizarjanje drame je imelo točno določene institucionalne pogoje itn., od 19. stoletja naprej pa se je literatura polagoma deinstitucionalizirala. Nič več ni izrekala resnice, ki bi jo lahko zajela ali poenotila kakšna institucija, in je postajala čedalje bolj anarhična, zaradi česar tudi ni nič čudnega, da je bila očarana nad norostjo in da je rada privzemala njeno govorico. Že pri poznem Hölderlinu, pa tudi pri Blaku, lahko opazimo, da najde svoje najgloblje poslanstvo, ko se opaja z govorico norosti. Foucault povrhu poudarja tudi zvezo med norostjo in mamili: izkušnja omamljenosti je vselej blizu norosti, zato je bila v literaturi in umetnosti sploh vse do danes zelo produktivna (lahko bi našli imena, kot so Poe, Baudelaire, Coleridge ... vse do Michauxa). Zveza med norostjo, omamljenostjo in literaturo pa je simptomatična zato, ker sta bila izkušnja norosti in njeno izrekanje v zahodni kulturi vsaj od razsvetljenjstva naprej docela marginalizirana. Če se moderno pesništvo zateka k delirični govorici, se torej zato, da bi poudarilo svojo transgresivno in anarhično vlogo (prim. *Dits II* 490).

Pozneje Foucault v pogovoru s svojimi japonskimi oboževalci<sup>7</sup> pravi, da ga je pri razmerju med norostjo in literaturo zanimalo tudi to, da je med tema sicer nekompatibilnima diskurzoma še eno presečišče: tako literarna

govorica kot govorica norosti sta izrazito »vertikalne« narave, kar pomeni, da prerežeta z vsakršno »horizontalno«, tj. komunikativno razsežnostjo. Tako norost kot (moderna) literatura pravzaprav ne govorita o ničemer. Moderna literatura tako na neki način predpostavlja norost, še več, norost sploh šele omogoča moderno literaturo kot tako (prim. *Dits I* 982 isl.). To pa se, nadalje, zgodi natanko takrat, ko literatura – v modernem pomenu, se pravi od začetka oziroma, če mislimo na Baudelaira, od sredine 19. stoletja naprej – pretrga zvezo z retoriko in hermenevtiko, se pravi, ko ni več v funkciji reprezentacije in subjekta (prim. *Dits I* 307).

### Transgresija in »mišljenje od zunaj«

Foucault se je na začetku svoje kariere precej ukvarjal z literaturo. V zvezi z njo si je postavljaj temeljna vprašanja, na primer, v čem je moč literature, kakšno je njeno razmerje do jezika, fikcije, v čem je njena »transgresija« itn.<sup>8</sup> V zgodnjih šestdesetih letih je objavil več člankov o moderni literaturi: o Rousseauju, Flaubertu, Mallarméju, Artaudu, Bataillu, Klossowskem, Blanchotu in Robbe-Grilletu. Poleg tega je napisal tudi dolgo študijo o dotlej malo znanem francoskem literatu Raymondu Rousselu, ki je nekaterim veljal za predhodnika novega romana. Iz njegovih spisov je razvidno, da ga je moderna in sodobna literatura fascinirala (pogosto naletimo na omembe vélikih modernih piscev, kot so Proust, Joyce, Kafka, Borges, Beckett idr.). Zato je toliko osupljivejše dejstvo, da je literatura s koncem šestdesetih let povsem izginila iz njegovega delokroga.

V *bommagu* Bataillu Foucault Bataille izraz »transgresija« razlaga kot gesto, gibanje, ki zadeva meje.<sup>9</sup> Ne gre za korak »čez« – kot namiguje izraz – v območje, ki bi bilo docela onkraj, *trans*, ampak za nenehno prekoračevanje, ki nikoli ne seže v neprekoračljivo. Zato transgresivnega nikdar ne moremo speljati na subverzivno, na goli upor nečesa proti nečemu. »Transgresija ne nasprotuje ničesar ničemur« (*Dits I* 266).<sup>10</sup> Pri njej ne gre niti za zanikanje niti za navadno zatiranje, ampak za zatiranje, ki ne zatruje nič pozitivnega, zatiranje, ki samo kaže na neprekoračljivo, brezmejno. Strukturno gledano gre tu za nekakšno posnemanje heglövske dialektike, pri čemer je zadnji korak sinteze (*Aufhebung*) nekako »izpah-njen« oziroma se sesede samega vase – je implozija sinteze v brezno čiste imanence, ki materialistično misel dela tako mikavno, nikoli do konca razumljivo. Na podobno strukturno logiko naletimo pri domala vseh »post-strukturalistih« (zlasti pri Deleuzu, Lacanu in Derridaju).

Izkušnjo transgresije, o kateri govori Foucaultu v zvezi z Bataille, pa lahko, kakor je razvidno iz drugih njegovih besedil, mirno prenesemo na

moderno literaturo na splošno, saj gre pri transgresiji v temelju za gibanje govornice same, ki gre znotraj literature vselej k svojemu lastnemu robu, ne da bi ga kdaj prestopila. V tem gibanju govoreči subjekt vselej najdeva svojo lastno končnost, svojo lastno smrt: »Morda gre za prostor [*espace*] neke izkušnje, v kateri govoreči subjekt namesto tega, da bi se izrazil, razložil, naleti na svojo lastno končnost in je z vsako besedo napoten na svojo lastno smrt« (277). Gre torej za tezo o smrti avtorja, ki jo je pozneje (leta 1968) v okviru literarnovednega (post)strukturalizma nekoliko bolj razdelal Roland Barthes.<sup>11</sup>

Moderna evropska literatura Foucaultu v njegovih zgodnjih »literarno-teoretičnih« spisih – ki se, mimogrede rečeno, odlikujejo po izjemno večplastni in težko ulovljivi retoriki<sup>12</sup> – pomeni polje preseganje novoveškega narcističnega subjekta, saj njena govornica omogoča izginjanje oziroma disperzijo subjekta v govornici.<sup>13</sup> Temeljno Foucaultovo »literarnoteoretsko« vodilo je namreč prav zveza literature s smrtjo (človeka kot subjekta). Od tod tudi slovita izjava v *Besedah in stvarih*, da je literatura »področje, kjer se klati smrt [*cette région où rôde la mort*]« (*Les mots* 395). Toda v tem ne smemo videti nekakšnega anarhičnega antihumanizma, kajti prav radikalna razlastitev kartezijskega *cogita* je to, čemur Foucault na več mestih povsem heideggrovsko pravi »bit govornice«, ki literaturo osvobaja tako avtorskega subjekta (avtorjeve intence in same funkcije avtorja) kot tudi izpod dinastije reprezentacije. Gre za možnost mišljenja in izkušnje govornice, ki je onkraj subjektivitete kot take. Foucault torej skuša literaturo misliti kot temeljni kraj osvoboditve, kot »prodor [*pervée*] v govornico, iz katere je subjekt izključen« (*Dits I* 548). Literatura je zato zanj privilegirani kraj svobode. Literatura je kraj, kjer je govornica prignana do svojih lastnih mej, kraj, kjer narcistični subjekt, ki je v vsaki stvari videl le to, kar je sam položil vanjo, izgine, umre. Prav to razmerje govornice in smrti, ki ga razkriva literatura, je tisto, čemur Foucault pravi tudi »vertikalnost literarnega govora« – v nasprotju s »horizontalnostjo«, ki je, kot smo že videli, raven vsakdanje komunikacije.

Toda literarni diskurz ni bil vedno takšen. Foucault govori o radikalnem obratu evropskega literarnega govora proti koncu 18. stoletja. Dejansko je šele tedaj nastalo to, čemur danes sploh pravimo literatura. Ta historična ugotovitev je temeljna predpostavka Foucaultove misli o literaturi – srečali smo jo že prej, ko je bil govor o razmerju med norostjo in literaturo. Kajti dotlej so literaturo pisali kot neke vrste transparentno komunikacijo, ki je neproblematično odsevala svet. S tem je začela prelamljati romantika, dokončno pa so prelomili simbolisti. Foucault večkrat omenja Mallarméja kot glavnega nosilca dokončnega preloma.<sup>14</sup> Literatura v 19. st. postane neke vrste »proti-diskurz« (prim. *Les mots* 59), katerega logika je povsem drugačna kot logika drugih diskurzov. V moderni dobi namreč kompenzira

označevalno funkcijo jezika tako, da prek nje »bit govornice na novo zasije na mejah zahodne kulture, zato odslej literatura daje misliti, vendar ne v okviru neke teorije označevanja« (prav tam).

Govornica tu zatrjuje samo sebe, je radikalno avtoreferencialna oziroma se literatura, kot pravi Foucault, »zapre v radikalno intranzitivnost« (*Les mots* 313) in »postane čisto in preprosto izkazovanje govornice [*langage*], katere edini zakon je – nasproti vsem drugim diskurzom – zatrjevati svoj brezdanji obstoj [*existence escarpée*]« (prav tam). Toda to poudarjanje radikalne avtoreferencialnosti in vasezaprtosti literarne govornice nas lahko zavede, kajti tu ne gre za trivialni jakobsonovski *factum brutum*, da je literatura v nasprotju z vsakdanjim jezikom kratko malo samonanašalna, ampak, nasprotno, za *radikalno* avtoreferencialnost, intranzitivnost, ki se prav s tem, da je napotena na svoje lastno brezno, v (brez)dnu odpira drugam, »onkraj«, čeprav tja – kot nas je poučil koncept transgresije – nikoli ne prestopi. Zato temeljno vprašanje Foucaultove »literarne teorije« pravzaprav zadeva topologijo te referencialne alteritete. Kam – če sploh kam – prodira literatura, ko se osvobaja vsakršne reprezentacije, vsakršne mimetičnosti, ki ji je podvržen kateri koli diskurz, ko se torej otrese imperializma avtorefleksivnega subjekta? Gre za govornico, ki mora iti kar se da naprej od same sebe, ki je na neki paradoksalen način »zunaj sebe«, čeprav odpravlja vsakršno razliko med notranjostjo in zunanostjo. Takšna govornica je zato »nenadna jasnina, ki je bolj razlika kot guba« – tu Foucault že anticipira Derridajevo diseminacijo –, »bolj disperzija kot povratek znakov k samim sebi« (*Dits I* 548). Literatura potiska subjekt – tako subjekt avtorja kot bralca – v stik s tem nemogočim »zunaj«. Gre za izkušnjo zunanosti (*dehors*) oziroma za »mišljenje/misel zunanosti« v pomenu subjektivnega genitiva, torej za »mišljenje/misel od zunaj« (*la pensée du dehors*).<sup>15</sup> Vsekakor je treba to mišljenje/misel, ki se izkazuje v sodobni literaturi – za Foucaulta je bil to tedaj zlasti t. i. »novi novi roman«, zato pogosto govori o Sollersu, Robbe-Grilletu, Butoru idr. –, ločiti od nadrealistične poetike, ki je bolj usmerjena v psiho, prek katere izdeluje izkušnje nadsвета oziroma, morda bolje rečeno, podsveta (prim. 366 isl.). Mišljenje/misel, ki jo misli zunanost sama, bi lahko zelo grobo in površno spravili pod okrilje »duhovnosti«. Foucault pravi, da sta izkušnja in mišljenje tega »zunaj« morda – to je samo njegova nepreverjena domneva – že bila izražena v zahodnem izročilu, in sicer v krščanski mistiki:

Nekega dne bi bilo treba opredeliti temeljne oblike in kategorije tega »mišljenja/misli od zunaj« [*pensée du dehors*]. Treba bi si bilo tudi prizadevati, da bi znova našli njegove poti, treba bi bilo raziskati, od kod prihaja in kam gre. Lahko domnevamo, da se je rodilo v mističnem mišljenju, ki se je od besedil Psevdo-Dionizija naprej klatilo na mejah krščanstva; morda se je ohranilo vsaj tisočletje, če ne več, v oblikah negativne teologije. (549)



Seveda gre tu za domnevo,<sup>16</sup> ki je Foucaultu vse preveč »sumljiva«. Bolj gotova in manj drzna je domneva, da je bila izkušnja »tistega zunaj« izražena na prelomu iz klasične dobe v moderno, najprej pri de Sadu – ta je zanj na neki način celo utemeljitelj moderne literature (prim. 977)<sup>17</sup> – in Hölderlinu ter potem proti koncu 19. stoletja pri Nietzscheju in Mallarméju (prim. 550 isl.). V vsej brutalnosti pa je izbruhnila v 20. stoletju z Artaudem, Bataillem, Klossowskim in Blanchotom.

Toda kako misliti to radikalno eksterioriteto? Že samo vprašanje je postavljeno narobe. Prej gre za vprašanje, kako mišljenje, ki prihaja od »zunaj«, lahko doseže nas. Ne gre za to, da bi se te zunanosti polastili, ampak za to, da se ona polasti nas in nas kot samobitne, samostojne subjekte razlasti. Mišljenje oziroma govorica zunanosti ali, še natančneje in abstraktneje, tista »vmesnost«, ki spregovarja v vezniku »in« in veže mišljenje *in* govorico ter ju s tem sploh omogoča, tisti kraj brez kraja, ne-kraj (*non-lieu*), ki razpira oboje, je tudi pogoj možnosti (moderne) literature.<sup>18</sup> Se to ne sliši precej heideggrovsko? To nedvomno tudi je, hkrati pa je blanchotovsko. Pri tej čudni eksterioriteti, tako kot pri Heideggrovi biti, ne gre za neki metafizični onstran, ampak za alteriteto kot eksterioriteto, ki je vselej končna, zgodovinsko pogojena, saj se vselej daje v relativnem horizontu neke dobe oziroma, foucaultovsko rečeno, episteme.

Oglejmo si še Foucaultovo razglabljanje o fikciji, ki je povezano s pojmom transgresije in eksterioritete.

V enem izmed esejev o skupini *Tel quel* iz leta 1963<sup>19</sup> Foucault pravi, da je treba o fikciji razmišljati zelo previdno, saj se zdi, da nam na tem spolzkem terenu vselej grozi nevarnost zdrsa v (vulgarno) psihologiziranje, zlasti ob izrazih, kot so domišljija, fantazma, sanje, invencija itn. Poleg tega moramo biti previdni tudi zato, ker lahko kaj hitro zapademo v banalno dihotomijo med imaginarnim in realnim, resničnim in neresničnim<sup>20</sup> (priznajmo, da je to tudi v tako popularnem sodobnem teoretiziranju o fikciji in fikcionalnosti še vedno problem). Foucaultova misel o fikciji je precej težka, saj se hoče izmakniti pastem znanstveniškega speljevanja na (racionalistične) pojme. Zato se nam lahko tudi tu – tako kot prej pri obravnavi transgresije in »mišljenja od zunaj« – zbudi sum, da gre samo za nekakšno ohlapno retoriziranje, ki navsezadnje ne pove ničesar.

Foucault skuša misliti fiktivno kot tisto, kar izhaja od nekakšne »distance, ki ne pripada niti svetu, niti nezavednemu, niti pogledu, niti notranjosti« (308), ampak je oddaljevanje od govorice, ki se godi znotraj nje same. Fikcija ne obstaja zato, ker naj bi obstajala distanca med govorico in stvarmi, kot predpostavlja večina teorij o literarni fikciji, ampak je govorica sama distanca stvari. Je njihova »luč, v kateri so, in njihova nedostopnost, simulaker [*simulacré*], v katerem se edinole daje njihova prisotnost«

(prav tam). Prav distanca omogoča vzniknjenje stvari v prisotnost prek simulakra govornice – gre za simulaker, ker simulira nekaj, česar, strogo vzeto, sploh ni<sup>21</sup> (o tem bo pozneje govoril Baudrillard). Večina diskurzov se namreč vzpostavlja tako, da notranjo distanco prikrije, fikcija, natančneje, literarna fikcija, bodisi v obliki proze ali poezije, pa, nasprotno, v tej distanci vztraja in jo »preiskuje«. Zato Foucault pravi, da če bi že moral opredeliti fiktivno, bi to storil takole: »[Fiktivno je] besedno ožilje tega, kar ne obstaja takšno, kot je« (prav tam). Povedano drugače: fikcija je na neki način jezikovna izkušnja »raztresene eksterioritete« (311), ki je, strogo vzeto, sploh ni oziroma je samo, kolikor se nam na neprilastljiv način daje prek literarne fikcije. Fikcija tudi ni v tem, »da bi dala videti nevidno, ampak da bi dala videti, kako nevidna je nevidnost vidnega« (552). Rečeno kar najbolj zgoščeno in preprosto: fikcija je prostor disperzije tako subjekta kot podobe.

V teh težavnih formulacijah lahko zaznamo zlasti to, da fikcija Foucaultu v nasprotju z Blanchotom, ki s fikcijo zmeraj razume literarno fikcijo, pomeni več kot samo literarno fikcijo.<sup>22</sup> Literarna fikcija je samo eno od izkazovanj fiktivnega, za katero se pri Foucaultu zdi, da preči polje literature, zgodovinopisja, filozofije, skratka, da »straši« po celotnem področju humanističnih ved. To je pomembno, saj se tu že svetli prehod k »drugemu« Foucaultu, ki bo fikcijo pozneje vselej tematiziral onkraj omejitve na literaturo.

## Arheologija vednosti in »konec« literature

Povsem očitno je, da je Foucaulta v šestdesetih letih, vsaj do leta 1966, ko so izšle *Besede in stvari*, zanimala in fascinirala moderna literatura, zlasti avantgardno snovanje skupine, ki se je zbirala okoli revije *Tel quel*. Pozneje, vsaj od leta 1968 naprej, pa je na podlagi vsega, kar je Foucault napisal in izjavil, postajalo čedalje jasneje, da se je literaturi »odpovedal«: ne samo da literatura iz njegovega raziskovanja domala izginje, ampak se celo zdi, da je zanj z literaturo kot literaturo prav po heglovski »konec«. Kako si je to mogoče razložiti?

Prve kali tega »protiliterarnega« obrata je mogoče zaslediti že v njegovem v literarni vedi tako vplivnem besedilu, kot je »Kaj je avtor« (*Qu'est-ce qu'un auteur*) iz leta 1969.<sup>23</sup> Besedilo govori o avtorju, ki ni individuuum, ampak samo funkcija, ki avtorizira neko besedilo. Tekst ni nikoli produkt enotne avtorjeve zavesti, ampak je rezultat socialno-politično določenih vlog, ki so združene pod okrilje tega, kar Foucault imenuje avtorska funkcija. Nas bo seveda bolj zanimalo to, kakšen položaj ima v tem besedilu literatura.

Pri branju tega sestavka naletimo na znane teme Foucaultove »literarne teorije«, kot so na primer labirint,<sup>24</sup> pisava<sup>25</sup> in zlasti smrt subjekta. Moderna literatura – »poglejte samo Flauberta, Prousta, Kafko« (Foucault, »Kaj je avtor?« 26) – ne zagotavlja več nesmrtnosti, ampak je zdaj postala morilska. Toda »koga« oziroma »kaj« – če sledimo Foucaultovi naslovni formulaciji – pravzaprav ubija? Avtorja. »Gre pa še za nekaj drugega: ta odnos med pisanjem in smrtjo se kaže tudi v zabrisovanju osebnih značilnostih pišočega subjekta. Pišoči subjekt z zvijačami, ki jih postavlja med sebe in tisto, kar piše, odvrča od sebe vse znake svoje posebne individualnosti; avtorjev pečat je le še v enkratnosti njegove odsotnosti; v igri pisave mora prevzeti vlogo mrtveca« (prav tam). Vendar takoj sledi obrat: »Vseeno pa nisem prepričan, da so dosledno izpeljali vse posledice, ki iz te ugotovitve izhajajo, in da so se dovolj zavedali njihovih razsežnost« (prav tam). Foucaultova poanta je, kot je razvidno iz nadaljevanja, jasna: izpeljati dosledno posledico smrti avtorja pomeni ubiti literaturo samo; kdor torej sprejema tezo o smrti avtorja, mora sprejeti – če hoče biti dosleden – tudi tezo o smrti literature (in seveda tudi bralca samega, čeprav o tem v besedilu ni govora).<sup>26</sup>

Oglejmo si zdaj, kako v tem v sodobni literarni vedi tako pomembnem in spoštovanem besedilu literatura »umre«. (V samem besedilu sicer ne bomo nikjer naleteli na jasno izraženo tezo o »smrti« literature, je pa mogoče dovolj jasno razbrati sledi, ki kažejo v smer takšne vizije.)

Foucault, kot že rečeno, razpravlja o avtorski funkciji in ugotavlja, da (tradicionalna) literarna veda še zmeraj predpostavlja tisti vzorec za ugotavljanje avtorjeve istovetnosti, ki je bil v rabi že v krščanski patristiki, ko so hoteli vrednost kakega teksta utemeljiti z avtorjevo svetostjo. Foucault demonstrira, da so vsa štiri temeljna merila za ugotavljanje avtorja ista, kot jih najdemo v spisu svetega Hieronima »O sijajnih možeh« (*De viris illustribus*). Gre za to, da je avtor določen, prvič, kot nesprijemljiva vrednostna raven, drugič, kot polje konceptualne ali teoretične koherentnosti, tretjič, prek slogovne enotnosti in, četrtič, kot zgodovinski dogodek. Temeljni namen preučevanja avtorske funkcije je za Foucaulta seveda ta, da obračuna s tradicionalnim konceptom avtorja kot ekstratekstualne substančne monade, ki daje tekstu tako diskurzivno zaokroženost kot polnost smisla. Nasprotno se je treba vprašati, »kako, pod kakšnimi pogoji in v kakšni obliki se lahko nekaj, kot je subjekt, pojavi v diskurzivnem redu? Kakšno mesto lahko zavzame v različnih tipih diskurzov, kakšne so njegove funkcije in katerem pravilom se podreja« (39)? Skratka, kako je avtor kratko malo funkcija, učinek teksta samega, kako so vzeli teksta samo kraj rojstva in smrti subjektivitete kot take. Kljub temu pa obstaja razlika med avtorsko funkcijo literarnega in teoretičnega dela. V tem

smislu je kratko malo simptomatična Foucaultova izjava, da avtor kakega literarnega dela (oziroma, pravilneje, funkcija avtorja, ki ga implicira kako literarno delo) ni nikoli iznajditelj novega tipa diskurzivnosti, se pravi, da ne ustvarja možnosti in pravil novih, drugačnih besedil. Če se, recimo, omejimo na primer, ki ga podaja Foucault sam: Ann Radcliffe kot utemeljiteljica novega romanesknega žanra, namreč grozljivega romana – ta žanr je sicer po Foucault znak prehoda iz klasične v moderno literaturo –, ni ustvarila nobene nove diskurzivnosti, ampak so njeni teksti samo »odprli polje določenemu številu podobnosti in analogij, ki imajo svoj model ali princip v njenem delu« (35). To pomeni, da bomo v njenem delu našli prepoznavne motive, kot so »motiv junakinje, ujete v past lastne nedolžnosti, podobo skrivnostnega gradu, črnega junaka, prekletega in zapriseženega, da bo svet delal pokoro za zlo, ki mu je bilo prizadejano itd.« (prav tam). Nasprotno sta avtorja teoretskih del, kot sta Marx in Freud, »vzpostavila neskončno možnost diskurza« (prav tam), kar pomeni, da nista omogočila samo nekega določenega tipa analogij, ampak tudi odmikov, distanc od njunih tekstov, ti odmiki in odstopanja pa so sprožili neskončno število permutacij, ki so v najširšem smislu del enega in istega, se pravi marksističnega in psihoanalitičnega diskurza. Iz tega je mogoče sklepati, da literatura pač nima več moči preloma in diskontinuitete, ki bi privedla do transformacije enega diskurza v drugega oziroma ki bi sploh lahko utemeljila nov diskurz. Po drugi strani pa je izjavo, da je avtorska funkcija »povezana s pravnim in institucionalnim sistemom, ki zameji, določi in izoblikuje prostor diskurza« (34), bržkone mogoče naobrtni tudi na literarni diskurz. Mar to povsem izrecno ne opozorja tale stavek: »Beseda 'delo' in celota, ki jo predstavlja, sta verjetno prav tako problematični, kakor je problematična avtorjeva individualnost« (27). To že nakazuje ne samo arheološko, ampak tudi genealoško tematizacijo literature. Literaturo je treba desakralizirati, demistificirati in demitologizirati. To, čemur pravimo »literatura«, je učinek zunanjih, institucionalnih in drugih pogojev oblastne moči. Ne nazadnje je latentni nagib k desakralizaciji literature opazen tudi v tem, da literatura opredeljuje avtorja povsem analogno, kot se je vrednost teksta v krščanstvu utemeljevala z avtorjevo svetostjo. Foucault pravzaprav tu implicitno govori o »rojstvu« literature »iz duha« krščanske eksegeze in hagiografije. To bi navsezadnje lahko govorilo o tem, da je institucija literature morda zadnji in najodpornejši relikv zahodne metafizike.

Kako pa Foucault gleda na literaturo v okviru *Arheologije vednosti*?<sup>27</sup> Neposredno se tu z njo sicer ne ukvarja. Pomagamo pa si lahko z analogijo. Znano je, da je Foucaulta bolj kot literatura privlačilo slikarstvo, in večkrat ga zalotimo pri analizi slik kot pri analizi literarnih del.<sup>28</sup> Če upoštevamo, da je med slikarstvom in literaturo nekakšna analogija – to je bilo

v evropskem izročilu vse do Lessinga pravilo, spomnimo se Horacijeve *ut pictura poesis* –, si lahko zamišljamo, kako bi ravnala arheologija literarnega dela, in vse, kar je v navedku, ki sledi, rečeno o sliki, prenesemo na literarno delo:

Da bi analizirali neko sliko, lahko rekonstruiramo slikarjev latentni diskurz; lahko poskušamo odkriti šepetanje njegovih intenc, ki naposled niso transkribirane v besede, temveč med črte, površine in barve; lahko poskušamo osvoboditi implicitno filozofijo, ki naj bi formirala njegov pogled na svet. Na enak način je možno preučiti znanost oziroma vsaj prepričanja neke dobe ter poskušati prepoznati tisto, kar si je slikar od njih lahko sposodil. Arheološka analiza bi imel drug cilj: raziskala bi, ali prostor, razmik, globina, barva, svetloba, proporciji, obsegi in konture v dani dobi niso bili imenovani, izjavljeni in konceptualizirani znotraj neke diskurzivne prakse; in ali vednost, ki jo ta diskurzivna praksa omogoči, ni bila vključena v teorije in morda v spekulacije, v forme poučevanja in v recepte, a tudi v postopke, tehnike in malone celo v samo slikarjevo kretnjo. Ne bi šlo za prikaz tega, da je slika določen način označevanja in »izrekanja«, ki naj bi imela za svojo posebnost to, da se izogne besedam. Potrebno bi bilo pokazati, da je slika vsaj po eni izmed svojih dimenzij diskurzivna praksa, ki se utelesi v tehnikah in učinkih. Tako opisana slika ni čisto videnje, ki bi ga bilo potrebno nato prepisati v materialnost prostora; prav tako ni gola gesta, katere neme in neskončno prazne pomene bi morale osvoboditi kasnejše interpretacije. Povsem jo preči pozitivnost vednosti – in to neodvisno od znanstvenih spoznanj in filozofskih tém.« (Foucault, *Arheologija* 208–209)

Arheologija umetniškega dela oziroma – če to besedilo naobrtno na literaturo – literarnega besedila bi torej izrecno zavračala ugotavljanje avtorjevih intenc, raziskovanje kulturnozgodovinskega konteksta, semiotično analizo in še zlasti kakršno koli interpretacijo, ki bi hotela rekonstruirati »smisel« besedila, ampak bi skušala prek dela eruirati latentne diskurzivne prakse oziroma vednost, ki jo te omogočajo. Ker je ta vednost (*savoir*)<sup>29</sup> – ki po Foucaultu (še) ni spoznanje (*connaissance*), s katerim bi lahko manipuliral kak subjekt (tako avtor kot bralec) – kot splošna paradigma izrekljivosti kake dobe (oziroma episteme) sploh pogoj možnosti kake literarne izjave, v ospredju torej sploh ne bi bila literatura, za katero se zdi, da je samo neka iluzorna enotnost, ki jo samo začasno formirajo take ali drugačne diskurzivne prakse.<sup>30</sup> V ospredje bi se pomaknila deskripcija vednosti, ki so jo (humanistične) vede vztrajno spregledovale.<sup>31</sup> Zato ni čudno, da »arheološki teritoriji lahko prečijo tako »literarne« ali »filozofske« kot tudi znanstvene tekste« (196).

Pritrditi je treba Deleuzu, ko ugotavlja, da Foucault kot nekakšen pozitivist oziroma pragmatist »ni nikoli imel problemov pri preiskovanju razmerij med znanostjo in literaturo, ali med imaginarnim in znanstvenim, ali med vedenim in živetim, saj pojmovanje vednosti prepaja in giblje vse pragove in jih dela za spremenljivke plasti [*strate*] kot historične formacije«

(59). Arheološka analiza namreč zahteva, da na isti nezainteresirani ravni obravnavamo literarno izjavo in znanstveno propozicijo, vsakdanjo frazo, shizofrenično blebetanje itn. Na diskurzivni ravni sta tako znanost kot literatura vednosti (prim. 29).

Še zmeraj pa nisem odgovoril na temeljno vprašanje, zakaj je z literaturo za Foucaulta v okviru arheologije vednosti, zlasti pa pri genealoški analizi kulturnih praks, konec.

Da je z njo konec, zvemo v pogovoru, ki ga je Foucault imel z Japonci leta 1970. Kolikor vem, Foucault samo v tem pogovoru zelo jasno in izrecno izrazi svoje dvome glede sodobne literature. Med razpravljanjem o kontroverzni Guyotatevi knjigi *Éden, Éden, Éden*, o kateri Foucault pravi, da gre za transgresivno – kar v njegovem besednjaku, kot smo zvedeli, pomeni eminentno literarno – delo, njegova japonska izpraševalca iz njega vendarle uspeta izvleči, kakšen je dejansko njegov odnos do literature. Foucault najprej omenjeno delo pohvali, vendar brž zatem izrazi svoj dvom: »Toda hkrati je literatura v naši družbi postala institucija, v kateri je transgresija, ki bi bila povsod nemogoča, postala mogoča« (*Dits I* 985). Nadalje pojasnjuje, da je »meščanska« družba njegovega časa v Franciji postala tolerantna do vsakršnega literarnega prikaza kratko malo zato, ker gre za literaturo. Lahko se pišejo homoseksualni romani, saj je to vendarle umetnost, literatura, vendar se homoseksualne prakse hkrati kaznuje. Foucault meni, da v takšni situaciji transgresivna moč literature ni več mogoča. Zato je literaturo kot tako, se pravi samo institucijo literature, nujno treba desakralizirati in demitizirati. Najbrž je jasno, da Foucault s tem noče vnaprej obsoditi vsakršne literarne produkcije, temveč gre za to, da je institucija literature zanj paradoksalno postala pogoj nemožnosti *resnične* literature. Položaj sodobne literature je postal podoben normativnemu položaju predmoderne literature v 17. in 18. stoletju: »Zdi se mi, da je literatura danes znova dobila normalno družbeno vlogo zaradi neke vrste onečaščenja [*galvaufrage*] oziroma zaradi velike asimilacijske sile, ki jo ima buržuazija« (987). Foucault nazadnje povsem heglovsko zatrdi, da je literature konec. Zanj je zadnji pisatelj Blanchot (prim. 991 isl.), ki pa je vendarle prav kot »poslednji pisatelj« že pokazal pot, ki vodi ven iz literature, ven iz institucije literature, kajti danes se je treba postaviti ven iz »njene borne zgodovinske usode« (993).

Če je Foucault res verjel v totalno zmago buržoazije, ki si je navsezadnje prilastila in s tem uničila literaturo kot zadnje zatočišče resnične subverzije oziroma transgresije, je treba reči, da je zanj kratko malo simptomatično to, da je kljub vsej intelektualni neodvisnosti ostal zavezan epistemologiji in ontologiji marksizma.

## Nietzschejanska nadgradnja: od arheologije h genealogiji

Kar zadeva genealoško analizo, je treba poudariti, da, vsaj metodološko gledano, ne gre toliko za obrat kot za nadgradnjo. Foucault se namreč arheologiji ne odreče, ampak bo ta odslej vedno predstopnja oziroma dopolnilo genealogije. Tako kot arheologija se tudi genealogija ne ukvarja s problemom izvora, nastanka oziroma geneze, ampak gre v njej, kot Foucault sam pravi, za »dešifriranje« pomenov nediskurzivnih, ne več samo diskurzivnih praks, na katere se je zvečine omejevala arheologija.<sup>32</sup> Foucault pride do novega temeljnega uvida, namreč da se je analiza diskurzov pokazala za nezadostno, kolikor je bil »arheoanalitik« – predvsem Foucault sam – pri tej analizi vselej izvzet iz svojega lastnega diskurza. Zato Foucault skuša svoje mišljenje nekoliko hermenevtizirati, tj. misliti svojo lastno pozicijo, kar pa v zadnji posledici pomeni, da ne gre več za nikakršno historiografsko prakso, ki bi se historicistično »zaklepala« v lastno fikcijo preteklosti, ampak za transcendentalno zgodovino sedanjosti: vsi Foucaultovi »izleti« v zgodovino imajo poslej en sam namen, namreč priskrbeti hermenevtični ključ za razumevanje sedanjih kulturnih praks, sedanjih formacij moči. Iz nevtralnosti deskripcije je bil Foucault prisiljen približati se temu, čemur Ricoeur pravi hermenevtika suma – čeprav je seveda res, da se sam ni nikoli hotel imel za nikakršnega hermenevta, saj naj bi bila njegova genealogija kljub interpretativnemu ustroju nekakšna tretja pot med (post)strukturalistično deskripcijo in hermenevtično interpretacijo.<sup>33</sup> Vsekakor je simptomatično – in seveda v tistem času modno –, da se ima Foucault poslej za nietzschejanca. Na podlagi interpretacije Nietzschejeve *Genealogije morale*<sup>34</sup> ugotavlja, da je njegovemu dotlejšnjemu raziskovanju manjkalo nekaj temeljnega, in sicer tematizacija moči oziroma oblasti. Genealogija je namreč nekakšna diagnostika relacij med močjo/oblastjo (*pouvoir*), vednostjo (*savoir*) in telesom (*corps*)<sup>35</sup> v moderni družbi. V vsaki obliki racionalnosti, bodisi kot volji do resnice (*volonté de vérité*) bodisi kot volji do vednosti (*volonté de savoir*), bo Foucault odslej preiskoval to, kar je Nietzsche, čeprav še vedno nekoliko psihologizirajoče, imenoval »volja do moči« (*Wille zur Macht*). Sam bo temu sicer pravil (le) moč/oblast (*pouvoir*) oziroma (v času prvega dela *Zgodovine seksualnosti*, 1976) bio-moč/oblast (*bio-pouvoir*), kolikor gre za nekakšen interpretativno-analitični koncept, ki skuša zajeti »mikrofiziko« lokalno razpršenih sil, ki lahko konstituirajo celotno politiko človeškega življenja (to se pri njem imenuje biopolitika).<sup>36</sup> Foucault torej v sedemdesetih letih razvija koncept oblastne moči, ki je docela depersonaliziran in anonimen. Misli ga je mogoče v obliki nekakšnih ritualov moči, ki so razpršeni po celotni sferi javnega življenja. Čeprav je takšna oblast po eni strani vsepričujoča, pa po drugi – kot se glasi sloviti Foucaultov obrazec

– *kot taka* v resnici sploh ne obstaja;<sup>37</sup> določene skupine in institucije si jo začasno prilastijo, tako da poenotijo kontingentno igro sil. Koncept moči je pri Foucaultu na splošno zelo enigmatičen. Vtis imamo, da gre za nekakšno materialistično apofazo moči, ki se izmika vsaki (prilaščajoči) teoretizaciji. Čeprav je kot take ni, vendarle učinkuje kot nekakšna kvazitranscendentalna enotnost<sup>38</sup> – morda zadnja metamorfoza heglovskega duha –, ki omogoča misliti, kako se strukturirajo in transformirajo kulturne prakse.

V »genealoški fazi« Foucault iznajde tudi nov temeljni metodološki koncept – dispozitiv. Vendar ga, tako kot vse druge pglavitne koncepte svoje misli, nikoli zares koncizno ne opredeli. Za razloček od *epistème*, ki je celota epohotvornih interdiskurzivnih relacij in s tem nekakšen (kvazi)transcendentalni pogoj dobe oziroma obdobja, je dispozitiv širši pojem. To je, zelo posplošeno rečeno, celota tako diskurzivnih kot nediskurzivnih relacij (institucije, zakoni, administrativne reglementacije, znanstvene, filozofske in moralne propozicije, itn.). Povedano drugače: dispozitiv omogoča izoliranje relacij med vednostjo in močjo/oblastjo, ki jih je mogoče analizirati. Je nekakšna mreža, ki zameji, modelira svežnje relacij med heterogenostjo diskurzivnih strategij in nediskurzivnih praks, kot je, recimo, arhitektura prostora, organizacija teles, pogledov oziroma, v zadnji posledici, vidljivosti kot take. Vselej pa je v temelju dispozitiv moči/oblasti, kajti prav mikrofizika sil oziroma, na »višji« ravni, oblasti lahko dejansko premošča diskontinuiteto med diskurzom in kulturno prakso.<sup>39</sup> Pojem moči/oblasti je tako tisti temeljni kvazitranscendentalni pogoj, ki povezuje, enoti, sintetizira dve v temelju nezdružljivi in ločeni sferi. Kvazitranscendentalna enotnost pripade prav tej disperziji moči. Tako Foucault pride – kot opozarja Deleuze (91) – do novega historičnega *a priori*, do atopičnega kraja oziroma ne-kraja (*un non-lieu*), ki ga, strogo vzeto, sploh ni, pa vendarle učinkuje. Je – če lahko tako rečemo – fantazmatsko kvazitranscendentalno »gibalo« zgodovine kot množstva kontinuitet in diskontinuitet, ki jih ne more poenotiti nobena teleo-logija (ta strukturni vzorec je – to bi se dalo pokazati – skupen vsem »poststrukturalističnim« filozofijam zgodovine, ki vse, čeprav tega nočejo, predpostavljajo kontinuitetno in teleološko mišljenje).<sup>40</sup> Vendar dispozitiv implicira tudi proces subjektivizacije – kar Foucaultu postaja čedalje jasneje –, brez katere bi nehal biti to, kar je, namreč dispozitiv moči/oblasti, in bi postal zgolj nasilje. Zato Giorgio Agamben opredeli dispozitiv takole:<sup>41</sup> »[Gre za] relacije med individui kot živimi bitji in zgodovinskim elementom, pri čemer je mišljena celota institucij, proces subjektivizacije in pravil, prek katerih se konkretizirajo relacije moči« (11–12).

Ker Foucault v »genealoški fazi« o literaturi ne govori več, je treba to, kako bi jo vendarle analiziral, improvizirati. Zdaj bi ga zanimalo samo še to, kako literarni diskurz funkcionira znotraj dispozitiva oblastne moči, se pravi, kako je selekcioniran, sakraliziran in institucionalno etabliran. Zanimali bi



ga samo zunanji, socialni, ekonomski in politični pogoji produkcije literarnega diskurza. Literaturo bi bilo torej mogoče analizirati samo na podlagi relacij literarnega diskurza z zunanjimi transdiskurzivnimi praksami oziroma, če nekoliko poenostavim, z drugimi institucijami, se pravi z državno kulturno politiko, z univerzo oziroma literarno vedo kot stroko, založniki, tržnimi nišami itn. Skratka, govor o literaturi bi bil v zadnji instanci možen samo še v obliki takšne ali drugačne sociologije.

Tega projekta se Foucault sam ni nikdar lotil. Lotili so se ga in se ga še lotevajo novi historisti<sup>42</sup> in druge sodobne kulturnomaterialistične literarne teorije. Po tej poti pridemo do različnih sodobnih v temelju (novo)marksističnih produkcijskoestetiških literarnih teorij: iz Francije prihajata marsikje zelo vplivna Bourdieujeva teorija literarnega polja in – sicer manj znana – Machereyeva althusserjanska teorija literarne produkcije. V anglosaksonskem svetu sta na tem področju najvplivnejša Fredric Jameson in Terry Eagleton, čeprav je takšen pristop na splošno značilen tudi za druge kulturološke usmeritve v sodobni (ameriški) literarni vedi, kot so, recimo, *New Economic Criticism*, ki se je »odcepil« od novega historizma, *Ecocriticism*, *Race-Class-Gender Criticism*, *Queer Studies* itn. V Nemčiji pa sta tovrstne teoretične nastavke vase vsrkali zlasti empirična literarna veda in že omenjena *Diskursanalyse*.

## Estetika etike

»Pozni« Foucault konec sedemdesetih in zlasti na začetku osemdesetih vpelje v svoje mišljenje dotlej precej zanemarjen koncept: subjekt. Problemi subjektivacije so povezani s t. i. vladnostjo<sup>43</sup> (*gouvernementalité*), pri kateri ne gre samo za tehnike vladanja kralja, institucij, dominantne družbene skupine, moških nad ženskami in otroki oziroma katerega koli subjekta/subjektov nad drugimi subjektom/subjekti, ampak tudi in morda še zlasti za to, kako »vladamo« sami sebi. Politika nujno vodi k etiki. Foucaulta čedalje bolj zanima etika v smislu subjektivnih praks ter njihovega razmerja z védenjem in oblastjo. Njegova misel posledaj dobi eleganten tričleni ustroj. Gre za mišljenje relacij med tremi osmi, ki naj bi bile temeljne že za antično misel: med vednostjo oziroma resnico (*alétheia*), močjo oziroma oblastjo (*politeía*) in etiko (*éthos*). V sestavku »Kaj je razsvetljenstvo« Foucault svoje podjetje koncizno opredeli takole:

Toda mi imamo opravka s tremi osmi, katerih specifičnost in medsebojno povezanost moramo analizirati: os védenja, os moči in os etike. Z drugimi besedami, zgodovinska ontologija nas samih mora odgovoriti na odprto serijo vprašanj, opraviti mora neomejeno število raziskav [...], toda vse se bodo naslavljalne na vprašanja,

sistematizirana takole: kako smo konstituirani kot subjekti lastnega védenja? Kako smo konstituirani kot subjekti, ki izvršujejo razmerja moči ali pa se jim podrejujejo? Kako smo konstituirani kot moralni subjekti svojih lastnih dejanj? (Foucault, *Vednost* 157)

Te relacije Foucault preučuje v različnih zgodovinskih situacijah, in sicer v okviru svojega (nedokončanega) grandioznega projekta *Zgodovina seksualnosti*.<sup>44</sup> Zlasti v drugem in tretjem delu tega dela je njegov namen pokazati na nekakšno estetiko življenja, ki naj bi bila navzoča že v antiki, vendar naj bi se izgubila v krščanstvu, ki naj bi zahtevalo popolno podređitev Božji volji in s tem izničenje sebstva.

O literaturi Foucault tudi v tem svojem zadnjem obdobju domala sploh ne spregovori več. Lahko bi seveda spekulirali in razglabljali o tem, v kakšne subjektivacije nas sili branje literature, vendar je poanta pozne Foucaultove misli, ki se dotika umetnosti, pravzaprav drugače. Foucault toži, da smo umetnost zreducirali na objekte, pri čemer ima v mislih to, da imamo za umetniško delo vselej delo, ki je objektivno ločeno od »subjekta«, na primer sliko, kip, tekst itn., namesto da bi za umetnost imeli življenje samo. Da, tako zdaj baudelairovsko zahteva Foucault: posameznikovo življenje naj bi bilo temeljno umetniško delo. V pogovoru z naslovom »O genealogiji etike: pogled dela v nastajanju« pravi takole:

Čudi me dejstvo, da je v naši družbi umetnost postala nekaj, kar je povezano samo z objekti in ne z individui ali z življenjem. Umetnost je nekaj specializiranega ali narejenega s strani izvedencev, ki so umetniki. Toda ali ne more življenje vsakogar postati umetniško delo? Zakaj naj bi svetilka ali hiša bila umetniški objekt, naše življenje pa ne? (*Vednost* 128)

Foucaultovo zadnje »oznanilo« v zvezi z literaturo bi torej bilo: ne berite literature, temveč to postanite!

#### OPOMBE

<sup>1</sup> »Nikakor nisem literarni kritik, nisem zgodovinar literature.« (Foucault, *Dits II* 1426)

<sup>2</sup> V slovenščini imamo doslej vsaj tri sintetične prikaze Foucaultove misli. Gl. Močnik (1984), Dolar (1991) in Lešnik (1998).

<sup>3</sup> Njun prikaz Foucaultove misli, ki ga je »potrdil« tudi Foucault sam, ko je k njuni knjigi napisal celo epilog, je še danes eden izmed najboljših »kažipotov« po težavnih Foucaultovih miselnih pokrajinah. Omeniti je treba še Deleuzov spis *Foucault* (1986). Čeprav Deleuze ponekod misel svojega prijatelja (in v marsičem tudi učitelja) preveč napeljuje na mlin svoje filozofije, je ta spis vendarle najglobokoumnejša, filozofsko kongenialna interpretacija Foucaulta.

<sup>4</sup> Na primer norost kot *furor*, ki jo evropska civilizacija pozna vsaj od starih Grkov naprej. Norec je lahko (tako kot pesnik/prerok v stanju norosti, ki so jo sprožili bogovi) izrekel, ne da bi seveda sam to vedel, najglobljo resnico. To se zgodi na primer tudi v Shakespeareovem *Macbethu*.

<sup>5</sup> Tu se opiram tudi na sestavek »La folie, l'absence d'oeuvre«, objavljen v *La Table ronde*, št. 196 (1964), in ponatisnjen v *Dits I* 440–448.

<sup>6</sup> »Norost je popoln prelom z umetnino; je konstitutivni trenutek odprave, ki v času utemeljuje resnico umetnine; zarisuje njen zunanji rob, črto razkroja, obris na praznini.« (*Zgodovina norosti* 246).

<sup>7</sup> Gre za pogovor z naslovom »Kjoki, bungaku, šakai« (»Folie, littérature, société«) iz leta 1970. Gl. *Dits I* 972–996.

<sup>8</sup> Prim. T. O'Leary 90. V nadaljevanju se opiram zlasti na ta članek. Prim. tudi knjigo Simona Duringa (1992), ki pa je napisana precej »ohlajno«, in Freundliebov članek (1995), ki je kritičen do sodobne recepcije Foucaultovih konceptov v literarni vedi, saj ugotavlja, da iz Foucaultovih razglabljanj o literaturi ne moremo potegniti nobenega konsistentnega metodološkega izhodišča. Vseeno gre za branje, ki Foucaultovi misli ni pravično, kar je simptomatično za večino literarnovednih strokovnjakov, ko skušajo v »jasne pojme« prevesti »temačno govorico« kakega modernega filozofa in pri tem ves čas razočarano ugotavljajo, kako megleni in medli (beri: neuporabni) so vsi koncepti, ob katere so trčili. Res pa je, da je kritika arheološke analize literature, ki se je povsem nekritično, ne da bi premislila, za kaj tu v temelju sploh gre, že dodobra udomačila v literarnih vedi – razen v anglosaškem svetu zlasti v Nemčiji –, povsem upravičena. V novejših nemških učbenikih metodologije literarne vede praviloma vedno naletimo na prikaz očitno čedalje priljubljenejših zgodovinskih analize diskurzov (*historische Diskursanalyse*) literature oziroma njene še sodobnejše metamorfoze, interdiskurzivne analize. Prim. npr. Geisenhanslüke 121–141.

<sup>9</sup> Gl. »Preface à la transgression«, v: *Critique*, št. 195–196 (1963) oziroma *Dits I* 261–278.

<sup>10</sup> »La transgression n'oppose rien à rien.«

<sup>11</sup> Gl. Barthes 19–23. Istega leta Foucault v nekem intervjuju izjavi: »Delo vselej na neki način implicira smrt avtorja samega.« (*Dits I* 688).

<sup>12</sup> Kar je rad poudarjal zlasti de Certeau (2002).

<sup>13</sup> Foucault je Nietzschejev stavek »Bog je mrtev« rad radikaliziral s trditvijo, da je hkrati z Bogom umrl tudi človek.

<sup>14</sup> Gre za »mallarméjevsko odkritje besede v njeni nemočni moči« (*Les mots* 313).

<sup>15</sup> Oziroma za »mišljenje zunanosti«, če to razumemo kot subjektivni genitiv, se pravi za mišljenje, ki ga misli »zunanost« sama.

<sup>16</sup> V pogovoru s Phillipom Sollersom in drugimi o novem novem romanu (*Débat sur le roman*) Foucault vendarle ugotavlja, da se mu kategorije, kot so duhovnost in mistika, pravzaprav ne zdijo ustrezne. Prim. *Dits I* 368.

<sup>17</sup> V *Besedah in stvarih* je ta pionirska vloga dodeljena Cervantesovemu *Don Kihotu*. Gl. *Les mots* 62 isl.

<sup>18</sup> Prim. v **tipično blanchotovski diktaciji napisan sestavek o razmerju med literaturo**, govorico in prostorom »Le langage de l'espace«, *Critique*, št. 203 (1964), oziroma *Dits I* 435–440.

<sup>19</sup> Gre za sestavek »Distance, aspect, origine«, objavljen v *Critique*, št. 198 (1963), in ponatisnjen v *Dits I* 300–313.

<sup>20</sup> Prim. prav tam 307.

<sup>21</sup> Logiko simulakra Foucault obširneje tematizira v sestavku »La prose d'Actéon« (*Dits I* 354–365), ki je namenjen Klossowskemu. Tu celo trdi, da je »prostor simulakra nedvomno sedanj, čeprav še skrit kraj literature« (365). Prim. During 84–86.

<sup>22</sup> O tem prim. O'Leary 100. Temeljni Blanchotovi knjigi, na kateri se Foucault navadno sklicuje, sta *La part du feu* (1949) in *L'espace littéraire* (1955).

<sup>23</sup> Besedilo je bilo objavljeno v *Bulletin de la Société française de philosophie* 63 (1969). Nekoliko spremenjenega ga je Foucault prebral na konferenci v Buffalu (New York) leta

1970. Prevod francoskega besedila najdemo v zborniku *Sodobna literarna teorija* 25–40. Ta Foucaultov spis sicer najdemo v številnih pregledih sodobne literarne teorije (denimo v *Contemporary Literary Criticism* in *The Norton Anthology of Theory and Criticism*). Zanimivo je, da ti prikazi, ki v uvodih največkrat tudi povzamejo Foucaultovo misel, ki naj bil bila pomembna za literarno teorijo, ne vedo ničesar o zgodnjem Foucaultu in njegovih razmišljanjih o transgresiji in eksterioriteti. Omejujejo se samo na njegov vpliv na novi historizem in seveda na priljubljeno témo o boju proti humanistični homogeni identiteti avtorja kot osebe.

<sup>24</sup> Pojem je Bataille (gre za tematizacijo »labirintnih« človeških odnosov, ki dajejo iluzijo Biti, ki je v resnici ni) in je bil v šestdesetih zelo popularen. Alaine Robbe-Grillet je celo napisal roman z naslovom *V labirintu*. Gl. During 80 isl.

<sup>25</sup> Pisava (*écriture*) je bil v šestdesetih letih seveda modni pojem, ki ga je moral vsak pisec pač uvrstiti v svoj teoretski arzenal, če je hotel biti slišan oziroma bran. Na splošno je sinonim za smrt subjekta: »Pri pisanju se ne razodeva in ne povečuje samo dejanje pisanja; niti ne gre za to, da bi se subjekt utrdil v govorici; pisava odpira prostor, v katerem pišočič subjekt nenehno izginja« (Foucault, »Kaj je avtor?« 26).

<sup>26</sup> Še več, menim, da Foucault ne bi mogel sprejeti temeljne metodološke triade literarne vede, namreč enotnosti polja, ki ga zasedajo mesta avtorja, teksta in bralca. Nisem prepričan, ali se tisti, ki v literarni vedi radi sprejemajo modne anarhične teze o smrti tega in onega, sploh zavedajo, da imajo take izjave vselej tudi ustrezne ontološke posledice.

<sup>27</sup> To delo bo natančneje analizirano v drugi razpravi, ki bo – kot sem opozoril že na začetku – izšla v eni izmed prihodnjih številok Primerjalne književnosti.

<sup>28</sup> Paradigmatična je njegova analiza slike Renéja Magritta »To ni pipa« (2007).

<sup>29</sup> O pojmu vednosti pri Foucaultu gl. zlasti Deleuze (1986).

<sup>30</sup> O tem, da je pojem diskurza pri Foucaultu vselej zelo ohlapen in nikoli zadovoljivo pojasnjen, glej Frank (1988). K temu prim. Revel 22–24.

<sup>31</sup> Če arheološki deskripciji dodamo še genealoško razsežnost, te vednosti ni treba misliti samo v smeri, ki pelje k konstituciji objekta spoznanja, in imeti pred očmi samo transdiskurzivna razmerja med oblastjo in znanjem, ki se konstituirajo znotraj neke institucije, ampak jo je *berati* treba misliti tudi v relaciji do procesa subjektivacije, se pravi do estetike samospoznanja. Se mar takšna arheo-genealogika tu odpira tudi k bralcu, interpretu?

<sup>32</sup> Prim. Dreyfus in Rabinow 102 isl.

<sup>33</sup> Dreyfus in Rabinow namreč zagovarjata tezo, da Foucaultova metoda, čeprav je interpretativna, vendarle ni hermenevtična, kolikor je pri njem interpretacija »pragmatično vodeno branje koherence družbenih praks« (124), ne odkrivanje globljih pomenov, ki bi se skrivali za temi praksami. To pa se mi ne sliši prepričljivo. Ali ni tudi samoprodukcija raziskujočega subjekta (v tem primeru Foucaulta samega) prek objektov raziskave v temelju hermenevtična gesta?

<sup>34</sup> Gre za spis »Nietzsche, la généalogie, l'histoire«, objavljen v zborniku *Hommage à Jean Hyppolite* (gl. *Dits I* 1004–1024).

<sup>35</sup> Foucault skuša misliti telo povsem drugače, kot se ga je mislilo dotlej, in se distancira tudi od Merleau-Pontyjeve fenomenologije medtelesnosti. To, kar skuša misliti, je nekakšna »politična tehnologija telesa«, pri čemer gre za mišljenje relacij med telesom v razsežnosti biološkega funkcioniranja in institucionalnimi dispozitivni moči (Prim. Dreyfus in Rabinow 115). Tudi koncepta moči in vednosti je treba pri Foucaultu vselej misliti na anonimni predsubjektni, se pravi kvazitranscendentalni ravni.

<sup>36</sup> Foucault razloži ta izraz v sestavku »Rojstvo biopolitike«: »S tem razumem način, kako so od 18. stoletja naprej skušali racionalizirati probleme, ki so se v obliki pojavov, značilnih za skupnost živih bitij, ki tvorijo populacijo, postavljali vladni praksi: zdravje, higiena, rodnost, dolgoživost, rase ...« (*Življenje* 132) Prim. tudi Revel 13–15.

<sup>37</sup> »To seveda pomeni, da tisto, kar se imenuje Oblast – z veliko začetnico ali ne, in kar naj bi obstajalo univerzalno, v koncentrirani ali razpršeni obliki – ne obstaja« (Foucault, *Vednost* 113).

<sup>38</sup> O tem za poststrukturalistično misel temeljnem pojmu več v članku, ki bo izšel pozneje.

<sup>39</sup> Prim. Dolar xix–xx, ki pa se tako ali tako opira zlasti na Dreyfusa in Rabinowa ter Deleuza.

<sup>40</sup> Podobno v zvezi s Foucaultom ugotavlja Tomo Virk v svoji *Dubovni zgodovini*: »Tudi ideja episteme, ki jo v svoji viziji zgodovine podaja Michel Foucault, kaže določene sorodnosti z duhovno zgodovino.« (22)

<sup>41</sup> Agamben ugotavlja (prim. 8 isl.), da je predhodnik pojma »dispozitiv« pojem »pozitivnost«, ki naj bi ga Foucault prevzel od mladega Hegla (*Posivität*). V dispozitivu vidi enega izmed temeljnih metodoloških konceptov moderne filozofije, zato ni čudno, da je tudi temelj njegovih lastnih genealoških preiskovanj. Nasploh je Agambenova misel izrazito foucaultovska – vendar v »pozitivnem«, intelektualno zadovoljivem smislu. Njegova »ontologija« je, tako kot Foucaultova, v temelju tričlena: obstajata dva velika »razreda« mišljenja, živa bitja oziroma substance in dispozitivi (eden izmed temeljnih in najstarejših dispozitivov naj bi bila kar govorica sama), vmes pa se konstituira (in v isti sapi tudi že dekonstituira) subjekt. Če vso stvar nekoliko aktualiziramo, je Agambenova poanta jasna. Sodobna hiperkapitalistična družba se odlikuje po izredni proliferaciji dispozitivov, kar pomeni, da imamo kot živa bitja, kot substance, na razpolago ogromno različnih dispozitivov, prek katerih se lahko subjektiviramo. Na primer: zazvoni mobilni telefon, pritisnemo na gumb, začnemo pogovor – in že smo subjektivirani prek celotnega stehnziranega dispozitiva, ki ga zasnavlja mobilna telefonija. Vendar Agamben meni, da večina sodobnih dispozitivov pravzaprav nima več funkcije subjektivacije, ampak, narobe, desubjektivacije. Seveda, vsak proces subjektivacije vodi k desubjektivaciji, zato gre tu za desubjektivacijo, ki ne vodi v nobeno novo subjektivacijo, če pa do te že pride, je nekako fantomska, spektralna, se pravi nepristna, neresnična. Na primer: mobilni telefon zaradi stehnzirane oblike komunikacije predpostavlja dispozitiv, ki zgolj desubjektivira, ne vodi v nobeno novo (pristno) subjektivacijo, ampak z njim samo dobimo »številko, prek katere smo lahko nadzorovani« (31). Mislim, da lahko v tem prepoznamo tipično novomarksistično (oziroma, če hočete, postmarksistično) dikcijo, ki v »sodobnejše« izrazje prevaja stare marksistične pojme, kot sta reifikacija in depersonalizacija. Mobilni telefon namreč razoseblja in postvarja – tako bi lahko staromodno izrazili povsem isto stvar.

<sup>42</sup> Te »zgodbe« tu ne bom obnavljal, saj je dobro znana. V slovenščini prinaša dober prikaz Vanesa Matajca, gl. zlasti 98–101, kjer je obravnavana navezava novih historistov na Foucaulta.

<sup>43</sup> Gre za prevodno rešitev zadnjega slovenska izbora Foucaultovih spisov. Gl. sestavek »Vladnost« v Foucault, *Življenje* 110–131. Prim. tudi Revel 38–40.

<sup>44</sup> Naj mi bo v zvezi s tem dovoljeno pristaviti posplošujočo in nekoliko trivialno pripombo: kolikor se Foucault vrača h kantovskemu avtonomnemu subjektu, ki je dedič stoiške parezije, je treba reči, da je njegova etika izrazito (neo)stoična – morda bi ga lahko ironično označili kar za »poslednjega stoika«.

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## Foucault's Views on Literature

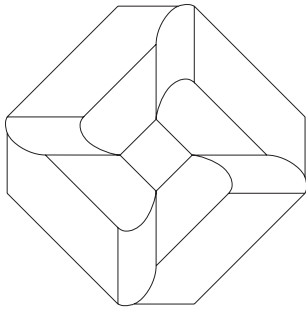
Keywords: literature and philosophy / Foucault, Michel / structuralism / fictionality / authorship

This article discusses the conceptions of literature by the famous French theoretician Michel Foucault. As already implied in the title, Foucault liked to change his views on literature. This basically involved two opposing viewpoints. In Foucault's early works, literature (or, more specifically, modern literature) was at the forefront of his interest, especially because he believed it has a strong liberation potential. However, in his later works this was quite the opposite: literature was perceived merely as a social and political game played by the modern bourgeoisie. Foucault's early works express a positive attitude towards literature and can be divided into four topics: madness or the mad language of poetry, transgression, notions of exteriority, and literary fiction. According to Foucault, until the end of the eighteenth century literature always reflected a non-problematic image of the world and thus served the ruling ideology. Only with the emergence of Romanticism, and finally with symbolism, did literature manage to cut its ties with the communicational function of language and penetrate the field of mad (i.e., uncontrolled and polyvalent) language. Since then literature, especially in the completion of modern literature (which according to Foucault already began at the beginning of the nineteenth century) in modernism, has also been transgressive; this means it constantly moves on the edge of language, without ever crossing over into the field of transcendence. In the sense of (post)structuralism, which was emerging at that time, Foucault claims that writing (*écriture*) is primary and comes before any subject; literature thus involves thinking that comes from the "outside" (exteriority), although this exteriority is never merely a counterweight to the interior.

In Foucault's late works (i.e., as part of his genealogy of authoritative discourses), literature is no longer specially thematized. Nonetheless, by the late 1960s it was possible to almost perceive some sort of an anti-literary turn; for example, in his famous essay "What is an Author?" In a 1970s interview, Foucault stated that for him literature had become a bourgeois institution in which transgression was no longer possible. From then on, literature had to be viewed within the context of the discourses of power. Foucault did not carry out this project himself; instead, this work was performed by various cultural and materialist currents of contemporary literary studies.

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## Tematski sklop





# Esej in singularnost: uvod

Darja Pavlič

Eseja ni mogoče uvrstiti v tipologijo literarnih vrst, podedovano iz romantike, torej v epiko, liriko ali dramatiko, vendar ga literarna veda vsaj od začetka 20. stoletja obravnava kot samostojen žanr. Njegova zgodovina sega v antiko k Platonu, Pliniju, Seneki in Marku Avreliju, za začetnika zvrsti velja Montaigne. Med razlogi, da lahko esej označimo kot žanr, ki poleg romana najbolj ustreza moderni dobi, so njegove strukturne značilnosti, kot so mešanje različnih žanrov, refleksivnost in avtorefleksivnost, prvoosebni govor, ki ga je mogoče primerjati z lirično izpovednostjo, avtobiografskost, poetični slog, narativni elementi (zlasti anekdotičnost), intertekstualnost (zlasti citatnost), odprta forma, obravnavanje kulture v najširšem pomenu te besede itd. Esej posamezniku (nemetaforičnemu jazu), ki nima pretenzije po objektivni resnici, omogoča, da zapiše svojo subjektivno resnico, zato ga je mogoče razumeti tudi kot ključni žanr post-moderne družbe oz. njene umetnosti, filozofije in znanosti.

Drugi pojem, zapisan v naslovu pričujočega tematskega sklopa, se podobno kot esej izmika enoznačnim definicijam. V luči singularnosti se je esejju mogoče približati vsaj na dva načina:

1) V ospredju so značilnosti eseja, njegova enkratnost in edinstvenost. Pri tem se je mdr. mogoče sklicevati na posebno šolo novejših literarnih ved, t. i. poetiko singularnosti. Avtorji, kot so Timothy Clark, Derek Attridge in Samuel Weber, so literaturo obravnavali kot dogodek singularizacije, ki se odvija ob recepciji, pri čemer so svoje raziskave oprli na argumente Kanta, Heideggerja, Gadamerja, Blanchota, Derridaja. Clark\* trdi, da singularnost ni neka skrita lastnost, izvor ali afekt literature. Vsebovana je v tem, kar Derrida imenuje »sintaksa«, se pravi v postavitvi in ne vsebini besed. Singularnost literature je sintaktična, logična ali poetična operacija, ki povezuje besede. Eden izmed izrazov, ki jih je Derrida uvedel za opisovanje singularnosti literature, je »gubanje« izrazov enega prek, čez in okoli drugega v besedilu in možnih kontekstih, ki jih besedilo prinaša. Singularnosti ne moremo v celoti zajeti s kako tematizacijo ali kratko trditvijo. Povzroči lahko učinek posebne globine, sakralnosti, zgoščenosti ali skrivnostnosti. Nobena interpretacija ne more zajeti skrivnosti ali singularnosti besedila zgolj z nekim preprostim naslovom, ne da bi pri tem česa izpustila (131–132).

2) V ospredju je singularnost esejista, pri čemer se je mogoče nasloniti na različne filozofske koncepte subjekta in posameznika (Kierkegaard).

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\* Clark, Timothy. *The Poetics of Singularity: The Counter-Culturalist Turn in Heidegger, Derrida, Blanchot and the later Gadamer*. Edinburgh: Edinburgh University Press, 2005.

Poleg tega ni mogoče zanemariti dejstva, da je že Montaigne razpravljajl o oblikovanju svoje identitete v procesu pisanja, o subjektivnosti in univerzalnosti svojih ugotovitev ipd. Po Montaignu, ki je last absolutne resnice pripisoval izključno Bogu, so koncept jaza, predmeti konceptualizacije in védenje o predmetih enako spremenljivi in gibljivi. V svojih esejih je vedno znova obravnaval samega sebe in svoje spremembe. Kritiziral je idejo, da bi bil on sam, Michel, kaj manj zanimiv od človeka na splošno (III/9). Čeprav je bilo njegovo zanimanje usmerjeno k »posamezniku« (III/2), se je dobro zavedal, da imajo njegovi opisi singularnega Michela splošne implikacije.

V razpravah, zbranih na naslednjih straneh, je mogoče zaslediti oba pristopa, ki smo ju pravkar grobo orisali, pri čemer se je večina avtorjev osredotočila na singularnost eseja. Peter V. Zima v svojem prispevku ugotavlja, da je imel modernistični esej utopično dimenzijo, ki v postmodernističnem eseju izgine in jo nadomesti enodimenzionalen pogled na družbo. Preroško napetost kot posebno značilnost esejističnega sloga Walterja Benjamina poleg alegoričnosti in surrealističnosti izpostavi Remo Ceserani. Sledijo trije prispevki, v katerih je v ospredju singularnost esejista: Marko Uršič se ob Montaignevih esejih ukvarja z razmerjem med avtorjem in esejističnim subjektom; Montaignev podvig analizira tudi Varja Balžalorsky, pri čemer izpostavi vzporednice z neegološkimi teorijami individuuma; Ignacija Fridl pokaže, da je Montaignevo stališče o eseju kot refleksiji jaza mogoče razumeti na način, da jaz v esejistični formi poskuša določiti mero in mejo lastnemu bivanju. V naslednjih treh razpravah avtorji izpostavijo značilnosti izbranih esejističnih pisav: na primeru čeških esejev iz 20-ih in 30-ih let Ivo Pospíšil analizira specifične tematske in formalne značilnosti češkega eseja in njegovo tipologijo; v prispevku Pétra Hajduja je literarnost biografskih esejev madžarskega pisca Kálmána Mikszátha opisana z analizo metafor; Mária Bátorová pa ugotavlja, da eseji čeških in slovaških disidentov nimajo samo dokumentarne vrednosti, ampak avtentično presegajo meje žanra. Singularnost eseja po mnenju Marka Juvana ne bi bila mogoča brez »sensus communis« – pojma, razumljenega kot obče mesto, sklicevanje na zdravo pamet ali Kantov »Gemeinsinn«. Na premalo upoštevano značilnost eseja opozori tudi Bart Keunen, ko izpostavi njegovo prikladnost za raziskovanje vsakdanjega življenja. Po mnenju Iztoka Osojnika esej nikoli ne more nastati z reportažo (reprezentacijo), temveč zgolj kot neposredno lingvistično pričevanje, kot dogodek. S posebno vrsto dogodka, tj. z gledališkim esejem se ukvarja Tomaž Toporišič, pri čemer za analizo izbranih primerov uporabi koncepte singularne pluralnosti in estetske performativnosti. Tematski sklop zaokroži prispevek, v katerem se Tomo Virk ukvarja z naravo esejističnega diskurza v literarni vedi in ugotavlja, da esej omogoča razpiranje tistih segmentov literature, ki niso dostopni v objektivno znanstvenost naravnemu diskurzu.

# The Essay and Singularity: Introduction

Darja Pavlič

The essay cannot be categorized in the typology of literary genres inherited from Romanticism – that is, as epic, lyrical, or dramatic. Instead, since at least the beginning of the twentieth century, literary studies has treated it as an independent genre. Its history stretches back into Antiquity, to Plato, Pliny, Seneca, and Marcus Aurelius. Montaigne is considered to have started the genre, and in the twentieth century the best-known authors and poets writing essays included. Among the reasons that the essay can be labeled the genre that, alongside the novel, best suits the modern age are its structural characteristics such as the mixing of various genres, reflection and self-reflection, the use of the first person (which can be compared with lyrical expressiveness), autobiography, poetic style, narrative elements (especially anecdotes), intertextuality (especially citationality), open form, treatment of culture in the broadest sense of the word, and so on. The essay enables the individual (the non-metaphorical self) that does not have pretensions of objective truth to write down his subjective truth, and so it can also be understood as a key genre of post-modern society or of its art, philosophy, and science.

Like the essay, the second concept contained in the title of this thematic section also evades an unambiguous definition. In the light of singularity, the essay can be approached in at least two ways.

First, the characteristics of the essay, its uniqueness and singularity, are in the foreground. Here one possibility is to refer to a special new school in recent literary studies: the “poetics of singularity.” Writers such as Timothy Clark, Derek Attridge, and Samuel Weber have treated literature as an event of singularizing that takes place in reception, and they have based their studies on the arguments of Kant, Heidegger, Gadamer, Blanchot, and Derrida. According to Clark in his book *The Poetics of Singularity*,\* singularity is not some hidden quality, origin, or affect of literature. It inheres in what Derrida terms “syntax,” the placement and not the content of words. The singularity of literature is the syntactic, logical, or poetic operation that relates the words. One of the terms introduced by Derrida in order to describe the singularity of literature is “fold” or “folding” of terms across,

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\* Clark, Timothy. *The Poetics of Singularity: The Counter-Culturalist Turn in Heidegger, Derrida, Blanchot and the later Gadamer*. Edinburgh: Edinburgh University Press, 2005.

over, and about each other through the text, and through the possible contexts that are projected by the text. Singularity cannot be fully captured in some sort of thematization or summary proposition. It may produce the effect of extra depth, sacrality, density, or mystery. No interpretation can gather the secret or singularity of the text under some summary heading without leaving some remainder (131–132).

Second, the singularity of the essay writer is in the foreground, in which it is possible to rely on various philosophical concepts of the subject and single individual (Kierkegaard). In addition, one cannot overlook the fact that even Montaigne discussed the formation of his identity in the writing process, subjectivity, the universality of his findings, and so on. According to Montaigne, who ascribed the possession of absolute truth to God alone, the conceptual self, the objects of conceptualization, and knowledge about objects are equally changeable and fluid. In his essays, Montaigne repeatedly discusses himself, his flows, and changes. He criticizes the idea that he himself, Michel, should be of less interest than man in general (III/9). Although his interest is directed to “a particular one” (III/2), he is well aware that his portrayals of the singular Michel convey general implications.

In the papers brought together on the following pages it is possible to trace both of the approaches roughly sketched out here, although most of the contributors have concentrated on the singularity of the essay. **Peter V. Zima**'s paper determines that the modernist essay had a utopian dimension that has disappeared in the postmodern essay and has been replaced by a one-dimensional perspective on society. **Remo Cesarani** highlights prophetic tension as a special characteristic of Walter Benjamin's essay-writing style, in addition to allegory and surrealism. The next three papers focus on the singularity of the essay writer. **Marko Uršič** examines the relationship between the author and the subject of the essay in Montaigne's essays. **Varja Balžalorsky** also analyzes Montaigne's achievement, highlighting parallels with non-ego-based theories of the individual. **Ignacija Fridl** shows that Montaigne's stance on the essay as a reflection of the self can be understood as the self seeking to define the scope and limits of its own existence in essay form. The papers by the next three contributors highlight characteristics of selected essay-like writing. Based on Czech essayists of the 1920s and 1930s, **Ivo Pospíšil** analyzes specific thematic and formal features of the Czech essay and its typology. **Péter Hajdu**'s paper describes the literary character of biographical essays by the Hungarian writer **Kálmán Mikszáth** through analysis of metaphors. **Mária Bátorová** determines that the essays of Czech and Slovak dissidents have not only documentary value, but also authentically exceed the boundaries of the

genre. According to **Marko Juvan**, the singularity of the essay would not be possible without a *sensus communis* – a concept understood as a common place, referring to common sense or Kant's *Gemeinsinn*. **Bart Keunen** also draws attention to an under-acknowledged characteristic of the essay by accentuating its applicability for the study of everyday life. According to **Iztok Osojnik**, the essay can never originate through reportage, or representation, but only as indirect linguistic testimony, as an event. **Tomaž Toporišič** deals with a special type of event, the theatrical essay, in which he uses the concept of singular plurality and aesthetic performativity in order to analyze selected examples. This thematic section concludes with a paper by **Tomo Virk**, in which he examines the nature of essay-like discourse in literary studies and determines that the essay makes it possible to open up those segments of literature that are not accessible to discourse that is oriented towards objectivizing disciplines.



# Essay and Essayism between Modernism and Postmodernism

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*The article is an attempt to show to what extent the essay, which is situated between philosophy and literature, is an anti-systematic genre open to individual experience and aiming at the particular phenomenon. Although this openness is a feature common to modernist and postmodern essayistic writing, developments in literature and philosophy show that modernist essayism (from Musil to Adorno) contained a utopian dimension which disappears in a postmodern constellation (from Robbe-Grillet and Fowles to Barthes) marked by a one-dimensional view of society. The question concerning an alternative social order is no longer raised in postmodern essayism.*

Keywords: literature and philosophy/ literary genres / essay / modernism / postmodernism  
/ utopia / particularity

In its long history (cf. Schärf 13–37), the essay has always been geared towards the particular and the incomplete, towards openness and philosophical or aesthetic experience. In all its phases and forms, it has avoided systematic closure and conceptual deductions at the expense of individual experience. In most cases, it has preferred the particular and concrete to the general principle. It has nevertheless been open to generalisation and argument: not only in philosophy, but also in literary criticism and in literature itself.

In fact, the most fascinating aspect of essayistic writing, one might argue, is its potential for bringing about a spontaneous synthesis between the particular and the general, for bridging the gap between experience and the concept. It is not by chance that modern literary criticism, which deals with increasing ambiguity, indeterminacy and openness, has always professed a penchant for the essay and an ingrained distrust of systematic discourse.

For criticism, as defined by a writer like T. S. Eliot or a deconstructionist like Geoffrey H. Hartman, is an art in its own right, is literature about literature. This is what T. S. Eliot means when he points out: “The critical activity finds its highest, its true fulfilment in a kind of union with creation in the labour of the artist.” (Eliot 31) This kind of union cannot possibly be realised in a systematic philosophical treatise or in a sociological

system. Almost half a century after Eliot, Geoffrey H. Hartman considers criticism as a literary genre. He writes about his critical work: “In *Criticism in the Wilderness* and *Saving the Text* I try to define the symbiosis or tangled relations of literature and literary commentary.” (Hartman 203)

At this stage, it would be tempting to assume that the form of the essay and essayistic writing in general is typical of literary criticism and has had little or no impact on philosophy and the social sciences. This is not the case. Although philosophy is well known for its ambitious systems – from Aristotle to Hegel – it also has an essayistic past highlighted by the works of Michel de Montaigne and David Hume.

In his text “On Essay-Writing”, Hume seeks to bridge the gap between what he calls “the learned and the conversable Worlds”, that is between the world of philosophy or science on the one hand and the world of social conversation. The latter is at the same time the world of experience which is frequently lacking in the “learned world” of philosophers and scientists: “And indeed, what cou’d be expected from Men who never consulted Experience in any of their Reasonings, or who never search’d for that Experience, where alone it is to be found, in common Life and Conversation?” As a logical consequence of this criticism, Hume envisages a synthesis between the two worlds, a synthesis that is “essayistic” in character: “’Tis to be hop’d, that this League betwixt the learned and conversible Worlds, which is so happily begun, will be still farther improv’d, to their mutual Advantage; and to that End, I know nothing more advantageous than such Essays as these with which I endeavour to entertain the Public. In this View, I cannot but consider myself as a Kind of Resident or Ambassador from the Dominions of Learning to those of Conversation [...]” (Hume 412–413)

It is not by chance that a philosopher who relies heavily on the empirical tradition favours a genre aiming at experience and the world of daily life. He is very much in disagreement with a systematic thinker like Hegel who exclaims “all the worse for the facts” whenever reality refuses to conform to the laws of the idealist system.

## **The Modernist Essay between Philosophy and Art**

This fundamental disagreement between a systematic idealism and an essayism inspired by openness and individual experience reappears in late modern or modernist philosophy at the beginning of the 20<sup>th</sup> century. The political controversies between George Lukács and Theodor W. Adorno, which ultimately revolved around the question whether Soviet socialism was an acceptable model or not, are embedded in a philosophical and aesthetic context involving the problem of essayism sketched above.



It is a well-known fact that the young Lukács considered the essay as a form of life, as a form in its own right that mediated between art and conceptual thought and at the same time stood aloof from both. To Lukács, who published his famous collection of essays, entitled *The Soul and The Forms* (*Die Seele und die Formen*) in 1911, the essay appeared as a kind of conceptual thought which avoided the “icily-conclusive perfection of philosophy”. The original expression is: “der eisig-endgültigen Vollkommenheit der Philosophie”. (Lukács 7)

Unlike philosophy, which the young Lukács tends to assimilate to a science dealing with facts and their relations, the essay is not determined by its objects and contents, but by its *form*. Unlike the philosophical or scientific text, which may lose its relevance in the course of time because situations and facts change, the essay is read for its own sake. In this respect, it is close to art and is comparable to an aesthetic object. It cannot be refuted like a scientific treatise. One of Lukács’s examples is Johann Winkelmann’s essayistic work about Ancient Greece. “Is it conceivable”, he asks, “that Burckhardt and Pater, Rhode and Nietzsche might call into question the influence of Winkelmann’s Greek dreams?” (9) The answer, of course, is no.

The reason is not so much the – frequently doubted – erudition of Winckelmann’s dreams, but the *form* they were put in. The form defies the ravages of time, and we read Winckelmann, as we read Burckhardt, Pater or Nietzsche, because we are fascinated by their way of looking at reality, by the forms of their texts. The same argument applies to Lukács’s own essays, to *The Soul and the Forms*.

According to the author himself, they are located between art, life and conceptual thought: unlike works of art, they do not refer directly to life and the real world, but come into being as critical reactions to aesthetic experience, to art. This is why Lukács can argue that they come about “on the occasion of something else”: “bei Gelegenheit von”. (27) For the essay which stands between art and conceptual thought differs radically from art insofar as it never refers to life itself, but only to life as represented by art: that is to artistic experience. For that reason, it renders life only indirectly. It is nevertheless true that its forms give expression to the particular experience, but this experience is mediated by art.

As an expression of the particular, the essay cannot represent the totality of experience, but only a fragment. It is fragmentary in character. Those familiar with Montaigne, Hume, T. S. Eliot and especially Adorno are surprised to find, at the end of Lukács’s essay on the essay, i.e. in his letter to Leo Popper, that the essay is provisional in character because it is a forerunner of the “great aesthetic”, of “the system”. Let us hear Lukács himself: “With quiet pride the essay may confront its fragmentary character with the

small perfections of scientific precision, however, its utmost fulfilments, its greatest achievements fade away as soon as the great aesthetic arrives.” (29)

To Lukács, “the great aesthetic” appears as a system, and the final part of his essay is dominated by a Hegelian “longing for the system”, literally: “Sehnsucht nach dem System”. (30) This longing finds a kind of fulfilment in Lukács’s “great aesthetic” of the 1970s which is a materialist reconstruction and reinterpretation of Hegel’s aesthetic theory and philosophy of art. In Lukács’s work as a whole, the essay thus appears as a mere forerunner, as a provisional solution which is meant to be superseded – in the Hegelian sense – by a higher form: by the system. At the same time, the particular and singular is sacrificed to a future totality.

In the present context, the crucial aspect of Lukács’s text is its utopian ending. For the “longing for the system” is at the same time a longing for a new “system of values” (“System der Werte”) (30) – and, indirectly or implicitly, for a new society, a better world. It announces Lukács’s later conversion to a Hegelian Marxism (in *History and Class Consciousness*, 1923) and his endorsement of East European socialism in his mature life. It is undoubtedly a late modern or modernist utopia comparable to the utopian projects of other Marxists and some existentialists. However, it is not a utopia in the sense of Adorno, in the sense of Critical Theory.

Adorno’s essayistic utopia is irrevocably anti-systematic and anti-Hegelian. In his essay on the essay (“Der Essay als Form”, 1954-58), he follows the young Lukács in emphasising the fragmentary and particularistic character of the essay, but at the same time dwells upon the contrast between the essayistic consciousness and an official culture that is latently hostile to the particular and to individual freedom.

The freedom to give one’s opinion, to insist on one’s preferences – if necessary against dominant fashions and trends – is inherent in Adorno’s notion of the essay, of essayism: “The essay reflects what is loved and hated instead of presenting the mind as creation *ex nihilo* on the model of an unrestrained work ethic. Luck and play are essential to it.” (Adorno, *Notes I*, 4) “Luck and play” are absent from Lukács’s theory of the essay, but they are quite important in postmodernism, especially in Roland Barthes’s essayistic criticism. The affinity between Adorno’s and Lukács’s essayism is the utopian component. However, Adorno’s utopia is very different from that of the Hungarian philosopher.

It is the utopia of non-identity, inseparable from individual emancipation and from Adorno’s and Horkheimer’s critique of Enlightenment rationalism and Hegel’s systematic philosophy. The essay is defined negatively by what it opposes: “The essay allows for the consciousness of non-identity, without expressing it directly; it is radical in its non-radicalism,

in refraining from any reduction to a principle, in its accentuation of the partial against the total, in its fragmentary character.” (Adorno, *Notes I*, 9)

It is interesting to observe how Lukács’s and Adorno’s ideas about the essay converge only to diverge in the last but crucial point. The two philosophers agree that the essay aims at the particular experience and that its form is geared to this aim. But unlike Lukács, who believes that the essay is to be superseded by a higher form of thought, by the system, Adorno maintains that the essay is a permanent rebellion against systematic philosophy from Plato to Hegel: “In particular, it rebels against the doctrine, deeply rooted since Plato, that what is transient and ephemeral is unworthy of philosophy – that old injustice done to the transitory, whereby it is condemned again in the concept.” (Adorno, *Notes I*, 10) In this respect, Adorno’s and Lukács’s comments on the essay anticipate their later works: While Lukács’s thought evolves towards the system in the Hegelian and Marxist sense, Adorno’s thought becomes increasingly radical in its rejection of systematic philosophy and in its defence of the particular, the individual, the non-identical.

His *Negative Dialectics* (*Negative Dialektik*, 1966) is an attempt to map out an alternative to Hegel’s positive dialectic and its materialist reincarnations in Marxism and Marxism-Leninism. Once again, Adorno defends the individual and particular against Hegelian attempts to integrate it into a totality, thus sacrificing it to the general. “Dialectics is the consistent sense of non-identity” (Adorno, *Negative 5*), Adorno points out and adds elsewhere: “The matters of true philosophical interest at this point in history are those in which Hegel, agreeing with tradition, expressed his disinterest. They are nonconceptuality, individuality, and particularity – things which ever since Plato used to be dismissed as transitory and insignificant, and which Hegel labelled ‘lazy Existenz’.” (Adorno, *Negative 8*)

In his *Negative Dialectics* and elsewhere – especially in his collection of maxims entitled *Minima Moralia* – Adorno attempts to do justice to this particularity by developing his theory of the essay. Once again, the idea is an adaptation of theoretical, conceptual writing to the singular, the particular. In *Minima Moralia*, the maxim links the individual case to the general concept, the fragment to the whole. Truth thus appears not as an abstract thesis but as a concrete case. In *Negative Dialectics*, this process of particularisation culminates in the model. The author of this rebellious, unorthodox text envisages a series of model analyses as an alternative to the rationalist treatise or the Hegelian system: “Philosophical thinking is the same as thinking in models; negative dialectics is an ensemble of analyses of models.” (Adorno, *Negative 29*)

In his posthumous *Aesthetic Theory*, Adorno radicalises his essayistic, particularizing approach and tries to go beyond the model. His ultimate

alternative is the paratactic order of the text: a parataxis that avoids hierarchy and systematisation. It is reminiscent of Walter Benjamin's "configuration" and – in the last instance – of Mallarmé's "constellation". It is meant to simulate simultaneity and to present an alternative to traditional argumentation which yields a result. Adorno's utopia is a reconciliation of the particular and the general, of subject and object, spirit and nature.

### **Essayistic Literature: Essay and Utopia in Proust and Musil**

Adorno's modernist utopia of a critical thought aiming at the particular and at reconciliation with nature reappears in the works of Robert Musil and Marcel Proust. Both authors are averse to a systematic, didactic approach that reduces the particular to an epiphenomenon of the general, the individual case to a mere example of an overarching totality. Like Adorno, they seek truth in particular experience.

In his essay on Proust, Adorno is quite explicit on this subject: "In Proust, however, the relationship of the whole to the detail is not that of an overall architectonic plan to the specifics that fill it in: it is against precisely that, against the brutal untruth of a subsuming form forced from above, that Proust revolted." (Adorno, *Notes* II, 174)

It is a fact that Proust's novel does not follow teleologically a grand design, but is composed of autonomous units which are linked paradigmatically and paratactically rather than by a causally and syntactically structured narrative. "Un amour de Swann" is as autonomous a unit as "Noms de pays: le nom". Moreover, Proust's narration is constantly interrupted – like Musil's – by essayistic excursions into very heterogeneous fields of knowledge such as science, psychology, politics, history and art.

The striking affinities between Proust and Adorno are partly to be explained by the French novelist's aversion towards the abstractions of intellect and towards a way of life entirely governed by intelligence and conceptual thought. At the end of Proust's search, the latter is subordinated to "artistic instinct". Not the intellectual, brilliant Causeur who manipulates concepts and ideas has access to truth, but the artist capable of listening to his unconscious, to his "involuntary memory" (the *mémoire involontaire*): "The ideas formed by the pure intelligence have no more than a logical, a possible truth, they are arbitrarily chosen. The book whose hieroglyphs are patterns not traced by us is the only book that belongs to us." (Proust 241) Naturally, this is not what Adorno would have said; but it comes rather close to his distrust of purely conceptual thought and to his orientation towards artistic mimesis.

There is another reason why Proust can be considered an essayistic precursor of Adorno: like Adorno he stands Hegel on his head by continuing the romantic tradition (F. Schlegel, Schelling) and by proclaiming that art, not philosophy, is the supreme form of consciousness. This inversion of Hegel's hierarchy implies an orientation towards the particular, towards essayistic writing unhampered by conceptual constructions and logical deductions.

This is the point where Proust and Musil meet. From a philosophical point of view, Musil is a lot more explicit than Proust. What he has to say about systematic thought in philosophy could be read as an implicit critique of Hegel and possibly of Plato and Aristotle. About Ulrich, his main character, we read: "He was not a philosopher, for philosophers are violent characters, who haven't got an army at their disposal and therefore try to rule the world by locking it up in a system." (Musil 253) Like Musil, Ulrich is a non-systematic observer who is more fascinated by a significant detail than by ideologies and metaphysics. Unlike other characters in the novel, he distrusts all ideological rhetoric which he tries to deconstruct by emphasizing modernist ambivalence and by dwelling on paradoxical situations.

Ambivalence and the paradox are responsible for the crisis of narration both in Proust's *Recherche* and in Musil's fragmentary novel. In a situation where characters, actions and statements can no longer be defined unambiguously (as was the case in 19<sup>th</sup> century novels), it becomes difficult to establish a narrative causality based on the assumption that certain thoughts and actions can be attributed to certain actors. Ulrich is not a man of action, but a thinker and dreamer in the sense of Virginia Woolf's Orlando. Woolf's narrator remarks about her heroine or hero: "If then, the subject of one's biography will neither love nor kill, but will only think and imagine, we may conclude that he or she is no better than a corpse and so leave her." (Woolf 257) The fact is, however, that the modernist corpse is full of ideas and dreams which cannot be used in a traditional narrative structured by action. In modernism, action is superseded by an essayistic writing closely linked to thought and imagination.

Like Virginia Woolf's Orlando, Ulrich mainly "thinks and imagines" – and this is one of the reasons why essayism and an essayistic philosophy are so important in Musil's novel. About Ulrich his narrator remarks: "Roughly like an essay, which, from section to section, considers a phenomenon from many perspectives, without ever defining its meaning, – for a perfectly defined phenomenon loses its volume and boils down to a concept, – he believed that he could deal with the world and his own life in the most satisfactory manner." (Musil 250)

At this point, the affinity between Musil and Adorno need hardly be emphasised. Although Adorno never abandons conceptual thought, he distrusts the concept, especially in its rationalist or Hegelian form. Like Musil, he refuses to reduce the particular phenomenon to a conceptual definition, to an abstraction, and writes about the essay that “it rejects definition of its concepts”. (Adorno, *Notes I*, 12)

In the 62<sup>nd</sup> chapter of his novel, Musil refers to the “utopia of essayism”. An unambiguous definition of this utopia is hardly possible and would certainly not be approved of by the essayistic novelist. However, he might agree with the idea that this utopia is a move away from the ideological or philosophical schemes which have precious little to do with the reality they pretend to explain. It is a utopia in the sense of Adorno: a state of mind and a social situation that may not ever come about, but that are worth aspiring to because they promise to be infinitely better than the situation we live in.

It is a modernist utopia insofar as it calls into question the entire bourgeois order which rests on the dubious assumption that the dominant ideas and ideologies correspond to reality – or, rather, that reality corresponds to them. The plausibility of this correspondence is only maintained by the Subject’s domination over the Object, over nature. The utopias of essayism are attempts to subvert the principle of domination and to think outside of its conceptual systems. The difficulties Musil and Adorno encountered in their search for alternative discursive forms – in their essayism, their aphorisms and their paratactic writing – show how difficult it is to break out of the established order.

Postmodern philosophers, literary critics and writers no longer attempt to break out. They still adhere to the critical idea, to essayism and even the essayistic novel, but they have abandoned the utopian search for an alternative social order and a subjectivity emancipated from the principle of domination. The latter is still criticised – by philosophers and literary critics alike – but alternatives are no longer envisaged. Postmodernism has become one-dimensional.

### **From Deleuze and Rorty to Barthes: The Loss of the Utopian Dimension in Postmodernism**

It would be misleading to assume that postmodernism is one-dimensional in the sense that it renounces criticism or the critical activity as such. It is one-dimensional in so far as it deletes the notion of truth and the complementary modern and modernist question concerning a better

society and a more humane world. Postmodern critique no longer aims at an overcoming in the sense of the German *Überwindung*, but accepts what Gianni Vattimo, quoting Heidegger, calls *Verwindung* in *The End of Modernity*: “Precisely this difference between *Verwindung* and *Überwindung* can help us to define in philosophical terms the ‘post’- in ‘post-modernism’.” (Vattimo 164) Translated into political terms, this should be taken to mean that postmodernists no longer believe in an overcoming of capitalist and bourgeois society. They have accepted it – albeit grudgingly.

Postmodern essayism bears witness to this situation marked by *Verwindung*. In art and literature, it no longer aims at truth and the truth content of artworks in the sense of Adorno, but disavows truth as a metaphysical relic. The philosophers who most convincingly plead against the modern and modernist metaphysics of truth are probably Gilles Deleuze and Félix Guattari. Their rapprochement between philosophy and art, between philosophy and literature is designed to outmanoeuvre the notion of truth in the traditional, metaphysical sense: “Philosophy does not consist in knowing and is not inspired by truth. Rather, it is categories like Interesting, Remarkable, or Important that determine success or failure.” (Deleuze, Guattari 82) Although they never attempt to dissolve philosophy in literature, they do emphasise the literary, non-conceptual aspects of philosophical discourse: “Melville said that great novelistic characters must be Originals, Unique. The same is true of conceptual personae. They must be remarkable, even if they are antipathetic; a concept must be interesting, even if it is repulsive.” (Deleuze, Guattari 82) “Interesting”, “remarkable” are the new criteria – not “true”.

A postmodern philosopher such as Richard Rorty is even more explicit when, going one step further than Deleuze and Guattari, he crosses the generic border and dissolves philosophy and even science in literature. What he calls “twentieth century textualism” could be viewed as a postmodern essayism which, having abandoned the notion of truth, encompasses literature, philosophy and science: “[...] Twentieth-century textualism wants to place literature in the center, and to treat both science and philosophy as, at best, literary genres.” (Rorty, *Consequences* 141) Like Geoffrey H. Hartman, a literary critic and a deconstructionist, Rorty considers Jacques Derrida’s experimental text *Glas* as a model of postmodern textuality: “It is no small feat to get this sort of thing down on paper, but what we find in *Glas* is not a new terrain. It is a realistic account of a terrain upon which we have been camping for some time.” (Rorty, *Deconstruction* 15)

*Glas* could best be described as an essayistic textual collage which criticises Hegel’s systematic, absolutistic thought without proposing – like Adorno’s or Horkheimer’s modernist critique – an alternative truth content

in artistic mimesis. In postmodern philosophy, critique is no longer linked to the complementary concepts of truth, emancipation and overcoming, but is geared towards the new notions of play, desire and pleasure.

A model of this new postmodern textuality is Roland Barthes's essayism. In some respects it is similar to Adorno's anti-systematic, anti-logocentric approach; in other respects it represents a break with Adorno's modernist search for truth and truth contents in the realm of art. With Nietzsche, Barthes shares "the *good* will to hold on to appearance" (Nietzsche 113) which characterises the artist and the aversion towards metaphysical truth. Inspired by the essayistic and aphoristic spirit of the German philosopher, he emphasises the impossibility of translating the polysemic signifiers of literary and philosophical texts into conceptual systems or – as he himself puts it – into "structures of signifieds". (Barthes, *S/Z* 5)

His critical essays of the 1960s and 70s can be read as a permanent struggle against rationalist, dialectical or structuralist attempts to define the meaning or the truth content of literary or even philosophical texts. "The instance of the text", he points out in *The Semiotic Challenge*, "is not signification but the signifier, in the semiotic and the psychoanalytic acceptance of the term [...]".<sup>(7)</sup> In reality, Barthes is not interested in semiotic or psychoanalytic deep structures (in the sense of Greimas or Charles Mauron), but in the playful interaction of polysemic signifiers.

This becomes obvious in his essays on Robbe-Grillet, where, following the anti-metaphysical stance of the Nouveau Roman, he tries to avoid all metaphysical connotations, all references to a "truth content" in the sense of Adorno. The objects, as described by Robbe-Grillet, he argues, are simply there. In another article on Robbe-Grillet, he maintains that the novelist of the new type systematically avoids associating objects with meaning and human intentionality; his objects are purely material and linked by "indifferent chance", "hasard indifférent" (Barthes, *Essais* 65), as Barthes himself expresses it.

His essays are reactions to this "indifferent chance" and indirectly to postmodern indifference as such which gradually supersedes modernist ambivalence. In Kafka's, Musil's and Adorno's works, this ambivalence was responsible for the essayistic search for meaning and subjectivity. In Barthes's essays, the indifference of words and things puts an end to the search and essayism becomes one-dimensional. The postmodern essay is no longer a search, but a playful experiment, a game, aiming not at truth, but at pleasure.

This one-dimensional character of postmodern writing is amply illustrated by Barthes's book *The Pleasure of the Text*, whose author defines writing as the "science of the pleasure of language" (14) and eventually pleads



in favour of an “aesthetic of pleasure” (“esthétique du plaisir”). (94) Like many postmodernists – e.g. Linda Hutcheon – he considers Brecht as a prominent forerunner of such an aesthetic – forgetting Brecht’s Marxist engagement and his emphasis on the link between popular pleasure and popular revolution.

### **Postmodern Essayism in Literature: John Fowles and John Barth**

The tendency towards a playful and indifferent one-dimensionality reappears in contemporary essayistic literature which is considered as postmodern by many critics. In John Fowles’s novel *The French Lieutenant’s Woman* (1969), for example, essayism and metalingual commentaries – considered by various literary critics as a postmodernist feature – are quite prominent. The numerous quotations from philosophy and literature preceding each of the novel’s 61 chapters could also be considered as essayistic elements which are meant to induce the reader to stop and ponder on the text and the plot instead of consuming both uncritically.

One of the best examples is probably chapter 13 which begins with a brief quotation from Tennyson’s *Maud*. Its beginning is a clearly essayistic, “metalingual” reflection on the author’s positions within the literary evolution and within society. It is worth quoting extensively, especially since it establishes a link between Fowles’s art of the novel, Barthes’s literary criticism and Robbe-Grillet’s *Nouveau Roman*. Answering the question “Out of what shadows does she [i.e. the heroine Sarah] come?”, Fowles’s narrator answers:

I do not know. This story I am telling is all imagination. These characters I create never existed outside my own mind. If I have pretended until now to know my characters’ minds and innermost thoughts, it is because I am writing in [...] a convention universally accepted at the time of my story: that the novelist stands next to God. He may not know all, yet he tries to pretend that he does. But I live in the age of Alain Robbe-Grillet and Roland Barthes; if this is a novel, it cannot be a novel in the modern sense of the word. (Fowles 85)

So what exactly is it?

It is a postmodern novel whose narrator and author reflect on their positions within the literary evolution, the literary field and the literary institution. Their essayistic approach is certainly not uncritical. Yet it is very different from Virginia Woolf’s, Robert Musil’s or Adorno’s utopian essayism. Far from aiming at a utopian future like Musil or at an aesthetic truth content like Adorno, Fowles envisages a playful text and an aesthetic

game. At the beginning of the 13<sup>th</sup> chapter, he is quite explicit in this respect: “So perhaps I am writing a transposed autobiography; perhaps I now live in one of the houses I have brought into the fiction; perhaps Charles is myself disguised. Perhaps it is only a game.” (85)

Very much like Barthes, who abides by Nietzsche’s Hellenistic maxim that only appearance counts, that one ought to avoid the depths of essence and remain on the surface, Fowles inaugurates a textual and intertextual game in which quotations from the works of Marx and Darwin do have a critical function, but at the same time contribute to a better functioning of the game: of Fowles’s “intertext”, Barthes would say. Like the narrator’s “metalingual” comments, they are essayistic elements within a novel which is no longer a metaphysical search in the modernist – Proustian or Joycean – sense, but a playful experiment designed to entertain the cultivated postmodern reader.

John Barth’s well-known short story *Lost in the Funhouse* reveals what kind of reader the postmodern writer has in mind. It is a reader who is familiar with pre-modernism and modernism, but who considers both with growing irony, as Umberto Eco puts it in his *Reflections on the Name of the Rose*. (67) Essayism within the novel turns out to be an important instrument of this postmodern irony. In Barth’s story, it appears in the guise of a regularly recurring metalingual comment: “The function of the beginning of a story is to introduce the principal characters, establish their initial relationships, set the scene for the main action [...]” (Barth 77) This sentence is to be found at the beginning of the story and signals a self-reflexive attitude of the narrator. It suggests that, in modernism and postmodernism, literature has become an essay on literary writing: a kind of meta-literature.

The narrator reflects ironically upon the modernist novel (Joyce, Th. Mann) and its unfortunate heroes whose literary genius is inseparable from their suffering, from their outsider status. He tells us about his hero Ambrose who is destined to become a writer: “Though she had never laid eyes on him, she recognized that there was one of Western Culture’s truly great imaginations, the eloquence of whose suffering would be an inspiration to unnumbered.” (Barth 96) The essayism of this sentence does not only consist in its irony, but also in the parodistic attitude adopted by the postmodern narrator towards the modernist hero whose metaphysical pretensions are cut to size.

Finally, they are reduced to a game similar to that played by other postmodern authors such as Umberto Eco or John Fowles. At the end of Barth’s story, literature appears as a funhouse: “He wishes he had never entered the funhouse. But he has. Then he wishes he were dead. But he’s not. Therefore he will construct funhouses for others and be their secret

operator – though he would rather be among the lovers for whom fun-houses are designed.” (Barth 97)

Essay and essayism, which were instruments of a metaphysical search in modernism, both in philosophy and in literature, are thus turned by postmodern authors into a textual game which has its critical components, but excludes the utopian dimension.

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## Esej in esejizem med modernizmom in postmodernizmom

Ključne besede: literatura in filozofija / literarni žanri / esej / modernizem / postmodernizem / utopija / partikularnost

Odkar je esej postal žanr, je meril na partikularno, na odprtost in individualno izkušnjo. Vedno se je izogibal sistematičnemu zaprtju in identifikaciji z realnostjo: identifikaciji subjekta in objekta v racionalističnem ali hegllovskem smislu. Na tej ravni bi lahko esej ahistorično opredelili kot žanr, umeščen med filozofijo in literaturo. A takoj ko sprejmemo zgodovinsko perspektivo in se ukvarjamo z vlogo eseja in esejizma med modernizmom (pozna modernost) in postmodernizmom, pridejo na dan funkcionalne in družbene spremembe, ki kažejo, da esej nikakor ni filozofska ali literarna stalnica, ampak besedilo, prežeto z zgodovino in politikom. Modernistični esej – v Lukáčsevem in Adornovem smislu – meri onkraj obstoječe realnosti, onkraj obstoječe družbene ureditve, in naznanja utopično stanje, ki pa ostaja nedoločeno. Podobno funkcijo ima v esejističnih romanih pisateljev, kakršna sta Musil in Proust, kjer ni le povezan s posebno in individualno izkušnjo, ampak premore tudi utopične razsežnosti v filozofskem, estetskem in umetniškem smislu. Te utopične razsežnosti se v postmodernizmu izgubijo; esej je še vedno povezan s posebno izkušnjo, vendar se odreka ideji kritične negativnosti in boljšega sveta v Adornovem smislu. V delih Rolanda Barthesa, Johna Fowlesa, Johna Bartha in Itala Calvina se esejistično pisanje sčasoma preobrazi v enodimenzionalno igro s tekstualnostjo.

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# The essayistic style of Walter Benjamin

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*This paper examines the peculiar essayistic style of Walter Benjamin. All of the various genres of his writing have an allegorical and surrealist quality, with hidden and private (and essayistic) meanings, but also with a prophetic, hallucinatory tension.*

Keywords: literature and philosophy / essay / Benjamin, Walter / literary style

The genre of the essay has a long tradition in German literature and German literary criticism (see Lukács, Bense, Adorno, Rohner, Haas, Chadbourne, Benassi-Pullegra, Chevalier). I will not, here, relate all the discussions on the subject. I will limit myself to some quotes from the classical essay by the philosopher and aesthetician György Lukács, the pioneering article by Max Bense and Adorno's celebrated essay on the essay, which had clear connections with Walter Benjamin's practice of the genre.

Lukács had underscored the strong relationship between the essay and other forms of writings with aesthetic quality, but also its independence:

The essay form has not yet, today, traveled the road to independence, which its sister, poetry, covered long ago: the road of development from a primitive, undifferentiated unity with science, ethics, and art. (Lukács, *Soul* 79)

Max Bense has praised the essay as a form of writing that is critical in its intellectual attitude, experimental in its methodology, flexible in its configuration:

The essay is rooted in the critical nature of our spirit, whose aspiration to make experiments is ingrained in its way of being, in its way of functioning. [...] Those who criticize, they must experiment with this aspiration, they must create the conditions by which that object can be seen in a new perspective. [...]

The most sophisticated type of essay, born out of efforts to describe in an axiomatic manner any object, belonging to any field of science, have an indispensable dependence on logic; they reveal the style of clear reason, which they never abandon; they analyze, make elemental, crumb the substance, as it remains unchanged

in all the experimental variations. It is to be seen whether one should distinguish a special class of polemical essays, which usually tackle the object not so much critically, rather with the poignancy of a destructive aggression. It is not necessary. The essay will of course, with every means, bring the object in a position, where its fragility, its adventurousness, its weakness will amount to a suicidal drive. [...] Its very existence depends on an 'ars combinatoria' typical of literature. The writer of essays is a 'combinatorial writer', a tireless creator of configurations around a given object. (Bense 420–422).<sup>1</sup>

Adorno has set out to enumerate those that, according to him, are the peculiar features of the genre, which resembles art, having a certain aesthetic autonomy, but is differentiated from art "by its medium, concepts, and by its claim to a truth devoid of aesthetic semblance" (Adorno, *Notes* 5). Let me list what are those features, according to Adorno:

– The spontaneity and subjectivity of the presentation: "The subject's efforts [typical of the essay] to penetrate what hides behind the façade under the name of objectivity are branded [by the watchdogs of academic respectability] as irrelevant" (4).

– The rejection of a purely deductive logic: "[The essay's] concepts are not derived from a first principle, nor do they fill out to become ultimate principles" (4); "The essay incorporates the anti-systematic impulse into its own way of proceeding and introduces concepts unceremoniously, 'immediately', just as it receives them. They are made more precise only through their relationship to one another" (12); the essay [...] shakes off the illusion of a simple and fundamentally logical world, an illusion well suited to the defense of the status quo" (15).

– The eschewal of heavy-handed profundity: "Thought's depth depends on how deeply it penetrates its object, not on the extent to which it reduces it to something else" (11).

– The antipathy toward systematic dogmatism: "The essay does not try to seek the eternal in the transient and distill it out; it tries to render the transient eternal" (11); "Even in the manner of its presentation, the essay may not act as though it had deduced its object and there was nothing left to say about it. Its self-relativization is inherent in its form: it has to be constructed as though it could always break-off at any point. It thinks in fragments, just as reality is fragmentary, and finds its unity in and through the breaks and not by glossing them over" (16).

– The exaltation of the incomplete: "The romantic conception of the fragment as a construction that is not complete but rather progresses onward into the infinite through self-reflection champions this anti-idealist motive in the midst of Idealism" (16)

– The discourse presented as a meandering, exploratory journey.

– The concentration on the object: “The essay quietly puts an end to the illusion that thought could break out of the sphere of *thesis*, culture, and move into that of *physis*, nature. Spellbound by what is fixed and acknowledged to be derivative, by artifacts, it honors nature by confirming that it no longer exists for human beings” (11).

– The treatment of non-scientific, often unconventional subject matter: “With the objectification of the world in the course of progressive demythologization, art and science have separated. A consciousness for which intuition and concept, image and sign would be one and the same – if such a conscience ever existed – cannot be magically restored, and its restitution would constitute a regression to chaos” (6).

– The emphasis on rhetorical sophistication: “Its alexandrinism is a response to the fact that by their very existence, lilacs and nightingales – where the universal net has permitted them to survive – make us believe that life is still alive” (11); “In the essay the satisfactions that rhetoric tries to provide for the listener are sublimated into the idea of a happiness in freedom vis à vis the object, a freedom that gives the object more of what belongs to it than if it were mercilessly incorporated into the order of ideas” (21).

– The insistence on human fallibility, error being an essential element of the truly new: “This kind of learning remains vulnerable to error, as does the essay as form; it has to pay for its affinity with open intellectual experience with a lack of security that the norm of established thought fears like death” (13).

– The central importance of play: “Luck and play are essential to it” (4).

– The invocation of intellectual freedom: “[The essay] thinks conjointly and in freedom about things that meet in its freely chosen object” (11).

In order to put Adorno’s essay in perspective, let me quote some of the severe critical objections (with many of which I do not personally agree) that have been moved against Adorno by a brilliant doctoral student from Princeton, Sarah Pourciau, who has been working with one of the utmost specialists of Benjamin studies in America, Michael Jennings. These are the shortcomings of Adorno’s thoughts, according to Sarah Pourciau (2007), who reads Adorno’s text as an attack to Heidegger’s ontological theory:

– Adorno’s essay on the essay is not as original as it appears: “To the earlier investigations of the essay form on which his text both builds and plays, Adorno appears to add little that could be considered truly new” (623).

– [He shows a] “peculiar combination of superficial sophistication and philosophical banality” (624).

– Adorno's text “dwells insistently on the essayistic relation to a negative truth, a relation established for him by way of the essay's anti-systematic form” (625).

– For Adorno “alone among nonfiction forms, the essayistic mode emphatically engages the alien, unknowable character of the aconceptual object to which the concept, as concept, necessarily relates. Enlightened reason, which would subjugate the heterogeneous world of experience to its own hierarchical laws and categories, attempts to purge the concept of its troublesome relation to an aconceptual remainder by consigning all resistant elements to the nebulous non-space of philosophical fantasy, a false utopia reserved for dilettantes and poets” (625-26).

– Adorno accepts the allegation of logical error as the necessary consequence of thinking ‘otherwise’: “In refusing to succumb to the tautology of false adequation, in attempting to thrust itself beyond a system it helped to institute and cannot, henceforth, avoid, thought leaves behind the firm ground of dogma and ideology and takes up, instead, a nomadic, wandering existence in the no man's land of the undefined, where all truth remains provisional and partial” (626).

– “By insisting on a historical link between rhetoric and the essayistic ‘dishonesty’, Adorno plays with a philosophical and theological tradition that sees in rhetoric a morally slippery set of seductive techniques. In the context of the essayistic project, the gymnastic freedom of this dissimulative mode, whose task is to persuade (if necessary, at the expense of truth) submits itself to the rigor of self-reflection, incorporating into its fictional structure the acknowledgement of its own untruth” (634).

– Adorno's version of the essay seems simultaneously to remain within conventional categories and to leave them entirely behind: “His treatment transforms the facile equations of cultural stereotypes – in this case, notions of the essay as a decadent, elitist form appropriate to a cultivated leisure class and defined primarily by an Olympian disdain for heavy-handed profundity – into the historical condition of possibility for the philosophical production of transcendence. The importance of this transformation explains his insistence on seemingly marginal and historically contingent elements of the form, including its lack of popularity in German academic circles and its appeal for Jewish ‘outsiders’ like Benjamin and Simmel; it explains, too, his concluding claim that “die Aktualität des Essays ist die des Anachronistischen” [“The contemporary relevance of the essay is that of anachronism”]” (644).

– Against the Heideggerian prioritization of rootedness, Adorno's text rehabilitates for rigorous thought the hackneyed and traditionally poisonous trope of the Wandering Jew: “[He] aligns the essay, together with the foreign words that help it perform its essayistic function, with the disruptive



force of the outsider, and specifically with the disruptive force of the twentieth century outsiders who preferred and perfected it – namely, the Jews. [For Adorno] the essay is the Jew of forms, as foreign words are the Jews of language, and the precarious power of both words and form derive from their uncomfortable relation to the (German) culture in which they dwell without belonging” (645).

It is certainly true, I must admit, that many of the features attributed to the essay by Adorno (and, with a negative dialectical stance and a scathing critical approach – possibly colored by a shade of anti-semitism, by Sarah Pourciau) can easily apply to Benjamin’s writings. For instance:

- The unorthodox, almost perverse, transformation of such well established models as the academic dissertation or the philosophical or scientific treatise into a very personal and subjective treatment of the theme.

- The choice of very original, often marginal subjects, that slowly tend to concentrate on three areas of interest: the critical theory of Romanticism, the literature of the Baroque age, the culture of Modernity.

- The keen attention to unconventional aspects of the cultural life of the past: technology, urban setting and life, fashion, photography, commodities.

- The mixture of different genres of writing: from the autobiographical memory, to the description of cities and places, to the journalistic review and moral comment, to the aphoristic observation (following the models of Nietzsche and Krauss).

- The rhetorical sophistication of the style, to the limit of obscurity (with a special kind of profundity, due to the numerous allusions and sudden illuminations).

- The tendency to leave his works incomplete (and the large use of fragmentary notations, marginal observations and comments, with different versions of the same essay, often left in very personal manuscripts).

I will, in the remaining part of this paper, concentrated on some peculiarities of Walter Benjamin’s essayistic style. On this subject there is a large bibliography (see, for instance: Menninghaus, Jakobs, Schöttker, A. Benjamin). I will start by quoting a brilliant, pioneering essay by Susan Sonntag, in which the style of Benjamin’s writing is connected with his bold set of ideas, his melancholic character, his interest in images and photography:

His characteristic form remained the essay. The melancholic's intensity and exhaustiveness of attention set natural limits to the length at which Benjamin could develop his ideas. His major essays seem to end just in time, before they self-destruct.

His sentences do not seem to be generated in the usual way; they do not entail. Each sentence is written as if it were the first, or the last. (“A writer must stop and restart with every new sentence”, he says in the Prologue to *The Origin of German*

*Trauerspiel*.) His style of thinking and writing, incorrectly called aphoristic, might better be called freeze-frame baroque. This style was torture to execute. It was as if each sentence had to say everything, before the inward gaze of total concentration dissolved the subject before his eyes. Benjamin was probably not exaggerating when he told Adorno that each idea in his book on Baudelaire and nineteenth-century Paris “had to be wrested away from a realm in which madness lies”.

Something like the dread of being stopped prematurely lies behind these sentences as saturated with ideas as the surface of a baroque painting is jammed with movement. (Sontag 129)

Sontag’s idea that the style of Benjamin’s writing gives at time the impression of a freeze-frame sounds like an allusion to the photographic device of the snapshot, or to the expression “the frozen time”, used by William Faulkner to represent both his poetics of narration and his interpretation of the historical moment in the South of the United States, where history, after the Civil war, had stopped to evolve and was almost suspended. It can also remind us of Benjamin’s conception of memory, allegory, and history. According to Benjamin both the allegorical mode and the photographic snapshot tend to give a frozen picture of the movements of history and life. Adorno, speaking of Benjamin’s childhood recollections that go under the name of *Berliner Kindheit* and, in another occasion, describing Benjamin’s personal character, has some interesting comments on his essayistic style:

The fabulous photographs of *Berliner Kindheit* are not only the wreckage of a life by a long time lost and viewed from the height of a bird-view, but also snapshots of the ethereal country that the aeronaut has taken, inducing his models to pose in a friendly manner. (Adorno, “Nachwort”179)

The essay as form consists in the ability to regard historical moments, manifestations of the objective spirit, ‘culture’, as though they were natural. Benjamin could do this as no one else. The totality of his thought is characterized by what may be called ‘natural history’. He was drawn to the petrified, frozen or obsolete elements of civilization, to everything in it devoid of domestic vitality no less irresistibly than is the collector to fossiles or to the plants in a herbarium. Small glass balls containing a landscape upon which snow fell when shook were among his favourite objects. The French word for still life, *nature morte*, could be written above the portals of his philosophical dungeons. The Hegelian concept of ‘second nature’, as the reification of self-estranged human relations, and also the Marxian category of ‘commodity-fetishism’ occupy key positions in Benjamin’s work. He is driven not merely to awaken congealed life in petrified objects – as in allegory – but also to scrutinize living things so that they present themselves as being ancient, ‘ur-historical’ and abruptly release their significance. Philosophy appropriates the fetishization of commodities for itself: everything must metamorphose into a thing in order to break catastrophic spell of things. Benjamin’s thought is so saturated

with culture as its natural object that it swears loyalty to reification, instead of flatly rejecting it. This is the origin of Benjamin's tendency to cede his intellectual power to objects diametrically opposed to it, the most extreme example of which was his study on "The Work of Art in the Era of its Mechanical Reproduction". The glance of his philosophy is Medusan. (Adorno, "A portrait" 233)

On this aspect of Benjamin's work an American scholar, Eduardo Cadava, who teaches at Princeton, has written, with reference to Benjamin's *Theses on History*:

If Benjamin suggests that there is no history without the capacity to arrest historical movement, he also requires a mode of writing that can remain faithful to this movement of interruption or suspension. Like the gaze of the camera that momentarily fixes history in an image, the thesis condenses a network of relations into a frame whose borders remain permeable. A photograph in prose, the thesis names a force of arrest. It signals in writing the interruption of writing. As Benjamin explains, it is because historical thinking involves "not only the flow of thoughts, but their arrest as well" that photography can become a model for the understanding of history, a model for its performance. Like the stage setting that in Benjamin's *Traverspiel* book names a process that, seizing and tearing an image from its context, works to immobilize the flow of history. This is why, following the exigency of the fragment or thesis, photography can be said to be another name for the arrest that Benjamin identifies with the moment of revolution. Although Marx identifies revolutions as the "locomotives of world history", Benjamin suggests that "perhaps it is completely otherwise. Perhaps revolutions are, in this train of traveling generations, the reach of the emergency brake". This moment of arrest is linked in Benjamin's thinking with what he sees in his essay on Goethe as the sudden emergence of the expressionless, in his "Critique of Violence" as the interruptive character of the general strike, in his writings on Baudelaire as the petrified restlessness of the image, in his writings on the mimetic faculty as the flashlike perception of similarity, and in his "Theses" as the messianic intervention into history. In each instance, Benjamin traces the effects of what he calls "the caesura in the movement of thought". This caesura – whose force of immobilization not only gives way to the appearance of an image but also intervenes in the linearity of history and politics – can be understood in relation to what we might call the photograph's Medusa effect. (Cadava xx)

It is, at this point, clear to me: Benjamin's interest in photography, as witnessed in his writings on the subject,<sup>2</sup> was not an occasional, extrinsic one. It was closely linked with his way of thinking and also with his way of writing. All the different genres that he practiced, from the academic dissertation to the newspaper article, from the philosophical aphorism to the book review, from the description of visited cities and countries to the personal memoirs, from the collection of leftovers from the past to the utopian projections of a new political and social future, they all took an

allegorical and surrealistic quality, with hidden and private (and essayistic) meanings, but also with a prophetic, hallucinatory tension.

A question comes up in this regard: why the pages on the photograph of young Benjamin and his brother and on the famous one of Kafka as a child, present in the first version of *Berliner Kindheit* have been omitted in later versions? (Benjamin, *Gesammelte* II, 69–268; VI, 465–519; IV/I, 235–304). I would venture a possible answer: Because Benjamin's attention was not on single photographs or remembered episodes of having posed for a photographer, but on photography as a general metaphor for his conception of life and history, of writing, of the "dialectical image".

## NOTES

<sup>1</sup> When not otherwise indicated, the translations from the original texts are mine.

<sup>2</sup> The main writings on the subject are *Kleine Geschichte der Photographie* (*Short history of photography*, 1931), *Das Kunstwerk im Zeitalter seiner technischen Reproduzierbarkeit* (*The Work of Art in the Era of its Mechanical Reproduction*, 1935), the *Pariser Brief* (Letter from Paris) on painting and photography (1936), the review of Gisela Freund's book on photography (1938), numerous pages in the posthumous *Passagen Werk* (*Paris, Capital of the Nineteenth Century*).

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## Esejistični slog Walterja Benjamina

Ključne besede: literatura in filozofija / esej / Benjamin, Walter / literarni stil

Prispevek se ukvarja s posebnim esejističnim slogom Walterja Benjamina, pri čemer se najprej zaustavi pri opredelitvah eseja, kot so jih podali György Lukács, Max Bense in Theodor Adorno, v nadaljevanju pa razvije primerjavo med Benjaminovim slogom in fotografijo. Interes, ki ga je Benjamin pokazal s pisanjem o fotografiji, ni bil slučajen in postranski. Prepričan je bil, da obstaja podobnost med alegorijo in fotografskim posnetkom, kajti oba sta nagnjena k podajanju zamrznjenih slik o trenutkih iz zgodovine in življenja. Različni žanri pisanja, ki jih je uporabljal – od akademske disertacije do časopisnega članka, od filozofskega aforizma do knjižne ocene, od opisa mest in dežel, ki jih je obiskal, do osebnih spominov, od zbirke preostankov preteklosti do utopičnih projekcij nove politične in družbene prihodnosti –, imajo na sebi nekaj alegoričnega in nadrealističnega, kar nosi v sebi skrivne in zasebne (ter esejistične) pomene, obenem pa vsebuje pre-roško, halucinacijsko napetost.

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# Who Speaks in Montaigne's Essays?

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*This paper discusses three questions concerning singularity from the point of view of Montaigne's Essays: 1. Does essayistic language itself enable to express the individuality of the writer? 2. Is it really possible to write about my-self? 3. Who is the essayistic subject? As shall be seen, the answers are rather complex.*

Key words: literature and philosophy / Montaigne, Michel de / essay / subject / individuality / singularity

In the preface to his *Essays*, Michel de Montaigne expresses his wish that the world would see him in his proper individuality: “for it is my own self [*moy-mesme*] that I am painting”; and if “I had found myself among those peoples who are said still to live under the sweet liberty of Nature's primal laws, I can assure you that I would most willingly have portrayed myself whole, and wholly naked” (*The Complete Essays* lix). At the very beginning, he assures the reader that “here you have a book whose faith can be trusted” (*ibid.*). The essence of this “trust” [*bonne foy*] is speaking the truth, first of all the truth about oneself. The writer himself is the “subject of this book” as Montaigne writes in his last essay “De l'experience” (On Experience; III. 13): “I study myself more than any other subject; that is my metaphysics, that is my physics” (*The Complete Essays* 1217). Historians of philosophy and literature often point out that the “discovery of the individual” is the greatest novelty of the *Essays*. Montaigne founded his thinking and writing upon his belief that philosophy did not begin with “universals” but with personal and individual self-reflection. As he states in the essay “Du repentir” (On Repenting; III. 2): “every man bears the whole Form of the human condition” (*The Complete Essays* 908). The essayistic discourse, which Montaigne formed in the cross-section between philosophy and literature, is the “natural” consequence of such a premise.

This paper's main question is: *who* is the “literary subject” of the *Essays*? It is not so simple to “portray myself whole, and wholly naked,” even if I have the best intentions to be sincere – for “it is my own self that I am painting” – because always when my-self [*moi-même*] becomes the subject of my writing, I am unavoidably a literary subject (in the broadest sense): a subject “dressed” and “enveloped” in the language of my writing (or speaking).

However, when pointing out the literary subject of the *Essays*, I am not following the structuralist line of thinking that some decades ago proclaimed “the death of the author” (Barthes, Foucault). This thinking has been criticized from many perspectives. On the contrary, I am joining with its critics by stressing that literature, as well as philosophy and especially philosophical essays, is dead without the author, as well as without the reader (even if an author is the only reader of his/her own text), namely without the author and/or reader as a *living spirit*, who is free in recognizing or even identifying himself with those literary subjects that he creates and reads. The difference between my-self as a living spirit (living in my body, “here-and-now”, being a person, named M. M. or M. U.) and my literary subjects (including philosophical, essayistic subjects) is irreducible. My-self, when writing/reading, I am always in some dialogue(s) with my “other” literary selves.

The first (sub)question is: What are the *specific* features of the “essayistic subject”? The main features of essayistic discourse have often been pointed out: essays, compared with philosophy on the one hand and literature (*belles-lettres*) on the other, are “more free” in their expressive form, being singular, individual, and documentary in some personal or social sense etc. They are similar to prose, sometimes even to poetry, but they also preserve their “subjective objectivity” and their “personal universality”. Essays express universals in terms of particulars. The features of essayistic discourse, considered subjectively, or more accurately, considering the relationship between the author and his/her literary subject(s), provide specific features of the “essayistic subject”, compared with the “philosophical subject” on the one hand and the “lyrical subject” (which is the best known and most discussed among literary subjects) on the other. The main feature of the essayistic subject is its “polyphony that it is comprised of several different literary subjects and yet still functions as a single unit. When writing or reading an essay, *my-self* can “shift” among different “other literal selves” of mine. For example, *my-self* can freely “switch” between my philosophical and poetic “counterparts” or literary *Doppelgänger*s – allowing my-self a high degree of intellectual, emotional, and spiritual freedom.

The “polyphony” of essayistic writing, and of the “essayistic subject” is evident from Montaigne’s writings about death. Death is one of the principal themes of the *Essays*. For Montaigne, writing about *my-self*, about my own life, is writing about *my* death as well. In his book *La Mort* (1977), Vladimir Jankélévich distinguished three levels (or phases) of thinking and writing about death: in the third, second, and first persons: the third being the philosophical (and/or scientific) approach, the second “documentary” writing (witnessing somebody dying), and the first writing from personal encounters with death (near-death experiences and/or proximity to death



during old age and illness). It is interesting to see how Montaigne went through these three phases in his writings about death. Below I present some characteristic passages.

On the third level, there are Montaigne's "premeditations" of death, his encounters with death "in the third person." In the essay "Que philosophe c'est apprendre à mourir" (To Philosophize Is to Learn How to Die; I. 20), Montaigne tries to "premeditate" death by following the examples of great classical philosophers in their "universal" discourse ("we all die, so my-self too") There are different ways of premeditating death, from Socrates' "philosophical death", described in Plato's *Phaidon*, to Seneca's acceptance of the universal fate (stoic *heimarmene*), and Epicurus' and Lucretius' "denial of death." Here are some characteristic passages: "We do not know where death awaits us: so let us wait for it everywhere. To practice death is to practice freedom" (*The Complete Essays* 96). "Every moment it seems to me that I am running away from myself" (97). And this is the most famous: "I want Death to find me planting my cabbages [*que la mort me treuve plantant mes chous*], neither worrying about it nor the unfinished gardening" (99). That passage is followed by: "Just as our birth was the birth of all things for us, so our death will be the death of them all" (102). Then we come to a stoic conclusion: "Nature ... says to us: 'Your death is a part of the order of the universe; it is a part of the life of the world' ..." (103). In these passages, the formal (grammatical) person of the essayistic subject varies however, their actual subject (maybe apart from the passage concerning "my cabbages") is in the third person (plural), following the scheme of reasoning: *they all* → *we* → *my-self too*.

We may add that such "premeditations" of death are an element of the melancholy of the late Renaissance, of its various figures described by M. A. Screech in his well-known book *Montaigne and Melancholy: The Wisdom of the Essays*. In that book one finds an important remark concerning Montaigne's melancholy: "His melancholy was not to be confused with *tristesse* – that refined sadness paraded by man of fashion" (24). In the second edition of Books I and II of the *Essays* (1588, together with the new Book III), Montaigne inserted the sentence: "I am among those who are most free from this emotion" (Screech 7) at the beginning of the essay "De la tristesse" (On Sadness II. 2). Later, just before his death in 1592, when he was preparing the third edition of the *Essays* (1595), Montaigne explained at the same place his attitude towards *tristesse* even more clearly: "I neither like it nor think well of it, even though the world, by common consent, has decided to honour it with special favour. Wisdom is decked out in it; so are Virtue and Conscience – a daft and monstrous adornment. More reasonably it is not sadness but wickedness that the Italians

have baptised *tristezza*, for it is a quality which is ever harmful, ever mad. The Stoics forbid this emotion to their sages as being base and cowardly” (Screech 7). In the late essay “De la vanité” (On Vanity; III. 9), when his own death was closer than ever before, Montaigne says again, following the ancient wisdom, that “Joy we should spread: sadness, prune back as much as we can” (*The Complete Essays* 1108).

But even in his younger years, Montaigne’s encounters with death were very close, namely “in the second person” (in Jankélévich’s terms). He witnessed the death of his beloved friend Etienne de La Boétie in 1563. Montaigne began to write his *Essays* some years after the death of his friend, and they were primarily intended as an *hommage* to Etienne, wholly dedicated to his memory. That was later, but only a few days after Etienne’s death, Michel wrote a letter to his own father, describing in details his friend’s terminal illness and dying. It is probably the most moving passage of Montaigne’s opus, and in spite of the fact that later he did not include this documentary writing in *Essays*, Montaigne’s intensive “second-person experience” of death had an important role in his creation of the “essayistic subject.” Here is a fragment from Montaigne’s letter to his father. I prefer to quote it in the original, Renaissance French: “[Etienne] me dit, à toutes peines: ‘Mon frere, mon amy, pleust à Dieu que je visse les effects des imaginations que je viens d’avoir.’ Apres avoir attendu quelque temps qu’il ne parloit plus, & qu’il tiroit des souspirs tranchants pour s’en efforcer, car deslors la langue commençoit fort à luy denier son office. ‘Quelles sont elles, mon frere?’ Luy dis-je. – Grandes, grandes, me respondit-il ...”<sup>1</sup> (*Œuvres complètes* 1358).

Montaigne met death and wrote about it “in the first person” after the event in the middle of his life when he himself was very close to it. One of his most interesting and best written essays bears the unambitious title “De l’exercitation” (On Practice; II. 6). It is the first-person account of his near-death experience (circa 1568), a “practice” of dying. During one of the Huguenot wars, Michel, who was about thirty-five years old at that time, rode with his people not far from the castle. He fell from his horse in some misfortune, was badly wounded, lost a lot of blood, and remained unconscious for quite a long time. In the essay “De l’exercitation” he described his feelings after having regained consciousness, and there we find the following beautiful and precious passage: “To me it seemed as though my life was merely clinging to my lips. It seemed, as I shut my eyes, as though I was helping to push it out, and I found it pleasant to languish and to let myself go. It was a thought which only floated on the surface of my soul, as feeble and delicate as everything else, but it was, truly, not merely free from unpleasantness but tinged with that gentle feeling [*cette douceur*]

which is felt by those who let themselves glide into sleep" (*The Complete Essays* 420).

My second question concerning the "essayistic subject" is the following: Can somebody named M. M. or M. U. – namely, "I" as the author – be truly *sincere* when writing about *my-self*? Is it possible? I have already given the general answer *no*, because, at the moment when *moi-même* becomes a subject of my writing, I am unavoidably transformed into a literary subject – in the case of essays, into an essayistic subject – that is "made" in the language, indeed "from" the language, growing out of the dialogue with *my-self* as a living spiritual being, named X.Y. A more specific question is whether a writer can be "quite sincere" in his or her autobiographical writings (e.g., essays or diaries), in the sense of giving the "naked truth" of *my-self* as promised by Montaigne in the preface. The answer is again *no*, at least *not quite*. The inability is due not only to the subject's non-transparency of his or her own self (this point is over-stressed by psychoanalysis), but also to the simple fact that the difference between my living self and my literary counterparts always remains.

It is not enough to follow the maxim of sincerity in speaking *Non pudeat dicere quod non pudeat sentire* (Let us be not ashamed to say whatever we are not ashamed to think – as Montaigne wrote in one of his most sincere essays, covertly titled "Sur des vers de Virgile" (On Some Lines of Virgil, III. 5, *The Complete Essays* 953). This interesting and amusing late essay on human bodily pleasures and pains is an excellent case for disputing the "correspondence" (i.e., "sincerity") between the author himself and his "naked" essayistic subject. For example, when Montaigne writes "It pains me that my *Essays* merely serve ladies as a routine piece of furniture – something to put into their *salon*. This chapter will get me into their private drawing-rooms [*cabines*]: and I prefer my dealings with women to be somewhat private: the public ones lack intimacy and savour" (958), we may ask: Should (or could) we imply from these written words that the very *self*, the living spirit in the body of *monsieur le comte* Michel de Montaigne, would like to enter personally into the drawing-rooms of his female readers? Probably not, at least *not in the same sense* as the author of *Essays* expressed this wish in his book. It is only *this* essayistic subject however, known to the world as Michel de Montaigne, who really counts now, four centuries later. Here one might remember the words written by Céleste Albaret in the memoirs of her master Marcel Proust: she stated that, if some person believed that Proust's books were the veritable tale of his life, this person would have a really bad opinion of his imagination.

The third and final question of this paper, concerning the literary subject of the *Essays*, repeats more generally the main question that was asked

at the beginning: *Who* is the *essayistic* subject? How is it related to its author? These issues are quite complex and should be discussed in a much larger study than the present. Nevertheless, I have already mentioned that the principal formal feature of the essayistic subject is its flexibility: it is a singular and unique manifold of several literary (including philosophical) subjects. It enables shifting among several fields and/or discourses of philosophy, prose, personal diary, and sometimes even poetry.

In the case of an “autobiographical essay,” as in Montaigne’s *Essays*, the essayistic subject encompasses more particular psychological features of its author. If it is compared with some other literary or philosophical subjects, however, the dividing line between “subjective” and “objective” features is blurred (e.g., Kierkegaard, Nietzsche, Merleau-Ponty, and others). For every writer of essays, the following recognition, expressed clearly by Montaigne in his essay “Du démentir” (On Giving the Lie; II/18), is very relevant and important: “By portraying myself for others I have portrayed my own self within me in clearer colours than I possessed at first. I have not made my book any more than it has made me – a book of one substance [*consubstantiel*] with its author, proper to me and a limb of my life” (*The Complete Essays* 755).

At the end of this short essay regarding the essayistic subject, I am adding the following conclusion from my own experience of writing essays: I have tried to paint *this man*, namely my-self, “whole, and wholly naked,” and now I would like, if it were possible, for this close literary counterpart of me, the author, to be indeed *myself*, a living spirit. I am not sure whether Montaigne would agree with me on this point; however, *time* works in this direction, passing always and for all – in time, Montaigne *has become* just “this man,” the essayistic subject of his own great book.

#### NOTE

<sup>1</sup> “[Etienne] said to me with the utmost difficulty: ‘My brother, my friend, please God I may realize the imaginations I have just enjoyed.’ Afterwards, having waited for some time while he remained silent, and by painful efforts was drawing long sighs (for his tongue at this point began to refuse its functions), I said, ‘What are they?’ ‘Grand, grand!’ he replied...” (translation by Charles Cotton).

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## Kdo govori v Montaignevih *Esejih*?

Ključne besede: literatura in filozofija / Montaigne, Michel de / esej / subjekt / individualnost / singularnost

Zgodovinarji filozofije in književnosti radi poudarjajo, da je največja novost *Esejev* »odkritje posameznika«, namreč da je Montaigne svoje mišljenje in pisanje utemeljil na prepričanju, da se filozofija ne začne z »univerzalijami«, ampak s sámopremislekom, saj nosi »vsak človek v sebi celotno formo človeškega bivanja« (III/2). Esejistični diskurz, ki ga je oblikoval v preseku filozofije in književnosti, pa je »naravna« posledica takšnega izhodišča.

V tem prispevku si zastavljam tri vprašanja o singularnosti v Montaignevih esejih:

1. Ali esejistični diskurz bolj kot kak filozofsko abstraktni omogoča izražanje *individualnosti* govorca/pisca, in če je tako, ali naj to zmožnost eseja pripišemo predvsem njegovi literarni formi, ali pa gre bolj za odločitev, subjektivno intenco samega avtorja? O tem vprašanju razpravljam na »primeru« Montaignevega pisanja o smrti, ki ga v *Esejih* razvija na treh ravneh (če parafraziram Vladimirja Jankélévitcha): kot govor v tretji, drugi in prvi osebi, drugače rečeno, od filozofije prek pričevanja do osebne izpovedi, vse od eseja na sokratsko temo »filozofirati pomeni učiti se umreti« (I/20) prek pisma očetu po prijateljevi smrti do tiste »vaje« umiranja v osebni »predsmrtni izkušnji« (II/6) in naposled spricho neizbežne starostne bližine smrti (III/13).

2. Ali je v eseju res mogoče pisati o »samem sebi«, o svoji konkretni, človeški eksistenci? Je sploh mogoča takšna *iskrenost*, ki jo Montaigne zahteva od svojega pisanja? (»Ne sramuj se izreči, česar se ne sramuješ misliti.«) Mar ni mojemu pogledu bolj ali manj »zastrt« lastna duševna in telesna

resničnost, tako da vselej, ko želim pisati o sebi, neizogibno pišem o nekem svojem »drugem jaz«, se ubesedujem kot literarni subjekt? O vprašanju možnosti esejistične sámoizpovedi bi lahko razpravljali na »primeru« Montaignovega pisanja o lastni telesnosti, ljubezenski strasti in starostnih tegobah in se navezali zlasti na njegov pozni esej »O Vergilijevih verzih« (III/5).

3. Kdo je *esejistični subjekt*? Se v subjektovem pogledu esejistični diskurz razlikuje od, na primer, osebnoizpovedne lirike? V formalnem pomenu gotovo, a tudi pri še tako osebнем eseju se razločujeta subjekt pisanja in zapisani subjekt. Montaigne v eseju »O zavračanju laži« (II/18) ugotavlja: »S tem, da sem se slikal za drugega [tj. za bralca], sem se naslikal tudi zase v bolj razvidnih barvah, kot sem jih videl poprej. Svoje knjige nisem nič bolj ustvaril, kot je ona ustvarila mene.« Lepo in resnično povedano! Jaz sam pa dodajam vprašanje, mar ne bi bilo dandanes, po štirih stoletjih razvoja novoveškega subjekta, bolje že v nagovoru bralcu reči takole: prav *tega* človeka (tj. subjekta esejev) bi rad naslikal »vsega in docela nagega« – in če bi bilo mogoče, bi bil to jaz sam, ne le kak moj »drugi jaz«, ampak rajši kar moj »prvi jaz«?

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# O singularnosti tistega »neumnega podviga«

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*Prispevek se loteva problematike Montaignevega dvojnega projekta – samo-proučevanja oziroma samo-spoznavanja ter poskusa samo-upodabljanja – z vidika nekaterih zgodovinskih in sodobnih teorij samozavedanja ter konstituiranja subjekta v govorici, s posebnim poudarkom na literarni govorici.*

Ključne besede: francoska književnost / esej / Montaigne, Michel de / subjekt / individualnost / samozavedanje

## Uvod

*Eseji* Michela Eyquema de Montaigna se od časa svojega nastanka pa do danes izmikajo izključujočim poskusom, da bi jih uvrstili bodisi v filozofijo bodisi v literaturo. V prežemanju teh dveh polj ustvarjanja in mišljenja so z edinstveno gesto vzpostavili izvorno hibridno umetniško-filozofsko konfiguracijo, ki je zaznamovala novi vek. Po štirih stoletjih so še vedno aktualni in naš čas nemara nagovarjajo celo bolj neposredno, kot jim je uspelo nagovoriti številne predhodne. Vprašanje ostaja, koliko jim zmoremo in hočemo prisluhni. Ljubljanska konferenca o eseju in singularnosti (2009) se je spraševala, »v kakšnem odnosu sta na področju eseja singularnost in pluralizem etik, politik, resnic, ki naj bi bil domnevno emblem postmoderne«. Podobna vprašanja si v tragičnem izteku renesanse v Franciji zastavljajo tudi *Eseji*. Nastali so kot posledica vsestranske, politične, intelektualne, moralne in čustvene krize (Nakam, *Le dernier* 212). So ozaveščanje in odgovor na krizo vednosti in vrednot, svojevrsten angažma, utemeljen na introspekciji, svobodni notranji vesti in individualni etiki.

Filozofsko tkivo *Esejev*, ki so nastajali med leti 1571 in 1588 oz. do 1592, ko je avtor tik pred smrtjo dopisal še zadnje »podaljške« (*allonges*), kakor jih je imenoval, v primerjavi z zgodnjimi renesančnimi misleci, npr. z Marsilom Ficinom, kaže sistematično zavračanje sistema. Njegova pozicija je bližja Picovi, ki se zavzema za spravo med različnimi filozofijami, a je še vedno prepričan v nujnost izgradnje sistema, v katerem je želel združiti vse učeno-sti, ki so se zdele nezdržljive. (Škamperle, *Giovanni Pico* 52). Nič podobnega

pri Montaignu. V *Esejih* res srečamo številne antične filozofije, predvsem skepticizem oz. pironizem, stoicizem, epikurejstvo in nekatere predsokratike (Parmenid, Heraklit), vendar so to le viri, pri katerih se *Eseji* navdihujejo, toda skoraj izključno pri izbiri metode (raziskovanja samega sebe) (gl. Conche 27–42): »To tu ni moj nauk, pač pa proučevanje; to niso izsledki koga drugega, temveč moji.« (II, 6, 159)<sup>1</sup> *Eseji* ostro zavračajo vsakršen sistem. Prvič zato, ker pojem sistema na strukturni ravni ustreza vrednostnim principom, proti katerim se najbolj borijo: absolutizaciji vednosti, dogmatizmu, avtoritarnosti, ekskluzivizmu in fanatizmu vseh vrst. In drugič, gledano z današnje perspektive, – ker so *Eseji* pravzaprav specifična filozofija subjekta, ki je vselej, rečeno z Bahtinom, v zadanosti in nedokončnosti, ki se nenehno preizkuša in nikdar ne strdi v sistem (tako filozofija, kot subjekt, namreč); torej mišljenje, ki ni doktrina, temveč vedno le spraševanje.

Ko se je l. 1572 Michel Eyquem po nekajletnem dejavnem političnem življenju sredi verske vojne vihre umaknil v okrogli stolp svojega gradu, se je začel dvajsetletni »neumni podvig« (II, 8, 162): »Že nekaj let so moje misli usmerjene izključno k meni samemu ... samo sebe proučujem in če kdaj raziskujem kaj drugega, to brž spet usmerim nase ali vase [...] Ni težavnejšega, pa tudi koristnejšega opisovanja ne, kot je opisovanje samega sebe.« (II, 6, 160) Montaigne se že od začetka zaveda edinstvenosti, obenem pa, kot bomo videli, tudi problematičnosti svojega početja: »Ta knjiga je s to svojo čudno, nenavadno namero, edina svoje vrste na tem svetu.« (II, 8, 162); *Eseji* so vztrajna samo-preskušanja sebstva (ki bodo porodila novoveški hibridni žanr, česar pa Montaigne ne more vedeti), obenem pa tudi poskusi doslej še nepoznanih načinov izrisovanj avtoportreta – s peresom namesto s čopičem. (II, 17, 271)

V nadaljevanju želim na kratko osvetliti oba vidika; samo-preskušanje, kot tisto plast, kjer se, vzvratno gledano, snujeta montaignevska filozofija in hermenevtika subjekta, in montaignevski avtoportret, kot tisto plast, kjer se ustvarja subjekt teksta. Ločevanje teh dveh plasti je smiselno le za potrebe razprave in samo, če ju nazadnje osvetlimo v njenem prežemanju. Preko predstavitve nekaterih značilnosti *Esejev* s teh dveh vidikov, hkrati pa tudi možnih povezav z določenimi kasnejšimi zgodovinskimi in sodobnimi premisami, se bom implicitno spraševala tudi, kakšno singularnost oziroma singularnosti konstituirajo *Eseji*.

### »Konstativi« *Esejev*

M. Pintarič na koncu poglavja o Montaignu v monografiji *Občutje časa v francoski srednjeveški in renesančni književnosti* napiše, da je Montaigne že moderna duša (291); razdrobljena zavest njegovega jaza se ne zmore več



zapopasti v svoji celovitosti. *Eseji* so postaja tik pred kartezijanskim obratom.<sup>2</sup> Odločilni razkol med čisto transcenco in tosvetnostjo se v *Esejih* že izvrši. Metafizični temelj v konstelaciji *Esejev* biva zunaj človeka; subjekt še ni začel privzemati kvalitet absoluta. Pri Montaignu je absolut Bog, s katerim ni subjekt v ničemer povezan: »V ničemer nismo v stiku z bitjo, saj se vsako človeško bitje vselej nahaja med rojevanjem in umiranjem.« (II, 12, 250) Samo Bog je resnična Bit: »Samo Bog je, in sicer ne po časovni meri, temveč po negiblivi in nespremenljivi večnosti, ki je čas ne more meriti in ki ni podvržena nikakršni spremembi [...] In ničesar ni, kar bi resnično bilo, razen njega samega, ob tem pa ni mogoče reči: bil je ali bo, saj je brez začetka in brez konca.« (II, 13, 251) To spoznanje predstavlja finale razprave *Apologija Raymonda Sebonda*, trinajstega eseja druge knjige *Esejev*. Ker je Bog transcendentalna entiteta, človek ne more govoriti o njem, še manj pa ga zmore dognati, zato ga Montaigne izključi iz svojega filozofskega spraševanja. Če torej obstaja Resnica, človeku ni dosegljiva. Montaigne kljub temu zapiše: »Kajti rojeni smo za iskanje resnice.« (III, 8, 375) V procesu iskanja se razkrivajo le *resnice* in ne Resnica, ki biva v Bogu – transcenciji. *Eseji* pa niso predstavitev rezultatov tega iskanja, teh razkritih, sprotnih resnic, temveč procesa. Montaigneva metoda je poleg tega izrazito pironistična, kar je razvidno predvsem v *Apologiji*, za katero bi lahko rekli, da je najbolj »teoretičen« del *Esejev*. V nasprotju s pojavnim skepticizmom, ki dvomi o vsem, razen o pojavih, pironizem na temelju ideje o absolutni in univerzalni dozdevnosti (Conche 29–30) postavlja pod vprašaj tudi samo idejo Biti, torej tudi obstoj pojavov. Obenem pironizem zavrača vsakršno možnost spoznavanja in se vzdržuje presoje. Na ravni (nemogočega) diskurza o Biti – Bogu je Montaignev skepticizem pojavní, saj ne dvomi o obstoju nespremenljive in negiblive Biti. (prim. II, 12, 251) Toda njegovo iskanje, raziskovanje se tiče druge ravni, ravni subjekta oziroma konkretnega jaza. In tu je njegova metoda pironistična, saj se giblje v območju čiste dozdevnosti. Njegov pironistični dvom torej ne zadeva pojavov, temveč zgolj človekovo dojemanje pojavov. »Ko Tales ugotavlja, da je spoznanje človeškega za človeka zelo težavno, slednjega podučí, da je spoznanje česar koli drugega zanj nemogoče.« (II, 12, 232) Absolutno spoznanje je mogoče zgolj v območju božjega, v območju možnosti človeškega spoznavanja so možne zgolj osebne in zato relativne sodbe: »Stvari se predstavljajo v različnih odsevih in sprožajo različne presoje: tu se spočenja raznolikost mnenj. En narod na stvar gleda v določeni luči, drugi pa spet v drugačni luči.« (II, 13, 242) Vedenje o stvareh je po Montaignu vedno najprej vedenje o sebi. Presoja je vedno presoja o presoji. Obenem pa bi predstava, da smo stvari dokončno doumeli, implicirala, da je tisto, kar mislimo, da vemo, nenehno isto. Montaigneva misel se snuje na povsem

nasprotnih načelih, na razliki in postajanju. Čas je ena najpomembnejših kategorij pri Montaignu. »Kajti čas je gibljiva reč in zdi se kot v senci, s to svojo tekočo, odtekajočo snovjo, ne da bi kdajkoli postal stalen in trajen.« (II, 13, 251) Edinole Bit je negibljiva in nespremenljiva. Tisto, kar mi imenujemo bit, pa je »le prostor med življenjem in smrtjo.« »Kajti velika neumnost je trditi, da nekaj je, če še ni ali pa je že nehalo biti.« (prav tam) Vse, kar je, neha biti, postane novo. Bit se razprši v spreminjanju. V tuzemski dejanskosti je gibanje edina danost. Tudi v naravi sami ni ničesar, kar bi obstalo. »Svet je eno samo nenehno gibanje. Vse reči se brez prestanka gibljejo: zemlja, kavkaške skale, egiptovske piramide, gibljejo se vse skupaj in vsaka posebej. Stalnost sama ni nič drugega kot počasnejše gibanje. Svojega predmeta ne morem umiriti; zmedeno se opoteka v nekakšni naravni pijanosti. Pri tem ga jemljem takega, kakršen je v trenutku, ko si dajem opravka z njim.« (III, 2, 327)<sup>3</sup> Ne le, da si subjekt ne more zagotoviti stalnosti objekta spoznavanja, sama identiteta subjekta je nejemljiva, saj je nenehno v postajanju: »Navsezadnje ni nobenega trdnega obstoja niti obstoja naše biti niti obstoja biti predmetov: mi sami, naše presojanje in vse umrljive stvari neprestano tečejo in se kotalijo. Zato ni mogoče vzpostaviti nobene gotovosti o enem in drugem: tisti, ki presoja, in tisto, kar je presojano, sta nenehno podvržena gibanju in spremembi.« (II, 13, 250) »Ničesar ni, kar ostaja in kar bi vedno bilo eno [...] Biti vedno postaja drugo drugega.« (II, 13, 251) Jaz si »vsak hip uhaja« (I, 20, 50), nenehno postaja drugi jaz: »Jaz v tem trenutku in jaz kmalu zatem sva dva.« (III, 9, 389) »In je prav toliko razlike med nami in nami samimi, kot je je med nami in drugimi.« (II, 1, 145)<sup>4</sup> Človek je »raznolika in valovita reč« (I, 1, 22) in njegova »bit sestoji iz delovanja in gibanja.« (II, 8, 163) Zato »ne morem ničesar reči o sebi kot o celoti, preprosto in trdno, brez zmešnjav in primesi, skratka z eno besedo. *Distinguo*, razločujem, sta alfa in omega moje logike.« (II, 1, 144)<sup>5</sup>

*Eseji* niso samo prostori samopremišljevanja konkretne, singularne subjektivitete, ampak tudi spoznavanja njene neusahljive dinamike, pravzaprav njene dogodkovnosti. Te »konstatacije« o subjektu v *Esejih* bom v nadaljevanju skušala osvetliti s teorijo individuuma Manfreda Franka. Uvidi, ki jih Frank izpelje iz danes neuveljavljene verzije zgodovine subjekta, transformirajo pogled na ustaljeno narativo filozofij subjekta in ji protipostavijo alternativo s teorijo individuuma in samozavedanja. Zdi se, da je Montaigna mogoče uvrstiti v to »nekanonizirano« vejo. Smisel povezovanja Montaigna s to tradicijo oziroma z nekaterimi njenimi zgodovinskimi momenti, ki tudi spričo dovolj jasnih pojmovnih vzporednic še zdaleč ni arbitrarno, se bo, upam, dokončno razkril šele v območju drugega vidika hibridnih *Esejev*, namreč njihove literarnosti.

## Individuum kot singularna, neujemljiva neidentiteta

»Individualistična« paradigma kot šibkejša linija zgodovine teorij subjekta je po Franku vzniknila ob koncu 18. stoletja, vendar je od začetka 19. stoletja spričo dominacije analitičnega uma prevladala tradicionalna, močnejša teorija subjekta in prvo posrkala. Ta močnejša tradicija razumevanja subjekta korenini v klasičnem starem veku in individuum razume kot »prostor polnosti«, »povsem določeno bitje (»ens omnimodo determinatum),« kot »nerazcepno substanco«, za katero sta značilna »stalnost in samovzdrževanje«. (Frank, *Kazivo* 309) Tako mišljen individuum je poleg tega izpeljan iz teze o istovrstnosti kategorij univerzalnega in individualnega, pri čemer je kategorija individualnega izenačena s partikularnostjo – posamičnostjo in ne singularnostjo – edinstvenostjo. Na tej postavki je temeljila sholastična doktrina o različnih stopnjah individualiziranosti in o *principum individuationis*, po kateri je narava individuuma kot *species infima*, najmanjše vrste, vselej povezana in vsebovana v Bogu kot najvišji vrsti, ki razpolaga z značilnostmi vseh individuuumov. Frank tako antično in srednjeveško razumevanje individuuma kot partikularnega sooča z linijo, ki jo predstavlja Schleiermacher (ob njem še Humboldt in Boeckh), v 20. stoletju pa Sartre. Iz Sartrovega koncepta individuuma kot *universel singulier* in Schleiermacherjevega razlikovanja med subjektiviteto kot občo univerzalno strukturo in individualiteto kot singularno, neponovljivo entiteto, Frank utemelji trojni model, s katerega je mogoče vizirati človeško bitje: subjekt kot univerzalna struktura, individuum kot singularna entiteta in oseba kot partikularna entiteta. (gl. *L'ultime*) Subjekti, ki kot samozavedajoča se bitja delijo skupno univerzalno strukturo domačnosti s seboj, nimajo le univerzalne eksistence, temveč tudi singularno in nezamenljivo eksistenco individuuma in partikularno eksistenco osebe. V tem pojmovanju individuum ne implicira popolne določenosti niti samoprisotnosti, temveč je spoznan kot radikalna neidentiteta, kateri ni mogoče določiti trajnega bistva. Radikalna neidentiteta je, prvič, zato, ker je njegovo samozavedanje časovno ustrojeno. Individuum je vedno v postajanju, je nefiksna, procesualna entiteta, čisto dejanje (*actus purus*), »nekaj, kar obstaja brez biti«, kolikor bit razumemo kot v menjavi stanj nespremenljivo identiteto. Samozavedanje pa tu ni razumljeno v smislu intencionalnega in relacijskega akta (refleksijske) zavesti (Frank, *L'ultime* 65–66), ki se objektivizira in se zaobjame v samoprisotnosti in identiteti, temveč kot dogodek dinamike med dvema modusoma zavesti; neposredno zavestjo in refleksijo. Individuum, drugič, ne more biti prostor polnosti le zaradi svoje časovne določenosti, temveč tudi zato, ker individualno samoobčutje – domačnost individualno eksistirajočega s samim sabo – predstavlja neko

konstitutivno vrzel vsakega samozavedanja. Neidentiteta individuuma s seboj namreč ne izničuje možnosti njegovega samoobčutenja, domačnosti s seboj; slednja to neidentiteto celo proizvaja. To linijo pojmovanja individuuma Frank poveže z uvidi zgodnjemantične filozofije in zgodnjega nemškega idealizma. Schleiermacherjev koncept individuuma se namreč s slednjimi prekriva ravno v odkrivanju in konceptualizaciji neposredne zavesti. Pri vseh mislecih je, tako kot tudi pri Schleiermacherju, to odkritje povezano s kritiko refleksijskega modela samozavedanja. Pri Hölderlinu, v fragmentu *Sodba in bit* (1794/5), je formula intelektualnega zora kritizirana ravno zato, ker intelektualni zor predpostavlja dvojnost v sosledju; najprej imamo zor, nato pa intelekcijsko. (gl. Frank, *Uvod* 59) Hölderlin v tem fragmentu, podobno kot Novalis v *Fichtejevih študijah*, jedrnato postavi, da mišljenje – sojenje (*Urtheil*), implicira tudi izvor ločitve subjekta in objekta in ta dogodek imenuje pradelitev (*Ur-Teilung*). Razcepi, razdeli se neka prvobitna, predrazcepna enost subjekta in objekta v človeškem bitju, ki predstoji izvornemu rezu z vstopom v refleksijsko zavest in jo Hölderlin poimenuje bit. Te pa ne gre zamenjevati z identiteto (v refleksiji): Ko rečem *jaz sem jaz*, sta subjekt (jaz) in objekt (jaz) razdružena. Identiteta (racionalističnega in idealističnega) subjekta torej ne more biti utemeljena na empirični zavesti, temveč je teoretski konstrukt refleksijskega modela subjekta. Novalis v *Fichtejevih študijah* (1795/96) za refleksijo – zavest (*Reflexion*) v tem smislu pravi, da je refleksija le zrcalna podoba občutja (*Gefühl*). (5) V refleksiji se pojavi, prikaže tisto, kar je že vselej bilo tu. (12) Namreč občutje. Občutje je vselej pred refleksijo. (13)

Tudi *Eseji* so prepredeni z variacijami fragmentarnih spoznanj o nenehnem osciliranju jaza, ki se porajajo kot posledica metode nenehno novega preskušanja in poskušanja. Montaigneve variacije so zelo sorodne Schleiermacherjevim tezam o radikalni neidentiteti individuuma, o njegovi neujemljivosti in nedeljivosti. Zdi se tudi, da ni mogoče trditi, da se Montaigne vpisuje v tisto zgodovinsko linijo, ki na temelju istovrstnosti univerzalnega in individualnega singularnost individuuma izenačuje s partikularnim. Montaigne vedno znova ugotavlja singularnost. »Če gre verjeti Pliniju in Herodotu, živijo na nekaterih koncih sveta človeške vrste, ki so v maločem podobne naši [...] In če je tako, koliko napačnih opredelitev človeka torej obstaja?« (II, 12, 218) Tako kot spoznanje o postajanju vedno novih jazov, v *Esejih* doživlja vedno nove variacije tudi izjava, da je opredelitev človeka na abstraktni ravni v smislu zajetja univerzalnega bistva človeka nemogoča. Montaignevi načeli drug(a)čnosti in različnosti, njegov *distinguo*, najbolj zadeva ravno nastajajoče spoznanje o singularnosti prav vsakega bitja. Vsak človek kot singularnost uhaja klasifikaciji, s

tem pa hierarhizaciji in totalizaciji. »Svoje misli usmerjamo k splošnemu, k univerzalnim vzrokom in potekom, ki se gladko vršijo tudi brez nas, pri tem pa zapostavljamo svojo stvar in Michela, ki se nas tiče bolj, kot se nas tiče človek.« (III, 9, 384) Moja stvar – jaz – Michel, kot singularno bitje, se me tiče bolj kot človek kot univerzalno bitje. Tema o singularnosti individuuma v *Esejih* ima tudi svoj protipol variacij, ki jih strne eden izmed najbolj znanih Montaignevih izrekov »vsak človek v sebi nosi celotno obliko [*forme entière*] človeške danosti [*humaine condition*]« (III, 2, 327) Zdi pa se, da *Eseji* kot celota o tej *humaine condition* – človeški danosti – vselej govorijo kot o obliki; tudi v zgornji misli je imenovana *forme entière*, celotna oblika, drugod pa je označena kot *forme maîtresse* oziroma *maîtresse forme* (III, 2, 329), ključna oblika, ali pa *forme universelle*, univerzalna oblika (III, 2, 330) (gl. Defaux 185): »Če prisluhne, vsakdo v sebi odkrije samosvojo obliko, ključno obliko, ki se bori proti določilom in nevihtam strasti, ki so z njo v nasprotju. Sam nikdar ne doživljam pretresov, skoraj vselej sem na svojem mestu. Če že nisem pri sebi, pa sem vselej zelo blizu.« (III, 2, 329)

Kaj je ta ključna oblika? Je treba to očitno dvojnost razumeti kot eno aporij *Esejev*, ali pa jo je smiselno vzporejati z dvojnostjo, o kateri govorijo Schleiermacher, Sartre in za njima Frank? So v *Esejih* implicirana spoznanja o subjektu kot univerzalni strukturi (*forme maîtresse*) in individuumu kot singularni entiteti (Moja stvar – jaz – Michel), ki je utemeljena na radikalni spremenljivosti? Individuum se po teh teorijah kaže kot neizrekljiv, edinstven, njegova nezamenljiva singularnost ni zaobjemljiva v nobenem konceptu, z njo pa zaznamuje vsako univerzalno (subjekt), v katerem se odraža. Skupna univerzalna struktura pa je tista domačnost s seboj oziroma nenehno osciliranje samozavedanja med predrefleksijo in refleksijo, med občutenjem in zavestjo. Domačnost s seboj je po Franku nerelacijska, spontana, implicitna, kar pomeni, da je nekaj, kar nima potrebe reflektirati o sebi, da bi se vedelo, zato ni spoznavanje, vednost v relacijskem smislu (*L'ultime* 65–66), temveč neko primarno vedenje, nekaj neposredljivega v refleksiji, zato pa tudi neizrekljivega v govorici, ki je le refleksijska, – v konceptualni govorici. Mogoče Montaignevo misel: »Če že nisem pri sebi, pa sem vselej zelo blizu,« lahko tolmačimo v smislu te domačnosti s seboj. Tudi navidez nasprotno misel: »Nikoli nismo doma, zmeraj smo onstran samih sebe,« (I, 3, 23) je nemara mogoče razumeti v luči Sartrove teze, da subjekt tudi v predrefleksijski zavesti ne more biti povsem samoidentičen. Izvorna prisotnost sebstva sebi po Sartru predpostavlja »rahlo razdaljo od sebe«, »rahlo samoodsotnost«. (388)<sup>6</sup> Sebstvo tako nikoli ni biti-sebstvo, temveč je – če lahko na tem mestu uporabimo Bahtinov izraz, saj Sartrove izpeljave močno spominjajo na Bahtinovo razumevanje zadanosti subjekta (Bahtin 141) – zadano, nedokončljivo, vselej v postajanju. *Eseji* kot filo-

zofija seveda ne »konstatirajo« spoznanja o neposredni ali predrefleksijski zavesti. To bodo storili šele romantični umetniki in filozofi. *Eseji* prav tako ne teoretizirajo problematičnosti racionalističnega refleksijskega modela, ki še ni vzpostavljen. Precej bolj logično se seveda zdi zagovarjati nasprotno trditev: *Eseji* so kot proučevanje sebe vendar knjiga refleksijske *par excellence*, in sicer tako refleksijske v smislu razmišljanja kot refleksijske v smislu okularnega modela: subjekt se postavlja za svoj objekt. Toda, kolikor so knjiga refleksijske, iz njihovih spoznanj, predvsem v *Apologij Raymonda Sebonda*, v fragmentih pa na številnih drugih mestih, izhaja, da so ravno kot projekt refleksijske tudi poraz refleksijske. Pironistični temelj *Apologije* projekt obsoja na neuspeh. »S časom in rabo se navadimo na čudnost, toda bolj se družim s seboj in bolj se spoznavam, tem bolj me čudi moja razobličnost [difformité] in tem manj se pri sebi razumem.« (III, 11, 414)

Zakaj se potem Montaigne nenehno znova loteva tistega dvojnega »težavnega« [épineux] ali pa, etimološko, – »trnovega« podviga samospoznavanja in slikanja sebe? Zakaj se vedno znova podaja na pot, se poskuša [s'essayer], če ve, da se ne more razrešiti? [se résoudre], (III, 2, 327), če na vsakem koraku spoznava, da se ne more spoznati, če vedno znova naleti na tisto obliko [forme], ki je razobličena ali brezoblična (*difforme* – skažena, *informe*)? Montaigne se v svoji praksi pisanja še zdaleč ne meni za tisto, kar je dognal v *Apologiji*, ki bi jo pogojno lahko imenovali njegova teorija. V praksi *Esejev* teorijo zanika. (Defaux 185) Eden odgovorov je zagotovo uvid v nujnost nenehne hermenevitične prakse, ki jo mora individuum kot neskončno nalogo izvajati v svojem postajanju, da bi se samointerpretiral in skušal razumeti. Ob pomoči izbranih referenc bom druge mogoče odgovore, zakaj Montaigne vztraja pri dvojnem projektu samo-poskušanja in slikanja sebe, poskušala iskati v dejstvu, da so *Eseji* ne le svojevrstna filozofija, temveč tudi izjavljanje, in sicer specifično izjavljanje – literatura.

## Performativ subjekta *Esejev*

*Eseji* ne slikajo metamorfoz jaza, ki se spreminja in obenem opazuje svoje spreminjanje, – sami namreč ugotavljajo, da ta jaz zunaj knjige pravzaprav spočenjajo: »Svoje knjige nisem ustvaril bolj, kot je ona ustvarila mene; knjiga konsubstancialna s svojim avtorjem, knjiga, s svojo lastno snovjo, ud mojega življenja.« (II, 18, 275) Izjava ima več implikacij. Po eni strani se knjiga kaže kot prostor – zbirališče, stekališče v času razpršenih identitet jaza in s tem vzpostavlja nekakšno množstveno identiteto ter jo je mogoče razumeti kot iznajdbo neke vrste gibljive, pretakajoče se stalnosti. Montaigne, presenetljivo, zapiše: »Moja knjiga je vedno ena.«

(III, 9, 388) Morda jo je sam avtor razumel kot vrsto rešitve v nenehnem (pretresnem) občutenju spremenljivosti vsega. Ta izjava, ob njej pa še številne druge v *Esejih*, ki se tičejo govorce, pa napotujejo tudi na spoznanje, da subjekta brez govorce ni in da ni govorce brez subjekta: »Le zaradi govorce in z govoro se drug z drugim povezujemo in smo ljudje.« (I, 9, 31) Govorica je »edini pripomoček, preko katerega se posredujejo naša volja in naše misli, je edini posrednik naše duše: če je ne bi več imeli, se ne bi več povezovali, se ne bi spoznavali.« (II, 18, 276) V dvajsetem stoletju je konstituiranje subjekta v govoricu teoretiziral Benveniste. (gl. *Problemi*) Za Benvenista je vsako izjavljanje, tako kot za Bahtina, vsakič edinstven, neponovljiv in intersubjektivni dogodek. Sam Montaigne zapiše, »da je govorica napol od tistega, ki govori in napol od tistega, ki posluša.« (III, 13, 437–438) V izjavljanju se po Benvenistu individuuum, ki reče jaz in nagovarja ti-ja, vsakič na novo konstituira kot subjekt. (*Problemi* 188) Konstituiranje subjektivitete v govoricu pa ne pomeni, da pred diskurzom ni subjekta, temveč, da ni mogoče postulirati »identične identitete« subjekta med enim in drugim izjavljanjem. To je mogoče ponazoriti z Montaigneovo prisposodbo o soncu in duši: »Pravijo, da Sonce ne pošilja luči v nepretrganem soju, a da nam nenehno pošilja nove žarke, drugega za drugim tako na gosto, da ne opazimo vrzeli med njimi [...] Tako tudi naša duša strelja puščice vsako posebej in neopazno.« (I, 38, 110)<sup>7</sup> *Eseji* nam tudi s svojimi neposrednimi izjavami razkrivajo neidentiteto subjekta skozi pisanje – izjavljanje. Montaigne kot individuuum se vsakič znova konstituira kot subjekt v izjavljanju – pisanju svoje knjige. Postajajoči individuuum subjektivira diskurz, ki ga ustvarja, in diskurz subjektivira individuuum, – in ga ustvarja, če ponovimo z Montaignem. Spomniti pa se je treba, da po Benvenistu instanca jaz v govoru ni empirični govorec, temveč se vzpostavlja kot diskurzivni subjekt. To Benvenistovo razlikovanje ne temelji le na premisi o vsakokratni, novi subjektivizaciji individuuma v govoricu, temveč tudi na globalni premisi, da diskurz ni le mimetičen ekran zunajdiskurzivnega sveta, temveč performativen, svetotvoren; ne le, da svet semantizira in interpretira, temveč s tem sodeluje v njegovem postajanju. Že po Schleiermacherju jezik izvira iz govornih dejanj (Bowie 187), govorno dejanje pa je individualno intersubjektivno dejanje. In *Eseji* na svojstven način ravno kot govorna dejanja tudi sodelujejo pri postajanju jezika, francoščine, ki je v renesansi doživljala najživahnejše spremembe in največji razcvet v svoji zgodovini. Montaigne ni tako drzen kot Rabelais, ali eksperimentalen kot pesniki Pleiade (Jeanneret 19), njegova govorica želi biti predvsem kar najbližje vsakdanji: »Pri srcu mi je preprosta in navna govorica, tako na papirju, kot v ustih, slastna in živčna, kratka in stisnjena, ne toliko pretanjena in prečesana, kot vehementna in sunkovita.«

(I, 26, 83) Kot do vseh drugih področij, vednosti, znanja, religije, navad in običajev ima Montaigne v postavljanju spraševanja pred vsako doktrino tudi do govornice večznačen odnos. (Nakam, *Le dernier* 222) Tudi govornico je treba nenehno postavljati pod vprašaj, saj je nevarnost dogmatizma inherentna jeziku samemu. Montaigne je mnenja, da je govornica konvencija; v tem pogledu je nominalist in relativist, obenem pa se ravno z ustvarjalnim dejanjem govornice, ki je ena glavnih tem *Esejev*, tudi na meta-ravni, želi zavihetati onstran navad govornice. Ustvarjalnost govornih dejanj je način prevpraševanja govornice. Individuum ima s performativno govorno gesto možnost preseči rigidnosti, dogmatičnosti, ideološkosti ustaljenih oblik pomenov v jeziku z ustvarjanjem novih oblik pomenjanj v edinstvenih dogodkih izjavljanja. Montaigne zapiše: »Imam slovar, ki je samo moj.« (III, 13, 447), pa tudi, da besede »več pomenijo, kot povejo«. (III, 5, 353) S ponovnim izjavljanjem v dialoškem dogodku branja, pomenjajo vsakič na edinstven način: »Dober bralec bo v pisanju drugih pogosto odkril nove popolnosti in v njih odkrival bogatejše pomene in obraze.« (I, 24, 65)

Zaradi hibridne filozofsko-literarne narave *Esejev* se njihov diskurzivni subjekt vzpostavlja tudi kot subjekt literature. Po Benvenistu je literatura specifičen umetniški modus pomenjanja v izjavljanju.<sup>8</sup> Če jo razumemo kot diskurz, se tudi v njej vedno konstituira in konfigurira subjekt, a na specifičen način, ki pa ni povsem drugačen od tistega v vsakdanji govornici, le njegova radikalizacija je. V literarnem, predvsem pa pesemskem diskurzu se po tezah Henrija Meschonnic, ki je Benvenistovo lingvistiko izjavljanja razvil v poetiko izjavljanja, Benvenistov diskurzivni subjekt razširi z izjavnega aparata na organizacijo celotnega sistema diskurza, in sicer s tekstualnimi vrednostmi – žarišči, ki jih Meschonnic osvetljuje z novo teorijo ritma in uvedbo pojmov generaliziranega pomenjanja, kontinuitete, recitativa in množstvenega pomenjevalca, ki razbije binarno logiko jezikovnega znaka.<sup>9</sup> Osrednja hipoteza poetike diskurza je namreč, da sistem literarnega teksta postaja z vpisovanjem in konfiguriranjem subjekta v njegovem diskurzu: »Če je diskurz praksa subjekta v zgodovini, je pesem razumljena kot maksimalni vpis subjekta (z njegovo situacijo in njegovo zgodbo) v govornico, medtem ko se druge oblike diskurza realizirajo predvsem kot vpis govornice v zgodovino in situacijo. Smisla zato ne gre več razumeti kot semantizma, leksikalizma, temveč kot generalizirano proizvajanje – ustvarjanje v celotnem diskurzu.« (*La rime* 46) Literarni subjekt nasploh je po poetiki diskurza ireduktibilno zvezan s specifično konceptualiziranim ritmom. Ritem je glavni antropološki element in glavni pomenjevalec v diskurzu; konstituira govornico, ne kot jezik, temveč kot diskurz; ne kot znak, temveč kot pomenjanje onstran znaka. Ker presega vse znake, ritem zajema govornico tudi



v vsem, kar ima ta telesnega in medtelesnega. Z ritmom se individuuum subjektivizira v subjekt literature, tako, da je ta subjekt ena od figur individuuma; njegova nujnost in fikcija. (*Politique* 359)

Menim, da zmore poetika diskurza, ki zahteva samostojno obravnavo, na visoki pojmovni, obenem pa praktično-analitični ravni zelo dobro podpreti teze teoretikov individuuma o povezavi med ustrojem individuuma in ustrojem teksta. Strukturiranje individuuma, katerega samozavedanje je po Schleiermacherju in z njim Franku neločljivo povezano z govorico, in sicer v primeru obeh modusov samozavedanja, je po teh tezah uskladjivo s strukturiranjem diskurza, tudi literarnega. Specifična diferenca literarne umetnosti v luči teorije individuuma je sledeča: literatura, še posebej poezija, predstavlja privilegirano mesto dogajanja oz. udejanjanja dinamike med t. i. neposredno, predrefleksijsko zavestjo in refleksijsko zavestjo.<sup>10</sup> Obstajajo tudi tesne vzporednice med Meschonnicovo relacijo ritem – subjekt, Schleiermacherjevo relacijo individuuum – stil ter Novalisovo relacijo (absolutni) subjekt – pesniška *Darstellung*, pesniško upodabljanje.<sup>11</sup> Meschonnicovi koncepti in analitična orodja tako dopolnjujejo in nadgrajujejo teze o predrefleksijskem in refleksijskem modusu v literarnem diskurzu, predvsem v poeziji, ki najbrž pogosteje kot druge vrste na najvišji ravni udejanja predrefleksijski modus, obenem pa dodajajo tudi razsežnost telesnosti, ki v teorijah individuuma ni posebej tematizirana. Neposredna zavest individuuma kot singularnega in časovno – dogodkovno ustrojene se v tekstu artikulira v območju tistega, kar Schleiermacher imenuje stil. Schleiermacherjev koncept stila je neposredno povezan z njegovim ločevanjem med logičnim in muzičnim v govorici. (Bowie 211) Muzično pa je povezano predvsem s pesniško govorico in – z neposredno zavestjo; saj se ta po Schleiermacherju artikulira v območju muzičnega. V govorici, predvsem literarni, so elementi muzičnega intonacija, jakost, barva in ritem, ki jim tudi Schleiermacher pripiše specifično vrsto pomenjanja s svojevrstno ilokucijsko močjo. Schleiermacherjev stil je v tem smislu razumljen kot zunajznakovna razsežnost besedila, ki pridobi specifično pomensko vrednost. V tem je vsaj implicirana tudi telesnost diskurza. Podobno razumevanje se kaže pri Novalisovem in Schellingovem pojmovanju ritma. (gl. Bowie, prav tam)

Problematico o singularnosti Montaignevega dvojnega projekta samoposkušanja in avtoportretiranja, ki nas je pripeljala do vpeljave teh shematično predstavljenih pojmovnih polj, velja zdaj pogledati še s teh vidikov. Po Benvenistu se diskurzivni subjekt konstituira kot subjekt v izjavnem aparatu, in sicer kot subjekt izjavljanja, hkrati pa kot subjekt izjave.<sup>12</sup> Subjekt izjavljanja ni refleksijska instanca v diskurzu, temveč je diskurzivna instanca, ki to refleksijskost subjekta izjave omogoči v diskurzu. Na

primeru *Esejev* imamo potem naslednjo konfiguracijo: empirični govorec Montaigne z izjavljanjem vzpostavlja diskurzivni subjekt kot subjekt izjavljanja (*je*), ki vzpostavlja izjavo kot diskurzivni svet (*histoire*) in znotraj njega refleksijski subjekt izjave, osebo Michel de Montaigne, ki se gradi z narativno konfiguracijo.

G. Defaux v študiji *Marot, Rabelais, Montaigne, l'écriture comme présence* razlog, zakaj Montaigne brezskrbno nadaljuje s svojim projektom samospoznavanja in slikanja kljub aporijam na ravni možnosti spoznanja, subjekta in reprezentacije, vidi v dejstvu, da vsi humanistični misleci in renesančni pisci, od Lutra, Erazma, Clémenta Marota, Margarete Navarske, Rabelaisa do Montaigna, verjamejo v možnost refleksijske pisave. Kaj mu pomeni ta refleksijskost? »Za Montaigna je tako kot za Erazma edini in edinstveni razlog za obstoj govornice, da govori točno bit, da je točno bit, ki jo govori. Tako za enega kot za drugega, mora biti govor podoba duha, slika ali zrcalo duše, *mentis imago, picutra sive speculum animi*.« (203) Je to refleksijskost jaza kot subjekta izjave? Subjekt izjave je tisti jaz, tista refleksijska instanca, v kateri se zre Montaigne iz mesa in krvi, ko reče jaz in se s tem postavlja za objekt proučevanja in upodabljanja.

Avtorska persona Montaigne – subjekt izjave seveda ni prefiltrirana skozi transformativni dispozitiv božanske inspiracije, ki ga je najbrž mogoče povezati s predrefleksijsko zavestjo, kakor je to pogosto za avtorsko figurirano persono renesančne poezije, denimo pri Ronsardu.<sup>13</sup> Vendar po Novalisu kazalnik jaz v diskurzu lahko pomeni zgolj ne-jaz jaza, neidentiteto, saj z njim označujemo refleksijski modus, ki je posredovan in ne neposreden.<sup>14</sup> Impliciran je manko, ki je konstitutiven za samozavedanje in za govornico. Refleksijska postavitev jaza, jaz = jaz, je, to ugotavlja tudi Hölderlin v fragmentu *Sodba in bit* (13–14), bistveno povezana z govornico; je tetična zareza in z vidika lacanovske psihoanalize pomeni vstop v simbolni red. Diskurz prav zato ne more biti zgolj udejanjanje neposredne zavesti, občutja, kot je to lahko glasba. Da pa Montaigne sploh lahko uporabi zaimek jaz, se mora vendarle najprej čutiti: imeti mora občutek predrefleksijske domačnosti s samim seboj. Subjektivacija v govornici, kot jo razume Benveniste, namreč ne more pomeniti zgolj refleksijskega modusa, temveč vsakokrat pomeni celotno vzvalovanje samozavedanja.

Kolikor *Eseje* obravnavamo tudi kot literarni diskurz, je treba v luči zgoraj predstavljenih pojmov subjektna žarišča neposrednega in telesnostnega subjektnega modusa teksta kot izjavljanja iskati še drugod, ne le v postavljenem, reprezentiranem jazu – osebi. Montaigne zapiše, da je »slediti tako burnim potem, kot so pota našega duha, prodirati v motne globine njegovih notranjih koticov, izbirati in najti tako prefinjene izraze njegovega nemira, trnovo podjetje, in to bolj kot je videti.« (II, 6, 160)<sup>15</sup>

Morda pri svojem projektu vztraja tudi zato, ker čuti, da mu govorica, ki ni le filozofska in tudi ne le vsakdanja, temveč tudi literarna (čeprav kar najbližje vsakdanji) omogoča tisto, česar mu sama refleksija brez umetnostnega dispozitiva ne more. *Eseji* si kot dvajsetletni projekt proučevanja sebe s pisanjem prizadevajo odkrivati tako gibanja refleksije, kot gibanja (samo)občutenja – predrefleksije in gibanja telesa, ki pronika na dan kot kretnja govornice – glas. Saj je z vidika renesančnega imanentizma šele to zares celovito proučevanje sebstva. Tudi Montaigneva dolgoletna vračanja k *Esejem*, branja, interpretiranja, v katerih se beroči subjekt v ponovnem izjavljanju subjektivira (gl. npr. Iser 236–246; Meschonnic, *Politique* 192), je mogoče razumeti kot vzvratna samospoznavanja, ne le na ravni refleksije v reprezentirani avtorski personi Montaigne, temveč tudi v drugih plasteh, kjer se v tekstu še z drugimi pomenjevalnimi strategijami udejanjata občutenje in telesnost.

Kot otrok renesanse – čeravno pozne renesanse, ki se že preveša v barok – se Montaigne še bori proti dualizmu duše in telesa in išče njuno ravnovesje. (II, 17, 265) V *Esejih* podrobno govori o svojem telesu, o telesnih navadah, stanjih, hibah, boleznih, tudi o svojih prebavnih in spolnih posebnostih. »Naslikati« se želi iz mesa in krvi, ne zgolj »razkrivati notranjih koticov duše: »Razgrinjam se vsega: OKOSTJE, žile, mišice, kite, vsak delček se zdi na svojem mestu ... Gibi, ki jih opisujem, so moji gibi, to sem jaz, to je moje bistvo.« (II, 6, 160) Proučevanje sebe je »moja metafizika, je moja fizika.« (III, 13, 431) M.-L. Damonet ugotavlja tudi, da v *Esejih* telo predstavlja središče metaforične mreže, s katero avtor opredeljuje svoj stil. (98) Govorica, ki jo Montaigne želi udejanjati kot način živenga sporazumevanja, pogovora, se nahaja med kretnjo in pisavo. Govorico je treba torej razumeti tudi v njeni telesnosti, diskurz pa kot neponovljive telesne kretnje – dejanja, ki so po Merleau-Pontyu del gibanja telesnosti/mesa (*chair*) sveta (kot čutečega in čutnega hkrati), preko katere se konstituira intersubjektivnost. Z glasnim izgovarjanjem je govorica še bližje telesu.<sup>16</sup> Ko Montaigne zapiše, da mora pomen osvetljevati in proizvajati besede, poudari, da te niso »iz vetra«, temveč »iz mesa in krvi«. (III, 5, 353) Pravi, da *Eseje* »narekuje«, da »govori papirju, kot govori človeku, ki ga sreča«. (III, 1, 321) V eseju *Umetnost pogovarjanja* (III, 7) postavi pogovor za najbolj plodno in naravno početje duha in sploh najprijetnejše dejanje v človeškem življenju; če bi moral izbirati med izgubo vida ali sluha in govora, bi izbral prvo. (III, 8, 372)

*Eseji* niso avtobiografija; Montaigne si narativne identitete ne ustvarja z biografskimi postopki uzgodbenja življenja. Če bi bili avtobiografija, bi bil njihov čas preteklost, njihov glagolski čas pa preteklik. Njihov čas pa je sedanjost govora tukaj, zdaj, zato je raven izjavljanja še toliko bolj

izpostavljena in delujoča. Montaigne se dobro zaveda vloge in ilokucijske moči ritma – stila svoje knjige. Večkrat poudari pomembnost načina (*manière*) pred snovjo (*matière*) izrečenega (gl. Nakam, *La manière* 880) : »[...] gre za način, ne za snov izrečenega. Na moje razpoložanje je treba gledati prav tako z vidika oblike kot z vidika snovi.« (III, 8, 375) Kakšni so ti načini *Esejev*? Najbolj jih morda opiše kar Montaigne: »pesniška hoja iz skokov in poskokov.« (III, 9, 401) To je predvsem prepuščanje svobodnemu brizganju misli, ki je konsubstancialno s pisanjem oziroma narekovanjem, kot sam pravi: »Slikam predvsem svoje misli, brezoblični predmet [...] in se ga trudim položiti na zračno telo glasu.« (II, 6, 160) *Eseji*, ki spoznavajo ireduktibilno mobilnost, diskontinuiteto, diferenco vsega, ta spoznanja tudi upodobijo. Preveva jih mobilnost stilov, množstvo zelo hitro menjajočih se tonalitet (že na primer v *Nagovoru bralca*), po mobilizacijski moči njihovih ritmov in zvočnosti se ponekod približujejo poeziji, s pomenjanjem, ki se ne dogaja le linearno, temveč v vse smeri in ne le na semantično-leksikalni ravni, temveč v celotnem diskurzu, v vseh odnosih izjavljanja, tudi tistih, ki tradicionalno spadajo v območje literarne forme. Montaigne to mobilizacijsko moč čuti: »Zdi se mi, da se, tako kot glas, ki pod prisilo ozke cevi trobente pride ven ostrejši in močnejši, tudi stavek, ki ga pospešujejo številne stopice poezije, poganja sunkoviteje in me zato bolj živo pretresa.« (I, 26, 72) V *Esejih* sicer ni metričnih, verzificiranih modulov, udejanjajo pa močne ritmične konfiguracije, ki temeljijo predvsem na odsekanosti, prekinjenosti posameznih mikrostruktur znotraj večjih modulov.<sup>17</sup>

Fragmentacija, prekinitve, preskok, vrivek, serpentina, asimptota, kontrast so nekateri od značilnih strukturacijskih elementov, ki so v *Esejih* nenehno na delu, in sicer na vseh ravneh teksta: v knjigi kot celoti, posameznem eseju kot celoti, stavku, skladnji. (gl. Jeanneret 20–23; Nakam, *Le Dernier* 195–228; Nakam, *La manière*, 870–890; Dubois 850–869) Z meandriranjem ritmov živjetja, mišljenja, duše, telesa, ki se spletejo v ritem pisanja – izjavljanja, konstituirajo mobilno razprtost teksta, ki mu ponekod preti celo nevarnost neberljivosti, vsekakor pa od bralca terjajo sodelujoči napor in vztrajnost. Montaigne šele v zadnjih letih svojega preiskovanja in pisanja vzvratno najde ali pa le izreče že prej najdeni odgovor na vprašanje: kako se torej lahko slikam, če pa je vse eno samo osciliranje? »Ne slikam biti, slikam prehajanje; pa ne prehajanje iz enega obdobja v drugo, ali kot pravi ljudstvo, iz sedemletke v sedemletko, ampak iz dneva v dan, iz minute v minuto.« (III, 2, prav tam) Le tako torej, da ničesar ne fiksiram, da ne strujem; ne smem slikati puščic, ki jih duša strelja, ali žarkov, ki jih pošilja, v hipu njihove negibnosti, temveč njihovo gibanje. Ne biti, temveč njeno valovanje. In glas in pero sta celo boljša pripomočka kot čopič.

## Sklep

Montaigne sam poudarja, da je njegova knjiga edinstvena, brez primere, edina taka na tem svetu. Doslej se še nihče ni poskusil naslikati s peresom. Obenem se, vsaj v njegovem času, kajti svoje antične zglede ima vedno v mislih, nihče ni odločil za tako vztrajno in dolgotrajno samoproučevanje. Toda *Eseji* niso edinstveni le v vsaki od teh dveh značilnosti posebej, temveč singularnost konstituirajo ravno v prežetosti obeh plasti svojega hibridnega tkiva. Skozi vse svoje »verbalno meso« z vsemi oblikami pomenjanja namreč uprizarjajo tisto, kar spoznavajo in izjavljajo na ravni Montaigneove osebno-filozofske introspekcije: konkretni singularni jaz v njegovi dogodkovnosti. S tem ustvarjajo singularni avtoportret oziroma nič manj kot sto sedem avtoportretov v gibanju. V skladu in hkrati z dogajanjem svoje hermenevtike subjekta se Montaigne upodablja sproti v svojem postajanju, oblikovanju, spreminjanju v »vedno v drugi jaz« (III, 2, 327), toda vedno v tistega, – na to *Eseji* nenehno opozarjajo – ki zna biti »dobro in pravilno človek« (III, 13, 447) in je v svojem postajanju vsakokrat, če že »ne povsem pri sebi, vsaj blizu sebe« (III, 2, 329) ter poskuša postajanje vsega, tudi odtekanje lastnega življenja, (ob)čutiti »globlje in polnejše.« (III, 13, 447)

Z današnjega stališča, ko na zelo raznorodne načine razumljen pojem singularnosti zavzema pomembno mesto ne le v filozofiji (npr. pri Deleuzu, Badiouju, Nancyu, Franku idr.), temveč tudi pri razumevanju literature (pri Bahtinu, Meschonnicu, Attridgeu idr.), pa se mi zdi, da Montaignovi *Eseji* ravno kot hibrid, ki svoj refleksijski – predrefleksijski – telesnostni »performativ« osvetlujejo s filozofskimi – refleksijskimi »konstativi«, na edinstven način kažejo na nekaj, čemur lahko rečemo kar univerzalna singularnost. S spoznanjem o »konsubstancialnosti« avtorja in knjige *Eseji* anticipirajo pojem subjekta literarnega diskurza.

Na obeh ravneh, performativni in konstativni, ki stopata v dialog tudi na način prakse in teorije, predvsem pa v njunem preseku, *Eseji* namreč kažejo, da o singularnosti literature kot dogodka (Attridge 64) ali literaturi kot singularnem dogodku, ne moremo govoriti, dokler ne predpostavimo neke druge singularnosti, namreč singularnosti dogodka njenega subjekta oziroma subjektov. In sicer dvojne singularnosti: prvič, singularnosti posamičnega individuuma, ki se z različnimi pomenjevalnimi strategijami subjektivira v literarnem diskurzu in ga maksimalno subjektivira v vpepljevanjem novih oblik pomenjanja in pomenov. In drugič, singularnosti subjekta literature kot ene od funkcij in dejavnosti v množstvu subjektivnih funkcij individuuma.

OPOMBE

<sup>1</sup> V navedkih iz *Esejev* si sledijo številka knjige, eseja in strani. Kjer ni navedeno drugače, so prevodi moji.

<sup>2</sup> Tukaj nekatere dele povzemam iz svojega prispevka, objavljenega v *Novi reviji*. (gl. Balžalorsky)

<sup>3</sup> Prevod M. Leskovar. (Auerbach 209)

<sup>4</sup> Prevod B. Madžarevič. (Pintarič 273)

<sup>5</sup> Prevod B. Madžarevič. (Pintarič 272)

<sup>6</sup> Sartre to v *L'Être et le Néant* formulira takole: »*Le soi* predstavlja idealen razmik v imanenci subjekta v odnosu s samim seboj, način, da subjekt ni svoje lastno sovpadanje, da uide identiteto tako, da jo istočasno postavlja kot enotnost, skratka tako, da je v trajnem in nestabilnem ravnotežju med identiteto kot absolutno kohezijo brez sledi razlike in enotnostjo kot sintezo mnoštvenosti.« (nav. po Frank, *Kazivo* 313)

<sup>7</sup> Prevod B. Madžarevič. (Pintarič 268–269) Montaigne navaja Lukrecijeve verze o sončni svetlobi.

<sup>8</sup> Benveniste na podlagi uvida dvoravninskosti (raven jezika kot sistema in raven nepovnljive izjave kot dogodka), ki jo ugotavljata tudi Schleiermacher in Bahtin, izpelje koncept dveh sistemov pomenjanja (*signifiance*); Semiološki sistemi temeljijo na znakovnem pomenjanju (npr. sistem jezika), nesemiološki sistemi pa so tisti »kjer pomenjanje v delo vtisne avtor« [où la signifiance est imprimée par l'auteur à l'oeuvre] (npr. umetniški sistemi) (Benveniste, *Problèmes* 59)

<sup>9</sup> Gl. predvsem *Critique*. Dvojico označenec – označevalec nadomesti Meschonnic s pojmom *pomenjevalca* – *signifiant* (prevod *označevalec* je v tem pomenu nesmiseln in nemogoč, obenem pa se z drugim izrazom nakaže tudi razlika s poststrukturalističnim označevalcem) – kot proizvajalca generaliziranega pomenjanja. *Pomenjevalec* tako ni več materialni nosilec pomena, temveč v Meschonnicovi teoriji dobi vrednost »sedanjega deležnika glagola pomenjati, razumljenega kot kulturna in subjektivna *kontinuiteta* (*continuu*) subjekta v njegovi govorici.« (*La rime* 58)

<sup>10</sup> Pri obravnavi teh teorij pri vprašanju estetskega izkustva tudi A. Jovanovska postavi tezo, da je *differentia specifica* estetskega izkustva poezije v modernosti stik s predrefleksijsko zavestjo. (*Estetsko*)

<sup>11</sup> Za podrobnejšo obravnavo Novalisovih tez gl. Jovanovski, *Razmerje*.

<sup>12</sup> Metodološko razlikovanje med govorcem (*locuteur*) ali pošiljateljem v teorijah informacije in med subjektom diskurza – subjektom izjavljanja je mogoče ponazoriti takole: prvi koncept – *govorec*, predpostavlja trdni koncept subjekta, drugi pa procesualnega, dogodkovnega. Benvenistovo lingvistiko procesa subjekta je treba dopolniti z drugačnim filozofskim modelom subjekta oziroma samozavedanja; kot diskontinuitete, diference, postajajočnosti.

<sup>13</sup> O božanski inspiraciji Montaigne piše na številnih mestih. Gl. npr. I, 24, 65 o transformativnem dispozitivu vseh umetnosti.

<sup>14</sup> Ko govori o opuščanju identičnega za njegovo upodabljanje, Novalis pristavi, da to počnemo »preko njegove ne-bití (tistega, kar ni), preko ne-identičnega (kar z njim ni identično) – z znakom.« (*Fichte* 3)

<sup>15</sup> Prevod M. Leskovar. (Auerbach 213)

<sup>16</sup> Gl. odlomek o glasu v III, 13, 437.

<sup>17</sup> Gl. npr. odlomek iz zadnjega eseja, *O izkustvu*, kjer je Montaigne zadnje »podaljške« dopisal tik pred smrtjo. V odlomku se telesnost in njeno občutenje pomensko konfigurirata na različnih plasteh diskurza. (III, 13, 439) Gl. npr. tudi znameniti odlomek, kjer Montaigne omenja *distinguo*, razločevanje, »kot univerzalni ud svoje logike«. Tu govori o nenehni spremenljivosti osebnih razpoloženj, stanj, pa tudi lastnosti, hkrati pa to spremenljivost uprizori tudi na ravni ritmične konfiguracije. II, 1, 144.

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## De la singularité de la « sottre entreprise »

Keywords: French literature / essay / Montaigne, Michel de / subject / individuality / self-awareness

L'article aborde la double nature du »sot projet« de Montaigne, celle de se connaître en s'essayant et celle de se peindre à la plume. En traitant brièvement quelques éléments du plan philosophique des *Essais* tout d'abord, il nous semble fondé de rapprocher certains aspects de l'herméneutique du sujet montagnienne des théories non-égologiques de la conscience de soi. À la base d'une critique du modèle réflexif, celles-ci conçoivent l'individualité en tant que non-identité événementielle, possédant néanmoins une familiarité-à-soi non relationnelle liée à la conscience préreflexive. L'aperçu de Montaigne sur le devenir perpétuel de l'individu, de même que ses vues sur le langage sont ensuite mis en lumière par le postulat de Benveniste de la constitution intersubjective et événementielle de la subjectivité dans le discours. Dans la deuxième partie, nous abordons le plan de l'autoportrait où se configure le sujet du discours littéraire. Les thèses d'Henri Meschonnic sur l'extension du sujet d'énonciation benvenistien à l'organisation entière du discours littéraire par le rythme spécifiquement conceptualisé sont liés aux modes préreflexif et corporel de la configuration littéraire, ainsi qu'à la conception du style de Schleiermacher par lequel la conscience préreflexive se manifesterait dans le texte poétique. Nous suggérons que les constatations sur la nature de l'individu en perpétuel devenir avancées sur le plan philosophique des *Essais*, se trouvent simultanément articulées dans la chair verbale du texte grâce aux formes spécifiques de signifiante. La singularité des *Essais* se constitue précisément dans le dialogue entre le »constatif« et le »performatif« de leur texture hybride. De plus, il semble que les *Essais* anticipent la conception du sujet du discours littéraire par l'idée de »consubstantialité« du livre et de son auteur. D'une manière tout à fait singulière, leur nature hybride indique qu'il est impossible de postuler la singularité de la littérature conçue comme événement, sans supposer préalablement une autre singularité, à savoir celle de ses sujets. Cette singularité est double : tout d'abord la singularité de l'individu qui s'inscrit dans toute énonciation littéraire par la subjectivisation maximale du discours en introduisant des formes inédites de signifiants et de sens. Et deuxièmement : la singularité du sujet de l'écriture en tant que fonction et activité dans la multitude de fonctions – sujets de l'individu moderne.

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# Esej z vidika antične filozofije

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*Avtorica se v svoji razpravi opre na Montaigneovo stališče o esejju kot refleksiji jaza. Z vidika današnjega stanja duha bi ga razumeli v pomenu osrediščenja jaza kot subjekta. Če pa Montaigneovo in renesančno misel nasploh prebiramo v historično zaobrnjeni smeri, z vidika antičnega pojmovanja človeka, zlasti s filozofskega stališča, ki nam ga je prek Platona zapustil Sokrat, potem se da stališče o esejju kot refleksiji jaza razumeti na način, da jaz v esejjistični formi prek razmisleka o širših zadevah sveta poskuša določiti mero in mejo lastnemu bivanju. Iz te perspektive esej v pravem pomenu besede nikakor ne more biti zgolj zgodovinski žanr, temveč ga je treba razumeti v pomenu »živete literature«.*

Ključne besede: literatura in filozofija / antična filozofija / esej / Platon / Montaigne, Michel de / jaz / subjekt

Esej sodi med tiste literarne zvrsti, za katere se zdi, da se jih da zgodovinsko povsem jasno opredeliti. Za njegovega začetnika velja Montaigne, ki je izraz *essai* tudi vpeljal v literarno in filozofsko zgodovino.

A da *nomen* ni vedno *omen*, če parafraziram znano krilatico, se izkaže ob množici vsakovrstnih razprav, ki jih njihovi avtorji, zlasti v anglosaksonskem prostoru, dandanes radi naslavljajo kot »An Essay ...«. Večinoma gre za strokovne in znanstvene, tudi monografske razprave, analize in študije, ki ne razkrivajo avtorjeve življenjske drže, ampak zgolj njegovo tezo o obravnavani temi. Z rabo oznake esej poskušajo razpravljalci zgolj zmehčati normativni značaj svojih stališč, opozarjati na svojo dialoško odprtost do drugačnih interpretacij in resnic, ne pa izrisati lastnega duhovnega portreta v slogu Montaignevega predgovora k izdaji *Esejev* leta 1580, ko je zapisal: »Zakaj tisti, ki ga slikam, sem jaz sam.« (Montaigne 3).

Raba oznake esej je, kot sem uvodoma na kratko nakazala, v primerjavi z Montaignevim razumevanjem pogosto precej drugačna, celo vprašljiva in problematična. Pogled od Montaigna v sedanjost pa bi zdaj rada še historično zaobrnila in problematizirala razumevanje ter razlago esejjistične forme tudi za nazaj. Moje vprašanje se torej glasi: ali se esej, ker je pač terminološko vezan na svojega renesančnega očeta, upravičeno razume kot »tipičen poznorenesančni pojav, povezan s humanističnimi predstavami o svetu in položaju človeka v njem [...], saj empirična skušnja zamenja aristotelovsko statičnost v razumevanju sveta.« (Poniž 9). Tako je namreč

v svoji razpravi *Esej* o izvoru eseja pri nas spregovoril Denis Poniž, pri čemer se je oprl na številne mednarodne vire in razlage.

Interpreti, ki poskušajo esej historično fiksirati v pozno renesanso, pa spregledajo vsaj dve dejstvi: prvič, da je humanistični poskus opredelitve položaja človeka v svetu izhajal iz antičnega razumevanja in pojmovanja kozmosa. In drugič, da aristotelovska paradigma statičnosti nikakor ni izhodiščni model filozofske razlage človeka in sveta.

Montaigne nam v uvodu k svojim razpravam ponuja imenitno, kar se da splošno izhodišče o eseju kot refleksiji jaza. In kdo je ta jaz? Je to avtor, ki v svojem delu misli nase in govori zgolj o sebi? Ali avtor, ki o sebi premišljuje? Če se vprašam še na drugačen način: ali to pomeni, da jaz z esejistično govorico dejansko stopi v ospredje, celo v središče razmišljanja, ali da jaz premišljuje o sebi prek tematiziranja nekega drugega problema in gre na tak način za razmerjanje jaza do drugega? Za določevanje mere jaza v odnosu do ti, širše rečeno, za izpisovanje koordinat jaza v svetu, o katerem razmišlja in prek katerega se določuje?

Če na to vprašanje pogledam z vidika današnjega stanja duha, potem lahko trdim, da je mišljenje od renesanse dalje izhajalo iz prve teze, in sicer da je potekalo v smeri osrediščenja jaza kot subjekta. Jaz postane center sveta in iz tega centra se izza bolj ali manj visokih zidov okrog sebe ozira po tem, kar stoji onstran njegovega izkustva. Iz take perspektive zre na to drugo, na to, kar je zunaj oziroma onstran, kot na tujstvo, ki oža meje njegovega čutnega užitka, čustvenega doživljanja in miselne svobode.

Naj navedem konkretni, sorazmerno svež primer takega razumevanja eseja kar iz domače esejistične prakse. Gre za priznanje za najodličnejšo esejistično zbirko v letu 2009 knjigi Ifigenije Zagoričnik *Konci in kraji* (2009). V njej avtorica s pronicljivim preiskovanjem sebe, iskrenim, že kar intimnim, tako duševnim kot fizičnim samorazgaljanjem popisuje izkušnjo lastnega življenja in nam pri tem ponuja imenitne miselne iztočnice. Vendar svoje misli zapisuje na način, da iz občutenj jaza zre na svet, ne pa da bi prek drugega, namreč iz zadev sveta, poskušala določiti mesto lastnemu jazu. Zato mej sveta, ki ga beleži, ne širi, temveč oži na potrebe, zahteve in pričakovanja lastnega jaza.

Če pa Montaignevo in renesančno misel nasploh prebiram z zgodovinsko zaobrnjene smeri, namreč iz perspektive antičnega pojmovanja človeka, zlasti s filozofskega stališča, ki nam ga je prek Platona zapustil Sokrat, potem se da Montaignevo izhodišče o eseju kot refleksiji jaza razumeti tudi drugače. In sicer da avtor v svojih *Esejih* tematizira obča bivanjska, družbena in kulturna vprašanja o človeku in svetu, da bi iz njih poskušal določiti mero in mejo samemu sebi. To je nenazadnje razvidno tudi iz naslovov njegovih razprav, ki jih ne zasnuje v prvoosebni obliki, temveč kot serijo vprašanj, pogosto zastavljenih v množinski obliki, oziroma

kot niz družbenih tem. Tako Montaigne že z izbiro naslovov sociološke, pedagoške, etične in kulturne narave jasno nakazuje, da ga zanima neko družbeno razmerje in ne zgolj on sam.

In kaj naj bi imela skupnega Sokrat in Montaigne? Dobro je znano, da je Sokrat sporočilo delfskega preročišča o svoji veliki modrosti strnil v znano sintagmo »vem, da nič ne vem« (*gnōthi sautón*). Že on je torej vzpostavil filozofijo kot način samospraševanja in samopreiskovanja. V nasprotju s prevladujočo prakso pesnikov, pa tudi filozofov, ki so javno razglašali svojo od boga dano modrost, pa je kot božji dar poudarjal človekovo nevednost. Na ta način je opozoril na potrebo po samozamejevanju posameznika in posamičnega kot takega.

Iz te perspektive je treba začeti drugače brati tudi Platonovo filozofijo. Njegovega poskusa zamejevanja vrednosti konkretno bivajočega se ne da enostavno izenačiti z diktaturo občega (to je njegovih idej), kakor Platona že stoletja berejo in razumejo tradicionalni raziskovalci. Prav zaradi takih, izredno spornih filozofskih enačb je priljubljena krilatica o paradoksalnem nasprotju med konkretnim Platonom, to je Platonom kot literarno nadarjenim avtorjem dialogov (tako imenovanim Platonom-umetnikom), in Platonom-filozofom, ki naj bi umetnike, tudi literate izgnal iz svoje države. Naj ob tem omenim le nekatere znane literarnozgodovinske razprave Penelope Murray, Iris Murdoch, Richarda Robinsona, v Sloveniji pa Kajetana Gantarja ali Janka Kosa.

Nasprotno, Platon ne izničuje vrednosti konkretno bivajočega, ko resnico pripisuje ideji kot skrajni občosti. Pokaže pa na relativnost resnice posamičnega, kar je filozofija od Aristotela dalje povsem spregledala. Svojo trditev opiram predvsem na dve točki:

Prvič, Platon v svojih delih resnici v bran ne kliče avtoritete jaza. V svojih dialogih namreč sploh ne nastopa, temveč razpravlja skoz usta mnogih drugih govorcev, med njimi še zlasti svojega učitelja Sokrata. Na tak način posebej opozarja, da je filozofska govorica prosta vezi imena oziroma da ne sme podleči imperativu *authós éphe* (»on sam je govoril«). Filozofija je drugo ime za prevprašujočo pot mišljenja, na kateri šele s skrajno zamejivtijo jaza in prisluškovanjem govoric drugega – kar je tudi bistvo njegove dialoške forme – lahko pridemo do uvida v bitno razprtost človeka. V Platonovi filozofski govorici, ki je sama razprtost med jaz in ti, se razkriva človekova bitna razprtost med posamičnim in občim in šele na tej osnovi se rojeva spoznanje o človekovi smotrnosti danosti kot biti za Dobro.

Naj zdaj navedem še drugo točko, na katero opiram svojo tezo: Aristotel je bil tisti, ki je vzpostavil historično razumevanje filozofije kot zgodovinskega obračuna z mišljenjem svojih filozofskih očetov. Platon svoje filozofije namreč nikoli ni ovrednotil kot »*prima philosophía*«, kot prve med prvimi, ki v nasprotju s predhodniki ponuja odrešenjsko, absolutno

resnico. Nasprotno, svoja stališča je iz dialoga v dialog pogosto spreminjal, jih variiral, obnavljal ter se o njih znova in znova spraševal. Variabilnost mišljenja glede na vsakokratno novo dialoško situacijo je dokaz, da njegova filozofija ni abstraktna misel, v katero in iz katere lahko razpravljalec svoj jaz po potrebi vključi ali izključi, da ji nadene podobo absolutnosti. Platonovo mišljenje je obenem življenje, njegova filozofija je živeta misel, misel, ki se zaveda vsakokratne konkretne pozicije in jo v svojem premisleku o sebi tudi upošteva. Prav iz tega premisleka zmore uzreti človekovo bitno razprtost (med minljivostjo in neskončnim, med jaz in ti, med posamičnim in obče dobrim, med človekom in kozmosom) in iz tega spoznanja bivanjski izkušnji posamičnega postaviti pravo življenjsko (etično) mejo in mero.

Če Montaigneovo opredelitev eseja kot refleksije jaza beremo na tak način, se izkaže, da torej Platon ni nič manj izrazit ali nič večji esejist od Montaigna, saj gre za en in isti poskus ubesedenja bivanjske izkušnje človeka v kozmosu. Teza o Platonu kot začetniku esejizma pa ni izvirno moja. Na začetku 20. stoletja jo je v svoji razpravi *Über Wesen und Form des Essays* zapisal že György Lukács, ki »med dela največjih esejistov« prišteva Platonove dialoge, spise mistikov, Montaigneve *Eseje* in Kierkegaardove imaginarne dnevnike (Lukács 30).

Vendar se na tem mestu ne želim izraziteje zaustavljati ob trditvah, kaj sodi v zgodovino eseja in kdo si zasluži naziv njegovega začetnika. Nasprotno, prav na primeru eseja želim opozoriti na relativnost zgodovinskega pogleda ter potencirano historizacijo pri razlaganju tako literarnih kot filozofskih pojavov. Kot sem že predhodno na kratko nakazala, je evolutivni zgodovinski vidik v evropskem mišljenju uveljavil Aristotel, ko je filozofijo utemeljil kot neprestani boj z mišljenjem dedičev oziroma kot obračun s svojim učiteljem, da bi lastni modrosti lahko priboril pozicijo »prvek in najvišje.

Poudariti želim dejstvo, da esej ni prvenstveno historično opredeljiva forma pisanja. Moje stališče o esejizmu kot transhistoričnem načinu mišljenja oziroma človekovega samospoznavanja pa seveda vzbuja novo dilemo. Ali esejistike v primeru navezave na Platona enostavno ne izenačimo s filozofijo in ji – skladno s platonskim izganjanjem umetnikov iz njegove idealne države – ne odvzamemo vsakršne literarne vrednosti?

Odgovor na to vprašanje terja daljšo razpravo o Platonovem odnosu do umetnosti, ki se ne opira več zgolj na dobesedno branje tistih njegovih stavkov, v katerih govori o lepem, resnici in umetniškem delu. A naj njegovo zavračanje umetnosti zgolj na kratko postavim v kontekst svoje predhodne razprave. Platon zavrača tisto umetnost, ki ni zmožna refleksije, to pomeni, ki posamičnemu umetniškemu delu pripisuje resnico, ne da bi ga zmožla uvideti na horizontu človekove razprtosti med končnostjo in tem, kar ga presega. Zavrača torej umetnost, ki ne prepozna potrebe po samozamejevanju, ki ne predpostavlja dialoškosti kot temeljne oblike, v

kateri je reflektirana spremenljivost in negotovost vsakokratne človekove življenjske izkušnje. Zavrača umetnost, ki sama sebe postavlja na piedestal najboljše, vrhunske in edine lastnice resnice.

Platon je stal na prelomu človeštva v vladavino individualizma, zato je s kritiko umetnosti in prividne, lažne filozofije (sofistike) svaril pred nevarnostmi diktature jaza, ki se v najbolj skrajni obliki kot volja do moči razkriva v sodobnem svetu. Sodobna filozofija nedvomno lucidno in skrbno beleži stanja današnjega duha, izgubljenost človeka v labirintih zavesti, podzavesti in nezavednega, opozarja pred grozo znanstvenega ekspanzionizma, preiskuje meje človekove govornice in ga napotuje k fenomenu biti. Sprašuje se, kako misliti in kako govoriti, a po trpkem izkustvu s poskusom zgodovinskega udejanjanja markisistične misli je iz svojega besednjaka povsem izbrisala sokratski pogovor, ki je obenem in vedno tudi nenehno spraševanje in odgovarjanje o tem, česa ne storiti, in na drugi strani, kako živeti oziroma kako svojo misel uresničevati. Dokler je s sodobno filozofijo tako, ostaja ujeta v prividno samozadostnost mislečega jaza, v avtonomnost duha, ki izza slonokoščениh stolpov zazrtosti v lastno modrost ne more več uzreti človekove bitne danosti kot biti za drugega, prek katerega šele lahko določi mejo in mero samemu sebi.

Človek je dan na svet kot bitje ljubezni, a ne v smislu ljubeče vdanosti, temveč v pomenu odprtosti za drugega. To je ljubezen v pomenu spraševanja, pogovarjanja, ogledovanja in prisluškovanja temu ti, ki biva v moji bližini. In ta ti je vsakršna drugost (bodiš sočlovek, narava, svet ...). V zamejevanju bivajočega kot obratu od njegove svetne neizmer(je)nosti, se za njegovo mejo odpira pogled na onstran, ki ni ogledovanje v prostoru in času. Z zamejevanjem brezmejnosti posamičnega se razkriva onstranmejnost kot sama enost meje in brezmejnega.

Medtem pa razni modrovalci v imenu filozofije, tiste, ki jo že v njenem izvornem imenu določuje ljubezen, ta brezpogojna ogleda(l)nost jaza v ti, še vedno vztrajno merijo dolžino in širino človekovega individuuma in njegove miselne svobode in tako oni sami obilno hranijo že imenovani ekspanzionizem znanosti, absolutizem védenja in diktat, četudi včasih razcufanega, malo omotičnega ali vsaj malo zaspanega subjekta. V tem prividnem svetu ni mesta za afirmacijo drugega, je zgolj in samo prostor za njegovo kritiko. Človeško bivanje ni več ljubezen, temveč je agōn, boj na življenje in smrt med jaz in ti. Zakaj vsako širjenje mej svobode jaza v razprtosti človekove biti med jaz in ti pomeni brezpogojno odvzemanje svobode drugemu. Zaradi identifikacije svobode človeka kot posameznika s svobodo njegovega jaza se mišljenje paradoksalno zapira v vedno ožji krog človekove samozadostnosti in v dokončno izgubo uvida za svet. Skrajna osvoboditev posameznika, ki ne zmore uvideti človekove bitne danosti kot biti za drugega, to je delovati, bistvovati kot dobro, je sama najhujša oblika tiranije. Iz tega pogleda se tudi

filozofija ne kaže več kot neskončna svoboda mišljenja, temveč kot odgovorna zavezanost. Filozof ni tisti, ki lepo govori, dejanski družbeni učinki njegovega govora pa so lahko bodisi dobri ali slabi. Biti filozof pomeni živeti svojo misel, zato filozofija ne more biti izenačena s sofistično modrostjo, ki se jo da naučiti, plačati in jo potem dobro prodati (povsem enako prakso beležimo danes tudi pri trenutno najbolj slavni »filozofih«). Filozofija v tem pogledu ne more biti poklic, temveč je pristna odprtost mišljenja.

V tej luči se posredno toliko bolj razsvetljuje tudi Platonovo zavračanje umetnosti. Filozof ni avtarkični suveren, ni tiran, ki samovoljno odloča, kateri umetnik bo ostal v varnem zavetju njegove države in kateri bo moral iz nje za zmeraj izginiti, temveč s svojo prisposodno govorico o izgonu Homerja in Hezioda utemeljitelj Akademije opozarja, da je idealna država tista, kjer filozofija in umetnost ne govorita vsaka s svojim, druga za drugo nerazumljivim, avtorskim in avtarkičnim jezikom, temveč se morata medsebojno pogovarjati ter svojo skupno temo najti v tem, da se ozreta prek vsakdanjega človeškega življenja k uvidu v to, kaj pomeni biti človek, in iz tega uvida delujeta v svetu kot umerjanju človeka v kozmosu.

Zato ni, kot menijo mnogi raziskovalci Platonovega nauka o umetnosti, bodisi naključje, bodisi protislovje ali morebiti paradoks, da svojo filozofijo poimenuje kot »najvišjo umetnost« (*megístē mousikē*) (*Phd.* 61a). Prav tako ni presenečenje, da v svojo filozofsko govorico vpeljuje ironijo, prisposodno izražanje ter variira različne diskurzivne forme. Na tak način poskuša preprečiti dokončni razkol med filozofijo in umetnostjo, razkol, zaradi katerega bitna razprtost bivajočega lažno izgleda kot ontološka diferenca (kot razcepljenost in popolna razločenost).

V svoji razpravi govorim na prvi pogled zelo malo o prvotno zastavljeni temi, torej o eseju. Poudariti pa želim, da sem se zavestno odvrnila od neposredne govorice o eseju, da bi ravno prek drugačnega, širšega pogleda na mišljenje sploh – skladno s svojo drugo tezo o tem, kako velja razumeti Montaigneovo stališče o eseju kot refleksiji jaza – prišla do nekaterih poskusnih koordinat pri določevanju esejistične forme. Odgovor na spraševanje o esejističnem pisanju je lahko le esej sam kot refleksija lastne bivanjske razprtosti med jazom, ki živi, in jazom, ki preiščuje (oziroma izreka svoje mišljenje).

Ravno na tak način pridemo do spoznanja, da esej v pomenu antičnega in renesančnega razumevanja refleksije jaza kot procesa samozamejevanja nikakor ne more biti zgolj zapisana literatura. Njegova temeljna *differentia specifica* v primerjavi z drugimi literarnimi žanri je prav v tem, da je živa, živeta literatura. A to ni življenje v smislu preživljanja vsakdana, kot ga poznamo iz avtobiografskih zapiskov. Temveč je esej preiščevanje o zadevah sveta na način, ki brezpogojno določa mejo in mero tistemu, ki ga zapisuje. Esaj torej ni neki novi, zgodovinsko pogojeni model mišljenja, ampak je temeljni način človekovega bivanja. V svoji razprti strukturi (ki



jo danes radi označujemo kot odprtost, nedokončanost ...) namreč na literarno-ontološki ravni ohranja živo refleksijo o človekovi bitni razprtosti, zato je tako historično kot žanrsko neopredeljiv in enkratno. Obenem pa ni zgolj edina zvrst, ki izpričuje razprtost bivajočega med jaz in ti, med človekom in kozmosom, med živeti in biti za dobro, v katerem se bitna razprtost pokaže za smotrnostno. V samem procesu spoznavanja razprtosti bivajočega se ne godi zgolj iskanje človekove izgubljene enosti, temveč tudi poskus njenega udejanjanja, ko filozofija in umetnost nista več razločeni, temveč govorita z eno in isto govorico Muz – z modrostjo.

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## The Essay from the Perspective of Ancient Philosophy

Keywords: literature and philosophy / ancient philosophy / essay / Plato / Montaigne, Michel de / self / subject

The essay is one of those literary genres that seem to lack a clear-cut historical determination. This article proposes a shift in the understanding and explanation of the form of the essay, moving away from the accepted historical perspective on the essay regarding its origin in Montaigne and its development up to the present.

Montaigne succeeded in providing a remarkable general starting point for his treatise on the essay, which is a reflection on the Self. The contemporary frame of mind sees reflection, at least from the Renaissance onward, as directed towards the centralization of the Self as the subject. The Self becomes the center of the world, looking over the walls at what lies beyond its experience. It is from this perspective that the Self looks at the other, at what is external, at the beyond, which is expected to reduce its sensual pleasure, emotional experience, and mental freedom.

If one interprets Montaigne's idea and Renaissance thought in general from the reverse perspective (i.e., that of the Ancient Greek conception of the human being, especially that inherited from Socrates via Plato), one can clearly assume a different starting point for Montaigne's understanding of the essay as the reflection of the Self. In his *Essays*, Montaigne sought to determine the measure and limit of his own existence through reflection on broader existential, social, and cultural issues of the world (as the titles of his essays clearly show).

Socrates identified himself with the thought "I know nothing except the fact of my ignorance," and so he was the first to stress the importance of self-limitation of the individual. The same is true of Plato. He never evaluated his philosophy as *prima philosophia*. On the contrary, he reconsidered his views throughout his dialogues. It is only through the ultimate self-limitation of the Self and through listening to the language of the Other that we can gain insight into the openness of the human being between Me and You, between the particular and the general.

The essay, which has its origin in the ancient understanding of the reflection of the Self as the process of self-limitation, is not "just written literature," but must also be "lived literature" because reflecting on matters of the world unconditionally determines the limit and measure of the one writing it. The essay is therefore not some new, historically conditioned

mode of thought, but a way of life. With its open structure (today usually referred to as openness or unaccomplishment), it retains a living reflection on human ontological openness at the literary and ontological level. It is more than the only genre that expresses the openness of entities. The very process of learning about the openness of entities initiates its actualization, in which philosophy and art are no longer two separate phenomena, but speak one and the same language of the Muses: that of wisdom.

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# Singularity and the Czech Interwar Essay among the Currents: František Xaver Šalda, Karel Čapek, and Jaroslav Durych

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*This study examines the Czech interwar essay of the 1920s and 1930s based on the example of three writers and critics: František Xaver Šalda, Karel Čapek, and Jaroslav Durych. It analyzes the specific thematic and formal features of the Czech essay and its typology.*

Keywords: Czech literature / 20th cent. / essay / Šalda, František Xaver / Čapek, Karel / Durych, Jaroslav

To deal with the essay means to touch the kernel of literature in its widest sense, fact and fiction and all the neighboring plasma that links various layers of literary creation in both the past and present. A few years ago, in his book on early German romanticism, Břetislav Horyna, a Brno philosopher with a German orientation, emphasized the former more or less successful attempt at the synthesis of philosophy and poetry with the idea of continuity with the neoclassicist vision of the world, which might remind one of the “Christian Renaissance” based on the similar continuity with the classical, ancient tradition starting from the Carolingian Renaissance – a softer variety of the later genuinely hard, often atheistic Renaissance trying to delimitate itself in comparison to the medieval worldview. If the frequent link between philosophy and literature in its aesthetic or poetic function is taken into account, an essay on essay writing might be understood as a softer attempt at constructing bridges between various, often hostile, antinomic genre forms, cultural epochs, or ideological bias. I am convinced that all the treatises devoted to this subject may accentuate the many-sidedness, plurality, and ambiguity of the essay, its singularity, and its position on the boundary of literature and non-literature, of fact and fiction. I do not wish to philosophize about the essay or generalize its

multiple features; rather, I prefer the inductive approach based on a short comment on selected parts of the Czech essay tradition of the interwar period, the essence of which was being formed by the three writers and essayists in my title.

In Czech literature, the tradition of the essay goes back to modernism (the Czech *moderna*) linked to Czech decadence, which was more or less – as Robert Pynsent puts it – socially biased. Of course, this does not mean the total absence of the essay in preceding periods. One of the leading realist writers, Jan Neruda, may be regarded as the first to tend to a very similar sphere. However, only Julius Zeyer (as understood by Pynsent) represented the path to decadence (Pynsent, *Julius Zeyer*) and was most probably a modernist predecessor of this genre. The group around *Moderní revue* cultivated this genre form, and later Otokar Březina – one of the most significant Czech symbolists and a frequent Czech candidate for the Nobel Prize – wrote his well-known essay collections called *Skryté dějiny* (Hidden History) and *Hudba pramenů* (Music of the Springs) under the influence of František Xaver Šalda. However, the aim of this short article is not to trace the history of the essay in Czech literature, but “simply” to grasp one or two aspects of it that might have a more general meaning.

In Czech literature (and, moreover, in other Slavic literatures) the essay and essay writing was located between the rigid German tradition and the “lighter,” more elegant French and English approach towards literature well understood by younger artists born after 1890. The form of the essay in Czech literature was similar to that cultivated in the course of the entire nineteenth century; it was overloaded with many non-aesthetic functions and developed from general and artistic subjects up to culture in its widest sense, history, and politics. Thus, the essay, in those cosmopolitan currents of Czech post-realist times, often served for the integration of European subjects, bringing the Czech literature of that time closer to western European literary discourse. In the interwar period, when the writers of the 1890s matured, the essay sometimes served as a tool for wider cultural and political aims, including the propagation of the new state, its national ideology, and the democratic principles it was based on, as well as other general cultural tasks. The essay has often been involved in the polemics concerning several crucial subjects threatening the very existence of the new state: the concept of Czechoslovakia itself (i.e., the “Slovak issue”) was very topical if one simply compares the positions of Albert Pražák and Josef Jirásek on the one hand, and of Alexander Mach (the former minister of internal affairs of the First Slovak Republic in the 1940s) on the other. Mach’s fragmentary memoirs portray the entire problem as unsolvable and at an impasse, the problem of political orientation,

the role of President Tomáš Garrigue Masaryk, and the popularity of Russian bolshevism among both the Czech working class and the majority of young Czech intellectuals. In the Czech interwar cultural environment, the essay participated in constructing the new cultural policy.

František Xaver Šalda (1867–1937) gradually became a founder of the all-embracing Czech essay. It is characteristic that the essay in the Czech lands has often had a hybrid genre structure, drawing closer to the plasma of heterogeneous genres and genre groupings such as the feuilleton, treatise, reflection, contemplation, and so on. Šalda intentionally cultivated the personal essay-portrait, which went back to his aesthetic doctrine based on French biographical models. He also integrated his essay writing in his *Šaldův zápisník* (Šalda's Diary), continuing the tradition of the work in progress with commentaries on world literature (Dostoevsky, Léon Bloy, and Jakub Deml). Although it was conceived in a different way, oriented more toward literature itself, towards the end of Šalda's life the diary contained increasingly more politicizing. Šalda stood somewhere between essay writing and journalistic ironic writing filled with biting remarks, politically attacking new state policy, often from social or leftist positions. His broad interests and the flexibility and dynamism of his conceptual ability in political writing are demonstrated by the titles of some of his essays written as journalism, such as “Krise inteligence” (The Crisis of Intelligentsia), “Střelející stát” (The Shooting State), “Stát a jedinec” (The State and the Individual), and “Stát a ulice” (The State and the Street) on the one hand, and on the other hand his essay-like portraits in the tradition of Charles-Augustin Sainte-Beuve, such as those on the political journalist Viktor Dyk, the political and social journalist Karel Čapek, and Arthur Rimbaud (*Jean Arthur Rimbaud, božský rošťák* ‘Jean Arthur Rimbaud: A Godly Rascal’). There was a general impact of a changing social and political situation (a world economic crisis, the unstable position of the new state, totalitarian pressures from Germany, Soviet Russia, and neighboring dictatorships in Poland and Hungary, the end of the “Russian Action” supporting Russian and East Slavic emigration into and outside Czechoslovakia in general, including the founding of universities and secondary schools, and the marking of the centennial of Pushkin's death in Prague in 1937). It is therefore significant that these circumstances grouped all the essay writers together, although not politically, but structurally. Their essays often expressed contradictory views, but were similar in their genre flexibility and dynamism.

Karel Čapek (1890–1938) is a typical example. He belonged to the group of Czech intelligentsia that could successfully continue the results of the victorious national revival in the nineteenth century and also seek

their stimuli outside the traditional German cultural milieu, although Karel Čapek himself also studied at the Faculty of Arts of Friedrich-Wilhelm University in Berlin in the 1910–1911 fall semester (he later found the opportunity to study in Paris at the Sorbonne). Čapek's artistic work was based on the plurality of chances: the axiomatic German tradition in the framework of the Austro-Hungarian Empire together with the spirit of the Austrian monarchy with its Biedermeier and secession (art nouveau, Jugendstil, new art, modern style) on the one hand, and on the other hand French modernist inspiration, the Anglo-American world with its utilitarianism, positivism (different from its French founders), pragmatism and Russian axiological and ethical extremism, melancholy, disillusionment, and suicidal moods. Thus French modernist literature, American pragmatism, and Russian extremism were the spiritual and methodological currents that counterbalanced the prevailing German impact. Čapek's translations of French symbolist and post-symbolist poetry under the title *Francoúzká poezie nové doby* (Modern French Poetry) originated mainly in 1916 in the war years and under the impact of wartime events (as Čapek himself put it in the epilogue to a new edition that appeared under the slightly modified title *Francoúzká poesie* 'French Poetry' in 1936 published in Prague by Borový publishers): "I played with Czech and made it create difficult puzzles of both form and sense and, at the same time, I realized with pleasure, emotion, and gratitude how stimulating, rich, flexible, inexhaustible and shapeable it is" (243; my translation).

Čapek analyzed a grotesque in modern German literature in a seminar with Arne Novák in 1910, and in 1911 and 1912 he wrote a treatise on Goethe's *Faust* in a seminar with Arnošt Kraus (its text is, however, lost). Last but not least, in 1914 in a seminar with František Krejčí he read his work on pragmatism and simultaneously worked on his study *Vztah estetiky a dějin umění* (The Relation of Aesthetics and Art History), which was then modified into his dissertation written in 1915: *Objektivní metoda v estetice se zřetěním k výtvarnému umění* (The Objective Method in Aesthetics with Regard to Visual Arts). His term paper on pragmatism was first published under the title *Pragmatismus čili Filosofie praktického života* (Pragmatism or Philosophy of Practical Life) by Topič publishers in Prague in 1918, and then in a second edition as the thirty-fourth volume of the series *Duch a svět* (Spirit and World) in 1925 (Čapek, *Univerzity*). In his essay on pragmatism, which followed the theses of pragmatism from Charles Peirce's first impulses up to the mature works of William James (1842–1910) and John Dewey (1859–1952), Čapek demonstrates a crucial controversy between empiricism and rationalism (Čapek, *Univerzity* 266). Exactly in the year of the publication of Čapek's juvenile term paper on pragmatism, John



Dewey published his new book *Reconstruction in Philosophy* (in Czech in 1929 as *Rekonstrukce ve filozofii*; in the Czech epilogue by Josef Schützner there is the term *přestavba*, which might be translated as ‘renewal’ or ‘revival’).

Čapek’s work is wedged between the poles of pragmatism, extremism, and radicalism – it is part of the chains, links, pairs, and triangles put together by a similar spiritual atmosphere in which it is useless to seek influences or thematic theses, but only to observe the complex process of genre continuity; that is, the phenomenon that is sometimes called the poetological function of art: endless chains of steps, returns, repetitions, retrospectives, stagnation, progression, crises, and catharses confirming art as an irreplaceable transcendencey (Bradbrook, *Karel Čapek. In Pursuit, Karel Čapek. Hledání pravdy*; Ohme; Pospíšil, “Primerjalna”; Pynsent, *Julius Zeyer, Pátrání, Question of Identity, “Tolerance”*; Uhle).

This wide range of interests is reflected in the development of Čapek’s essay writing; his engagement in the foundation of PEN, in which the letter “E” is of great importance, is more than symbolic. Čapek – whom Robert Pynsent regarded as a mere journalist because, as he put it, he knew only one Čapek in Czech literature: Karel Matěj Čapek-Chod (1860–1927, a Czech realist and naturalist) – moved between a feuilleton essay and a column, and even invented a specific radio feature (the *rozhlásek*), column ambit, and essay-letter (his letters to Olga Scheinpflugová anticipated Havel’s *Letters to Olga*). He used the essay as a tool for describing practical matters (“Jak se co dělá” ‘How Things are Being Done’); his pragmatism and neo-neoclassicist way of writing since the end of the 1920s tried to form a specific synthesis between a more spiritual, philosophical, and practical function of the essay as a sort of specific description or instruction. The essay in his hands became more journalistic, flexible, and practical, a genre of everyday use. However, like František Xaver Šalda he often used it for purely literary purposes (e.g., *Marsyas čili na okraj literatury* ‘Marsyas or On the Margin of Literature’, examining popular literature, or *Trivialliteratur*).

Čapek’s typology of the essay was extremely rich, and it concentrates on the problems of human culture in its widest sense. He began to deal with literature very early, and his essays cover the period from the mid-1910s up to his premature death. He dealt not only with literature, but also with translations, theater, painting, economics of culture, philosophy, history, and also foreign literature, containing practically all the significant works of his time. He is one of the founders of the literary review in essay form, and he anticipated the power of media over literature in a very impressive and influential manner. He tried to construct a cultural bridge between cultivated journalism and the aesthetically valuable art of writing, between

rigid scholarly approaches on the one hand and free evaluation on the other. In this sense, he became a real predecessor of contemporary criticism of the same sort, but mostly on a much higher critical and aesthetic level. His review essays covered typical examples of the Czech literature of that time, also accentuating outsiders and literature on the margin (e.g., Jiří Mahen, Jaromír John, etc). In his “greeting” to Karel Matěj Čapek-Chod, written on the occasion of his sixtieth birthday, he presented him as a pioneer of modernist literature in spite of his realism, an art that the neo-neoclassicist Karel Čapek tried to manifest. Karel Čapek’s essay is very sensitive to the receiving cultural environment, and therefore he often deals with theater criticism, film, and exhibitions of modern paintings, which reflect the most topical shifts of moods (Čapek *Spisy II, III*).

Jaroslav Durych (1886–1962) was a military doctor by profession and he fought against the Protestant conception of Czech history (e.g., František Palacký, T. G. Masaryk, Alois Jirásek) as a misinterpretation. In his prose and poetic work, he constructed quite a different picture of an ideal man and woman of modern times: religious piety, the cult of poverty, sensibility, strong emotionality, and an ecstatic love of God. Due to his Catholic faith, he regarded this reality as part of a higher order inspired by the poetics of Romanticism (*Jarmark života* ‘The Fair of Life’, 1916; the novel *Na borách* ‘In the Mountains’, 1919; the romantic novella *Sedmikráska* ‘A Daisy’, 1925, and the essays in *Gotická růže* ‘A Gothic Rose’, 1923). Probably the most impressive are his historical novels set in the time of the great religious wars of the seventeenth century (*Bloudění* ‘The Wandering’, 1929; *Rekvie* ‘The Requiem’, 1930; *Masopust* ‘Shrovetide’, 1938; *Služebníci neužiteční* ‘The Useless Servants’, 1969; *Duše a hvězda* ‘The Soul and the Star’, 1969; and *Boží dýha* ‘God’s Rainbow’, 1969). In his pseudo-Baroque style he found a new, modern poetics demonstrating and revealing the hidden layers of the Czech poetic language being influenced and formed for many centuries by Baroque poetics. In his essays and reflections, he very often expressed controversial views and impressions of modern human individuality searching for God, extreme opinions, emotions, sincerity, and openness (see, e.g., his essays *Výstražné slovo k českým básníkům* ‘A Word of Warning to the Czech Poets’, *Proč mne mrzí být českým spisovatelem*, ‘Why I Feel Bad to Be a Czech Writer’, *Kánon sexuality* ‘The Canon of Sexuality’, and *Čekám na slovo osvobozující* ‘I Am Waiting for the Liberating Word’; in his essays Durych even came to a positive appraisal of communism). The rational kernel of his utterances consists in his revealing some common features of large mass movements: emotions, psychosis, weak mental control, extremism, and expressing absolute opinions consisting of the condemnation of postwar unmanliness, impotence, and weakness:

After the war our men became softer: it became fashionable to exhibit this unmanliness. The influence of postwar French literature is in this sense glaringly demoralizing. Although this unmanliness dwells rather on the tongue than in the real physiognomy of men, the word has its powerful spell that has its affection even through the crust of hypocrisy. So it happened that the idea of speaking softly and lamentably about the horrors of war became common and that these horrors would be expelled in the future. And communism seems to be an apparition that threatens these dispositions ... The Bolshevik revolution attempted the formation of a balance between natural and unnatural death, because even at war many people died naturally. It carried out the work of destruction and the work was really immense. We could be instructed that great dangers were still ahead .... Communism manifested its lack of the sense of sentimentality, and I must accept it with respect. Regarded as an ephemeral experiment, it showed its ability of inertia. It even organized its own principles to a certain degree. It plundered the fear of violence, accentuated the significance of the army, the sense of dictatorship, it proved to be more vital and stronger than socialism; it declared its privilege to rule over the world without any compromises and at any cost. I have respect for communism and I may even have more affection for it; I recognize many of its principles and especially its view of the bourgeoisie; I recognize that cultus is really the work of the proletariat, I even recognize the haughtiness of the proletariat without any incidental explanations and escapes. However, I am no communist because communism does not mean completeness for me, but just a part, maybe a stage. I could not become a communist although they would make me do so, although I know I will not be forgiven without complete obedience, although I know the communist hammer strikes not only nail heads, but also human ones, although not every day. If I long for completeness, I can serve a part, but I cannot believe in the sufficiency of this part. What possibilities can then appear? Either nothing happens, and we will quietly die. Or communism will win the so-called old world and it will forgive us, or it will treat us due to its common methods. Or communism will be defeated by its opponents, and then they will let us live not being interested in us or cover us with the ruins of communism without knowing about it. Or afterwards quite different circumstances will dominate in the spiritual world, and in this case it depends on our ability to create history or not. The peak of communism is relatively high. Humanity has not created anything higher. For us, though, it is not the highest peak. No empirical reasons against communism are sufficient for me. For that matter, communism has not had its own historian that would at the same time be its critic and visionary. I can see the monstrosity, but also beauty and mainly strength. However, there is even a bigger strength and in the order of eternity the lower must serve the higher.<sup>1</sup> (Fialová 189–190; see Pospíšil “Primerjalna”)

The thematic range of Durych's essay is closely connected with *Weltanschauung*, religion, and culture. First of all, it concerns the position of the writer in modern society; even if Durych goes back to the nineteenth-century Czech tradition (Havlíček), he stresses the moral integrity and protests against the impact of immoral sexuality and pride associated with wealth (*Česká krása* ‘Czech Beauty’, *Kánon sexuality* ‘The Canon of

Sexuality', *Chudoba jako podmínka* 'Poverty as a Condition'). He sharply criticizes the tendencies towards progressivism and leftist ideas that were fashionable in the interwar period (*Pokrokovost až k zblbnutí* 'Progressivism ad Nauseam'), and he insists on preserving a certain mystery in connection with literary creations (*Škodlivost autorských vykladů o genezi básnického díla* 'The Harmfulness of Authors' Interpretations on the Genesis of Poetry'). One of Durych's significant essays deals with František Xaver Šalda: Durych expresses his view of Šalda's personal integrity: "Time changes the face, but very rarely the human being itself. The face is a human matter, the human being is from God" (Durych 108). Politics occupy a very important position in Durych's essay writing. Here, he criticizes the reality of the first Czechoslovakia, which seemed to him too atheistic, anti-Catholic, and immoral (*Řád svobody* 'The Order of Freedom', *Kult moci* 'The Cult of Power', *Demokracie* 'Democracy'); this is closely linked to the problems of the political situation of the 1930s, including the Spanish civil war, in the evaluation of which he differed a great deal from other Czech and foreign intellectuals, even Catholic ones (e.g., Edvard Kocbek) of that time. Durych opened the structure of the essay to many subjects and applied some significant features of the Baroque style known from the Czech Baroque literature of the seventeenth century: long sentences, florid language, rich imagery, conservative views, and a Catholic vision of the world against modern liberalism. Unlike Čapek, he concentrated on a relatively narrow circle of ideas, on ideological integrity, and on the spiritual model of the world, although he was also very (even extremely) emotional and expressive. For Durych, however, the depiction of the material world was the revelation of God's will and creativity.

At this moment I would like to take a step aside: even the history and theory of the Czech essay seems to confirm a certain Czech isolationism, which is reminiscent of some other nations, nationalities, or national communities. This includes the concentration of the Czech essay on intrinsic Czech affairs and problems, and the development of its genre structure towards its social dimension and function. Not long ago, in 2007, a book was published on one of the topics of this article: the conference proceedings *Na téma umění a život: F. X. Šalda 1867–1937–2007* (On the Subjects of Art and Life: František Xaver Šalda 1867–1937–2007). There are many sophisticated articles, but very few concern the comparative aspect of Šalda's activity, although he was a professor of comparative literatures at Charles University. It always surprises me that the Czechs have been too little interested, say, in Poland and the Poles whereas there are hundreds of students of Czech at Polish universities, even on the Ukrainian border. To speak about non-comparative aspects of Czech globalism

(Mukařovský's *Kapitoly z české poetiky* 'Chapters from Czech Poetics') is not necessary if it has something in common with the general Czech position in Europe. One marginal remark: it has much in common with the tradition of Russian political thought so influential in Europe at the beginning of the twentieth century.

Whereas Šalda (even in old age) and Čapek tried to integrate the Czech essay with its social and genre flexibility into a wider European democratic tradition, in his attacking, aggressive essay Durych stressed the fact that modern, liberal, atheistic times resulted in an absence of spirituality, put the entire religious (above all, Catholic) tradition on the margin of contemporary philosophy and practical politics, and lost the entire artistic tradition connected with past epochs. Therefore he protested against the anti-Catholic policy of the Czechoslovak state and filled his essay with pseudo-Baroque stylistic figures, with simple, yet determined, political and cultural positions. Ignoring his harsh attacks (among others, on Čapek himself), and his sometimes vulgar and offending words, one has to admit that Durych filled the modern essay with the features of the religious literature of the Baroque: exempla, homiletic structures, litanies, emotional exclamations, and ecstasies as if confirming Wellek's famous idea of the two currents in both Czech and English literatures: a materialist, pragmatic one on the one hand, and the spiritual, metaphysical one on the other (Wellek, "Two Traditions").

The Czech interwar essay represented a new stage in its development. It became more flexible, closer to other genre forms and groupings. Moreover, the essay was gradually becoming the dominant genre form and, like the novel, it swallowed up other genre forms, spreading beyond the borders of its former existence. It is said that the essay moved somewhere between philosophy and literature; I would only like to add that it is both philosophy and literature in the same degree in which literature had to philosophize and philosophy became literature more than in the eighteenth and nineteenth centuries. Philosophers shocked by the practical disastrous impact of their teachings on twentieth-century politics stressed the non-systematic nature of philosophy, philosophy as artistic creation. In this tendency, the revival of the essay is playing an important role. *Quod erat demonstrandum*.

The essay cannot avoid the specific situations of national literature, its functions and its development; therefore it is impossible to analyze the Czech essay outside Czech literature as a whole as something supranational.

Thus, essay research must address both the genre aspect of literature (genology) and history, and – as René Wellek (*Theory*) put it – the theory of literary history not speaking about its obligatory comparative aspect.

If it must be admitted that the postmodernist essay sometimes degenerates into an attempt to replace literary criticism or scholarship as such, it must also be admitted that essay research – like the genre itself – might swallow up all the substantial disciplines of literary criticism necessary for its more profound understanding.

## NOTES

<sup>1</sup> “Po válce naši lidé změkklí: stalo se aspoň módou nosit změkčilost na odív. Vliv poválečné francouzské literatury je v tomto smyslu okatě demoralizující. Změkčilost ta sídlí sice spíše na jazyku než v pravé fyziognomii lidí, ale i slovo má své mocné kouzlo, které působí i skrze krunýř přetvářky. Tak se stalo, že se vžila představa, že je nutno o hrůzách válečných mluvit měkce a žalostivě, a tím že se tyto hrůzy pro budoucnost zažehnají. A komunismus je strašidlem, které tyto dispozice ohrožuje . [...] Bolševická revoluce pokusila se, aby zjedнала rovnováhu mezi smrtí přirozenou a nepřirozenou, poněvadž i ve válce ještě příliš mnoho lidí umíralo přirozeně. Vykonal dílo zničení, a bylo to dílo veliké. Mohli jsme se poučit, že na nás číhají ještě velká nebezpečí . [...] Komunismus ukázal nedostatek smyslu pro sentimentalitu, a to musím uznávat s úctou. Považován za efemerní experiment, dokázal svou schopnost setrvačnosti. Zorganizoval do jisté míry i svoji řeholi. Vyplnil strach před násilím, vyzdvihl smysl armády, vyzdvihl smysl diktatury, ukázal se životnějším a silnějším než socialismus; ohlásil svůj nárok na vládu nad světem beze všech kompromisů a za jakoukoli cenu. Ctím komunismus a snad k němu chovám city ještě vřelejší; uznávám mnohé z jeho zásad a zvláště jeho názor o buržoazii; uznávám, že kultus je skutečně dílem proletariátu, uznávám i povýšenost proletariátu beze všech postranních výkladů a zadních dvířek. Ale komunistou přece jen nejsem, poněvadž komunismus pro mne neznamená úplnost, nýbrž část, třebaš i etapu. Nemohl bych být komunistou, ani kdyby mne nutili, třebaš vím, že bych pardonu nedošel bez poslušnosti úplné, třebaš vím, že komunistické kladivo bije nejen do hlav hřebíků, ale i do hlav lidských, třebaš ne každý den. Toužím-li po úplnosti, mohu sloužit části, ale nemohu věřit v dostatečnost části. Jaké nastávají možnosti? Buď že se nám nic nestane a že zemřeme klidně. Nebo komunismus zvítězí nad takzvaným starým světem a pak nám buď dá pardon, nebo s námi naloží podle běžných metod. Nebo komunismus podlehne svým odpůrcům a pak nás jeho odpůrci buďto nechají žít, nedbajíce o nás, nebo nás zasypou troskami komunismu, třebaš ani o tom nevěduce. Nebo posléze nastanou zcela jiné poměry v duchovém světě, a to záleží na tom, zda historii tvořit umíme, nebo neumíme. Vrchol komunismu je značně vysoký. Lidský duch sám o sobě nevytvořil dosud ničeho vyššího. Ale pro nás přece jen není vrcholem nejvyšším. Žádný empirický důvod proti komunismu mi nestačí. Ostatně komunismus ještě neměl svého historika, který by byl i kritikem a vizionářem. Vidím obludnost, ale i krásu a hlavně sílu. Je však síla ještě vyšší a v řádu věčnosti nižší musí sloužit vyššímu.”

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## Singularnost in češki medvojni esej med tokovi: F. X. Šalda – Karel Čapek – Jaroslav Durych

Ključne besede: češka književnost / 20. stol. / esej / Šalda, František Xaver / Čapek, Karel / Durych, Jaroslav

Začetki modernega češkega eseja segajo v drugo polovico 19. stoletja, čeprav so njegove korenine nasploh starejše. Toda šele uspešen zaključek procesa češkega narodnega preporoda in začetek češkega modernizma pod vplivom francoskih *poètes maudits* sta pokazala pripravljenost češkega kulturnega prizorišča, ki se je nagibalo k prevladujoči svetovljanski miselnosti Evrope, da sprejme esej kot žanr v vsej njegovi jezikovni in slogovni kompleksnosti. Čeprav je bilo med generacijo češke »moderne« od 90-ih let 19. stoletja naprej veliko dobrih esejistov, smo izbrali tri, ki razločno ponazarjajo singularnost češke esejistične pisave v 20. stoletju, obenem pa kažejo na tesne vezi z drugimi nacionalnimi literaturami in kulturnimi okolji. F. X. Šalda je bil tesno povezan z začetnim obdobjem češke »moderne«

po letu 1890, pa tudi z njenim nadaljnjim razvojem in s čehoslovaškim avantgardnim gibanjem v 20-ih in 30-ih letih 20. stoletja. Bil je vnet zagovornik moderne francoske književnosti, francoskega načina ustvarjanja artefaktov in francoskega esejističnega pisanja, polnega čustvenih izrazov, metafor in bogatega podobja. Njegova redna, goreča kritiška dejavnost, struktura njegovih kritik in poseben žanrski izbor, ne le njegove knjižne ocene, ampak tudi študije in kritiški Dnevnik (Šaldův zápisník) so izoblikovali novo poetiko češkega eseja in pomenijo tudi določeno stopnjo v razvoju češkega kritiškega in umetniškega jezika. Karel Čapek je bil predstavnik mlajše generacije, ki je kritizirala enostranskost svojih predhodnikov, pobudnikov češkega modernizma: njegovo neoklasicistično pisanje in kulturna usmeritev sta bila raznolika, saj je odraščal v nemški kulturi, naj pa je močno vplivala tudi ruska, francoska in angleška oz. britanska esejistika, v kateri so odsevali določeni tokovi filozofije britanskega utilitarizma in predvsem ameriškega pragmatizma. Njegovo nagnjenje k žanrski strukturi eseja je razvidno tudi iz njegovih kratkih zgodb. Jaroslav Durych je predstavljal tip grobe katoliške, neo- ali psevdo baročno čustvene, napadalne, ofenzivne in agresivne esejistike, ki je protestirala proti meščanski civilizaciji, konformizmu, ateizmu in vulgarnemu materializmu ter težila k absolutnim duhovnim vrednotam. Njegovi eseji so pomenili vnovično vzpostavitev konservativnega sloga v politični in literarni misli.

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# Narrative and Metaphorical Discourse in Biographical Essays

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*This paper analyses the relationship of the narrative and rhetorical formation of a body of biographical essays written by a single author, Kálmán Mikszáth (1847–1910). The literariness of some authors' writing is described through various tropes and some examples are analyzed from the viewpoint of implied ideology.*

Keywords: Hungarian literature / biographical essay / metaphor / Mikszáth Kálmán

Essays often have a storytelling aspect, and their narrative component can be traced back to very beginning of the genre tradition. Many of Montaigne's late essays began with self-biographical narratives to inspire philosophical discourse. The essay as a display of a personal worldview may make good use of the narration of a personal experience that can or cannot be generalized (Stierle 37). Douglas Hesse wrote an impressive paper on the differences between narrative essays and first-person short stories that can contain long commentaries on the events narrated. According to Hesse, there is a gray zone on the border of the two categories where the characteristics of the texts do not help taxonomy; readers must rely on paratextual markers offered by editors to decide if they want to regard a given text as a narrative essay or a short story (85). However, I am not interested in taxonomy or genre. I referred to the approaches above in order to emphasize how important an aspect the narrative can be in an essay, and that an essay is not necessarily pure thinking. What I discuss here is the relationship of narrative and discursive passages in essays. For this analysis, I have chosen a body of narrative (actually, biographical) essays composed by a single author as introductions for a series of books.

This prestigious series, *Magyar Regényírók Képes Kiadása* (Illustrated Library of Hungarian Novelists), was published between 1904 and 1912 and was designed to demonstrate the history of the Hungarian novel from its very beginnings to its contemporary achievements. The publisher employed the most important novelist available, Kálmán Mikszáth, to serve as the editor of the series and to compose biographical essays on every author included. The series contained sixty volumes, published in

five-volume batches twice a year. Mikszáth wrote twenty-eight introductory essays, which can be (and sometimes actually are) regarded as a sort of literary history: the history of the Hungarian novel. Here I am interested in the techniques of display rather than in the general story that the body of essays together might comprise.

On the one hand, such an essay on a novelist does have a storytelling aspect because it narrates his or her life history; on the other hand, it has some argumentative structures because it wants to persuade readers while discussing the characteristics of the given novelist's writing and evaluating his or her literary achievement. It is true of literary history in general that one may have the impression of a contrast between the relatively flat language of pure narration and the highly figurative language of evaluating or analyzing passages. If one regards an essay's evaluative or analyzing aspect as its basic function, it will appear as a kind of rhetorical discourse; in this case one may explain that contrast through the notion of traditional oratory (i.e., *narratio*), which is the name of a narrative passage inserted into the oration. In his early work *De Inventione*, Cicero differentiated between narrative inserts of ornamental purpose and the passages that narrate the case itself being deliberated or some events strongly connected to it.<sup>1</sup> In ornamental digressions of delight, an orator should make use of his entire rhetorical toolkit, whereas the other type of narration should fulfill three requirements: they should be brief, clear, and probable.<sup>2</sup> The last two requirements actually mean that nothing should be said that deviates from everyday strategies of cognition. The events should be narrated in a simple chronological order; motivation and narrative and causative patterns should be conventional. An orator, while he is narrating, should not attract any attention to himself or to his achievement, or rather to the linguistic mediation. Roman Jakobson called this aspect of linguistic communication the poetic function. The orator should make the impression that the events appear in a transparent narration exactly as they really happened, and only after such display of "events as they were" is he allowed to mobilize the whole weaponry of persuasion.

Quintilian's suggestions were slightly different. He recommended the middle style for narration.<sup>3</sup> In the rhetorical tradition, it seems the general attitude requires that an inserted narrative should be concise and inornate, and it is for pedagogical reasons that Quintilian raises an objection against plain inornateness. After all, the topic of his work is not how to speak, but how to teach people to speak. He describes excessive ornamentation as a poetic aberration that cannot fit in an orator's behavior.

Another explanation for the contrast between plain narrative and adorned analyzing passages might be offered by the opposition of the two general methods of cognition; namely, narrative and metaphor. The aspect

of time may be decisive for the shifts between them. The carrier of an author, which is a process developing in time, can be understood (i.e., organized into an apprehensible scheme) through narrative thinking, whereas the deictic gesture of metaphor (as a master trope representing figurative language in general) can describe a piece of literature non-temporally by giving it a name. Just as one can describe man as a cruel creature by calling him a wolf, or one can describe the poetic potential of words by calling them flowers, Mikszáth could describe the nature of Alajos Degré's novels by calling them *papier-mâché* palm trees.

The introductions can be characterized by an obvious contrast between narration of life history, which usually lacks rhetorical embellishment, and the highly figurative passages of description. The contrast is so sharp partly because as a belletrist Mikszáth avoided using the purely conceptual language of scholarship. As an example of his manner, I quote his reference to a novel, which is traditionally referred to as "the first Hungarian novel about society" in literary scholarship. Instead of applying this technical term, Mikszáth wrote: "the first Hungarian novel that bravely grasps the life of Hungarian society" (Mikszáth, *Tárcák* 522). The declaration is clearly based on a commonplace of literary history, but the formulation dissolves the terminology and invents surprising metaphors.

The introduction to the novels by Zsigmond Kemény (1814–1875), a political thinker and a major novelist that was most active during the 1850s, can clearly demonstrate the shift from the mostly non-figurative narrative of his life to the characterization of his writing, full of tropes. The biography contains the list of his novels and then a generalizing declaration about Kemény's activity as a novelist: "This man with a gigantic capacity for work wrote his novels as relaxation. Just like a tough warrior in the Middle Ages, when he had the opportunity to put down his heavy accoutrements and fight in some lighter ones, he thinks he is just lying about" (Mikszáth, "Kemény" vi).

This image implies that for Kemény journalism and belles-lettres are the same activity, but with different means. The implication, however, is too important to serve as occasional stylistic embellishment; it must have some consequences. In the first sentence of the next passage the simile returns in the form of a metaphor: "However, these lighter accoutrements were heavy too" (Mikszáth, "Kemény" vi)

The shift in the tenses indicates a shift from the present of the image back to the past of the main narrative; and this sentence does not tell us about the medieval warrior, but reveals the novelist. The metaphor also indicates a thematic shift from the author's life, the biographical background of literary production, to the texts themselves. However, the new

topic must be explained in a discursive manner: the paradox of the accoutrements that can be called both light and heavy needs an explanation. "The thorough knowledge of a philosophical mind with deep insight is displayed in his belletristic writing; the representation of historical ages and psychic processes compete with the most valuable European products in that genre" (Mikszáth, "Kemény" vi).

This laudation does not result in a high estimation of Kemény's literary achievement; what is praised here is the achievement of a thinker, immediately challenged by the shortcomings in literariness, narrative skills, and the requirements of genre conventions. "However, these novels are boring because he does not know how to narrate, his style is heavy and jolting, he makes long digressions, and the psychic explanations are extended to an eccentric amount" (Mikszáth, "Kemény" vi).

The description of Kemény's literary achievement is a discursive passage with accurate terminology. The tropes it makes use of can rightly be regarded as dead metaphors such as "deep insight" or "to compete." Only the expression "heavy and jolting style" might create a metaphorical meaning, partly because it retrospectively modifies the opening image of heavy accoutrements, which used to mean weighty intellectual content and now means ponderous style. Therefore, the vision of a heavy and jolting cart develops, which travels slowly towards its goal with long detours, which makes the entire journey boring. However, this image is no more than an option; and up to this point the passage instead solicits interpretations in a purely discursive manner. Nevertheless, the passage is to be finished with a summarizing conclusion in the figurative mode: "His works are colossi without form or proportions; he does not know how to build because he has too many bricks" (Mikszáth, "Kemény" vi).

When it comes to speaking about a given piece of literature, the dominant aspect is success, the public's reaction, which is the consequence of the discussion's embeddedness in the author's life story. Mikszáth rather frequently explains why a novel was successful in its own age, but every essay necessarily contains some kind of evaluation. Because the series was designed to be sold, it seems logical that the evaluations should have been laudations that compelled people to read the book. This requirement, however, which is related to the communicative situation or the topical speech act, is often countered by the intentional meaning of the utterance because Mikszáth does not seem to consider Hungarian novels to be particularly good. The genre of the introductory essay obliges him to say "this book is good and worth reading" whereas his own evaluative gesture suggests "this book is mediocre or bad." Mikszáth's essays make readers feel this evaluation too, but mostly through a modality that undermines

the declarations of praise. This tension, unusual in discursive genres but familiar in belletristic texts, might be explained through the trope of irony; the text declares something different from its suggestions. This tension solicits attention to the text's rhetorical formation. The textual strategies are governed by two contradictory purposes; on the one hand, by the purpose of persuasion (the reader of the introduction should buy and read the book), and on the other by the purpose of a literary evaluation that cannot always be in the positive. Such purposes usually require different rhetorical strategies, but in this case the same text must fulfill both. The problem does not appear in the passages narrating the life stories, which might contrast with the highly figurative mode of the descriptive ones.

In discussing Mikszáth's subverting metaphors, I do not intend to offer a complete typology of metaphors in his introductory essays or in his literary scholarship in general,<sup>4</sup> but I do want to mention that gastronomic metaphors are remarkably frequent. They can be connected with the viewpoint of success; that is, with the discussion of the public's customs of consumption. The essays very often refer to the taste, scent, or color of a literary text. Let me quote from the description of the success that the first historical novel by Miklós Jósika achieved: "It was phenomenal. A sweet read, full of honey. It made the eyelashes sticky like slumber" (Mikszáth, "Jósika" 603).

The image of a novel that pours sweet honey on the readers' eyelashes solicits another gastronomic metaphor: "Jósika imitated Walter Scott, no doubt. There was no originality in his writing, no taste. But who is looking for taste in the first strawberry of the spring?" (Mikszáth, *Tárcák* 603).

A metaphor of taste does not necessarily imply negative evaluation, not even in the dialectical manner of discussion that is obvious in the example above: *a strawberry – but without taste, or very early in the spring – but already a strawberry, or honey – but on the eyelashes*. The "colorful language" of Sándor Baksay is described as follows: "He produces as little as a noble tree, but the rare fruit that is produced has an inviting, moreover sublime taste" (Mikszáth, *Tárcák* vii).

The simile of the fruit tree concludes in the antithesis *few – but good*; such praise, however must be followed by new restrictions: "The composition of his writing is not creative, and the contents are a bit monotonous. Whereas others go abroad for themes, he does not even leave the circle of his parish; he has little imagination, but a strong talent for observation" (Mikszáth, *Tárcák* vii).

The figurative movements become slower, but they do not stop. The antithesis of *few – but good* is completed with an antithesis of *good – but monotonous*, which is explained by the image of the author's movement in space that is proved to be metaphorical by the notion of imagination; it is the

realm of imagination where one can go to collect themes. The literal declaration about the biographical author, who does not leave his parish but remains there keenly observing everything, is connected with metaphorical declarations about what one is possibly allowed to call the author function.

One of the few essays that is strongly characterized by figurative discourse from the very beginning to the end is written about Ferenc Herczeg, a rather problematic figure in Hungarian literary history. Herczeg's relation to Hungarian is displayed through a detailed prosopopoeia, which is introduced by a refusal of the commonplace metaphor of language as mother tongue. The mother/child relation is inappropriate in this case: "Oh this Herczeg! He destroys all our well-construed theories about the language that we should imbibe with our mother's milk" (Mikszáth, "Herczeg" vii). Because Herczeg's native language was German, this theory of metaphorical nature cannot explain his achievement in Hungarian writing. Therefore, prosopopoeia comes into play. Hungarian is represented as an attractive woman; and she is made to deliver a speech, which describes his relation to language with an erotic imagery. "For him she disclosed her veil, her honey, her secret beauties, her delightful forms, because she wanted to be more tender with him than to other foreigners, as though she said: 'Since you were such a fool, my dear son, as to become a Hungarian writer, although you could write in a world language too, I give myself to you completely.' And she gave. He penetrated all the secrets of Hungarian" (Mikszáth, "Herczeg" vii).

The address "my dear son," which brings back the refused image of "language as mother," gives the erotic scene a drastically oedipal air. One year later, Mikszáth offered a more explicitly erotic description of language in another introduction: "It might be useful to know several languages, but this has not been proven yet. Because the mother tongue is a real lover of those she has bewitched, and I think she takes off her clothes and shows her secret charms and sweet beauties only to those that kneel only before her and are not attracted by others" (Mikszáth, "Előszó" 385).

But I digress. After the penetration, one more sentence describes the result (i.e., Herczeg's style), and it offers an almost full catalogue of the metaphors on the topic: "His style is fresh and flexible, sometimes it is real music, and it has the scent of a Hungarian geranium" (Mikszáth, "Herczeg" vii).

Although the deep structure is based on an antithetical logic, it is "tamed" at the level of elocution by a peaceful attitude, which is willing to accept different aspects simultaneously. The figurative discourses of description and evaluation are also able to suggest contradictory qualities simultaneously. A contrast between the narrative discourse of process representation and the figurative discourse of evaluation might be character-

istic of literary history in general, but this creates an opportunity to display a highly personal view on literature. Mikszáth's own intellectual attitude can be characterized as a special sort of relativity, which is described by a major Hungarian literary historian as follows: "He did not want to answer the question 'what is man?'; his question was 'what is *not* man?' or 'what is man *too*?'" (Németh 209–212). I would rather say that his answer was that there is no exclusive answer; that man can be defined many ways. The metaphorical discourse, the figuratively tamed antithetical logic, is a useful method to display this "relativizing" attitude, to say and not to say something or to say something and suggest at the same time that it is not necessarily true, or rather that many other opinions can be also true about the given object. The language is a mother and a lover. It is impossible to tell what it means that a read is sweet as honey. Is it delightful or boring? No definite evaluation can be given about literature. The self-conscious leveling of contradictory aspects or values results in a unique discussion of literary history, a personal one, which is appropriate in the genre of essay.

#### NOTES

<sup>1</sup> Cicero suggests three types of *narratio*, but from the formal or linguistic viewpoint there is no difference between the narration of the case and the events connected with the case.

<sup>2</sup> 1.28.1: *brevis, aperta, probabilis*. The treatise *Rhetorica ad Herennium*, which was formerly also ascribed to Cicero, uses similar expressions: *brevis, dilucida, veri similis* (1.9.14).

<sup>3</sup> "The rhetorician therefore should begin with the historical narrative, whose force is in proportion to its truth. I will, however, postpone my demonstration of what I regard as the best method of narration till I come to deal with narration as required in the courts. In the meantime, it will be sufficient to urge that it should be neither dry nor jejune (for why spend so much labour over our studies if a bald and naked statement of fact is regarded as sufficiently expressive?); nor on the other hand must it be tortuous or revel in elaborate descriptions, such as those in which so many are led to indulge by a misguided imitation of poetic licence. Both these extremes are faults; but that which springs from poverty of wit is worse than that which is due to imaginative excess. For we cannot demand or expect a perfect style from boys. But there is greater promise in a certain luxuriance of mind, in ambitious effort and an ardour that leads at times to ideas bordering on the extravagant" (*Initium sit historica, tanto robustior quanto uerior. Sed narrandi quidem quae nobis optima ratio uideatur tum demonstrabimus cum de iudiciali parte dicemus: interim admonere illud sat est, ut sit ea neque arida prorsus atque ieiuna (nam quid opus erat tantum studiis laboris impendere si res nudas atque inornatas indicare satis uideretur?), neque rursus sinuosa et arcessitis descriptionibus, in quas plerique imitatione poeticae licentiae ducuntur, lasciuat. Vitium utrumque, peius tamen illud quod ex inopia quam quod ex copia uenit. Nam in pueris oratio perfecta nec exigi nec sperari potest: melior autem indoles laeta generosique conatus et uel plura iusto concipiens interim spiritus*) *Institutio oratio* 2.4.2–4; English translation by Harold Edgeworth Butler.

<sup>4</sup> For the dangers of such an enterprise see Derrida (28).

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## Narativni in metaforični diskurz v biografskih esejih

Ključne besede: biografski esej / literarna zgodovina / metafora / Mikszáth, Kálmán

Biografski esej je narativno in diskurzivno besedilo. Razprava obravnava razmerje med narativnimi in retoričnimi elementi v biografskih esejih, ki jih je napisal Kálmán Mikszáth (1847–1910) kot uvodne študije v zbirko knjig, ki je izhajala med letoma 1904 in 1912 ter vsebovala reprezentativni izbor madžarskih romanov v 60-ih zvezkih. Mikszáth je napisal kar 28 uvodnih esejev, za katere je značilno ostro nasprotje med preprosto pripovedjo in vmesnimi analitičnimi odlomki. To nasprotje si lahko razložimo s tradicijo klasične retorike (*narratio* mora biti preprosta) ali z različnimi metodami spoznavanja (narativizacija vs. metafora). Toda biografska predstavitev mora bralce tudi zabavati; če ni pripovedi, ki bi v njih vzbudila zanimanje, potem jim ponuja nekaj užitka vsaj nezaustavljiva lepota tropov.



Razprava analizira antitetične strukture Mikszáthovega literarnega vrednotenja, ki se včasih končajo s sintezo, pogosteje pa težijo k nekakšni ohlapnosti. Literarnost nekaterih avtorjevih esejev je opisana z različnimi tropi, in razprava – ki sicer ne ponuja izpopolnjene tipologije tropov v obravnavanih besedilih – se osredotoča na nekaj primerov, ki jih analizira s stališča nakazane ideologije. Dokaj pogoste so gastronomske metafore, skozi prozopopijo materne jezika pa se lahko včasih prikrade tudi erotična metaforika.

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# Personal Ethos in the Literature of Slovak and Czech Dissidents: The Essay as a Form of Expressing an Active Personality

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*This article discusses texts by selected authors from the period of »consolidation« in Czechoslovakia. The first part briefly outlines the sociohistorical context of dissident writing.*

Keywords: literature and ethics / Czech literature / Slovak literature / dissidence / dissident writers / social role / essay

## Introduction

Twentieth-century art cannot do without reflection on significant social problems, without artists' focus on man and his diverse, varied existence. However, it is important to distinguish whether this is done only through the prism of a subjective view of artists with an emphasis on descriptions of their own maladies and experience, without any concentration on any abstract meaning and scope, without great conceptions and transpersonal goals. Such "talking about oneself" has reduced art to a trivial level of common everyday conversations.

Few writers have been able to grasp the trivial authenticity that modernism allowed in art at the beginning of the twentieth century, in a way that made it art with propositions of the fundamental problems of life. For the outstanding personalities living under the totalitarian conditions of the Warsaw Pact countries after the Second World War, it was the essay that became their genre of narration, through which they were most capable of reflecting reality.

Faced with the diversity and ambiguity of the current of modern movements, as well as their postmodern continuations, entropy became entrenched in thinking about literature and art. However, in the second

half of the twentieth century in the Eastern Bloc countries it is possible to distinguish two basic streams in art: the official and the alternative one.

Outstanding personalities of twentieth-century alternative culture, whose primary medium was the word, still relied on the word and still had confidence in it. They placed all their hope for the resolution of social (and more often also political) conditions in it. Literature of inner emigration<sup>1</sup> and dissent<sup>2</sup> are symptomatic of alternative culture. In various communist countries, their mode of existence and the extent of their activities differed.<sup>3</sup>

In international projects, Czechoslovakia emerges as one state, largely compact and without any resolution. As a rule, Slovak participation is missing. From my own experience, I know that *-slovakia* was still a mere suffix of *Czecho-* (i.e., Bohemia, Moravia, and Silesia) for the West in 1996. From the outside this may seem acceptable. However, upon closer inspection one discovers dissimilarities. The difference between the Czech lands and Slovakia has deep historical roots and also continues into the twentieth century. However, it was only together that the Slovaks and Czechs were able to break loose from the Austro-Hungarian Empire.

In Czechoslovakia in the late 1960s the Slovak politician Alexander Dubček conceived of “socialism with a human face.” Dubček came from a communist family and by the end of the 1960s he was working as a reform communist. His politics were inspired by movements in intellectual and artistic circles, as well as among the “workers” created by the 1950s – that is, political processes, gulags, the creation of cooperatives, the dissolution of monastic orders, and so on. Already by the preparatory phase of the 1960s it is necessary to trace parallels and differences in development in the Czech lands and Slovakia.<sup>4</sup>

In the period of “consolidation” following the Prague Spring, sanctions emerged in the Czech lands under the leadership of Gustáv Husák, against which it was necessary to take a stand in one way or another. Sanctions against intellectuals were much more striking than in the past. Thus, the situation crystallized – many intellectuals from the period of revival in the 1960s left and lived abroad – actually, they were “allowed” to do so under dismal conditions as in the case of Jiří Gruša, Pavel Kohout, Arnošt Lustig, and others, or they were monitored at home like Ludvík Vaculík, Václav Havel, and others, and from their “emigration into their own world” (“life in truth”) they organized important resistance with a risk of interrogation, imprisonment, and other forms of persecution, including inferior social standing without work or without an adequate job.

In Slovakia in this situation, the sanctions were not set as an “either-or” alternative.<sup>5</sup> After the purges in 1970,<sup>6</sup> political differentiation of the unreliable became a tool for breaking up the potential solidarity of dissidents

in Slovakia. Unlike Dominik Tatarka, Jozef Jablonický, Miroslav Kusý, Hana Ponická, Marian Városov, Thomas Strauss, and others, some politically engaged intellectuals quietly obtained new inconspicuous positions. Culture was saved by writers engaged in the organs of the Communist Party. Through this differentiation, the last remnants of hope for a common front of further resistance were smashed.

The social life of the “parallel culture” in the Czech lands was organized through public manifestos such as “The Two Thousand Words” (which automatically belong to parallel culture for their courage to criticize the party and its practices), petitions to the samizdat series *Edice Petlice* (Padlock Edition), and other activities. Many participated in this and, despite monitoring by the police, it was tirelessly promoted by Vaculík and Havel.

### **1968, normalization, and consolidation**

In 1968 the awareness of democracy, which made it possible to cooperate, was indelibly set in the consciousness of the citizens of Czechoslovakia. The reform thesis of “socialism with a human face” had become a slogan and Alexander Dubček became a national symbol. Lubomír Lipták considers the changeover from 1967 to 1968 to be the beginning of a “new stage of our history.” The “national front” (a notion used by Lipták) that was formed did not target the Czech nation, but was against conservatism; it did not reject Prague, but centralism in general.

Suppression of the reform efforts by armed forces from Warsaw Pact countries (i.e., occupation) was a twofold disappointment for the people of Czechoslovakia: 1) the rest of the countries did not join in, but they served a hegemonic power, and 2) the people themselves, under the influence of this power, stepped back from their positions on the path to freedom. The years of “normalization” and “consolidation” meant only resignation and large-scale “inner emigration.” On the other hand, this situation was also a challenge to maintain one’s own “human face” despite “consolidation.” Two burning human torches became the conscience of the time and a uniting factor, two students from Prague: Jan Palach (who burned himself to death on 16 January 1969 in protest against the ongoing “normalization”) and Jan Zajíc (who burned himself to death a few days later). Over the following years, environmentalists were rather well organized as well as the Slovak Catholic dissident movement connected with foreign countries, which resulted in the Candle Demonstration in 1988, which was also the beginning of open protest and revival and the fight for democracy in Slovakia one year before the Velvet Revolution. (Korec, *Bratislavský*)

An important role in the preparations for 1968 was played by *Kultúrny život* (Cultural Life) with Pavol Števíček as its editor in chief, and within this especially *Oneskorené reportáže* (Belated Reports) by Ladislav Mňáčko. The initiatives around Echo appear unique and exceptionally progressive for the 1960s. Milan Zemko's ideas fundamentally revise communist society and in all their proposed coordinates are reminiscent of the changes that took place after 1989 (Zemko 22–25).

The “consolidation” period was marked with deepened schizophrenia, an atmosphere of fear of ubiquitous power, total “inner emigration,” or actual emigration abroad. In Slovakia, “inner emigration” and the dissident movement were concentrated in fine arts circles and in the Catholic underground (see Strauss, *Tri otázky*).<sup>7</sup> Other activities in other professions were either sporadic and individual, or persistent but isolated. Resistance against the authorities was not organized and institutionalized in Slovakia<sup>8</sup> as it was in the Czech lands.

### **The Slovak issue as part of the resistance**

As so often in the past, the issue of the autonomy of Slovakia, connected not only with the ideological hegemony of the USSR but also the state hegemony of the Czechs in Czechoslovakia (Lipták 5), came to the fore in Slovakia again in the 1960s. The Czech lands, as a historically independent formation, did not need to struggle with such issues. This is the “external” difference between the Czech and Slovak dissident movements. At the same time, it is also a very complicated element that clouded the situation for Slovak dissidents, and it divided rather than united Slovak society on the edge of what was already symptomatic nationalism. Part of the opposition, who unreservedly and gladly functioned later under the sun of autonomy in a functioning society, were reluctant to support independence. (The same situation was repeated once again after 1989.) On the other hand, the activation of national awareness also stirred up the old Slovak nationalists (from the first Slovak Republic from 1939 to 1945), who in the old spirit hatefully and in the name of democracy attacked not only the contemporary communists but also the resistance fighters that fought against Germany in the Second World War. The formation of the “national front” and its operation is analyzed in detail by Lipták with the following conclusion: “The Slovak participants in the fight for democracy in the republic brought into it zeal and stubbornness, but above all the temperament and enthusiasm of a real national and nation-liberating fight” (353). When the Soviet troops withdrew from the streets of the

cities into their garrisons, the question of ratifying the constitutional law on the Czechoslovak federation was again placed on the agenda. After a lengthy process of the application of Constitutional Law no. 143/1968 Coll., which theoretically changed and amended the constitution from 1960, basically creating a new constitution, the first Slovak government was appointed by the chairmanship of the Slovak National Council at the beginning of January 1969. On 30 January 1969 the Federal Assembly gathered for its first session (Rychlík 271 ff.).

Proceeding from this socio-historical context, which developed author's personalities as dissidents, I categorize dissidents (i.e., those thinking differently) based on certain differentiating features, some of which overlap:

A: Common features:

a) Coming out against or a radical attitude towards power and violence (all that were demonstrably prosecuted and persecuted by the government); and

b) The natural world and maintaining it under unfavorable conditions.

B: Differentiating features:

a) The scale of importance (public appreciation or also function) before becoming part of the dissident movement;

b) After becoming part of the dissident movement: organized dissent (in the Czech lands), scattered dissent (in Slovakia);

c) Differing level of education;

d) Affiliation with the Communist Party: political persuasion, revision of the ideology of socialism, Christian universalism, a liberal attitude; and

e) The relation to the nation.

Here it is important to realize what strength there had to be in the common features listed above if they were able to maintain the idea of unity despite such significant differences. The dissident author type may have the following identity:

a) Supranational or panhuman (Havel,<sup>9</sup> Vaculík,<sup>10</sup> Strauss,<sup>11</sup> Hnitka<sup>12</sup>)

b) Both panhuman and national (Tatarka)<sup>13</sup>

c) Panhuman, national, and also Christian (Korec).

Within the differentiation listed above, every dissident author has his own special identity that shows in his works in a very pregnant way through the subject, which manifests itself as unique and original, without any reference to the relations (or boundaries) of genres and other theory-given criteria in the selection of the theme, motifs, and later in their way of reflecting and their poetics of processing. Because the works of the authors mentioned above reduce the plot and fiction is a distinct subject reflecting sociopolitical events, these authors' predominant genre is the essay,<sup>14</sup> and

distinct essay-like elements are also present in their other writing. Under the sociopolitical conditions of the twentieth century, the genre of the essay and its characteristics overstepped its boundaries and shifted into drama (Havel), into prose works in an authentic, diary, documentary form (Tatarka, Pavol Strauss, and Jozef Hnitka), or into journalism (Vaculík).

If action is the essence of existence of these authors, despite the fact that they were silenced by force, the living “subject matter” of this production, these essays, has more than documentary value. Based on possibility and due to its “vivacity,” it has also actively entered into the civic consciousness, and thus it became active in the process of awareness. In cases when the author was not allowed to publish at all, he lived in an area in a “happening” way and he alone “performatively” influenced a relatively broad audience with the risk of police or physical persecution.

Such alternative literature (the essay) accompanies official politics and official thinking like a shadow, like a correction, like a reservoir of different thinking, a possible potential of transformations.

The individual authors were more or less aware of the power of their influence. Havel describes the inner mechanism of the functioning of the word against power in the following way:

The operational range of this special power cannot be recorded based on the number of followers, voters, or soldiers because it extends in the “fifth column” of the social consciousness, the hidden intentions of life, the suppressed desire of man for his own dignity and fulfillment of elementary rights, his real social and political interests. Thus, in question here is power that does not dwell in the force of a social or political group limited in this way or that, but above all in the power of the potential hidden in the *whole society*, including all its power structures. This power does not rely on its own soldiers but, so to speak, on the “soldiers of its enemy”; that is, everybody that lives in falsehood and can be at any time – at least theoretically – struck by the power of truth. Is it a sort of a bacteriological weapon, by means of which – once the conditions have ripened for it – a single civilian can disarm an entire division. (Havel 20)

An addition to Havel’s reflections above is made in one of the texts by Tatarka; a discreetly hidden reflection on power and the possibilities of overcoming it:

No defeat is absolute. Based on the assumption of the fundamental that you have a desire to undergo a struggle, that you have courage and or self-confidence to fight an adversary, you are watchful and wait. A suitable moment and the position you take will add regiments and divisions to you that make you, presently, positionally, historically weaker than your adversary. And this is surely the Biblical story of pitting one’s strength against another’s, the story and case of David and Goliath. (Tatarka 47)



“The Two Thousand Words” by Vaculík was the first serious attack against the power and positions of the governing party. Because it was issued publicly and it was possible to affiliate with it, it also had great political power. Here, Vaculík analyzes mechanisms of power that cannot possibly be identified with:

The Communist Party, which enjoyed a great deal of confidence from people after the war, had gradually exchanged it for offices, until it got them all and had nothing else. We must say it like this, and it is also known to the communists that are among us and whose disappointment from the results is as great as the disappointment of others. A wrong line of leadership has changed the party from a political party and an ideological alliance to a power organization that has acquired a great amount of attraction for power-hungry self-seekers, accusing cowards, and people with a guilty conscience. (Vaculík, “Dvatisíce” 1, 3)

In the Czech lands, the social life of the “parallel culture” was organized: from the public manifestos of “The Two Thousand Words,” which due to their courage to criticize the political party and its practices automatically belong to parallel culture, via the foundation of the Committee for the Defense of the Unjustly Persecuted (*Výbor na obranu nespravedlivě stíbaných*, VONS), via petitions to the Padlock Edition and other activities, in which many participated but which, despite monitoring by the police, were tirelessly supported by Vaculík and Havel. Vaculík expressed the contempt for the regime and the absurdity of the “functioning” of the system in one sentence: “So why do the brutes ask if they expect only one answer?” (Vaculík, *Český* 57). For them, the situation was not easy. Vaculík describes the sadness over the relations in the following way:

Again, I have experienced that trembling, incomprehensibly and inadequately coming from some ill part of my body perhaps. Nor could I speak; on my way back, Saša took me home. After a common friendly farewell, at home (fortunately I was there alone, out of shame), I worked my way through anger: are those boys of his possibly more valuable and precious than mine?” (Vaculík, *Český* 38–39)

In *Hovory o kultúre a obcovaní* (Conversations on Culture and Discourse), Tatarka begins with a description of the feeling his comfortable shoes give him in the streets of Paris. He is led by two experiences to reflect on possibilities generally, on the “tradition of broad possibilities”: during a visit to a certain Parisian student and his lodging he can see the familiar wide bed he himself used to have once in his student room:

I couldn’t resist, I got out and looked. Almost exactly the same room as mine some time ago. On the walls there was old faded wallpaper, a wide, enormous

bed that took up almost three-quarters of the space. Half of it would suffice not only for sleeping but also for God knows what kind of performances, and you wouldn't fall. God knows who introduced a bed of such oversize dimensions and when, but it is maintained as a tradition of broad possibilities. (Tatarka 45)

In a friend's cottage, where he relaxes, he is again reminded of the variants of possibilities by tools brought from the loft: "Surely I can create what I want, this all is at my disposal, so why wouldn't I attempt something that could be called a work of architecture. This all was caused by the tools .... the tools opened my eyes to age, shapes, quality" (Tatarka 50).

He puts individual conclusions next to one another in an associative way, and so it is up to the reader to figure out connections. He describes life situations in a mosaic-like way and reflections arising from them about sociopolitical, historical, and aesthetic issues. Topically, the present alternates with the past here – the terse advice of a Polish historian about the suffering of the Polish nation through art – a gibbet, as a monument that has become a memento for the living, the death of a little son on insurgent territory, an extreme existential situation in which, as a prisoner of the Germans, he was close to death, as well as other horrors of the war, experiences rooted in his subconscious.

My first boy, still in his swaddling clothes, used to walk in the mountains as a partisan; he paid a high price for the uprising. I'm no longer surprised by death. But nonsense still keeps surprising me. Before I rose, everything was decided concerning us. . . . And what is the consolation for a nation that doesn't weigh in terms of power? A nation whose fate has become to always be liberated by someone and from something? . . . Liberators will become redeemers, and if we do not defend ourselves against them, they will keep paying a high price for us with a gradually more liquid dollars until they buy us out at a giveaway price forever. (Tatarka 46)

The identity of dissident authors manifests itself in not forgetting about what makes the essence of the meaning of life. The authentic narrative is almost stenographically recorded. The artistic processing is visible in the authorial selection of facts, the usage of paradox, verbatim and factual but also transferred naming of actual experience, reflection of reality, and also very emotionally engaged or discursive language.

The essence of creation in the authors' essays is their sensibility to socio-political events and also the mutual reflection of works published in samizdat. In the introduction to *The Demon of Conformism*, titled "Outcry of Epiphany," Havel writes: "As a medium of human self-awareness, literature can simply never entirely break free from the clime of its place and time. This is why in places where politics penetrates everything so markedly, literature is also more penetrated by it" (Havel, "Výkřik" 5)

Limited space prevents me from mentioning and analyzing all the authors listed above that became emblematic in various types of dissent in Czechoslovakia.

In conclusion, it is possible to point to a broader context. The interpretation of the situation for the entire Eastern Bloc also legitimizes a personality from nearby Poland as the analyst of the nature of the twentieth century: Czesław Miłosz. By the beginning of the 1950s, when he published his essays as *The Captive Mind* (1953) in his London emigration, Miłosz showed a double existence – a public mask and a private face – and revealed the pretence and hypocrisy of eastern totalitarian society. Miłosz was not a political writer. He only needed to identify, for himself, what was going on in the country he left, so that he could exist freely; that is, without a double face. In emigration he also published his novel *The Seizure of Power*, which elaborates on the theses of his previous essays in a fictionalized form. As Ladislav Volko points out in the introduction to the Polish edition of Miłosz's novel (2002), Stanisław Barańczak speaks about the possibilities of the protagonists of this novel as about a defeat. He has the following in mind: collaboration, isolation, and death. However, in the panorama of history we can really see the isolation of the “inner emigration” as a hidden corrective for contemporaries and as a motivation for reflections about a possible future direction of humankind.

## NOTES

<sup>1</sup> The notion of “inner emigration” emerged in the period of the Third Reich (see Lowy). I use it metaphorically for a different historical period, and so it is not identical with the meaning it had in the 1930s. It is different mainly due to the gesture of the voluntary decision that the personalities of the “inner emigration” had to exist outside the official current and in a substandard position of a citizen and artist. It also differs in a certain courage to express one's own opinion. In 1930s Germany something like this would have been impossible due to the extreme threat to existence and very probable incarceration in concentration camps. Despite this difference, I use this notion to stress the affinity between the types of free existence in two totalitarian systems of the twentieth century: fascism and communism (see Courtois et al. 24–25).

<sup>2</sup> The notion of “dissent” is an inexact notion. According to Zdeněk Mlynář, it was Western journalists and people active in the opposition that participated in introducing it and did not know how to more precisely term themselves “differently thinking.” Being a dissident referred to expressing one's own opinions in public, “not to live in lie” (Solzhenitsyn), to live the “life in truth” (Havel), and “to defend one's own reality” (Šimečka). In Czechoslovakia a question of the natural world is related to dissent. That world had been formed against the conformism of “real socialism” (Kusý). The natural world and its interpretation constitute the explicit part of Dominik Tatarka's reflections; for example, in his work *Návraťky* (Recordings). (see Bělohradský 83; Mlynář 660; Kusý, 95; Patočka, 9; Kmet')

<sup>3</sup> After the death of Stalin, the politics of the Soviet Union attempted de-Stalinization

twice; once during the twentieth convention of the Communist Party in 1956, and then during the twenty-second convention in 1961. After that, imprisonments set in again. In art, a pilot role in the process of democratization was played by Boris Pasternak and Vladimir Vysotsky and the conception of the “rebellion of personality.” The establishment of samizdat in the 1960s represented an uncensored platform. Recall the “Chronicle of Current Events” from 1968 and the foundation of the “Initiative” groups from 1969; these were the first programmatic activities for human rights in the Eastern Bloc. In Poland in 1956 there were attempts at reform that ceased very quickly. However, the government had to respect the Catholic Church, where the intellectuals found their refuge. In 1970 there were workers’ strikes in Gdańsk and Gdynia, and in 1980 the establishment of the Solidarity (*Solidarność*) social and workers’ movement. The nation also organized itself into a community thanks to the election of Karol Wojtyła as pope. In their difficult history, Poles had been trained in perseverance, and in the Second World War they organized an underground state structure. In 1981 they moved away from communist rule and took their own way. In Hungary, oppositional thinking is based on the experience from 1956. János Kádár tried hard to depoliticize the state and reform it economically. The intellectuals, followers of Georg Lukács, opened theoretical debates on contemporary socialism. At the same time, Hungarian dissidents were in operation and utilized their economic advantages; in the 1980s they achieved dialogue with the reform wing of the authorities. In 1961, the Berlin Wall was built in East Germany. In church and cultural circles, protest groups had been formed since the mid-1970s. These were peace and ecological initiatives demanding disarmament and nature conservation. The expulsion of Wolf Biermann from East Germany took place in 1976. Galleries, books, and newspapers appeared outside the official scene. Human rights took a place in the movement’s agenda only before the revolution.

<sup>4</sup> There are a relatively large number of resources on this issue in historical studies, and individual aspects of dissent have been dealt with elsewhere (e.g., Catholic dissidents and alternative fine arts; see Bátorová; Courtois et al.; Dobiáš; Kaplan; Kmet’ & Marušiak; Lesňák; Lipták; Mikloško; Pešek; Pešek & Letz; Petřivý; Rychlík; Strauss.

<sup>5</sup> An exception was the imprisonment of Milan Šimečka, and later Ján Kalina. Unlike similar cases in the Czech lands, nobody protested when they were taken into custody.

<sup>6</sup> For more detailed statistics as well as differences in the results of the purges in the Czech lands and Slovakia, see Jan Rychlík’s chapter “Rozdíl při průběhu čístek v ČR a SR” (280–282).

<sup>7</sup> In a very exemplary way, using various individual yet symptomatic examples, Strauss captures the inner developmental rhythm connected to foreign countries. (See also Strauss, *Utajená*; Strýko; Lesňák; Korec, *Od barbarskej* I, II, III)

<sup>8</sup> See Jablonický, *Samizdat*, *Samizdat 2*, *Samizdat o disente*; Kopsová et al.; Kusý; Kusý and Šimečka; Šimečka; Váross.

<sup>9</sup> Václav Havel was born in 1936 in Prague to a “bourgeois family,” which is why he was not allowed to study under the communist regime. In 1967 he graduated from a distance-learning program in dramaturgy from the Academy of Performing Arts (DAMU) in Prague. In 1963 his first play, *Zabradní slavnost* (The Garden Party) was staged at the Na Zábradlí theatre, in 1965 *Výrozmění* (The Memorandum), and in 1968 *Ztižená možnost soustředění* (The Increased Difficulty of Concentration). In 1969 his plays were banned in Czechoslovakia. He refused to leave Czechoslovakia and published in samizdat. He was a co-founder and one of the first three spokespersons of Charter 77 (*Charta 77*). He was imprisoned four times and constantly spied on. In 1989 he took part in the foundation of Civic Forum (*Občanské fórum*) and helped determine the direction of its activity. He holds many Czech and foreign awards. In 1989 he was nominated for the Nobel Peace Prize. An unusual biography of Havel, from his dissident years, is the book *Dálkový výslech* (Long-Distance Interrogation; an

interview with Karel Hviždala, 1986). In 1989 he was elected president of Czechoslovakia. There is much secondary literature on Havel, but no monograph has been published yet.

<sup>10</sup> Ludvík Vaculík is a Czech prose writer, columnist, and publicist, the author of the manifesto “The Two Thousand Words,” a founder of the samizdat Padlock Edition (*Edice Petlice*, founded in 1971), and a signatory of Charter 77. He was born on 23 July 1926 in Broumov, near Valašské Klobouky, as the son of a carpenter. From 1941 to 1943 he took a two-year course offered by the Baťa company in Zlín, where he worked until 1946. In 1946 he passed his school-leaving examination at the Business Academy and left for Prague, where he graduated from the College of Politics and Social Studies (*Vysoká škola politická a sociální*) in 1950. His literary career began in 1953, when he was working as an editor in the political literature division at Rudé Právo publishers, where he worked until 1957, later for the weekly *Beseda venkovské rodiny* (Village Family Meeting), and after 1959 in youth broadcasting for Czechoslovak Radio. Throughout the 1960s he attracted attention through his socio-critical journalism. In 1965 he joined the editorial board of *Literární listy* (Literary Papers), later renamed *Listy* (Papers). This was the most significant periodical of the reform-minded intelligentsia and he stayed with it until the periodical was banned in 1969. By then, he had started his career as a prose writer as well; for example, his novella *Na farmě mládeže* (On the Youth Farm) was published, as well as his novel *Rušný dům* (Busy Home). However, today only his non-conformist novel *Sekeřka* (The Axe) is considered his real entrance to literature, which draws its motif from the destiny of his father.

<sup>11</sup> Pavol Strauss was born in 1912 in Liptovský Svätý Mikuláš (central Slovakia) and died in Nitra in 1994. He spent his childhood and youth in the family of his maternal grandfather, the Mikuláš-based physician, Bartolomej Kuks. The family was trilingual (in Slovak, German, and French). He graduated from the prominent secondary school in Mikuláš, studied medicine in Vienna, and, after his transfer to Prague, graduated from Charles University. He published two collections of poetry in German, *Schwarze Verse* (Black Verse) and *Kanone auf dem Ei* (The Gun on the Egg), both of them from 1936 to 1937. Two collections remain in manuscript (*Worte aus der Nacht* ‘Words from the Night’ and *Und der Bruder Abel lebt ja noch* ‘And Brother Abel Lives On’; both from 1940). He returned to Slovakia and experienced two conversions: to Marxism (in Prague) and to Catholicism (in Slovakia in 1942, lasting until his death). In 1944 he was imprisoned by the Gestapo, and then freed. Until 1948 he continued publishing and working as a surgeon, then as a head physician in Skalica. He received a fellowship in Zurich in 1946, and was then transferred to Nitra to a position in which he was not allowed to practice surgery. He mainly wrote for himself: essays, journals, and aphorisms (a rare genre). All of his works were published after 1989. An unusual biography of Strauss is presented in the book *Človek pre nikoho* (A Man for Nobody, 2000). The first scholarly monograph on Strauss, *Paradoxy Pavla Straussa* (Pavol Strauss’ Paradoxes, 2006) was written by the author of this article.

<sup>12</sup> Jozef Hnitka was born in 1913 in Turzovka (northern Slovakia) and died in Nitra in 1992. He studied at the Pedagogical Institute in Levice and received his degree at Comenius University in Bratislava. His fields of study were history, geography, and Slovak language and literature. He taught in several places in prewar Czechoslovakia and he joined the Communist Party. During the wartime Slovak Republic, he was a political prisoner in Ilava and he participated in preparing the Slovak National Uprising. He was one of the leaders of the uprising in northern Slovakia and took part in fighting in Strečno. He was arrested several times; he was constantly on the run with a fake ID. After the war he published the novel *Križové štácie* (Stations of the Cross). In the 1950s he was expelled from the Communist Party and from the Writers’ Union; he lost his job and did not have the right to work or publish. For his entire life, with the exception of the 1968 and 1969, he was listed in the ŠtB (secret police) files as an “enemy of the state.” After 1989 he was rehabilitated

by the Union of Slovak Writers and the School Administration in Bratislava. In 1991/92 he published *Útek z rakvy* (Flight from the Coffin) in samizdat. In 2003 a collection of his works was published, *Transfúzia* (Transfusion, Petrus publishers) with a detailed calendar in the concluding part and an epilogue by Anton Hykisch (and edited by the author of this article).

<sup>13</sup> Dominik Tatarka was born in Drienove in 1913 and died in Bratislava in 1989. He studied at Charles University in Prague and at the Sorbonne in Paris. He entered into literature through his collection of novellas *V úzkosti bládnia* (In the Anxiety of Searching, 1942) and *Panna zázračnica* (The Miraculous Virgin, 1945). He participated in the Slovak National Uprising, and in the 1950s he made his works conform to socialist realism. At the same time, he secretly wrote his *Demon súblasu* (The Demon of Conformism, 1956, published as a book in 1963). He insisted on protesting against the entrance of Warsaw Pact troops into Czechoslovakia, returned his state award, spoke on SNP Square in Bratislava, and students carried him on their shoulders. However, he remained ostracized in Slovakia, then made contact with Czech dissidents, was one of the first signatories of Charter 77, published in samizdat, and wrote *Písачky* (Scribbles) and *Navrávačky* (Recordings).

<sup>14</sup> Regarding the essay, “this term was used for the first time and canonized by Michel de Montaigne (1533–1592). From the viewpoint of formal logic a subject-object synthesis is dominant, which is an inherent part neither of poetry, nor of epics – not only methodologically, but also from the viewpoint of the character attributes (metonymical or metaphorical depiction of the model of the theme). Often it also has the form of brief, esthetically impressive and distinct journalistic performances that are a valuable resource for thinkers. However, even then a sensually and aesthetically dynamic modeling of the theme is characteristic for the essay, which is usually realized as a pendant of a novel plot by means of a polynome, polyvalent trope in a characteristic imaginative, often even poetically composed developmental movement” (Valček 155).

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## Osebni etos v literaturi slovaških in čeških disidentov: esej kot oblika izražanja aktivne osebnosti

Ključne besede: literatura in etika / češka književnost / slovaška književnost / disidentstvo / disidentski pisatelji / družbena vloga / esej

Prispevek obravnava zapleten problem, zato je njegova struktura razvejana.

1. V sklopu, ki obravnava družbenozgodovinski kontekst, so disidenti opredeljeni po določenih lastnostih, ki se med seboj povezujejo:

– skupne lastnosti: a) močno nasprotovanje politični oblasti in nasilju (vsi, ki jih je dokazljivo preganjala politična oblast in jim je grozil zapor, izguba službe itd.); b) ohranjanje naravnega stanja tudi v neugodnih razmerah;

– posebne lastnosti: a) stopnja pomembnosti (prepoznavnost, položaj) preden so postali disidenti; b) potem, ko so postali disidenti: organizirano nasprotovanje (na Češkem), razpršeno nasprotovanje (na Slovaškem); c) različne stopnje izobrazbe; d) prepričanje, revizija socialistične ideologije.

Kako vplivne so morale biti skupne lastnosti, da so uspele ohraniti idejo o enotnosti kljub velikim razlikam?

Vsak disidentski avtor ima svojo značilno identiteto, ki se pokaže v »ne pozabljanju« bistva oziroma smisla življenja. Avtorjeva globoka izkušnja izvira iz njegove zavesti in se kaže v »avtentični« naraciji. Iz avtorjevega načina izbiranja dejstev je jasno, da gre za umetniško obliko komunikacije.

2. Osrednji del tega prispevka je analiza tekstov izbranih avtorjev in del iz časa konsolidacije Českoslovaške socialistične republike. Izbrana besedila so eseji, ne romani, novele ali kratke zgodbe. Meje esejov so se v 20. stoletju premaknile, in sicer proti dramskemu in proznemu žanru – v avtentični, dokumentarni obliki ali obliki dnevnika (Tatarka, Vaculík, Gruša, Strauss, Hnitka).

Ta vrsta umetniškega ustvarjanja nima le dokumentarne vrednosti, ampak se je, zahvaljujoč svoji vitalnosti, ustalila v javni zavesti (kjer je bilo to mogoče) in učinkovito širila spoznanja. Če avtor svojega dela ni smel objaviti, je lahko na javnost (predvsem pa na ljudi iz svoje okolice) vplival na »hopeningih« in »predstavah«. Taka dejavnost je bistvo obstoja. Spretno je izražena skozi tematiko, motive in način refleksije in poetike ter izvirno in avtentično presega meje žanra ali drugih teoretičnih meril.

Etos te alternativne kulture se izraža v univerzalnem kodeksu najstarejših etičnih norm. Lahko bi rekli, da so to prastari eseji, ki želijo na pozitiven način vplivati na sedanost in vzpostaviti tehtno prihodnost.

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# Esej in interdiskurzivnost: vednost med singularnostjo in *sensus communis*

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*Izmenjave med različnimi področji vednosti so značilne za transverzalne diskurze, ki jih zajemata literatura in časopisje. Esej se kot žanr odlikuje po interdiskurzivnosti, ki se v tekst vpisuje na način singularnosti. Toda singularna konfiguracija pomena, ki v eseju uteleša Kantovo »estetsko idejo« ter prečka obstoječe kulturne kode in sisteme vednosti, iz katerih sicer izhaja, ne bi bila mogoča brez »sensus communis« – pojma, razumljenega kot struktura občih mest, sklicevanje na zdravo pamet ali Kantov »Gemeinsinn«, ki je predpostavka estetske sodbe. Opisana bipolarnost eseja je osvetljena s perspektive družbene zgodovine vednosti in v kontekstu razmerja tega žanra do tiska, knjige in časopisja.*

Ključne besede: literarni žanri / esej / singularnost / interdiskurzivnost / estetska sodba / *sensus communis* / Rožanc, Marjan / Jančar, Drago

Kot sta v svojih metaesejih, tj. esejih o esejih, nakazala že Georg Lukács in Theodor W. Adorno, proizvodnja in obnavljanje znanja postajata čedalje bolj disciplinarno urejena in sistematizirana, posebej v dobi modernosti, izhajajoči iz racionalizma razsvetljskega projekta. Ob tem pa se vsaj od mitiziranega časa razkroja antičnega mita naprej v evropskih družbah ohranja potreba – pa naj bo še tako obrobna – po diskurzih, kakršne po njunem prepričanju uteleša esej in jo stopnjuje s svojo vmesnostjo in žanrsko neuvrščenostjo. Je pač križanec med estetsko, fiksijsko konotativnostjo besedne umetnosti in pojmovno razlago resničnosti. Lukács v eseju »Über Form und Wesen des Essays«, napisanem v obliki pisma prijatelju Leu Popperju, trdi, da »oblika eseja doslej še vedno ni prehodila poti osamosvojitve, ki jo je njena sestra, namreč književnost, prepotovala že zdavnaj: poti razvoja iz primitivne, nediferencirane enosti z znanostjo, moralo in umetnostjo« (Lukács 29; prev. po Adorno 7).<sup>1</sup> Lukács meni, da zato »esej vedno govori o čem, kar je že oblikovano, ali v najboljšem primeru o čem že videnem, torej k njegovemu bistvu sodi to, da ne dviguje novih stvari iz

praznega ničā, temveč zgolj na novo ureja tiste, ki so nekoč že bile žive« (Lukács 23; prev. po Adorno 7).<sup>2</sup> Lukácsseva razmišljanja razvija Adorno v »Eseju kot obliki«, ko ugotavlja:

S popredmetenjem sveta v času napredujoče demitizacije sta se znanost in umetnost ločili; zavesti, ki sta ji bili nazor in pojem, slika in znak eno, ni, četudi je kdaj obstajala, mogoče obnoviti z zamahom čarobne palice, in njena ponovna vzpostavitve bi zapadla nazaj v kaotičnost. (Adorno 9)

Tudi on vidi esej kot obliko, ki izstopa iz diferenciranosti moderne kulture in se izogiba kakršnemu koli določljivemu polju vednosti:

Esej pa si ne pusti predpisovati svojega resorja. Namesto da bi prišel do kakih znanstvenih dosežkov ali ustvaril kaj umetniškega, še njegovo prizadevanje odslikava sproščenost otroškega, ki se brez predsodkov razvname nad tistim, kar so drugi že storili. (Adorno 7–8)

Esej Adornu pomeni žanr alternative in odpora »panožno organiziran[i] kultur[i]«, njenim »ideal[om] čistega in snažnega«, normam torej, ki z razločitvijo filozofije od znanosti in umetnosti »nosijo sled represivnega reda« (10). V eseju je namreč po Adornu »strnjeno ohranjena izkušnja posameznega človeka«, ki pa jo ta žanr paradoksnost doseže ne le z navezavo na »individualn[o] izkušnjo«, temveč tudi s fragmentarnostjo in eklekticismom, s katerima kritično nasprotuje slehernemu metodičnemu znanju, sistemu disciplinarnih razlik in reduciranju resničnosti na resnico, ki jo je zmožna artikulirati znanost, metoda ali teorija:

V razmerju do znanstvene procedure in njene filozofske podlage kot metode potegne esej v skladu s svojo idejo vse možne konsekvence iz kritike sistema. [... Eseg je] radikalen v neradikalizmu, vzdržnosti od vsake redukcije na en sam princip, v poudarjanju parcialnega proti totalnemu, v kosovnosti. [...] Eseg se ne ravna po pravilih organizirane znanosti in teorije, kjer je po Spinozovem načelu red reči enak redu idej. (Adorno 12–13)

Esej sta Lukács in Adorno potemtakem ocenjevala kot enega od diskurzov, ki prečijo razmejitve med ustaljenimi vrstami kulturnih praks, zanemarjajo disciplinarne pristojnosti nad področji, predmeti, metodami in preverjanjem vednosti ter zaobidejo mehanizme njene institucionalne dostopnosti. Te govornice se odlikujejo s transverzalnim povezovanjem in medsebojnim osvetljevanjem znanj iz različnih strok, z izpostavljanjem tistega, kar v njih ni zajeto, česar te niso zmožne misliti, in/ali s preizkušanjem veljavnosti »specialističnih« posplošitev v kompleksnosti in »totalnosti« življenjskega izkustva, v njegovi jezikovni raznoličnosti.

Najstarejši med transverzalnimi diskurzi je, kot nakazuje Lukács, pesniški oziroma literarni. Johansen v knjigi *Literary Discourse* obširno utemeljuje, da literatura izvira iz t. i. mimetičnega diskurza, ki že tisočletja obstaja zato, da ustvarja podobe resničnosti ter mimetizira in konfrontira ostale družbene jezike, od mitologije, filozofije, religije ali znanosti do zgodovine, tehnike, morale in običajev. Govorica literature njihova delna zajetja resničnosti križa med sabo in jih modelira prek eksemplaričnih zamišljenih svetov in zgodb, individualiziranih perspektiv in likov; mogoči, zgolj diskurzivno podani svetovi literature dopuščajo naslovníkom razmišljujoče in podoživljajoče opazovanje obzorij takšnih govoric. Takšno dojetje besedilnih informacij je v literaturi prosto pritiska k njihovi »interesni« uporabi v dejanskem življenju bralcev (Johansen 89–109, 415–432). Za razvoj literarnega diskurza v novem veku in za družbeno zgodovino vednosti nasploh je bil ključen Gutenbergov izum tiska sredi 15. stoletja. Peter Burke v *A Social History of Knowledge* pomen novega medija povzame takole:

Pomen novega medija ni bil omejen samo na večji obseg širitve vednosti in prenašanje razmeroma zasebnih ali celo skrivnih znanj (od tehničnih do državnih skrivnosti) v območje javnosti. Tisk je spodbujal tudi *interakcijo med različnimi znanji* [...] Vednost je standardiziral tako, da je ljudem na različnih krajih omogočal brati iste tekste ali preučevati iste podobe. (Burke 11, poudarki dodani)

Tisk je kot medij dodal nov zagon izmenjavam med vrstami in polji znanja, tako da se je zaradi njega v novem veku okrepila tudi mimetično-eksemplarična interdiskurzivnost literarnih žanrov, in to najmočneje v pripovedni enciklopedičnosti romana. Roman je kot reprezentativna, najbolj priljubljena literarna zvrst modernosti vsrkal in – v stiku z odprtostjo, nezaključenostjo, sodobnostjo in singularnostjo izkustva – dialoško soočil in kritično osvetlil raznotere kulturne jezike in kode, tudi svojo lastno žanrsko preteklost (Bahtin 10–24, 31–33, 132–137). V obzorju Gutenbergove galaksije pa se je književnosti pridružil nov tip transverzalnega diskurza, ki je prav tako kot novoveški roman usmerjen v zdajšnjost, v nezaključeno, kompleksno in raznorodno dogajanje resničnosti – to je tiskano novičarstvo, časopisje (prim. Vogrinčič 148–152). Z industrializacijo, urbanizacijo, koncentracijo založniško-medijskega kapitala, razvojem telegrafa in drugih komunikacijskih tehnologij v 19. in 20. stoletju se je ta diskurz postopno razvil v množične medije, kakršne poznamo danes.

Že v tisočletnih tradicijah ustne kulture, kakor tudi v antičnem in srednjeveškem pismenstvu so se množile razne prakse posredovanja novic in mnenj o rečeh, ki so z odstopanjem od rutin zbujala pozornost, zanimanje, pretresenost in radovednost, in o zadevah, ki bi utegnile zarezati v življenjske navade in izkustva naslovníkov: takšna poročila so prek besedilnih

struktur z visoko stopnjo informativnosti metonimično, fragmentarno in povzemajoče posredovala raznovrstne komplekse znanj in izkustev – o vojnah, ukrepih oblasti, političnih spremembah, naravnih nesrečah, čudežnih doživetjih, zločinih, komičnih pripetljajih, moralnih prestopkih, govoricah, umetniških dosežkih, izumih in odkritjih, neznanih deželah itn. V primerjavi z naslovniško omejenim dosegom oblastniških razglasov, glasnikov, slov, sejmarskih povestičarjev in pevcev balad, pa tudi dopisovanja v izobraženih skupnostih (menihov, plemičev, premožnih meščanov in razumnikov) se je pretok novic močno razširil po izumu tiska, denimo v obliki letakov in balad o posameznih dogodkih ali neredno tiskanih knjig novic. Toda šele v 17. stoletju, ko se novica spreminja v iskano in cenjeno tržno blago (Burke 168), začnejo po Evropi nastajati časniki, ki na današnje dnevnikarje že spominjajo po formatu, izgledu, rednem izhajanju, datiranju, tematski raznovrstnosti ter uredniško-izdajateljskem vzdrževanju plačljivega stika med viri informacij in bolj ali manj množičnimi bralci (Stephens; Martin 2–9; Kay Baldwin 89–93; Burke 186–189; Vogrinčič 147–174). Časniki so prinašali različne aktualne vsebine iz sveta in/ali domačega okolja: politične, verske, moralne, družabne, trgovske in gospodarske, zabavne, poučne itn. Njihova moč je bila v tem, da so s tematsko raznovrstnostjo in ažurnostjo sproti stregli najrazličnejšim potrebam po novicah med pismenimi stanovni in poklici, se prilagajali svojemu družbenemu okolju in ga reflektirali, še bolj pa v tem, da so vplivali na javno oblikovanje mnenj, vrednot in vednosti (od tod sploh beseda informacija). Zaradi njihove dejanske ali potencialne moči jih je oblast vseskozi skušala nadzorovati ali omejevati (Martin 5–6, 9; Kay Baldwin 91).

Tednikom in dnevnikom za splošno publiko so se v drugi polovici 17. stoletja pridružili prvi učenjaki kulturni časopisi oziroma revije, na primer *Nouvelles de la République des Lettres*, ki so prinašale članke v spomin umrlih učenjakom, ocene novih knjig in podobno (Burke 29, 168), v 18. stoletju pa še literarne revije in moralni tedniki, kakršna sta bila *Tatler* in *Spectator* (Vogrinčič 50–51, 184–190). V takšnih revijah se je uveljavljal žanr periodičnega, eksemplaričnega eseja, ki je med svojim občinstvom vzgojno razširjal vzorce uglajene konverzacije in obnašanja ter razglašal elokventno izpisana osebna mnenja o različnih literarnih, kulturno-umetniških, družabnih, opravljenih, moralnih, političnih in učenih temah, primernih tudi za elegantne kavarniške debate (Kay Baldwin 94; Vogrinčič 50–51, 168, 184–190). Razvoj dnevnih časnikov, tednikov in literarno-kulturnih revij je s poročevalskim, uredniško nadzorovanim komuniciranjem raznovrstnih tematik – z njihovim kanaliziranjem od bolj specializiranih virov informacij k manj diferenciranim ciljnim naslovnikom – proizvajal izkustvo dogajajoče se, mnogolične resničnosti, sestavljene iz prežemajočih se polj

vednosti. Tako se je vzpostavljala skupni (»občič«) prostor javnosti, obenem z njim pa še kultura tihega branja, ki je kot način preživljanja prostega časa nastopala v vlogi pomembnega kanala za diskurzivno oblikovanje zasebnosti, osebnega izkustva, znanja in omikanosti. Diskurz tiskanih medijev se je z literarnim čedalje tesneje povezoval, zlasti v 19. stoletju: bil je medij za oglaševanje, trženje, objavlanje, diseminacijo in kritiško obdelavo literarnih besedil; z vključevanjem pisateljev v vrste novinarjev, poročevalcev, feljtonistov, urednikov ali kritikov je soustvarjal pogoje za avtonomizacijo in javno prepoznavnost literarnih producentov; ne nazadnje je postal snovni vir za bolj mimetične, verjetnostne literarne žanre in smeri, ki so se pogosto tudi strukturno opirale na publicistični jezik in zvrsti.

Za oba transverzalna diskurza, literaturo in časopisje, torej velja, da specializirane sisteme znanj in njihovo notranjo samoregulacijo – vsak po svoje, pa tudi v medsebojnih izmenjavah – soočata z odprto, nepredvidljivo, kompleksno in kontingenčno semiozo izkustva. Literatura kot področje fikcije svojo vrsto vednosti proizvaja in preoblikuje na način singularnosti. Iz Attridgeve *The Singularity of Literature* in Clarkove *The Poetics of Singularity* je mogoče razbrati misel, da se v literaturi dogodek edinstvene eksistencialne fokalizacije resničnosti besedilno uresničuje predvsem prek poetske sintaktike, tj. posebne, neponovljive in samonanašalne konfiguracije informacije, ki je ni mogoče brez preostanka prevesti oziroma posplošiti v kategorije nobenega od obstoječih označevalnih sistemov – ne v filozofijo, ne v znanost, ne v zgodovino, religijo ali politiko.

Clark v svoji knjigi zabeleži, da se pojem singularnost v literarni vedi pojavlja med njenim »protikulturalističnim zasukom« od začetka 90. let 20. stoletja naprej. Izraz po Clarku označuje način bivanja literarnega dela, ki se upira težnji, da bi to delo razumno opisali s pomočjo občih kategorij in pojmovnih sestavov, kakršne poznajo sociologija, psihologija, ekonomija, filozofija itn. Literarno besedilo je singularno ne samo zaradi upiranja inteligibilnosti v redovih občega, temveč tudi zaradi svoje dejavne kritike posplošujočih diskurzov, ki si ga skušajo polastiti, in še zato, ker iz razpoložljivih kulturnih kodov inventivno ustvarja izjemni dogodek pomena; literarna invencija »natalnega« pomena prelamlja z danimi sistemi označevanja, zato tak pomen ne more biti razumljen kot primer katere koli vnaprej dane tipske kategorije, temveč šele sam ustvarja konfiguracijo konteksta, znotraj katere ga je mogoče resnično dojeti (Clark 2–4, 12, 28–29, 125–126). Še pred Clarkom je Attridge singularnost literature razložil kot posebno vrsto različnosti posameznega literarnega dela od vseh drugih tovrstnih del: to je razlika, ki z inovativno zmožnostjo za transformiranje kulturnih kodov, vpletenih v posameznikovo znanje in izkustvo (v njegovo »idiokulturo«), omogoči izbruh drugosti, to je tistega, kar je v teh kodih

obstajalo le kot manj verjetna potencialnost, nekaj, česar si ta kultura dotlej ni znala ali mogla zamisliti, si verbalno predstaviti. Singularnost pomeni Attridgeu predvsem vpeljavo novih perspektiv in razmerij med danimi diskurzi. Po njegovem se artikulira v enkratni formi, konstelaciji besednega in zvočnega gradiva teksta, ta pa se odpira le odgovornemu bralnemu dejanju (Attridge 20–40, 63–73, 136).

Če naj bi za literaturo po Attridgeu in Clarku veljalo, da besedil zaradi singularnosti njihove strukture ni mogoče brez preostanka prevesti v nobeno drugo ustaljeno, obče veljavno kategorialnost, pa na drugi strani časopisje in množični mediji težijo k ravno takšni prevedljivosti med posamičnim in občim. Prek skupinskega, splošno dostopnega jezika jo omogoča predvidljivo javno mnenje, doksa. Zato se zdi presenetljivo, da je med tako različnima vrstama transverzalne vednosti, kot sta »fikcijska« literatura in »faktično« časopisje, vendarle mogoče najti vezni člen. To je *sensus communis*. Lahko ga razumemo najprej v logičnem in retoričnem pomenu 'obče znanega', 'zdrave pameti', 'tistega, kar že ve ali lahko dojame, doživi vsakdo' (ta pomen se zdi primeren časopisju kot glasniku in oblikovalcu javnega mnenja), vendar tudi v posebnem Kantovem pomenu 'skupnostnega čuta' (*Gemeinsinn*) kot nujne predpostavke estetske sodbe, sodbe okusa – ta pa meri na umetniške izdelke, kakršna so literarna dela.

Kant v *Kritiki razsodne moči* raziskuje »modalnost sodbe okusa« in pri tem utira pot mišljenju singularnosti. Lépo je povezano z ugajanjem nekega predmeta prek posebne, »eksemplarične« vrste nujnosti, takšne, ki je ne utemeljuje noben zakon; to je razvidno iz estetske sodbe, ki zahteva, da z njo soglašajo vsi, čeprav jo »imamo za primer občega pravila, ki ga ni mogoče navesti« (Kant 76–77). »Sodba okusa pripisuje vsakomur strinjaje. Tisti, ki razglša nekaj za lepo, želi, da bi vsakdo *moral* pritrditi danemu predmetu in ga enako razglasiti za lepega,« nadaljuje Kant in vpelje tezo, da je »pogoj nujnosti, na katero se sklicuje sodba okusa, [...] ideja skupnostnega čuta [*Gemeinsinn*]« (77; izvirni poudarek). Skupnostni čut, kot ga razume Kant, »se bistveno razlikuje od zdrave pameti, ki ji včasih pravijo tudi skupnostni čut (*sensus communis*)«, ker slednja »ne sodi glede na občutje [kakor estetska sodba, op. M. J.], ampak vedno glede na pojme, čeprav ti pojmi ponavadi nastopajo le kot nejasno predstavljena načela« (78). Okus Kant sicer obravnava »kot neke vrste *sensus communis*«, saj se nereflektivna razsodna moč pogosto opira na kak splošno razširjen občutek; v tem smislu se govori »o čutu za resnico, o čutu za spodobnost, pravičnost itn.« (133) Toda »vsakdanja človeška pamet« (zdrava pamet) ni kultivirana, njen *sensus communis* je le »navadni čut«, razumljen kot vulgaren, navzoč vsepovsod (134; izvirni poudarek). Skupnostni čut, kot ga tolmači Kant, je drugačen: je metafizičen in samorefleksiven pojem, brez dejanskih korelatov

v družbeni empiriji in abstrahiran od psihološke kontingenčnosti. Odvisen je zgolj od apriornih form subjekta. Ne gre za neki dejanski, v družbi prevladujoči čut, ampak za hevristično, hipotetično, zaželeno, s samo estetsko sodbo konstruirano subjektovo »idejo *skupnostnega čuta*, se pravi, zmožnosti za presojanje, ki v svoji refleksiji upošteva v mislih (a priori) predstavn način vsakega drugega, da bi svojo sodbo primerjala *tako rekoč* s celotnim človeškim umom«; po Kantu »primerjamo svojo sodbo ne toliko z dejanskimi sodbami drugih, ampak predvsem z njihovimi možnimi sodbami, in [...] se prestavimo na mesto vsakega drugega, in sicer tako, da enostavno abstrahiramo od omejitev, ki so naključno povezane z našim lastnim presojanjem« (134; izvirni poudarki). Subjekt sodbe se s svojo sodbo »dvigne nad subjektivne zasebne pogoje sodbe« (135). Kantu torej skupnostni čut pomeni nujno, a zgolj zamišljeno predpostavko absolutnega, abstraktnega subjekta, v skladu s katero se z njegovim občutjem, predstavljenim v sodbi okusa oziroma estetski sodbi, lahko uglasijo vsi (Kant 79).

Kantovo razlago estetske sodbe in lepega, ki je »brez pojma spoznana kot predmet *nujnega* ugajanja« (Kant 80; izvirni poudarek), radikalizirajo moderne koncepcije singularnosti. Sodbe okusa so namreč najčistejši primeri kantovskih »refleksivnih sodb«, v katerih umanjka obči pojem ali termin, s katerim v predikaciji določamo referenta – tistemu, o čemer se izrekamo, ni mogoče najti nobenega določujočega splošnega pojma, ni ga mogoče umestiti v obstoječe sisteme vednosti in ga v njih utemeljiti, argumentirati (Clark 5). Gaschéjevo formulacijo, da je »občnost, konstitutivna za mišljenje, [...] v literaturi inherentno odvisna od enkratnosti in singularnosti«, ponazarja Clark z eksemplaričnostjo Dickensovih romanov, v katerih so splošni družbeni, moralni in drugi problemi obravnavani prek likov posebnežev, edinstvenih situacij in izjemnih nazornih podob (Clark 6). Dopolni jo s Kantovim primerom za moč pesniške imaginacije, zmožne oživljati »nedoločljive kvazi-pojme«. Upodobitev Zeusa kot orla z bliskom po Kantu omogoča domišljiji (»upodobitveni moči«), da

se razširi na množico sorodnih predstav, ki dajejo misliti več, kot je mogoče izraziti s pojmom, ki je določen z besedami. Estetski atributi tvorijo *estetsko idejo*, ki za to idejo uma nadomešča logični prikaz, v resnici pa rabi za to, da poživlja čud, in sicer tako, da ji odpre pogled na nepregledno polje sorodnih predstav (Kant 155, izvirni poudarek).

Estetsko idejo razume Kant »kot tisto predstavo upodobitvene moči, ki daje veliko misliti, a ji ne more ustrezati nobena določena misel, se pravi noben *pojem*, kot predstavo torej, ki je noben jezik ne more popolnoma doseči in narediti razumljive« (Kant 154, izvirni poudarek). Iz tega je razvidno, da je Kantova »estetska ideja« zarisala tloris tako za Lukáčsevo,

Adornovo in druge teorije o specifični refleksiji, spoznavanja in vednosti, ki odlikuje esej, kakor tudi za sodobne koncepcije singularnosti.

Spoznadni odnos do zapisanega, ki ga vzpostavljajo singularne sodbe okusa na podlagi konstruiranega, v želji izrekanja zasnovanega »skupnostnega čuta«, in »estetska ideja« kot anti-diskurzivno amalgamiranje razvejenih reprezentacij in konotativno nakazovanje označevalnega presežka nad pojmovnimi sistemi – ti dve Kantovi ideji sta prvini, ki se ujemata z duhom eseja. V etimologiji francoske besede *essai*, ki jo je za naslovno oznako svojih besedil v letih 1580–88 prvi uporabil Michel de Montaigne, se namreč ne skriva samo znani pomen 'poizkusa', 'preizkusa'. Ta semantika sicer napoveduje za zvrst značilno provizorično, empirično in eksperimentalno, skeptično, kritično in individualno (singularno) razmerje do avtoritativne, tradicionalne, na knjigo in črko vezane vednosti. Toda beseda *essai* vsebuje še kulinarčni pomen 'pokušanja' (Schlaffer 522), kar žanr eseja pomenljivo postavlja v pojmovno polje okusa, s tem pa tudi čutnega spoznavanja, impliciranega v koncepcijah estetskega in književnosti.

Tako Montaigneva kakor tudi evropsko vplivnejša Baconova varianta eseja (1597–1625) – tega tipično novoveškega, v humanističnem individualizmu utemeljenega žanra – sta dejavnika, vpletena v premik, ki ga Foucault označuje kot prehod od komentarskega razmerja do avtoritet tradicijsko akumulirane vednosti, značilnega za antiko in srednji vek, k empiričnemu in kritičnemu odnosu do podedovanega znanja (Foucault 55–57, 92–95). Iz kritičnega empirizma se je na podlagah kartezijanske metodičnosti postopno razvila moderna znanost. Kot v tej zvezi opaža Graham Good v knjigi *The Observing Self*, pa se esej pri omenjenem prehodu ni pridružil sistematični, disciplinarni samoregulaciji in akumulacijskemu progresizmu znanosti, pač pa je vztrajal pri singularnosti književnosti, kjer novo literarno delo nikakor ne razveljavlja ali omejuje resnice svojih predhodnikov, kot se to dogaja v znanostih (Good 1–8). Pri tem je esej osebno izkustvenost, uveljavljeno z renesanso, še naprej interdiskurzivno soočal z arhivi vednosti in aktualnimi, pozneje tudi v časopisju obravnavanimi temami, izbranimi iz različnih področij razpravljanja – od morale prek politike, geografije in etnologije do filozofije, znanosti in umetnosti. Na ta način je esej v procesu pisanja oblikoval svojo delno, fragmentarno, perspektivirano, provizorično in estetsko resnico – prav takšno, ki ustreza Kantovemu opisu »estetske ideje«. Po Adornu esej »svobodno misli skupaj vse, kar se znajde skupaj v prosto izbranem predmetu« (Adorno 13).

Vse do danes prevladujejo predstave o esejju kot prostoru individualne, svobodne, do vsakršne disciplinarnosti in avtoritet kritične vednosti, utemeljene in preizkušene v osebni eksistencialni izkustvi. Napajajo se v glavnem iz tipično modernističnih Adornovih formulacij, sovražnih do



množične kulture. Toda ne glede na vse, kar vemo o literarni singularnosti eseja, ni več mogoče spregledati niti njegovega opiranja na *sensus communis*, in to ne le v Kantovem pomenu, temveč tudi tistem, ki mu je filozof v svojem intelektualnem kriticizmu in razsvetljenem odporu do podedovanih predsodkov starega režima izrecno nasprotoval.

Prvič, v območje retorično-logične *sensus communis* sega esej prav pri svojem izvoru. Zgodnji Montaignevi eseji so namreč nastali z medbese-dilnim navezovanjem na obča mesta (*loci communes*), torej na tradicionalno preverjene, splošno sprejete, utrjene in avtoritativne nadomestke za samostojno argumentiranje. Prvi Montaignevi eseji so se razvili iz avtorjevih glos in komentarjev na klasična dela, tudi na kompendije sentenc, kakršna so bila Erazmova *Adagia*,<sup>3</sup> na prav takšne zakladnice izrekov in eksempljev, sprejetih iz antičnih avtoritet, se obilno opirajo tudi Baconovi eseji (Good 1, 26–54). Vse to zgodnje eseje – njihovi laičnosti in tihemu, intimnemu nagovarjanju individualnih bralcev navkljub – približuje oratorski didaktičnosti pridige, namenjene občestvu vernikov, na primer pri Janezu Svetokriškem, ki v dobi baroka na podoben način, z množico izkustvenih ali citatnih zgledov obravnava sorodne moralne teme.

Drugič, *sensus communis*, razumljen v Kantovem pomenu »skupnostnega čuta«, impliciranega v estetski sodbi, je zajet v estetskem spoznavnem razmerju do vednosti, značilnem za esej. Kot »polliterarni« žanr, soroden avtobiografiki in avtoportetu, se esej namreč izmuzljivo giblje med neposredno neuporabnimi in nepreverljivimi kvazi-sodbami literature – te služijo oblikovanju oziroma »brezinteresnem« dojetanju portreta fikticijske osebe ali implicitnega avtorja – in preverljivimi sodbami znanosti, filozofije, novinarstva, literarne kritike in drugih nefikticijskih oblik razpravljanja. Esej interdiskurzivno absorbira koncepte ene ali več disciplin, a jih predeluje oziroma sintaktično umešča vase tako, da – po zgledu Kantove »estet-ske ideje« – definicijsko določenost prevzetih konceptov poetsko pretopi v »promiskuitetno« jezikovno vezljivost besede, označevalca. Adorno v tem smislu ugotavlja, da esej »zavrača tudi definicije svojih pojmov« in zajame »antisistematični impulz v lastni postopek«, kar pomeni, da »uvaja pojme brez ceremonij, 'neposredno' tako, kakor jih sprejema« (Adorno 14). Pojmi, ki so »implicitno že konkretizirani skozi jezik, v katerem so podani«, so v eseju natančneje »določeni šele v razmerju drug do drugega« (14). Ker se esej odreka strogi metajezikovnosti in »je sam v bistvu jezik«, ga ne zanima definiranje terminov, pač pa raje »pospešuje interak-cijo svojih pojmov v procesu duhovne izkušnje« (14). Iz tega je mogoče sklepati, da beseda, ki ni terminološko zamejena, z razraščanjem asociacij v mnogotere pojmovne mreže daje vtis mnogolične, singularne, miselno-čutne življenjske totalnosti izkustva. Za zgled naj citiram še en odlomek iz

Adornovega eseja o eseju, ki v literarizirani besedi prestavlja v življenjsko situacijo ravno teoretsko tezo o razliki med disciplinarnimi pojmi in njihovo transverzalno »konkretizacijo skozi jezik, v katerem so podani« (14):

Način, kako si esej prisvaja pojme, bi bilo najlaže primerjati z vedenjem človeka, ki je v tuji deželi prisiljen govoriti njen jezik, namesto da bi ga po šolsko klepal skupaj iz elementov. Bral bo brez slovarja. Če bo isto besedo v vsaki drugačnem kontekstu opazil tridesetkrat, se bo o njenem pomenu prepričal bolje, kot če bi prebral njene naštete pomene [...] (Adorno 14–15).

Znanje, ki ga predstavlja esej, dobiva tako dvoumen status: ne tvori jo ga čiste, od subjekta izrekanja ločljive propozicije, katerih resničnost lahko preverjamo zunaj besedila, temveč so zajete v modalnost, prek katere se nam v estetskem doživljanju razodeva neka perspektiva, z njo pa fikcija navzočnosti osebe (avtorja), ki jo besedilo predstavlja, konstruira. Merilo resničnosti estetsko posredovanega pričevanja ni več skladnost z zunajbesedilnimi, disciplinarnimi kriteriji, temveč avtentičnost ali, z drugo besedo, singularnost eksistence, prikazane v pisanju. Montaigne je v predgovoru bralcu o svojem esejskem razmerju do vednosti značilno zapisal:

[Hočem], naj me svet vidi v vsej preprostosti, naravnosti in takšnega, kakršen vsekdar sem, brez olepševanja in umetničenja: zakaj tisti, ki ga slikam, sem jaz sam. [...] Tako, dragi bralec, sem jaz sam predmet svoje knjige. (Montaigne 5)

Tretjič, a ne nazadnje je treba opozoriti še na *sensus communis* v pomenih 'zdrave pameti', 'obče znanega', 'splošno razumljivega, dojemljivega'. Tudi ti vidiki so v eseju trajno navzoči. Montaigne in Bacon, za njima pa še mnogi drugi esejist, so se pogosto lotevali tem, ki niso last kake specialne discipline, temveč veljajo za splošno življenjske, doživljajsko dostopne vsakomur. Montaigne se je na primer poleg osebne obravnave topik učene kulture ukvarjal s temami žalosti, laži, stanovitnosti, strahu, prijateljstva, vzgoje otrok, oblačilnih navad, Bacon pa smrti, zavisti, ljubezni, potovanja, odlašanja, opreme doma ali prevar. Tovrstne teme so esejisti osvetljevali tako z interdiskurzivnimi navezavami na disciplinarna spoznanja zgodovinskih, pesniških, filozofskih, političnih ali religiozних avtoritet, kakor tudi s primeri, izbranimi iz osebnih izkušenj, in z uporabo samostojnega sklepanja. To argumentiranje pa mora upoštevati *sensus communis*, če hoče biti sprejemljivo za »splošnega bralca«, ki mu je žanr eseja namenjen. Ko na primer Bacon ugotavlja samoumevno resnico, da se človek boji smrti, jo primerja s prav tako splošno znano izkušnjo, da se otroci bojijo zakoračiti v temo (Bacon 33); ko življenje maščevalnežev primerja s čarovnicami, uporabi stereotip, da so te hudobne in zato končajo nesrečno (41); ko

razpravlja o zavisti, se sklicuje na »znano« dejstvo, da so ljudje visokega rodu nevoščljivi povzpeticom (53). *Sensus communis* je torej pogoj singularnosti eseja celo v obliki stereotipov, predsodkov in spontanega zdravorazumskega sklepanja. Vse to esejist sicer pogosto kritizira in spodbija, a po drugi strani nezavedno sprejema. Stereotipija *sensus communis* namreč lahko vzpostavlja celo sam subjekt izkustva, če je to spontano in ni kritično reflektirano. Obča mesta javnega diskurza vstopajo v esej prek rabe knjižnega, splošnega, disciplinarno nevezanega ljudskega jezika, nanje pa se esejist opira, kolikor hoče svojo osebno izkušnjo in mnenja poljudno približati »splošnemu bralcu« in njegovemu okusu. Če sklenem: izrekanje singularne resnice v eseju spremlja tudi večja ali manjša mera stereotipnega *sensus communis*.

Tega se je esej verjetno navzel zlasti prek kanalov objavljajanja. Njegov izvorni medij je bila tiskana knjiga (Montaigneve in Baconove priljubljene zbirke esejev so bile izdane v več knjižnih izdajah), ki je eseju pomagala doseči tako rekoč zunajčasovno dostojanstvo »književnosti«; toda že od zgodnjega 18. stoletja se je žanr čedalje bolj selil v periodično časopisje, kjer se je spreminjal v sprotni, aktualni forum za izrekanje osebnih stališč in mnenj o moralnih, družabnih, političnih, umetniških, znanstvenih in drugih zadevah (Good 55–57). V dnevnikih, tednikih in mesečnikih se je esej v 19. in 20. stoletju pogosto mešal s publicističnimi žanri feljtona, glose, kolumne, kritike, potopisa, portreta ipd. (Poniž 47–49). S tem so vanj začele močnejše prodirati diskurzivne strukture in ideologije, ki so dnevno oblikovale javno sfero. Zaradi ekonomsko pogojene težnje po trženju novic, prizadevanja za njihovo relevantnost in sprejemljivost za čim širše kroge bralstva, pa tudi zaradi moralno-politične tendence vplivanja na javno mnenje so periodična tiskana občila ne nazadnje morala računati na »skupnostni čut« in stereotipijo zdrave pameti. Z ozirom nanju – da bi ju potrjeval ali po potrebi tudi spodbijal – je transverzalni diskurz časopisja izbiral in predstavljal tudi tematike z raznoterih področij vednosti. Razpetost eseja med singularnostjo literarizirane eksistence in ideologizirano vednostjo, ki jo reproducira stereotipija medijskega *sensus communis*, se še danes kaže tudi v reprezentativnih sodobnih slovenskih esejih, na primer pri Rožancu in Jančarju, ki ju bom čisto na kratko obravnaval za konec.

Nagrada za najboljši slovenski esej, ki jo podeljujejo od 1993, se upravičeno imenuje po Marjanu Rožancu (1930–1990). Rožanc je med slovenskimi esejisti izjemen, ker na moderen način obnavlja držo montaignevskega izjavjalca – miselno iskanje, nikdar pomirjeno z vnaprej danimi miselnimi sistemi ali z dozdevno dokončnimi resnicami, konfliktno razmišljanje, ki fragmentarnost, začasnost in protislovnost vednosti veže na prav takšno naravo samega subjekta izjavljanja in pogoje njegovega

družbenega, političnega *biosa*, ne more biti drugačno kot samokritično, težeče k iskrenosti in neponarejeni skromnosti. Njegov esejistični diskurz ni učeno, retorično popestreno in literarno okrašeno podučevanje javnosti s piedestala kulturniške avtoritete. Rožanc v eseje prenaša znanja z raznih področij (šport, zgodovina, literarna zgodovina, filozofija, teologija, politika itn.) in jih transverzalno prepleta. Ponekod jih le na kratko evocira, vpelje v digresijo, značilno za anarhično strukturo žanra, drugod pa metodično razvija, tako da se bliža disciplini znanstvenega traktata. Po Montaignevem zgledu Rožanc to vednost samorefleksivno zameji v enkratnost, začasnost in minljivost osebne izkušnje. Miselne tokove, interdiskurzivno pripojene na filozofijo, teologijo in druge vede, vnaša Rožančev opus v fragmentirano avtobiografsko zgodbo o iskanju identitete, kjer se v gestah besedilne profanizacije – kakor ponekod pri Montaignu – povežejo s telesom esejista. Telesom, ki je nepopolno, enkrat ekscesno, seksualno, transgresivno, drugič pa bolno, trpeče, umirajoče in končno.

Toda Rožanc pri singularnem konfiguriranju pomena vendarle potrebuje *sensus communis*. Ko v esejih razvija svoje videnje eksistencialnega, metafizičnega in družbenega položaja modernega posameznika, se opira na splošno znana predstavná področja (sicer tudi tematiko časopisja in medijev), kot sta košarka ali nogomet, ne izogne se niti stereotipom, zasidranim v javnosti, na primer kultu planiške skakalnice kot ponosa in emblema slovenstva (zbirka esejev *Demon Iva Daneva*). Ko z natrgano avtobiografsko pripovedjo spenja refleksije o svojih identitetnih krizah in jih skuša predstaviti na širšem duhovnozgodovinskem ozadju modernega individualizma, in ko pri tem povzema, komentira življenja in dela drugih pisateljev, filozofov in teologov, svoje izkustvo nezavedno postavlja na stereotipno argumentacijsko matrico, značilno za moralni in politični diskurz dela slovenskega katolištva. Privzema strukturo enačenj po vzorcu »Bog = smisel, ateizem = nesmisel«. Porazsvetljenski svobodomiselni individualizem je znotraj tega stereotipa nerefektirano označen z nihilizmom, saj je možnost za oblikovanje eksistencialnega smisla brez teistične transcendence vnaprej zanikana. Toda ta *sensus communis* je pri Rožancu razvit v singularno, lahko bi rekli heretično smer: o tem priča njegovo naslanjanje na eksistencialistično in personalistično krščansko misel, še bolj pa radikalizacija kristološkega utelešenja duha v obliki križanja transcendence z imanenco telesa, čutnosti, spolnosti in prigradnosti življenjskega toka (na primer knjige esejev *Iz krvi in mesa*, *Manibejska kronika*, *Roman o knjigah*).

Jančarjev primer lahko samo še na kratko omenim. Drago Jančar je med najbolj nagrajevanimi in prevajanimi sodobnimi slovenskimi pisatelji, kar trikrat je prejel tudi Rožančovo nagrado za eseje. V obdobju razpadanja jugoslovanskega komunističnega sistema in v prvih letih tranzicije je njegov

javni položaj kritičnega, disidentskega intelektualca vplival na dojemanje sporočilnosti njegovih esejev: ti so delovali kot pogumno, osebno izpostavljeno, z zgodovinsko erudicijo podprto in z bogatimi literarnimi sredstvi oblikovano razmišljanje o javno pomembnih zadevah, kot so zgodovinska usoda in perspektive Slovencev, svobode in demokracije, Balkana, Evrope in Srednje Evrope. Ko pa se je Jančar na prelomu tisočletja v javnosti s svojo literaturo, intervjuji, izjavami in čedalje pogostejšimi časopisnimi članki začel izraziteje povezovati s t. i. desno politično opcijo, je ideološko nesočutna kritika pod sloji literarizirane singularnosti njegovih esejev razkrila mnoge *loci communes*, stereotype, predsodke in mestoma celo publicistično strankarsko tendenčnost, skratka pomenske strukture, na katerih je med drugim temeljil tudi politični diskurz slovenske tranzicijske desnice (prim. Bogatajevo kritiko Jančarjeve *Duše Evrope*). Ta, za zdaj v slovenski literarni javnosti razmeroma obrobna in osamljena sprememba odnosa do resnice, ki jo izpričuje politični, umetniški, zgodovinski oziroma kulturološki esej, vendarle ni singularna. Umešča se v širši vzorec sprememb, ki jih v postkomunističnih družbah doživlja pisateljska beseda: iz edine možne alternative vladajoči ideologiji in s tem glasnice prave, neideologizirane resnice, se spreminja v eno izmed besed, vrženo med ideologeme znotraj pluralne ideološke sfere in njenih diferenciranih *sensus communes*.

#### OPOMBE

<sup>1</sup> »Die Form des Essays hat bis jetzt noch immer nicht den Weg des Selbständigwerdens zurückgelegt, den ihre Schwester, die Dichtung, schon längst durchlaufen hat: den der Entwicklung aus einer primitiven, undifferenzierten Einheit mit Wissenschaft, Moral und Kunst.« (Lukács 29)

<sup>2</sup> »[D]er Essay spricht immer von etwas bereits Geformtem, oder bestenfalls von etwas schon einmal Dagewesenem; es gehört also zu seinem Wesen, daß er nicht neue Dinge aus einem leeren Nichts heraushebt, sondern bloß solche, die schon irgendwann lebendig waren, aufs neue ordnet.« (Lukács 23)

<sup>3</sup> Montaigne je po upokojitvi v knjižnici na svojem posestvu uporabljal 271 knjig, poroča Burke – samo tri so bile o pravi, šest o medicini, šestnajst o teologiji, skoraj sto pa o antični in novejši zgodovini. Burke ugotavlja, da je bil Montaignev način branja sicer izviren, a tipičen za njegov čas: v knjigah je iskal moralne eksemple in je očitno uporabljal tudi priročnike z *loci communes*, čeprav jih je deklarativno preziral (Burke 191).

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## The Essay and Interdiscursivity: Knowledge between Singularity and *sensus communis*

Keywords: literary genres / essay / singularity / interdiscursivity / aesthetic judgement / *sensus communis* / Rožanc, Marjan / Jančar, Drago

Knowledge is increasingly becoming organized by discipline; however, according to Lukács and Adorno, the essay genre represents a persistent need for discourses that distinguish themselves through transverse crossing of knowledge from various disciplines and through the testing of “specialized” generalizations in the complex “totality” of life experience. The oldest among such transversal discourses is literature, and in the modern era this has been joined by print media: newspapers and journalism. Literature produces and transforms knowledge through singularity; according to Attridge and Clark, literary texts are singular inasmuch as they configure information that cannot be translated into any conceptual system. On the other hand, newspapers and journalism are tending towards a level of translatability, generality, and *doxa* such as are established by public opinion through a generally accessible language. Both types of transversal knowledge – literary and journalism – are connected by a *sensus communis* in the logical and rhetorical sense of “generally known,” “common sense,” “that which is known or can be understood or experienced by everyone,” and also Kant’s sense of a “communal sense” (*Gemeinsinn*) as a necessary prerequisite for aesthetic judgment.

The etymology of the French word *essai* (including the sense ‘tasting’) evokes the sensory cognition implied in the concepts of the aesthetic and literature. Foucault saw the essays of Montaigne and Bacon as embodying the shift from the medieval commenting relationship toward traditional knowledge to the empirical and critical relationship from which modern science developed. However, the essay did not join the systematic drive of science, but persisted in the singularity of literary works. It interdiscursively confronted personal experience with various discursive fields, and shaped a fragmentary, perspectivized, and aesthetic mode of truth. Regardless of the literary singularity of the essay, which realizes Kant’s notion of the “aesthetic idea,” the genre also relies on the *sensus communis*. It developed from intertextual commentary on ancient *loci communes*, but its mode of knowledge is aesthetic: the essay absorbs the concepts of other disciplines and melds them into a “promiscuous” poetic semiosis, which, by producing ramified representations, evokes the complex totality of experience. On the other hand, essayists often tackle topics accessible to the “general reader,” and they are not immune to stereotypes and common sense. Since

the eighteenth century, the essay has become established in newspapers, where it is has become susceptible to the ideologies of the day. The essay's tension between the singularity of literarized existence and the ideologized knowledge of the (media) *sensus communis* is also evident in contemporary Slovenian examples (e.g., Marjan Rožanc and Drago Jančar).

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# Profane Illumination through Essayistic Writing and Thinking. Benjamin and Bakhtin on the Value of Everyday Experience

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*This article points at the contrast between the empty concept of experience that was introduced by Enlightenment thinkers and the "essayistic" way of redeeming experience that can be traced back from Erasmus to Perec. The argument links the theory of everydayness of Lefebvre with Benjamin's concept of "illumination" and with Bakhtin's ideal of a "prosaics".*

Keywords: literary theory / essay / Benjamin, Walter / illumination / Bakhtin, Mikhail / prosaics

One of the striking paradigm shifts that occur in the Renaissance era is that intellectuals set out to redefine the notion of the irrational, putting it in an altogether different place within the discourse on experience and subjectivity. Although the modern may very well be identified with the search for a rational foundation of human knowledge, it is certainly also true that in the 15<sup>th</sup> and 16<sup>th</sup> century a parallel quest was undertaken in search of a non-metaphysical conception of the notion of experience. This sudden ascension of the irrational constitutes clear evidence of the fact that the view of subjectivity did not, or not entirely, coincide with Descartes' cogito. A case in point is the figure of Erasmus, the world-renowned humanist. In his *Laus Stultitiae* or *The Praise of Folly*, he perplexed the intellectual establishment by singing the praise of the irrational, its power to put things in perspective, to counterweigh the unilateral emphasis on logical and mathematical reason. Erasmus' body of work is exemplary for the paradoxical notion of subjectivity that continued to elude many a humanist scholar. He is truly a double-faced literary figure. Already author of a book on etiquette that makes a case for individual self-control in personal hygiene and social exchange, Erasmus gained universal fame with a work

published in Latin in 1530: *De Civilitate*. It concerned itself with good manners and civilized behaviour, and, in the view of the great Norbert Elias, was nothing less than a key moment in the civilization process. Over a period of six years it had more than 30 reprints and a total of 130 editions (13 of which were still being put out well into the 18<sup>th</sup> century; see Elias 80). In the book, Erasmus exemplifies the ways in which technical thought infiltrated everyday life. It is a plea for a way of life that celebrates control over impulses and rational submission of everything related to the body and our animal nature. At the same time, however, Erasmus' most famous bestseller, *The Praise of Folly*, shows him as a satirist who looks upon man's irrational traits with a considerably forgiving eye. The essay, dating from 1509, reveals that humanism not only adopted the ideas of harmony and logos from Antiquity, but also the relativist practical wisdom that was central to the thought of Aristotle, Lucretius and Epicurus. The irrational, Erasmus stresses, needs to be treated with respect. It needs to be kept on the right track by carrying out targeted rational interventions. In some ways, Erasmus' plea boils down to an attempt to reconcile what, in Antiquity, was considered to be the male and female principle. The Folly is represented as a goddess that personifies the irrational aspects of man. In her "declamatio," she makes a plea in favour of her own (female) attributes – naturalness, corporality and seductiveness – and indeed depicts these qualities as a compensation for reasonableness, self-control and wisdom – in short, for (what in patriarchal Western culture is identified with) male properties.

For first, what is more sweet or more precious than life? And yet from whom can it more properly be said to come than from me? (...) And the Stoics too, that conceive themselves next to the gods, yet show me one of them, nay the veriest bigot of the sect, and if he do not put off his beard, the badge of wisdom, though yet it be no more than what is common with him and goats; yet at least he must lay by his supercilious gravity, smooth his forehead, shake off his rigid principles, and for some time commit an act of folly and dotage. In fine, that wise man whoever he be, if he intends to have children, must have recourse to me. (Erasmus, online)

With the essay, Erasmus becomes one of the very first Moderns to opt for a more holistic approach to human existence. His intention was to discuss the fullness of human experience, one that comprises cognitive and affective skills, implies bodily and spiritual inclinations, and combines technical logic with aesthetic contemplation. Through the next centuries, and with clock-like regularity, intellectuals will rise to continue the work of Erasmus. At the same time, however, the dominance of logic and systemic thinking will grow with proportionate force. In philosophical thought, the

quest for equilibrium between the sensory and the noumenal will be given less and increasingly fewer chance, as the challenge to be met now is the development and expansion of a scientifically justified body of knowledge. According to Giorgio Agamben the distinction between Psyche and Nous, between the sensitive and the intelligible, has grown ever more vague (Agamben 19–27). The cogito's abstract form of subjectivity eventually, and effectively, replaced the other two by setting itself up as a neutral body. Since then, it functions as the epistemological foundation in the discourse on the foundations of human subjectivity.

The most notable exception to this general tendency of modern thought is indeed found among the Renaissance humanists, who, through their essayistic work, are at the basis of an alternative conceptualization of experience and of subjectivity. The humanists show how Psyche and Nous may be touched on – negotiated – *simultaneously*, thus paving the way for later attempts at formulating a wider notion of experience and a broader concept of the subject. Following in their footsteps, a select company, among whom we find Anglo-Saxon pragmatists, vitalists, Freudians and Nietzscheans, will raise even more radical questions concerning the Cartesian cogito. Similarly, literary men and women of the 19<sup>th</sup> and the 20<sup>th</sup> century will propose in an ever more frequent manner aesthetic programs that provide an alternative to the empty notion of experience found in science and among the rationalist thinkers of the Enlightenment. Every exponent of this new current in modern thought may be qualified as more or less essayistic. All of them choose a notion of experience that brings together multiplicity or diversity and unity, sensitivity and intelligibility. They preclude every possibility of arriving at an absolute truth, would sooner choose a precise and cautious examination of empirical situations. In other words, the investigative and tentative quality of their mode of thought thus justifies the label 'essay'.

### **Everydayness as a philosophical concept**

Essayism, however, is not merely a mode of thought. If the term may be interpreted in a more narrow sense, it can also be said to have a proper object of its own. For essayists, the domain of inquiry is everyday life. Not the everyday life of boredom, entertainment and distraction, because in the latter situations a subject hardly ever acquired knowledge. It is the contingent events of everyday experience that prompt the subject to thinking, to contemplation. It is crucial to understand that contingent events can never be reduced to a system. To put it differently: the everyday raised in the

essay meets two kinds of enemies, to wit, the trivial and the rigid. In this respect, the essayistic object largely corresponds to the object of inquiry that occupies center stage in the work of Henri Lefèbvre: an alternative space of experience that supersedes the systematics and the compulsive control of technical rationality and an ever-expanding bureaucracy; yet also a space that manages to offer resistance against the tendency toward alienating routine and banalization that go along with the hyperindividualism so prominently present in modern economies and consumer societies. Lefèbvre ascribes a different attitude or mode of thought to these competitive, 'hostile' forms of the everyday. Modern systemic thought imposes "strategies" on everyday life and thus emphasizes the linear and teleological forms of social action; the trivial occurs when everyday action becomes repetitive and cyclical. Between both oppressive forms of everyday action lies the domain that shows us the fullness of experience. It is a domain that Lefèbvre calls "productive" everydayness and that he situates "on the level of tactics, of forces and their relations, and of stratagems and suspicions" (135). "Its transformation," he continues, "takes place on the level of events, strategies and historical moments" (135). In Lefèbvre's view, this form of everydayness is capable of rising above the trivial. At the same time, it is a free zone against the modern systemic thought of the bureaucracy.

Bureaucracy tends to operate for and by itself. By establishing itself as a 'system', it becomes its own goal and its own end; at the same time, in a given society, it has real functions, which it executes more or less effectively. Thus it modifies the everyday, and this too is its goal and its aim. However, it never succeeds in 'organizing' the everyday completely; something always escapes it, as bureaucrats themselves ruefully admit. The everyday protests; it rebels in the name of innumerable particular cases and unforeseen situations. Beyond the zone bureaucracy can reach, or, rather, in its margins, the unformed and the spontaneous live on. (Lefèbvre 64).

Lefèbvre's philosophical ideal immediately reminds us of the alternative – 'humanist' – tradition in modern thought, but also of the ideas of Michel Foucault and Michel de Certeau. Studying the latter two thinkers could prove to be very useful within the context of essayism, but the path followed in this paper takes us further in time, and deeper into the theories of Benjamin, Bakhtin and (to a lesser extent) Bergson. Their theories focus on aspects of essayism that are given insufficient chance in the work of the French thinkers I mentioned earlier.

In order to gain better insight into the secrets of the essayistic mode of thought, it is interesting to map out the constellations of power that govern a society, and to examine more closely the relationships of tension in modern culture. This was what Lefèbvre, Foucault and De Certeau

set out to do. It is, however, equally useful to go deeper into the type of experience that would serve as an alternative. Benjamin, Bergson and Bakhtin formulated a positive concept of experience and put their theories at the service of expanding or extending the concept. They did not merely content themselves with observing how the Enlightenment, in many ways, lead to an empty scientific and systematizing concept of experience, but tried to put the fullness of experience on the agenda. In this respect, they find themselves close to the humanist ideal that flourished in the Renaissance. Following Walter Benjamin, this ideal could be denominated as the “secular Enlightenment” or “profane illumination”. In the latter concept, the intelligible and the sensitive, *Nous* and *Psyche* are joined “by virtue of a dialectical optic that perceives the everyday as impenetrable, the impenetrable as everyday” (Benjamin, *Surrealismus* online). In this “profane illumination”, a junction between extremes occurs, as the enlightened and the banal light up together. Thus, the two enemies are simultaneously defused: on the one hand, the profane illumination consolidates the “true creative overcoming of religious illumination” (ibid.) – and, by doing so, over the premodern forms of experience; on the other hand, the scores are settled with the empty rasters or frameworks of modern Enlightenment. If these inadequate forms of experience can be avoided, the world may show itself in its contingency and the subject is given the chance to adapt to a new world, in which the unpredictability and multiformity or multiplicity can be at once a blessing and an ordeal. The goal of the essayistic thought Benjamin, Bakhtin and Bergson propagate, is at once simple and difficult: they arm the modern subject with weapons that can finally render life in the fragmented modern world genuinely liveable.

### **Benjamin’s auratic experience**

Already in *The Origin of German Tragedy*, Walter Benjamin stands up for an essayistic way of thinking. He positions the essay in a continuum with two poles: one is constituted by the essay’s tentative mode of thought; the other by the philosophical system.

The art of the interruption, in contrast to the chain of deduction; the tenacity of the essay in contrast to the single gesture of the fragment; the repetition of themes in contrast to shallow universalism; the fullness of concentrated positivity in contrast to the negation of the polemic. (Benjamin, *Origin* 32)

In his later writings, Benjamin will apply the epistemological insights from his dissertation to the *Passagenwerk* (or *Arcades Project*) and to his studies

of Baudelaire. Especially these prove to be interesting in order to get a better view of the object of essayistic thought, that is, of everyday life. In Benjamin's view, the essayistic mode of thought is a way of working that creates a special object. In a remarkable essay on Benjamin, J.M. Coetzee recapitulates this mode of thought and its specific construction of object by way of the concept of "physiognomic method". Coetzee's term is particularly well-chosen, since Benjamin, in his Parisian period, became fascinated with physiologies, the journalistic and essayistic writings by *flâneur*-reporters and -columnists that zoomed in on everyday urban life. In these writings, Benjamin saw the physiognomy of everyday modern life indeed *manifest* itself. Whether he was influenced in this by Ernst Cassirer's interpretation of the term remains unclear to me, but there is no doubt that, here, the same primitive, mythological exchange with reality is concerned as was in the case of Cassirer. Nature –physis – is read in an emphatic manner, and this results into a specific knowledge of the laws (*nomoi*) that govern the world. Coetzee states that the physiognomic perception or *gaze* leads to a special form of theory. The physiognomic observer manages to "read the city from the outside [...] by leaving behind every form of abstraction or judgment and by representing in such a manner that all factualness already constitutes theory" (Coetzee 41). The physiognomic gaze does not touch on the rights of everyday reality. It mainly seeks out the constellations of objects, persons and actions that, in specific situations, lead to poetic or other intense experiences. In order to get a grasp of how this works, Benjamin falls back on Charles Baudelaire's essayistic work, as the poet himself was a great admirer of the physiologists and of the physiognomic gaze. In the physiognomic perception he perceived an opportunity to lift modern experience to the level of the "idéal", of aesthetic contemplation. A famous passage from *Le Spleen de Paris* describes everyday experience in mass society as follows:

The solitary, pensive stroller [...] adopts as his own every profession, every joy and every misery that circumstance presents [to him]. What men call love is very small, very limited and very weak, compared to the ineffable orgy, the holy prostitution of the soul that gives itself entirely, poetry and charity, to the unexpected that presents itself, to the unknown passer-by. (Baudelaire 21; my own translation)

These words could lead us to infer that Baudelaire intended to design a *mythologie moderne*, that he runs down aesthetic experience and degrades it to the level of the trivial and alienating. This, however, is not in the least the case. Benjamin points out that Baudelaire *reinvents* the concept of the *flâneur*, a concept that was indeed very fashionable in his days. The nucleus of this reinvention is that the ideal of the *flâneur* is no longer

constituted by the intoxication, the rush or high, but by the contemplation itself. Paraphrasing Agamben: the experience Baudelaire has in mind is no longer simply Psyche, it is also Nous. What is at stake for Baudelaire, as Benjamin states in his later studies, is the construction of an everydayness that balances on the tight-rope, the relationship of tension between the consumer, on the one hand, and the aesthetically contemplating flâneur, on the other hand. To elucidate this relationship of tension, Benjamin quotes – in a footnote to “The Paris of the Second Empire” – a chronicler who makes a distinction between the ordinary stroller and the genuine, cultivated and aesthetically gifted flâneur. Victor Fournel observes in *Ce qu'on voit dans les rues de Paris* (a ‘physiologie’ dating from 1858) that “the flâneur must not be confused with the Badaud (onlooker, rubberneck)” (Benjamin, *Selected Writings* 83). The observer with the genuine physiognomic gaze “is always in full possession of his individuality, whereas the individuality of the badaud disappears. It is absorbed by the outside world, [...] which intoxicates him to the point where he forgets himself. [...] He is no longer a human being, he is part of the public, of the crowd” (83). The quote allows Benjamin to explain what he seeks to arrive at with this expanded or extended notion of experience. His aim is to bring those modes of perception in the limelight that establish a joint appearance of the intelligible and the sensitive. In his own terminology: he wants to reconcile contemplation with the aura of things. It would lead me too far to explain the exact shifts in meaning this notion of aura went through in Benjamin’s thought. That being said, of great importance to the problem at hand is that Benjamin, by way of the flâneur and his physiognomic perception, came on to a rich and dually founded experience. The modern phantasmagoric pseudoworld threatens to condemn the subject to the passiveness of the sensitive exchange with things. Yet, the flâneur manages to fruitfully engage this passiveness, in order to arrive at an “illuminated”, active mode of perception. The flâneur, so one could claim, *reclaims* or develops the aura in the stony stratum of passive, consuming exchange or interaction with the modern world. In doing so, he needs to strip things of their triviality, that is, to do away with their capacity for recurrence, reiteration, repetition, reproduction. Either they repeat or mimic an experience that others demonstrated (much like in fashion: “this is found interesting by people, hence I allow myself to get carried away by the aesthetic enjoyment of the object”); or they reduce the experience to the repetitive: the unforgettable experience that the media are so keen on constructing.<sup>1</sup> The physiognomic gaze, in contrast, emphasizes the singularity of the perception. It places the event on a pedestal, creates a singular experience of illumination or enlightenment, and contemplates the object of experience

from a distance. In the physiognomic gaze – or, which amounts to the same, in the profane illumination – time and space are transformed and modified in such a way, that they produce an intense experience: “What, then, is the aura? A strange tissue of space and time: the unique apparition of a distance, however near it may be” (Benjamin, *Selected Writings* 104–105). In this respect, Benjamin’s findings – that, which he comes on to by reconstructing Baudelaire’s invention – anticipate today’s highly fashionable thought on singularity. More particularly, the definition given by Badiou of “the experience of singularity” bears strong resemblance to Benjamin’s definition of the flâneur’s auratic experience. In “Philosophie du faune”, Badiou states that the unrepeatable is the source of truth. As Benjamin, he detects the enemy of this experience in repetition. The repetition of an event betrays the truth and dissolves the singular.

### **Bakhtin and the Bergsonian experience of duration**

A similar view of singularity is present in the thought of Mikhail Bakhtin. Here, however, the framework of reference is no longer the modern consumer goods society and its fetishist interaction with things, but the psychological complexity of the modern individual. Despite the differences, Bakhtin’s phrasing of adequate and alienating modes of experiences draws very close to what Benjamin had in mind. In order to explain this, I need to refer to his essays on the chrontope concept where he deals with forms of spacetime in the literary experience. The innovating notion of experience which emerges from these texts betray the influence of Ernst Cassirer’s view on the persistence of the mythical in modern societies, but most of all, they are inspired by someone he never mentions, Henri Bergson.<sup>2</sup> When he discusses time representations in *Forms of Time and of the Chronotope*, he invariably favours a time of becoming, of continuous anticipation of future events (on the basis of elements present in memory). Similarly, in *The Bildungsroman and its Significance in the History of Realism*, he writes that real time is experienced as an “emerging whole, an event”:

The ability to see time, to read time, in the spatial whole of the world and, on the other hand, to perceive the filling of space not as an immobile background, a given that is completed once and for all, but as an emerging whole, an event – this is the ability to read in everything signs that show time in its course, beginning with nature and ending with human customs and ideas (all the way to abstract concepts). (25)

Bakhtin usually calls the lived time real time, historical time, or horizontal time. The abstracting mind exerts no influence in the temporal



experiences, which is why the theoretical reflections about timelessness of principles and essences (the Platonic world placed vertically above the existing one as a parallel world) are left out. In historical time, the experience of the individual surges with every new information brought up by history. Time and again, the past is integrated in the current moment of consciousness. This explains why Goethe holds a central position in this essay. Goethe allows the historical past to affect the present, and together they generate the future. The past, “produces in conjunction with the present a particular direction for the future, and, to a certain degree, predetermines the future. Thus, one achieves a fullness of time” (Bakhtin, *Bildungsroman* 34).

Benjamin, Bergson and Bakhtin equally find one another in their criticism of every form of metaphysical reductionism as far as experience is concerned. For all three, the aversion is prompted by a philosophy of time. Benjamin targets the “abstract” repetition of temporal events and Bergson targets the spatialization of time, as it has become common in Western rationalism, while Bakhtin targets narrative forms in which idealistic representations dominate temporal development. More specifically, he considers the abstract temporal development of the adventure novel, and its mechanical and arbitrary succession of moments of chance, to express a view on human experience that is all too reductionist. Just as Bergson, he believes that abstract concepts of time create the illusion that the past always determines the present. The abstracting mind reconstructs the present from the knowledge of the past and establishes causal relations between all possibilities of the present, on the one hand, and the existing condition, on the other hand. Real experience, the experience we have when we undergo strong emotions or when we are in a Zen-like state, performs the converse: it is a present that redefines the past as a whole of experiential data that can be re-interpreted. The existing moment is nothing other than a virtual rearrangement of the past. Abstract and concrete time, in other words, are interrelated as necessity and freedom.<sup>3</sup> The individual that liberates him- or herself from the abstract calculus and linear de- or reformations of experience, discovers that the real experience consists in the fact that past, present and future are interrelated in an endlessly transforming movement. The fact that Bakhtin – in this and in other works – emphasizes to such an extent the folkloric tradition and the temporal concepts present in this tradition, can be interpreted as a plea for a literature in which an expanded concept of experience becomes a priority. In Bakhtin’s view, only non-theoretical (wo)man is able to do this. Consequently, the individual has to draw lessons from popular (wo)man’s elementary philosophy of time, a philosophy that combines the sensitive

and the intelligible: “Folkloric man demands space and time for his full realization; he exists entirely and fully in these dimensions and feels comfortable in them.” In some cases, modern literature has learned to construct a narrative world that “in no way does [...] exceed the limits of the real, here-and-now material world, and [...] does not stitch together rents in that world with anything that is idealistic or other-worldly” (Bakhtin, *Forms* 150). The Russian scholar has approached this concept of everyday experience also in a purely philosophical manner – thereby anticipating the contemporary discourse on “singular events” we owe to thinkers like Badiou and Deleuze. In his *Toward a Philosophy of the Act* (written between 1919 and 1924), he connects the historical fullness of time with ‘eventness’, a notion that emphasizes the choice and creativity present in concrete historical acts. In discussing this Bakhtinian key concept, Gary Saul Morson illustrates it by describing the situation in which it is absent: “When the present simply actualizes what had to happen as in the transcendent world views of metaphysics, *events lack eventness*” (Morson, *Narrative* 22; our italics). Morson, in his comments on Bakhtin, sometimes terms “eventness” as “prosaics”, because, in his view, apart from being poetic, an aesthetic experience can equally be prosaic. Prosaic are those experiences in which the everydayness is charged with an intensity that, on the one hand, is drawn from the concrete and sensory/sensitive, yet, on the other hand, is also founded in detachedness and intelligibility. Prosaics is to be found in many novelistic texts; it refers, still according to Morson, “to Tolstoy’s idea that what really matters in history and individual lives is the small things, the countless ordinary events that constitute daily life, rather than the grand events or dramatic crises on which historians and novelists typically focus. Life is made by ‘tiny, tiny alterations,’ which we do not notice precisely because they are so ordinary and undramatic” (Morson, *Prosaics* 58). A fine example of this can be found in the work of 19<sup>th</sup> century novelists. The prosaic experience in their writings

leads to a moral emphasis not on dramatic decisions at great moments – the stuff of romance, adventure, and the heroic – but on small decisions at every ordinary moment. [...] Not kingdoms but sinecures change hands in Trollope, and Jane Austen’s plots are shaped not by the clash of armies but by the abrasion of words and gestures. In *The Brothers Karamazov*, Father Zosima tells the monks that their smallest deeds, even the very expression of their faces, can make a big difference, because a kind or malevolent expression may affect the mood of a passerby, which in turn can affect others’ moods and actions in an ever concatenating chain of deeds and feelings. (Morson, *Contingency* 683)

## Conclusion

From all this, I would like to conclude that the modern novel – and the 19th-century novel in particular – became aware of the surplus value of literature as an epistemic form, and that the essayistic attitude, already present in the work of Erasmus, Rabelais, Montaigne and other humanists, flourished in these novels. To novelists of the likes of Balzac and Tolstoy, or to poets such as Charles Baudelaire, it seems an evident fact that knowledge represents more than philosophical systematics alone, and constitutes more than the contingencies of the spontaneous praxis; they operate “beyond the rigid and the trivial”, the reason why they seek to enrich their *écriture* by means of a prosaic notion of experience, or, in other words, by way of an essayistic attitude that brings the singular of everyday events to the fore. In the 20<sup>th</sup> century, the essayistic, physiognomic and prosaic gaze will develop into an important undercurrent in the literary world. Associating the essayistic attitude with everydayness often acquires a political nature, so near and very dear to Walter Benjamin. The literary views of Georges Perec and the actions of the group around Cause Commune he joined some years, constitute a major event in this history.<sup>4</sup> “The Cause Commune group developed a utopian way of perceiving: For Duvignaud, it means ‘getting around the structure of conventional ideas, rules and values’ and ‘bringing to the surface [...] forms, symbols and gestures that lend the trivial world a richer image of its own life’, so as to make real ‘the fascinating utopia of unthought ideas and ways of being’” (Schilling 199).

In recent times, disappointingly, this political inspiration has largely faded away. The attention paid to the essayistic has sadly evolved into today’s highly individualistic discourse on the singularity of the reading experience. Many disciples of Heidegger and deconstructionist thinkers practice a form of literary criticism that allows the singular to be put forward as the object itself of their own essayistic text. These literary critics disband the political call of literature, prying it loose from the social dimension of everyday life. Benjamin applied essayistic observation and expression as a tool to mourn the rise of liberal ideology. Contemporary literary criticism, however, rather seems to mourn from *within* a neo-liberal ideology. In the contemplation of the Heideggerian or deconstructionist theorists, the essayistic perception becomes melancholy cynicism and – to quote Benjamin from his *Kunstwerk* essay – “a school for asocial behaviour” (Benjamin, *Selected Writings* 119).

## NOTES

<sup>1</sup> “Der Journalismus bemüht sich, die grosse Masse der Ereignisse aus dem Bereich der Arbeit, in dem sie immer nur eine begrenzte Menge von Zeitungslesern betreffen können, in den des Müsigganges zu transportieren, wo sie in Gestalt der Sensation von allen Zeitungslesern zu konsumieren sind. Ihm kommt es auf ein Erlebnis an, das dem Bewusstsein wie angegossen sitzt. Er stellt fest, dass etwas ein Erlebnis war im Feuilletonteil ein 'unvergessliches', im politischen Teil des Blatts ein 'historisches'.” (Benjamin, *Gesammelte Schriften* 1183-4) “Hätte die Presse es darauf abgesehen, dass der Leser sich ihre Informationen als einen Teil seiner Erfahrung zu eigen macht, so würde sie ihren Zweck nicht Erreichen. Aber ihre Absicht ist die Umgekehrte und wird erreicht. Sie besteht darin, die Ereignisse gegen den Bereich abzudichten, in dem sie die Erfahrung des Lesers betreffen könnten.” (Benjamin, *Gesammelte Schriften* 610)

<sup>2</sup> Henri Bergson is an author appearing only once in Benjamin’s work (in the essay “On some Motifs in the work of Baudelaire”).

<sup>3</sup> A ‘lifelike’ representation of human actions which shows (wo)man its state of ‘freedom’ is properly founded in a concrete representation of an experience of *durée*: “Every demand for explanation in regard to freedom comes back, without our suspecting it, to the following question: ‘Can time be adequately represented by space?’ To which we answer: Yes, if you are dealing with time flown; No, if you speak of time flowing. Now, the free act takes place in time which is flowing and not in time which has already flown. Freedom is therefore a fact, and among the facts which we observe there is none clearer. All the difficulties of the problem, and the problem itself, arise from the desire to endow duration with the same attributes as extensity, to interpret a succession by a simultaneity, and to express the idea of freedom in a language into which it is obviously untranslatable.” (Bergson 221)

<sup>4</sup> In a recent volume on the concept of ‘everydayness’, Derek Shilling discusses the “democratic programme” implicit in Perec’s literary work. In an essay written in 1965 (“Approaches to What?”) Perec explicitly deals with “the collective need to ‘question’ the objects, rhythms, gestures and lived spaces that compose everyday life” (Schilling, 197). Schilling concludes: “the unnoticed will regain meaning only if we prove ourselves able to be ‘astounded’ by it and see within these shared elements a framework for collective memory. [...] What Perec’s essay promotes is [...] a commitment to open-ended questioning and a playful approach to the lived environment through which the subject reinvents patterns of use and even the functions of objects.” (Shilling 198)

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## »Profana iluminacija« skozi esejistično pisanje in mišljenje. Benjamin in Bahtin o vrednosti vsakdanje izkušnje

Ključne besede: literarna teorija / esej / Benjamin, Walter / iluminacija / Bahtin, Mihail / prozaika

V senci pionirjev literarnega kritištva – ruskega formalizma, praškega strukturalizma, nove kritike – ostaja vzporedna tradicija mislecev v iskanju takšnega pojmovanja literature, ki bi bilo uporabno v kontekstu filozofije kulture. Predstavniki te tradicije – dialektični misleci, kakršna sta mladi Lukács in Walter Benjamin, postformalistični neokantovci, kot je Mihail Bahtin, ter francoski poststrukturalisti, kot so Blanchot, De Certeau, Foucault in Deleuze in Guattari – skušajo povezati literaturo s teorijo vsakdanje izkušnje. Na eni strani jih zanima opisovanje »odtujene« oblike izkušnje, na drugi strani pa se zanimajo za bolj avtentične oblike izkušnje. Da bi razložili slednje, se nekateri zatekajo k esejistični obliki pisanja. Drugi namenoma uporabljajo esej, da bi se pri svojem izražanju izognili načinom mišljenja, ki jih obsojajo kot preveč abstraktne, preveč sistematične, preveč represivne.

Članek pokaže na »esejističnost« kot sredstvo za reševanje vsakdanje izkušnje pred odtujenim načinom življenja. Esej so, v nekaterih od njegovih zgodovinskih preoblek (od Montaigna do *The Spectatorja*, od Louisa Sébastiena Merciera do poznega Benjamina) upravičeno povečevali kot žanr, ki je posebej prikladen za raziskovanje vsakdanjega življenja in za spodbujanje napada na abstraktno mišljenje, ki hoče nadzirati navadno življenje.

Za Benjamina je bila literatura vir navdiha pri oblikovanju »esejističnega« načina mišljenja. V svojih najdragocenejših izraznih oblikah sega literatura vse do »profane iluminacije«, ki pomaga pisateljem in bralcem, da se znebijo praznega pojma izkušnje, kot so ga uveljavili razsvetljski misleci. Ta razmislek vodi k nadaljnjima dvema opažanjema. 1. Moderni roman, kot ga je pojmoval Mihail Bahtin, skuša spodbijati starejše, bolj abstraktne oblike literarnega mišljenja na ta način, da vpeljuje v svoje pisanje pikolovsko analizo vidikov vsakdanje izkušnje. Te estetske inovacije bi lahko imenovali »pojav esejističnega mišljenja«. 2. Esejistično nagnjenje zgoraj imenovanih pisateljev in mislecev meri na analiziranje vsakdanjosti zaradi etičnih razlogov. Bahtinovi učenci, kakršen je Gary Morson, so razvili pojmovanje »prozaike«, da bi pokazali na etično funkcijo literarnega mišljenja. Etična funkcija prozaike se razlikuje od tiste, kakršno zagovarjajo dekonstrukcionisti, in je prej bližje ideji singularnosti, kot jo je opredelil Alain Badiou.

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# The Essay and Singularity

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*The essay as a genre signifies the very form of linguistic (ontological) practice that generates the being of the world as the existing one. It can never happen by way of reportage (representation), but only as direct linguistic testimony, as an event. The essay is naked singularity at work, a discourse that is not censored (i.e., covered) by the nihilistic horizon of power and abuse. Finally, I apply the theoretical findings of this paper to a concrete critical analysis of a recent essay about Slovenian art since 2000.*

Keywords: literary genres / essay / singularity / interpretation

## Introduction

This paper is a revision of a longer, unpublished essay dedicated to the same topic, but originally written in Slovenian. Due to limited space, I had to omit a great deal of the original extrapolations and most sections illustrating the performative nature of my essay. Unfortunately I had to eliminate those parts of my investigation that probe the double-bound nature of singularity in its textual production. I found this “unforced” exclusion of the performative aspect of my original essay to be a serious handicap, and I wonder whether it is not in the very structure of academic discourse to censor singular approaches that avoid academic conformity. “The constitutive lie of any university discourse lies in denying its performative dimension; namely, by presenting that which truly leads to a power-based political decision as a simple insight into the factual reality of things” (Žižek 199). I could list a number of authors that analyze the established discursive practice of academia along the same argument. Žižek, a self-proclaimed heir to Lacan’s psychoanalysis, is but one of them. In fact, a number of poststructuralist thinkers realized the importance of an in-depth analysis of discursive practices in light of their social background, seeing them as a symbolic expression of the social relations that they represent.

If considered seriously, the topic of my paper – namely, the double helix consisting of singularity and the essay – must be informed by the perspective mentioned above. In his book *Ce que parler veut dire*, Pierre Bourdieu points out that linguistics developed a model of understanding language primarily as an object of understanding and not as an instrument of action and power. Sociology can escape this trap only if the processes of construction of their

objects of research are illuminated in the light of their social representation and distribution of the basic terminology of a particular power structure that it represents. “We should not forget that any discursive exchange, any communication also *par excellence* represent relations of the symbolic power in which the relations of power between speakers or between their groups are realized” (Bourdieu 13, 14; all translations mine). According to Roland Barthes, “every author, facing the decision to write an essay, finds himself in the midst of a power play” (Barthes, “Inaugural” 48). He has to wrestle with the (linguistic) mechanisms of power, and pass the test required by the “signifier,”<sup>1</sup> the collective subject, possibly structured as a “political unconsciousness,” or rather by accepting the established codes of a group that controls socially dominant academic discourses and institutions. Humanistic discourse perpetuates its own social status and vice versa. In the post-Nietzschean world there is no doubt that university discourse serves the (established hierarchy of) authority, and not truth or knowledge. For a critical and politically aware author, this recognition features a moment of a possible epistemological rupture and confronts an academic researcher with a problem that was first formulated by the Greek philosopher Parmenides:

Come now, I will tell thee – and do thou hearken to my  
saying and carry it away – the only two ways of search that  
can be thought of. The first, namely, that It is, and that it is  
impossible for anything not to be, is the way of conviction,

for truth is its companion. The other, namely, that It is not,  
and that something must needs not be, – that, I tell thee, is a  
wholly untrustworthy path. For you cannot know what is  
not – that is impossible – nor utter it;

Is this a dilemma or not? This depends on the position one takes, one’s point of reference. For me, it is certainly not. Although it represents a complex nexus of an entire set of problems that cannot be easily resolved, the scientific way would be to “incessantly, putting our very existence on the line, reenact this epistemological break that separates science (from the break of theological constructions in the service of various forms of Power) and theology (as well as a society from theocracies with various names). This break, according to Gaston Bachelard in itself constitutes the act of scientific work, which exists, “provided it is continued” (Rotar 50). “The task of a future epistemology is to develop for knowledge the sphere of total neutrality in regards to concepts of both subject and object: in other words, it is to discover the autonomous, innate sphere of knowledge in which this concept in no way continues to designate the relation between two metaphysical entities” (Benjamin, cited in Mules 75).



Warwick Mules considers the above quote from Walter Benjamin as the point where it is possible to address the problem of creativity, singularity, and *techné* – three closely interlinked phenomena that constitute the material, formal, and ontological features of the essay as such. “They suggest a way of engaging with creativity that does not rely on a transcendental subject” (Mules 75). According to Negri and Hardt, “Politics resides at the center of metaphysics because modern European metaphysics arose in response to the challenge of the liberated singularities and the revolutionary constitution of the multitude. It functioned as an essential weapon of the second mode of modernity insofar as it provided a transcendental apparatus that could impose order on the multitude and prevent it from organizing itself spontaneously and expressing its creativity autonomously” (83).

The path I want to follow in my essay is therefore clear. I follow the call for an epistemological break with the conventional approach to authorized knowledge, which, as understood from the above, represents a continuous struggle for such a political system and social organization that would enable one to spontaneously and autonomously express one’s creative potential. An essay, I argue, is fundamentally an act of such an independent process of creativity that can break with established notions and discursive practices. Singularity, on the other hand, introducing the key concept, is the exposition of creativity as such.

## **Singularity**

To Mules, creativity is the release of singularity captured in form. “The method [of the systematic procedure of writing] could refer here to no other matter but to the discourse itself, as far as it fights for the possibility to dupe any discourse that catches up ... that is to say, the discourse that reflects on itself” (Barthes, “Inaugural” 31). For Roland Barthes, the discursive practice constitutes an exercise in the domain of power. “Language is legislation, speech is code. We do not see power which is in speech because we forget that all speech is classification, and that all classifications are oppressive: *ordo* means both distribution and commination” (Barthes, “Inaugural” 2). It is therefore imperative to fight the negative gravitational force of authority, even though it seems this is a battle lost in advance. Power when “exhausted, defeated here, it reappears there, it never disappears. Make a revolution to destroy it, power will immediately revive and flourish again in the new state of affairs ... the object in which power is inscribed for all human eternity is language, or to be more precise, its necessary expression: the language we speak and write” (Barthes, “Inaugural” 2).

An essay is something that is either written or read. There exists no “oral” essay. An essay shares something with the concept of weight and weighing, not because it is difficult to write or read, but because the essay has its own weight, its own gravity. It counts. Writing an essay, I want to suggest, is a subversive act. It is a dialectic process that generates energy but at the same time, in order to do that, it must destroy formal requirements. Power is a two-way force. It is a kind of gravitation. On the outside it attracts, but on the inside it collapses into itself – into a point of singular dimensions that escape our rational control (calculation). It is like a gigantic weight. “From a size of millions of kilometers across, the star crumples to a pinprick smaller than the dot on an ‘i’” (Joshi 29). I shall come back to this.

The Medieval Latin word *exagium*, from which the French word *essai* is derived, means an act of weighing. The French word is actually a compound: *ex-agere*, meaning to push too much, to exaggerate. An essay implies a fragmented, compounded, condensed conglomerate of arguments expected to be organized as an army. “Je n’ay point d’autre sergent de bande à ranger mes pièces que la fortune. A mesme que mes resveries se pressentent, je les entasse; tantost elles se pressent en foule, tantost elles se traînent à la file” (Montaigne, *Les Essais*).<sup>2</sup> An essay has to do with condensation and weight, and with order, but not as it is conventionally understood as a particular collective discipline or formal structure. “The essay is a kind of work that accepts impurity of a discourse, philosophical, scientific, and literary waste, direct corruption of a message no less than of desire: fears, anger, expressions on faces, threatening, aggression, musical (or artistic) fragments that feature an active language” (Barthes, *Učna* 34). Such an understanding of the piling up of any material within the reach of one’s grasp without any formal prearrangement corresponds directly to Benjamin’s understanding of “the possibility of creation according to the laws of configuration which are experienced directly, and not mediated by means of form” (cf. Mules 75).

Derrida’s account of the performativity of literature speaks of an experience of writing that he calls ‘subject’ to an imperative: to give space to singular events, to invent something new in the form of acts of writing which no longer consist in a theoretical knowledge, in new constative statements, to give oneself to a poetico-literary performativity at least analogous to that of promises, orders, or acts of constitution or legislation which do not only change language or which, in changing language, change more than language. (Weber 274)<sup>3</sup>

An essay has its own field of gravity that it is not governed by any rational form outside its inner domain. It is this particular force that generates its “laws of configuration.” This force does not come out of nowhere. It is a result of a particular kind of condensation of ideas, concepts, and

pictures within the normal discursive flow. Deleuze conceives singularities as pre-individual and a-conceptual points of condensation attached to the constitutive series of all structures, which are at one and the same time, indifferent to, and productive of, the relations of difference realized within such structures. An exaggerated condensation of the non-formal fragmentation features an event, a combination, a break with the normal interpretative discourse, “a collapse of a gravitational function” that cannot be reduced to its usual designation of something “that is” and forces us to choose a new way of being,” writes Alan Badiou (34), a rigorous critic of Deleuze, who developed the notion of singularity. According to him, Deleuze always begins his analysis of cases with an “initial formalism”: “Once the initial formalism is in place, the [categorical] method consists precisely in fashioning its nomadic subversion and showing that every relation and every fixed distribution must therefore, insofar as they are indifferent to terms that are arrayed within them, dissolve and cause thought to return to the neutrality ... of ‘extra-being’” (cf. Mules 76). Michael Halewood explains that

beneath the general operation of laws ... there always remains the play of singularities ... . Specific difference ... in no way represents a universal concept (that is to say, an Idea) encompassing all the singularities and turnings of difference ... the distribution of singularities belongs entirely to the conditions of the problem, while their specification already refers to solutions constructed under these conditions ... . The problem is at once transcendent and immanent in relation to these solutions ... . Singularities are that which becomes problematised and which consequently constitute individuality; in themselves they are not individuals in the usual sense, as such individuals are resultants. Singularities don't express the solidity of objects, they do not exhibit the reality of Newtonian self-identical things ... . The role of singularities is to provide a prior metastable state ... the existence of a 'disparateness' ... between which potentials are distributed. (Halewood 11–14)

There is no doubt that academia as an establishment first rejects or even excommunicates such subversive discourse, although later on it advertises and recycles it as the very foundation of its establishment, as its code. Let us just mention the case of Walter Benjamin, whose work *Ursprung des Deutschen Trauerspiels*, written to receive his professorship and today considered to be one of the masterpieces of the first half of the twentieth century, was found unsuitable for his department of German studies by Professor Franz Schultz of the University of Frankfurt and an “incomprehensible morass” by his colleagues at the philosophy department. Here is then a good illustration of such common academic procedure, succinctly elucidated by the quotation from Barthes above.

However, as I have already stated, things are not this easy. An essay, at the moment of being written, is not an instance of the triumph of power

*avant la lettre*, but its very singularity in the transcendence ahead of time. It features a moment of secession, of “extra-being,” and not just falling into the abyss of endless variations on the same theme without “passage to the limit.” To make this point clear, it is necessary to introduce Leibniz’s invention of the differential calculus; that is, his concept of the *infinitesimal* (a quality smaller than any assigned finite quantity) and the actual infinite as its result. “If the difference between two cases or two figures can be reduced below the level that is effectively assignable in concrete data, then it is necessary that this difference *can be reduced below any assignable quantity*” (Zellini 112). Therefore a point has been reached where all the differences, in a way, vanish, but at the same time, do not vanish at all. This concept is the concept of the *infinitesimal* – *a quantity smaller than any assigned finite quantity* (Zellini 115). The result is a visible demonstration of the actual infinite, rather than of continuity of infinities. Singularity can be said to constitute such an actual infinite. The very last line of the poem “Južni otok” (The Southern Island) by the Slovenian poet Kajetan Kovič categorically confirms this: “And the southern island *is*.” The “is” is what I take to be the ontological confirmation of the *actual (real) infinite*. The ultimate “is” of singularity as a monad.

Thus the historic perpetuation of power is perforated by some kind of functional distortion of occasional blackouts. Because power, according to Barthes, is inscribed in language, at the same time it is language that is structured by a permanent counter-positioning: a perforated flow of singularities (monads, as Leibniz would say). Chomsky would call them infinite expressions by limited means of language. Clearly there are two faces to the dialectics of language, two functions of language. I shall call them the *expositive function* and the *symbolic function*, respectively. The expositive function of language suggests the language of creation; that is to say, it is a performative, poetic exposition of singularity as such. Deleuze says that “the singularity belongs to another dimension than that of denotation, manifestation, or signification . . . . Singularities are turning points and points of inflection; bottlenecks, knots, foyers, and centers; points of fusion, condensation, and boiling; points of tears and joy, sickness and health, hope and anxiety, ‘sensitive’ points” (Winqvist 48). Winqvist continues:

“Singularities are points of resistance within the interpretative meaning of experience . . . . The singularity is an event around which thinking recoils. Thinking turns on itself in an experience of inadequacy. The singularity is yet something to be thought and we do not know it until it is thought whether it can be thought in the frame of its occurrence . . . . Singularities are those confusions in life that are sometimes fleeting but which can also be a complete breakdown of understanding (48–49).

## Aletheia

There is a symmetry between power(s) and singularity(ies) at work in an act of essay-writing. They are both facets or effects of the same machinery. They perpetually generate each other in a double play of language and social relations. When I referred to Leibniz and his concept of the actual infinite in my use of the concept of singularity as a complete event, or when I discuss power(s), I do not use the terms in the metaphysical sense of the expression of “one.” Singularity is a particular play of endless and ever-changing differences and information that should be understood more in the meaning of the infinity set of Cantor and less as a commanding principle that runs all those differences within one and the same program. Each singularity features a unique event with its own textual topography and strategies. Once one finds oneself in the play of singularities, one no longer dwells in the domain of law and order, within the domain of power(s) – although, of course, one still does. Any repetition of any singular experience is never the repetition of the same singularity. Not even once does a person step into the same river. Within the distortions of singularity, one treads through a jungle of differences and information that is not governed by a common organizing principle, but by “the vanished event that is drawn from the absolute neutrality of the void. [No doubt, singular events] are supported by the action of a militant subject: Such action takes the form of an intervention that has the effect of undermining and overturning previous practices and forms of knowledge” (Gillespie 1). If writing an essay is considered an act of creative writing, it is possible to extend the argument about such an event further and expose the ontological status of such a militant action. It is not only Badiou but Montaigne as well, “the father of the art of writing essays himself,” who explains this discursive action in military terms. He compares the fortune of his thought to a squad of soldiers led by a sergeant. Such a creative intervention that undermines previous practices or forms of knowledge exposes the *poietic* instance of the language function. It is Plato that explains the ontological dimension of *poiesis*, a word commonly and incorrectly translated as ‘poetry’. The famous section 205b of Plato’s *Symposium* reads as follows: “Take the following: you know that poetry (*poiesis*) is more than a single thing. For of anything whatever that passes from not being into being the whole cause [205c] is composing or poetry.” I shall ignore the problem of this rather “poetic” translation because it is enough for my purpose to simply understand the role of *poiesis* as a “cause” (*ergasia*) for the “passage from not being into being.” Perhaps “creativity” would be the better term here in reference to the field of knowledge because it means “revealing,” bringing something out from being hidden (or forgotten). In fact, that is the actual meaning of the Greek

word for truth: *aletheia* (cf. Kocjančič 79). That which is not hidden (or is remembered again) – at least as it stands in the poem of Parmenides – is the only Being. In this sense, one can understand the ontological implications of creative writing as militant action and an event that overturns received forms of knowledge as it exposes Being in its nakedness.

## Naked singularities

Two consequences follow from the notion of the ancient Greek understanding of truth as *aletheia* – the non-hidden Being exposed in its nakedness in the process of *poiesis* or in a stream of acts/events (*ergasia*) of creativity as the “passage from not being into being.” Creativity is the capacity to bring such pure affects together, singularities in “a virtual conjunction ... and each time [to] form a complex entity” (Deleuze, cited in Mules 77). “Poetry in the meaning above is speech that translates the non-being into ‘un-hiddenness’ and constitutes the essence of *techné* (knowledge, skill). Aristotle used a special term for this type of ‘revealing speech,’ which is not an exclusive domain of poetry, although it is its naked manifestation: *lógos apophantikós*” (Pirjevec 153).

“Creativity is the release of singularity captured in form” (Mules 76). This form of course is speech, it is a linguistic form. Thus one can argue that: 1) singularity/creativity/*poiesis* is a process of (essay-)writing that exposes the “un-hiddenness” of Being as such. Singularity as a textual phenomenon is an ontological machine, the truth of every manifestation of power(s), its symmetrical other – hidden, censored – side. There is no written or read text without there being this machinery at the very core as the other of its structure, regardless whether it is hidden or exposed. This is the first conclusion; and 2) an author should wrestle with the established forms of writing and develop such theoretical and practical formulations that aim to fully disclose the “un-hiddenness” of singularities. This basically means developing “knowledge [as] the sphere of total neutrality in regards to concepts of both subject and object: in other words, it is to discover the autonomous, innate sphere of knowledge in which this concept in no way continues to designate the relation between two metaphysical entities” (Benjamin, cited in Mules 75). The avoidance of any transcendental point of reference requires one to address the true reality of any act of writing as an intervention into the field of established oppressive social relations (the truth censored in the name of the literary or aesthetic nature of the essay).

Scientists have established the existence of two types of singularities in the universe. They are the black holes and naked singularities, the two possible outcomes of a collapse of a massive dying star. At the heart of each

is a singularity, a wad of matter so dense that the strength of gravity becomes infinite and the known laws of physics break down. In a black hole, the singularity is “clothed” – that is to say, it is surrounded by a boundary called the event horizon that hides it. Nothing that falls through this surface can ever resurface. There is no information that could penetrate this “clothing” to tell us what the reality of its singularity is. Singularity is a mystery beyond the horizon of knowledge; it is a mysterious essence that can only ever be addressed indirectly; we can only refer to it. The famous British mathematician and physicist Roger Penrose – a Platonist among us, as Stephen Hawking said – conjectured that the formation of a singularity during stellar collapse necessarily entails the formation of an event horizon. This conjecture is called the cosmic censorship hypothesis.

Naked singularity, on the other hand, has no such boundary. It is visible to outside observers. In fact, dying massive stars need not always collapse into a black hole. Only perfectly spherical stars with homogenous uniform density and neglected gas pressure fall into a black hole. The collapse of real stars is more complex. Their density is not homogeneous, the gas in them exerts pressure; quantum effects can slow down the collapsing star, and so on. In fact, astrophysicists have discovered scenarios of inhomogeneous collapse that leads to singularities, and yet remains visible to external observers (Joshi 28).

There is an obvious correspondence to be noted here between the ancient Greek notion of *aletheia* and the astrophysical concept of naked singularity. Gian Batista Vico, in his most famous book, *Scienza Nuova*, first clearly formulated the difference between two kinds of knowledge: *il vero/scienza* and *il certo/scienza*, which basically correspond to the present-day distinction between the natural sciences and the humanities. One might argue that using concepts from the natural sciences for interpretative strategies in the humanities does not contribute to a reliable academic debate. However, Vico himself claimed that only once one has combined both *scienze* can one form a doctrine that yields a full knowledge of facts. A number of authors developed their conceptual notions out of such cross-breeding of different knowledges. Badiou, for instance, claimed that “only mathematics can present Being *qua* Being to thought” (Gillespie 2). In *Difference and Repetition*, Deleuze specifically marks Leibniz as the source for his development of the notion of “pre-individual singularity in the field of vectors” (McDonnell 1). The Estonian semiotician Yuri Lotman tried to use mathematical models in his structural semiotics, whereas Jacques Lacan talked about the knowledge out there that is formulated by mathematics. Sociologists use statistics. And so on. As Yuri Lotman put it, “The problem of translation is a universal scientific task” (269). The transfer of

concepts and notions between various sciences is not only legitimate but is also a vital and potentially illuminating collaboration.

## Exemplum

From what I have said so far, I believe it is possible to see the language machine of the power/singularity symmetry as two phases of a discursive practice that actually expresses the established ruling relations in a society. “We should not forget that a discursive exchange, a communication exchange *par excellence*, also represents relations of the symbolic power in which the relations of power between speakers or between their groups are realized” (Bourdieu 14). Basically, the controlling relay switch between the phase of power as dominance and the condition of singularity is actually an act of outside intervention of censorship, which is built into the conforming function of language. The conforming function of language *is* the execution of the censorship/power condition. The exposing “un-hiddenness” of this condition creates a singularity and by the very elimination of censorship annihilates the generative, transcendental symbolism of power. The intervention of this kind is a singular event (although it can have lasting effects). The moment singularity, which is the internal reality of a text (an essay), blanks out (with the end of writing or reading, although one should not eliminate the retention effects of the after-echo); it is the institution of power (the academy) that seizes it for its canonized repertoire of its formal references. This need not be an immediate act of acceptance because academic establishment always requires a period of time for the process of recognition (i.e., canonization) to take place. I mentioned the case of Benjamin. Thus an authorized interpretation or conceptualization represents a system of censorship and “authoritarian oppression” that basically rests upon the institution of canonized references. These in turn should be applied as presupposed connotations and mostly conveyed through summaries, although occasionally – when convenient – also through direct citation, but within the canonized frame of interpretation. The former notion of influence is thereby translated into the notion of intertextuality. In reality, one is dealing with citationality, meaning that one subjects oneself to, and accepts, the established hierarchy of power and its kind of knowledge. Citations that do not conform to this function are not welcome within academic papers. “The constitutive lie of any university discourse lies in denying its performative dimension; namely, by presenting that which truly leads to a power-based political decision as a simple insight into the factual reality of things” (Žižek 199). Of course, there are other functions of citation than this. The essay is one example. To paraphrase the famous dictum



of the German-Romanian poet Paul Celan; one could say: *L'essai expose!* An essay should not refer to an external text merely by a summarizing reference that conveniently introduces, and perpetuates, a canonized interpretation, but should try to expose the referenced text in its original visibility. In this way, an essay will feature a multitude of voices that all speak for themselves. Such an essay escapes the confirmation of an authoritative monologue, which always speaks on behalf and instead of them.

Finally: the two states of the power/singularity symmetry at a textual level correspond to two discursive “perspectives” that expose the position of a writer/interpreter as an agent of social and political oppression. An essay could express either a position of authority and power, or one of science and “truth” disclosing language itself as an aggregate that generates Being. Let us now proceed to a concrete case of an established authority’s intervention artistic interpretation. To do this, I wish to analyze an essay by Tomaž Brejc, one of the “leading” art critics in Slovenia, entitled “Painting and Three Conjectures by a Viewer.”

### **A practical example**

Browsing through literature to find a concrete and clear-cut example to illustrate the two very different approaches to singularity sketched out above and their textual realizations, I came across an exemplary essay by Tomaž Brejc entitled “Painting and Three Conjectures by a Viewer,” which “superbly” demonstrates the discursive practices mentioned above. Before I showcase the phenomenon of citation, I should point out one of the main difficulties in the academic practice of interpretation, as can be seen from Brejc’s text. Academic interpretative practice, it seems to me, is no longer capable of imposing/masking its strongly power- and prestige-oriented strategies with their claim to some deeper truths, traditions, knowledge systems, laws, and norms ostensibly available to a “discipline” as a site of exclusive interpretation that authorizes itself through the autonomy of university curricula and academic discourse. The fact is that today every elevated interpretation that draws its validity by alluding to the supposed truth of the subject under consideration is a futile and rather pathetic undertaking, all the more dangerous because it masquerades its inherent violence (it operates on the back of institutions of social power, consolidating their criminal activities) as something dignified and irreproachable. Speaking about literature, painting, music, and so on from the position of “sensing” or a “deeper understanding” is no longer viable, unless it is expository (i.e., performative), whereby the key values and characteristics it describes are enacted by a sincere discursive or textual drive as well as an ethical – as opposed to

moralistic – stance (its evocation is not enough). The very title of Tomaž Brejc's essay is paradigmatic in this respect. To speak of the viewer's suppositions while removing oneself (the writing subject) to the side as someone that can hypothetically evaluate the viewer from a distance points to the problematic of such a removal into the shadows of hidden observation (what is known as voyeurism or secret control) as well as the problematic assumptions of knowing the viewer's experience based on one's own (but not presented as such) experiences, which are thus universalized.

The viewer is thus attributed the writer's own problematic assumptions, and the viewers themselves are instrumentalized as a screen for their projections, seen as "deeper" knowledge and "universal" truth. However, at least one of the viewers mentioned here does not act in accordance with the stated conjectures. As is seen later on, this withdrawal into the hiddenness of fictitious universal truth is repeated once again when Brejc speaks about trends in contemporary art criticism, noting an abandonment of modernist criticism, which, according to him, means "to criticize using the means offered by painting, that is to say, to analyze painting itself. Critiques, challenges, and revolutionary thinking have almost ceased to exist in painting today. Greater consideration is given to tradition and its conventions" (Brejc 120). Leaving aside this odd partnership between tradition and contemporary painting, which clearly points to the general character of our contemporary, socially uncritical, conformist, collaborationist, apolitical, business-oriented neo-liberal generation that seeks shelter in conservative and "profit"-oriented primary accumulation (of traditional capitalism that has just collapsed like a house of cards to burden public debt for generations to come), we are confronted here with another hidden and unproblematized facet to such interpretation: namely, the disappearance of the "critic" that is not a painter; the critic whose role in determining the social role of painting has been crucial from modernism onwards. This "erasure of the critic," which in reality means that the critic has withdrawn from the public (although he is still there, controlling it) makes me think that the above statement needs to be read differently, and should not be taken at face value. Critiques, challenges and revolutionary thinking are still abundant in contemporary art. However, they are not seen as respectful and therefore remain unacknowledged within the small circle of the chosen connoisseurs of "established art." This in turn partly follows the dictates of the market (selling to the richest, who tend to be the most conservative and "puritanical" buyers) and partly the increasing need for decorum and respectability, and is in itself a condition for being included within the circles of condensed social and economic power. It is precisely this fact that makes it possible to creatively problematize painting and prevents accepting the sole validity of the "peaceful illustrative painting." (Such painting typically reproduces illustrations from the covers of

some popular “new age” book about authentic channeling of dreams and energies, or, as in the case of Mitja Ficko’s painting, it illustrates exotic – for example, Japanese – stories or “traditional” folding screens, which are in themselves an instrument of concealment). It is the case that our present-day “respectable and selected” experts – one-time critics – have given up criticism proper, supplanting it with social and “political correctness,” which, they claim, “treats the painting and its rights the same way we speak of human rights” (Brejc 118).

This talk of rights is only ideological manipulation, mere talk, without real respect for or an attempt at realization of these rights. However, it is disrespectful to even discuss this in terms of a socially problematic practice; to analyze, question, or “criticize” it. A painting is “a personal and cultural medium that needs no external verification, control, or validation. This elegant, peaceful assuredness I might call (by analogy with the notion of political correctness) – ‘painterly correctness’, for it respects the painterly conventions, their creative traditions and stipulations” (Brejc 118). Furthermore: “This is a special sort of appropriateness (*decorum*), which respects tradition and convention ... dignity ... we see in this devotion to craft and tradition the revelation of a latter-day, sometimes, quite stoic conceptual Puritanism” (121). However, it seems I am getting ahead of myself. Let me go back to the beginning.

### **True and false painting**

Mysterious paintings are usually more peaceful than not. Unpeaceful paintings betray an excitement of the spirit and of the work; openly displaying their own restless activity, even confusion and overstatement. A certain inner naivety is perhaps revealed in the loquaciousness of unpeaceful paintings: They show on the surface everything that is supposedly happening within: the subjects are animated, the gestures expressively active, all is in motion and agitated – but it is easy to interact with such paintings, and they can even be comforting, for such activity seems entirely ordinary and familiar to us. We experience drama in the look of these paintings, but their commotion only mirrors the excitement and agitation we have so often tasted in life ... at most, the lively picture intensifies our own everyday, occasionally even dramatic life experiences. Essentially, unpeaceful paintings preserve an experiential correlation with our own lives.

Peaceful paintings, on the other hand, can confound us; outwardly, they express nothing overstated, no drama or pathos. And yet, we sense the inner working of the spirit, a kind of relentless necessity which, however, is captured in a well-controlled appearance. In such works, catharsis

is complete, made real ... the only thing such a painting says (to me) is: "Calm down" ... Peaceful paintings withdraw into a meditative timelessness in which we cannot intervene. (Brejc 117)

All of the above statements are taken from Brejc's essay on the painting by Mitja Ficko, "a 'peaceful man,'" as he calls him, "and is so in several aspects that are important in determining the state of Slovene painting since 2000" (Brejc 118). However, let me return to the question of the two modes of singularity first. In my view, the passage above substantiates both modes. Brejc sets forth his experience of painting in the field of singularity itself. Interpreting Ficko's painting *Pristan I* (Harbour I), he writes: "The dark time and space in the passage from night to day is again a single open symbolic area/depth, the painting's *black hole*, as it were, which could easily absorb the birds and the pergola, sound and light, painter and viewer" (Brejc 122-123; my emphasis). As can be seen, here there is a mention of a "black hole" (a "singularity censored by an impenetrable event horizon of interpretation"), an obvious attempt at deployment of "clothed" singularity in the field of interpretation. But let me proceed.

It is not difficult to pick out both modes of "singularity" in Brejc's text. His writing strikes me as what he himself describes as a conjunction of "ideology and aesthetic effect." This is perhaps a perfectly good example of a "civilized" text intended for the sales catalogue, and which under the disguise of seeming expertise (*decorum* – appropriateness, composure, and dignity) offers a promotional model for how to entice a prospective buyer.<sup>4</sup> I say this so as to explain my understanding of the model of discursive singularity that refers to the opaqueness of the event horizon; namely, its indirect presence ("And yet, we sense the inner working of the spirit, a kind of relentless necessity which, however, is captured in a well-controlled appearance"; Brejc 117), which is evoked as a premise but never explicitly revealed in the text (because then it would no longer be a "sense ... of a kind of relentless necessity captured in a well-controlled appearance"). I should however state that in my analysis of Brejc's text I do not write about the paintings of the "peaceful man" himself. Here too it would be possible to point out the hidden ideological kernel of his exoticism, but that will have to wait for another occasion.

The difference between the singularity that is concealed by an event horizon (as a text discussing it indirectly, intimating it), and naked singularity (meaning the text itself is an event that enacts it through the very effect of the text) therefore lies in either nakedness or hiddenness, a direct or indirect expression of singularity as a specific ontological condition of the text. Or, one might say, between descriptive and expressive functions. This difference can be seen to correspond to Brejc's conceptual differen-

tiation between peaceful and unpeaceful painting. Peaceful paintings are mysterious; there a catharsis has already happened, meaning that we are reconciled to the fact that we are unable to quite adjust to them because we are robbed of the direct (emotional) journey required for such an adjustment. We are told to reconcile ourselves to this fact. This of course is paradoxical because catharsis already suggests appeasement. A peaceful painting should therefore appeal to viewers' incapability to appease themselves and penetrate its secret. It urges them to accept the position of a "contemplative viewer who is just as peaceful, composed, and dignified" (c 117). "Peaceful paintings withdraw into a meditative timelessness in which we cannot intervene" (Brejc 117), meaning one can only loosely meditate on singularity, but cannot penetrate its "body"; one cannot "emotionally" experience it. One is presented here with that notion of singularity that offers itself as a "a kind of black hole," as one big open symbolic "surface/depth," an intimation of the workings of the inner spirit, and so on. In short, it is singularity that is accessible only as a symbolic space, as a metaphor. In a traditional setting of devotion to craft, respectability that honors received traditions and conventions (i.e., established social and political relations), and *decorum*, which is sometimes quite stoic (patient) conceptual puritanism, singularity (a black hole of sorts) presents itself as a metaphor for repressed (unseeming), unavailable, uncritical, submissive, modernist, meditative, lost archetypal or symbolic contents – namely, as a space, atmosphere, and event that has once again realized itself. Following Brejc's explication, this would suggest an activity that in contrast to "contemporary genetic science" does "care ... about the ethical standards of humanist tradition" (Brejc 117) (whose apexes of realization were the concentration camps, imperialism and preemptive wars against terrorism), except that it "treats it in the same way we talk about human rights" (Brejc 117) (with tongue in cheek). Hermeticism, which was once seen as the designating mark of modernism, has now been transposed to this domain of the new renaissance of tradition, which "one might expect to find in seventeenth-century French classical theory or in Lessing" (Brejc 117), but is now reborn in the mysterious gathering of "domestic and exotic birds" of the twenty-first century, "who do not know how to behave in this new freedom" and become an emblem of the "state of Slovene painting since 2000" (Brejc 118).

At this point, I have interpreted the obvious things in the work, but a painting is not merely an aggregate of texts and signs; it is not an anonymous surface on which I can simply overlay the meanings I understand; rather, it is a conceptual body with its own subjective existence and expression. Archetypal symbols, in other words, can be real only if they are personified to the extreme, even to the

extent that they become unrecognizable, enclosed in the (conceptual) darkness of the artist's body (Brejc 112).

The hermeticism of the dark artist's body thus serves to validate the great myth about the just humanist every respectable person should reconcile themselves to as though this were some objective, albeit hidden, truth in itself (as suggested by academic experts).

The painting of sovereignty, which is another term for singularity, concealed with a censored interpretative horizon beyond which I cannot see – otherwise the author would not have to tell us that behind it “we sense the inner working of the spirit, a kind of relentless necessity which ... is captured in a well-controlled appearance” (Brejc 117) – is pitted against “unpeaceful paintings” that “betray an excitement of the spirit and of the work; openly displaying their own restless activity, even confusion and overstatement. A certain inner naivety is perhaps revealed in the loquaciousness of unpeaceful paintings: They show on the surface everything that is supposedly happening within” (Brejc 117) (i.e., behind the event horizon). It shows people their own reality, “the excitement and agitation we have so often tasted in life” (Brejc 117). It is performative, enacting the “drama” of people's lives happening here and now, a fundamental dilemma that – drawing on Aristotle – calls for a catharsis. It suggests a confrontation with the horror of fate that, while surpassing us, is truth-revealing (the truth of unjust social reality and lies inherent in democracy). Fate, *moira*, means partaking in the cosmos, participating in the eventful singularity of the universe that takes no notice of the ways of man or gods and directs things in its own way. In its unconcealment, the great mythologies, both personal and familial, and the autobiographical contents burst like soap bubbles – naturally, with fatal consequences. Fate's intervention means an end to *decorum*, respectability, and suitability. It is not guided by “devotion to craft”; no “civilized, conceptually trained painter” can lay an exclusive claim to it nor can he or she avoid it. Nor can a dictionary of images or iconography escape its effect. Singularity is neither a metaphor nor academic discourse or craft. Naked singularity is a revelation of crime that halts, organizes, and eats away into the vitals of human society.

## NOTES

<sup>1</sup> “A signifier represents the subject for the other signifier” (Lacan 66). This means that any author always represents this or that establishment of power (e.g., the university).

<sup>2</sup> “I have no other officer [sergeant] to put my writings in rank and file, but only fortune. As things come into my head, I heap them one upon another; sometimes they advance in whole bodies, sometimes in single file” (Montaigne, *Essays*).

<sup>3</sup> I should add a thought by the Croatian philosopher Vanja Sutlić: “Upon beginning to contemplate something new, we somehow start expressing ourselves, but in a new fashion – thus feeling like strangers in our own language and seeming as such to our fellow countrymen (but not only to them) – not in order to speak another language, but to discover for ourselves the appropriate expression for what we are contemplating, for what is being unveiled” (*Kad počinjamo misliti nešto novo, onda počinjemo nekako i na nov način kazivati – pa se u vlastitom jeziku osjećamo kao stranci, a tako izgledamo i svojim sunarodnjacima (i ne samo njima) – ne zato da bi prešli na drugi jezik, nego da bi za sebe našli kazivanje koje je primjerno onome što mislimo, što nam se pokazuje*; Barbarić 84).

<sup>4</sup> According to a marketing theoretician, there are “clear parallels between modern marketing practices and the teachings of postmodernism” (see Negri and Hardt 130–131) In the spirit of postmodernism, Ficko's painting *Pristan I* (Harbor I) may be interpreted as depicting a makeshift counter at a local fair, offering a diverse variety of poultry (or fish) from all over the world, as if on supermarket shelves or at a natural science exhibition at that very shopping center (e.g., snakes, fish, birds, rodents, and other animals; all for sale, of course).

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## Esej in singularnost

Ključne besede: literarni žanri / esej / singularnost / interpretacija

V astrofiziki poznamo (če izvzamemo začetno stanje vesolja) dve vrsti singularnosti: golo singularnost in zakrito (črno luknjo). V polju literarne ustvarjalnosti temu ustrežata dva modela produkcije: simbolističen in eksistencialističen. Simbolizem in eksistencializem se torej ne kažeta kot dve kronološko različni literarno zgodovinski strukturi, ampak kot dve formi pisave. Simbolistični teksti reprezentirajo transcendentalno podobo sveta, eksistencialistični pa svet producirajo v odsotnosti kakršnihkoli metafizičnih počel v njegovi obstojnosti. Ta razlika se kaže tudi na ravni strategij pisave. Ločimo med deskriptivno (konformno) funkcijo in ekspoziitivno (performativno) funkcijo jezika. Prva zakriva primarno naravo tekstualnega stroja, druga pa jo izpostavlja. Primarni zmožnosti pravimo poietična (ustvarjalna, po stgr. *poiesis*). Deskriptivna funkcija jo postavlja v službo mehanizmov oblasti moči (nihilistične socialne mašine), ekspoziitivna pa pisavo generira kot ontološki stroj (*poiesis* kot vrenje biti), ki kot stranski proizvod razkriva tudi delovanje nihilistične mašine. V svojem prispevku pokažemo, da je esej tista hibridna forma ustvarjalnega zapisa, ki v polju transcendentalne distance in zakritega zapisovanja moči izpostavi primarno razsežnost pisave kot ontološkega (estetskega) stroja. Tovrstna meta naravnost ni samo-nanašalna, ampak izkazovalna. V polju strukturacij pomenskih povezav vedno znova izkazuje primarno razsežnost pisave, ki



je zunajpomenski generator postajanja in obstojnosti postanega. Naša trditev je, da ta ustvarjalnost dobavlja bit (obstoj) sveta. Esej v luči razkritosti biti pomeni tisto delovanje, ki omogoča pojavljanje biti kot biti sveta, označi ga *logos apofantikos*, kot je zapisal Aristotel. To pa se ne dogaja kot poročanje, ampak kot neposredno pričevanje. Esej je gola singularnost na delu, ki je ne zastira nihilističen horizont, v igri zlorabljanja sveta, ki obstaja. V zaključnem delu spoznanja, ki smo jih razvili v eseju, kritično apliciramo v njihovi konkretni analizi v nekem sodobnem eseju o slovenskem slikarstvu po letu 2000.

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# The Essay on Stage: Singularity and Performativity

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*This article takes a closer look at the phenomena of the “theatrical essay” or “essay on stage” as an example of a dynamic tour de force of singularity and plurality (Jean-Luc Nancy) and the performative autopoietic feedback loop (Erica Fischer-Lichte) between actors and spectators. It applies the concepts of singular plurality and the aesthetic of performativity to selected contemporary stage phenomena.*

Keywords: theatre / aesthetics / essay on stage / performativity / singularity / feedback loop

## Towards a definition of the term

This paper outlines some basic characteristics of a particular genre within performing arts practice; namely, the “essay on stage” (or theatrical essay or theorized performance). Taking into consideration some examples of the contemporary performing arts, I take a closer look at this phenomenon with its two main specific features:

1. The dynamic tour de force of singularity and plurality, the incarnation of the fact that there is no being without “being-with,” that “I” does not come before “we” (i.e., *Dasein* does not precede *Mitsein*), and that there is no existence without co-existence (Jean-Luc Nancy).

2. The performative autopoietic feedback loop between actors and spectators, the event of the performance that provokes and integrates emergence, and thus blurs distinctions between artist and audience, body and mind, art and life (Erika Fischer-Lichte).

Before looking at some examples, let me try to be a bit more precise about what is considered an essay on stage. The essay is a specific genre that usually takes unusual forms. Its French meaning, *essai*, connotes tentativeness and experimentation; this understanding of the genre has been lost in most translations. In his illuminating and informative book *The Observing Self: Rediscovering the Essay*, Graham Good states that the initial impulse of the essay was away from genre altogether, in the direction of formlessness (1).

In other words: one can consider the essay to be a form of expression within a given literary system that reveals the limits of that system as inadequate, imposed, or arbitrary and therefore constantly crossing over those borders within what Lotman would call the semiosphere of literature or the performing arts.

In accordance with this definition of the essay as a form of literature, it can be assumed that a theatrical essay or an essay on stage belongs to the tradition of the borders crossing experimental theatrical and performance-art pieces conceptualized in the twentieth century by artists such as Gordon Craig, Antonin Artaud, the historical avant-garde (Meyerhold, futurist synthetic theater), neo-avant-garde theater, and so on. Or, more precisely: one can call the essay on stage any performance practice that (like the essay according to Good) makes “a claim to truth, but not permanent truth. Its truths are particular, of the here and now. Nothing is carried over” (Good 9).

The theatrical essay – as indeed any genuinely original work – therefore produces particular truths and also reveals the limits of an artistic genre. It is far from a stable category and it establishes its inventiveness and singularity by operating at the unstable limits of the theatrical and by reinventing the category of theatrical itself. In the words of Derek Attridge: “To succeed in writing a work that is genuinely original, and does more than extend existing norms, is to introduce into the cultural matrix a germ, a foreign body that cannot be accounted for by its existing codes and practices” (55, 56).

Attridge’s concept of artistic practice as something that introduces a germ into the cultural matrix seems to come close to what Jean-Luc Nancy’s *Being Singular Plural* sees as a part of “a wholly different thinking of ‘art’” that “might [be] include[d] under the heading ‘critical art’” (55).

There are numerous possible examples of this “critical art” or introduction of a foreign body into the cultural matrix in a theatrical essay producing singularity. I take a closer look at some of them below.

### **Alice in “prison-land”**

The first example is the 2009 performance *Alice in Wonderland: A Theatrical Essay on the End of a Civilization*, by Italian director Armando Punzo, staged in Volterra Prisons. Loosely based on Lewis Carroll’s masterwork, the text of the performance weaves in soliloquies from other authors, Shakespeare (predominantly *Hamlet*), and also Genet, Pinter, Chekhov, and Heiner Müller. The performers are convicted criminals

serving anywhere from five years to life in a maximum-security prison for crimes as varied as armed robbery and murder.

In this “tragedy of power,” the characters try to break free of the roles imposed on them by their playwrights, reciting, reading, and literally eating and vomiting Shakespeare, Carroll, and Genet, mixing their words with those of Carmelo Bene, Chekhov, and other authors. Alice, lost in this “prison-land” of language, is a child actress in turquoise, the only woman, the only silent character in this dramatic pit, acting secretly, sometimes dragging a spectator’s hand, pushing him on the run from room to room.

Her male counterpart Hamlet has infected the characters of Wonderland with his craziness; they keep changing their roles, entrusting them with their tortures and their obsessions. Alice is in a labyrinth, Carroll disappears, and our heads are beneath our feet; we now wrap those big white sheets first written by the detainees in the black-and-white words of Hamlet, Ophelia, Polonius, Gertrude, and all the other ghosts. There are many voices and many forms: the actors are men dressed as women dressed as the Mad Hatter, from Hamlet to Ophelia, a black whore in pink boots with red paint.

We have entered into the domain of Artaud’s theater of cruelty, into his statement: “If theatre wants to find itself needed once more, it must present everything in love, crime, war and madness. ... Everyday love, personal ambition and daily worries are worthless except in relation to the kind of awful lyricism that exists in those Myths to which the great mass of men have consented” (*The Theatre* 85).

The audience is a witness to the tremendous “flames” or “luminescent suns,” as Artaud called them, which man discharges during the course of a theatrical performance and which he later transforms in his fantasy into symbols and then into a work of art. Like Artaud, Armando Punzo believes that theater can perform a specific act of embodied transgression, within which the body that is becoming serves as a site for restructuring cultural belief systems. Punzo pioneers his essay on stage as a practice that begins through taking the body as a site of potential disorganization and then becomes a performance technique that instigates collective cultural subversions. For Punzo, the practice of dismantling cruelty creates a lucid body: a body open to possibility and change.

This version of *Alice in Prison-Land* is reminiscent of another *Alice in Wonderland*, a different kind of theatrical essay in post-socialist political circumstances by the Slovenian theater director Vito Taufer. Staged in 1986 at the Mladinsko Theater, this example of theater of images (Marranca) had an immense impact on Slovenian and Yugoslav theater of the 1990s. This theatrical essay was constructed in a form in which the tableau was

a central unit in performance composition. From broken and, in themselves, decentralized pieces, an image was built that continuously emitted a dispersed beam of heterogeneous ideas.

In his essay on stage, Taufer deconstructed Carroll's nonsense in a dialogue with Artaud, reading the two authors simultaneously along with the history of theater. He translated Carroll and drama by creating (to paraphrase Deleuze, referring to Artaud) "a sliding and even a creative, central collapse, causing us to be in another world and in an entirely different language" (Deleuze 96).

In Alice's journey across the space and time planes of the performance, the montage of virtual spaces gives rise to a poetic sphere of connotations. One witnesses a simultaneous double shift from the dramatic into the postdramatic on the one hand, and from political into post-political theater on the other. In the words of Derek Attridge, Taufer does more than extend existing norms: He introduces "into the cultural matrix a germ, a foreign body that cannot be accounted for by its existing codes and practices" ( 55, 56).

## The subversive reading of the avant-gardes

As a third example of singularity and the theatrical essay, I take Matjaž Berger's *inscenation* for the official celebration the fifth anniversary of Slovenia's independence in 1995 presented on Republic Square in front of the Slovenian Parliament. The French philosopher Alain Badiou would most likely define this case as a kind of theatrical essay producing "a singular regime of thought" that "is irreducible to philosophy" (Badiou *Handbook*, 9).

Entitled *KONS 5, 5-letnica osamosvojitve Republike Slovenije* (KONS 5: Five Years of Slovenian Independence), the title of this essay on a huge square serving as a stage quotes a poem by Srečko Kosovel, a Slovenian constructivist poet of the 1920s. Performed with actors, musicians, athletes, members of the Slovenian armed forces, and others, it was a deconstructive reading of the Slovenian historical avant-garde, the three poems by Srečko Kosovel, the poem "Električna žaga" (Electric Saw) by Anton Podbevšek, another avant-garde poet of the 1920s, and a poem by their contemporary Vladimir Bartol together with an eclectic reading of avant-garde large-scale open-air artistic events.

In his deconstructive reading of the past, Berger also included two avant-garde works of art:

- Nathan Altman's celebration of the first anniversary of the October Revolution of 1917 in St. Petersburg with its decoration of the central

obelisk of the great square in front of the Winter Palace with huge futurist abstract paintings; and

- Leni Riefenstahl's films *Triumph des Willens* (Triumph of the Will, 1935) and *Olympia* (Olympiad, 1938).

In addition to this, *KONS 5* also juxtaposed inserts from Slovenian films with a flyover by Slovenian military aircraft, ballet inserts with parachute descents, a Slovenian military review, and an actors' review in American classic cars. With its machinery of army, ballet dancers, athletes, and other artists, the entire celebration echoed and re-appropriated Soviet revolutionary performances, such as the futurist mass demonstration and the 1920 spectacle *The Storming of the Winter Palace* with an army battalion and more than 8,000 citizens in the re-enactment of the event.

Thus *KONS 5* met most of the "standards" of the form of the essay on stage: it revealed the limits of an artistic genre, it was far from a stable category, and it established its inventiveness and singularity by operating at the unstable limits of the theatrical and by reinventing the category of the theatrical itself.

Although the performance was "untheological" enough in its structure, the political discussion about it was predominantly not launched by its postmodern eclectic structure of sliding signifiers, but by the very fact that its title quoted Kosovel's avant-garde poem. Although the performance used the poem as a kind of *in absentia* – just as part of its title – it provoked vivid political discussion due to the following lines of *KONS 5* (translated by David Brooks):

Dung is gold  
and gold is dung.  
Both = 0  
0 = ∞  
∞ = 0  
AB <  
1, 2, 3.  
Whoever has no soul  
doesn't need gold.  
Whoever has a soul  
doesn't need dung.  
EE-AW (Brooks)

In the words of Erika Fischer-Lichte: the artistic event created a specific and very intense performative autopoietic feedback loop between actors and spectators, the event of the performance that provokes and integrates emergence and thus blurs distinctions between artist and audience, body and mind, art and life. The fact that the performance provoked

emergence and blurred distinctions between art and life was clearly seen in the reaction of some politicians: the Slovenian conservative parties' representatives considered the performance to be an offence to the newly established independent Slovenia and its five years of parliamentary democracy, and they boycotted the event.

Berger's theatrical essay, a performance as something that is "evental" (i.e., singular), thus paradoxically produced strong political reactions as though it were a political statement and not an artistic event with its components (to use the words of Alain Badiou once more) that, taken separately, are not capable of producing theatrical ideas or even a text. The politicians did not want to understand that "the idea arises in and by the performance, through the act of theatrical representation. The idea is irreducibly theatrical and does not preexist before its arrival 'on stage'" (Badiou, *Handbook* 72).

The avant-garde – which, as Lev Kreft points it out, "had moved to the Institution of Art" (i.e., galleries of modern art), and had been thereby "reduced to emptied aesthetic pleasure, in which all its politicity is lost" (13) – has thus through the deconstructive and singular tactics of reading the avant-garde poem (to a certain extent) regained its political impact and indirectly led to a political crisis that commented on the current post-socialist condition.

## Post-communist flags

The fact that a specific form of postmodern politicized theatrical essay flourished in most of the countries of the former Eastern Bloc, including East Germany, can also be clearly perceived in the work of the German choreographer Jo Fabian. His "theatrical essays" in a form of dance theater pieces of the 1980s created what Jens Giersdorf calls "a truly post-modern theatre in East Germany, a country that hadn't worked through all the issues of modernity at that time" (Giersdorf 3). With their attention to the structure, meaning, and elements of the theater medium, his productions borrowed eclectically from Artaud, absurd theater, surrealist paintings, political theater of the 1920s and 1930s, Bauhaus mechanical ballets, the American avant-garde theater of images, and the tradition of German *Tanztheater*, namely, Pina Bausch and Johann Kresnik.

Jo Fabian's theater also appropriated some of Brecht's epic theater theories while mapping the late communist and post-socialist condition and striking against socialist theater in the form of an essay on stage. Thus his postmodern usage of Brecht resulted in demystification by interactively



depicting the basic elements that comprised a confused social and historical situation. His 1993 production *Whisky & Flags*, for example, restaged in 2003 and planned to be restaged each ten years, has the form of an essay on stage and uses a sign language close to Wilson's "theater of images" to deal with the political theme of German reunification and its consequences.

Fabian's essayistic fictional performance depicts East German history while paralleling two historical periods: Nazi Germany and German reunification with consequences for the East Germans through a specific postmodern problematization of the medium and institution of theater. This problematization does not lead to a Brechtian condition of arousal of the observer's capacity for action, but to the deconstruction of theatrical and social sign systems. His performance is a reaction to utopianism. It perfectly suits Mikhail N. Epstein's idea of postmodernism and its approach to history: "Postmodernism, with its aversion to utopias, inverted the signs and reached for the past, but in so doing, gave it the attributes of the future indeterminateness, incomprehensibility, polysemy, and the ironic play of possibilities" (cited in Erjavec 20).

In Fabian's *Whisky & Flags* – to paraphrase Epstein's analysis of contemporary Russian culture – the East German communist future has become a thing of the past, whereas the Second World War Nazi past and bourgeois German period before the war approaches us in a decontextualized and recontextualized condition from the direction where we had expected to meet the future.

### ***Slovenian National Theater***

Another form of politically engaged essay on stage can be clearly identified in the very unusual theater production *Slovensko narodno gledališče* (Slovenian National Theater),<sup>1</sup> the fourth performance piece in a series entitled *Program!*<sup>2</sup> by Slovenian artist Janez Janša, which deals with questions of the system of contemporary performing arts and its position in the wider societal and historical context. The production's program carries the following sentence:

*Slovenian National Theater* reconstructs actual historical events: political demonstrations of 2006 that took place in certain Slovenian villages. The story of the encounter between two different communities, which had enormous media coverage, is staged through the theatrical forms of the ancient chorus and radio play, as well as a live television and radio broadcast. The combination of classical theatrical form and contemporary media broadcasts creates a moving spectacle and opens up anew the question of tragedy in today's world. (*Slovensko narodno gledališče*)

One could say that *Slovensko narodno gledališče*, this theater performance concerned with the sonic dimensions of political public rage thus combines two different types of theatrical tactics that belong to two historical territories on the map of Eurocentric theater:

- A classical theatrical form in which actors perform as a chorus commenting on the action as in ancient or classical tragedy; and
- A contemporary form of media broadcast in which actors perform the exact sound recordings of television reports on events in the village of Ambrus in 2006, while simultaneously listening to them on headphones.

As such, it embodies Artaud's notion of theater as a plague. In its hybrid theatrical form (also identified as a specific feature of the theatrical essay), it constantly addresses the audience and reconstructs actual historical events: political demonstrations of 2006 that took place in certain villages in Slovenia. In its essay-like form it reconstructs the story of two communities: the larger group of rural Slovenians and the minority group of Roma people living on the outskirts of the rural community. This was a major media event and thus the reconstruction is staged in the manner of Auslander's junction of live performance and the mediatized spectacle, performativity, and reproduction. This junction (in connection with the plot and the subject, which are directly political because they are bound to the media of television and radio) produces discomfort in the audience. It demands that they formulate a viewpoint towards the action unfolding on stage and respond to it, while being aware of their own powerlessness and deceptive participation, which is assured and at the same time imposed by the mediatized television event.

One witnesses a unique process of autopoietic feedback loops (Erika Fischer-Lichte), a temporary community formed by performers and the audience that launches a specific theater of revolt against what Auslander defines with *syntagms* such as "live presence has depreciated in our mediatized culture" and "a fusion that we see as taking place within a digital environment that incorporates the live elements as part of its raw material ... [in] the cultural dominant" (Auslander, *Liveness* 38).

The performance stresses the fact in an essay-like manner that we live in the firmament created by the prevalence of the mediatized culture, and yet it deliberately resorts to performative culture, to the restorative processes of ritualistic theater in which the actual performative event – the confrontation of the audience with the village of Ambrus, and the resulting consequences – takes place. The audience is thus forced to face the unavoidable self-reflection and images of themselves, their role in (not) taking responsibility for what happened in Slovenia about a year ago.

Janez Janša's piece *Slovensko narodno gledališče* thus achieves a withdrawal of the aesthetic aspect of the theatrical event in favor of current political

issues. Within this, as critic Blaž Lukan points out, an equally acute crisis of ethics is exposed:

The event of the Slovenian nation, directed by Janez Janša (an intriguing collision!), is therefore “the case of the village of Ambrus,” linked with, as we know, the exile, or rather, the deportation of the Roma Strojanc family from that village and all the accompanying events that made for one of the darkest stains on post-independence Slovenia. ... Janez Janša stages the reconstruction of Ambrus in a kind of performative inversion by means of returning us to the actual event itself, or serving it to us as a temporal and spatial extraction from its original unfolding, and transcribes its media origin into a sonic performance piece, distributed amid four performers and a companion. However, the formal side of the (thoroughly professionally executed) event is of little importance. What carries greater significance is that, by reconstructing and transcribing the documentary material, Janša revives a fact that our political (and media) reality has suppressed to a great extent. Taking Ambrus out of a (partly dictated, partly spontaneous) amnesic political and media reality is thus the essential quality of this event that, despite not hiding its own performing or conceptual origins, inhabits the traumatic core of Slovenian political mythology. (Lukan 23)

## Interlude

As seen from the examples discussed up to this point, the artists using a form of the theatrical essay see the art of today not purely as a work of art, but as a singular event that comes into being by means of interaction of performers and the viewers. They try to put the audience in a state of insecurity and discomfort. In their actions, the common oppositions of subject and object, of presence and representation, and of art and social reality disappear, whereas dichotomies appear to have evaporated. At the same time, the audience transforms and finds itself in a state that is alienated from everyday social norms. Following the logic of Erika Fischer-Lichte’s book *Aesthetic of the Performative*, the consequence of this is a destabilization of the perception of reality due to the liminality of an artistic event, and it may cause a re-orientation of the individual (which, let us not deceive ourselves, is only temporary).

Janez Janša and the other artists discussed thus count on the trigger for the change of the perception of reality and a simultaneous emergence and exposure of an abyss between the signifiers and the signified, which establishes the credibility of the language of art. At the same time, their projects generate an Auslander-like politics of performance that is “exposing processes of cultural control” (Auslander, *From Acting* 61).

## Post-Brechtian measures taken

This also holds true for the last example of the theatrical essay I discuss: Sebastijan Horvat's staging of one of most controversial twentieth-century pieces for theater, Bertolt Brecht's *Lehrstück* (learning play) titled *Die Maßnahme* (The Decision), also known in English as *The Measures Taken*. *Die Maßnahme* consists of eight sections in prose and unrhymed, irregular verse, with six major songs. It received its first theatrical production at the Great Theater (*Großes Schauspielhaus*) in Berlin, opening on 10 December 1930. The play was also produced in Moscow around 1934. Brecht and his family banned the play from public performance but, in fact, the Soviet government did not like the play and other governments banned it as well. Performances resumed in 1997 with Klaus Emmerich's historically rigorous staging at the Berliner Ensemble. The FBI translated the play in the 1940s, and titled it *The Disciplinary Measure*. The report described it as promoting "Communist World Revolution by violent means."

Also recently staged by the Slovenian theater director Sebastijan Horvat in 2008, this *Lehrstück* is another example (to use Alain Badiou's words from *Handbook of Inaesthetics*) of the assemblage of extremely disparate components, both material and ideal, whose only existence lies in the performance, in the act of theatrical representation.

As in other cases discussed, the components (a text, a place, some bodies, voices, costumes, lights, a public, etc.) in Horvat's essay on stage are gathered together in an event, the performance (representation), "whose repetition, night after night, does not in any sense hinder the fact that, each and every time, the performance is evental, that is, singular. ... None of the components taken separately is capable of producing theater-ideas, not even the text. The idea arises in and through the performance, through the act of theatrical representation. The idea is irreducibly theatrical and does not preexist before its arrival 'on stage'" (Badiou, *Handbook* 72).

Brecht's *Lehrstück* – this specific genre that, according to Jean-Luc Nancy, can easily belong to what he labels "critical art" – reads in today's theater as an essay belonging to different traditions and genres with a high degree of crossings: from theater to ideology, from prose to poetry, drama, and vice versa. Slovenian philosopher Slavoj Žižek defines the piece as one in "the line of 'overorthodox' authors (from Pascal through Kleist and Kierkegaard to Brecht's learning plays) who subvert the ruling ideology by taking it more literally than it is ready to take itself." These works produce "the uneasy, disturbing effect on the reader" that resides "in the fact that they ... disclose the hidden cards of ideology they identify with ... and render them inoperative" (Žižek 77).

This “irreducibly theatrical idea” of the singularity of the theatrical event, in which the idea arises in and through the performance, is well embodied in Horvat’s staging of Brecht’s theatrical essay. In his project created in 2008, with the permanent dance group EKG, Horvat stages Brecht with post-Brechtian logic, on the elusive line between performing and not-performing, acting and non-acting, privacy and the role, the exchange of over-identification, and alienation, which evoke a feeling of uneasiness in the spectator. Brecht’s text is not spoken, but projected on the back wall. Language, not as speech, but as writing, talks about a collective organism of execution.

In a specific post-Brechtian procedure, Horvat and the performers go beyond and away from the text itself; for example, in the scene in which Turkish dancer İlkem Ulugün wears a blood-red dress, with “revolution” written on her forearm, is escorted by other dancers, and walks on the red carpet like a fashion model until her ecstatic showing of the body and corporeality gradates into hysteria. In this way, on the one hand Horvat deconstructs, rearranges, and puts on trial Brechtian political theater, his form of essay on stage. He reaches this by a specific formal principle, which originates in Bob Wilson’s procedure of friction between two systems of representation through which the performance operates: namely, visual and audible.

In his artistic procedure, Horvat adds to Wilson’s tension or confrontation of two spaces/times of performance (which are, incidentally, very close to Brecht’s epic theater) a third, kinetic (or, rather physical) dimension. In his theatrical essay image, voice and movement are no longer in hierarchical or at least predictable relations. This non-hierarchy triggers a particular politics and singularity of performance. While following the movement material that the dancers create, one reads the translated letters of Brecht’s *Die Maßnahme* as they slide by on the projection screen. The audience is a witness to a process in which the other, quite unimaginable disposition of cultural materials produces a singularity that can nevertheless be experienced only as a process of partial accommodation to norms.

Horvat is not trying to play/enact the text, but instead literally demonstrates it with a conveyor belt of letters following one another. He is not ignoring its historical and political weight, but at the same time he transfers it from the representational into the scopic (visual) field, with text being articulated and de-articulated in a different manner. In contrast to a common manner of directing, which submits gestures and images to the text, the “running” text and the images complement and comment on each other. This creates the singularity of an open structure, which

Umberto Eco named *opera aperta*, Barthes and Kristeva “inter-text,” and Baz Kershaw “over-layering.” They oppose each other as many contrasting and incompatible sign systems of a performance, and cultural codes of performers and viewers.

In the terminology of Derek Attridge, one is witnessing singularity, alterity, and inventiveness not as a property, but as an event, “the event of singularizing which takes place in reception,” “it is produced, not given in advance; and its emergence is also the beginning of its erosion, as it brings about the cultural changes, necessary to accommodate it” (64). The director thus approaches Brecht without epistemological debates, but with a great enough wish and need to decompose the elements of the medium of the theater and then construct them back together. He does so in order to establish a “privileged area, where theater speaks as it is” (Ubersfeld 39).

The staging of *Die Maßnahme* can be thus seen as another attempt by Horvat to bind different medias, to produce a singularity of theatrical essay, which Badiou describes as “the assemblage of extremely disparate components, both material and ideal, whose only existence lies in the performance, in the act of theatrical representation” (Badiou, *Handbook* 72).

In the terminology of Jean-Luc Nancy, one could say that in his theatrical essay Horvat establishes “singular plurality,” which refuses to start with the opposition of the same and the other, arguing instead for a primacy of relation, the “in-common” and the “with.” Using the terminology of Erika Fischer-Lichte and her aesthetic of performativity, one could maintain that Horvat is interested in the emergence of performance as an “art event” in its own right, of a specific autopoietic feedback loop produced within the event of the performance that deliberately makes changes in priority from “I” (the artist, the spectator in the singular) to “we” (the performers and spectators interchanging their traditional roles). If Brecht already crossed the borders between artistic and theoretical disciplines, Horvat is persuaded that theory should become a constituent part of the performance.

## **Art as a procedure of truth**

One could also say that the theatrical essays discussed developed a specific autonomy. They detached themselves from ordinary or everyday or ideologically committed *language* through formation of a specific “counter-discourse.” Thus they negate the representative or signifying function of language. Like medieval madness (in the sense of Michel Foucault) they became a discourse that wants to return to its origins as the “truth” of the

world and deals with a specific subversive power. This subversive power lies in a singularity of the artistic event, in what Jean-Luc Nancy names a dynamic tour de force of singularity and plurality, the incarnation of the fact that there is no being without “being-with,” and that “I” does not come before “we.” They stress the fact that there is no existence without co-existence.

In addition, they achieve what Antonin Artaud (in the “First Manifesto of the Theater of Cruelty”) defined as the utopist power that a theater can obtain by presenting “everything in love, crime, war and madness.” They produce tremendous “flames“ or “luminescent suns,” as Artaud called them, which man discharges either during the course of a theatrical performance or in moments of great stress (as during a plague), and are also the same ones that he later transforms in his fantasy into symbols and then into a work of art.

In this sense, the theatrical essay can be seen as one of the possible incarnations of Artaud’s strong belief that theater can perform a specific act of embodied transgression, within which the body-becoming serves as a site for restructuring cultural belief systems.

As seen in the examples explored here, it is far from Foucault’s thought that literature can be granted the utopian role of transcending those epistemic structures that determine how people think or even that they think. They nevertheless persist in the belief that art can be interpreted as a foil to the arbitrary changes that bring about a new economy of discourse. Like a dream, or perhaps more like a medieval madness, contemporary art is characterized as a discourse that wants to return to its origins as the “truth” of the world. To quote the metaphorical and somehow prophetic style of Artaud:

It may be true that the poison of theatre, when injected in the body of society, destroys it, as St. Augustine asserted, but it does so as a plague, a revenging scourge, a redeeming epidemic when credulous ages were convinced they saw God’s hand in it, while it was nothing more than a natural law applied, where all gestures were offset by another gesture, every action by a reaction. (Artaud, *Collected Works* 20)

In the examples of the essay on stage discussed here, a performative act on stage unites singular and plural, and textual and performative culture. It produces what Alain Badiou defines with the notion of art as a procedure of truth: art that is no longer a rival to philosophy and theory because it provides material *for* philosophy; it is no longer a supplement because it carries its own self-sufficient truth. In addition, following the thoughts of Derek Attridge, it establishes a singularity of the theatrical act, a performative artwork and its occurrence as a particular kind of *event*, a

“performance.” It is a performative event in which one experiences art less as objects than as events, and as events that can be repeated over and over again and yet never seem exactly the same. It creates a singular event, the repetition of which, night after night, “does not in any sense hinder the fact that, each and every time, the performance is evental; that is, singular” (Badiou, *Handbook* 72). A singular event, in which – to use words of Jean-Luc Nancy – “what counts in art, what makes art art (and what makes humans the artists of the world, that is, those who expose the world to the world), is neither the ‘beautiful’ nor the ‘sublime’; it is neither ‘sensible manifestation’ nor the ‘putting into work of truth’. Undoubtedly, it is all this, but in another way: it is access to the scattered origin in its very scattering; it is the plural touching of the singular origin” (Nancy 14).

In this sense, a specific form named the “essay on stage” or “theatrical essay” produces what Badiou names “a generic vacillation” in *Rhapsodie pour le theatre*: “The true theater makes of each performance, each actor’s every gesture, a generic vacillation in which differences with no basis might be risked. The spectator must decide whether to expose himself to this void, and share the infinite procedure. He is called, not to pleasure ..., but to thought” (Badiou, *Rhapsodie* 91–92).

#### NOTES

<sup>1</sup> *Slovenian National Theater*, A theater performance re-invoicing the sound dimensions of political public rage. Concept, directed by: Janez Janša. Cast: Aleksandra Balmazović, Dražen Dragojević, Janez Janša, Barbara Kukovec, Matjaž Pikalo. Opening night: 28 October 2007, Stara Mestna Elektrarna – Elektro Ljubljana, Ljubljana.

<sup>2</sup> For more information see: <http://www.maska.si/sl/produkcije/scenska/program/371/sng.html> (accessed 15 February 2008)

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## Scenski esej kot singularnost in performativnost

Ključne besede: gledališče / gledališka estetika / gledališki esej / performativnost / singularnost / povratna zankas

Prispevek na podlagi izbranih primerov iz sodobnih uprizoritvenih praks spregovori o odrskem esejju kot dinamiki singularnosti in množstva, »Jaza«, ki nima nobene prioritete pred »mi«, eksistence subjekta, ki je po svojem bistvu vselej ko-eksistenca (Jean-Luc Nancy) ter performativni avtopoetični feedback zanki med izvajalci in občinstvom, dogodku-predstavi kot performativnem dejanju, ki provocira in integrira emergenco (Erika Fischer-Lichte). Avtor v njem poveže dva teoretska koncepta: Nancyjev ponovni premislek koncepta skupnosti, ki ne temelji na kakršnikoli individualni subjektivnosti, v kateri »biti« vselej pomeni »biti z«, ter estetiko performativnega Erike Fischer-Lichte, ki izhaja iz Austinovega pojma performativ ter ga vpeljuje v teorijo uprizoritvenih umetnosti. Tako ugotovi, da lahko tudi v primeru izbranih odrskih fenomenov (Armando Punzo, Vito Taufer, Matjaž Berger, Jo Fabian, Janez Janša, Sebastijan Horvat)

govorimo o posebni obliki uprizoritvenih praks kot esejistične pisave, za katero je značilno prestopanje meja med različnimi umetniškimi mediji, pri katerem prihaja do odsotnosti prioritete »jaza« (avtorja, izvajalca, gledalca) pred »mi« (izvajalcev in receptorjev, ki lahko tudi izmenjujejo svoje vloge), hkrati pa tudi do tega, da teorija postane konstitutivno okostje predstav (Miško Šuvaković). Tudi na odru in v avditoriju lahko torej pride do performativnega dejanja, združujočega singularnost in množstvo, tekstualno in performativno kulturo. Hkrati avtor pokaže, kako odrski eseji kot posebni sistemi reprezentacije proizvajajo to, kar Alain Badiou imenuje s pojmom mišljenje, ki ga ni mogoče misliti, ker v govorico zajame singularno prezenco čutnega, mišljenje torej, v katerem se vzpostavljajo singularne, umetnosti lastne resnice. Oziroma to, kar Derek Attridge ob tem, ko govori o singularnosti literature, poimenuje s pojmom pojavitev umetniškega dela kot posebne vrste »dogodka«, ne več toliko kot objektov ampak predvsem kot dogodkov in dogodkov, ki se lahko ponavljajo, ne da bi bili kadarkoli identični. Ali to, kar (prevedeno v logiko dogodkovnosti) Erika Fischer-Lichte razpozna kot neponovljivost, vsakič drugačnost in enkratnost uprizoritve.

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# Esej in narava literarnovednega diskurza

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*Raziskovanje literature je mogoče bodisi v obliki posploševanj, tipologij, klasifikacij, numeričnih pristopov itn., ali pa – zlasti tam, kjer se dotika vprašanja literarnosti – esejistično. Esejistični diskurz v literarni vedi omogoča razpiranje tistih segmentov literature, ki niso dostopni v objektivno znanstvenost naravnemu diskurzu.*

Ključne besede: literarna veda / literarna znanost / esej / singularnost / literarnost

Med najvidnejšimi teoretiki, ki so se v dvajsetem stoletju ukvarjali s problematiko eseja, sta bila tudi Georg Lukács in Theodor Adorno, avtorja, ki sta zelo podobno gledala na vlogo umetnosti kot utopičnega preseganja nespravljenosti realnosti, ki pa sta imela v mnogih pogledih precej različne nazore o literaturi. A zdi se, da ne tudi na naravo eseja, saj sta glede te pravzaprav oba, Lukács v zgodnji esejistični zbirki *Duša in forme*, Adorno pa v *Beležkah o literaturi*, predvsem v besedilu »Esej kot oblika« (v njem citira ravno Lukács ev esej o eseju), bila podobnega mnenja, da gre za najprimernejšo obliko izraza žive (humanistične) misli. Po Adornu se esej izogiba absolutnim pojmom in strogim definicijam. Ne ravna se »po pravilih igre organizirane znanosti in teorije« (Adorno 12), saj »svoje misli razvija drugače kot po diskurzivni logiki« (21). Njegova oblika je »totaliteta netotalnega« (18), za katero je značilno, da »vključi antisistematični impulz v lastni postopek« (14). Tako se na neki način približa umetnosti, vendar ni identičen z njo, temveč ostaja vmes med njo in znanostjo oziroma teorijo. Po svoji definiciji ne more do nesporne, objektivne resnice, vendar se prek negacije resnici vseeno bliža, namreč resnici predmeta, ki ga misli. Zaradi zavesti o neujemljivosti dokončne resnice, gotove vednosti, ter zaradi bližine umetnosti, ki enako kot esej temelji na izkustvu, se a priori izmika ideološkim shemam. – Po duhu zelo podobno – čeprav v izpeljavi in posameznih poudarkih nekoliko drugačno – je pojmovanje Lukácsa, ki govori o eseju kot »umetniški obliki«, »umetnini« (*Kunstform, Kunstwerk*; Lukács 5 idr.), a obenem tudi opozarja, da se od dejanske umetnosti tudi pomembno razlikuje. Esej po njegovem »stremi k resnici«, a esejist, ki išče resnico, bo »na koncu svoje poti dosegel cilj, ki ga ni iskal, življenje« (26).

To življenje je pri Lukácsu razumljeno povsem adorno, protisistemsko, »singularnostno«: »Za življenje ni nikakršnega sistema. Le posamezno eksistira v življenju. Eksistirati pomeni biti-različen [...] Resnica je le subjektivna – morda; a povsem zagotovo je subjektivnost resnica; edino, kar biva, je posamezna reč; dejanski človek je posameznik« (70–71), esej pa, podobno kot pri Adornu, najprimernejša oblika za izražanje te protisistemске posameznosti.

Lukács in Adorno sta zanimiva ne le kot dva izmed največkrat navedenih in obravnavanih teoretikov eseja v dvajsetem stoletju, temveč tudi zato, ker sta sama uporabljala to obliko za pisanje o literaturi, se pravi, za spise, ki po svoji temi sodijo na področje literarne vede. Adornovi eseji so bili in so še nepogrešljiva referenca pri razpravljanju o takih literarnovednih temah, kot so denimo vprašanja realizma, modernizma, avantgard, postmodernizma, razmerja med vsebino in obliko, diskurza, literarnega vrednotenja, ideološkosti, političnosti in angažiranosti literature, reprezentacije, »bistva« literature oziroma literarnosti, njene »odrešenjske« funkcije itn. In Lukácseva izrazito esejistično izpeljana *Teorija romana* – če med njegovimi deli omenimo le to – je eno izmed velikih »klasičnih«, kanonskih del literarne teorije, se pravi literarne vede. Vse to je dobro znano in na prvi pogled neproblematično, nesporno. Toda – ali je tako tudi zares? Ali Lukácsovi in Adornovi eseji o literaturi po današnjih merilih znanstvenosti sploh sodijo na področje literarne vede? Natančneje: ali na primer Lukácseva *Teorija romana* in Adornova *Parataksa* res pripadata diskurzu, ki nam danes velja za diskurz literarne vede oziroma literarne znanosti? Ali esej s svojim odrekanjem objektivni resnici, zavračanjem posploševanj in vztrajanjem pri posameznem, idiomatskem, singularnem, sploh lahko pripada literarnovednemu diskurzu?

Najbrž nihče ne dvomi o tem, da je esej pomembna polliterarna oblika, posebej primerna za subjektivno obarvano izražanje ugotovitev, pa tudi za »polpojmovno« izražanje življenjskih izkustev. Pojmovnosti in miselni jasnosti, koherentnosti, se ne odreka povsem, vendar svojih trditev oziroma hipotez ne postavlja s pretenzijo po univerzalni veljavnosti, po ugotavljanju dokončnih, nespremenljivih, objektivnih dejstev ali resnic, temveč bolj odprto, fleksibilno, nedogmatično. Gledano s tega zornega kota pravzaprav res zaseda nekakšen vmesni položaj med umetnostjo in strogo znanostjo. Esej je »vmes«; ni ne čisto umetnost niti ni povsem znanost. In prav zato je že a priori na mestu vprašanje, ali sploh lahko pripada literarnim študijam. Torej, ali je del tega, čemur pravimo literarna veda ali, da bo vprašanje jasnejše, literarna znanost, *Literaturwissenschaft* – se pravi, akademsko uveljavljena, znanstvena disciplina, posvečena raziskovanju literature?<sup>1</sup>

Vprašanje nikakor ni zgolj retorično, in odgovor nanj ni tako samo-umeven, preprost ali enoznačen, kot bi se lahko zdelo na prvi pogled. Na eni strani je bržkone povsem razumno domnevati, da ima velik del – verjetno kar večina – raziskovalcev s področja literarne vede Adornove *Beležke o literaturi* ali Lukácsevo *Teorijo romana* za nekaj, kar pripada tej vedi. To seveda nista izjemi; podobnih primerov je več kot dovolj. Eno od klasičnih kanonskih del primerjalne književnosti, Auerbachova *Mimezis*, je denimo prav tako pisana prej v esejističnem kot v znanstvenem slogu, a vseeno ohranja svojo tehtnost pri literarnovednem razpravljanju. Nič prav dosti drugače ni denimo s spisi predstavnikov imanentne interpretacije, novega kritištva, dekonstrukcije itn., če navedem le najizrazitejše primere. Na Slovenskem v to kategorijo nedvomno sodijo na primer slovite spremene študije k zbirki *Sto romanov*. Pripadnost vseh teh del literarni vedi oziroma znanosti se zdi res samoumevno.

Vendar je ta samoumevnost na drugi strani očitno nekakšna optična prevara. O tem se lahko prepričamo takoj, ko si predočimo resda povsem banalno, a brutalno realno okoliščino: eseji, ki so pisani v duhu Adorna in Lukácsa, torej miselno zaostrena, filozofska usmerjena, na posameznost izraza osredotočena, toda ne strogo sistematična in formalno disciplinirana besedila, brez opomb in bibliografije po pravilih in bibliografskih (na primer MLA) standardih, ki jih določajo ustrezne ustanove – naj bo to nacionalna agencija za znanost, univerzitetna habilitacijska komisija ali pa uredništvo znanstvene revije – danes vsaj »uradno« očitno niso priznana kot znanstvena besedila – ali če povem drugače – kot dela, ki pripadajo akademski znanstveni produkciji v disciplini, ki jo imenujemo literarna veda. Pri tem imamo morda kdaj občutek, da je to le domislica sodobnega birokratskega aparata, ki si tako omogoča pregledno sistemizacijo, klasifikacijo in vrednotenje znanstvenih dosežkov. V tem je gotovo delček resnice, vendar nikakor ne vsa. Problematika je precej bolj načelne narave, pa tudi starejšega datuma. Morda bi se dalo pokazati, kako njena genealogija pravzaprav izhaja še iz časov Platona in iz dvojnega diskurza o literaturi pri njem;<sup>2</sup> a raje navajam dva novejša, povsem očitna, neposredno razvidna primera. Dušan Pirjevec je leta 1968 v spisu »Uvod v vprašanje o znanstvenem raziskovanju umetnosti«, ki je pomenil nekakšen predgovor k posebni številki revije *Problemi*, v kateri so bili zbrani eseji o umetnosti priznanih umetnostnih in literarnih teoretikov, ugotovil, da so to »prispevki, ki bi jih sicer bilo mogoče uvrstiti v določena že izoblikovana strokovna področja, a ki ne morejo in tudi nočejo v priznane strokovne revije [...] Ali je to navaden diletantizem, ki se bo obletel od danes do jutri?« se sprašuje, in sklene takole: »Prispevkov te številke *Problemov* po vsem videzu ni mogoče vključiti v uveljavljeno področje znanosti o umetnosti niti jih iz

njega ni mogoče kar pregnati.« (Pirjevec 8). Pirjevec torej – in pri tem se ne razlikuje prav dosti od Adorna – umetnostno esejistiko (tej zvrsti namreč pripadajo prispevki, o katerih govori) uvršča nekam *vmes*: iz znanosti o umetnosti je ni mogoče povsem izločiti, vendar pa prav zaradi svoje esejističnosti vanjo tudi ne sodi zares (in se, kot je očitno, celo sama distancira od nje). – Moj drugi primer sodi še dlje nazaj v preteklost in je sicer anekdotične narave, a zato nič manj tehten. Ko je Lukács sklenil, da si bo skušal v Heidelbergu ustvariti akademsko kariero, mu je »njegov prijatelj in mentor Max Weber, ko je beseda nanesla na to, ali je Lukács res esejist in ne sistematičen mislec, odgovoril brez sprenevedanja: 'Odkrit bom z vami. Vaš zelo dober prijatelj Emil Lask je mnenja, da kot rojeni esejist ne boste našli zadovoljstva v sistematičnem delu in je zato za vas bolje, da se ne habilitirate. Esejist ni niti malo slabši od discipliniranega sistematičnega misleca, nemara je celo nasprotno. Vendar ne sodi na univerzo in svoja dela piše za svojo lastno odrešitev'« (*Encyclopedia of the Essay* 1953).<sup>3</sup>

Esejistiki torej z gledišča akademske sfere, institucionalne znanosti in današnjega državnega birokratskega aparata, ki finančno in posledično v dobršni meri tudi organizacijsko upravlja znanstveni pogon, ne pripada status resnega diskurza družbeno priznane vednosti, torej znanosti. Zaradi okoliščine, da dobršen del raziskovanja oziroma objavljanja raziskovalnih rezultatov na področju literarne vede vendarle še vedno poteka v obliki esejističnega pisanja, je znanstveni oziroma akademski status te discipline – vsaj z vidika današnjih akademskih, znanstvenih ter državno-birokratskih institucij – problematičen, vprašljiv, še zlasti v primerjavi z družbeno sankcioniranimi tipi vednosti, ki prevladujejo v družboslovju in naravoslovju ter na katere se opirajo, žal, tudi tiste državne institucije, ki financirajo znanstveno raziskovanje. S tega zornega kota je esejistični diskurz, ki je bil zlasti v preteklosti in je vsemu navkljub še danes (diskurz humanistike v precejšnji meri še vedno ostaja diskurz odpora) značilen za dobršen del literarne vede, neznanstven, poljuben, »impresionističen«, v skrajnih primerih celo šarlatanski.

Resnici na ljubo je treba priznati, da esejistični diskurz res ni imun na razne anomalije. Tako kakor vsako svobodo je tudi svobodo esejističnega diskurza mogoče zlorabiti, njene učinke pa je na drugi strani težko objektivno, formalizirano, numerično ovrednotiti. »Afera Sokak«,<sup>4</sup> zgovorna glede vse humanistike, ne le glede literarne vede, to na primer zelo dobro demonstrira in daje odličen argument vsem tistim, ki esejistični diskurz preganjajo s področja (literarne) znanosti. Zato seveda ne presenečajo odzivi, ki se postavljajo v bran verodostojnosti discipline z zamislimi, kako omejiti to »slabo svobodo« literarnovednega diskurza. Ena takih je na primer povsem razumen predlog Stevena Tötösyja de Zepetneka. Po njegovem

mnenju bo primerjalna književnost postala »zares znanstvena«, če bo »sprejela nekatere metode, natančnost, ponovljivost in objektivnost – naj bo to še tako vprašljivo –, značilne za naravoslovne znanosti« (Tötösy 22) (torej tiste, ki so zaradi svoje »eksaktnosti« oprane vsakršnega suma improvizacije). Tako se bo primerjalna književnost oziroma – ta posplošitev se zdi na tem mestu upravičena – literarna veda oziroma znanost nasploh znebila najbolj utemeljenih očitkov, da je neresna disciplina, ki temelji zgolj na intuicionizmu, spekulaciji in metaforičnem opisu. Posledice take zahteve so bolj ali manj očitne: v tako razumljeni literarni vedi, oziroma bolje: znanosti, za esej, za esejističen diskurz pravzaprav ni prostora. Teoretski in metodološki model zanjo Tötösy najde v »sistemskem in empiričnem pristopu k literaturi in kulturi« (23), naravnem izrazito po modelu družboslovja in naravoslovja. Podobno težnja je značilna za Siegfrieda Schmidta, ustanovitelja empirične literarne znanosti, ki prav zaradi želje po čim večji znanstvenosti s področja literarne znanosti izključuje interpretacijo kot paradigmatično esejistično obliko literarnovednega razpravljanja.

Status eseja znotraj literarne vede je torej, ne glede na navidezno samozavezanost, zlasti glede tistih določil, kot jih za esej ugotavljata Lukács in Adorno, problematičen. Seveda, tudi ta problematičnost sama ni povsem neproblematična. V mnogih pogledih je posledica menjave epistemoloških paradigem in spremenjenega pojmovanja znanosti. Diskusija o tem, kaj je znanost in kaj ne, kaj je znanstveno in kaj ne, že stoletja poteka na vse bolj dinamičnem polju med seboj prepletenih raznorodnih silnic, med katerimi so najvidnejše (spremenljivi) kulturni in zgodovinski kontekst, svetovni ali življenjski nazor, epistemološka drža, politična ideologija, interesi moči vseh oblik itn. Za Diltheyja na primer je znanstveno nekaj drugega kot za Comtea ali Taina, pa tudi nekaj drugega kot za ruske formaliste ali za Husserla, vsekakor tudi nekaj drugega kot za današnji administrativno-znanstveni pogon. V naravoslovju je diskurz znanosti drugega tipa kot tisti v družboslovju, ta pa se spet v mnogih pogledih razlikuje od tipa vednosti, ki mu lahko pripišemo status znanstvenosti v humanistiki. Vse to je seveda dobro znano in ne potrebuje podrobnejšega prikaza; omenjam le zato, ker se opazen del današnje literarne vede (nikakor pa ne vsa) iz mnogih razlogov – tudi pragmatičnih – nagiblje v smer tistih modelov znanstvenosti, ki so značilni za naravoslovje in družboslovje, ta težnja pa esej a priori potiska iz njenega območja.

Premislek o razmerju med esejem in literarno vedo pred nas torej postavlja ne le vprašanje o esejju, o njegovi identiteti, o tem, kaj je esej, temveč vsekakor tudi o literarni vedi, o tem, kaj je literarna veda oziroma znanost. Lahko bi celo rekli, da nas razpravljanje o esejju, tudi o mnogih nedvomno esejistično naravnanih razpravah, ki sestavljajo pomemben, včasih že kar

kanoniziran segment naše discipline, *nujno* vodi v premišljevanje o statusu literarne vede. Namreč: je to glede na raznolikost diskurzivnih žanrov, ki jo sestavljajo, res lahko prava znanost? Ali je v literarni vedi mogoče smiselno uporabljati metode, ki jih navaja Tötösy? Ali pa je, pač glede na to, da del literarne vede po vsem sodeč poteka v obliki esejističnega diskurza, zanj primernejša tista metoda, ki jo v zvezi z esejem propagira Adorno, ko govori o »identiteti neidentičnega«? Kakor koli obračamo, je odgovor na vprašanje o razmerju med esejem in literarnovednim diskurzom mogoč šele, ko odgovorimo na vprašanje o naravi literarnih študij; povedano drugače: o tem, kaj literarna veda sploh je.

Kot je znano, ponuja sama disciplina danes na to več odgovorov. Razlike med njimi so seštevke mnogih dejavnikov; prav gotovo pa so v dobršni meri posledica tega, kako postavimo vprašanje. Odgovor je – tega se je vselej potrebno zavedati – vsaj delno motiviran z vprašanjem. Sam predlagam, da skušamo odgovor na vprašanje o naravi oziroma statusu literarne vede videti v odvisnosti od tega, kako razumemo to, kar literarno vedo sploh vzpostavlja in jo razmejuje od drugih disciplin, kako razumemo predmet literarnovednega preučevanja, se pravi, kako razumemo literaturo. Kaj je literatura?

Tudi na to vprašanje nikakor ni mogoče odgovoriti enoznačno. Razprava o tem s krajšimi prekinitvami poteka že vsaj dve tisočletji in pol, mnenja pa so danes deljena bolj kot kdaj koli. V zadnjih desetletjih sta se glede tega izoblikovala – če zaradi preglednosti nekoliko poenostavim in navedem zgolj obe skrajnosti (čeprav precejšen, verjetno celo levji delež literarnovedne dejavnosti poteka v širokem polju med njima) – dva tabora: kontekstualistični in esencialistični. »Kontekstualisti« menijo, da je literatura *zgolj* eden izmed kulturnih diskurzov, povedano drugače, *zgolj* eden od družbenih proizvodov in učinkov, zato je predmet literarnovednega raziskovanja predvsem ta *kontekst*, ki da je zmožen pojasniti literaturo v vseh njenih razsežnostih. »Esencialisti« nasprotno menijo, da ima literatura svoje lastno bistvo, *literarnost*, da je neodvisna od konteksta in da je naloga literarne vede zato raziskovanje predvsem te specifične literature, literarnosti. Sam se iz razlogov, ki sem jih predstavil drugje,<sup>5</sup> zavzemam za eno od vmesnih možnosti razumevanja. Menim, da literatura ima svojo posebnost, specifično, *literarnost*, ki jo bistveno razlikuje od vseh drugih »kulturnih diskurzov«; obenem pa sem prepričan, da literatura ni abstraktna monada, izolirana od zgodovinskosti in družbenosti, torej od prostora in časa, temveč je vselej vpeta v množico kontekstov. Iz takega razumevanja literature potem logično sledi, kaj naj bi bilo predmet preučevanja literarne vede. Na eni strani raziskovanje konteksta, torej področje, kjer se literarna veda pogosto stika z drugimi disciplinami – ki prav tako, le da s



svojega zornega kota, preučujejo ta kontekst – in lahko pri tem uporabljajo svoje lastne metode, ki jih je razvila sama, lahko pa jih deloma ali v celoti prevzema iz teh drugih znanosti; na drugi strani preučevanje *literarnosti*, to je instance, ki ni v ospredju zanimanja drugih disciplin (čeprav se nekateri, na primer jezikoslovci, prav tako s svojega zornega kota z njo lahko ukvarjajo) in je posebni, specifični predmet prav literarne vede. Ravno pri raziskovanju te, za literarno vedo posebej pomembne, specifične teme, v ospredje prodre vprašanje esejiističnega diskurza in s tem posledično tudi narave znanstvenosti literarne vede.

Pr eden osvetlim to vprašanje, bi rad gornjo dvodelitev polja zanimanja literarne vede in metodološke posledice, ki jih ima za to disciplino, spet potrdil z dvema primeroma, slovenskim in »svetovnim«. Dušan Pirjevec razume literaturo kot bivajoče, ki mu pripadata dva modusa biti. Literatura je *mimesis*, torej posnemanje oziroma – če uporabim pojem, ki je v zadnjih desetletjih bolj v obtoku – reprezentacija, in obenem *poiesis*, privajanje ne-bivajočega v bivanje, kot to heideggerjansko formulira Pirjevec. Literatura v svoji posnemovalski razsežnosti, kot *mimesis*, je po Pirjevcu predmet znanstvene analize (skratka, tega, kar literarna veda običajno počne, ko se ukvarja z razvrščanjem literarnih besedil v skladu z literarno periodizacijskimi modeli ali literarno teoretskimi klasifikacijami ipd.; sem vsekakor sodi tudi levji delež »kontekstualističnih« obravnjav). *Mimesis* pomeni nujno, vendar samo na sebi neumetniško podstat, podlago literature. Literatura kot umetnost se daje šele v razsežnosti *poiesis*, vendar se kot taka ne razkriva znanosti o literaturi, temveč drugačni vrsti diskurza, namreč »mišljenju biti«, ki je, spet s Heideggrovimi besedami, »mišljenje in pesnjenje«, *Denken und Dichten*. Ta drugi diskurz, če ga napnemo na bipolarno tipologijo znanstveno-esejiistično, pravzaprav pripada področju esejistike.<sup>6</sup>

Moj drugi primer je Derrida. Tudi po njegovem mnenju literaturo zaznamuje neka dvojnost: na eni strani je »literarno delo vselej singularno in je zanimivo le s tega zornega kota« (Derrida 67); vendar pa

*na drugi strani* ne glede na to, da *singularizacija* vselej obstaja, absolutna singularnost nikoli ni dana kot dejstvo [...] Da bi postala berljiva, mora biti *razločena*, mora *deležiti* in *pripadati*. Tedaj je pač razločena in *udeležena* pri žanru, tipu, kontekstu, pomenu, pojmovni splošnosti pomena itn. [...] Rekel bi, da je 'najboljše' branje v tem, da se *predamo* najbolj idiomatskim vidikom dela, obenem pa *upoštevamo* tudi zgodovinski kontekst, to, kar si delo *deli* [...], kar pripada žanru in tipu ... (Derrida 68)

Če zdaj povzamem misli obeh avtorjev in sklepe, ki izhajajo iz njih: literatura je predmet preiščevanja in raziskovanja z dveh vidikov: kot *reprezentacija* in kot *singularnost*. Kot reprezentacija je pravzaprav objekt znanstvenega diskurza, bodisi diskurza literarnih znanosti ali katerih dru-

gih. S singularnostjo pa je drugače. »Singularnost označuje specifični način obstoja besedila ali dela, to pa tako, da poudarja njegovo upiranje temu, da bi ga bilo mogoče opisati s splošnimi kategorijami ali pojmi« (Clark 2, če med mnogimi podobnimi definicijami navedem zgolj eno), kakršni so značilni za znanstveni diskurz.

Tako razumevanje ponuja eno od možnih izhodišč za opredelitev razmerja med esejem in naravo literarnovednega diskurza. Povedano povsem preprosto: literarna veda (oziroma: literarna znanost) z različnimi znanstvenimi metodami – bodisi da jih je razvila sama ali prevzela od drugih disciplin – raziskuje tisto, kar v literarnem delu *ni* singularno. To, kar ni singularno, je mogoče zajeti s takimi ali drugačnimi posplošitvami (dve taki sta na primer, če ponovimo za Derridajem, žanr ali tip), torej z »znanstvenim« diskurzom. Na drugi strani pa se singularnost literature – tako po Pirjevčevem kot po Derridajevem mnenju – izmika posploševanjem. Z besedami Mauricea Blanchota: »Bistvo literature je ravno v tem, da se izmika vsakršni bistveni določitvi, vsakršni trditvi, ki jo stabilizira ali jasno določa; nikoli ni preprosto že tu, vselej jo je potrebno znova odkriti ali iznajti« (nav. v Zalloua 16). Ali z besedami Johna Kertzerja:

Čeprav utegne narediti specifičnost literarnega dela pri prvem branju na nas močan vtis, jo je težko definirati, saj imajo vsi načini definiranja, ki so nam na voljo, sprevrženi učinek, da delo oropajo njegove posebnosti. Razlage neizogibno posplošujejo. Ne glede na to, kako delo razlagamo: s pomočjo kategoriziranja, analogije, paradigme, funkcije, vpliva ali genealogije; v vsakem primeru je proces razumevanja kontekstualen in sistematski. Je relacijski, medtem ko je specifičnost tisto, kar je pred vsako relacijo in vstopa vanjo šele pozneje. (Kertzer 209)

Zato so na primer vsi poskusi definiranja *literarnosti* (denimo v ruskem formalizmu) neizogibno slej ko prej obsojeni na neuspeh. Opisljivi so kvečjemu *učinki* literarnosti; ona sama pa – tako kakor na primer *črne* luknje, še en značilni pojav singularnosti<sup>7</sup> – niso. Kaže, da je edini možni način, kako se diskurzivno vsaj približati tej specifikki, tisti, ki ga uporablja denimo Blanchot, ko opisuje »smisel literarnega besedila kot horizont, ki se ga lahko edino dotaknemo, a ga nikoli ne moremo zajeti. In bralcu je, tako kot ljubimcu, po vsem sodeč usojeno deliti to poetsko zadrego izmikajoče se intimnosti, da se dotika, ne da bi kdaj koli zajel to, kar ga dražeče mami in nenehno vabi analizo, a le zato, da bi mu vselej znova preprečilo razumevanje« (nav. po Egerer 158).

Zlahka prepoznamo, da tu ne gre za znanstveni diskurz, temveč za esejistični. V skladu z »zakonom singularnega«, prikazanem ne le v prej navedenih ugotovitvah, temveč tudi v definicijah mnogih drugih teoretikov in filozofov, je mogoče singularnost literature opisovati le v diskurzu, ki

ne posplošuje, ne kategorizira, si ne prizadeva za »eksaktne« definicije, temveč skuša evocirati zgolj bližino, slutnjo – ki se ji moramo, kot pravi Derrida, *predati* –, da obstaja nekaj, česar se »lahko edino dotaknemo, a [te]ga nikoli ne moremo zajeti«. Skratka: približati se ji je mogoče le z esejističnim diskurzom.

Sklep te razprave je očiten. Njeno izhodiščno vprašanje je bilo, ali esej sodi v območje literarne vede (oziroma znanosti) ali ne. Kot sem skušal pokazati, je diskurz, za katerega se zdi, da je v literarni vedi, ki si prizadeva biti resna znanstvena oziroma akademska disciplina, predvsem pa tudi v vseh institucijah znanstvenega pogona, v zadnjih dveh desetletjih (znova) najbolj v čisljih, v mnogih pogledih nasproten esejističnemu. Vendar pa si ne morem zamišljati, da bi bila znotraj literarnega sistema kaka taka domena, ki je ne bi bilo vredno ali potrebno raziskovati oziroma »procesirati« v literarnovednem pogonu, še zlasti, če je ta domena tisto, kar dela literaturo posebno, edinstveno: torej njena singularnost.<sup>8</sup> Glede na to, da je esej po vsem sodeč najprimernejša oblika opisnega približevanja tovrstnim pojavom, se zdi precej samoumevno, da mu na vseh ravneh, tudi institucionalnih, priznamo nujno pripadnost literarni vedi. Dopolnjuje namreč tisto vrsto literarnovednega diskurza, ki ga nekateri sodobni pristopi imenujejo edino znanstvenega. Po mojem mnenju ni v tem, na prvi pogled morda za marsikoga nenavadnem partnerstvu prav nič nenaravnega. Narava vednosti v humanistiki je pač drugačna kot v družboslovju in naravoslovju (že Gadamer je v *Resnici in metodi* pokazal, kako veliko vlogo v humanistiki igra *izkuševstvo*, torej tisto, kar med drugim posreduje prav esejistični diskurz) in tudi literarna veda mora iskati taka razpravna orodja, ki ji bodo najbolj v pomoč pri raziskovanju njenega lastnega, specifičnega predmeta. Mednje pa zaradi svojih posebnih, nenadomestljivih lastnosti vsekakor sodi esej, ki na širokem polju literarne vede zlahka soobstaja z drugimi oblikami bolj »znanstvenega« diskurza.

## OPOMBE

<sup>1</sup> Drobna terminološka opomba. Izraze »literarna veda«, »literarna znanost«, »literarne študije« uporabljam – v skladu z najsplošnejšo, a ne nujno tudi najnatančnejšo rabo – sinonimno. Vendar bi se seveda tudi zanje dalo pokazati, da *nomen est omen*. Pred desetletji je na Slovenskem potekala živahna polemika o najprimernejši oznaki za literarne študije nasploh, ki je nihala med možnostma »literarna veda« in »literarna znanost«. Med obema je namreč nemara vendarle več kot le slogovna razlika. Čeprav sta izraza »znanost« in »veda« pravzaprav v precejšnji meri sinonimna, pa naš jezikovni čut, pogojen z njuno konkretno rabo, zgodovino, spremenljivimi kulturnimi in epistemološkimi okoliščinami »znanost« postavlja nekoliko bolj v smer »trdih«, »objektivnih«, »empiričnih« znanosti, na primer matematično-naravoslovnih, »vedo« pa tistih malo manj strogih, denimo humanističnih. Verjetno zato je nazadnje prevladal izraz »literarna veda«, prav gotovo zato pa se v posameznih primerih, kadar gre za metodološko približevanje naravoslovju ali družboslovju, uveljavlja

izraz »znanost«, na primer »empirična literarna znanost«. – Podobna, čeprav ne povsem identična, so razmerja v angleški terminologiji (ki je, žal, v sodobni literarni vedi povsem prevladala). Izrazi »literary studies«, »literary criticism« in »literary science« ali »science of literature« so načeloma sicer sinonimni, vendar pristopi, ki poudarjajo znanstveno eksaktnost in disciplino, sorodni naravoslovju, pogosto dajejo prednost zadnjima dvema izrazoma, medtem ko ima izraz »literary criticism« precej močne konotacije, vezane na angleško šolo »impresionistične«, se pravi, esejistične literarne vede s konca devetnajstega in prve polovice dvajsetega stoletja. Kako širok pomenski razpon – od izrazito esejističnega do pretežno »objektivnega« razpravljanja – ima ta pojem, lepo demonstrira njegova klasifikacija v Abrahamsovem *Slovarju literarnih pojmov*, kjer se deli v te smeri: theoretical criticism, practical or applied criticism, impresionistic criticism, judicial criticism, nato pa še na te tipe: mimetic criticism, pragmatic criticism, expressive criticism, objective criticism. – Tale razprava terminološkega vozla ne bo poskušala razplesti, saj so dosedanji tovrstni poskusi prinesli premajhen izpljen. V tem primeru (ne pa tudi kar počez) se pridružuje Goethejevemu mnenju, izraženem (v prevodu Boža Voduška) v *Faustu*: »Samo občutek, to je vse; ime je odmev in dim.«

<sup>2</sup> Primerjaj o tem odlično razpravo Alena Širca, navedeno v seznamu literature.

<sup>3</sup> Adorno v svojem eseju o eseju – seveda z neodobravanjem – opaža isto: »Še danes je pohvala *écrivain* za tistega, ki si jo prisluži, dovolj, da ga zadržijo zunaj akademskih krogov« (7).

<sup>4</sup> Prim. prikaz v Juvan 46.

<sup>5</sup> V knjigi *Primerjalna književnost na prelomu tisočletja*.

<sup>6</sup> S filozofskega, zlasti heideggerjanskega vidika, je to seveda nedopustna poenostavitev.

<sup>7</sup> Literarno singularnost primerja s singularnostjo črnih lukenj Hillis-Miller (npr. v knjigi *Black holes*).

<sup>8</sup> Tu seveda nikakor ne gre le za razmeroma »tehnično« literarnoteoretsko vprašanje o literarnosti, temveč tudi za široko polje »kontekstualističnih« raziskav, ki kažejo, kako je literatura umeščena v tak ali drugačen kontekst *s svojo specifično* oziroma *s svojo singularnostjo*.

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## The Essay and the Nature of Discourse in Literary Criticism

Key words: literary criticism / literary science / essay / singularity / literariness

Lukács and Adorno were both theoreticians and practitioners of the essay. They understood the essay as a genre halfway between art and the “objectivizing” disciplines. However, can texts that are wittily composed, often philosophically oriented, without strict systematization and, above all, written without footnotes, references, or a works-cited section (following MLA guidelines) and appertaining to literary studies be understood as academic or scholarly? They apparently do not fulfill the requirements of scholarship, not only according to bibliographic standards or the strict criteria of national scholarly bodies, but also according to rules in force in scholarly periodicals. The author examines this issue in line with his understanding of the scope and subject matter of literary studies. In his opinion, this is twofold: the study of literature as representation and as singularity. As representation, literature is accessible to scholarly research, whether the discipline in question is literary studies or any other. As singularity, however, it does not appertain to the same domain. “Singularity names the specific being of a text or work, inflected so as to underline its resistance to being described in general categories or concepts” (Clark, *The Poetics of Singularity* 2), which are characteristic of scholarly discourse. With this in mind, the author concludes that – although in many respects the discourse that is desirable and approved of in contemporary literary studies as a serious, academic, scholarly discipline seems to be at odds with the discourse typical of essays – the essay supplements scholarly discourse particularly in addressing those topics that are inaccessible to strictly organized, systematic research, but represent the essential part of the “phenomenon” of literature; namely, its uniqueness and singularity.

Maj 2010

UDK 821.163.6.09Kosovel S.

Janez Vrečko: The Formation of Kosovel's Constructivism: A Conflict between Composition and Construction

This paper analyzes the dispute between Kosovel and Černigoj, which developed from the disagreement between Kandinsky and the constructivists at INHUK, which was then transferred to the dispute between Kandinsky and Moholy-Nagy at the Bauhaus school, and from here to Kosovel, following Černigoj's arrival in Ljubljana. The concepts of composition and construction are used to elucidate Černigoj's Ljubljana exhibit and the Trieste Constructivist Ambient, which Kosovel conceptually outlined in his poem "Kalejdoskop" (The Kaleidoscope) as early as 1924 and 1925 and formulated with the syntagm "metaphysical materialism." The dispute between suprematism and constructivism, which had already been resolved by Lissitzky, also experienced a resolution in Trieste in 1927 through Stepančič's mobiles and Malevich's White Square hung beneath the ceiling of the Ambient. This represented contact with the roots of constructivism, which Kosovel had achieved with his consonants "x, y, z" and so on as early as 1924 and 1925. In this sense, the Trieste Constructivist Ambient also paid homage to Kosovel, a deceased poet and theoretician, because through his consonants he achieved in literature what Černigoj could not in the fine arts.

UDK 82.091:115

Tina Bilban: Torn and Reversed Time on the Pages of the Contemporary Novel

This article examines the problem of time in the novels *Unikat* (Unique Item) by Milorad Pavić and *Time's Arrow* by Martin Amis. In both of them, the examination of time determines not only the elements of the content, but the outer structure of the novels as well. Literary storytelling is essentially based on elements from contemporary physical and philosophical theories.

UDK 82.0:1

Alen Širca: Foucault's Views on Literature

This paper thematizes Foucault's reflections on literature within the context of his thought, which is divided into four stages. The basic finding is that in his archaeological and genealogical stage (i.e., from the end of the 1960s onwards), Foucault no longer perceived literature as a place of emancipation and transgression, but merely as a discretionary aspect of authoritative power, or an ideological apparatus of the "bourgeoisie."

UDK 82.0-4

Peter V. Zima: Esej in esejizem med modernizmom in postmodernizmom

Prispevek obravnava vprašanje, v kolikšni meri je esej, ki ga umeščamo med filozofijo in literaturo, nesistemski žanr, odprt individualnim izkušnjam in usmerjen k določnemu pojavu. Čeprav je ta odprtost skupna tako modernistični kot postmodernistični esejistiki, razvoj literature in filozofije kaže, da je imel modernistični esej (od Musila do Adorna) utopično dimenzijo, ki v postmodernističnem esejju (od Robbe-Grilleta do Fowlesa) izgine in jo nadomesti enodimenzionalen pogled na družbo. Vprašanje alternativnega družbenega reda se v postmodernistični esejistiki ne pojavlja več.

UDK 82.0-4

Remo Ceserani: Esejistični slog Walterja Benjamina

Članek obravnava tipični esejistični stil Walterja Benjamina. Za vse žanre njegovega pisanja je značilna alegoričnost in surrealističnost s skritimi ter zasebnimi (in esejističnimi) pomeni, a tudi s preroško halucinatorično napetostjo.

UDK 111.852

Marko Uršič: Kdo govori v Montaignevih *Esejih*?

V članku so obravnavana tri vprašanja singularnosti v Montaignevih *Esejih*: 1. Ali esejistični jezik omogoča izražanje individualnosti avtorja? 2. Je res mogoče pisati o sebi? 3. Kdo je esejski subjekt? Kot bomo videli, so odgovori precej kompleksni ...

UDK 821.133.1.09-4Montaigne

Varja Balžalorsky: The Singularity of the "foolish attempt"

This article tackles the issue of Montaigne's double project – self-study and self-representation – from the perspective of selected historical and contemporary theories of the subject's self-consciousness and constitution in discourse with a special emphasis on literary discourse.

UDK 82.0-4:1

Ignacija J. Fridl: The Essay from the Perspective of Ancient Philosophy

This article proceeds from Montaigne's premise on the essay as a reflection of the Self. From today's perspective, it should be understood in the sense of focusing on the Self as the subject. However, if Montaigne's idea and Renaissance thought are interpreted from the historically reverse direction, from the perspective of the ancient human conception, especially from the philosophical viewpoint inherited from Socrates via Plato, then the perspective on the essay as a reflection of the Self can be understood such that the Self in the essay form determines the measure and limit of one's own existence through reflection on broader matters. From this perspective, the essay in the proper sense of the word cannot merely be a historical genre, but must be understood in the sense of "lived literature."

UDK 821.162.3.09-4«19»

Ivo Pospíšil: Singularnost in češki medvojni esej med tokovi: F. X. Šalda – Karel Čapek – Jaroslav Durych

Avtor prispevka primerja češke medvojne eseje v 20-ih in 30-ih letih na primeru treh slavnih pisateljev in kritikov – Františka Xaverja Šalde, Karla Čapka in Jaroslava Durycha. Analizira specifične tematske in formalne značilnosti češkega eseja in njegovo tipologijo.

UDK 821.511.141.09Mikszáth K.

Péter Hajdu: Narativni in metaforični diskurz v biografskih esejih

Članek analizira odnos med narativnim in retoričnim oblikovanjem biografskih esejev Kálmána Mikszátha (1847–1910). Literarnost avtorjevega pisanja je opisana s pomočjo različnih tropov, nekateri primeri pa so analizirani z vidika implicitne ideologije.

UDK 82.091

821.162.3.09

821.162.4.09

Mária Bátorová: Osební etos v literaturi slovaških in čeških disidentov: esej kot oblika izražanja aktivne osebnosti

Članek obravnava besedila izbranih avtorjev iz časa konsolidacije Češkoslovaške socialistične republike. V prvem delu je na kratko orisan družbenozgodovinski kontekst disidentskega pisanja.

UDK 82.0-4

Marko Juvan: The Essay and Interdiscursivity: Knowledge between Singularity and *sensus communis*

Exchanges between various areas of knowledge are typical of the transversal discourses in literature and journalism. As a genre, the essay excels in its interdiscursivity, which is inscribed in the text in the form of singularity. However, the singular configuration of sense, which in the essay embodies Kant's notion of the "aesthetic idea" and transcends the existing cultural codes and knowledge systems from which it generally proceeds, would not be possible without a *sensus communis* – that is, a concept of common place, or referring to common sense or Kant's *Gemeinsinn*, which is the prerequisite for aesthetic judgment. This bipolarity of the essay is elucidated from the perspective of the social history of knowledge and within the context of this genre's relationship to the press, books, and newspapers.

UDK 82.0-4

Bart Keunen: »Profana iluminacija« skozi esejistično pisanje in mišljenje. Benjamin in Bahtin o vrednosti vsakdanje izkušnje

Prispevek obravnava kontrast med praznim konceptom izkušnje, ki so ga vpeljali razsvetljenski misleci, in »esejističnim« načinom unovčevanja izkušnje, ki sega od Erasmosa do Pereca. Razprava povezuje Lefebvrovo teorijo vsakdanjosti z Benjaminovim konceptom »iluminacije« in Bahtinovim idealom »prozaika«.



UDK 82.0-4

Iztok Osojnik: Esej in singularnost

Esej kot žanr označuje tisto obliko lingvistične (ontološke) prakse, ki generira svet tak, kot je. Nikoli ne more nastati z reportažo (reprezentacijo), temveč zgolj kot neposredno lingvistično pričevanje, kot dogodek. Esej je gola singularnost, diskurz, ki ni cenzuriran (tj. prekrit) z nihilističnim horizontom moči in zlorab. Teoretske ugotovitve iz tega članka uporabim za konkretno kritično analizo eseja o slovenski umetnosti v drugem tisočletju.

UDK 792.02:82.0-4

Tomaz Toporišič: Scenski esej kot singularnost in performativnost

Prispevek podrobneje obravnava fenomen "gledališkega" eseja ali eseja na odru kot primera dinamične mojstrovine singularnosti in pluralnosti (Jean-Luc Nancy) in performativne avtopoetske povratne zanke (Erica Fischer-Lichte) med igralci in gledalci. Prispevek uporablja koncepte singularne pluralnosti in estetske performativnosti za izbrane odrske fenomene.

UDK 82.0-4

Tomo Virk: The Essay and the Nature of Discourse in Literary Criticism

The study of literature may take place in the form of generalizations, typologies, classifications, numerical approaches, and so on, or – especially when this concerns issues of literariness – in the form of essays. The discourse characteristic of essays in literary studies opens up those segments of literature that are not accessible to discourse that is oriented towards "objectivizing" disciplines.

## NAVODILA ZA AVTORJE

*Primerjalna književnost* objavlja izvirne članke s področja primerjalne književnosti, literarne teorije, metodologije literarne vede, literarne estetike in drugih strok, ki obravnavajo literaturo in njene kontekste. Zaželeni so tudi meddisciplinarni pristopi. Revija objavlja prispevke v slovenščini, izjemoma tudi v drugih jezikih. Vsi članki so recenzirani.

Članke oddajte po elektronski pošti (darja.pavlic@uni-mb.si), obenem dva iztisa pošljite na naslov: Revija Primerjalna književnost, Filozofska fakulteta, Aškerčeva 2, 1000 Ljubljana, Slovenija.

Razprave ne presegajo 25 strani (50.000 znakov), drugi prispevki – poročila, recenzije ipd. – imajo največ 10 strani (20.000 znakov). Razprave imajo sinopsis (do 300 znakov) in ključne besede (5-8) v slovenščini in angleščini ter daljši povzetek (do 2.000 znakov) v slovenščini ali tujem jeziku.

Tekoče oštevilčene opombe so za glavnim besedilom. Vanje ne vključujemo bibliografskih navedb. Citati v besedilu so označeni z narekovaji, izpusti iz njih in prilagoditve pa z oglatimi oklepaji. Daljši citati (več kot 5 vrst) so izloženi v samostojne odstavke. Vir citata je označen v oklepaju na koncu citata.

Kadar avtorja citata navedemo v sobesedilu, v oklepaju na koncu citata zapišemo samo strani: (42–48).

Kadar je avtor citata imenovan v oklepaju, med avtorjem in stranjo ni ločila: (Pirjevec 42–48).

Več enot istega avtorja označimo s skrajšanim naslovom v oklepaju: (Pirjevec, *Strukturalna* 42–48).

V bibliografiji na koncu članka so podatki izpisani po standardih MLA:

– za samostojne knjižne izdaje (monografije, zbornike):

Pirjevec, Dušan. *Strukturalna poetika*. Ljubljana: Državna založba Slovenije, 1981. (Literarni leksikon 12).

– za članke v periodičnih publikacijah:

Kos, Janko. "Novi pogledi na tipologijo pripovedovalca.« *Primerjalna književnost* 21.1 (1998): 1–20.

– za prispevke v zbornikih:

Novak, Boris A. "Odmevi trubadurskega kulta ljubezni pri Prešernu.« *France Prešeren – kultura – Evropa*. Ur. Jože Faganel in Darko Dolinar. Ljubljana: Založba ZRC, 2002. 15–47.

## GUIDELINES FOR AUTHORS

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- Articles in periodicals:  
Kos, Janko. "Novi pogledi na tipologijo pripovedovalca." *Primerjalna književnost* 21.1 (1998): 1–20.
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Novak, Boris A. "Odmevi trubadurskega kulta ljubezni pri Prešernu." *France Prešeren – kultura – Evropa*. Eds. Jože Faganel and Darko Dolinar. Ljubljana: Založba ZRC, 2002. 15–47.