Anthropos

Revija za filozofijo in psihologijo

Journal of Philosophy & Psychology

LETO · YEAR 2024
LETNIK · VOLUME 56
ŠTEVILKA · NUMBER 1
ISSN 0587-5161
E-ISSN 2630-4082

56

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Revija za filozofijo in psihologijo
Journal of Philosophy & Psychology

ISSN 0587-5161 | E-ISSN 2630-4082
https://hippocampus.si/issn/2630-4082

Mednarodni indeksi
Indexing and Abstracting
PsycInfo | ErihPlus

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Uredništvo ***Editorial Office***
UP Pedagoška fakulteta, Cankarjeva 5, SI-6000 Koper

Založba Univerze na Primorskem
University of Primorska Press
Titov trg 4, SI-6000 Koper
https://hippocampus.si

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Letna naročnina · 20 EUR

Revijo *Anthropos* izdajata Slovensko filozofsko društvo in Društvo psihologov Slovenije, izhaja s podporo Javne agencije za znanstvenoraziskovalno in inovacijsko dejavnost Republike Slovenije in Pedagoške fakultete Univerze na Primorskem.

Anthropos is published by the Slovenian Philosophical Society and Slovenian Psychologists' Association with the support of the Slovene Research and Innovation Agency and University of Primorska, Faculty of Education.

Anthropos 56 (1) | ISSN 0587-5161 | E-ISSN 2630-4082

Kazalo *Contents*

https://doi.org/10.26493/2630-4082.56_1

Miscellanea

*Ta številka je izšla z delno podporo raziskovalnega projekta
Protesti, umetniške prakse in kultura spomina
v post-jugoslovanskem kontekstu (ARIS J6-3144)*

Anthropos 56 (1): 5–12 | ISSN 0587-5161 | E-ISSN 2630-4082

Rememorizing Memories

Ksenija Vidmar Horvat
University of Ljubljana, Slovenia
ksenija.vidmarhorvat@ff.uni-lj.si

This edited volume presents a diverse body of work dealing with cultural legacies of socialism. It covers a wide range of topics (from communist comics to partisan art, the avantgarde movement and children's literature, etc.) which could be, more or less comfortably, inserted into the field of (post-socialist) memory studies. Post-socialist memory studies, a fresh branch of the well-situated memory studies (Assman and Czaplicka 1995), itself has been an assorted conglomerate of (mainly) case studies of how, in different regions of the former socialist Eastern Europe, communities in transition towards Western-style democracy have remembered their immediate past (Berdahl 2010; Bernhard and Kubik 2014; Mihelj 2016). The quest for the memory itself has played a critical role in this intellectual endeavour. Early on, Todor Kuljić (2017), a leading scholar in the ex-Yugoslav region, warned how the culture of remembrance would become a prime stage on which the emerging ideologies of nationalism and historic revisionism would play out their scripts. Considering the growing atmosphere of 'anti-fascism as a useless past' in the post-Yugoslav space, as Kuljić observantly put it, as well as a present day pan-European culture of amnesia as concerns the lessons of WWII, the early fears have proved to be far from a futuristic paranoia. In the last decade, they have formed the backbone of a new political condition in Europe, and, with the rise of far-right authoritarian leaders, across the globe. This new reality calls for a renewed chapter in dealing with the memories on socialism. Indeed, we are in dire need of critically rethinking – and intellectually rememorizing – the (post)socialist memory itself. This collection of essays provides some signals as how to embark on this task.

The initial interest for the socialist world which followed the fall of the Berlin wall focused predominantly on popular sentiments and daily life (Svašek 2006). Marginal, sometimes bizarre cultural practices of living behind the 'Iron Curtain,' as in Drakulić's *How We Survived Communism and Even Laughed* (1992), debunked the monolithic view of the socialist bloc; in some cases, as in *Cinderella Goes to Market,* the stereotypes

https://doi.org/10.26493/2630-4082.56.5-12

persisted (Einhorn 1993). A rather brief period of this investigative engagement, with its focus on living with thrift but also on practices of resistance, coloured the previously grey zones of passivity and subjugation with brushes of vitality and agency (Reid and Crowley 2000). Avantgarde art movements in socialism formed an additional provocative insight into a West-East critical dialogue during the Cold war era (Bryzgel 2017). For a moment, it seemed that post-socialist studies could become a new cross-disciplinary global paradigm (Forrester, Zaborowska, and Gapova 2004), open to combining its own research agenda with post-colonial studies, critical feminist theory, cultural studies and cosmopolitan/multicultural topics (Jansen 2008; Spasić 2011; Vidmar Horvat 2012).

Soon, a new strand of research followed, enmeshed in the investigation of collective yearning for the past. After the initial widespread euphoria collapsed into passages of disappointments, topics of nostalgia prevailed. Post-communist nostalgia (Todorova and Gille 2010), Yugonostalgia (Volčič 2007; Velikonja 2009), Titostalgia (Velikonja 2008), and Ostalgia (Boyer 2006; 2010) took the centre-stage of both popular and scholarly attention. Socialism, through this revisit, emerged as a new promised terrain, worthy to be re-claimed, re-imagined, refashioned: indeed, re-memorized. It appeared, though, that the appeal of the socialist past was limited to the region. While the West turned towards its own imagined past, an imaginary land of retrotopia (Bauman 2017), in the East, we settled for a nostalgic constellation. The retrotopian citizen has dreamt of a nationalist fantasy of ethno-racial purity in a deglobalized world of small-town communities. Hoping to regain a sense of dignity and agency (Pilbrow 2010), the post-socialist nostalgic citizen begins to look back to past promises of social justice and solidarity.

This, of course, is a caricature reading of the emotional landscape which crystalized in both the West and the East once the fantasy of the end of history lost its persuasive political force. Regardless, it is a testimony of an impasse where the anxiety-ridden struggle for the future is replaced by regression into the idealization of the past.

In this sense, if judged merely by their commitment to revisit socialism, the contributions presented here could be read as yet another exercise to provide content to post-socialist studies in order to respond to the demand for alternatives. They explore, charged with the individual intellectual curiosity of the next generation, cases of cultural creativity and artistic sabotages of the socialist political regime of the previous generation. Importantly, in the second aspect, they depart from the main epis-

temic centre of post-socialist memory studies, namely its ambition to un- and re-cover aspects of past life to assure a more accurate picture of the post-WWII history of the region. To the contrary, the binding thread of the papers in this bloc is that they are neither concerned with the history as such, nor are they explicitly regional.

To begin with the latter, a tangible predicament of the post-socialist memory has been that it appeared to be a region-specific research topic. Involuntarily, this reiterated the Cold War academic legacy of *area studies*. A product of the 1950s, area studies compartmentalized the global geopolitical map with the ambition to make the world ideologically governable when isolated in capsules of regional identities. The socialist bloc presented one such capsule, 'frozen' in its own political histories and cultural idiosyncrasies. Upon the 'defrosting' decade of the 1990s, the narrative of 'catching up' to the West was born, suggesting an evolutionary view of global history whereby the East needed to let go of its own pathologies, developed during the socialist experiment (Štiks and Horvat 2015; Vidmar Horvat 2020). Retroactively, this view affirmed a perspective of post-WWII Europe, divided into two halves with no cross-border communication nor critical exchange of ideas.

The West and the East of the Cold War era, as Slovene writer Marjan Rožanc indicated soon after the collapse of the Berlin wall, both strived to define the type of modernity which would emancipate the individual. The research in this volume confirms the point. In their analyses of comics, Cvar and Žbontar (2024), Mudry (2024), and Komel (2024) uncover an intriguing terrain of a hidden political conversation performed by comic artists in either visual appropriation of Western cultural codes (comic books about Slyboots, *Muriel*) or by direct translation of the comic book into a new ideological context (*Alan Ford*). Importing Western references into the socialist cultural text allowed the artists to conduct a secretive debate with their respective socialist regimes. Considering his complicated relation with the socialist project, as Cvar and Žbontar refresh the memory, Miki Muster's visual 'westernization' of his comic characters offered a subtle ground to open up as well as disturb the ruling political space. In Czechoslovakia, comic artists Saudek and Macourek, the authors of the graphic novel *Muriel,* used a similar strategy of appropriating American comics' visual references to interfere with the communist jargon and its underlying cultural politics. It was the implication of the distance from the state-authorized discourse of Western bourgeois degeneration, implicit in Saudek's visual rephrasing of the American superhero

plot (Mudry 2024). At approximately the same time, on the other side of the Yugoslav border with the West, *Alan Ford* by Luciano Secchi and Robert Raviola unravelled a satirical dialogue with capitalism. Yet, when translated for the Yugoslav publics, the same text of ridicule became a comic critique of socialism. 'How can one satire of society become such an effective ironic critique of two such different ideologies?' Komel asks (2024, 198). Through a detailed analysis of the work of the translation itself, the author argues that the perverse logic of capitalism, where the poor are exploited in favour of the rich, and the perverse logic of socialism, where the poor are exploited by themselves, in a cross-border setting, encapsulate the 'paradoxes or embodiment of class struggle itself' (p. 201).

Cross-border trafficking with cultural references allowed for the articulation of political opposition which disturbed the ideological landscape in a controlled way – and safely below the sensory system of the repressive state. In the Yugoslav translation of *Alan Ford,* it was only implicit that the comic book was a satire of socialist society, Komel writes (2024, 204) 'as if the comic book enabled an indirect satisfaction of an unconscious desire to ridicule a system that allowed none.' Unfolding under the historical contexts of the Soviet occupation, in a similar way, Saudek published a comic story 'full of scathing socio-political and ideological criticism, […] full of irony, inter-iconic and -medial citations and Western, mostly American references.' *Muriel*'s universe includes versions of a different utopian future where communism seems to have been fully realised,' Mudry (2024, 173) observes.

If one is to accept the author's point, the entanglement with Western visual culture was not about the idealization of the cultural space across the border, but a form of artistic exploitation to articulate a different utopia in the East. Tepina and Grafenauer's (2024) mapping of activist aesthetics, starting in the 1960s, corroborates the point. 'The majority of avantgarde poetics were based on the global desire to change the world and use art to establish a different system of both values and relationships,' the authors write (p. 39). Again, global aesthetic avantgarde references were mobilised to critique bourgeois cultural and sexual hypocrisies of the ruling party (Šuvaković 2007 in Vidmar Horvat 2020). In the post-socialist political constellation, the creative energies of the socialist experimentation with an alternative communist future, which unfolded via the contact with the Western iconography, have been supressed under the overarching mantle of depoliticization and amnesia. Critical poten-

tials of the evolving alternative public sphere in post-socialism have faced pop iconographic transformation into a cultural curiosity of past artistic struggles to survive amidst the socialist aesthetic regimes. Questions of how the creative art of the West and the East served each other as a reference point to carry on the dialogue with oneself, slip away from the radar of remembrance.

The cross-regional cooperation, be it deliberate or involuntary, in critiquing the two systems of political subjugation, sits uncomfortably amidst the narrative hegemony of the transitology discourse (Štiks and Horvat 2015; Vidmar Horvat 2020). It complicates the clear-cut landscape of the Cold War border and its post-socialist passage to the debordering towards the Western norm of emancipation. The same holds true when considering the historical travel of the modern Eastern European citizens from their socialist to the post-socialist constitution. The contributions by Kirn (2024), Kobolt (2024), and Tepina and Grafenauer (2024) all speak of the legacies of civic engagement which stand in sharp opposition to the moral, political and cultural space of the post-socialist neoliberal subject. With her focus on children's literary education, unfolding through practices of cultural participation and agency building, Kobolt contests the leading commemorative narrative of socialism, which relies on the stereotypical image of collectivization of the socialist youth. In literary education, Kobolt writes (2024, 118), 'promoting literary agency does not appear only as some activity useful in education processes or in spare time, but as one of the vital aspects of literary systems and also of other cultural and artistic production fields and by that also for broader cultural and social development.' By reflecting on the past modes of literary education in reference to cultural agency, she adds a fragment to the understanding of the multiplicity of aesthetic education in socialist Yugoslavia as well as illuminating the focus on participatory politics in cultural production.

Kobolt's point is reinforced by both Kirn's and Hofman's research. Kirn (2024) returns to the partisan legacy. He expands on his previous work on the partisan transformative politics of solidarity though creativity, this time focusing on anonymous cultural voices of often illiterate and/or poorly educated partisan artists. Engaged in multiple artistic practices, from theatre, drawings, poems and film scripts, the resistance fighters against fascist forces also developed a peculiar solidarity with nature and animals. Identified by Kirn as partisan ecology, this new poetics and ethics of co-habitation contributed to an evolution of political subjectiv-

ity which, Kirn proposes, could be re-integrated into present ecological struggles for global justice.

Ana Hofman's (2024) investigation of amateur cultural activities in the post-WW II socialist context of cultural pedagogical work unveils a compelling picture of democratic participation of people across a social and cultural spectrum of talent and skill, regardless of education background and professional artistic expertise. Considering the recent 'rediscovery' of the self-taught artists and indigenous art by the established museum across the globe, this socialist legacy of authenticity as concerns cultural expression, coupled with the overall project of the state-run socialist emancipation, provides an interesting entry point to confront the hegemonic boundaries of art, class and (cultural) capital.

Last but not least, Tanja Petrović (2024) and Igor Štiks (2024) observe the eclipse of socialism into the post-socialist ideological landscape. Štiks calls it hypochondria, a profoundly fearful obsession with purity and contamination, which builds on racial and ethnic cleansing of both the ethnic others, and the socialist identity which was built precisely on erasing ethnic, religious and cultural divisions. Tanja Petrović (2024, 131) returns to the post-Yugoslav comics which complicate the neat division between 'good boys,' modern, listening to rock music and having 'western' values, while 'the enemy' is homogenized, presented in a stereotypical, caricatural way as primitive, dirty, cruel and grotesque. Her analysis proposes the need for a nuanced approach to the experience of war trauma, suffer and sacrifice which cuts across the warring lines and, again, contest the purifying discourse of the post-socialist nationalism.

To conclude, the present volume provides an entry into the annals of post-socialist memory (studies) in a way which surpasses the intellectual care for the historiographic complexity of socialism. By contesting the lines of demarcation of both space and time, they serve as a potent ground to start rememorizing the memory – away from the legacies of the transitional narrative and back towards the chapters of socialist history which were concerned with the future: subversive, creative, and emancipated from both the West and the socialist East.

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Rememorising Memories of War and Transition

Anthropos 56 (1): 15–36 | ISSN 0587-5161 | E-ISSN 2630-4082

Hypochondria as Collective Syndrome? Nationalist-Conservative Hegemony in the Balkans, and How to Fight It

Igor Štiks
University of Ljubljana, Slovenia
Faculty of Media and Communications, Serbia
igor.stiks@ff.uni-lj.si

Abstract. The post-socialist and post-Yugoslav societies have undergone a profound transformation under the influence of nationalist-conservative hegemony. I use hypochondria as a heuristic term to elucidate the mobilising force of nationalist-conservative ideology, and the pervasive feelings, emotions, perceptions and actions it generates. I argue that hypochondria manifests as an anxious fear of existential threats, either internal or external to our being, and propose to analyse it as a collective syndrome. This approach allows us to examine political narratives and practices that indicate an exaggerated, paranoid anxiety rooted in perceived threats to the political community. I draw on psychoanalytic theories to describe and examine social and political symptoms such as observable shared emotions, group behaviours and collective actions. To support the main argument that hypochondria is essential for understanding nationalist-conservative hegemony, I apply Jean-François Bayard's definition of the national-conservative revolution, adapting his seven points to the post-Yugoslav context. Despite the strong grip of hypochondria on post-Yugoslav societies, I briefly present resistances that have challenged both the nationalist-conservative hegemony and the neo-liberal policies, and that offer hope for significant social and political change.

Key Words: nationalism, hypochondria, Yugoslavia, post-socialism, post-Yugoslav states

Hipohondrija kot kolektivni sindrom? Nacionalistično-konzervativna hegemonija na Balkanu in kako se z njo boriti

Povzetek. Postsocialistične in postjugoslovanske družbe so pod vplivom nacionalistično-konzervativne hegemonije doživele temeljito preobrazbo. Hipohondrijo uporabljam kot hevristični pojem za pojasnitev

https://doi.org/10.26493/2630-4082.56.15-36

mobilizacijske sile nacionalistično-konzervativne ideologije, vseprisotnih občutkov, čustev, percepcij in dejanj, ki jih le-ta ustvarja. Trdim, da se hipohondrija kaže kot tesnobni strah pred eksistencialnimi grožnjami, bodisi notranjimi bodisi zunanjimi, in predlagam, da jo analiziramo kot kolektivni sindrom. Ta pristop nam omogoča preučevanje političnih narativov in praks, ki kažejo na pretirano, paranoidno tesnobo, ki temelji na percipiranih grožnjah politični skupnosti. Pri opisovanju in analizi družbenih ter političnih simptomov, kot so opazna skupna čustva, skupinsko obnašanje in kolektivna dejanja, se opiram na psihoanalitične teorije. V podporo glavnemu argumentu, da je hipohondrija ključna za razumevanje nacionalistično-konzervativne hegemonije, uporabljam definicijo nacionalno-konzervativne revolucije Jeana-Françoisa Bayarda in prilagajam njegovih sedem točk postjugoslovanskemu kontekstu. Kljub dominaciji hipohondrije v postjugoslovanskih družbah na kratko predstavim tudi odpore proti tako nacionalistično-konzervativni hegemoniji kot tudi neoliberalnim politikam, ki dajejo upanje na pomembne družbene in politične spremembe v prihodnosti.

Ključne besede: nacionalizem, hipohondrija, Jugoslavija, postsocializem, postjugoslovanske države

In Lieu of Introduction: The Diagnosis

Over the past three decades, the post-Yugoslav societies have been profoundly shaped by the nationalist-conservative hegemony. One of its critical and yet overlooked elements, I argue in this article, is hypochondria, which I use as a heuristic term to understand the mobilising potential of nationalist-conservative ideology, widely shared feelings, emotions and perceptions as well as collective actions. I propose to analyse it as a syndrome, which *The Oxford Dictionary of English* (the one that is provided with my laptop) defines 'as groups of symptoms or signs that consistently occur together, or a condition characterized by a set of associated symptoms' (2010). It also provides another important definition for my hypothesis on hypochondria as collective syndrome; it defines it as 'a characteristic combination of opinions, emotions, or behaviour.'

In order to understand hypochondria, I will use various psychoanalytic approaches that might help us to elucidate its functioning at both individual and collective levels. Through a cluster of symptoms ranging from nationalist narratives, religious revival, ethnic conflicts, and territorial obsessions to sexual practices, I will illustrate my argument that a certain collective hypochondria has been a neglected but central and en-

during aspect of the nationalist-conservative hegemony, understood here in Gramscian terms as the enduring intellectual, ideological and cultural dominance that has underpinned the profound socio-economic transformation of the post-socialist Balkans.

Hypochondria is generally defined here as the anxious fear of something that threatens one's existence, and that can be inside but also outside oneself. By framing it as a collectively shared syndrome, I want to analyse political ideologies and narratives as well as practices that testify to the exaggerated, paranoid anxiety based on the shared perception of threats and dangers coming from within and from without the political community. The threatening *other* thus becomes constitutive of what I would call hypochondriacal ideologies such as nationalism that, coupled with religious conservativism, has come to dominate the post-socialist Balkan societies. Not only external 'enemies' but also national, religious or sexual minorities and groups, or simply 'subversive' citizens, could all be seen as dangerous, to be tolerated at best, but at worst to be expelled or annihilated for the survival of the group. Hypochondria within communities could also be observed as an exaggerated response to the 'infiltration' of ideas that might threaten the hegemonic order in a particular community. The group is thus constantly threatened from within by traitors or minorities, as well as from without by the hostile others. So not only is the possibility of *polemos,* as war with the external others, constantly on the table, but the possibility of *stasis,* or of a civil war within the group, is also a constant worry, requiring control, repression and occasional purges of undesirable people and ideas.

To further test my main argument, I will use Jean-François Bayard's definition of the national-conservative revolution and apply his seven points (2023, 5–6) to the post-Yugoslav case. I will then propose a counter-hegemonic treatment based on the resistances that have (un)successfully challenged both the nationalist-conservative and the neo-liberal hegemony. Finally, as it is customary in medical practice, I will offer a prognosis in lieu of conclusion, situating my analysis within the wider European and global framework that today confirms the spread of hypochondria as a collective syndrome with potentially disastrous consequences, as we have seen in the recent history of the Balkans.

Hypochondria as Collective Syndrome?

As noted above, I use some psychoanalytic approaches developed to explain hypochondria as an individual condition and disorder in order to

describe and examine social and political symptoms. Here I am aware of the potential risks of scaling up from the individual to the collective level. For this reason, I propose to understand hypochondria, when applied to groups, as a collective *syndrome* rather than a disorder. Syndrome is used here as a less rigid category encompassing behaviours, reactions and emotions shared by a sufficiently large number of individuals to be socially and politically relevant. I use it for descriptive and analytical purposes without pretending to establish causes or to cover all possible symptoms. In other words, I argue that the notion of hypochondria applied to the post-socialist and post-Yugoslav situation will help us to understand some enduring phenomena in this region, such as the continuing hegemony of nationalist-conservative ideology, and the constitution of a large number of political and social actors and their actions, as well as certain socio-cultural habits and shared worldviews.

I take as the reference point Freud's classic article 'On the Introduction of Narcissism' (2006; first published in 1914) in which he relates narcissism to hypochondria as a neurosis that occurs when the libido moves away from the objects in the external world and focuses on the body and its organs. Further developments in psychoanalytic theory help us to understand hypochondria and its features such as a lack of interest in the external world and other people, splitting of the body into a healthy and a sick part – what Sandor Ferenczi called 'autonarcissistic splitting' (in Stathopoulos 2017, 363) – and paranoid fears of persecution coming from outside or inside when an internal organ is seen as a persecutor.

Of particular interest for my argument is the theory of the 'paranoid-schizoid' and 'depressive' positions as developed by Melanie Klein (1975, 176–235). In the 'paranoid-schizoid' position, the child in very early infancy, through projective identification of its own libidinal and aggressive drives and omnipotent fantasies, splits external objects into 'good' and 'bad.' The 'bad' object, in turn, creates a strong fear of persecution and annihilation, as well as the anxiety of paranoia and hypochondria. The theory was later used to explain the roots of racism and hatred of different groups into which one projects the badness, while the goodness is projected into one's own idealised group. The infant will normally overcome this position and enter the 'depressive' one, where it begins to understand the others as a whole and that *good* and *bad* are part of its own self as well as of the external objects. In this position, the child should be able to deal with their own ambivalent feelings and internal conflicts, as well as with consequences of their own aggressions, which cause in-

ner grief and guilt. In order to develop more or less normally, the child should overcome this position as well. Throughout our lives, however, the paranoid-schizoid and depressive positions remain in dynamic relationship and their various aspects can be reactivated.

Racism, nationalism, and chauvinism are all based on group membership and thus on a shared worldview as well as on shared emotions of love for one's own group and fear, suspicion or even hatred of others. It is obvious here that individual hypochondriacal symptoms could be shared with others and thus influence collective behaviour such as collective rituals, mobilisation, action, and violence. Finally, we must ask ourselves why in so many nations, communities and groups do we find feelings and narratives that reflect the early paranoid-schizoid position at a collective level or in collective behaviour. Furthermore, how do certain 'targets' activate the elements of this position, and provide a basis for the love of one's own nation and hatred of others (Volkan 1985; see also Caputi 1996)? How does a certain collectively shared hypochondria, as I argue here, develop from this paranoid-schizoid worldview, and how does it influence 'the politics of fear' (Wodak 2021)?

Hypochondria, as underlined above, is understood here as an acute and even chronic awareness of threats and dangers, both internal and external, shared collectively by a sufficiently large number of group members. They may perceive their group as being in a position of 'ontological insecurity.' The notion of *ontological security,* and hence *insecurity,* was first defined by the Scottish psychoanalyst Ronald D. Laing in his book *The Divided Self* (1960) and later used in sociology by Anthony Giddens and, more importantly for us here, for the analysis of collective actors and states in international relations and security studies (see Mitzen 2006; Ejdus 2018; for a Lacanian perspective, see Vulović and Ejdus 2024). Some entities (groups, nations, states) perceive their position as fundamentally endangered and threatened by others and act from a position of ontological insecurity. Moreover, ontological security might even conflict with physical security. As Mitzen explains, 'even a harmful or self-defeating relationship can provide ontological security, which means states can become attached to conflict' (2006, 342). For the Balkan context, it is worth recalling that 'states might actually come to prefer their ongoing, certain conflict to the unsettling condition of deep uncertainty as to the other's and one's own identity' (p. 342).

The use of hypochondria I suggest here encompasses the problem of ontological *in*security but casts the net more widely by covering more

than the behaviour of the states or political entities and their relations, and subsequent ontological crises. It concerns a significant number of social and cultural practices that involve constant vigilance and obsession with the 'health' and 'purity' of the collective 'body,' the pressure to achieve ever greater homogeneity, the actions aimed at clear demarcation and constant reinforcement of collective identity, and the use of symbols and rituals for these purposes. It is equally present in entities that do not have such an obvious problem of ontological *in*security but are nonetheless subject to hypochondriacal reactions to anything that is perceived as threatening or corrupting their identity, and thus undermining their stability, potentially leading to dreadful disintegration and even, in the most hypochondriacal visions, to extinction.

The Clusters of Symptoms: From Religion to Sex

From Brotherhood and Unity to the Threatening Other: The Violent Dissolution of Yugoslavia

Throughout the 1980s, the general public in socialist and federal Yugoslavia was inundated with hitherto marginalised or dissident narratives. After Tito's death, as early as 1983, the influential Belgrade weekly NIN noted 'the outburst of history!' (serb. *provala istorije*) (Dragović Soso 2002, 77). But what kind of history was communicated in so many feuilletons, articles, speeches, memoirs, novels, plays, and historiographies? Authors brought what they portrayed as 'secret' and repressed memories to a public hungry for such stories, especially if they had an aura of dissidence. Many of these stories, however, targeted the pillars of socialist Yugoslavia (see Stojanović 2023): the official narrative of the Second World War and the anti-fascist liberation struggle, as well as the policy of 'brotherhood and unity' that was supposed to ensure the peaceful existence of the Yugoslav multi-national federation.

The liberalisation of the Yugoslav public sphere in the 1980s did not lead to the desired pluralism and democratisation that liberals and liberally-minded communists had hoped for, but to a subversion of the previous social contract. Until the first multi-party elections in 1990, citizens were being told by local politicians (based in and operating from different Yugoslav republics) and national intellectuals that they were primarily members of their ethnic nations who should put their own *national* interests first. These interests were portrayed as threatened to the point of basic survival by their very neighbours with whom they had shared decades of communal, if not always harmonious, life. It was suggested that it was

their nation that had paid the highest price for Yugoslavia, either in terms of sacrificed lives (the Serbian version based on the human losses in two world wars), independence and identity (the Croatian version), or, finally, economy and prosperity (the Slovenian version). The narratives of 'resentment and blame,' as Sabrina Ramet (2007) called them, focused heavily on the Second World War and the inter-ethnic killings, especially the genocide against Serbs in Hitler's puppet regime of the so-called Independent State of Croatia, but also the Serb Chetnik massacres of Muslims and Croats. This version of history directly undermined the significance and reputation of the multinational anti-fascist Partisan movement that had won the war against the Nazi-fascist occupiers and their local collaborators. This struggle and victory were part and parcel of the official narrative of socialist Yugoslavia: the Yugoslav peoples overcame the crimes of the occupiers and local traitors and, through the common struggle, signed the pact to live together in the common (federal) state oriented towards a better (socialist) future.

The proliferation of alternative narratives reopened old wounds and were fully exploited by nationalist politicians, whether from the ruling League of Communists of Yugoslavia or from newly formed movements and parties. The democratisation of the political sphere led to ethnicisation and almost immediately to open conflicts between ethnic majorities and minorities in the Yugoslav republics. Through a series of horrible wars, many inter-ethnic crimes were indeed repeated, sometimes in exactly the same places as during the Second World War. Today, new wounds are the main source of nationalist ideology based on victimhood, suspicion and hatred of neighbouring nations.

In other words, the problem of 'ontological insecurity' dominated the late 1980s and, after the break-up of Yugoslavia in 1991, was used to justify ethnic cleansing, massacres, and even a genocide, as the one in Srebrenica. Often these acts were explained by past crimes committed against one's own group. 'The time has come to take revenge on the Turks in this region,' declared general Ratko Mladić after his forces captured Srebrenica in July 1995. Referring to the local Slavic Muslims as 'Turks,' he used almost five centuries of Ottoman rule to justify the execution of more than 8,000 men and boys.

Religion, National Purity, and Ethnic Cleansing after Yugoslavia

Religion played the crucial role in the consolidation of nationalist-conservative hegemony in the contemporary Balkans. The churches were

in a sense predestined to lead the nationalist renaissance in opposition to communist atheist rule and Yugoslavia as an 'artificial' creation or a 'prison house of the peoples' which, so the story goes, the communists had robbed of their *true* identity, tradition and religion. The fact that among Serbs, Croats and Bosniaks, unlike among Albanians, the only solid marker of separate national identity is precisely their religious affiliation made these organisations guardians of the national identity and 'soul.' Re-traditionalisation took the place of socialist modernisation and the glorious national past eclipsed the vision of a future classless society. Opportunistically, many rushed to be baptised (although the practice was never banned), religious insignia became a solid proof of national identity, and showing up in churches or mosques an opportunistic sign of political conformity.

If there is any doubt about the nationalist-conservative hegemony and the role of religion, one only has to take a look at the official calendar in Croatia. As well as Christmas and Easter, the calendar closely follows the Catholic calendar, with as many as five special religious non-working holidays for St Stephen's Day (26 December), Epiphany (6 January), All Saints (1 November), Corpus Christi (a movable feast) and the Assumption of the Virgin Mary (15 August). Meanwhile, in Serbia, the calendar seems to focus more on national history and identity: in addition to 11 November to commemorate the First World War, Serbia introduced 15–16 February to mark the adoption of its first constitution. Since 2019 Serbia also celebrates the 'Day of Serbian Unity, Freedom and the National Flag' as a working holiday on 15 September (introduced in the Serb Republic in Bosnia as well). Whilst St Sava's and St Vitus's day remain working holidays, almost all state institutions in the country, including schools, have introduced their own patron saint's day (a tradition associated with families), which typically requires the presence of priests.

The idea of 'mixing' and of a shared Yugoslav identity was and still is hypochondriacally regarded as either a betrayal or a danger to the genetic purity of one's own nation. The obsession with 'pure blood' was not only focused on separating men and women of different origins, but was disastrously applied to the soil as well. Moreover, the plan to create ethnically pure territories was implemented not only through physical violence and ethnic cleansing, but also through legal and administrative means. Following the dissolution of Yugoslavia, the newly formed independent states introduced citizenship laws that prioritised individuals belonging to their ethnic majority or their co-ethnics in nearby regions

(Štiks 2015). This resulted in varying degrees of discrimination against individuals from different ethnic backgrounds or of those originating from other republics. The acquisition of citizenship in the newly independent states was linked to employment, access to health care, eligibility for property ownership, and the enjoyment of civil and political rights. Many full citizens were transformed overnight into foreigners, residents, or stateless persons. As a result, many left their homes, moved to other post-Yugoslav states where their origins offered greater security, or emigrated abroad.

As an example of hypochondriacal citizenship policies, one should mention that in February 1992, the Ministry of the Interior of newly independent Slovenia secretly erased from the citizens' register about 25,000 persons who had no proof of Slovenian citizenship at the time (Deželan 2012). Most of them had immigrated from other Yugoslav republics or their parents had previously settled in Slovenia. For a new country the idea of having so many minority members was unbearable and, in the context of Yugoslavia's dissolution, they were perceived as undesirable and potentially dangerous. Their documents were confiscated and subsequently invalidated. Numerous deaths were recorded as a result of the loss of health care, along with several cases of suicide, and many simply left Slovenia. The case of the 'erased' (slov. *izbrisani* only came to light in the early 2000s. It tarnished the image of Slovenia's successful and exemplary 'transition.' It was not until 2012 that the European Court of Human Rights in Strasbourg condemned Slovenia over this case.

Ethnic Hypochondria Today: Symbols, Territory, Borders

Ethnic killings and cleansings, repression and informal pressures on individuals (such as loss of employment or exposure to insults, destruction of property and physical assaults), together with the general atmosphere of fear, led to significant changes in the ethnic composition of the post-Yugoslav states. They all homogenised around the ethnic majority, which included a general assimilation to the dominant ethnic identity regardless of complex family histories and origins. Even after the wars, the imperative of ethnic consolidation remains high on the agenda. Although Bosnia-Herzegovina has survived as a multi-ethnic state, the process of ethnic homogenisation has taken place at the sub-state level (entities and cantons) despite the significant refugee return. This has been exacerbated by the ongoing ethno-centric migrations: Croats from Bosnia migrate across the border to Croatia, mainly to Split and Zagreb; Serbs from Bosnia and Montenegro to Serbia, mainly to Belgrade and Novi Sad;

while Bosniaks from the Sandžak region (in Serbia and Montenegro) often choose to continue their lives in Sarajevo.

Anyone who still doubts the use of terms developed to deal with individual psychological disorders to explain political and thus collective processes and outcomes, need look no further than post-war Bosnia. Hypochondria there is even legally institutionalised through ethnic electoral participation and ethnically designed official positions. Bosnia was already condemned by the European Court of Human Rights back in 2009 for discriminating against citizens who are not Serbs, Croats, or Bosniaks but Jews, Roma or the 'others,' who are legally barred from running for the state presidency and other ethnically marked positions. To no avail. There is even a special constitutional provision called the 'vital national interest' (serb. *vitalni nacionalni interes*) whereby any law could be stopped if the 'national interest' of one of Bosnia's three constituent peoples is declared to be *vitally* threatened. It has been used to block any unwanted reform and to paralyse the entire system until the interests of Bosnia's ethnic entrepreneurs were met. Predictably, this reduced the entire political system to the deals between ethnic leaders. Moreover, the system of 'two schools under one roof' institutionalised the educational apartheid and the segregation of Bosniak and Croat children in municipalities where they live together. It is based on the 'national subjects' such as language, history, and even geography, which must be taught separately. Children who speak the same language are taught different standard uses of that language in order to separate their written and oral expressions as much as possible, and are taught different histories and, to make things even more absurd, different geographies.

At the ground level, as in Northern Ireland, one can observe ethnic markings of the territory. This is particularly true in multi-ethnic but now divided cities such as Mostar or Brčko, where football fans with strong links to nationalist parties and the criminal underworld are often involved in mural painting, and where monuments to the fallen soldiers, national flags and symbols clearly signal the territorial 'ownership.' In the absence of physical barriers or 'peace walls,' citizens use mental maps and know exactly where the front lines were in the 1990s, which cafés to visit, and where *not* to go.

Borders are constitutive of any nation building, especially when they could be culturally and linguistically porous. The re-drawing of the maps in the Balkans on the basis of 'historical' or 'ethnic' rights remains an inevitable feature of the nationalist imaginary. It usually involves claiming

parts of the territory of neighbouring countries and attempts to create a greater state (e.g. a greater Serbia, a greater Croatia, a greater Albania, a greater Hungary). The idea that the existing borders could be changed (in 'our' favour), thus finally uniting all members of 'our' nation and drawing clear lines between 'us' and 'them,' still animates the political imaginary and mobilises the masses.

In Serbia, for example, the situation still seems fluid, with no one able to give the right answer as to where exactly Serbia's borders are. The Kosovo issue continues to plague Serbian politics and regional relations. Seen as a sacred land, Kosovo is convenient for all politicians who claim to be fighting for the 'heart' of Serbia. The story is hypochondriacal at its core: it recalls the 'Great Replacement' theory (allegedly the Serbs lost Kosovo due to Albanian demographic superiority); it is full of mythology about the lost battle in 1389 against the Ottomans; it recalls Christian martyrdom at the hands of Muslim infidels; and it also imitates the Jewish tradition ('Next year in Prizren,' as nationalist banners often proclaim).

On the other side, we also find the idea of creating a Greater Albanian state, consisting of Albania, Kosovo and parts of Macedonia. If Serb nationalists insist that Serbs have been replaced by Albanians, Albanian nationalists stress their 'autochthonous' presence in the Balkans, long before Slavs settled in the region. In August 2023, inspired by the construction of a tunnel linking Tetovo in North Macedonia and Prizren in Kosovo, Kosovo's prime minister Albin Kurti even tried to interpret God's intentions. He explained to the crowd how something had gone slightly wrong somewhere between God's design and the earthly embodiment of His idea, and how this mistake should be corrected. He concluded that Albanian-populated Tetovo and Prizren should be united by the ongoing infrastructure project because 'in the eyes of God in the sky [they] have been one city and when they fell on earth, they were separated by Sharri Mountain, and became Tetovo here and Prizren on the other side.' He concluded: 'Let's make Prizren and Tetova one with the road axis that connects us with this tunnel.'[1]

Obviously, there are borders that should be torn down to unite the members of the same nation – such as those that separate Croats in Croa-

[1] The full statement is published on the official website of the Republic of Kosovo's Office of the Prime Minister: https://kryeministri.rks-gov.net/en/blog/prime-minister-kurti-ending-his-visit-to-tetovo-lets-help-and-support-each-other-for-each-others-sake-not-against-anyone-else/.

tia from those in Bosnia-Herzegovina, Serbs from Serbia, Montenegro and Bosnia, and Albanians scattered across three countries – and there are borders that must be built and patrolled. The Balkan route, used by tens of thousands of migrants and refugees every year, prompted an ethno-national counter-mobilisation. Like Hungary and Poland, Slovenia put up barbed wire, and Croatia was given the task of heavy policing of the tiny piece of land between Bosnia and Slovenia. In general, the EU has tasked the Balkan states with filtering migrants. Although migrants have no intention to stay in these countries, their very presence has provoked an anxiety and brought us back to hypochondriacal tropes of 'great replacement,' 'infiltration,' and even 'danger.' If Orban portrays refugees as being paid by Soros to invade and undermine the Hungarian nation, in Bosnia it is mostly Muslim migrants who are seen as a potential asset for Bosniaks and a threat to the fragile ethnic balances. In reality, migrants are mostly concentrated in Bosniak-dominated areas where they are also unwelcome, especially in border towns.

EU member Croatia faces another problem when it comes to its dwindling population. It cannot sustain its economy (especially tourism and construction businesses) without a massive influx of foreign workers, brought these days from the Philippines and Nepal. It must open its borders, which means that ordinary Croats now have to confront, literally overnight, the cold mechanism of global economy and their own position in such a world: in a country that has been generally allergic to different ethnicity, namely to Serbs, or to different accents of the same language,[2] the streets are now filled with very different people from those with whom Croats have lived in the past. Racist attacks are already taking place in both Croatia and Serbia and the far right, with its strong base among football fans and neo-Nazi groups in these countries, presents the situation as a struggle for the purity of both blood and soil.

Other Battlefields: Language, Memory, and Sex

Despite the achievement of national independence and ethnic consolidation, other dangers still seem to loom over the post-Yugoslav nations. One is not only fighting against neighbours and external evils, but one must

[2] To illustrate this point, at the time of writing, a group of teenagers in Vukovar were violently attacked by Croatian nationalist football fans because these hooligans thought the teenagers spoke with Serbian accents. It turned out that the beaten teenagers, like their attackers, were ethnic Croats (Miličić 2024).

also be prepared to fight on the home front as well. In the post-Yugoslav space, language remains the old battlefield where the war against contamination and impurity is constantly being waged. As recently as of January 2024, for the first time in history, the Croatian Parliament adopted the Law on Croatian Language ('Sabor usvojio Zakon o hrvatskom jeziku' 2024). The law was drafted by major cultural institutions, dominated by nationalist intellectuals, with the aim of 'protecting and cultivating' the Croatian language, and fighting against international influence. The latter actually refers to the eternal 'danger' posed by the simple fact that Croats, Serbs, Bosnians and Montenegrins share a common language. The 'contamination' lies not only in anglicisation but above all in the porosity of the linguistic borders between South-Slavic peoples: anyone could be contaminated by Serbian through TV series, the Internet, YouTube and TikTok, or simply through conversation! In Serbia, similar attempts at 'protecting and cultivating' the language are constantly being pushed by such institutions as the Serbian Academy of Arts and Sciences and the Serbian Orthodox Church: there they focus on the use of the Cyrillic alphabet, which supposedly has been endangered by the Latin alphabet. Most books and journals are indeed published in Latin script, including numerous nationalist tabloids such as *Informer, Kurir* and *Alo,* and people use Latin script more often in informal communication. But the problem only exists if one rejects and even finds threatening the established fact that modern Serbian society uses both scripts equally.

History is another crucial battlefield where hypochondriacal vigilance is continuously required. Almost all post-Yugoslav societies adopted nationalist visions of their history based on two main premises: anti-Yugoslavism and anti-communism. Therefore, history textbooks are the preferred tool of this new interpretation of modern history based on national victimhood, enmity with neighbours, and historical revisionism when it comes to the Second World War and its outcome, namely the victory of the Partisans led by Tito and the Communist Party of Yugoslavia (Stojanović 2023). Historical revisionism usually means the rehabilitation of Nazi-fascist collaborators who are branded as nationalist or simply as patriots who opposed the multinational communists. History textbooks are ethnicised and purged of others, with particular intolerance for the idea of South Slavic unity, Yugoslavia as a state project, and the socialist ideals of 'brotherhood and unity.'

In Croatia, the fear of Yugoslavia is so acute that the name of the country to which Croatia belonged for almost 70 years is rarely publicly men-

tioned, and then only with trepidation. It has become something of a taboo (Markovina 2018) in a country where the Yugoslav idea was born and where, as early as 1866, a bishop with the apparently non-Slavic surname of Strossmayer founded the Yugoslav Academy of Sciences and Arts in Zagreb as the future South Slavic cultural capital. Major Croatian cultural and political figures of the nineteenth and the twentieth centuries fought for a Yugoslav state in which Croats would achieve independence together with other South Slavic peoples. Now all this history had to be reinterpreted without mentioning the huge Yugoslav elephant in the room.[3]

The powerful Althusserian 'ideological state apparatuses' such as the state and its media, the church and schools, make it much easier to forget and learn the new 'truths' about the past. The Past is Coming (2023), to use the title of Serbian historian Dubravka Stojanović's latest book that analyses ideological manipulations in Serbian history textbooks over the last hundred years. Battles are still raging there, and even the outcomes of the First and Second World Wars are still undecided. In other words, we do not yet know what might happen in the past! It will be, of course, dictated by current or future ideological hegemons.

Finally, sex remains a hideous enemy and the privileged litmus test for hypochondriacal reactions. One must be vigilant about sexual minorities, hybrid identities, gender fluidity, and female bodies. Accused of destroying the family, emancipated women and LGBTQI+ persons undermine the 'healthy' body of the nation. Since its future existence depends on sexual practices, they must be controlled and should produce as many ethnically pure national members as possible. Education and modernisation are blamed for undermining women's role as protectors of home and tradition. The fight against women ranges from abortion bans, as in Poland, to collective prayers in public spaces in Croatia for the salvation of women. Sexual minorities are seen as further endangering the nation

[3] Two illustrations from the world of sport come to mind that show how hypochondria works on an everyday level. The basketball club Cibona from Zagreb was one of the most successful clubs in Yugoslavia, winning the Yugoslav championship several times. In its arena, the word 'Yugoslavia' is simply replaced by the word 'state' without any further definition (e.g. Cibona won the 'Cup of the State'), while the titles won in independent Croatia are clearly marked 'Champion of the Republic of Croatia.' Hajduk, the famous football club from Split, had their historical photos doctored to erase the red star, which was Hajduk's emblem during the Second World War, when Hajduk represented anti-fascist Yugoslavia. The red star remained part of the club's emblem until 1990.

by killing it biologically and by indulging in forbidden sexual pleasures that know no bounds. Again, the demographic threat looms, as does the image of the nation disappearing under attack from external and internal enemies.

Conservative Revolutions and the Nationalist-Conservative Hegemony in the Balkans

Having presented the cluster of hypochondriacal symptoms and analysed them as a necessary part of the nationalist-conservative hegemony in the Balkans, I will attempt to situate this hegemony in a broader historical framework. For comparative purposes, I use Jean-François Bayard's article on conservative revolutions in contemporary Africa (2023), in which he draws on the experience of the inter-war period in Europe to develop seven key points of conservative revolutions. I find them relevant for understanding the post-socialist conservative revolutions (and subsequent hegemony), for which the inter-war period and the Second World War remain the crucial historical and ideological references.

Bayard's first point is that 'the conservative revolution provides a national identitarian repertoire at the moment of the shift from empire to nation-state.' The end of socialism, or the shift from socialist multinational federations and the Soviet bloc to the independent nation-states, was indeed marked by the return of nationalism with its conservative 'national identitarian repertoire.' The Velvet Revolutions were all about national independence from Soviet influence and troops. Nationalism provided a solid basis for mass mobilisations in the former socialist multinational federations as well as a coherent and massively supported narrative for post-socialist societies, which in most cases looked back at the anti-communist nationalists of the 1930s and the 1940s for inspiration.

Since socialism was presented as an unwanted break, it was finally time to go back to exactly where *we* were stopped when the Soviets 'kidnapped' our part of Europe or, in the Yugoslav context, when cosmopolitan atheist communists denied *us* the right to enjoy *our* national identity and even religion in *our* own independent state. The affinity with the extremist right-wing movements and regimes was and still is obvious. It could be observed in the open or silent rehabilitation of the Horthy regime in Hungary, the Ustashas in Croatia, the Chetniks in Serbia, the Lithuanian, Latvian and Estonian SS troops, the Iron Guard in Romania, or Banderist nationalists in Ukraine. The removal of the socialist regimes was a gift to the far-right movements and their nationalist and conservative ideolo-

gies as well as an opportunity for their historical rehabilitation, despite their affiliation with Nazi Germany and the mass crimes they committed against members of other national or religious groups. This rehabilitation could be clearly seen in the renaming of the streets in Croatia and Bosnia after notorious Croat fascists, in the judicial rehabilitation of the Chetnik leaders in Serbia, but also in today's Ukraine where streets are often named after Stepan Bandera and his troops responsible for mass killings of Poles and Jews.

Bayard argues that the conservative revolution is the fruit of the war. This point, together with the third point about attributing all political misfortune to the Other, inside and outside, both apply to the contemporary Balkans, with a specific addition: there the conservative revolution was not only the fruit of the war but, as I have argued, its essential ingredient. It was crucial to the mobilisation for war and was consolidated during the war and thanks to the war. It reigned supreme in the immediate post-war period and continues to influence societies with the war-like rhetoric of threats, struggle for survival and hatred. The 'new man' promised by the old conservative movements (Bayard's fourth point) simply becomes the 'old man' who must be resurrected as he supposedly was before the communist regime. Indeed, the theme of national resurrection, redemption and 'renewal' is very much present in nationalist-religious discourse.

Furthermore, warlike machismo, patriarchal heteronormative attitudes and violence (which we find in Bayard's fifth point) are part of the masculine post-socialist worldview, which often finds outlets in neo-fascist groups, football fans or in the conspicuous display of power and virility. The invention of tradition (Bayard's sixth point), coupled with religious orientation regardless of the actual faith, is directly linked to historical revisionism as well as to the introduction of old or new national symbols, holidays, myths and legends. The main media such as state or private television, films, documentaries and history textbooks are all involved in disseminating the newly invented or reinterpreted traditions.

Finally, the fear and hatred of ethnic or religious minorities, people of different sexual orientations, and migrants is fully in line with Bayard's seventh point of the inter-war conservative revolutions in Europe. The difference is that today, 'cultural, social or national humiliation' often takes the form of global capital and local capitalist relations that have transformed the relative socio-economic equality of the socialist period into deeply divided societies. Frustration with a system that works for

the few is, however, not channelled into struggles for social justice, but carefully directed against national enemies and traitors.

In conclusion, the post-socialist nationalist-conservative hegemony has its specificities compared to the model proposed by Jean-François Bayard, but it still has dangerous affinities with the nationalist and conservative right-wing movements of the 1930s and the 1940s. As shown above, many hypochondriacal symptoms unite both the inter-war period and our present.

Treatment: Counter-Hegemonic Forces and Their (Un)Successful Subversions

Since the late 1980s, the pendulum across the post-Yugoslav space has swung sharply to the right. For the past thirty years the collectively shared hypochondriacal symptoms have been shaping political systems, ideological positioning and values, and broadly shared views of national identity. Chronic existential anxiety, coupled with paranoia, constitutes a destructive collective syndrome that has mobilised large numbers of citizens and even led them to violent behaviour and crime.

Throughout the 1990s and early 2000s, the weak resistance to the nationalist-conservative hegemony came mainly from liberals and social democrats, who were themselves preoccupied with how to fit their agenda into the new ethno-national paradigm. They usually promised a more inclusive society, both for ethnic and sexual minorities, and the rule of law framework, with only occasional concerns for social rights and justice amid the ravages of post-socialist neo-liberal restructuring. To illustrate, centrist and centre-left politicians have never dared to question the role of the church, let alone the generous funding it receives from the state budget. Religious education in schools is a case in point. Brief social-democratic governments in Croatia never dared to question it (promoting civic education instead), and in Serbia it was the democratic opposition, and its liberal prime minister Zoran Đinđić, who opened the school doors to church officials.

So, what might be suggested as a treatment in this situation? Any behaviour, ideas and practices that challenge and undermine nationalist-conservative ideology and hegemony as well as the associated hypochondriacal symptoms. Here I will briefly highlight some of the attempted 'cures' by individuals and activist groups to illustrate the repertoire of (un)successful counter-hegemonic treatments.

The anti-war movement promoted the values of peace, tolerance and

coexistence even during the period of heavy fighting and numerous war crimes against civilians. It included an active anti-war movement in Serbia as well as anti-war networks in Croatia, involving a large number of liberal, left-wing and feminist activists and intellectuals who never stopped communicating across newly established borders. There were also many individual heroes who risked their lives to save their neighbours. Here I will only mention two cases: the 'Schindler from Ljubuški,' Nedjeljko Galić, a Croat from Herzegovina, forged documents to save more than a thousand Bosniaks from concentration camps; Srđan Aleksić, a Serb from Trebinje, saved his Bosniak neighbour, only to be killed himself by Serb soldiers. The memory of their deeds lives on, showing the power of 'good people in an evil time,' in the words of Tito's granddaughter Svetlana Broz who collected many similar stories.

Furthermore, the 'anti-nationalist' civil society sector was at the forefront of the liberal challenge to the nationalist-conservative hegemony. Usually branded as 'traitors,' 'anti-war profiteers' and 'Soroshoids,' it was a loose coalition of human rights activists, the first LGBT groups, ethnic minority and anti-fascist associations, and journalists who, often with the support of Soros's Open Society Foundation, founded liberal-minded media outlets such as the weekly *Vreme* and Radio B92 in Serbia, and more openly left-wing magazines such as *Feral Tribune, Arkzin* and later *Zarez* in Croatia. During the war, they promoted the idea of a liberal, inclusive society based on human rights and the rule of law, within a broader framework of EU integration. In the 1990s, amidst the killings, these groups and outlets were the only progressive platforms. If in the 1990s they were able to penetrate closed borders and in the 2000s openly challenge the new nationalist-conservative hegemony, the subsequent events in the 2010s have marginalised and utterly transformed this scene.

Immediately after the death of Tudjman in 1999 and the fall of Milošević in 2000, the political scene in Croatia was occupied by liberals and social-democrats, and in Serbia by right-wing and left-wing liberals, as well as by dissatisfied nationalists (disappointed by the outcomes of the wars, Serbian defeats and the loss of Kosovo). Once in power, they could not resist the temptation to at best flirt with patriotic sentiments and at worst continue to promote nationalist-conservative hegemony. In other words, throughout the 2000s, this hegemony was challenged to some extent (for example, with the apologies to war victims and attempts at inter-ethnic and inter-state reconciliation) but never fully confronted.

What was never questioned in the 1990s and the 2000s, but rather ac-

cepted as an inevitable fate by almost all political and social actors, was the capitalist transformation of post-Yugoslav societies. It would take another decade and the financial crash of 2008 to see the rise of the New Left across the region in the 2010s. It challenged the so-called 'transition' as well as the nationalist-conservative ideological hegemony. Furthermore, the New Left movements, organisations and groups openly promoted cross-border cooperation and shared knowledge on how to fight for urban and natural commons, and how to advance participatory democracy. Social movements were formed from student rebellions (which inspired each other from Belgrade and Zagreb to Ljubljana and Skopje), the Bosnian citizens' plenum movement demanding social justice across ethnic lines, the Right to the City protests that mobilised masses in Zagreb and Belgrade, to the struggles for natural habitats (see Štiks and Stojaković 2021). Despite many failures, this new left has had some significant electoral successes in the 2020s. It joined the liberal-left government in Slovenia in 2022, it won the city of Zagreb in 2020, and it entered the Belgrade and national parliaments in Serbia under the green-left umbrella in 2022 and 2023. They showed that it is possible to think and mobilise outside the contours of nationalist-conservative hegemony, and even to openly confront it by changing focus, vocabulary, and actions. Predictably, this new left drew inspiration from the anti-fascist struggle of the Second World War, socialist self-management, non-alignment, and the legacy of the Yugoslav supra-national framework.[4]

Lastly, one must mention the initiative that addressed head on one of the main hypochondriacal symptoms, namely language and its control. *The Declaration on the Common Language* signed in 2017 by more than 200 leading intellectuals, artists and writers across the former Yugoslav region, and subsequently followed by more than 10,000 individual signatories, caused a small political earthquake.[5] It simply called for the free individual use of the common language of Croatia, Bosnia, Serbia and Montenegro, in all its standard variants, and for an end to the ethnic segregation of schoolchildren. It struck at the heart of the nationalist projects

[4] Culture and art remain the privileged terrain where the nationalist-conservative hegemony is constantly questioned. There is not enough space in this text to do justice to numerous writers, artists, actors, film and theatre directors who are working intensively across the post-Yugoslav region to promote a different version of their societies, from inclusiveness to more radical social change.

[5] The text of the Declaration is available at https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Declaration_on_the_Common_Language.

that still operate within the nineteenth century Central and Eastern European fantasy that each nation must have its own separate language. By insisting on 'commonality' it openly provoked the dominant narrative of enmity and hatred between historically, culturally and linguistically closely related peoples. The *Declaration,* one might add, moves beyond the Kleinian 'depressive' position, which requires a more realistic and complex view of one's self and the others, to another imaginary in which the other is someone with whom we might want to share more than just language. The protectors of the supposedly endangered Cyrillic as well as the drafters of the Law on Croatian language could be seen as directly irritated not only by the Declaration as a public document, but also by everyday communication across borders. It is made possible precisely by the shared language and new technologies, leading to a new creative hybridity in the post-Yugoslav space.

In Lieu of Conclusion: A Prognosis

In this article I suggested that hypochondria as a collective syndrome has been an overlooked but crucial and enduring element of the nationalist-conservative hegemony in the post-socialist Balkans. This hegemony has led to devastating wars, the criminalisation of society, the primitive accumulation of capital through plunder and privatisation campaigns, and massive emigration. It will continue to maintain a strong grip on post-Yugoslav societies through the ideological apparatuses such as religious institutions, the political system and its parties, as well as the existing media and the school curricula.

However, this hegemony has many cracks through which light can enter and create subversive strongholds. Today, we can see the rise of social and political resistances and the search for alternatives. It is difficult to predict whether these counter-hegemonic practices could lead to significant reversals, despite some important social and political victories in the last decade. The future will also depend on the European and global context where too many hypochondriacal symptoms are clearly visible, from extreme violence, brutal wars, the rise of the far right, the return to an obsolete model of national sovereignty to the spread of religious and ethnic intolerance. The Balkan 'dark avant-garde' of the 1990s, one might say, ominously foreshadowed the world of the twenty-first century.

Note

Work on this paper was supported by Social Contract in the 21st Century, a research project based at the Faculty of Arts, University of Ljubljana, and funded by the Slovenian Research Agency (ARIS, P6-0400). A draft of this article was

first presented at the conference 'Religion et révolution conservatrice: perspectives comparatives' at the Geneva Graduate Institute (23–25 October 2023).

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Anthropos 56 (1): 37–58 | ISSN 0587-5161 | E-ISSN 2630-4082

Art and Revolt: From the Socialist Republic of Slovenia to Today

Daša Tepina
University of Nova Gorica, Slovenia
dasa.tepina@ung.si

Petja Grafenauer
University of Ljubljana, Slovenia
petja.grafenauer@aluo.uni-lj.si

Abstract. This contribution takes a closer look at visual art and protest and develops a comparative analysis of activist aesthetics that will contextualize the images of art and revolt from the Socialist Republic of Slovenia in the 1960s to today. It will focus on the representation of counter-power images, not only as a supporting visual form but also as an interweaving that can function as an independent element in moments of social rupture. Beginning with the examples of the student movement from 1968 and the visual code of the student newspaper *Tribuna,* we follow the stories of the artist collective OHO and the art commune established by some of its members; from there, follow the examples of punk subculture and the legendary spaces of Disco FV and their visual codes; then we trace the anti-militarization movement and the stories of the occupation and transformation of army facilities into creative, cultural, social and political places, with the example of Autonomous Cultural Centre Metelkova City. The article concludes with the alter-globalization movement, the new wave of squatting, and other contemporary social movements occurring from the end of the 90's to the 2020/21 anti-governmental protests. With comparative narration of different social movements and their creative force, we try to comprehend the revolutionary aesthetic potential of the margins in revolt in different social contexts.

Key Words: visual code, protests, social movements, aesthetics, counter-power

Umetnost in upor: od Socialistične republike Slovenije do danes

Povzetek. Prispevek se podrobneje posveča vizualni umetnosti in protestom ter razvija primerjalno analizo aktivistične estetike, ki bo kontekstualizirala podobe umetnosti in upora od Socialistične republike

https://doi.org/10.26493/2630-4082.56.37-58

Slovenije šestdesetih let do danes. Osredotoča se na reprezentacijo protioblastnih podob, ki jo razumemo ne le kot podporno vizualno obliko, temveč tudi kot preplet estetskih elementov, ki lahko v trenutkih družbenih prelomov deluje kot samostoja politična praksa. Tako po primerih študentskega gibanja iz leta 1968 in vizualnega koda študentskega časopisa *Tribuna* sledijo zgodbe umetniške skupine OHO in umetniške komune, ki so jo ustanovili nekateri člani tega kolektiva; nato sledijo primeri subkulture punk in legendarni kraji Disco FV ter njihovi vizualni kodi; nato sledi gibanje proti militarizaciji in zgodbe zasedb ter preoblikovanja vojaških objektov v ustvarjalna, kulturna, socialna in politična stičišča na primeru Avtonomnega kulturnega centra Metelkova mesto. Članek se zaključi z alterglobalizacijskim gibanjem, novim valom skvotiranja in drugimi sodobnimi družbenimi gibanji, ki se odvijajo od konca 90. let do protivladnih protestov med letoma 2020 in 2021. S primerjalno analizo različnih družbenih gibanjih in njihove ustvarjalne moči skušamo razumeti revolucionarni estetski potencial obrobja v uporih znotraj različnih družbenih kontekstov.

Ključne besede: vizalni kod, protesti, družbena gibanja, estetika, protimoč

Introduction

When the political breakthrough of art and the artistic praxes move beyond the artistic frameworks and intersect with wider social movements, it opens space for aesthetic revolutionary potential. Freedom and autonomy within art had been buried under the pressures of neoliberalism, and as Danko Grlić (1988, 146) wrote, 'the absolute freedom of art was only freedom in individual spheres; thus, it came into conflict with the enduring state of non-freedom as a whole.' Thus, art was already stuck in a desperate situation and, as Theodor Adorno (2002, 29) argued, 'among the dangers faced by new art, the worst is the absence of danger.'

Social movements often bear the political character of a certain kind of vivid, living art, which has the potential to move beyond artistic frameworks. Within the diverse examples from the post-Yugoslavian context of Slovenia (former Socialist Republic of Yugoslavia), the article examines aesthetic revolutionary potential and the recuperation practices of the power structures. We follow the student movement from 1968, the visual code of the student newspaper *Tribuna* and with it the works of the artist group OHO and the artist commune established by some of its members. After that, we focus on the examples of punk subculture and alternative spaces of Disco FV and ŠKUC and their visual codes. Besides

subculture, we track the anti-militarization movement and the stories of the occupation and the transformation of army facilities into creative, cultural, social, and political places just after the dispersion of Yugoslavia, with the example of Autonomous Cultural Centre Metelkova City. The article concludes with the alter-globalization movement, a new wave of squatting, and other contemporary social movements happening from the end of the 90s to the 2020/1 anti-governmental protests. With comparative narration of different social movements and their creative force, we try to comprehend the revolutionary aesthetic potentials of the margins in revolt in a different social context. In addition, we also examine the mechanisms of recuperation in the existing social order and how this potential is systematically neutralized through power structures and/or capitalist codification.

Slovene art critic Brane Kovič (1990, 13) stated that 'the majority of avant-garde poetics were based on the global desire to change the world and use art to establish a different system of both values and relationships.' The link between art and the political is especially prominent when it comes to the avant-garde movements, as politically and aesthetically progressive. However, their strength is continually decreased by different political processes (recuperation, cultural codification, institutionalization, etc.) by power structures that are making such movements a part of the existing social order. This, in turn, leads to a perpetual need for them to be redefined.

The avant-garde has always strived for autonomy, in which the expression of the individual becomes the measure of personal freedom and freedom in general. The concept of freedom and the attempts to define it bring art out of the realm of aesthetics and into the field of ethics no longer relegated to the private; art thus becomes public and social. Autonomy plays a key role in this. Adorno advocated for the autonomy of art, as art needs autonomy to open up an area of imagined freedom that is in opposition to the present and draws attention to its shortcomings. Samuel Beckett went a step further and proclaimed that art only becomes autonomous when it demands to become a world 'unto itself' rather than reflecting the world (Belting 2010, 12). A similar position was adopted by Jacques Rancière (2010, 117), who claimed that the question did not concern the autonomy of the work of art but rather the mode of experience. With such stipulations in mind, this article explores the need to question the notion of freedom, which cannot exist without sufficient space for one's own expression.

Freedom is neither final nor static. It does not exist without the desire or struggle for it, which makes it more of a guideline than an absolute state. Avant-garde movements are a part of aesthetic revolutions, for they criticize the current situation, seeking and formulating alternatives. Of course, this takes place at the crossroads between aesthetics and politics. According to Rancière (2010, 119), social revolutions are the daughters of aesthetic revolutions. Revolution's fundamental part originates from the emancipation of the individual in terms of the sensorium of which they are a part and which they can influence. Rancière sees art as a part of the struggle for space, for what we are allowed to show and what we are not, believing that it belongs in the same domain as aesthetics. The ultimate alternative to politics lies in aestheticization, the creation of a new collective ethos. This starts when art becomes life and life becomes art (pp. 119–123). Terry Eagleton (1990, 3) argued that aesthetics is an eminently contradictory phenomenon: on the one hand at the very heart of the middle class's struggle for political hegemony, while on the other providing an unusually powerful challenge to the dominant ideological forms.

The rise of broader social movements opens a space for diverse art practices and an advancement of new social relations in which we can follow the aesthetic revolutionary potential as the social movements or cultural scenes are ongoing. To highlight them we chose some of the most visible acts of revolt from below from the subculture movements in the former Yugoslavia's Republic of Slovenia to social movements after independence, and through them tried to show how visual practices are an inherent part of the social movements whatever the social context. Similarly, with the response of the power structures, with similar mechanisms from recuperation, and with appropriation to institutionalization, the aesthetic revolutionary potentials are normalized back to the dominant social order. As James C. Scott (1990, 111) says: '[A]ppropriation is, after all, largely the purpose of domination.'

This contribution is based on interviews and materials already issued by groups and individuals involved, newspaper articles, and secret service reports.

From the Student Revolts of 1968–1972 Forwards

The student movements which arose in 1968 all around Europe also emerged in socialist Yugoslavia, first in Belgrade in June 1968, and in parallel in Zagreb and Ljubljana. Students were addressing the social crisis and demanding better living conditions. One of the most important

achievements in Slovenia was the establishment of Radio Študent (Radio Student) which still exists today. In 1971 Filozofska fakulteta (Faculty of Arts) in Ljubljana was occupied by students and some professors and many students' manifestations took to the streets. Besides Radio Študent there was also another important propaganda and informative student newspaper called *Tribuna,* where the aforementioned group OHO also had a large visual input.

Besides the general social unrest in the 1970s, the first squatting actions influenced by the Dutch movement took place with the occupation of the villa at 29 Erjavčeva Street in Ljubljana, which lasted from October 28, 1977, to November 9, 1977. The occupation drew attention primarily to student and general housing problems but also had a symbolic purpose – to show the possibility of the functional use of unused spaces in general. The authorities evicted the squatters in a relatively short time under threat of coercive measures, and a kindergarten soon moved in.

At the same time, communes were established all over the world to put libertarian ideas and theories into practice. In Ljubljana, it was Komuna G7 (Commune G7), which was founded in the suburbs of Ljubljana called Tacen under the influence of the hippie (sub)culture and the student movement. Commune G7 was initially a small project, but it gained more public and international attention over time. The main ideas were self-organization, solidarity, and equality; in short, principles and methods derived from anarchism. They also became acquainted with anarchism, which was promoted by one of the most prominent figures of the Commune G7, Frane Adam. The second important commune, whose development and impact will be discussed below, was an artists' commune by the art collective OHO in the village of Šempas in 1970.

OHO Group

In 1965, socialist Yugoslavia underwent comprehensive economic and financial reform. For the first time, the issue of convertibility of the currency – the dinar, international competition, and trade with foreign countries – was raised. The state-sponsored increase in the production of consumer goods, industrial revenues, the development of a goods distribution system, the development of tourism, and port activity (also because of membership in the Non-Aligned Movement) led to an increase in the standard of living. Between 1965 and 1968, per capita income increased by 18 percent and consumption by 20 percent. The level of education also improved. The 'look' of Yugoslavia changed, especially in the urban cen-

tres. The country's borders were opened and the number of trips abroad increased. In daily life, there was the possibility of buying a car, new household appliances were introduced, more items were on the shelves, the advertising industry expanded, the presence of television, magazines, and photography was felt more strongly and links with Western European countries became stronger. The artist Kostja Gatnik, who had a significant influence on many branches of visual art (alternative as well as dominant) in the 1970s, says that he ordered many magazines to Ljubljana through the Mladinska knjiga bookshop chain, mainly those about art, culture, and alternative lifestyles, but also those that taught how to brew synthetic drugs in your own kitchen, and the delivery never got stuck.[1]

In the 1960s, rock came to Slovenia, at first as a copy of foreign hits. Rock was not for Slovenian radio, but it was played in the youth clubs that were opening around the country, followed by the first discotheques and Radio Student (1969), and by the first student demonstrations and the bands of the Faculty of Arts (1968–1972). In the cultural sphere, students were still oscillating between elite and autonomous culture, drawing attention to social inequality and other pressing problems of the time. At the same time, the social climate was becoming more repressive in the 1970s. Some communes and broader family and friendship communities were established, with a distinctive look, sensitivity to ecological problems, emphasis on a healthy lifestyle in nature, the practice of yoga, the study of Eastern philosophies, the smoking of marijuana, etc. All these factors aroused the interest of artists.

Foreign publications travelled more easily to the Yugoslav art world and the number of international connections and exhibitions increased. The President of the country, Josip Broz Tito, publicly warned against negative influences from abroad and against modern, especially abstract, art from the West in a speech at the Seventh Congress of Yugoslav Youth in January 1963 and in four speeches in the winter of 1964. The attitude of politics towards modern art was ambivalent, not least because of the microphysics of power, which is not diffused from the top but circulates, and does not reproduce the general form of government at the lower levels and is therefore not a simple projection of central power. Federal policy itself had been ambivalent about the diminishing role of Western, espe-

[1] Interview with Kostja Gatnik by Petja Grafenauer, conducted on 15 June 2015 (kept in the authors' personal archive).

cially abstract art. Local politicians and bureaucrats, however, for various reasons – different views on art, personal ties, political connections, financial and other benefits – tolerated and supported such art, except when there were serious prohibitions from the top, of a kind that could threaten the whole structure. The art world operated relatively independently. It is of great importance that when Yugoslavia opened its doors to the capitalist west and its socialism became softer it opened a gap for new development in the then-marginal art.

In this situation, new possibilities also opened for counter-institutional culture and art. Now it could develop further and pose some anticanonical questions. Let us look at the example of the OHO group. Its core was already established in 1963 when, while still in high school in the city of Kranj, the students Marjan Ciglič, Iztok Geister, and Marko Pogačnik established a school bulletin called *Plamenica* that was provocative in its content with a demand of a 'merciless destroying of fusty peace,' as was written in the editorial by Pogačnik (Zabel 1994, 19). They demanded a living experience in the arts and a breaking down of the dusty conventions that ruled the Slovene art world. They were joining 'hooliganism,' a term in the mid-sixties used for young people who had long hair and unusual clothes and behaved in a way that broke the boundaries of the 'normal' socialist society: 'Naturally, the "hooligan" movement involved a strong existentialist element of dissatisfaction with the developing consumer society and of protest of it,' (p. 20). They wished to break the conventions of the art.

The OHO movement was born out of two groups. The first so-called Kranj group, which included Pogačnik, Geister, Ciglič, Naško Križnar, and Franci Zagoričnik, and had occasional contacts with Rudi Šeligo, who was a bit older and theoretically strong. They were influenced by the Slovene historical avant-garde magazine *TANK!,* some of the then-unpublished historical avant-garde poems *Kons*'s[2] by the Slovene poet Srečko Kosovel, and other sources. When Geister and Pogačnik came to study in Ljubljana, they joined Ljubljana's hooligans. They – Aleš Kermavner, Naško Križnar, Milenko Matanović, Matjaž Hanžek, Vojin Kovač (Chubby), and Andraž Šalamun – were inspired by rock music and beatnik poetry and had a countercultural attitude. Pogačnik describes the sound of the reunited group as a mixture of Zen and Dada. OHO

[2] Constructivist poetry also involves collage and some of those were also done by Srečko Kosovel and the historical avant-garde artist Avgust Černigoj in the 1920s.

went through many phases, namely pop art, reism,[3] conceptualism, arte povera, land art, programmatic art, and cosmic conceptualism, finally establishing a commune in Šempas in 1970 and renouncing active collaboration with the art world.

> If you were to wander under the arcades at the corner of the Kazina building on a certain day in the spring of 1966, you would see a young man, a student with long hair, drawing anti-Vietnam protest comics on the walls to the sounds of the Rolling Stones. This was Marko Pogačnik [...] whose core parts and satellites expressed themselves in poetry, visual poetry, drawing, performances, and short films. They were students. They were hippies. Or as Pogačnik says: 'We listened to the Beatles, Bob Dylan, the Rolling Stones, and the WHO. We wore long hair and necklaces made from discarded things, pinecones, or deer excrement. We were extremely peaceful.'
>
> The three, Pogačnik, Iztok Geister Plamen, and Milenko Matanović, were part of the editorial board of the student magazine *Tribuna,* which had its premises in the building of Kazina in Ljubljana at the time. This led to various happenings in the neighboring Zvezda Park, such as tracing a person's shadow with chalk or blowing up transparent plastic tubes with a vacuum cleaner. The pages of *Tribuna* were populated by their drawings, poems, visual poetry, theoretical treatises, nonsense, and stunts. The movement initially wanted to focus on film, but the medium was not easily accessible, and visual poetry as typewriter art was cheap. They had their own stall under the arcades of the Casino, where they sold – matches. They bought boxes of matches, stuck their own batch of stickers on them, and resold them for the same price. Next to that, they sold DIY books, the so-called OHO Edition, hand-printed with a machine for printing partisan documents.
>
> [Oleami 2019]

In the first half of 1970, the artists were preparing materials and later taking part in the exhibition *Information* (curated by Kynaston McShine

[3] The starting point of Reism is an anti-anthropocentric stance, starting from the wholeness of being and unusually focused on things, i.e. 'the truth' – because the Oho saw them as the most submissive to man. It contrasts the hierarchical scale with the world of equivalent existent entities forming horizontal relations with each other. The equation of the previously higher and lower is done through 'reistic gazing,' as a mere obscuring of what is sensually present – to the eyes, to the ears, to the touch.

and held at MOMA in New York between 2 July and 20 September 1970). After that, they decided not to take part in the art world any longer, therefore four of them with their families and friends in April 1971 established a commune on an abandoned farm in a small village on the western side of Slovenia called Šempas (Zabel 1994, 134):

> The Šempas Family, as it was called, was founded on ideas that had been developed during OHO's last period. The main idea was to discover a way of life based on balanced relations within the family and between the group and its immediate contexts. [...] Nor did they stop making art. [...] The Šempas Family may be considered the conclusion of OHO. The group's history came to an end when Matanović, Nez, and Šalamun left Šempas about a year after the community was established.

Disco FV and Škuc Gallery

Since the mid-1980s, social and political developments have also brought significant changes to the field of art. In 1976, Yugoslavia, by re-establishing self-management, attempted to establish direct democracy, still, of course, within the framework of the state's one-party system. Because of self-management, the communist bureaucracy flourished, with each of the social structures operating semi-independently and participating in the decision-making chain. When enterprises, which were still state-owned, were given the possibility of self-determination, they preferred to invest the resources they had acquired in wages rather than in reinvestment.

International funds were spent by the Yugoslav republics on unproductive mega-projects. These included investment in infrastructure for the 1984 Sarajevo Olympics, which did not live its own life after the event. The international debt grew and an economic crisis with rising inflation set in. This, together with the death of President Tito, who had led the country since its liberation in 1945, and the escalation of national issues among the country's economically diverse nations and nationalities, led to new Serbian and Slovenian political programmes (*Memorandum,* Srpska akademija nauka i umjetnosti, Belgrade 1986 and *Nova Revija 57,* Ljubljana 1987). Both programmes envisaged finding solutions to the problems outside the borders of Yugoslavia, which Slovenia did with its independence in 1991.

Civil society was awakening in the Slovene national space, heralded by

the alternative and subcultural scene. This emerged as the first alternative mass movement in the history of the Slovene Republic (Borčić 2013). The episode of art that did not follow the traditional art world patterns and developed twofold outside of them, repeated itself in the late 70s. With its cores in the ŠKUC Gallery and Disco FV in Ljubljana, two groups, one established mostly from students from the Academy of Fine Arts in Ljubljana and Faculty of Humanities in Ljubljana in ŠKUC and the other coming mostly from the Faculty of Social Sciences in Ljubljana and the established Borghesia group and Disco FV, fought the system again with a different kind of art related to the punk movement, that was at that time strongly sweeping over Slovenia.

In the early 1980s, the Ljubljana subcultural and alternative scene began to take shape, first within the student institutions that emerged because of the student movement in the 1970s, and then independently, at least in terms of content. Like the historical avant-garde and the neo-avant-garde of OHO before it, it looked for inspiration mainly in alternative mass culture, which also came from the West. The poles of 1980s visuality – the world of canonized fine art and the subcultural scene – operated largely separately. There are many differences between them in their modes of organization, ideologies, and expression. These differences are manifested in visuality on an extrinsic as well as intrinsic level.

The alternative scene was established within institutional frameworks (ŠKD Forum, ŠKUC), but these were smaller, more flexible organizations that reacted more easily and quickly to the demands of alternative contemporaneity than the established galleries and museums, which were also more in the sights of the authorities. The subcultural and alternative scene was established in spaces that were not only dedicated to fine art, but were also linked to other art genres and, above all, to culture more broadly. Special emphasis was placed on popular bands, which also provided the scene with a more mass and different audience from that which frequented the 'mainstream' state and municipal galleries. The art part of the subcultural scene was initially deliberately working within the framework of mass culture and always reflected the socio-political everyday life in which it was produced (Zabel 2003, 20):

> The visual language of the 1980s subculture and the alternative scene made a conscious decision to contrast itself with traditional fine art and its conception. […] The visual language so conceived is aware of the social conditionality of painting, sculpture, etc. […] The re-

jection of Pop Art and Hyperrealism was repeated in the 1980s, e.g., as a rejection of Neue Slowenische Kunst's perverse strategies.

Several factors are relevant for understanding the characteristics of the visual language of the alternative and subcultural scene of the 1980s and its causes. The visuality reflected and was based on the specific socio-political situation of the Slovene space, but it was also established as a reaction to the specific situation in Slovene visual art. The art system, in exhibition practice, art criticism, theory, and history, was, despite some exceptions, rather closed to other forms of thinking about art and culture. Artworks or discourses that radically linked art to everyday life, mass culture, humour, marginalized groups, politics, or the economic situation in the country were almost non-existent. Fine art institutions operated in a self-contained system that allowed for occasional exhibition 'excesses,' but the dominant discourse obscured the interconnectedness of art, society, politics, and capital by excluding certain issues. One of the purposes of subculture and alternative culture, which began to develop in Slovenia in the late 1970s, was precisely the link between artistic and socio-political goals.

It seems that the distinction between the production of the subcultural scene and established fine art is not so easily made by emphasizing the use of a particular medium. On the one hand, subculture and alternatives have produced works that can be placed within the (extended) notion of painting or printmaking (graffiti, graffiti painting, posters, etc.), while on the other hand, the medium of video has also been used by fine artists and has already entered art institutions. The 1979 survey exhibition of Slovenian art, Miha Vipotnik's video installation *Videogram 4,* was exhibited at the Jakopič Gallery, and Borghesia released its first videocassette *Tako mladi* in 1985 in co-production with the institution of Cankarjev dom, where the first public presentation of the project was also held. More important than the choice of medium for the analysis of the two scenes dealing with visuality is where and how the work was made, where it was shown, who watched it, and how and what ideology it served.

The alternative and subcultural scene was the first alternative in the then-socialist republic of Slovenia that grew into a social movement in the national space.[4] In the second half of the 1970s, there was a collaboration between the visual art of ŠKUC Gallery and the Museum of Mod-

[4] Barbara Borčić (1994, 51) has described 'FV, or the broader Ljubljana alternative and subcultural scene as the most massive cultural movement in Slovenia to date.'

ern Art, but with the departure of Taja Brejc in 1980, a new generation came to ŠKUC. Dušan Mandić began to run the gallery and introduced a programme of 'new conceptual practice,' but when the artist co-founded the Irwin group in 1983, he was replaced at ŠKUC by Barbara Borčić and Marina Gržinić. The alternative and subcultural scene evolved mostly around FV 112/15, better known as Disco FV:[5]

> We chose the name by taking the Dictionary of Foreign Terms from France Verbinc and each person wrote 2 numbers on a piece of paper. Then we decided that the first number was the page, and the second number was the dictionary entry on that page. So, it came out 112 through 15, so 112 the page and 15 the dictionary entry, which was 'c'est la guerre.' But that is irrelevant. The important thing was that FV 112/15 was an acronym, which was a trend among the punk bands, and it didn't even really matter what it meant.

From 1981, a group of students, together with the new wave of the punk scene, created a plural and autonomous scene that included theatre activities, dances, concerts, video recordings, the formation of their own bands, and multimedia art actions. In the basement of the fourth block in the student housing, the scene developed around the Disco FV,[6] while the second part was occupied by ŠKUC.[7] Both spaces developed a large-scale multimedia production, which (especially in FV) was linked to popular band music. A 'second scene' emerged, where visual art was only one of the possible expressions and which, with its own institutions and its own way of working, lived a parallel life. It was only at the beginning of the new century, with artefacts and documentation, that this became part of the canon of visual art, something that the protagonists themselves did not want in the early days of the movement.

The actors in the scene used a diverse range of visual media. What was produced in Disco FV was very much connected to the theatre and music scene, but also transcended it. A particularly important element of the

[5] Interview with Neven Korda by Daša Tepina, conducted on 24 May, 2022 (kept in the authors' personal archive).

[6] Zemira Alajbegović, Dragan Čolaković Šilja, Goran Devide, Sergej Hrvatin, Aldo Ivančić, Nerina Kocjančič, Neven Korda, Anita Lopojda, Mirela Miklavčič, Dario Seraval and others.

[7] Video production manager Marijan Osole-Max, Borders of Control No. 4 (Barbara Borčić, Dušan Mandić, Marina Gržinić, and Aina Šmid), Keller (alias Andrej Lupinc), Peter Vezjak, Igor Virovac, Kollaps (Bojan Štokelj, Venko Cvetkov, and Darja Prelec), Emil Memon and others.

artistic aspect of FV was the space of the disco, which could be described in art historical terminology as a collective, holistic artwork (Vidmar 1983, 44):

> A special component – and an unusual attraction – of the FV Disco is the walls of the corridor in the anteroom of non-dance communication: these walls, covered with a multitude of scribbled, spray-painted, painted, lacquered and xeroxed words, band names, meaningful and nonsensical phrases, 'classic' street and new anarcho-punk, even political calls, slogans, signs and texts, all this colourful chaos of FV walls is one of the most fascinating memorials of this space – it is similar to the famous spray-painted compositions of the New York Metro [...] with fewer aesthetics – and mythology, of course – and more 'politics': this gives the space an additional, symbolic meaning, which has been especially felt in the last year – after the police crackdown on street graffiti. [...] The Student disco is a spatial-visual variant of punk as a 'symptom that has spoken' – or rather, has drawn itself, painted itself on the wall in an elemental, emotional, often polarized desire to mark its presence.

Already towards the end of the 1970s, the first graffiti had appeared on the walls of Ljubljana. These were mainly slogans, names of punk bands, and signs. When the city authorities carried out a campaign to clean the walls and act against graffiti writers, graffiti inhabited the walls of Disco FV. In this 'ghetto,' the artists were safe from persecution and the FV corridor became a substitute for urban space (Bavčar 1984, 103–463).

In 1982, graffiti painting appeared. With the screening of the video *Icons of Glamour – Echoes of the Death* of the group Borders of Control No. 4 and an evening of selected music in December 1982, Dušan Mandić, as a member of the group, decorated the corridor of Disko FV with photocopies of graffiti, 5 × 2 m, drawn on paper, based on a photograph of a graffiti image of four homosexuals, taken from the *Art Press* magazine. Also, on the occasion of another project, *Borders of Control No. 4,* a graffiti image appears with the stencil-painted text 'Hey you man watch me, you might be right I am a tool, but why don't you tell me, if you know a better tool' (Gržinić 2003, 170).

Mandić exhibited the graffiti with the image of homosexuals during a sexual act again in August 1983 at the FV in Šiška, and in November of the same year, he exhibited a photocopy of the graffiti and a graffiti image of a red male sexual organ made with stencils as part of the sympo-

sium What Is the Alternative on the Dance Floor. This was also a time of homosexuality outspokenly stepping into the world. In the same month, Roman Uranjek, Marko Kovačič, Andrej Savski, and Dušan Mandić organized an exhibition of Sv. Urh graffiti on the FV dance floor. The graffiti, which depicted partisans being brutally tortured and shot, were based on templates – photographs from a book containing documentary material about the events at Sv. Urh during the Second World War. In a text for Radio Študent, two of the authors mentioned the connection between the exhibition and the ritual of dancing on the same premises. It was therefore a way of thinking about visual art that went beyond the visual and considered the specificity of the space in which the work is presented.

The Kollaps group also produced graffiti, which was on display at the FV in November and December 1983; in 1984, the R Irwin S group (Borut Vogelnik, Roman Uranjek, Dušan Mandić, Andrej Savski, Marko Kovačič) organized the exhibition *Erotic Graffiti with Pornographic Motives*. These finally established the pornographic content that was present in the postcards of Soldier D. M. (Dušan Mandić), The placement of pornography in the image, and thus in the field of ideology, was a radical intervention that represented the specificity of Ljubljana's subcultural production at the time in relation to the market-regulated divide between pornographic and artistic production in the West (Španjol 2003, 87).

In FV and ŠKUC, the content and visuality, the way of production and presentation have definitively erased the difference between popular and high culture. Subcultural and alternative art production was aimed at an audience very different from that attracted by gallery exhibitions. Those who came to Disko FV and ŠKUC were those who liked to listen to different music – mainly punk, hardcore, and new wave, but also those who did not feel at home in the established cultural institutions and who wanted different, critical thinking and a different cultural offer. The proverbially closed world of fine art was opened for a few years in the framework of FV Disco precisely because of the mixing of expressive forms, even to those who would otherwise have remained outside the world of those 'initiated' into fine art.

In the 1980s, the subcultural and alternative movement in Ljubljana involved projects that combined several media. Often, painting and video, photography, and installation were exhibited to the accompaniment of punk, hardcore, or new wave. FV mixed gallery culture, mass culture, and what was coming from the street. The subculture offered motifs, themes, and the use of media that were still largely unacceptable in the context of

fine art as it was presented in gallery spaces at the time. It introduced the previously taboo themes of crude sexuality, marginalized social groups, violence, different humour, lifestyles, and images. A new aesthetic was established – an aesthetic of the ugly, the dilettante, the marginal, the crude, the collaged, and the mass. The material and ideological possibilities gave rise to the DIY Principle, which is the main principle of self-organization as a core principle for establishing counter-power relations which provoke the hierarchical relations in the established order. This has led to a crude look in which, in conjunction with direct, often political messages, and with technological possibilities – the use of the photocopier and of pre-existing images whose meaning is perverted by their transfer into a new context – photographs and images from the mass media have been welcomed with open arms. We can speak of a key principle of creation: the principle of collaging pre-existing images. Posters, graffiti, videos, etc. are jigsaw puzzles of parts taken out of their original context and inserted into new contexts. Changing the context in which an image appears adds a new way of reading it, and this is often used by subcultures to criticize existing social reality. The principle of collage has been brought to its peak by Borghesia's multimedia projects, which are themselves collages. They consist of pre-existing independent video works, inserts of theatre performances, samples of music, pre-existing visual material, etc.

The motives of the visual material produced by the alternative and subculture are highly explicit and include political images, images of violence, catastrophes, or pornography; the latter was itself a political statement in this period, as it spoke of political bondage that forbids and represses and does not allow, for example, images of different sexuality even in the field of mass culture. The scene constantly points to a repressed but existing society of prohibition. The message is often on the surface and easy to read, but the materials, in addition to the original clarity, often offer details that the art material uses to further reinforce, and sometimes subvert, the original statement. In his essay *Come, Close Close to Me, I Tell You Man You Will See …* Dušan Mandić (1983, 38–39) enumerated the characteristics of video in the descent from high to mass culture. Many of them can be applied to the entire visual expressiveness of alternative and subcultural art of the 1980s. This artistic production was interested in 'entertainment rather than hermetic seriousness,' yet it cannot be accused of not expressing important political and social ideas. Mandić goes on to say that in the works 'political action rather than political rhetoric is evident and inherent.' The visuals of subcultural production 'are comic

(mocking) rather than tragic.' Many of them are characterized by humour, which ranges from the momentary quirks of early posters to the subtle statements with which punk 'subverts the cynical workings of ideology' (Žižek 1984, 122–129).

The creator of the art material can be anyone, a trained artist editing a video or a disco-goer with an incomplete primary school degree who writes graffiti on the wall. Both are equal, both works were – at least in the early phase of the FV Disco – equally on display to the visitor. It is also true that many of the protagonists of the scene, especially those who trained as artists, later entered the art system. This abandoned another ideal – the ideal of the creativity of the individual, which was only possible within the framework of subculture and alternative culture as a broader social movement. In the mid-1980s, more prominent names emerged within the subculture, notably the NSK, and within the Irwin group, which soon after its foundation crossed over into the field of 'high art.'

Anti-Militarism and Squatting of Metelkova

The end of the 1980s and the early 1990s were a period of great tension and drastic social changes, from the socialist transition to capitalism to the growing nationalist tendencies that fuelled the Yugoslav wars. As mentioned above, in the early 1980s, the subculture was very pronounced and was further strengthened by the new wave of punk and hardcore scenes in Ljubljana. In addition to the scene in Ljubljana, the alternative scene also developed in Maribor, where it formed in circles around the Radio Marš initiative, the *Katedra* newspaper, MKC, AGD Gustaf, Front Rock, and so on. These subcultures often overlapped in their practice of anti-authoritarian ideology ranging from systemically promoted self-organization to more autonomous practices such as critique of institutionalization, assembly decision-making, etc. A 1982 Analytical report of RSNZ (Republican Secretariat for Internal Affairs of the Socialist Republic of Slovenia) stated, 'It is no accident that in this world of thought, full of naiveté and speculation, punk is used as a synonym for the true progressive youth who reject all organized political action because it excludes human freedom, rejects authority, and accepts an "anarchism that has never compromised itself in social practice". Punk is currently the most vital part of the youth subculture that represents a resistance to real socialism and young Stalinism' (Arhiv Republike Slovenije, 1931, MA-701_108, 9).

Under these conditions, there were very strong pacifist and anti-militaristic tendencies inside of these subcultures, which came to the forefront, especially in the 1990s, when they focused on the struggle to turn mil-

itary facilities into cultural ones which would be autonomous. One of the most widely known was the 1993 occupation of Metelkova in Ljubljana, a former military barracks that remained in the centre of Ljubljana after independence as an empty reminder of militarization and the tragedy of the Yugoslav wars. A diverse multitude of associations, groups, and individuals, united in a common association, the Network for Metelkova, decided to use the occupation to draw attention to the strong anti-militarist agenda of the time and to demand that military facilities be transformed into spaces for culture and art (more in Bibič 2003; Pavlišič 2013). At the same time, various collectives were formed. These were mainly concerned with anti-militarism and ecology, partly because of the war in the former Yugoslavia (e.g. Kolektiv anarho-pacifistične akcije (The Collective of Anarchist Pacifist Action) (K.A.P.A.), the punk collective T.O.T.A.L.I.T.A.R., Škrati (The Elves collective), and the Ecological Anarchist Initiative) (Crnkić and Tepina 2014, 25).[8] The occupation of the former military bakery in Maribor is also worth mentioning here. Like the occupation of Metelkova, the protagonists of the occupation founded an informal organization, the Magdalena Network, which tried to acquire premises and organize the individual actors into a whole.[9]

In the 1990s the anarcho-punk subculture was based on DIY culture. This had a significant impact not only on the aesthetics of the subculture but also on self-publishing, where a strong culture of fanzine publishing developed alongside the proliferation of music production.[10] The

[8] Their actions include critical fairs and demonstrations against McDonald's greed, nuclear weapons, and GMO products. The opening of the first anarchist info point, Škratova čitalnica (the Dwarf Reading Room), was a co-production between K.A.P.A. and the Dwarfs, who founded the KUD Anarhiv in 1999, organizing discussions, meetings, and presentations, while Škratova čitalnica was responsible for the distribution of radical, libertarian and anarchist literature (Crnkić and Tepina 2014, 25).

[9] Later, in 1996, the organization was formalized as the Pekarna Institute of the Magdalena Network. For more information on Pekarna and its structure, principles, etc. see their webpage (Pekarna Magdalenske mreže Maribor n. d.).

[10] This led to the publication of numerous magazines and fanzines, such as *Svojtok* and *13. brat* (13th brother). Also worth mentioning is the Kolektiv nenasilnega delovanja (Collective for Nonviolent Action) (K.N.D.), which was active from 1989 to 1998, during which time it disseminated anarchist ideas and was involved in the publication of the newsletter *Preporod – časopis slovenskih anarhistov za svobodno družbo* (Preporod – Newspaper of Slovenian Anarchists for a Free Society) as well as numerous leaflets and other propaganda materials on topics such as antimilitarism, ecology, antifascism, criticism of parliamentary democracy, sexism, etc. (Federation for Anarchist Organising 2009, 8).

late 1990s are particularly important for the emergence of a new wave of squatting, which was also linked to the emergence of new social movements. For example, in 1999 the Cukrarna squat took place in Ljubljana, which was followed by social, political, and cultural squats known as Vila Mara, AC Molotov, and Galicia. Similar autonomous spaces began to emerge in other parts of Slovenia.[11] The squatting movement was on many levels always interconnected with the wider social and political struggles, from the participation in the alter-globalization movements and No-NATO campaign to demonstrations against the war in Iraq, which was followed by student revolts (2006–2007, 2009–2010), solidarity with workers and syndicalist struggles, and many others.

Autonomous spaces and squatting had an important interconnection with art and revolutionary aesthetics. In the history of social movements, we can observe the strong relationship between the strength of the movements and the development of their own cultural base – the development of the counterculture, which is characterized by a spirit of resistance. The creation of its own cultural base was a starting point and an agency of counter-power for building diverse social movements. One of the most important crossroads was creating autonomous social and cultural centres, which were a consequence of direct actions of occupations of empty buildings, called squatting. In squatted spaces art and visual image had an important or even focal role. We could emphasize three points: art has a central role in the creation of the aesthetics of the place, and autonomous places are laboratories for experimenting with utopian social activity and relationships that are built beyond existing norms and values. Secondly, also consequently, art and autonomy are focal points as aesthetics becomes a way of life. And the third important role is the preservation of the spaces; as we can see in the example of ACC Metelkova, it played an important role as the buildings have been preserved with recognition of the place as one of significant cultural value.

Autonomous Factory Rog and Contemporary Social Movements

In 2006, the project TEMP was also the basis for the occupation of the old, abandoned bicycle factory Rog in Ljubljana, which was established

[11] Izbruhov kulturni bazen in Kranj and later TrainStation Squat, Mostovna and Ideal bar in Nova Gorica, Ambasada Štefana Kovača Marka (Štefan Kovač Marko's Embassy) in Beltinci, Sokolc (the Sokol House) in Novo Mesto, Inde in Koper, Argo in Izola, and others.

on the anarchist ideas of Hakim Bey and the concept of a Temporary Autonomous Zone. A temporarily occupied space of freedom, creativity, and action was created and was used for various projects, concerts, artistic activities, a social centre, etc. under the common name Avtonomna tovarna Rog (the Autonomous Factory Rog) – AT Rog. Rog also became an important meeting point for political struggles, from Nevidni delavci sveta (the Invisible Workers of the World, IWW) to Izbrisani (the Erased), who eventually found a space for community and resistance in the Rog Social Centre. The autonomous spaces, AKC Metelkova and AT Rog, played an important role in struggles rising from the broader social ruptures, as did the global economic crisis, which was countered by the local mass movement 150. This was followed by widespread uprisings that took place in all major Slovenian cities between 2012 and 2013. After this period another rupture followed one of the biggest social crises that emerged on the borders of the European Union in 2015. One of the central spaces for the struggle against the racist migration policies at that time was AT Rog, which also hosted many gatherings of the broader coalition of social movements and initiatives united in the Anti-Racist Front that was active in 2015–2016. This front brought together various anti-authoritarian collectives and individuals who were working on migration and refugee issues at the time with information sharing, fieldwork, community events, etc. After this very intense momentum, an attempt to evict of the entire Rog area followed in 2016, but the eviction was halted, and a court case began between the municipality and the community of AT Rog. With its numerous collectives, activities, and political-social actions, Autonomous Factory Rog also represented the struggle against gentrification until January 19, 2021, when the municipality evicted the area after fifteen years of existence, despite strong resistance. The eviction coincided with the COVID-19 pandemic and a high level of social disintegration due to strict and rigid government health measures. When there was the first COVID-19 lockdown in May 2020, diverse anti-authoritarian collectives, activists, and artists started bicycle protests in front of the governmental buildings, which led to regular protests, sit-ins, protest assemblies, and themed actions (actions of Aktiv kulturnih delavk in delavcev – ADDK (Active of Cultural Workers) in front of the Ministry of Culture; a coalition of ecological initiatives carried out many diverse actions by the rivers, outside of the Ministry of the Environment and Spatial Planning and other institutions), etc. (Grafenauer and Tepina 2022, 409–428).

Conclusion

As can be deduced from this short overview and series of visual examples from different periods in the context of the area of one of the post-Yugoslavian republics, there has been a strong connection between art, autonomous spaces, and social movements reacting to political developments. This tangle created a space for the development of critical political culture, both through the broader intertwining of the art scene with social movements and through the strong presence of visual and performative images in the movements. At certain historical moments (e.g. Komuna 7, Šempas, Disko FV, ACC Metelkova, AT Rog) we can also speak of the counterculture, when it goes beyond the artistic frameworks such as cultural institutions, galleries, etc., and establishes its own, based on non-dominant discourse and self-organization principles.

Art in social movements has an enormous potential for revolutionizing aesthetics, which is also one of the essential elements of achieving fundamental social change. Together with other elements such as anti-authoritarian politics, which has a wider social impact, values, autonomous spaces, music, fashion, etc., it forms the basis for the formation of a counter-power. However, if the field of aesthetics is not completely decoded from the existing social codes, no fundamental change takes place. Hierarchical power relations easily integrate inside of art and activist movements and influence their dynamics to the extent that they become subordinated to systems of power and capital. As we observe the period of transition to capitalism, we can recognize that always when there is a gap, the code of capital inscribes it and takes control of the dynamics. These mechanisms of recuperation of anti-authoritarian politics and aesthetics allow capitalism to become an all-embracing system integrated in every pore of political and social life.

We can follow the changes in the methods and modes of pressure by the authorities and institutions, and the response to it, which is reminiscent of that shown by avant-garde movements in the past (with manifestos, rebranding/detournement, street art, and performative actions as a form of protest and art as a demand for a different collective life). We can also observe the attempt to invent alternative social relationships, which have been addressed by this protest movement on several occasions, but which have failed to find roots in the broader social dynamics. The main obstacles can be found in the repetition of the protests, normalization of radical actions, and recuperation of artists and rebellious actions in the system of

power structures. When they become a repetitive routine, they lose their potential counter-power and their strength to think beyond the imaginable. With the reduction of the protests to only demands, the protests became predictable, and the creative political space begins to shrink.

The capitalist recuperation of praxis is one of the strongest elements of contemporary suppression of revolutionary aesthetic potential and the building of political counter-power from below. It is also one of the key elements of capitalist flexibility, thus it is important to differentiate between the alternative praxis decodified through alternative social relations (horizontality, solidarity, mutual aid, etc.) and those praxes that are not or are mere simulacrums of the first (Baudrillard 1999). Numerous art projects with socially critical and aesthetically conspicuous content have their recognition or/and popularity incorporated by economic value, with which they are easily re-appropriated into the existing social order.

The aesthetic revolutionary potential achieves dispersion momentum but is closed by reduced demand. Capitalism has an intensely flexible spectrum that can, through constant crisis, adapt to new social circumstances. However, it is possible to observe the point at which capitalism needs to brutally adapt to the new realm. The older and more sophisticated methods of recuperation and reification of every aspect of the individual's life are no longer sufficient, thus we are facing the more autocratic phase, which is on the rise.

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Anthropos 56 (1): 59–78 | ISSN 0587-5161 | E-ISSN 2630-4082

Postajanje tovarišev v boju: umetnost in skrb za nečloveški svet ter partizanska subjektivnost v jugoslovanskem narodnoosvobodilnem boju

Gal Kirn
Univerza v Ljubljani, Slovenija
gal.kirn@ff.uni-lj.si

Povzetek. Besedilo izhaja iz koncepta partizanske ekologije in ga postavlja v kontekst druge svetovne vojne ter jugoslovanskega partizanskega boja (NOB) proti fašistični okupaciji. To besedilo interpretira vrsto partizanskih umetniških del, ki jim je uspelo upodobiti neizmerno senzibilnost za nečloveški svet, rastline, živali ter zlasti gozdove. Teza članka predpostavlja, da si je partizansko gibanje, nasprotno od fašistične okupacije in dominacije nad ljudmi ter naravo, prizadevalo graditi solidarnost med partizani in živalmi/naravo. Članek obravnava nekatere to interpretacijo podpirajoče trope v pesmih, proznih delih, risbah in grafičnem gradivu, kjer gozd postane zatočišče, mesto upora in obljuba osvoboditve. Nadalje članek opiše vznik nastajajoče politične partizanske subjektivnosti, ki vključuje zatirane, a tudi raznolike živali, krdelo volkov, požgana drevesa, ptice, ki kljub trnovim vejam še naprej žvrgolijo, polža kot figuro in kot primer trdoživega upora ter osvobojen gozd. Demonstrativno prikažemo potek procesa, ki ga Deleuze in Guattari imenujeta »postajanje človeška žival«, pa tudi metamorfozo nečloveških figur v »tovariše« v borbi proti fašizmu. Besedilo se zaključi s poskusom uskladitve jugoslovanskega partizanskega boja s splošnejšo razvojno linijo protikolonialnih in ekoloških bojev.

Ključne besede: NOB, Jugoslavija, partizanska umetnost, gozd kot prostor osvoboditve, postajati človeška žival, požgano drevo, figura polža, odpor, trdoživost, partizanska ekologija, zapatisti

Becoming Comrades in Struggle: Art and Care for Non-Human World and Partisan Subjectivity in the Yugoslav People's Liberation Struggle

Abstract. The article is based on the concept of partisan ecology and is deployed in the context of the Second World War and the Yugoslav

https://doi.org/10.26493/2630-4082.56.59-78

partisan struggle (NOB) against fascist occupation. It interprets a series of partisan artworks that succeeded in depicting an immense sensitivity to the non-human world, plants, animals and forests. The thesis of the article argues that the partisan movement, in contrast to the fascist occupation and domination over people and nature, sought to build solidarity between partisans and animals/nature. The article examines this thesis in diverse poems, prose works, drawings and graphic material, and is focused on the process of transformation: for example, how the forest first becomes a refuge, then a place of resistance and a promise of liberation. The article goes on to describe the emergence of political subjectivity, where the oppressed are joined by diverse animals, a pack of wolves, burnt trees, birds that continue to chirp despite the thorny branches, the snail as a figure of resilience, and the liberated forest. This is what Deleuze and Guattari call becoming a human animal, as well as the metamorphosis of non-human figures into comrades in the struggle against fascism. The text concludes with an attempt to expand the Yugoslav partisan struggle to the contemporary situation.

Key Words: partisan art, partisan ecology, forest as site of liberation, national liberation struggle, Yugoslavia, figure of snail, resilience, resistance, becoming animal, Deleuze, Zapatistas

Teoretski uvod: misliti po partizansko?

Izraz *misliti po partizansko* nas napotuje na slavno izjavo Karla Marxa (Marx, Bloch in Rossi 2008, 25), ki dejansko zaobsega širok nabor področij, in sicer na slovito 11. tezo o Feuerbachu: »Filozofi so svet samo različno interpretirali, gre za to, da ga spremenimo.« Ta vizionarska izjava je, ne brez kanca ironije, spodbudila številne nove filozofske in drugačne interpretacije, ki so svet ponovno interpretirale. Njena začetna naloga ostaja kakopak nerešena, predvsem v smislu, kako naj spremenimo svet, kdo smo »mi«, ki naj ga spremenimo, in s kakšnimi sredstvi. V Marxovem delu ne najdemo enoznačnega odgovora, prav tako pa obstajajo odstopanja med različnimi izhodišči in praksami, med poezijo, ki mora sanjati o prihodnosti, in zgodovino, ki mora zajeti dinamiko kapitala in (partizansko) razredno subjektivnost, ki še ne obstaja. Ker ni mogoče izolirati posameznih praks družbene transformacije, se poglavitno partizansko vprašanje glasi, na kakšen način lahko heterogene prakse – politične, teoretične in umetniške – prispevajo k boju za osvoboditev in spreminjanje sveta.

Ko razmišljamo o tem, kaj pomeni biti partizan, in ko se srečamo s partizansko zapuščino v (post)jugoslovanskem kontekstu, moramo začeti z

dialektične pozicije: biti danes partizan pomeni, po eni strani, zavzeti kritično distanco do prevladujočega nacionalističnega zgodovinskega revizionizma in političnih aparatov, ustanovljenih na podlagi ideje etnično očiščenih držav, po drugi pa ponovno soočenje s partizansko zapuščino, ki je bila nekdaj del uradne ideologije socialistične Jugoslavije. To nelagodno pozicioniranje do zapuščine nekdanje države pa nas vendarle ne bi smelo odvračati od premisleka in reaktivacije ter reapropriacije protifašistične in emancipacijske zapuščine ter kulturnih in političnih virov, ki lahko pripomorejo obnoviti »tradicijo zatiranih« (Benjamin 2015), ali celo od sodelovanja pri grajenju transverzalne solidarnosti.

Če se želimo vrniti k raznoliki in transformativni zapuščini partizanskega – narodnoosvobodilnega – boja, moramo odkrito priznati, da to ni bil le negativen boj proti okupatorju, temveč boj, porojen v gozdovih partizanske Jugoslavije, ki je osvobodil okupirana ozemlja ter vzpostavil alternativno politično in kulturno organizacijo. Za ta uspeh je zaslužna ljudska mobilizacija zatiranih, zlasti delavskih množic nepismenih kmetov, mladine in žensk v letih 1941–1945.[1]

Čeravno so bili jugoslovanski odporniki eni redkih v Evropi, ki so se uspeli osvoboditi sami, pa partizanskega delovanja ne moremo zvesti zgolj na vojaško gverilsko taktiko. Enako veliko vlogo so imele namreč politične, predvsem pa kulturne in umetniške dejavnosti, ki so postale najpomembnejše orožje množičnega ustvarjanja. V štirih letih osvobodilnega boja so množice anonimnih pesnikov – zvečine samoizobraženih, mnogi med njimi pa so se branja in pisanja šele začeli učiti – ustvarile okrog 40.000 pesmi.

V nemogočih okoliščinah materialnega pomanjkanja in neobstoječe umetnostne infrastrukture so partizanski umetniki ustvarili na tisoče risb, zgodb, črtic, celo dram, grafik, kipov, fotografij ter celo simfonij in filmov.[2] Vojna zatorej ni bila izključno temačno obdobje grozovitih dejanj, temveč tudi proces kulturne revolucije, ki je prinesel emancipacijo tistim, ki so bili v predvojni Kraljevini Jugoslaviji najbolj izkoriščani. NOB je tako že od vsega začetka povezan z utopičnim in transformativnim vidikom: projektom gradnje nove Jugoslavije, ki se ne bo končal s koncem vojne (Kirn 2022a). Tako se ta utopična, avantgardna ideja prelamlja tudi znotraj kasnejših tendenc in prelomov v socialistični Jugoslaviji.

[1] Ta proces je podrobno opisan v Kirn (2022a).

[2] Za najpodrobnejši prikaz partizanske umetnosti, osredotočene na poezijo v času druge svetovne vojne, glej Komelj (2009).

Partizanska ekologija?

Kako in zakaj povezati jugoslovansko partizansko-osvobodilno umetnost z ekologijo? Tu ne gre toliko za to, da predmet raziskovanja na vso silo usmerimo k modnejšemu in aktualističnejšemu branju preteklosti. Naj takoj pristavim, da v medvojnem obdobju skrb za okolje ni bila visoka teoretsko-politična prioriteta tako v kapitalistični kot socialistični modernizacijski paradigmi, a vendarle je partizansko gibanje prispevalo k drugačnemu pogledu in praksi do okolja. Nadalje, članek bo poskusil dokazati, da če danes želimo o partizanstvu govoriti onkraj nostalgije, si moramo tudi zastaviti vprašanje o povezavi med (neo)partizani in ekologijo. Če nam je mar za svet in če ga spreminjamo, potem morata, glede na podnebne spremembe ter ekološke izzive sedanjosti, razmišljanje in delovanje v tej smeri postati ena prioritetnih nalog sodobnih partizanskih prizadevanj, usmerjenih proti korporativnemu zelenemu pranju (angl. *greenwashing*) in zanikanju podnebnih sprememb. Ko upoštevamo izsledke dolgotrajnih znanstvenih raziskav, politične akcije in destruktivno transformacijo naše obstoječe realnosti, postane povsem očitno, da globalni kapitalizem ruši absolutne meje okolja in njegovih občutljivih ekosistemov. Kapitalistični razvoj je drastično spremenil našo predstavo o prihodnosti. Ne gre le za to, da je v velikem delu znanstvenofantastičnega in fantazijskega žanra že pred časom prišlo do preobrazbe utopičnega v distopični imaginarij prihodnosti (Jameson 2001) in da je že vsaj od leta 1989 znano, da se je s propadom socializma ta proces samo še okrepil (Buden 2014). Imaginarij (post)apokaliptične prihodnosti, nepredvidljivih in neobvladljivih sil narave evocirajo že sama imena, recimo temu »novopartizanskih« ekoloških gibanj oz. skupin: »izumrtje«, »upor«, »zadnja generacija« ipd. (Extinction Rebellion, Last Generation, Voluntary Human Extinction Movement).

Toda zamišljanje apokalipse in postapokaliptičnih scenarijev, kot so to že ugotavljali nekateri teoretiki, ovira plodovit kolektivni razmislek o drugačni in alternativni prihodnosti. Na to distopijo sta jasno opozarjala Jameson in Žižek, zlasti koncizno pa je to ugotovitev razvil in populariziral Mark Fisher s koncipiranjem »kapitalističnega realizma«, ki ga je opredelil kot občutek, da je samo kapitalizem edini možen politični in ekonomski sistem in da si je danes nemogoče zamisliti alternativo kapitalizmu (Fisher 2021). Tako ne preseneča, da se velik del ekološke kritične zavesti in gibanj vrti okoli religioznega oz. eshatološkega tropa zadnje sodbe in grehov, za katere bo človeštvo naposled moralo odgovarjati.

Na točki, ko ne premoremo imaginarija utopije, sedanjost in prihodnost pa vidimo vedno bolj kot del »naravnega stanja«, se nam alternativna izbira reducira na izumrtje ali preživetje. S tem pa se v našo legitimizacijo obstoječega vedno bolj vsiljuje normalizacija vojne, ekstraktivizma in najbrutalnejših oblik vladanja ter nasilja.

V članku bi rad, tudi kot protiutež tej normalizaciji naravnega stanja in odsotnosti utopije, opravil nekaj preliminarnih raziskav o jugoslovanski partizanski ekologiji, ki bi bile lahko v pomoč tako pri razmisleku o umetniški razvojni poti in dediščini zatiranih iz druge svetovne vojne kot tudi pri formuliranju jasnega – partizanskega – stališča, ki bo ustrezno odgovarjalo na pereče izzive naše sedanjosti. Zato me bodo zanimale tiste prakse partizanske ekologije, ki jim je uspelo prelomiti z obstoječim stanjem »prvotne akumulacije kapitala«.[3] To so prakse, ki si zamišljajo in že materializirajo svet, v katerem skupnost v odporu razvija sobivajoč in nepridobitniški (nekstraktivističen) odnos do narave. Za tukajšnji koncept partizanske ekologije se v tem članku naslanjam na dve besedili: kratko besedilo Andreasa Malma o maronskih upornikih in divjini ter knjigo Malcolma Ferdinanda, ki govori sicer o »dekolonialni ekologiji« ter ponuja izjemen vpogled v karibsko modernost s posebnim poudarkom na karibskem odporu proti kolonialnemu in okoljskemu zlomu. Oba avtorja prepričljivo predstavita emancipatorno gibanje nekdanjih sužnjev, ki so od 16. do sredine 20. stoletja gradili alternativne skupnosti. Nekdanji oz. osvobojeni sužnji so dobili ime »maroni« po francoski besedi *marron* oz. španski *cimarrón,* ki pomenita »divji, ubegel«, najprej uporabljani v zvezi z divjim ali pobeglim govedom, kasneje pa so v Latinski Ameriki in zlasti na karibskem otočju tako poimenovali zasužnjene ameriške domorodce ter afriške sužnje, ki so ubegli suženjstvu ter pobegnili s plantaž globoko v gozdove, hribovita in gorata področja ter močvirja, kjer vladajo težke življenjske razmere (Spitzer 1938; Arrom in García Arévalo 1986). Nenehno so bili življenjsko ogroženi, sprva kot sužnji, kasneje pa je njihov boj za svobodo potekal v gosto porasli divjini.

Kljub tem oviram pa so maronske skupnosti uspešno konstituirale drugačno, avtonomno obliko življenja, ki je med drugim temeljila na bolj organskem odnosu z naravo. Maroni so ostali vojaško pripravljeni tudi po samoosvoboditvi, bili so gverilski borci, ki so občasno napadali plantaže in osvobajali druge sužnje. V tem pogledu so se še naprej bojevali

[3] Ta koncept sem v okviru spominske politike in tranzicije v (post)jugoslovanskem kontekstu obravnaval v Kirn (2022b).

proti zatiralskim oblikam plantažnega sistema in najnasilnejšim vidikom ter oblikam »primitivne akumulacije kapitala« (Marx 2012). Po Malmovih (2018) ugotovitvah je prehod na fosilni kapitalizem notranje zvezan s kolonializmom, zato ga najmočneje občutijo prav kolonizirana ljudstva in ti, ki živijo na periferijah svetovnega sistema; medtem ko Ferdinand (2022) kot ključno spoznanje izpostavlja, da je maronski transformativni odpor ponujal utopični horizont, kar sam jemlje za temeljno in nujno epistemološko izhodišče ponovnega premisleka karibskih zgodovin.

Čeprav se omenjeni deli ne osredotočata na umetniško razsežnost maronskih uporniških bojev, pa pri svojem raziskovanju upoštevam njuna teoretska okvira. V raziskavi poskušam najprej uskladiti jugoslovanski partizanski primer s splošno nadzgodovinsko solidarnostjo/dediščino, k čemur je pozival že Walter Benjamin (2015), ko je pisal o obnovitvi »tradicije zatiranih«. Pri analizi jugoslovanskega odpora proti fašistični okupaciji med drugo svetovno vojno pa še posebej upoštevam, da je ta potekal v izrazito drugačnih zgodovinskih okoliščinah in kontekstu kakor karibski. Pa vendar je mogoče kaj hitro ugotoviti, da obstaja nekaj nespregledljivih podobnosti med partizanskimi in maronskimi odporniškimi praksami ter med partizansko in maronsko senzibilnostjo za okolje. Podobno kakor maroni so se bili tudi jugoslovanski partizani – da bi preživeli in (p)ostali svobodni – prisiljeni zateči v goste gozdove, hribovja in gore Balkana.

Ti prostori zatočišča so se spremenili v prave prostore odpora in konstitutivne moči. Na osvobojenih območjih je Komunistična partija v tvornem sodelovanju s partizansko samoorganiziranim ljudstvom razvila alternativne politične in kulturne protiinstitucije. Pri ustvarjanju novega imaginarija drugačnega sveta pa je imela odločilno vlogo prav partizanska umetnost. Prav tako je treba upoštevati, da je njihov *modus operandi* temeljil na izraziti mobilnosti, saj so se osvobojena ozemlja naglo širila in izginjala, partizani pa so se pogosto morali, ponekod v roku nekaj tednov, preseljevati v povsem druge regije. Celoten osvobodilni boj lahko potemtakem razumemo kot dolgotrajno deteritorializacijsko gibanje in gverilsko vojskovanje.

Jugoslovanski protifašistični odpor ni nasprotoval zgolj fašistični okupaciji, pač pa je bil zasnovan tudi kot boj proti predvojni Kraljevini Jugoslaviji, torej usmerjen proti izkoriščanju in dominaciji nad ljudstvi ter proti sami vojni kot dominaciji nad naravo. Zato ne preseneča, da imajo narava, gozd pa tudi živali ter rastline ključno vlogo v partizanskem načinu življenja in boju ter zasedajo pomembno mesto v njihovem imaginariju, ki je formiral to, kar tu imenujemo »partizanska ekologija«. Pre-

senetljivejše pa je nemara to, da niti med najnovejšimi raziskavami partizanskega boja in partizanske umetnosti ne najdemo nobene, ki bi poglobljeno obravnavala dotično razsežnost partizanstva in njegovega razmerja do narave. Sicer obstajajo krajše analize narave v partizanskem pesništvu, ki jih je opravila Marija Stanonik (1995), Lojze Gostiša (1994) je analiziral nekatere alegorične motive živali v likovni umetnosti, Miklavž Komelj (2009, 520–528) pa je med dodatke k svoji knjigi vključil kratek pregled »postajanja živali«[4] v nekaterih partizanskih pesniških, proznih in dramskih delih. Toda v teh obravnavah umanjka širša, celostna analiza partizanske umetnosti in simbolne politike, odnosa partizanov do narave ter vloge narave v partizanski umetnosti, kar je tema tega članka in prihodnjega dela.

Partizanska breza/umetnost: med propagando in modernizmom?

Namen predstavitve in interpretacije izbranega gradiva ni kanonizirati ter povzdigovati naravo in krajino v partizanski umetnosti, marveč pokazati, kako so izbrana umetniška dela, ki so obravnavala nečloveško – rastline, gozdove in živali –, ne le postala umetniške alegorije partizanskega boja, pač pa so, prežeta z idejo osvoboditve, zavzela stran v (protifašističnem) boju. Namen prispevka ni (zgolj) dokumentiranje fašističnega terorja, razvidnega v podobah pobitih živali in požgane zemlje, temveč dokumentiranje tistih podob in pesmi, ki so k naravi pristopile dialektično in ohranile sledi tako grozljivega nasilja kot tudi emancipatornih obljub. V času fašistične nevarnosti namreč ne obstaja nič takega, kot so nedolžna narava ali drevesa, oz.: zakaj bi pravzaprav v času fašizma sploh še govorili o drevesih? To spominja na Benjaminov zagovor »politizacije estetike« nasproti fašistični »estetizaciji politike«. Nek ideal narave, povratek k bolj »naravnemu« in očiščenem okolju je bil kakopak sestavni del nacistične ideologije, dasiravno v ostrem nasprotju s siceršnjimi nacističnimi težnjami po visoki tehnološki razvitosti in modernizaciji (Benjamin 2015). Brecht je v času skokovitega porasta fašizma v svoji (1967) pesmi spraševal, ali ni govoriti o drevesih v času fašizma malodane zločin, a vendarle se moramo skupaj z njim vprašati, ali – in kako – je mogoče govoriti o naravi na partizanski, antifašistični način?

Polemika, kakšno vlogo pripisati partizanski umetnosti, se je v okviru jugoslovanskega in predvsem slovenskega osvobodilnega boja še posebej

[4] »Človekovo postajanje žival je realno, ne da bi bila žival, v katero se človek spremeni, realna« (Deleuze in Guattari 1980, 291).

zaostrila leta 1944 po javnem natečaju za (partizanske) risbe/slike. Polemika je znana kot »partizanska breza«, saj je poziv vseboval izrecno politično navodilo: če že hoče nekdo narisati drevo/brezo, potem mora biti jasno, da, povedano s točnimi besedami partizanskega umetnika Doreta Klemenčiča – Maja (1971, 13),[5] »še tako dobro naslikana breza ne more biti umetnina, če ni pod njo naslikan vsaj partizanski mitraljez«. Prikaz narave mora vsebovati neposredno reprezentacijo (vojaškega) boja, zaradi česar je bil poziv kritično ocenjen kot propagandističen in direktiven. V sočasni javni razpravi, ki je artikulirala avtonomistično držo (ki je tudi prevladala), so pozivu nemudoma nasprotovali številni komunisti in raznovrstni partizanski umetniki. Mnoge retroaktivne interpretacije te polemike – ki so se po vojni tekom socializma nadaljevale – so zatrjevale, da gre za tipično dihotomijo med socialistično realistično/propagandistično stranjo in avtonomistično, modernistično stranjo, ki si je prizadevala za avtonomijo umetnikov. Vendar pa natančno branje teh polemik pokaže, da sprti strani niti nista bili tako daleč narazen, kot bi lahko sklepali iz prvotnih kontroverz: avtonomistična (pozneje modernistična) perspektiva ni namreč nikoli kategorično trdila, da sploh obstaja nekaj takega, kot je nepolitična umetnost, ki ne bi zagovarjala nobenih (etičnih) vrednot. Še več, neizbežno je, da vsaka umetnina znotraj osvobodilnega boja postane politična; prav tako pa to, kar je veljalo za propagandistično, iz partizanske umetnosti ni izključevalo nobene posebne umetniške forme niti ne bi mogli trditi, da je bil socialistični realizem prevladujoč okvir osvobodilne umetnosti.[6]

Primeri partizanske umetnosti: narava postaja partizanska, partizani postajajo živali?

Kot izrazit primer partizanskega drevesa je mogoče izpostaviti risbo, ki je postala znamenita partizanska grafika, imenovana *Ožgana tepka*.

To delo je ustvaril France Mihelič, eden bolj znanih slovenskih ekspresionističnih grafikov, ki je izdelal precej obsežen grafični portfelj, v katerem (mrtva) narava in požgana drevesa zasedajo pomembno mesto. V nasprotju z uveljavljeno interpretacijo motiva ožgane hruške predstav-

[5] Glej Močnik (2016, 32). Za daljšo razpravo o politični angažiranosti in modernističnih, realističnih ter avantgardističnih tendencah v levičarski in partizanski umetnosti glej tudi diskusijo med Komeljem in Močnikom v isti številki *Slavica tergestina* (Komelj 2016).

[6] Ponovno bi usmeril na omenjeno diskusijo med Komeljem in Močnikom, ki sva jo uredila s Habjanom v zgoraj omenjeni številki *Slavice tergestine*.

Slika 1

France Mihelič, *Ožgana tepka* (z dovoljenjem Muzeja novejše in sodobne zgodovine Slovenije)

ljam razmišljanje, da tega motiva ne gre razumeti le kot emblema fašistične vojne. Resda drži, kot je to ugotavljala Tina Fortič Jakopič, da požgano drevo predstavlja žrtev fašistične vojne, toda sam bi to interpretacijo nadgradil še z dvema poudarkoma. Najprej predlagam, da požganega drevesa ne dojemamo le kot prispodobo žrtve vojne, ampak kot »materialno pričo« vojne. Kot drugo pa menim, da (avtorjeva) osamitev in izpostavitev drevesa, kar ga naredi avtonomnega nasproti pokrajini, ne olepša toliko sledov nasilja, kolikor poudari pomen upirajoče se rastline in vztrajanja upora v krajini. Tudi Komelj izpostavi precej antimilitaristično držo Miheliča, ko zapiše (2016, 60), da »Mihelič trdi, da so drevesa pomembna prav v svoji konkretnosti in tujosti in da je ravno pozicija, s katere se zavemo njihovega pomena, tudi pozicija, s katere se lahko upremo vsakršnim poskusom estetizacije vojnega opustošenja«, zaradi česar je ta pozicija »antimilitaristična«. Čeprav je ta del gozda mrtev, pa njegova grozljiva forma vztrajno ostaja in jo je zato mogoče razumeti kot enega izrazitih primerov partizanske trdoživosti, trdoživosti boja – kot emblem partizanske ekologije.

Drug takšen presunljiv vizualni grafični izdelek je ustvaril hrvaški likovnik in grafik Marijan Detoni. Svoja dela o naravi najbogateje nagradi v svoji grafični mapi Plodovi vzburjenja (hrv. *Plodovi uzbudjenja*), ki nastane na samem začetku vojne (1941). Na prvi pogled je videti, da avtor do narave, različnih vizualnih tropov in morfologije rastlin pristopa na romanticističen način, vendar pa narava, različne rože in rastline s približevanjem detajlov postanejo grozeče, preraščajo meje in zadobijo celo pošastno podobo. V tem bi lahko brali vizualno referenco na Baudelairjeve *Rože zla,* ki so prav tako intervenirale v umirjajoče buržoazne horizonte morale.[7] Detonijev proces odstiranja in vzburjenja med »plodovi mišljenja« lahko razumemo kot »trganje okov«, ki je tukaj umeščeno v določen upor rastlin proti grozeči brutalnosti vojne in okupacije. Lahko bi rekli, da upor rastlin ponazarja tudi prihodnji upor še neobstoječih partizanov, ki bo prav tako vzklil v gozdovih Jugoslavije. V nekoliko bolj psihoanalitičnem smislu bi lahko tudi rekli, da to monstruozno izraščanje iz narave predstavlja realno, grozljive vojne okoliščine, ki nikogar ne pustijo nedotaknjenega, tudi same narave ne, obenem pa nas že pripravljajo na samo grozljivo nujnost upora proti takšnim okoliščinam. Detonijevo dediščino plodov, ki zaenkrat še ni dobila mnogo pozornosti, gre brati kot neke vrste bestiarij oz. favnarij partizanskih rastlin, nečloveškega sveta, ki budi in buri partizansko domišljijo.

Če se vrnem k Miheliču, ki je že med bojem zaslovel z grafičnim izdelkom, ki ga je soustvaril v sodelovanju z Nikolajem Pirnatom, osupljivim grafičnim zemljevidom *Naš boj,* pa je njegovo najbolj vizionarsko in navdihujoče grafično delo mogoče najti v njegovi seriji oz. ciklu risb *Apokalipsa.* Miheliču je uspelo zajeti vso razsežnost uničenja vasi, ljudi, narave, sledove nasilja, posiljevanja in mučenja, kar tvori apokaliptično krajino, ki jo težko zajameta fotografski in filmski objektiv. Ta izstopajoča risba, ki je kasneje postala tudi grafika oz. linorez, se imenuje *Sledovi.*

Tina Fortič Jakopič (2020, 23) trdi, da prav ta risba »povzema fazo popolnega uničenja in obenem prikazuje trenutek, ko se vse umiri in utihne […] edini preživeli bitji sta dve vrani. Edini preživeli bitji sta živali.« To »upočasnjevanje« je simptomatično, saj večina drugih Miheličevih podob in grafik predstavlja gibanje, ljudi, partizanov, fašistov ter drugih figur. V primerjavi z njimi sta tako *Ožgana tepka* kot *Sledovi* videti tihožitji vojne, kjer življenje obmiri, zaradi česar je oba izdelka mogoče razumeti kot nek

[7] Čeprav je bil Baudelaire poznan po favoriziranju umetnega nasproti naravnemu, vsaj del njegovega opusa lahko čitamo tudi skozi to alternativnejšo optiko; glej tudi Pegram (2012).

Slika 2 Marijan Detoni, grafična mapa *Cvjetovi mašte* (z dovoljenjem Muzeja suvremene umetnosti Beograd)

tragični rezultat vojne. Vojno gibanje nemalokrat – tudi zaradi ustaljenih reprezentacij vojne – »krasi« dinamika, gibanje, eksplozije, juriši … , vendar obstaja tudi stran obnemelosti, zamrznitev pokrajine, praznih ter požganih vasi in dreves, izgubljene živine ter postajajočih živali, ki po vojni vihri brezsmiselno tavajo naokoli.

Naslednja vrsta obravnavanih primerov se nanaša na gozd, ki, kot že rečeno, ni bil le primarno zatočišče partizanov, ampak tudi primarno mesto političnega organiziranja in odpora, laboratorij ljudske oblasti. Živali in gozd kot celota postanejo pomemben del partizanske ter umetniške senzibilnosti. Čeprav Marija Stanonik (1995) meni, da reprezentacija narave v partizanski poeziji ni tako prevladujoča, kot bi to pričakovali, pa še vedno najdemo obilo mnogoterega vizualnega in pisnega gradiva, ki izpostavlja gozd kot nov politični prostor. Še več, gozd postane neposredna metafora samega partizanskega boja (prim. Komelj 2009), kar nazorno ponazarja odlomek pesmi Zorana Hudalesa Senoviškega (iz leta 1943), v katerem je razvidna presunljiva preobrazba partizanskih trdnjav v partizanske zbore – zbori so najbolj priljubljena in najmnožičnejša *umetnostnopolitična* forma ter praksa partizanskega boja (Paternu 1998, 507):

> Zeleni gozdovi, slovenske trdnjave
> šumite o borbah, junakih in zmagi …
> šumite nad zemljo, kjer padli so dragi.

Šumite ponosni, brstite in stojte!
Z vetrom mogočno v širne daljave
še pesem o svobodi zlati zapojte.

Preobrazbo iz negibne trdnjave narave v zbore, ki jim je dan glas, spremlja subtilen premik od negodovanja in objokovanja padlih k petju pesmi svobode, ki so postale izjemno popularne in se hitro širile po partizanskem ozemlju pa tudi v okupirana mesta. Podoben ritem in odporniško trdoživost je mogoče zaslediti v različnih zapisih o zaprtih, poškodovanih in izmučenih pticah pa tudi o pticah, ki jih ni mogoče zapreti v kletke ali ki jim uspe pobegniti na prostost. Partizanska ptica kljub nemogočim okoliščinam poje še naprej, kljub temu da se njenega glasu ne sliši zaradi eksplozij fašističnih bomb in prepovedi uporabe nenemškega jezika na okupiranih ozemljih. Partizanska ptica poje navkljub ovirajočemu trnju in omejitvam ter prebuja ljudi, kot to dobro prikaže pesem Radajeva iz leta 1944 (Paternu 1989, 191):

Izpod neba
brnenje motorjev se krohota …

Pojte ptice,
pesem železno
pesem viharno, udarno …

Pojto jo dan in noč,
da jo poslušal bo
kleti sovrag.

Nas pa preletajte
in nam oznanjajte
srečno in novo
svobodno pomlad

Ptice so tako postale močan vizualni trop, eden najznamenitejših primerov pa je nedvomno petje slavčka na trnovi veji. Lahko bi celo odločno zatrdili, da so takšni emblemi iz sveta narave bistveno pomagali nadomestiti stereotipno figurativno junaško upodobitev partizanov ali partizank. Ta ptica je znamenje in simbol partizanskega odpora kot takega.

Postajanje žival: partizani – volkovi

Drevo, gozd in ptica so nemara nekoliko preveč prikladni primeri partizansko-osvobodilne umetnosti, zato je smiselno preiti na grozljivejšo upodobitev, in sicer na upodobitev zveri, kar je vselej služilo utrjevanju

ločnice med človekom/civilizacijo in živaljo, oz. kar je prisotnejše v propagandističnem žanru, ločnice med našo in sovražnikovo stranjo. Čeprav bi pričakovali, da bodo fašisti prikazani kot zveri/volkovi, ki plenijo »naše« ljudi/nedolžne ovce, pa je v različnih pesmih, proznih in likovnih delih mogoče zaslediti pozitivno vrednotenje volkov in volkov – partizanov. Partizanski pesnik Matej Bor je že od svoje prve partizanske reportaže in partizanske drame *Raztrganci* (1942) dalje upodabljal volkove v jasni navezavi na partizansko subjektivnost. Presenetljivo je tudi to, da se je prva pesem NOB »Pojte za menoj«, ki jo je napisal Oton Župančič (1959, 148–149) in je bila nepodpisana objavljena v *Delu,* decembra leta 1941, prav tako končala z izrecno omembo volkov. Pesem kliče k orožju proti fašistični okupaciji in kolaboraciji ter zaključi:

takrat volčji zbor
pojde lovce klat.

Volčji zbor oz. »krdelo volkov« je mogoče razumeti širše od metaforiziranega vznikanja moči silovitega odpora, katere pozitivne sledi najdevamo v zapuščini širšega balkanskega imaginarija (glej tudi Komelj 2009). Namesto tega predlagam, da teh verzov ne razumemo le kot metaforo, temveč kot tvorni del imaginarija,[8] ki sproži politični proces, ki ga Deleuze in Guattari (1986) poimenujeta postajanje žival. Ta proces je determiniran s premikom od glavnega/stalnega k manjšemu/spremenljivemu, kjer deteritorializacija označuje nomadsko modalnost postajanja. Zaradi specifične lokacije partizanskega boja in njegove intenzivnosti ta boj presega mejo med človekom ter živaljo. Poudariti pa velja tudi pomembnost tega, da je takšno politično branje v nasprotju z retrospektivnim in relativizirajočim liberalno-humanističnim tropom, ki vztraja pri ohranjanju ločnice med ljudmi in živalmi. Ta liberalno-humanistični trop namreč pripisuje grozote vojne ljudem, ki so postali živali in naj bi takšni postali zaradi vojne, tovrstno sklepanje pa zagreši logično zmoto krožnega sklepanja (lat. *circulus in probando*). Vendar pa takšna argumentacija človeka razbremeni vsakršne krivde in odgovornosti za storjena grozodejstva: fašistična dejanja, po mnenju revizionistov pa tudi antifašistični boj, so tako domnevno »nečloveška« zaradi vojne ideologije in ker naj bi storilci opustili svojo človeško/civilizirano naravo. Alternativna partizanska pesniško-literarno-politična trajekto-

[8] S tega vidika je ta specifična in močno metaforizirana podoba, ki se samospreminja – v tem primeru volčje krdelo –, tvoren del partizanskega imaginarija postajanja živali človeka.

rija uvaja možnost nove, drugačne identifikacije, ki je bila nujna, da so partizani lahko postali zveri, če so želeli zmagati v boju proti fašistom, za kar je včasih potrebna celo(s)tna eksistencialna angažiranost. Proces preseganja binarnega ločevanja med človekom in živaljo je tako izredno kritičen do moralizirajočega humanističnega tropa ter ga lahko zasledimo v številnih umetninah tistega časa.

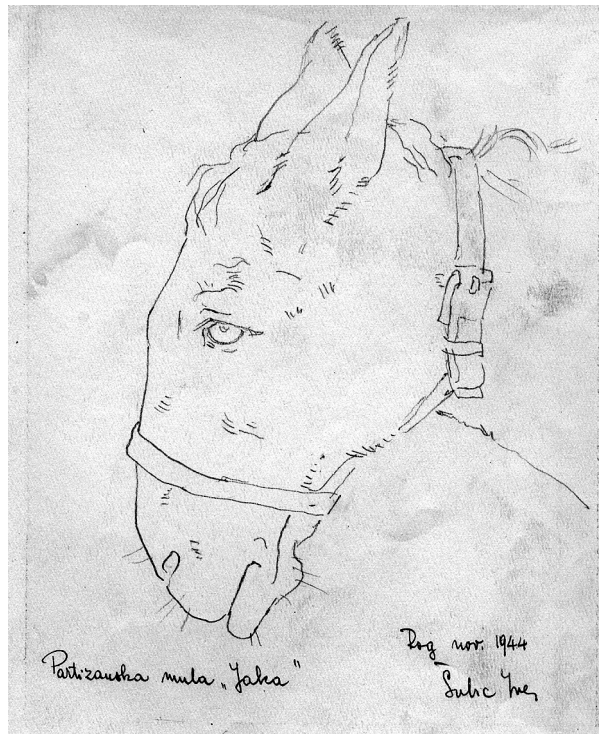
Še eno najemblematičnejših form vizualnega upodabljanja zveri pa najdemo znova v ciklu Franceta Miheliča *Apokalipsa.* Predlagam, da obravnavano podobo, ki so jo nekateri avtorji poimenovali *Tuleči pes,* interpretiramo kot tulečega volka (ali celo kot partizana oz. psa, ki postaja volk). Po interpretaciji Tine Fortič Jakopič naj bi ta podoba upodabljala poslednjega preživelega tavajočega psa (oz. žival, poleg že omenjenih dveh vran), ki mu ne preostane drugega, kot da obupano tuli v nebo. Vendar pa lahko tega tulečega volka s pomočjo manjšega dialektičnega zasuka – in z navezavo na Župančičev »volčji zbor« – razumemo kot klicanje k maščevanju, izravnavi krivice oz. kot pozivanje drugih k orožju, naj se pridružijo nastajajočemu zboru in krdelu partizanov – volkov.

V partizanskem tisku najdemo raznovrstna pesniška in prozna dela za otroke – na osvobojenih območjih so bile partizanske bolnišnice – in med to otroško (partizansko) literaturo sem našel ilustracijo, ki pospremi pesem »Živali pomagajo«, objavljeno leta 1944 (Paternu 1989, 107):

> Ono noč ob polni luni
> so živali gozdne zborovale.
> Enodušno so sklenile:
> »Partizanom bomo pomagale!«

Nekatere živali postanejo kurirji, drugi obhodniki v patrulji, vse pa sodelujejo v partizanskem boju proti fašistični okupaciji. Pomenljivo pa je tudi to, da so si številni partizani ob vstopu v partizanske odrede nadeli živalska imena.

Ena zadnjih ključnih živali, prisotnih v različnih zgodbah, pesmih, grafičnih zemljevidih, fotografijah in risbah, je nedvomno mula oz. konj. Ti so bili dejansko najnujnejše transportno sredstvo partizanov, simbol žrtve(nosti) in upora ter pomemben del partizanskih pohodniških kolon in maršev. Nekaj najmarkantnejših figur, ki upodabljajo mulo in konja, je pri nas ustvaril Ive Šubic, ki mulo oz. konja označuje z izrazom »tovariš«, kar kaže ne le na preseganje razlikovanja med človekom in živaljo, marveč na žival, ki pripada političnemu taboru. Žival, ki se, preko trpljenja in boja, subjektivizira (za odlično izpeljavo poglej Vičar 2016). To močno



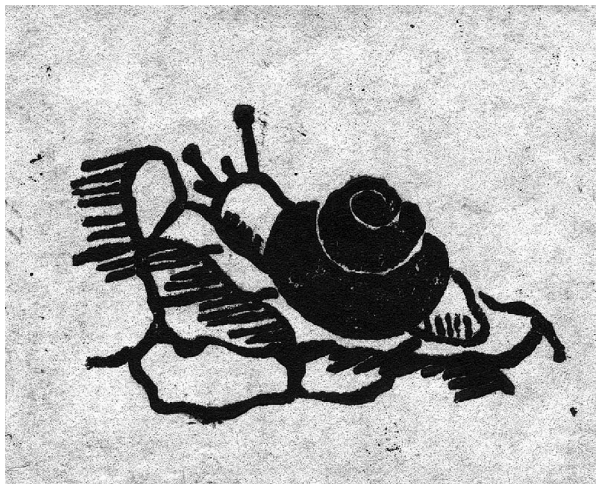
Slika 3

Ive Šubic, *Mula Jaka* (z dovoljenjem Muzeja novejše in sodobne zgodovine Slovenije)

spominja na misel, ki jo je – ob natančnem branju Platonova, čigar skrb in utopija sta zajemala ves planet – navrgla Oxana Timofeeva (2018, 168): »V njegovih spisih želja po komunizmu preplavlja ne le ljudi, pač pa vsa živa bitja, vključno z rastlinami«. Pri Platonovu tovariški hrbet konja, pri Šubicu obraz tovariša – konja in neskončna medsebojna podpora na njuni skupni poti do osvoboditve.

Figura polža: od partizanske trdoživosti do zapatistično navdahnjene odrasti

Za konec bi rad še omenil podobo živali, ki je bržkone ne bi videli kot borca v prvih vrstah partizanskega boja: polža. Polži so v primerjavi s konji, z volkovi in s pticami videti prepočasni, niso srditi, ne morejo se zbirati v »zbore« kakor volkovi, ne morejo peti pesmi, ki bi naravo in množice mobilizirala v skupnem boju, niti ne morejo prevažati ranjencev ali hrane, ki jo potrebujejo partizanski odredi. Partizanski polž pa simbolizira tudi vzdržljivost ter mukotrpno, dolgotrajno pot upora in osvoboditve partizanov. Nenazadnje polž venomer »nosi« s sabo svojo hišico,



Slika 4

Alenka Gerlovič, *Polž* (z dovoljenjem Muzeja novejše in sodobne zgodovine Slovenije)

kar predstavlja visoko adaptabilnost pa tudi določeno nenavezanost na lastnino in državo ter tako po samem načinu gibanja in življenja aludira na deteritorializirajoče gibanje partizanskih čet.

Zaradi tega je polž nadvse primerno utelešenje deteritorializirajoče logike, ki izvaja nenehno gibanje. Polž je figura, ki jo lahko zoperstavimo telurični (zemeljski) dimenziji večne pripadnosti eni »domovini«. Opomnimo, da ima prav navezanost na zemljo (angl. *soil*) ključen pomen v definiciji partizanske figure Carla Schmitta. Po njegovem prepričanju se partizanska formacija odlikuje po gibljivosti in neustaljenosti ter je naddoločena s telurično navezanostjo. Schmittovi partizani ljubijo zemljo in se zanjo borijo, kar lahko beremo kot projiciran odmev fašistične rodingrudovske (nem. *Blut und Boden*) ideologije.[9] V nasprotju s tem gre partizanskemu polžu, podobno kot pri deževniku ali pri krtu, za ritje po zemlji, to je za prakso, ki redefinira in preoblikuje to, kar dojemamo kot našo domačo grudo, zemljo, deželo. Ta polžje-deževniška praksa nas ne napeljuje k povratku k večni in nespremenjeni grudi, ki bi bil tako del vnaprej določene organske nacionalne substance, in kjer kri, ki izraste iz zemlje, določa njeno preteklost in prihodnost izvoljenega/izbranega naroda. V nasprotju z večnim vračanjem k stari etnično-zemeljski substanci bodo partizanske živali, borci in borke zemljo samo ter s tem tudi svojo identiteto preoblikovali med bojem.

Naša izbira figure polža za partizansko gibanje in osvobodilno logiko

[9] Za mojo kritiko Schmitta glej Kirn (2015).

ni tako poljubna, kot se zdi na prvi pogled. Polža lahko povežemo z različnimi partizansko-osvobodilnimi zapisi in podobami po vsem svetu: od znamenitega izreka Cheja Guevare, da so gverilci kakor polži, ki svoj dom vedno nosijo s sabo (2006, 52), do ideje deteritorializacije in velikega pomena polžev ter školjk v zapatističnem gibanju, ki se je razvilo v devetdesetih letih prejšnjega stoletja in vztraja še dandanes. Zapatistično gibanje polža obravnavakot zgodovinsko figuro, z Benjaminom bi lahko govorili tudi o miselni figuri (nem. *Denkfigur*), ki ponazarja tako začetek kot tudi konec svojega boja, je imanenten ter se nanaša na neko točko zunanjosti. Obenem polža vidimo kot emancipatoren navdih iz kulture in življenja majevskih staroselcev. Lupine polžev imajo koncentrične spiralne kroge, ki zgodovine/preteklosti ne kodirajo in ne registrirajo njenega linearnega poteka, temveč zgodovino predstavljajo bolj organsko ter na način, ki prepleta naravo in kulturo, na kar so opozarjali že v majski civilizaciji. Za zapatiste je reapropriacija preteklosti ključnega pomena in tudi ta članek privede do pomembnega vprašanja, in sicer, *kako je mogoče arhivirati znake in sledi odpora.* Ne gre torej za neko naivno dešifriranje znakov, da v neke stare neznane pisave čitamo, kar hočemo čitati, kar odslikava nek romantični povratek k nedolžni očiščeni naravi pred kolonializmom in kapitalizmom ali pa revizionistični večni povratek k nacionalni čistosti.

Podkomandant Marcos (Subcomandante Marcos 2021) je lapidarno zjedril pomen polža za politični imaginarij in celo za samo organizacijo zapatistov: »Polž, ki so ga naredili majevski uporniški voditelji, se je začel in končal v varni hiši, vendar se je tudi začel in končal v knjižnici. Mesto srečanj, dialoga, prehoda, iskanja – to je bil polž iz Aguascalientesa.« Če katera koli žival simbolizira naš potencial postati človeška žival, ki postane praksa naše počasne, dolgotrajne skupne rasti in odrasti, je to bržkone polž. Ne gre le za to, da so polži izredno vzdržljivi in odporni, gre za to, da se ta polžja kvaliteta kaže in se jo da slediti v gestah ter praksah odpora, upora, vzdržljivosti in neomajne odločenosti ne glede na nemogoče razmere, ne glede na to, da se sedanji imaginarij predstavlja kot brez alternative. V določenem smislu, z upoštevanjem globoke krize ideje napredka in kapitalistične modernizacije ter rasti v dobi podnebnih sprememb, bi lahko polž postal najmočnejša ikona odrasti.

Sklepna misel

Članek je pokazal, da je jugoslovanski partizanski boj, tudi zaradi svojih številnih navdušujočih umetniških dejavnosti, proizvedel močno ekološko senzibilnost in nepridobitniško odnosnost do nečloveškega sveta,

skratka nekaj, kar tu imenujemo partizanska ekologija. V partizanski umetnosti tudi ne gre iskati neke romantične nedolžnosti nečloveškega sveta. V tej umetnosti najdemo različne upodobitve, karikature, alegorične motive ter silno pripovedno in reprezentativno moč, vloženo v gozd, živali in rastline. Partizansko avtonomijo in osvobojena ozemlja je omogočalo zavetje globokih gozdov, prav tako pa so partizani sami spremenili svoja zatočišča v nove, osvobojene politične prostore. Kot se je politizirala estetika, sta se preko nje politizirala tudi prostor in predstava »narave«. Analiza primerov je pokazala, da je bila v produktivni partizanski izmenjavi, ki je potekala med človeškim in nečloveškim svetom, implicitna želja – določenega segmenta partizanske umetnosti – po mobilizaciji nečloveškega sveta v boju proti fašizmu in po prikazu določenega postajanja partizanske človeške živali (npr. volkovi, slavčki itd.). V nasprotju z uveljavljeno interpretacijo sem z analizo izbranih primerov pesmi, zgodb, črtic, risb in grafik skušal pokazati, da upodobljene živali niso mišljene le kot preprosta metafora, pač pa da je bil partizanski boj temeljno zaznamovan s procesom postajanja (človeka) žival, s preseganjem razlikovanja med živaljo in človekom ter z vključevanjem živali med soborce, v boj proti fašizmu.

Partizanska ekologija si je zatorej zamišljala – in skladno s tem tudi delovala – svet brez orožja in vojn, a tudi svet, ki nasprotuje imperativu rasti in profita, in se tudi sama spreminjala v smeri odrasti. To niti ne preseneča, saj je, glede na pokrajino, kjer se je odvijal jugoslovanski odpor, osvobajanje potekalo predvsem v gozdovih pa tudi sama družbena konstitucija partizanskega telesa je bila v veliki meri sestavljena iz pripadnikov in pripadnic kmečkega sloja, ki se je emancipiral skozi boj in s tvornim politično-kulturnim ter vojaškim delovanjem. V partizanskem spoštovanju narave in njegovem zavedanju, da je narava ključen dejavnik za uspeh osvobodilnega boja, kar bistveno določa partizansko ekologijo, pa je mogoče opaziti ambivalentnost in celo protislovje s prihodnjo usmeritvijo socialistične Jugoslavije, ki je v povojni socialistični obnovi sledila vzorcem modernistične paradigme in industrializacije. To je partizanska zgodovina, ki je bila pozabljena v socializmu in izbrisana v času kapitalistične tranzicije. Zaradi tega je zadnja sled in povezava s transverzalnimi ter internacionalnimi boji potlačenih toliko relevantnejša. Figura polža kot figura partizanskega odpora in trdoživosti, kot figura osvobodilnih bojev, zapatistov in nemara tudi kot znanilec sodobnega boja za odrast pa nas lahko pozove k bolj poglobljenemu raziskovanju ekološke ozaveščenosti. Namesto vselej nove (post)industrializacije in pospeševanja

ter krčenja prostora in časa je čas prav za upočasnitev, kar tudi pritrjuje globoki tezi Walterja Benjamina, ki revolucijo definira ne kot pospešenje časa, marveč kot njegovo ustavitev.

Opomba

Članek je nastal v okviru raziskovalnega projekta Protesti, umetniške prakse in kultura spomina v postjugoslovanskem kontekstu, ki ga je podprla Javna agencija za znanstveno-raziskovalno in inovacijsko dejavnost Republike Slovenije (ARIS, J6-3144).

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Anthropos 56 (1): 79–95 | ISSN 0587-5161 | E-ISSN 2630-4082

'Revolution is Learned Faster than Culture':[1] On the Amateur-Professional Relationship in the Artistic Legacies of the People's Liberation Struggle

Ana Hofman
Research Centre of Slovenian Academy of Sciences and Arts, Slovenia
hofman.ana@gmail.com

Abstract. This article focuses on the discourses and debates that surrounded the building of the new organizational model of artistic production during the People's Liberation Struggle (PLS), which sought to bring about a profound transformation of social relations. Drawing on the historical sources, I show how the reconfiguration of the amateur-professional nexus was central to these strivings. Those reconfigurations uncover the complex processes of dealing with the bourgeoise canon of art, the class-based notion of expertise and aesthetic value. Moreover, the legacies of artistic production in the PLS question the exclusive theorization of amateurism as a practice 'from below' that serves as a corrective to professionalized art, but instead reveals the complex encounters and the profound reconfigurations of these two fields. This historical look, I argue, points to the longstanding dilemmas and challenges that still haunt the contemporary debates about the artistic production as the field of transforming the capitalist modes of production and social relations.

Key Words: amateur-professional relationship, the PLS, artistic production, active masses

»Revolucije se učimo hitreje kot kulture«: o razmerju med amaterizmom in profesionalizmom v umetniški dediščini narodnoosvobodilnega boja

Povzetek. Članek se osredotoča na diskurze in razprave, ki so obkrožale vzpostavitev novega organizacijskega modela umetniške produkcije v času narodnoosvobodilnega boja (NOB), ki je skušal izpeljati globoko preobrazbo družbenih odnosov. Na podlagi zgodovinskih virov

[1] 'Revolucija se, eto, brže uči nego kultura' (Čolić 1981, 316).

https://doi.org/10.26493/2630-4082.56.79-95

pokažem, kako je bilo preoblikovanje razmerja med amaterizmom in profesionalizmom osrednjega pomena za ta prizadevanja. Ta preoblikovanja razkrivajo kompleksne procese soočanja z meščanskim kanonom umetnosti ter razrednim pojmovanjem strokovnosti in estetske vrednosti. Poleg tega zapuščina umetniške produkcije v NOB postavlja pod vprašaj izključno teoretizacijo amaterizma kot prakse »od spodaj«, ki služi kot korektiv profesionalizirani umetnosti, namesto tega pa razkriva kompleksna srečanja in temeljna preoblikovanja obeh področij. Menim, da ta zgodovinski pogled kaže na dileme in izzive, ki še vedno obvladujejo sodobne razprave o umetniški produkciji kot polju transformacije kapitalističnih načinov produkcije in družbenih odnosov.

Ključne besede: razmerje med amaterizmom in profesionalizmom, NOB, umetniška produkcija, aktivne množice

> The development of culture and art in the Republic of Užice shows that they merged with the People's Liberation Struggle and that the goal of the revolution and of art was the same: not only the social liberation of a human, but the liberation of her unsuspected creative possibilities [Glišić 1986, 179][2]

In his talk On Music ('O muzici') at the First Congress of the Cultural Workers of Croatia in Topusko in 1944, Yugoslav composer and partisan fighter Miroslav Špiler gave a comprehensive overview of the new role of musical activities in the building of socialist society. Musical life cannot be monopolized by artistic 'elites' who are detached from the wider masses and their musical activities, especially the exploited and oppressed peasants and urban proletariat. What he sees as the radical moment in laying the foundations for the new 'overall artistic life of the people' (serb.-cro. *zajednički općenarodni glasbeni život*) is to allow unrecognized artistic talents from all social strata to develop their artistic capacities in both productive and reproductive musical activities (Špiler 1976, 108).

This short excerpt from Špiler's talk gives an insight into the ambitious goals of the Yugoslav People's Liberation Struggle (PLS) in achieving transformation in the cultural sphere, which focused on two main aspects: the active involvement of the wider masses in artistic activities and

[2] 'Razvoj kulture i umetnosti u Užičkoj republici pokazuje da su one srasle sa narodnooslobodilačkom borbom i da je cilj revolucije i umetnosti bio isti: ne samo socijalno oslobođenje čoveka već oslobođenje i njegovih neslućenih stvaralačkih mogućnosti' (Glišić 1986, 179).

the dismantling of the division between the institution of art and other spheres of life. Both are based on Marxist thought about cultural transformation as inherent to revolutionary transformation.[3] In his writings on culture and arts, Lenin argues that culture should uplift the masses in order to prepare them for the role of key actors in the creation of the new socialist social relations. This process entails making up for what the working class in capitalism has been deprived of, being completely enslaved by 'the narrow specialization of the modes of production' (Ziherl 1958, 969).[4] The masses are not simply the recipients of art; their (self-)emancipation toward active political subjects relies on the 'releasing' of their creative capacities. The more the wider social strata are engaged with culture, the more ready they are to take a political destiny into their own hands. In other words, the revolutionary subject should no longer be 'guided' by the professionals, especially in the case of peasants and exploited workers, as a way to change the material conditions of artistic engagement, which, together with other fields of social life, would contribute to the formation of a new socialist society. This fully supports the claim that the Yugoslav socialist revolutionary strivings aimed not only to 'reshape the internal structure of culture, but also revolutionize the position of the "cultural sphere" in the social structure' (Močnik 2005).

Theorizing the Amateur-Professional Nexus through the Lenses of Yugoslav Socialist Revolutionary Legacies

By focusing my examination on the attempts 'to awaken and develop artists in the masses' (Lenin 1950, 124–125) during the PLS, I aim to address the amateur-professional relationship as essential for the building of the new organizational model of artistic production that sought to bring about the profound transformation in all spheres of life which was the key to socialist revolutionary strivings. Focusing on the discourses and debates that surrounded such transformation, I argue, reveals the dilemmas and challenges that still haunt our contemporary approaches to the political potential of art.

My intention here is not so much to establish a direct relation between

[3] The common thesis pertaining to Marxist thought about the key role of cultural emancipation of the working class as the basis of its the overall emancipation. For employment of this thesis in the Yugoslav context, see e.g. Jakopović (1976, 21) and Sklevicky (1996, 26).

[4] See also Lenin's writings on culture and arts (1950).

the historical experience of the PLS and the current moment, but rather to explore how these legacies contribute to the contemporary theorization of artistic engagements as an intervention in the social relations governed by the capitalist mode of production. This examination is motivated by the increasing interest in non-professional or anti-professional activities in various scholarly fields and the need to rethink the modes of artistic production based on expertise and the professionalized reality that dominates the social, economic, political and academic life of global capitalism (Merrifield 2018). Practitioners and scholars in the fields of music, theatre and visual arts have revitalized long-standing discourses on amateurism as a means of democratizing participation in cultural and artistic activities across the class spectrum and as a counter-response to commodified leisure (for an overview, see Bryan-Wilson and Piekut 2020). They focus on the power relations behind knowledge production in the artistic field and the unquestionable authority of trained, vocational, or professional artists. As a category unbound to the notions of skill or expertise, historically associated with vernacular and 'low' cultural production, amateurism helps to unmask the relations of inequality in knowledge production based on gender, race, class, education, geopolitical context, access to resources, etc. and reveals professionalism as strongly rooted in the capitalist Global North/the Anglophone world (Ochoa Gautier 2014). While the amateur and professional spheres often overlap – as non-professional artistic engagement can be just as effective in terms of innovation, productivity or approaching the aesthetic goals of professional(ized) art – the authors argue for the gesture of 'distancing' from the professionalized sphere of artistic production. What Lucia Vodanovic calls the manifestation of a distance, 'a separation but also an engagement with this distant relationship' (2013, 173), reveals artistic expression not simply as the realm of the gifted and trained, but of the privileged who have access and the opportunity to develop their talent through formalized training.

This article aims to contribute to the ongoing conversations about the boundaries between 'professional' and 'amateur' as politically charged, revealing the hierarchies in knowledge production as embedded in the material conditions of life and the modes of production. The historical trajectories of the amateur-professional nexus in the Yugoslav socialist revolutionary context gives us insight into the historical knowledge and experience that is often missing in the contemporary debates. As a distinct moment in history, the PLS laid the groundwork for changing the realization of the pre-war communist cultural and artistic tendencies to dis-

mantle the modes of artistic engagement based on the capitalist exploitative social and economic conditions. This transformation had a strong class dimension, which presupposed an active participation of all working people in cultural activities, regardless of their social background or level of education.[5] The PLS thus enabled the close interaction between established artists and cultural workers and the 'ordinary' people, including uneducated and illiterate peasants, the working classes or women, youth and minorities, who were denied access to 'art' (as conceptualized by the bourgeois canon). The intersection between the professional and amateur fields formed the basis for the 'artistic production' (serb.-cro. *umetničko stvaralaštvo*) that was deeply embedded in the revolutionary moment (Miletić and Radovanović 2016, 51). This historical moment untangles the exclusive theorization of amateur art as a practice 'from below' that serves as a corrective to professionalized art, and instead reveals the complex strategies and organizational models not only of the encounter, but also of the profound reconfigurations of these two fields.[6]

Much has been written about the anonymous masses as the main bearers of partisan art that signalled a radical break with artistic production based on class stratification.[7] Little attention, however, has been paid to the mechanisms and strategies that allowed such interactions to emerge, and more importantly, to be sustained. The mass participation in artistic activities aimed at challenging the professionalized framework of art and artistic expertise relying on the hierarchical relationship between 'high' and 'low' cultural expression.[8] Realizing such strivings on the ground, however, was a complex process saturated by an array of tensions and contradictions. One of the main stumbling blocks was the unsettling co-

[5] Among many others, see Petranović (1988), Močnik (2005), Komelj (2009), and Kirn (2020).

[6] This has been partly explored by the studies focused on the role of amateur musical activities in building the public cultural infrastructure in the villages (Hofman 2011b), the role of amateur music making in the negotiation of gender roles (Hofman 2011c), and on the cultural activities in the socialist factories and bigger enterprises (Koroman 2016; Vaseva 2018; Petrović 2021).

[7] For more about the transition from individual to collective authorship as one of the most important characteristics of the self-emancipatory process of the working masses in the Yugoslav revolution, see Nedeljković (1962a; 1962b; 1963), and Hofman (2008). On anonymous authorship and how it is related to the concept of the community to come, see Kirn (2020).

[8] My intention is not to reopen the question of the autonomy of art that was one of the long-standing concerns of the intellectual circles of that time.

existence between the persisting dominance of the bourgeois institution and understandings of art and the goal of building new artistic life based on its rejection. This further raises the question of the self-taught or self-grown artist and their role in the reconfiguration of the very categories of artist and artistic production. This process concerned the intersection between institutional regimes of arts and the practices on the ground, formal and informal organization, the question of cultural values and recognition, and knowledge production, all related to the building of the socialist social relations.

We can follow the lively debates among the political leadership, intellectuals and cultural workers about the need for a democratization of the artistic field, which should bring about the transformation of the very recognition of what art is and the equality of different forms of expressive practices, especially folk expression. The material I analyse consists of the reports on cultural activities, memoirs (both the ones made during the PLS and during the socialist period), discussions, and papers presented during the congresses of cultural workers.[9] I am fully aware that each artistic field has its own peculiarities in the understanding and use of the terms 'amateur' and 'professional,' a prime example of this being the field of popular music, where the lack of institutionalized training made self-taught musicians into professionals who live from making music.[10] While a focus on the specificities has its own advantages in tracing how the amateur-professional relationship figured across different artistic fields, I pursue a view that includes a wide range of artistic activities to provide an important insight into the general tendencies.

Liberation of People's 'Natural' Artistic Capacities

Another participant at the 1944 Topusko Congress of Cultural Workers, general Ivan Gornjak, said that 'we are witnessing an extraordinary mo-

[9] My initial aim was to search through the memoirs of partisan fighters that reflected the everyday experiences of the PLS, looking for the accounts that capture artistic engagement as it unfolded within the broader context of partisan and revolutionary struggle. My attempt was not successful, however, as the cultural activities were usually described very briefly, only in a few sentences as part of the description of other events. While I use some of this material in this article, I eventually turned to the sources that focus on culture, primarily the reports of the congresses of Slovenian and Croatian cultural workers in Semič and Topusko in 1944.

[10] Ethnomusicologists argue that amateur music is 'rather a label than a distinction' (Finnegan 2007, 18), while the amateur–professional relationship is a complex continuum that can also involve making an emotional claim and a political statement (see Finnegan 2007; Baily 2016).

ment in this region as once semi-literate and illiterate people are now participating in writing either wall newspapers or pocket newspapers' and 'are active participants and creators of a better reality' (Gošnjak 1976, 30). He emphasized the cultural-educational work (serb.-cro. *kulturno-prosvetni rad*) as essential for increasing the intellectual and artistic capacities of partisan fighters. The cultural-propagandistic or educational-propagandistic committees (often called cultural groups or cultural sections) in the partisan units were responsible for improvement of their literacy and organization of cultural activities. Yugoslav intellectual and partisan fighter Moša Pijade recalled the full dedication to the organization of cultural events (*mitinzi, priredbe*), which consisted of theatrical performances, poetry, and choral singing, most of them produced by the partisan fighters themselves (1976, 32).

The work of the cultural-educational committees did not concern only the partisan units, but extended to the organization of cultural events and activities for the people in the liberated territories or in the areas the partisan units passed through. Mobilizing the local population to take an active part in artistic activities was a demanding task of systematically raising their awareness of the importance of artistic activities for a better life for all. For this reason, as soon as the partisan units liberated certain territory, they established the alternative cultural infrastructure. Ivan Ćaće, writer and painter, notes that they first searched for talented peasants who would engage in writing and painting, if possible, 'in every village, and collect and publish the peasants' works, while giving feedback for those whose works still need polishing' (1976, 94).

Writing in more detail about the organization in the cultural field after the foundation of the Republic of Užice (Užička republika), the first liberated territory in Europe in 1941, Milutin Čolić (1981, 313) notes that the artistic unit of the Užice partisan brigade[11] initially consisted of twenty 'fighters – "artists"' (his emphasis). The majority of them were not trained artists, but had an aspiration or a talent for singing, acting, playing, dancing, or writing music and poetry (Đurić 1981, 321), many of whom were active in the pre-WWII workers' cultural societies.[12] According to the testimonies, the untrained but talented individuals were the main bearers of the cultural life in the Užice Republic, although with the significant help of the professionals. In only two months, they established three choirs –

[11] Also called artistic section or artistic theatre (Čolić 1981, 313).

[12] Sources also note that the search for 'talents' was not always successful and report on the constant lack of people who could be engaged in the cultural activities.

men's, women's and mixed, and even four orchestras: symphonic, wind, folk and pop (serb.-cro. *narodni* and *zabavni*) (Glišić 1986, 169). The activities of those ensembles were not limited to the town of Užice only, but they regularly performed in the surrounding villages.[13]

The active participation of 'ordinary' people, peasants and workers, in the cultural activities was essential for the reconfiguration of relations of production in the artistic field. Reflecting on how class consciousness was deeply connected to amateur music-making activities during the PLS, Dragutin Cvetko wrote: 'All those who had talent or were willing to learn basic musical skills, but who were deprived of educational or performance opportunities before the war, were able to develop and realize their talent during the war' (in Križnar 1992, 10).[14] Ivan Ćaće uses the term 'the self-activist artists' (serb.-cro. *umetnici samoaktivisti*) to denote 'an army of fighters and background workers – men and women – who write poems, sketches, plays (*igrokaze*) and the like; who paint, edit magazines, give lectures and generally engage in cultural work; who, so to speak, have started from scratch' (1976, 96). This statement fully illustrates the rhetoric of the 'deep democratization' of people's cultural life, in which the masses are both *the object and the subject* of emancipation (Gabrič 1991, 492).

Achieving this in practice meant a constant effort to overcome the fixed positions of *producers, reproducers and consumers* established by the pre-World War II bourgeois canon of art. While these positions remained, they were no longer reserved for a certain group of people according to their profession, education, or expertise. Špiler (1976, 113) wrote that at the beginning of World War II, the wider masses were mainly involved in the reproductive musical activities (serb.-cro. *reproduktivna glasbena djelatnost*), which continued to be the main form of their artistic engagement in the PLS. In this way, the division between those who can 'produce' art and those who can just reproduce it, maintains the stratifications based on expertise and thus stands in the way of revolutionary strivings. The next step, therefore, would be to give people from different social strata a voice in all aspects of musical production, reproduction and consumption (p. 114). To understand his stance, we have to be aware that it de-

[13] For the condensed history of the cultural activities in the Užice Republic, see Miletić and Radovanović (2016, 61–102). On musical life in the PLS, see Pejović (1965), Hercigonja (1972), Tomašek (1982), Križnar (1992), and Hofman (2008; 2011a).

[14] See also Hrovatin (1961) and Kalan (1975).

rives from the Western art music paradigm,[15] which neglects the productive relations in other fields of music activities, primarily folk expression, something I will return to in the next section.

The specific conditions of the PLS and the guerrilla mode of fighting opened up the possibilities for transgressing the established divisions of roles in artistic production, often out of necessity: due to the precarious conditions, the constant movement, and the lack of people and resources, trained individuals were no longer the only creators of artistic content. Written sources indicate the constant lack and fluctuation of people as the main problem in maintaining cultural groups or making them more structured and organized. For example, the constant lack of musicians (instrumentalists)[16] or sheet music, lyrics, and ready-made dramatic texts required to take on new, often multiple roles in writing, performing, conducting, and acting (Vojvodić 1987, 64).

However, we cannot say that this was only a result of the exceptionality of the war and revolutionary moment. The agenda of 'educational and liberating ideological and political work with the people' (serb.-cro. *prosvetni odgojni-obrazovni i oslobodilački idejno-politički rad u narodu*) meant the continuous agitation of the importance of culture on the ground. Members of the culture groups organized extensive debates with the audience after the cultural events, visited people in their homes and used every possible opportunity to explain the importance of culture for building new social relations. All this ought to promote the idea of 'active masses' against the position of masses as the passive consumers of the 'given' cultural offer.[17]

In the efforts to encourage cultural expression among all working people – be they peasants, workers, or intelligentsia – the PLS set up new ways

[15] The folk expression does not support the thesis of separated phases of production and reproduction. The oral transmission is based not only on anonymous authorship, but on a process of creation as a process of reproduction: in the case of folk songs, they were constantly (re)created through new variants.

[16] Vojvodić (1987, 13) reports that in 1942 there was no single instrumentalist – accordion player – in the whole of Lika.

[17] In my previous work, I have written extensively about how cultural activities in Yugoslav villages had a strong self-organized and participatory dimension, as they were supported by a robust cultural infrastructure that aimed to involve marginalized social groups, such as women and ethnic minorities, in cultural activities as part of a discourse of socialist modernization. I show how this fostered collaboration between the organizers of cultural activities, people from local communities and writers, ethnologists, composers, journalists, and local authorities and party administrators (Hofman 2011c, 35–37).

of artistic knowledge transmission. The artistic units tried to instil confidence in people to start writing, painting, and composing. Special attention was paid to the 'beginners,' who should be less concerned about the 'quality' of their works, but should concentrate on developing their skills. The most successful amateurs were automatically given new tasks and a leading role in 'training' new cadres and organizing the cultural activities and newly formed cultural groups, regardless of generational, gender, ethnic, social background, educational and other differences. This meant an important shift in the process of knowledge transmission, which now took place outside of the formal framework of schools and academies, in the improvised setting of quick courses[18] and the interactions between professionals, newly trained people and the ones completely inexperienced. Illustrative examples of this can be found in partisan testimonies, in which uneducated peasants, who were transformed from 'just' the audience or listeners into authors, composers, or conductors in the partisan units, acquired diplomas or master's degrees in composition or conducting after the war. For instance, Avdo Smailović confessed that he could not have obtained a university education without the radical transformation of social relations brought about by the socialist revolution (Tomašek 1982, 313).

Destabilization of the seemingly fixed positions of producers, reproducers and consumers/receivers paved the way for challenging the necessity of formal knowledge as a requirement for being active in the artistic field. The prime tool for the transformation was the people's (self-)awareness that they were not limited to the role of consumers of the cultural offer created by someone trained or skilled.

One such breakthrough came in 1945, when the members of the Anton Cesarec partisan theatre group attended a professional theatre performance in Trieste for the first time: 'For almost three years, we have been the bearers of a part of culture in the entire territory of Croatia, and most of the members of the August Cesarec theatre group are entering a real theatre for the first time. For the first time, they are seeing a real theatrical performance, with professional, trained actors' (Vojvodić 1987, 97–98). Yet to what extent did this enable the reconfiguration of artistic knowledge production and the value associated with the particular types of artistic expression?

[18] The informal education during the PLS is a topic in of itself and deserves profound examination.

Artistic (Self-)Emancipation between 'Liberation' and 'Cultivation'

The strivings to establish the new material conditions of artistic production based on the close interaction between professionals and amateurs were constantly faced with the difficulties of overcoming the values assigned to certain genres, forms and practices and the position of (artistic) authority. As far as musical activities are concerned, the ambitious goal of establishing the people's musical life, as simultaneously distant from both national and 'high' culture and based on 'natural artistic instinct without regard to the conventions of music theory' (Žganec 1962, 15), demanded dealing with a deeply rooted and internalized values associated with a certain type of training or knowledge necessarily for music-making.

The main stumbling block was the hierarchies based on formal education and expertise: renowned artists were the main authority in directing and organizing musical activities. Due to their position of authority, prominent figures were still invited to assess the quality of the programme and offer advice for its improvement. 'It is not that the artists have only changed their halls or elite cultural spaces with the open wooden stages and partisan camps. The artist is now a politician and a pedagogue,' states Miroslav Špiler (1976, 113).

Therefore, we cannot ignore the fact that the foundation of the new canon of people's musical life could not completely dismantle the established forms of knowledge production and transmission based on the Western art music paradigm as the universal framework for music-making. For example, apart from fighting illiteracy, one of the main goals of people's emancipation during the PLS was also eradicating 'musical illiteracy' (serb.-cro. *muzički analfabetizam*), learning of Western musical notation. This aimed at raising the level of understanding of music, especially for young talented people who did not have access to formal musical education. Through the exposure to this content, the lower classes of illiterate peasants and workers would gain agency needed to change the internal hierarchies in the field of artistic production. Still, such an approach reinforced the long-standing unequal status of oral culture (folklore) in relation to written culture, the former playing a key role in the enlightenment of the masses.[19]

[19] In her research of ethnographic records of partisan songs, Jelka Vukobratović (forthcoming) notes that songs based on the local folklore idiom (in particularly untampered scales) did not enter the written songbooks, in particular the ones created after WWII. About the folk expression in the PLS and the partisan songs, see Hrovatin (1960), Hercigonja and

As a result of this, introducing the Western art music idiom to the masses was a challenge. I found several notes about the behaviour of the audience at the cultural events, who often needed to be 'educated' about the proper way of listening to the concert performance. In a vignette about the concert performance of mixed and men's choirs in 1941 in Užice, Milutin Čolić describes how the conductor Dragoljub Jovašević, who was conducting in front of 2000 people, reacted to the audience who, instead of waiting patiently for the end of the performance, started talking and making noise (serb.-cro. *galamiti*). He turned to them and complained that they should be ashamed of disrespecting Smetana, but he immediately added how they, as partisan fighters should know that (Čolić 1981, 316).

The recollection of Stanka Vrinjanin, a pre-World War II pianist and partisan fighter, of the musical activities during the PLS is particularly telling. A trained musician with a degree in piano from the Music Academy in Zagreb, she was assigned the task of teaching music and establishing the children's choir in the town of Glina in Croatia. She recollects that even the selection of children for the choir was a difficult task, as most of them were so unfamiliar with the 12-tone equal temperament music scale that she was unable to assess their singing abilities on the piano. Musically attuned to the folk idiom of the area, the children could not easily adapt to the postulates of Western art music and although she invested a considerable effort in 'tuning' their singing, they continued singing spontaneously in the folk manner, refusing to reproduce the melody and be guided by the conductor. Eventually, she managed to put together a repertoire consisting of various pieces (including folk songs), which they performed in the partisan units and at cultural events (in Tomašek 1982, 347).

This vignette portrays the constraints of dealing with the value assigned to the Western art music canon. It also raises the question about where and how the emancipation through artistic engagement can unfold. The debates of the time were not blind to these constraints and the inequalities deriving from artistic competence. The real transformation might happen, Ivan Ćaće (1976, 99) explains, 'when the self-taught artist is given the opportunity to be "developed" into a cultural worker, to take responsibility for the important task in the development of the new society.' In further elaborating on this, he adds that the main contribution to the

Danon (1962), and Hofman (2004; 2008). For the more general relation between oral and written culture through the concept of aurality, see Ochoa Gautier (2014).

struggle against the 'old' patterns of artistic production is not simply glorifying peasant's naïve art. In the pre-WWII period, the artistic elite started criticizing peasant artists when they did not conform to the expectations of the unpolished, 'childishly primitive' and 'sweetly naïve' amateur aesthetic, but began to depict the reality of peasant lives; they were accused of being 'contaminated' by the modern tendencies or the professionalized 'school' (p. 95). In other words, the value of self-taught artistic works is sustained only when it aligns with the expectations of the 'position' that was assigned to them within the bourgeois norms of artistic production. For the experts, peasants' works lost their 'artistic value' when they came closer to professional or trained aesthetics.

This reflection shows how artistic engagement became disruptive not when non-professionals met the expectations of the self-taught, amateur aesthetic, but when they refused the clear boundaries between 'high art' and 'folk art' and a class division attached to it. Therefore, an important part of the overall emancipation of people in the PLS was the recognition of the value of non-professional forms of artistic engagement, but without glorifying the difference or keeping them isolated in their marginality or exceptionality. The main target of transformation was the class stratifications that are at the core of artistic production in capitalism. Therefore, the peasant population's artistic activities should not be delimited by their (identitarian) position, but the new coordinates of artistic production nurtured embracing various forms and practices of artistic engagement. The same counted for the formally educated composers, performers or conductors who were widely exposed to folk music.[20] It is precisely these encounters that make it possible to challenge the bourgeois notions of the artist, of artistic production.

Conclusion

The quotation from the beginning of this article summarizes the central concern of the cultural policy debates during the PLS: to what extent the immediate goals of the socialist revolution are in line with the transformation of the cultural field. Numerous debates at the time dealt with the tension between the mass participation of people and the 'quality' of artistic expression or, in other words, the attempts to elevate the people's

[20] About the intersection between folk music and Western art music in the works of composers, see the introduction to The Collection of Partisan Folk Songs (Hercigonja and Danon 1962) and Atanasovski (2011).

capacities and the need to stick to the forms adjusted to the wider masses. Navigating the two often resulted in the practice where prominent artists and cultural workers were called upon to evaluate and improve the quality of the cultural activities, which meant that the 'more developed' expressive forms were widely disseminated across the social spectrum. With regards to music in particular, while official discourses emphasized the importance of folk music expression, this does not diminish the value of Western art musical practices as the 'highest' form of artistic expression.

I argue that we have to be careful in our critique of these constraints as it can conform the long-standing discourses of the harmful consequences of the 'forced' socialist modernization that 'erased' the 'authentic' folk expression by imposing the West-European 'elite' modes of cultural production on the masses. Lately, such views have been reinforced by the decolonial turn and the increased interest in the 'peasant' or 'indigenous' artistic knowledge and practices as marginalized or suppressed. As Lucia Vodanovic demonstrates, the works of the self-taught artists have been praised for their 'unpolished' aesthetics that presumes sincerity, immediacy, a sense of 'naturalness,' and an unusual use of new artistic means (2013, 171) from the perspective of the 'oppressed' subject – whether indigenous people, uneducated peasants, migrants or people from unprivileged social backgrounds.

The Yugoslav revolutionary legacies of the reconfiguration of the amateur-professional relationship, in contrast, remind us about the shortcomings of uplifting underprivileged individuals and communities within the existing field of artistic production informed by the capitalist modes of production and class division. The historical lesson of the PLS brings to the fore the transformation of the amateur-professional relationship as inherent in the transformation of that very system, in which both amateur and professional transcend the particular class position attached to the particular style or aesthetic practices (such as 'folk' or 'elite/high' expression). It invites the focus on the agency of an amateur in reconfiguring the modes of artistic production that is part of the broader socio-political transformation toward dismantling the capitalist modes of artistic production.

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Anthropos 56 (1): 97–123 | ISSN 0587-5161 | E-ISSN 2630-4082

Literature Builds Children, Children Build Literature: Literary Education in Socialist Yugoslavia and Children's Literary Agency

Katja Kobolt
Research Centre of Slovenian Academy of Sciences and Arts, Slovenia
katja.kobolt@zrc-sazu.si

Abstract. Based on ethnographic work with producers for children in the literary sector in socialist Yugoslavia (1945–1991), this paper turns to the literary education of the time. It reflects discourses, modes and (infra)structures – specialised children's magazines, literary circles and festivals, particularly – that facilitated early and continuous literary and aesthetic education and promoted children's participation in cultural life. The paper argues that the active forms of literary education, even if they were ideologically framed beyond utilitarian and functionalist conceptualisations, nevertheless contributed to the remarkable development of smaller and underdeveloped literary systems, which in some Yugoslav spaces (here mainly in Kosovo, Bosnia and Herzegovina) started more or less from scratch. By reflecting on the past modes of literary education in reference to 'cultural agency,' denoting 'a range of social contributions through creative practices' (Sommer 2006, 1), fostering agency also in other fields, the paper proposes their conceptualisation within so-called *literary agency* and frames the latter as a generative and reproductive tool of literary systems, and by extension also of other cultural and social fields as well as of subjectivation.

Key Words: literary education, literary agency, socialist Yugoslavia, Šimo Ešić, Xhevat Syla, Dije (Qibrije) Demiri-Frangu, festival Kurirček

S književnostjo otroci rastejo, književnost raste z otroki: literarna vzgoja v socialistični Jugoslaviji in literarno delovanje otrok

Povzetek. Na podlagi etnografskega dela z ustvarjalkami/-ci za otroke znotraj otroške književnosti v času socialistične Jugoslavije (1945–1991) se s člankom posvetim takratni literarni vzgoji. Posebej se osredotočam na diskurze, načine in (infra)strukture – otroške revije, literarne krožke in festivale –, ki so omogočali zgodnjo in kontinuirano literarno

https://doi.org/10.26493/2630-4082.56.97-123

ter estetsko vzgojo in spodbujali sodelovanje otrok v kulturnem življenju. Četudi je bila takratna literarna vzgoja večinoma razumljena onkraj utilitarističnih in funkcionalističnih konceptualizacij, skušam razumeti posebej njene aktivne oblike kot vzvode takratnega izjemnega razvoja zlasti manjših in manj razvitih literarnih sistemov, ki so se v nekaterih takratnih jugoslovanskih prostorih (predvsem na Kosovu ter v Bosni in Hercegovini) šele vzpostavljali. Z razmislekom o preteklih načinih literarne vzgoje v povezavi s »kulturnim delovanjem«, ki označuje »vrsto družbenih prispevkov preko ustvarjalnih praks«, ki spodbujajo delovanje tudi na drugih področjih (Sommer 2006), v članku predlagam njihovo konceptualizacijo znotraj t. i. »literarnega delovanja« kot generativnega in reproduktivnega vzvoda za razvoj ter prenovo literarnih sistemov kakor tudi za subjektivacijo in delovanje, ki presega samo polje književnosti.

Ključne besede: literarna vzgoja, literarno delovanje, socialistična Jugoslavija, Šimo Ešić, Xhevat Syla, Dije (Qibrije) Demiri-Frangu, festival Kurirček

Introduction: 'Children Are No Spectators, Children Are Players' (Milarić 1960, 14)

> In addition to many catchphrases of our time, this one is also known: 'We live in the century of the child.' Children were given significant freedoms and many [adults] shook their heads, because supposedly children's freedom manifests itself mainly in its flip side: in anarchy and oblomovism.[1] Cocteau expressed the opinion that young people are unhappy because they do not have the opportunity not to listen. That is completely excessive, taken to the point of absurdity. Children have not yet received elementary freedoms: to be honest, to be direct, to be children. They are in a situation to simulate prematurity, to express themselves with a gesture, instead of an act. [Milarić 1960, 6; translated by Katja Kobolt]

With these introductory words on 'Children's Literary Creativity' to a plenum at the 3rd edition of children's festival Zmajeve dečje igre (1960), Vlatko Milarić – a teacher at the elementary school Vladimir Nazor in Petrovaradin (Serbia) – invoked not only the famous book title by the Swedish feminist pedagogue Ellen Key, *The Century of the Child* (1900)

[1] After Ivan Alexandrovich Goncharov's 1847 novel *Oblomov* about an eponymous antihero, 'oblomovism' became synonymous with a dreamy, idle and aimless life and devotion to destiny.

– he also anticipated with his introduction contemporary scholarly and professional discourses on literary education and production for children derived from childism. Initially, the notion of childism was coined to denote prejudices against children, constructing not only children as an inferior social group, but more or less everything that is connected to children, and thus also artistic production *for* and *by* children, as subsidiary. However, in recent international children's literature studies the term has experienced an affirmative re-articulation, as 'a productive starting point for further openings in children's literature and culture studies and childhood studies if it becomes a plural and messy notion that questions the discourse of hope for a better future as defining children's lives' (Deszcz-Tryhubczak and García-González 2022, 1037).

The teacher Vlatko Milarić, who later became one of the leading editors and anthologists of children's literature of his generation in Serbia, and the festival for children Zmajeve dečje igre (Novi Sad, since the year 1957) have belonged to numerous practitioners and (infra)structures of the literary system and of aesthetic education for children in socialist Yugoslavia (1945–1991). The sole fact of the existence of such organisations as Zmajeve dečje igre, as well as the above-named presentation of Milarić to a plenum of children's authors, editors and decision makers in cultural and educational policy, testify to the endeavours socialist Yugoslavia invested in the project of modernisation and humanisation of social relations of the previously underdeveloped and war-torn country through participatory aesthetic and, here particularly, literary education, primarily of children but also other social groups.

The socialist foregrounding of children has, in the post-socialist decades, often been studied through the prism of totalitarianism and authoritarianism, presenting the socialist politics of childhood and its many infrastructures, including literary production for children, mostly as a tool of moulding children into ideal socialist citizens, on the way to establishing the new social order (Vučetić 2001, 251; Erdei 2004, 156). This paper, however, follows more recent research in regard to socialist cultural and childhood politics as well as children's literature scholarship and, along with that, also the suggestion by the above-quoted Vlatko Milarić (1960, 12): to consider production *by* children as a method of literary education. In his – in parts harsh – critical talk, Milarić first condemned various approaches of traditional literary education, which in his eyes often reduced children to passive imitators of given interpretations, forms and ideas, emphasising rational approaches and practical language (Milarić

1960, 8–9). He talked instead in favour of literary education raising affective relations towards literature and underlined that this can be realised only if children are free to write the way they want to and in their 'authentic children's language,' not following the guidelines and adults' ideas of what literary language *is* (pp. 8–9). Milarić (p. 12) saw the immanence of the active method *of/in* writing by children as twofold:

1. Children's writing constitutes on the one hand a so-called literary child;
2. and on the other it constitutes a literary author.

In other words, the active method adds to and co-defines the image of children and ideas of childhood *in* literature. In addition, through the experience of writing, the active method promotes understanding of literary works as specific expressions of an artist about life and as such also promotes self-awareness and autonomy in children, something which corresponds with intergenerational and relational conceptualisations in contemporary children's literature scholarship, anchored predominantly in childism (Deszcz-Tryhubczak and Jaques 2021; Deszcz-Tryhubczak and García-González 2022).[2]

Reading historical discourses on literary and aesthetic education of the time and drawing on interviews[3] with children's authors – Šimo Ešić

[2] Both aspects of participatory literary education addressed by Milarić in the year 1960 have also marked more recent international scholarship on children's literature, especially since the influential *The Case of Peter Pan, or the Impossibility of Children's Fiction* by Jacqueline Rose (1984), as well as Peter Hunt's *Criticism, Theory, and Children's Literature* (1991), which both foregrounded the need for an active status and participation of children in children's literature. While Rose's main critical claim was that literature for children, and by extension scholarship on it, mainly reflected an imaginary of ideal children produced by adults in order to mould real children after the images presented, Hunt stood up for 'rereading of texts from […] a childist point of view' (Hunt 1991,143). Along with other influential scholars and works, that followed their proposals, both authors problematised on the one hand the *image of children in literature,* as suggested by children's narrators, figures and implied readers, and on the other also critically addressed *the status of children as readers, critics and by extension as writers.*

[3] The present paper is based on a larger study on socialist Yugoslav children's literature and its multi-layered and changing ideological, (infra)structural, participatory, iconographic and stylistic characteristics. In its ethnographic part, the paper presents selected authors from Bosnia and Herzegovina and Kosovo, who were available for interviews and willing to share their documentary material. All of those included were born in the 1950s and participated in literary education activities mostly from the mid-1960s on, when they also gradually started their professional engagement with production for children in socialist Yugoslavia, which they have actively co-shaped since the 1970s.

(b. 1954, Bosnia and Herzegovina),[4] Dije (Qibrije) Demiri-Frangu (b. 1957, Kosovo) and Xhevat Syla (b. 1956, Kosovo),[5] as well as in reference to yet another cross-sectoral event of literary and aesthetic education of the time, the festival Kurirček, based in Maribor, Slovenia, which operated across Yugoslavia between the years 1963 and 1992 – the paper unfolds past participatory modes of literary education and its infrastructures. The paper argues that the participatory forms of literary education, even if they were ideologically framed beyond utilitarian and functionalist conceptualisations, nevertheless contributed to the remarkable development of smaller and underdeveloped literary systems, especially in some Yugoslav spaces (North Macedonia, Monte Negro, Kosovo, and Bosnia and Hercegovina); however, all of the production contexts experienced immense growth of the sector (Kobolt 2022; 2023a). The different socialist Yugoslav production contexts of children's literature were fragmented nationally and also language-wise;[6] however, they were also ideologically and structurally connected, thus the following findings are also applicable to other Yugoslav production contexts of the time. By reflecting on the past modes of literary education in reference to 'cultural agency,' as a term denoting a 'range of social contributions through creative practices' (Sommer 2006, 1), the paper proposes their conceptualisation within *literary agency* and frames the latter as a generative and reproductive tool of development and renewal of literary systems and by extension also of other cultural and social fields.

Literary Education as Participation in Culture

The centrality of culture in the Yugoslav project of social emancipation – in terms of class, gender, ethnicity and generation – has been emphasised by many scholars and also practitioners of the time.[7] In line with

[4] Interview conducted by the researcher in Tuzla in 2023.

[5] Interviews conducted by the researcher in Pristina in 2022.

[6] Writers in the so-called smaller languages like Slovenian, Macedonian, Albanian and also in minority languages, and by extension also illustrators that were equipping their publications with illustrations, depended much more on translation practices and networks, whereas writers in Serbo-Croatian, as it was called at the time, potentially addressed a much larger readership, because the different national variants of the Serbo-Croatian standard were largely understood in Croatia, Serbia, Bosnia and Herzegovina even if written in different script (Latin or Cyrillic).

[7] Within the past socialist Yugoslav research on cultural policy, the term 'culture' was used as an umbrella term and suggested different modes of participation. For the Slavicist and

the idea of enlightened rational subjectivity as the product of a human's own work, characteristic also of other socialist emancipatory projects of the time,[8] the core Yugoslav socialist idea of freeing people from alienated work and working towards (more) self-determined work and relations in production and thus life, was, especially since the introduction of self-management from the 1950s on, based on the project of 'humanizing' social relations mainly through education and cultural activity (Alečković 1954, 366; Kocijan 1970a; 1970b; Moder 1974; 1981; Žnideršič 1972; 1977).[9] Thus, the cultural policy of the time was directed towards the cultural participation of different social groups,[10] and was, in the course

later literary historian Gregor Kocijan (1970 and 1970b), who in the 1960s and 1970s, commissioned by the Association of Unions of Slovenia (Zveza sindikatov Slovenije) and the Cultural Community of Slovenia (Kulturna skupnost Slovenije), paid attention to worker's culture and cultural policy and its implementation, the term 'culture' thus covered the 'cultural-artistic field, forms, content and organisation, which concern cultural-artistic production and its circulation among people' and phenomena such as 'cultural life,' 'satisfaction of cultural needs,' 'cultural activity,' 'cultural values' and 'cultural goods,' etc. (Kocijan 1970a, 425).

[8] Cf. the paper by the theatre researcher Wolfgang Wöhlert from East Berlin, who presented at the UNESCO symposium at the 19th Jugoslovenski festival djeteta – Šibenik in the year 1979: 'Marx's fundamental thought that people in the practical life process develop as creative personalities and, as subjects of history, understand and act, applies to children as well as to adults. Therefore, in socialist countries, the youth is a partner of adults in the social development process, it is the subject of education, which co-shapes and educates' (p. 1). At the same symposium, the children's author Pero Zubac (1945–) made a similar claim, proposing that children, as they influence adults, have by that influence also the potential to change the world (Zubac 1979, 3). The relation between adults and children (and by extension also between other living beings (Deszcz-Tryhubczak and García-González 2022) has built the core of the recent conceptualisations of childism.

[9] Active participation was a common *topos* in discourses on cultural policy and aesthetic education of the time, cf. the programmatic speech on production for children's literature by an influential children's poet, editor, and decision-maker Mira Alečković (1955) in front of the 4th Congress of the Yugoslav Writers' Union in Ohrid, Macedonia, 1955 (Kobolt 2022). Franček Bohanec (1958, 5), a writer, editor and director of the children's public library in Ljubljana (Pionirska knjižnica), where aesthetic education was promoted by involving artists in workshops with children, wrote in his compendium on literary education: 'By active aesthetic education I mean that education which encourages children to be creative themselves.' The studies by the Institute for statistics of SR Slovenia and Cultural Community of Slovenia provide information on the cultural participation of workers and other groups provide (Moder 1974; 1981). Valuable insights into cultural participation of households/families, and thus also into children's reading culture, are offered also by the study by a researcher of publishing and a manager in publishing, Martin Žnideršič (1972; 1977).

[10] Next to national languages of individual socialist republics and autonomous regions, writing and publications in minority languages like Hungarian, Slovak, Turkish and

of its relatively short though diverse historical development, subject to change (Gabrič 1991; Praznik 2021; Kobolt 2022; 2023a; forthcoming). Within the self-management of the 1970s, the cultural policy was based on different laws[11] promoting participation of different social groups, among which children and youth were the principal group. The period since the late 1970s has even been denoted as a 'society of culture' (slov. *družba kulture*) (Korda 2008, 291). Proposed by sociologist, cultural practitioner and artist Neven Korda, 'society of culture' refers particularly to the 'global shift from industrial society' to the so-called 'alternative cultures' or 'subcultures,' creating intersections of art, culture, and entertainment (p. 283). While Korda, when forging the term, probably did not particularly have in mind children's culture, especially as children's culture has been much more entangled with different state apparatuses (institutions of care, school, and of out-of-school education as well as with different state and 'civil society'[12] organisations), I propose to consider children's culture also as a part of the larger context of the 'society of culture.'

Rusyn were also promoted. A volume edited by Tropin and Barač (2019) also offers insights into different Yugoslav periodicals for children in minority languages.

[11] The cultural policy of participation was implemented through the so-called cultural communities (slov. *kulturne skupnosti*) as hubs of differently organised cultural organisations and associations, operating in a cross-sectoral manner with the so-called organisations of associated work (slov. *organizacije združenega dela*) (Moder 1981). The policy was based on different laws on associated work, defining social economic relations and self-managed organisation of work among workers in organisations of associated work; the so-called Law on Common Grounds of Free Work Exchange (Zakon o skupnih osnovah svobode menjave), which anticipated 'the realisation of free exchange of work in order to fulfil personal and common needs as well as interests in culture, upbringing and education, science, health and other social activities and some other activities of material production, by the ways of free exchange and integration of work by workers in organisations of associated work in the field' (p. 12). Thus the General Directions of Cultural Development in Slovenia in the Period 1981–1985 (*Splošne usmeritve kulturnega razvoja v Sloveniji v obdobju 1981–1985*) particularly stressed the 'enforcement of social relations, in which *culture will not be conceived as part of consumption, but as an essential component of the overall material and spiritual reproduction of society, whose role will be defined by its contribution to the satisfaction of common needs and the development of society as a whole*' (p. 75; emphasis added). The Directions particularly promoted the 'development of artistic creativity' and 'accessibility to culture, cultural education, amateurism [slov. *ljubiteljske dejavnosti*]' and, departing from economic and social inequalities, stood for the closing of material, human and organisational resources gaps in regard to cultural development by different actions, like stipends and subsidies for associations (pp. 75, 77). Among the latter were also youth's and pioneer's (children's) sections in local communities (slov. *krajevne skupnosti*).

[12] Tomaž Mastnak (2023) offers a historic overview of civil society and elaborates on the development of it in the Yugoslav context of the so-called alternatives of the 1980s.

Even if contemporary scholarship only gradually starts paying attention to the multiple past structures and modes of aesthetic education in socialist Yugoslavia – musicologists especially have a leading role here (Duraković 2017; Vesić 2023; Hofman forthcoming) – the broader field of inquiries into cultural production and also childhood politics and ideology has provided valuable insights into different segments, interfaces and manifestations of participation in the cultural production of the time. Anthropologist and ethnomusicologist Ana Hofman, who is also present with a contribution in the current *Anthropos* issue, particularly addresses amateur cultural activities in her work, especially in relation to the historical antifascist struggle within the people's liberation front (NOB, 1941–1945), as well as contemporary antifascist protests and leisure activities. Researcher of music pedagogy Lada Duraković (2023) pays attention not only to in-school music education but also to different out-of-school structures of the time.

Research in other fields also offers valuable considerations on participation in the cultural production of the time. Participation in culture and arts of the time has also been questioned, particularly in recent art history: if Bojana Videkanić (2019) explored how cultural workers participated and collaborated within the non-aligned movement and its cultural policy in order to create global counter-hegemonic artistic and cultural networks and proposed a term of 'non-aligned modernism,' Petja Grafenauer and Daša Tepina (2024) have observed the lack of participation, or rather ignorance of the local (Ljubljana) artistic scene towards the presentations of their colleagues from the non-aligned countries (in the framework of the Ljubljana Biennale of Graphic Arts). When exploring different aspects of production of monuments in regard to the commemoration and celebration of the NOB and the revolution, Sanja Horvatinčić and Beti Žerovc (2023) observed a decrease in participation throughout the Yugoslav temporality. While in the first decade and a half after WWII, local communities also participated in the production of monuments, later on monuments became huge and elitist memorial centre projects, evoking participation mostly as rejection of too-inaccessible stylistic formations. Researcher of theatre and performance arts Branislav Jakovljević (2016) observed performing practices in the political economy of self-management. Following the relation between state (performances), performing practices and conservative reforms in parallel to the global, especially post-1968, neoliberal renewal of capitalism, Jakovljević showed how artistic and state performances revealed ruptures in self-management and

its participation practices. In regard to childhood politics and ideology, the historian Igor Duda (2015) researched the Yugoslav and Croatian Pioneer organisation, respectively, and even if he pointed to the centrality of children's participation, he also reflected the relational aspects and within those the persistence of romanticised conceptions of childhood, positioning children many times as still subordinated. Anthropologist of childhood Barbara Turk Niskač (2023) analysed the ideology and experiences of play/work by children within structures of self-management. She observed an amalgamate of the above-mentioned Marxist ideology of self-determined work and of the 'ethos of the agricultural society's domestic economy' (Turk Niskač 2023, 462). The historian Ljubica Spaskovka (2017) researched youth politics and youth activism in regard to participation in articulation, questioning and rethinking Yugoslav socialism and Yugoslavism. What do these scattered fields of research have in common besides all of them referring to cultural production in socialist Yugoslavia? They all reflect different (infra)structures and modes of participation culture (or the lack of it) and their impact (or the lack of it) on the 'society of culture.'

Literary Agency

Children's active participation in the literary education of the time has been mostly denoted as 'literary creativity' (serb.-cro. *literarno stvaralaštvo*) (Filipović 1968; Nola 1972; Tasić 1972). Danica Nola, one of the key figures in the post-WWII education system in Croatia referred to it also as 'common, especially social creativity' (1972, 9), while the researcher of aesthetic and literary education Zdenka Gudelj-Velaga (1990) proposed the term 'creative literacy.'[13]

[13] Important insights into the state of research and reflection on children's participation in culture and literature of the time are given, in particular, in the research activities by the Zagreb-based Centar za vanškolski odgoj Saveza društava »Naša djeca« (Centre for out-of-school education of the Association of Societies 'Our Children'). At the time, the Centre conducted noted research on children's free-time activities (cf. Jerbić 1970; 1973; Mesec et al. 1974; Posilović and Višnjić 1969; Bročić and Dizdarević 1972) as well as acted as publisher of the specialised journal *serb.-cro. Umjetnost i dijete* (Art and Child, 1969–1997) and of other publications related to aesthetic education. The Centre also organised events where practitioners, researchers and policy makers met to discuss topics related to aesthetic education. In the year 1971, thirty-four actors in aesthetic education from all over Yugoslavia gathered at the Festival Djeteta in Šibenik to exchange from different angles on the topic of creativity of youngsters and free time (Bročić and Dizdarević 1972). The common thread of the presented papers – creativity of children – was

In contemporary international scholarship we find again different proposals and terms in relation to children's participation in culture and principally in literature. The proposals are coming especially from scholars working with childist criticism, with the aim of 'appreciating children as creators of children's culture and of including texts produced by them into the remit of children's literature studies' (Deszcz-Tryhubczak and García-González 2022, 1040–1041). Researchers of children's literature Justyna Deszcz-Tryhubczak and Macarena García-González, who in their research practice even include children as co-researchers, have been exploring practical and theoretical possibilities of children's participation based on critical reflections as well as possibilities of childism in children's culture studies. Following feminist new materialism, Deszcz-Tryhubczak and García-González (2022, 1038) proposed to extend childism, particularly in its interrelational aspects towards 'more-than-human relationalities that produce childhood and adulthood.' Departing from the critique of the 'generational gap' in criticism and scholarship of children's literature, which has almost exclusively dealt with production for children *by adults* and as a rule excluded the production *by children,* researcher of children's literature David Rudd (2005, 19) proposed the term 'constructive child,' directed towards affirmation of children's creativity and writing. Researcher of literary and cultural aspects of childhood Clémentine Beauvais (2015) wrote of the 'mighty child' along similar lines of childhood as already proposed by revolutionary pedagogy, picturing children as the bringers of the new social order (Balina and Oushakine 2021). Sebastien Chapleau (2009, 79, 83), a teacher, activist and community organiser, devoted his thesis to childhood cultures in which he proposed to consider childism alongside other emancipatory theoretical-political-social projects like Marxist, feminist, LGBTQ+ and antiracist movements.

Acknowledging the past and present terms, proposals and conceptualisations in regard to participation in culture and particularly children's participation in literature, with the following paper I propose to observe the literary education of the time particularly through the aspects of agency. In reference to the concept of 'cultural agency' introduced by the philologist of Romance languages, writer and cultural activist Doris Sommer (2006), I propose the observation of the past participatory modes of the literary education through *literary agency.*[14]

thus considered in its social, institutional, inter-relational, personal, and political as well as economic and ideological, aspects.

[14] The term 'literary agency' has been introduced also by Maya Nitis (2023) in her doctoral

Researching cultural policy and activities within Latin American leftist movements, Sommer (2006, 2, 6) coined the term 'cultural agency' in reference to Gramscian 'passive revolution' and 'consensual hegemony [… which] requires compromise and a new culture that counts everyone in.' With 'cultural agency,' Sommer and her colleagues pointed to policies and practices as a 'wedge to open up the civil conditions necessary for decent politics and economic growth [in order to] move toward the goal of emancipation' (p. 2). Observing the past modes of cultural participation and, here particularly, of children's literary education through the concept of cultural agency, enables highlighting the common foundations of the herein discussed past modes and conceptualisations of literary education with other participatory aspects of cultural policy of the time as well as with the recent conceptualisations derived from childism. Focusing on agency within the past modes of literary education discloses their methodological, structural, systemic and relational dimensions which gave rise to it, and thus underlines its role in the past development of literary systems and, by extension, of the broader cultural as well as social system in the region.

Literary System(s) of Children's Literature in Socialist Yugoslavia and Children's Literary Agency: The Case of Bosnia and Herzegovina and Kosovo

The post WWII (re-)establishing and development of children's literatures in individual Yugoslav national languages has been embedded in different Yugoslav temporalities stemming from different *longue durée* constellations of individual nations: hence the proposal by the sociologist, curator and publisher Sezgin Boynik (2023) to regard Yugoslavia as 'an uneven and combined development.'[15] The ex-Yugoslav literary systems were re-

thesis 'Minoritized Knowledges: Agency, Literature, Temporalities,' in which she defines it as a decolonial intervention by 'minoritized literary practice where the transformative relation between literature and knowledge comes to the fore' (p. 33). Nitis situates it in the 'transdisciplinary context that underscores the interrelation of literary genres with one another, as well as with other theoretical discourses and practical social contexts' where 'literary agency intervenes in the historical present as a mode of counter-melancholy' (pp. 7–8).

[15] Imperial legacies of Ottoman and Austro-Hungarian times including, since the mid-19th century, rising nationalisms (on practically all sides), the pre-WWI imperial tensions as well the foundation of new states, the post-WWI territorial changes, the political and economic constellations of the mid-war Yugoslav monarchy, different positions in the WWII and post-WWII federal, republic and global political and economic streams as well as its social implications and, last but not least, the intensity and duration of the post-Yugoslav

lated in the federal framework due to cultural political, ideological, institutional, structural, productional and market aspects – and all these also affected canonisation processes and discourses framing the production, as well as the level, of literary contacts. The vivid and structurally supported past translation practices had a particularly important role,[16] as well as the different structures of literary education, which will be discussed in the continuation and which supported children in their literary agency.

Magazines

Children's periodicals played a particularly important role in the development of children's literary agency in the post-war period. In the post-war material shortages and the lack of books[17] in the national languages, periodicals were sometimes even used instead of textbooks.[18] A comparative view of children's periodicals in Yugoslavia discloses familiar editorial structures, based primarily on literary and artistic experience as well as technical and political education, among which sections for children's contributions were a constant.[19] The post-war establishment, development, editorial structures and role of children's periodicals in individual national languages as a tool of literary education were discussed at the

wars (1991–2000), which, next to the profound systemic changes, concluded the process of the disintegration of socialist Yugoslavia.

[16] At the time, inter-Yugoslav co-productions between different Yugoslav publishers specialising in children's literature were common, thus, selected titles came out simultaneously in different national and minority languages. Translated works featured originally produced illustrations or often also illustrations produced by locally engaged artists in order that the illustrations captured the visual dimension of the context into which the work was translated.

[17] The post-war lack of books had different reasons: pre-war and wartime Fascist and Nazi oppression had included redundancies, persecution, imprisonment, internment, murder and the burning of books in South-Slavic languages. The NOB had instituted cultural silence in some regions (slov. *kulturni molk*) as a resistance strategy, and the post-war period featured the prohibition of private publishers as well as changes in selection processes (Svetina). Finally, there was a lack of material (paper, inks, printing machines, etc.). For the post-war re-establishing of publishing for children, cf. Kobolt (forthcoming).

[18] The magazine *Ciciban,* published in the Slovene language since 1945 and targeted towards children of the first three school grades, had from 1945 and its first issue a remarkable print run of 82,000 copies, whereas today's average print run of *Ciciban* is 12,000 copies.

[19] A comparative view on editorial policies of children's sections in children's magazines would be a research desideratum, which would, however, go beyond the scope of the present paper.

symposium at the 15th Festival Kurirček (*XV. Festival Kurirček* 1977). Rifat Kukaj (1938–2005), a poet, writer, and editor for children in Kosovo, reported there in regard to the role of the Kosovo Albanian children's magazine *Pionieri* in literary education:

> *Pionieri* [...] has been a literary journal for 30 years. Old people say that a wise man sees life with three eyes. With the first eye he sees the past. Our newspaper has done so with hundreds of poems and stories suitable for children. It was necessary to show historical reality from the experience of adults. At the same time, with the second and third eye, the journal sees the present, our everyday life, full of flight and zeal for work, school knowledge and other goods, and the future – a vision of an even more beautiful and happier life. A society that cares for the lives and education of children shows its maturity and humanism, while at the same time it ensures its own future and perspective. [...] The circle of readers is growing and the print run has risen to 50,000 copies [...]. *The Journal made a significant contribution to the development of Albanian children's literature in Yugoslavia. Many writers have made a name for themselves in the newspaper, and many of its first readers are today its best colleagues.* Today, over twenty-five authors of Albanian nationality writing for children are members of the Writers' Association. The magazine has cultivated poetry and prose, drama and original comics, and has always been open to exploring the literary heritage of other peoples of Yugoslavia. Thus, the most important and most renowned writers of Yugoslav nations and nationalities 'sang' in Albanian and enriched the spiritual life of young readers. It can be said that the exchange of literary material between newspapers in Yugoslavia built bridges of fraternity and understanding between creators and readers. [...] Special attention has also been paid to the illustrations and furnishings in the sheets. [...] A large number of excellent illustrators have contributed to the design and growth of the original illustrations. [Kukaj 1978, 52; translated and emphasis added by Katja Kobolt]

Despite the particular temporality of Kosovo within the Yugoslav framework, which, as my interlocutors in the preparation of the paper reported,[20] resulted in a belated and interrupted development of the

[20] The interview was conducted by the researcher in Pristina, Kosovo (2022) with the writer and former editor of the *Zëri i rinisë* youth magazine, Ibrahim Kadriu, poet for children

Kosovo Albanian literary system,[21] the Kosovo Albanian children's literature[22] experienced an immense development in this period. Different (infra)structures of literary education promoting literary agency also added to this development.

The (infra)structures that supported the development of literary and artistic production for children were manifold: from the specialised publishers for children, that were established in all national production contexts immediately after the war (Kobolt forthcoming); through introduction of structurally secured access to daycare centres, mass curricular and extracurricular education, where publications for children become an important educational and interaction tool; to structurally implemented access to cultural and artistic production (Hofman forthcoming; Praznik 2021, 61; Videkanić 2019, 51, 232) and diverse professional and academic institutions as well as amateur networks. Particularly in the contexts which experienced a rapid re-establishment and development of publishing for children, like Slovenia and Serbia, but also in other contexts where publishing for children was re-established gradually, like Croatia, or established from scratch, most rapidly in Macedonia, and gradually also in Bosnia and Herzegovina, Kosovo and Montenegro (Alečković 1954), the introduced structures of the literary system provided an important platform for the inclusion of a broad network of cultural workers, and thus supported social and political homogenisation of the producers – cultural workers – as well as of their public – children

and editor of text books Xhevat Syla, poet for children and researcher of children's literature Dije Demiri-Frangu, and illustrator and visual editor of the *Pionieri* magazine Demush R. Avdimetaj.

[21] Due to political reasons, after the 1948 Yugoslav informbiro break with Stalin and by that also with Albania ruled by Enver Hodxa, cultural and academic production in Kosovo proliferated only from the mid-1960s on. The structural changes introduced in the course of the 1974 constitution substantially supported the development of Kosovo Albanian culture and thus also literature. The development was gradually hindered in the course of the post-1981 protests repercussions, which got especially intensified towards the end of socialist Yugoslavia and after its dissolution in 1990s (Malcolm 1998).

[22] The main publisher of children's literature in the Albanian language was the Pristina-based publishing house Rilindja (1945–1999), which brought out the magazines *Pionieri* (1947–) for children of the first school grades, and a weekly children's supplement titled *Rilindja për fëmij* to the daily *Rilindja* (1945–1990/1999–2002) and the youth magazine *Zëri i rinisë* (1968–1991), as well as children's books programme. Also, the Macedonian publisher Nova Makedonija/Detska radost brought out children's magazines in Albanian – *Fatosi: reviste e vocërrakëve* (1955–2005) and *Gëzimi: revistë e përdyjavshme e ilustruar për shkollarë* (1951–2005) as well as a children's books programme.

(Kobolt forthcoming). However, children were also active producers and were as such supported by different participatory modes and infrastructures of literary education.

Literary Circles

In the semi-structured interview conducted by the researcher in Tuzla in the year 2023, the Bosnian-Herzegovinian poet, editor and publisher for children Šimo Ešić (b. 1954, Breze by Tuzla, BIH), reported that for him, as one of eight children of an illiterate miner and a housewife, the activities offered at school were very important in his literary education. Ešić started writing poems as early as in the third grade of elementary school in the framework of the literary circle offered at school. A similar report is given by the Kosovo poets for children Dije Demiri-Frangu (b. 1957) and Xhevat Syla (b. 1956), who both started writing and publishing at a young age and with whom the researcher talked twice in the year 2022. At first the educators at schools, who ran literary circles, responded to the open calls of children's magazines to submit children's works for publishing; later on, children sent in their works on their own (Syla 2022; Demiri-Frangu 2022; Ešić 2023). My interviewees also report on vivid teachers' and editors' feedback that substantially supported them in their literary development.

Students engaged in literary circles also collaborated with school magazines, which in most schools were produced under the mentorship of teachers.[23]

Literary circles also operated out of school:[24] Olivera Tasić (1972; 1980),

[23] Pedagogue Nikola Filipović (1968), who acted first as a headteacher, then later as a university professor and influential Bosnian-Herzegovinian politician, accomplished with his doctoral thesis a quantitative and qualitative research of the 'educational value of literary creativity,' focusing on selected literary circles and school magazines in Bosnia and Herzegovina and Serbia. There were at the time 250 school magazines published, written and edited by children (Filipović 1968, 78). Filipović analysed the content of the magazines and concluded that children 'write about all issues from the life and work of the school, about various ideological-political, cultural, sports, scientific and economic-technical events in the country and abroad' (p. 79). Filipović evaluated published prose and poetic works to 'have an elementary literary-artistic value' and underlined that the editorial inclusivity dedicated to publishing works of students of different grades had 'a positive effect on establishing a closer relationship between the paper and readers of all grades' (p. 79).

[24] In the year 1978 there were in Slovenia, which had a bit less than 1,853,000 inhabitants at the time (SiStat), 192 children's and youth's literary groups gathering 2,411 youngsters

a pedagogue at the Belgrade library of Dom pionira (House of Pioneers), where extracurricular literary education was offered to children with an aim of 'systematic development of creative activities of pioneers, who have an affinity for literature and literary creativity' (Tasić 1972, 262; translated by Katja Kobolt), particularly underlined the importance of activities fostering interrelations between reading and writing (capturing impressions, reading logs), usage of different media (music-poetic events and performative adaptations of literary works) and mostly between children themselves, pedagogues and authors (discussions on the read works as well as discussions with authors, visits to literary events). 'A child in the position of a creator will be able to better understand the creative process and effort of writers, will be able to feel the beauty of the language and style, the message of the work, will be able to experience the book in its totality' (p. 263; translated by Katja Kobolt). Tasić therefore developed different games 'to support finding appropriate epithets that best characterise a word, to find vivid comparisons for given words, to metaphorically express the properties of certain phenomena, objects in relation to concepts, to discover all the meanings of a word, to derive new words from the root or from a letter of a given word' (Tasić 1972, 264; 1980; translated by Katja Kobolt).

Libraries

Specialised children's libraries at schools or out-of-school pioneer libraries should also be named as an important infrastructure for the promotion of literary agency. In the school year 1956/7 in Slovenia, from 1,793 schools 1,575 libraries with 578,247 children's books were recorded (Šlajpah 1963, 15). Specialised out-of-school children's libraries were founded usually within or back-to-back with public libraries and/or the 'Homes of the Pioneers' or 'Towns of the Pioneers' as cultural centres for children were called. In 1949, the Pioneer Library was founded in Ljubljana, which also promoted other forms of cultural education in addition to literary education (Šircelj 1963, 29). In 1947, the youth work brigades built the Town of the Pioneers in Belgrade, one year later the construction of the Town of the Pioneers in Zagreb began, and in 1961 and 1963, respectively, The Homes of the Pioneers in Pristina and Ljubljana were opened.

(whereas 691 adults gathered in 56 literary groups) and 106 fine arts groups, which gathered 1,543 youngsters (Moder 1981, 124).

The Reading Badge

In Slovenia, the reading competition Bralna značka (The Reading Badge) was introduced in 1960, allegedly based on the Czech model. The annual reading programme has been implemented for children of varying school grades and has included discussions on the read works. The participating children who read the included works were awarded a badge at ceremonies. The initiative was spearheaded by two pedagogues: the director of an elementary school in Prevalje, Carinthia, the writer for children Leopold Suhodolčan (1928–1980), and a teacher of Slovene Stanko Kotnik (1928–2004). After a decade, in 1970, has become a structurally implemented programme for the promotion of reading culture, including all primary schools in Slovenia (Letonja 2015). Participation in the reading badge was additionally rewarded, as successful participation in all school years also facilitated the acquisition of scholarships. The reading badge has also been introduced in some other Yugoslav contexts, such as Serbia, but on a much smaller scale and without curricular adaptation.

Paratextual Elements

As a tool of literary education, different paratextual and sometimes also metafictional[25] elements should also be mentioned. Prefaces were a constant element of children's books; they were especially never missing in the titles included in compulsory reading, where extensive book discussions and notes on authors were also included, and often also secondary literature. Whether written by editors or by the commissioned literary critics and literary scholars, the prefaces were directed to children and, in the case of publications for smaller children, to adults as well.

Festivals

The Festival Kurirček, which my interlocutors in the research often highlight, also belonged to the manifold cross-sectoral (infra)structures of literary education of the time (Syla 2022; Ešić 2023). Organised between 1963–1992 in Maribor, Slovenia and also in other Yugoslav cities (e.g. Kragujevac, Sarajevo, Varaždin, etc.) the festival Kurirček carried out ac-

[25] *Magarac* (Donkey) by Zvonimir Balog, published with illustrations by Nives Kavurić-Kurtović (1973) at Mladost, Zagreb in 1973, includes an address by the implied author and narrator to the implied readers; the narration is interrupted by proposals of the narrator for readers to take breaks while reading: 'Take a rest,' 'Stretch your legs,' 'How about a little lemonade?,' 'Take a deep breath,' 'Have a look outside the window,' and suchlike.

tivities with different organisations from the political, security, social and economic sectors[26] and featured an important platform for work *with* and *for children* as well as *by children.*

The festival organised events for children, mainly in the Army Halls (Dom JNA), where children's authors, some of them ex-NOB fighters, in the company of officers of the Yugoslav army (JNA, Yugoslav national army) read and talked to children (Filo 1966). In addition, with its activities the festival also importantly supported theoretical reflection on children's literature by the practitioners themselves as well as also gradually by scholars. As with the children's festivals in Novi Sad and Šibenik, the festival Kurirček also organised a yearly conference on specific topics related predominantly to the questions of the representation of the NOB in the production for children and later on, more general topics connected to literary and aesthetic education.[27] Keeping and shaping the memory of the NOB and of the revolution through the Yugoslav temporality was one of the main objectives of the festival Kurirček, which since its foundation addressed children, who did not experience NOB and the revolution themselves. If and how would the generations growing up from the 1950s on remember the events of NOB and the revolution depended on communicative memory and media (Assmann 1999). The strengthening of the memory of the NOB and the revolution was embedded in the Yugoslav politics of peace and was the core aim of the Kurirček festival (Kobolt 2023b).[28]

In the annual reports of the Festival, we can follow not only the activities, collaborations and plans of the festival but also its financial structure

[26] The founders of the Festival Kurirček were Zveza združenja borcev Narodno osvobodilne vojne (Federation of Associations of Combatants of the National Liberation Army), Komisija za vzdrževanje tradicij NOB (Commission for the Values of the National Liberation Movement) and Jugoslovanska ljudska armada (Yugoslav People's Army). The named organisations were also the main financers of the festival.

[27] The festival also initiated the journal for studies of children's literature *Otrok in knjiga* (Child and Book), which has since 1972 continued to be the only journal in Slovenia dedicated to children's literature and aesthetic education.

[28] 'The young generations coming after the war are embracing this great heritage as the tradition of their parents, as a guide for their young lives. The world we live in is different from what it was a quarter of a century ago; generations are growing up in a free homeland who know persecution and violence only from books or from the stories of their elders, generations who, in a free homeland, are called to build a new world, a world without hatred, a world of peaceful coexistence' (IV. *Festival Kurirček* 1966; translated by Katja Kobolt).

to which, according to the self-managed cultural policy, many organisations from security, education, and the economy, as well as the social and cultural sphere, contributed.[29] Already, by its third year of existence, in 1965, the festival reached out and included 250 writers and poets for children (practically all authors for children, members of the Yugoslav Association of Writers at the time) and addressed 50,000 children from all over Yugoslavia (Filo 1966).

Many of my interlocutors in the research, including Šimo Ešić, Xhevat Syla and Dije Demiri-Frangu, underlined the importance of the events with children's authors, as well as the open calls by the festivals and magazines, which, in their eyes, have importantly supported them in their decision to engage with literary production from a young age and to continue with it in one way or another later on in their lives. Like Šimo Ešić, Xhevat Syla continued to write for children when he worked as an editor at the Office for textbooks in Pristina, and as a member of many committees he also shaped cultural policy and children's literary education in Kosovo. Dije Demiri-Frangu, who still writes for children, worked as a professor and researcher of Albanian literature at the Pristina University, where, among other subjects, she researched children's literature.

Back to the festival Kurirček: next to the public programmes for children the festival initiated open calls on specific themes. The open calls were anonymous and were addressed to authors and composers as well as to children. The calls were promoted in children's magazines all over Yugoslavia, as well as through the Association of Yugoslav writers. Submitted works were evaluated by a jury composed of different professionals in children's literature. Authors and composers whose works were awarded, received financial prizes and in some years, these works were published as individual publications in the programmes of collaborating children's publishers. Selected works submitted by children were presented at public readings and in exhibitions, and were credited in the annual reports of the festival. All the submitted works were sent to children's periodicals across Yugoslavia to be, in the case of editorial interest, eventually published.

Next to the open calls by the Festival Kurirček, practically all children's magazines and festivals from all over Yugoslavia organised individual

[29] In the year 1977 the festival had an overall budget of 508,504 Yugoslav dinars or a bit more than 27,500 USD, which would, taking inflation into account, today be more than 142,500 USD (Filo 1977, 102).

open calls for writers, illustrators and children.[30] Selected submissions – written and visual – enjoyed printed presentations in magazines as well as in exhibitions. Many times, not only adult authors got cash prizes, but children, in addition to material awards – Ešić (2023) remembers getting a watch as an award for one of his public presentations of his poems – were sometimes even paid fees for their contributions, which were usually provided by economic organisations. Ešić (2023), who would send poems not only to Bosnian-Herzegovinian children's magazines but also to journals in Croatia and Serbia, reports that he started earning with his writing when he was fifteen years old.

A similar report is given by the Kosovo children's poet Xhevat Syla, whose first illustrated collection of poems for children *Syri i pranverës* (The Eye of Spring) came out with Rilindja in 1976 when he was 20 years old. At this age Syla already had a decade-long experience of publishing poems in children's magazines, for which, as he reported, he got editor's feedback, especially when meeting the editors at yearly literary meetings where child authors, along with adult authors, presented their works for other children and practitioners in children's publishing (Syla 2022).

In the year 1972, when he was 18 years old, Šimo Ešić, who was a regular guest at different public presentations all over Yugoslavia, where he met different authors for children, approached Samoupravna interesna zajednica kulture Tuzla (Self-managed interest community of culture Tuzla) and proposed to organise a literary event with prominent Yugoslav authors for children in his native Tuzla. The interest community gave him the opportunity and the funds, thus the event Oktobarska poetska drugovanja (October poetic friendships) continued to exist for the next twenty years till the outbreak of the war in BIH.

Conclusion

The presented discourses on the literary education of the time, its modes and infrastructures, as well as the testimonies of the authors included in the research bespeak active participation of children in literary production – what I propose to call *literary agency.* The manifold structures of literary education, embedded within literary systems and their cross-sectoral cooperation with institutions of care work and education

[30] Cf. a historical overview of participatory aesthetic education in children's publishing in the Slovenian-speaking context by the scholar of children's literature and librarian Martina Šircelj (1977).

(kindergartens, schools, organisations of out-of-school education and amateur structures) and with organisations from cultural, political, social, economic and security life, enabled promotion of literary agency and with that also an influx of trained writers, editors and other profiles back to the literary system, and thus added to the development of literary systems.

The systemic changes and the post-Yugoslav wars affected, in (cultural-)political, structural, institutional and economic terms, all ex-Yugoslav literary systems, and especially profoundly the literary systems in Bosnia and Herzegovina, Kosovo and North Macedonia. The dismantling of infrastructures of literary education like the Kurirček festival or their peripheralisation (the festivals Zmajeve dečje igre, Novi Sad and Festival djeteta, Šibenik are nowadays addressed as a rule only to professionals and children in Serbia and Croatia, respectively) added to the peripheralisation of the literary systems of children's literature.[31] Whereas in the socialist context, literary systems and the broader cultural field, particularly in the above-named countries, experienced a remarkable development (Alečković 1954; Praznik 2021, 61), today these very same literary systems face mitigation of new original production – in word and picture – and depend widely on translation or import from other languages and fight stagnation of original production. Šimo Ešić (2023), who still runs a publishing house and a festival for children in Tuzla as well as organising the Little Prince (Mali princ) award, the only cross-border prize for literary works for children in Bosnian-Croatian-Serbian-Montenegrin or the 'common language,'[32] lamented the generational gap in children's literature: without the manifold past infrastructures of literary education and with the productional scarcity there is a reduction of literary agency; in

[31] Even if today the literary systems as well as broader cultural fields in question still maintain contacts and partly share institutional similarities (e.g. pluralisation of publishers on the one hand and the centralisation of the public subsidising mechanisms on the other), the dissolution of the federal framework and the post-Yugoslav wars reduced the links between the ex-Yugoslav literary systems mainly to translation and sometimes institutional, but mostly personal, contacts.

[32] Since the year 2016, almost 10,000 people working in science, culture and other spheres of society have supported the Declaration on a Common Language ('Dekleracija o zajedničkom jeziku'), which treats the languages spoken in Bosnia and Herzegovina, Montenegro, Croatia and Serbia as a so-called polycentric literary language – a language spoken by several peoples in several countries, with distinctive varieties, which is a common phenomenon in Europe as well as in the rest of the world. More at 'Dekleracija o zajedničkom jeziku' (n.d.).

the above-named production contexts there are only a few writers and illustrators for children of younger generations producing new original works.[33]

The reasons for the lessening of literary agency are surely to be found in the global digital shift as well. However, next to the global media development in which electronic media took over, the post-socialist changes of ideological, productional and infrastructural organisation of literary education also affected the literary systems in question and added to their peripheralisation.

The past promotion and strengthening of literary agency in vernaculars of the region populated by diverse ethnicities and nationalities added not only to the development of literary systems, but also to the cultural agency of different social groups, and thus also of children. As such, literary agency is to be considered as an aspect of cultural agency and as a tool in the past processes of modernisation and social homogenisation beyond ethnic-religious identities and thus also of peace in the second half of the twentieth century in the region. [34] In the light of these considerations, literary education promoting literary agency does not appear only as an activity useful in education processes or in spare time, but as one of the vital aspects of literary systems and also of other cultural and

[33] Cf. the generations of the prize winners, https://maliprinc.ba/.

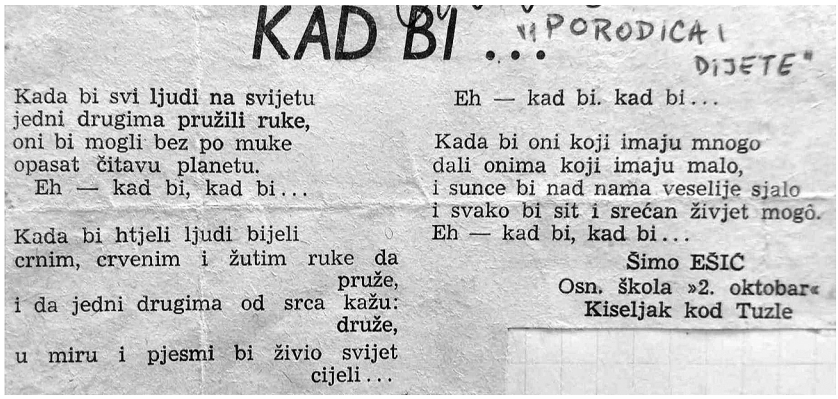
[34] See figure 1, the publication of the 'Kad bi' (If Only) by Šimo Ešić, at the time pupil at an elementary school, in the Bosnian-Herzegovinian magazine *Porodica i dijete* (Family and Child) which reflects the politics of peace and solidarity:

If all the people in the world would
give each other their hands,
they could easily encircle the entire planet.
If only, if only …

If white people would be willing to
reach out hand to black, red and yellow,
and to say to each other from the bottom of their hearts:
comrade, the whole world would live in peace and song …
Eh – if only. If only …

If those who have much
would give to those who have little,
even the sun would shine more cheerfully on us
and everyone could live full and happy.
Eh – if only. If only …

Šimo Ešić, elementary school 2. October, Kiseljak near Tuzla
Translated by Katja Kobolt.



KAD BI ... "PORODICA I DIJETE"

Kada bi svi ljudi na svijetu
jedni drugima pružili ruke,
oni bi mogli bez po muke
opasat čitavu planetu.
Eh — kad bi, kad bi...

Kada bi htjeli ljudi bijeli
crnim, crvenim i žutim ruke da
pruže,
i da jedni drugima od srca kažu:
druže,
u miru i pjesmi bi živio svijet
cijeli...

Eh — kad bi, kad bi...

Kada bi oni koji imaju mnogo
dali onima koji imaju malo,
i sunce bi nad nama veselije sjalo
i svako bi sit i srećan živjet mogô.
Eh — kad bi, kad bi...

Šimo EŠIĆ
Osn. škola »2. oktobar«
Kiseljak kod Tuzle

Figure 1 Poem 'Kad bi' (If Only) by Šimo Ešić published in the magazine *Porodica i dijete* (Family and Child), probably published in the year 1969 (courtesy of Šimo Ešić)

artistic production fields and thus also for broader cultural and social development and cohesion.

Acknowledgment

This article is part of a project funded by the European Union's Horizon 2020 research and innovation programme under the Marie Skłodowska-Curie grant agreement 101024090 – SOC-ILL. The article reflects the views only of the author, and EC REA cannot be held responsible for any use which may be made of the information contained herein.

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Memorising through Comics/Graphic Novels

Anthropos 56 (1): 127–150 | ISSN 0587-5161 | E-ISSN 2630-4082

Graphic Memories of Yugoslav Wars: *Rat* by Đo & Dju and *Vojna* by Goran Duplančić

Tanja Petrović
Research Centre of Slovenian Academy of Sciences and Arts, Slovenia
tanja.petrovic@zrc-sazu.si

Abstract. Starting from the capacity of comics to simultaneously confirm and challenge dominant narratives of war and conflict, this article discusses graphic narratives of the wars in which socialist Yugoslavia disintegrated in the 1990s. It outlines an arc of the comic production related to the Yugoslav wars, from those which emerged in the course of the wars, to those made and published with a temporal distance. Such a broad temporal arc offers a lens for understanding the ways in which comics relate to different layers of memory of wars and what they add to other narratives about war experiences. The central part of the article is dedicated to the discussion of two comic books that poignantly address questions of the subjective experience of soldiering in the 1990s, but also the generational experience of war and trauma: *Rat* (The War) by Đo & Dju (2018) and *Vojna* (The War) by Goran Duplančić (2021). The concluding part of the article is dedicated to the discussion of the ways these subjective and generational graphic narratives intervene in the memory landscape of post-Yugoslav societies.

Key Words: Yugoslavia, war, trauma, comic, cultural memory, Goran Duplančić, Đorđe Balmazović

Grafični spomini na jugoslovanske vojne: *Rat* Đoja in Djuja ter *Vojna* Gorana Duplančića

Povzetek. Izhajajoč iz zmožnosti stripov, da hkrati potrjujejo in izpodbijajo prevladujoče pripovedi o vojnah in konfliktih, članek obravnava grafične pripovedi o vojnah, v katerih je v devetdesetih letih prejšnjega stoletja razpadla socialistična Jugoslavija. Opisuje in razčlenjuje produkcijo stripov, povezanih z jugoslovanskimi vojnami, od tistih, ki so nastali med vojnami, do tistih, ki so bili ustvarjeni in objavljeni s časovno distanco. Tako širok časovni lok ponuja objektiv za razumevanje načinov, kako se stripi povezujejo z različnimi plastmi spomina na vojne in kaj dodajajo drugim pripovedim o vojnih izkušnjah. Osrednji

https://doi.org/10.26493/2630-4082.56.127-150

del članka je namenjen obravnavi dveh stripov, ki pronicljivo obravnavata vprašanja subjektivnega doživljanja vojskovanja v devetdesetih letih, in tudi generacijske izkušnje vojne ter travme: Vojna (*Rat*) avtorjev Đo & Dju (2018) in *Vojna* Gorana Duplančića (2021). Sklepni del članka je namenjen razpravi o tem, kako te subjektivne in generacijske grafične pripovedi posegajo v spominsko pokrajino postjugoslovanskih družb.

Ključne besede: Jugoslavija, vojna, travma, strip, kulturni spomin, Goran Duplančić, Đorđe Balmazović

Introduction

Comics, just as films, have always been a fertile ground for both fictional and non-fictional narratives of war, conflict, combat and soldiering. As argued by Prorokova and Tal (2018, 6), 'war provides a good story, uniquely bringing together universal themes, such as the battle between good and evil, and offering tales of heroism and transcendence, tragedy and heightened drama. Unsurprisingly then, graphic novels and comics about war are perhaps the most established and most popular genre of graphic narratives.' With their Manichean narratives about heroes and enemies, and privileging heroism over the suffering and horrors of war, comics have also been an important vehicle for propaganda and nationalism in times of war and their aftermath. In case of the US, Trischa Goodnow and James J. Kimble argue that comics 'helped forge a united home front by cultivating a patriotic sensibility that celebrated both American triumphalism and virtue' (Goodnow and Kimble 2016, 4; see also Rech 2014). Harriet E. H. Earle similarly argues (2017, 11) that 'the early superheroes were all, to some extent, symbols of nationalist pride, and Superman is no exception. However, it was the introduction of Captain America in 1941 that opened up the comics form as a medium for conveying nationalist pride and encouraging "homeland morale."'

At the same time, comics have demonstrated an important capacity to challenge fixed narratives about wars and conflicts and complicate our knowledge about them, thus defying the widespread view that they are ill suited to serious subjects, especially those that incorporate authentic social history (Schjeldahl 2005). Writing about the journalist and comic author Joe Sacco, Edward Said pointed to comics' capacity to open 'new and radical imaginative avenues' (Earle 2017, 16). Said wrote that 'comics seemed to say what couldn't otherwise be said, perhaps what wasn't permitted to be said or imagined, defying the ordinary processes of thought,

which are policed, shaped and re-shaped by all sorts of pedagogical as well as ideological pressures [...] I felt that comics free me to think and imagine and see differently' (quoted in Whitlock 2006, 967). An already classical and still resonating example of this capacity of comics to articulate and bring into public consciousness what is otherwise difficult to say is Art Spiegelman's *Maus: A Survivor's Tale* (see Chute 2016b).

Starting from the capacity of comics to simultaneously confirm and challenge dominant narratives of war and conflict, this article discusses graphic narratives of the wars in which socialist Yugoslavia disintegrated in the 1990s, focusing on the comics narrating the reality of war from the perspective of combatants/soldiers. This section is followed by an outline of comic production related to the Yugoslav wars, from those which emerged in the course of the wars to those made and published with a temporal distance. Such a broad temporal arc offers a lens for understanding the ways in which comics relate to different layers of memory of wars and what they add to other narratives about war experiences. The central part of the article is dedicated to the discussion of two comic books that poignantly address questions of the subjective experience of soldiering in the 1990s, but also the generational experience of war and trauma: *Rat* (The War) by Đo & Dju (2018) and *Vojna* (The War) by Goran Duplančić (2021). In the concluding part of the article, I ask how these subjective and generational graphic narratives intervene in the memory landscape of post-Yugoslav societies.

Comic (Super)Heroes of the Yugoslav Wars

In the series of ethnic conflicts in which Yugoslavia disintegrated, a variety of military and paramilitary units took part – from the Yugoslav People's Army (the JNA/JLA), which aligned itself with the Serbian side in the ensuing ethnic conflicts (Bieber 2008), to more or less spontaneously formed units of national armies, paramilitaries and criminal groups – among which a clear dividing line could not always be drawn (see Sacco 2003; Vivod 2013; Vukušić 2023). In Bosnia and Herzegovina, Croatia and Serbia, the early 1990s were marked by local comic production that brought new (super)heroes, placed in the battlefields where newly established armies and paramilitaries were fighting each other. This production was densely intertwined with other popular culture products, such as movies, TV series, illustrations, stickers, etc. (see Matošević and Škokić 2014; on Cro-Army stickers, see Bukač 2021). Many already established comic authors, active in 'the golden age' of Yugoslav comic production

of the 1970s and 1980s, embarked on this new production of war comics. The comic *Zelene beretke* (1994) was created by Ahmet Muminović, the author of 'partisan comics' *Otpisani* (in the late 1970s) and *Valter brani Sarajevo* in the mid-1980s. Jules Radilović, the author of the series *Partizani* (started in the late 1970s), created illustrations of Croatian Army soldiers published as chocolate stickers for the album Cro-Army (see Bukač 2021; Dragaš et al. 2014).

In 1991, Belgrade *Politika* started publishing *Knindže – vitezovi srpske krajine* (by Žarko Katić and Danko Đukić), inspired by paramilitary units whose name combines Japanese ninjas and the name of a Croatian city and a major war zone, Knin. They had names from Serbian folklore (Sava, Radojica, Milica, Dijete Grujica, Starina Novak), and were presented as descendants of Serbian freedom fighters from the remote past, devoted to traditional, patriarchal values, having superpowers and far eastern martial skills, but also rich cosmopolitan experience obtained in the criminal underground across Europe (see Čolović 2000; Matošević 2004/2005; Vivod 2013; Pasanović 2018); they were 'in good physical shape, dressed in modern camouflage uniforms' (Shymkevych 2021). Dragan Vasiljković, aka Kapetan Dragan, leader of the Serbian paramilitaries in Kninska krajina, was an inspiration for comics as well: *Osmica* published the comic *Kapetan Dragan,* while *Radio TV revija* published a series of comic strips *Kapetan Knindža* in 1991 and 1992 (Zupan 2007, 112).

A Croatian superhero from the same period was *Superhrvoje* (Ercegovac and Listeš 1992) who came into being when Hrvoje Horvat, a son of Croats who emigrated to Germany and got killed in a traffic accident, came to Croatia after receiving a call from his best friend Stjepan and got transformed into an undefeatable stone-man.

Bosnian comic superhero, *Bosman* (created by Ozren Pavlović in the mid-1990s), fought 'wild Chetniks' who attempted to conquer Sarajevo. Created in the besieged Sarajevo, *Bosman* 'was envisioned as an ongoing story for young readers to bring them hope and a form of escape from their daily horror' (Pasanović 2018, 60). Similarly to Serbian and Croatian (super)heroes, *Bosman* was closely connected to a remote, past mythology; in his case, pre-Ottoman and Ottoman imagery and traditions. Simultaneously, he was modern and cosmopolitan: he runs halfnaked 'through the woods and observe[s] the occupation forces moving around Sarajevo months before everyone else will admit there is a problem. When snipers start shooting, he is woken from his yoga rituals and is depicted as the only one who runs into buildings to stop the snipers from

killing innocent people in the crowds protesting wars in Bosnia, Croatia, and elsewhere' (p. 60).[1]

As several authors have already pointed out, these post-Yugoslav superheroes draw from both global superhero imagery (characters such as Captain America, Superman, Flash Gordon, etc.) and rediscovered (medieval) national imageries and histories of their respective nations. They were also based on the sharp opposition between 'us,' patriotic, traditionalist, but simultaneously modern, West-oriented, and 'the enemy,' presented as wild, cruel, incompetent, and primitive. These heroic graphic narratives do not depict traumatic effects of war events, but another kind of trauma often shapes and drives their superheroes' actions: it is trauma related to Yugoslav socialism. It turns out that the Yugoslav regime was responsible for the death of Hrvoje Horvat's parents in *Super Hrvoje,* while his best friend Stjepan's father was imprisoned in Goli otok in the 1970s because, while drunk, he blamed the Yugoslav regime for their deaths (see Matošević and Škokić 2014, 133). The childhood of Savo, protagonist of *Knindže – vitezovi srpske Krajine,* has also been marked by the trauma of Yugoslav socialism: in 1971, his father was killed by Ustaše in Lika because he allegedly worked for UDBA (Yugoslav secret police) (p. 126). In this way these comics contributed to the widespread Balkanist tropes of the Yugoslav wars as being caused and driven by centuries-old hatred among different ethnic groups, as just another iteration in an endless chain of violence, and thus as something primordial and inevitable.

Closer to the real experiences of combat are comics describing experiences of young fighters, whose authors sometimes had a first-hand knowledge of fighting in the war. Many of these comics were created during wartime by Croatian authors (e.g. *Mudraci* by Štef Bartolić (2011), 'Čistači' by Miljenko Horvatić and Mario Kalogjera (2014), 'Savjest' by Brajen Dragičević and Goran Sudžuka (2014), all comics were first published in 1992). Despite their narrative complexity and emotional multilayeredness, these comics still follow the clear pattern in which 'our' fighters are presented as 'good boys,' modern, listening to rock music and having 'western' values, while 'the enemy' is homogenized, presented in

[1] Kosovo-Albanian superhero *Shqiponja* (2012) by comic artist from Prizren, Gani Sunduri, may be added to this list of national(ist), post-Yugoslav comic heroes, although his author 'was insistent his superhero had no political message, and was aggrieved that some thought he harked back to the political superheroes of the Yugoslavian era' (Freeman 2022).

a stereotypical, caricatural way as primitive, dirty, cruel and grotesque.[2] This is also true for the majority of comics created after the Yugoslav wars were over. They do not challenge dominant binary views based on the idea of the moral and cultural superiority of 'us' and serve to support nation-building narratives. The preface for the collection *Domovinski rat u stripu* (Dragaš et al. 2014) was written by then president of Croatia Ivo Josipović, who stated (2014, 3) that the 'popularity of comics offers possibilities to show the greatness of the Homeland war to many generations and also express acknowledgement, respect, and gratitude to soldiers and all victims of war.' But this book itself reflects the complexity and ambiguity of war, the memory of it and its effects, showing how heroic narratives of war are inseparable from those exposing its absurdity, terrifying reality and the deep, painful traces it leaves on individuals, communities and societies.[3] Among the comics produced with a temporal distance from the war in this collection, there were also those which address the disastrous aftereffects of war – trauma, mental health issues, loneliness, difficulties of reintegration, etc. ('Poslije rata' (Sudžuka 2014) or 'Baba i ja' (Petruša 2014). Trauma, generational loss and discontinuity are also at the centre of the two longer albums, *Papak* by Frano Petruša (2010a; 2010b) and *Vukovar Haš* by Nenad Barinić (2018).

Another important body of comic works addressing the wars through which Yugoslavia disintegrated mostly concerns the war in Bosnia and Herzegovina and consists of works authored by foreign artists who either had a chance to observe war events as war correspondents, or to learn about these events from their friends and acquaintances in Sarajevo or other places. Sarajevo and the war in Bosnia were the subject of Hermann's *Sarajevo Tango* (1995) and Joe Cubert's *Fax from Sarajevo* (1996), Tomaž Lavrič's *Bosanske basni* (1997) and *Evropa* (2003), and *Les tam-*

[2] War comics The Prout Pictures by Dubravko Mataković, published in *Nedjeljna Dalmacija* in the 1990s, abounded with grim and ironic humour, cruelness, grotesqueness and absurdity, and offered a picture of war in Croatia that was an alternative to the narratives of heroism and moral superiority of Croatian soldiers, but also ironically mocked all conflicting sides in the Yugoslav wars, 'chronologically following events related to the start of the Homeland war in Croatia, ten-days war in Slovenia, war in Bosnia and Herzegovina, animosities within the disintegrating federation, but also the mentalities of its citizens' (Banić 2014, 34).

[3] For an overview of 'the independence comics' in Slovenia and Croatia, see Gale (2019). Gale emphasizes the importance of narrating the wars for independence of these two societies through the comic medium and thus paying tribute to the selfless soldiers who fought for it, but also points to the pointlessness and cruelty of war.

bours de Srebrenica by Lobjois and Raimbeau (2019). Joe Sacco visited war-torn Bosnia and Herzegovina several times between 1992 and 1995 and authored several war comics (*Christmas with Karadzić* (1997), *Šoba* (1998), *Safe Area Goražde: The War in Eastern Bosnia 1992–95* (2000), *The Fixer: A Story of Sarajevo* (2003)). These comics stand out as complex narratives exposing ambiguities of positioning within a reality defined by war and violence. They are also characterized by a high level of the author's self-reflexivity and awareness that these same ambiguities define his own position of 'confused observer' (Georgievski 2022). Tomaž Lavrič's comics related to the Yugoslav wars are also multi-layered, exposing the brutality of war, the ambiguity of its effects, and the long-lasting damaging consequences of violence and trauma, as well as the troubling work of hegemonic relations of power that have marked the European continent for centuries already and have strongly shaped relations, operations and people's destinies in the wars of Yugoslavia as well.

The above overview of comics related to the wars in Yugoslavia in the 1990s, although inexhaustive and inevitably simplified, points to the variety of discursive frames, domains of media content production and genre conventions with which they communicate. What connects this diverse comic production is a complex, often tense dialectics between the reality of war and combat and these broader frameworks. Some of the comics, particularly those made during the wars and published by mainstream media such as *Politika* in Serbia or *Slobodna Dalmacija* in Croatia easily read as nationalistic war propaganda. They were simultaneously interpreted as a way to keep the spirits of the population high. What the very short life of comics such as *Super Hrvoje, Bosman* and others seem to suggest is that their propagandistic narratives did not really resonate with the reality of life in war – the same suggestion is made by the authors who have analysed these comics so far (e.g. Matošević 2004/2005; Pasanović 2018). More personal comic narratives, many of which were told from a temporal distance from the war events, are more complex, but often remain within the binary understanding of two sides in war and insist on clear, unquestionable moral positions. As a consequence, they are perceived as a suitable tool for nation building and shaping the collective memory in which the figures of fighters for independence/freedom/democracy have the central role. Some of the comics created in the wake of the Yugoslav wars reveal aspects of war which are less suitable for romanticizing and veneration – the criminal background of paramilitaries and their leaders, corrupt politicians, the highly ambigu-

ous role of the international community and the UN forces, etc. They are often characterized by a blend of genres and referentiality: from a crime drama (*Sarajevo Tango*), a road-movie (*Evropa*), and a thriller (*Les tambours de Srebrenica*), to more (self-)reflexive works that explore 'the limits of autobiography' (Matović 2022, 256) and blend 'field journalism and its subsequent, often painstakingly long, graphic envisioning, altogether commonly referred to as comics journalism or graphic journalism' (Matović 2022, 256; see also Chute 2016a), as in Joe Sacco's graphic accounts of war in Bosnia. Such diversity of a rather limited number of comics related to the wars in Yugoslavia confirms the plasticity of the genre of the graphic novel (Hatfield 2005, 4).

Time, Biography, Generation

With the passage of time, the comic narratives on the Yugoslav war became even more rare. *Les tambours de Srebrenica,* published in 2019, presents a rather isolated event, and it seems that in the late second decade of the twenty-first century the international publishing market largely lost interest for the now distant Yugoslav wars and graphic stories about them. The appearance of two book-length graphic narratives whose titles both translate as *War* in this same period thus may seem a surprise: in 2018, Belgrade publisher Fabrika knjiga published the comic book *Rat* with Đo and Dju listed as its authors,[4] while in 2020, another small, independent publisher, Barbatus from Zagreb, released *Vojna* by Goran Duplančić.[5] But, as I will argue below, their appearance at that moment reflects the fact that time and its passing are essential for the very

[4] These pseudonyms are made of the first letters of the first name of the artist Đorđe Balmazović, who wrote and drew the comic book, and of the surname of Saša Đukičin, whose story was told in the book. The decision to indicate authorship in this way has been informed by the long-lasting opposition by Đorđe Balmazović and the art group Škart to which he belongs to the art-historical regime in which the authors and their identity are central and decisive to the artistic value of their works. In addition, it was important to acknowledge Saša's equal role in the creation of the comic book (interview with Đorđe Balmazović, 10 January 2024).

[5] In this article I refrain from using the designation *graphic novel* to describe *Rat* and *Vojna,* although they satisfy most of criteria used to define it as a genre: they are both 'longer narratives that are contained within one book' (Earle 2017, 23) and represent 'long comic books that require a bookmark' (Spiegelman 2011). My reasons to call them *comics* or *comic books* instead are similar to some of those informing Harriet E. H. Earle's decision to abstain from referring to comics as graphic novels in her work: she quotes Daniel Raeburn, founder and writer of *The Imp,* who writes (2004, 110): 'I snicker at the neologism first for its insecure pretension – the literary equivalent of calling a garbage man a "san-

possibility of articulation of the personal and generational experience of young men coming of age during Yugoslavia's disastrous dissolution.

At the heart of *Rat – priča u slikama* (The War – A Story in Images) is the story of Saša, a man from Novi Bečej in the Serbian province of Vojvodina, who answered a call for mobilization in 1991 and ended up in the battlefields of Eastern Slavonia in the uniform of the Yugoslav People's Army. 'Saša's Story,' the chapter describing events from the battlefield, is preceded by the chapter 'May 2007,' which provides a framework within which the main narrative that follows has been shaped. In May 2007, Đorđe Balmazović Žole, an artist and activist, and member of the artist duo Škart,[6] headed to London and stayed there with his friend Saša, who have lived there already for many years. In company of Miško (Mišel), Saša's Montenegrin friend who works as a taxi driver in London, they sit, talk and listen to music. At some point, they listen to Miles Davis' songs and start discussing when exactly he passed away. Žole asks whether it was in 1992. 'No, in 1991,' answers Saša. Žole asks if he is certain about it, and Saša answers: 'I am positive. It was at the end of 1991. I was on the frontline then.' This is an interlude into Saša's story about how he got mobilized, sent to the frontline, about the bizarre everyday reality of war, and about his injury in a battle. The story is not linear and gets interrupted several times with zooming out to its narrative here-and-now, in which Saša, Žole and Mišel continue their conversation, asking questions

itation engineer" – and second because a "graphic novel" is in fact the very thing it is ashamed to admit: a comic book.' As Earl (2017, 24–25) further emphasizes, 'To my mind, the term "graphic novel" serves to give legitimacy to a form that has been unfairly tarnished by its past as a mass-produced medium, or more precisely by high cultural prejudices about the age of mass production. Comics has earned its stripes as a legitimate narrative form. As such, there is no reason why a long comic that deals with "serious" issues and memoir should have any special term, hence my preference for the original term "comic".' An additional reason not to use *graphic novel* for *Rat* and *Vojna* comes from the fact that their authors do not use this term, either. *Rat* is described in the subtitle as 'a story in images' (serb. *priča u slikama*), and Goran Duplančić refers to *Vojna* as 'a comic' (cro. *strip*).

[6] Škart is an artist-activist group consisting of two members – Dragan Protić Prota and Đorđe Balmazović Žole. As stated on their website, 'Škart is a collective founded in 1990 at the Faculty of Architecture in Belgrade. While experimenting through their work, they focus primarily between the medium of poetry and design. "Architecture of the human relationships" is their main concept. Through the constant flux within the collective, present since its very beginning, members collaboratively work to develop new values. They are particularly capable through the process of making, to embrace "beautiful" mistakes and tirelessly strive to combine work with pleasure' (Škart, n.d.; see also Yildiz 2022).

about Saša's war experience and commenting on it. The epilogue ('What happened afterwards') has been crafted after a friend suggested that the authors add it. It talks about Saša's transfer to the Novi Sad hospital after wounding, his hospital days, return to his home town, and travel to Sarajevo, from where Saša emigrates to the UK. The book ends with his boarding the London-bound plane.

Vojna is the personal story of Goran Duplančić, who in 1991, as a 19-year-old man from the town of Split, performed mandatory service in the Yugoslav People's Army (JNA) in the Boris Kidrič military base in Ljubljana's Šentvid neighbourhood. Together with other young men from all corners of former Yugoslavia, Goran found himself in the middle of the conflict between the JNA and Territorial Defence, the military units of Slovenia who just declared independence. Under information blockade, without electricity and without food supplies, Goran and his army buddies take care of, encourage, and support each other. Abounding with humour and details recognizable to several generations who served in the JNA, with tense situations, chaos, and absurdities, this comic book ends with no tragedy, but announces tragedies of an incomprehensible scale that unfolded when the war moved further to Croatia and then Bosnia and Herzegovina.

Vojna focuses on the tense days of the summer of 1991 in Slovenia, without an ambition to place them in a broader context of consecutive events in which Yugoslavia disintegrated, or to reflect on them from the present-day point of view. As the writer Miljenko Jergović pointed out (2021), *Vojna*'s author 'managed to recreate the emotion of a distant past, making no use of the privilege of knowing the outcomes.' Although framed as a personal account of events encompassing a short period in Šentvid, Slovenia, detached from what came after, *Vojna* narrates a generational trauma of young men marked by violent conflicts in Yugoslavia. For this reason, it cannot be read (only) as an amusing, albeit tense, episode with no tragic consequences.

Drawn in fast, sharp moves, *Vojna* relies upon and simultaneously creates a recognizable imagery of war comics – it shows men in uniform, strategizing, weapons, etc. At the same time, however, the author pictures his army buddies and himself as rich, diverse characters and depicts complex relationships among them, including care, solidarity and love. At the very end of the comic, the reader is faced with the author's photograph from the army days and with the fact that he and other soldiers were very young, almost children, at the moment they were pushed into an absurd

Figure 1

A Detail from Goran Duplančić's Sketchbook with Drawings from *Vojna* (reproduced with permission of the author)

armed conflict – a fact that has been slightly obscured by the sharp lines in which the author portrays himself in comic frames.

Rat, on the other hand, engages more explicitly with the narration of the generational experience by addressing the lasting effects of war violence: emigration, trauma, separation, and loss. It is visually narrated in simple, black and white images, which amplify the intensity, absurdity and tragedy of events described. While *Vojna* is a personal story in which the author is the protagonist and in control of the narrative, *Rat*'s narrative results from interpersonal interaction and negotiation between Žole, who drew the story, and Saša, who narrated it. Their relationship and role in shaping the narratives is much more complex, though: they both grew up in Novi Bečej, were in the same class and have been good friends from those early days. The voices of both of them are present in the book and equally engaged in shaping the story, including when their views of the

past diverge significantly. From the closing text on the last page (p. 158), which offers the readers an insight into the process of creating the comic book, it is clear that one of the factors contributing to its long-lasting production was a negotiation between Saša and Žole over the content, its presentation and formulation. The readers learn that they took 20 months to compete the epilogue. 'We argued most over the footnote on page 42 – whether it is necessary at all and what should it say.'[7]

In spite of different narrative techniques, both *Rat* and *Vojna* tell personal stories that are simultaneously a story of the Yugoslav generation coming of age in the 1990s, and a universal story of the absurdity of war and dangers of nationalism and what they do to individuals, their dreams and futures. What is also common to both is that they were shaped during a long period of time and after a significant amount of time has passed since the events which they describe took place. Goran Duplančić (in Mager 2023) thus explains his decision to start drawing his story as late as in 2013:

> When I was experiencing these events, I was telling myself that this would be a good story to make a comic, if I only make it through. But then, I felt no need to put it on paper for a long time, probably also because after every war 'big stories' of suffering and heroism dominate the public sphere, while 'little stories' seem unimportant in comparison to them. The fact that the conflict in Slovenia, as compared to subsequent wars in Croatia and Bosnia and Herzegovina, seemed quite unserious did not work in favour of making a comic, either. I actually started working on it once I had my own children. I started thinking of what could I teach them about big truths of life and realized that everything I know I learned during those ten days of war in Slovenia. Those events have irreparably affected myself and our entire generation.

To be told as a graphic narrative, Saša's traumatic experience of participating in war operations in Slavonia had to wait for the two childhood friends to reunite in London in 2007, and then making the comic book took several years. Both comics thus resulted from a long process and became tellable only in a certain moment in time and from a certain distance from the traumatic events.[8]

[7] This footnote explains who Slobodan Milošević was.

[8] A significant amount of time used for the production of war comics also characterizes Joe

Temporal distance notwithstanding, the authors of these two comic books were careful to remain faithful to the events as they really happened decades ago and to provide exact and just representation of their actors. In the introductory note to *Vojna,* Goran Duplančić states that after almost 30 years he does not remember the faces and names of all the participants in the events he described, and 'that those he still remembers were arbitrarily ascribed to persons in the comic.' Đorđe Balmazović told me that for Saša it was very important that the events from the 1990s were told exactly as they happened, and once they started talking about the war and mobilization, he started remembering details gradually, in the process of creating the comic book.[9]

Another common characteristic of *Rat* and *Vojna,* which separates them from most of the war comics from the 1990s, is that they do not create a narrative with a clear dividing line and a moral opposition between 'us' and 'them.' *Rat* discusses openly the Serbian role in the Yugoslav wars and responsibility for it. *Vojna,* as Miljenko Jergović emphasized (2021), is a book 'that can be read with exactly the same feelings in all countries from which the soldiers came to the Šentvid military base 30 years ago.' Goran Duplančić carefully and skilfully draws his characters of the soldiers from different parts of Yugoslavia, emphasizing linguistic and other differences between them. However, specific linguistic and other features, which indicate the ethnic background and geographical origin of young men are not caricatured and used to mark anyone in a negative way, as was a standard technique in most of the comics about the Yugoslav wars.

Fear, Trauma, and the Workings of War

While fear and trauma do not go well with heroic narratives of war, comics seem to be a suitable form for mediating traumatic experiences and memories (see Whitlock 2006), due to their capacity to locate 'the reader in space' and 'to spatialize memory' and thus 'to map a life, not only figuratively but literally' (Chute 2011, 108–109). Goran Duplančić, the author of *Vojna,* also points to the ability of comics to tell traumatic (hi)stories: 'The written text is invaluable, but it cannot be rewound. But one can rewind images and drawings. Even film does not have such

Sacco's work, which has been labeled 'slow journalism,' 'not solely because of the sheer amount of time it takes to complete the publications, but more significantly because of the kind of reading experience they provide' (Matović 2022, 257; see also Chute 2016a, 7).

[9] Interview with Đorđe Balmazović, 10 January 2024.

power, because you cannot pause your gaze and establish a relationship with protagonists, you are primarily a spectator. In comics, on the other hand, the reader chooses the rhythm herself. For these reasons, there is no better medium than a comic book to tell personal, emotionally loaded stories' (Duplančić in Mager 2023).

The feeling of fear and its workings are the central motive of both *Rat* and *Vojna.* In Duplančić's comic book, the fear the main protagonist/the author feels during the days he was trapped in the military base during the war in Slovenia is depicted as a terrifying black wolf haunting him and known to him from his early childhood days. In *Rat,* the fear is explicitly mentioned and discussed several times. It is exposed as a driving force for decisions and as a feeling in the roots of important moral questions the two friends keep asking themselves over the years. On pp. 38–40, the authors deconstruct the very idea that answering the mobilization call was a sign of braveness while draft dodging was a sign of cowardness: Saša explains that his going to war was a consequence of the fear that one of his friends would get mobilized instead of him, and he would feel guilty in front of him or his mother. 'The same way your mum feared my reaction because you did not respond to the call to go to war. She told me that when I met her after I came back,' he says to Žole, adding: 'In my mind it looked like choosing between war and jail. For some reason, going to the front line seemed as a less bad option. At least I thought so back then. In a way, I went to the war because of cowardice.' 'So you both were afraid?,' asks Mišel. Saša and Žole both exclaim: 'Yes!'

The authors of both these comic books, as emphasized above, concern themselves with the precise and faithful narration of war events. The strong presence of fear and the fact that many years passed between the events and their recreation in the form of comic books (the process of remembering suppressed events and experiences particularly shaped Saša's story), already signal the highly traumatic nature of these events. However, neither of these two comic narratives reflects on trauma explicitly, which is in line with the insights that trauma is not 'fully narratable,' but 'it unquestionably influences narratives that emerge around it' (Jelača 2016, 3).

Rat faces the readers with terrifying experiences of death, wounding, and destruction in Eastern Slavonia during war operations and the painful reality of war in Serbia at the same time. Discrepancies between simple moves that slightly resemble children's drawings, mostly static, often metaphorical (e.g. soldiers depicted as skittles with helmets) and

Figure 2

A detail from Đorđe Balmazović's Sketchbook with Drawings from *Rat* (reproduced with permission of the author)

scenes of killing, suffering and destruction have profound effects and point to the inability to comprehend and narrate events in all their traumatic dimensions, simultaneously revealing the absurdity and pointlessness of war.

With such a driving technique, Balmazović breaks with the tradition of comic representations of war as heroic and abounding with action and glorification of war and conflict (Earle 2017, 13) which erases 'all the gore and truth from the battle' (Kermode 2011, 4). Moreover, *Rat* overtly opposes the mythology of war heroism extensively employed in the nation-building narratives with humour and fine sarcasm: in the beginning of Saša's story from the frontline, there is a scene in which, in search of a place to go to toilet, he crouches in the field with his pants down. The bullets start flying above his head, so he runs back to the transporter in rush. He then imagines how his monument would look if he got shot while relieving himself – a crouching soldier with his pants down and full military equipment on a pedestal.

Vojna, on the other hand, does not depict armed conflict, casualties and violence directly. According to its author, his ambition was to recall

in the comic the recognizable atmosphere of serving in the Yugoslav People's Army: 'I wanted to give the comic the aura that resembles conversations of friends who meet and evoke memories of their youth. Many people who read the comic told me that comics remind them of their high school days, although the events my comic describes are not really something they want to recall' (Duplančić in Mager 2023). It is rather what could happen than what happened (as well as the knowledge that it did happen just months later in Croatia and Bosnia and Herzegovina) that points to the fact that trauma significantly shapes the memory of described events in Vojna as well. The recognizable JNA humour and comic situations *Vojna* abounds with do not conceal the fear, tension, and absurdity of war, but actually amplify them. *Vojna* describes a moment in which Goran and other young men trapped in the Šentvid army base were denied the possibility to imagine the future and have dreams and plans for it. Between one day and the next, from being the soldiers of the common socialist country, they became enemies for the Slovenian Territorial Defence and the public (despite the fact there were still Slovenian soldiers among them), while the JNA authorities required them to blindly follow orders, even when it implies shooting at a friend who attempts deserting and leaving the confined space of the barracks where they were kept without food, electricity and information for weeks.

Several renowned researchers of trauma maintain that trauma has a distinctively individual character and insist that trauma is a singular experience (LaCapra 2001; Tal 1995; see also Earle 2017). For example, Dominick LaCapra warns against generalizing and relativizing, pointing out that 'the notion of trauma [should not] be rashly generalized or the difference between trauma victim and historian or secondary witness – or, for that matter, between traumatization and victimhood – be elided' (LaCapra 2001, 97). Both *Rat* and *Vojna* narrate personal experiences; however, these experiences strongly resonate both generationally and within the space and time of post-Yugoslav societies. They expose trauma as cultural memory (see Jelača 2016), shared by many belonging to the last Yugoslav generations who experienced mobilization, draft-dodging, war, forced migration, massive emigration and futures cut short. Trauma also marked the lives of the parents of these generations and significantly shaped inter-generational relations (which is poignantly illustrated by a scene in *Rat* in which an unknown woman cries and embraces Saša after he is back home from hospital and tells him 'Children, what did we do to you.').

The way these two comic books evoke trauma goes beyond the dichotomy of victims vs. perpetrators, destabilizes moral positions these two categories usually imply, and points to the ambiguous nature of involvement in war and conflict and the consequences of that involvement. In the Šentvid military base in 1991, Goran is faced with an order to shoot at his fellow soldiers, which he rejects, putting himself into danger. In *Rat,* Saša tells his father who manages to visit him on the frontline: 'Dad, why am I here? What do we want here? I just want to save myself. Dad, I cannot shoot at another human being!' His father answers: 'Son, if you have to choose whom to save, choose yourself!' The authors also reflect upon other workings of war that profoundly affect an individual in ways which often do not relate to what kind of person this individual is in 'ordinary' situations: Goran is rude and violent toward a Spanish female journalist who comes to the base and tries to get a statement from him. In *Rat,* Saša and his fellow soldiers laugh when they hear that their transporter hit *Fića,* a small Yugoslav automobile. Later, in the hospital, he encounters the driver of that car, who is badly injured, with multiple fractures in his legs. 'I was horrified remembering that a few days ago we were laughing because of the accident between *Fića* and our transporter,' says Saša.

Both comics critically expose war propaganda by both opposing sides and the ways it dehumanizes 'the enemy,' and what this dehumanization does to soldiers on the frontline. For example, in *Rat,* Saša and other soldiers watch TV news, first on the Belgrade television channel, where the reporter says that Croatian units broke the ceasefire, and Serbian soldiers liberated the village of Sarvaš. The soldiers loudly approve what they hear. Then they switch to the Zagreb channel, where the reporters say that Sarvaš was occupied by the Serbian aggressor army. The soldiers disagree in rage, and attack Saša when he asks them: 'Haven't you seen with your own eyes what happened?'

These comics do not romanticize war, battles, and bonds among men resulting from participation in dramatic and traumatic events. In *Vojna,* solidarity and comradeship among soldiers is not presented as a social infrastructure fostering their braveness and readiness to fight, but as survival strategy, their last resort and a way to oppose the hegemonic work of war and the military institution. They also expose collectivity and solidarity as sources of pressure and hegemony in war situations: before attacking Vukovar, the officer asks men in Saša's unit if there is anyone who feels incapable of participating in the forthcoming action. 'Everyone was silent, so I was silent, too,' describes Saša in *Rat* of how this pressure

works. In *Vojna,* Goran refuses to escape the military base and go home to Split when his mother visits and proposes it. The Slovenian soldier, Tomaž, also stays in the barracks with his army buddies, even though he meets his brother on the other side of the fence, who is a member of the Slovenian Territorial Defence unit, and although everyone expects him to leave.

Rat, Vojna, and Memory Cultures in Post-Yugoslav Societies

If we understand cultural texts as 'repositories of feelings and emotions, which are encoded not only in the content of the texts themselves but in the practices that surround their production and reception,' following Ann Cvetkovich (2003, 7), then *Rat* by Đo & Dju and *Vojna* by Goran Duplančić may be read as cultural texts. They engage the readership and the public in the former Yugoslav societies in complex and manifold ways. These two comic books have manifold lives, too.

Vojna was originally published on the largest regional web forum for comic authors and lovers, www.forum.stripovi.com, under the name *Na mestu … vojna!* The first six pages appeared on 8 March 2013, and the author periodically published new pages over the next two years. The last, 264th page, was published online on 14 January 2015. From the author's post on the forum preceding publication of the first pages, we learn that he decided to publish a web comic although it was originally planned to appear in print in the Q Library edition.[10] He enjoyed the immediate online interaction with the readers – members of the comic forum community and their feedback, and was quite surprised by an idea by Josip Sršen, another comic author and publisher, to publish the book that came several years later.[11] Publishing house Barbatus released *Vojna* in 2021, six years after Duplančić uploaded the last page on the web forum. The author was even more surprised by the significant interest in the comic book – the first edition sold out within only half a year, and the second addition appeared in 2021. In autumn 2022, the Slovenian translation of *Vojna* was published by the Research Centre of the Slovenian Academy of Sciences and Arts (Duplančić 2022). It provoked interest that clearly exceeded the usual circles of comic fandom and, travelling across state borders established through the events it describes, engaged in new debates in the ways its author did not anticipate or care about while creating

[10] See http://forum.stripovi.com/topic.asp?TOPIC_ID=43600&whichpage=1.

[11] Interview with Goran Duplančić, 22 April 2023.

it. If the dynamic, witty and emotional story and numerous references to military service in the Yugoslav People's Army made this comic appealing for readers in Croatia and other parts of former Yugoslavia, in Slovenia it acquired additional, more distinctively political meaning. As the first-hand account of dramatic events during the ten-day-war in Slovenia, *Vojna* challenges the narrative dominating the Slovenian public sphere, in which JNA soldiers, including the young men performing their military service who were trapped in military bases across Slovenia, were presented as the enemies and aggressors who were eventually defeated by the heroic actions of the Territorial Defence. October 25, the day when in 1991 the last JNA soldier left the territory of Slovenia, is marked as a national holiday (see Janša 2013). With a biographical story from the ten-day war, *Vojna* insists on that war's absurdity and pictures it as chaotic and morally ambiguous. Its challenge of the fixed narrative of virtuous and victorious defeat of the aggressor had a somewhat cathartic effect for the Slovenian public because it opened a space to remember the days of getting independence outside the petrified categories of national(ist) mythology.[12]

Most of the memorable, witty, and tragic images that comprise the narrative of *Rat* carry strong and important anti-war messages if taken individually or in shorter sequences. As painful 'postcards of the 1990s' (Kalaba 2019), they find their place in art exhibitions in the region. In December 2019, the Museum of Yugoslavia staged the exhibition *The Nineties: A Glossary of Migrations* whose aim was 'to generate a new vocabulary that would at least temporarily rearticulate [...] dominant concepts and discourses' about the nineties in former Yugoslavia. 'All the artists were invited, in collaboration with the curators, to choose a term, syntagm or idiom that they thought articulated the position of the work, initiative or community in the most accurate way – of course, primarily from the perspective of the exhibition's problematic focus – and they were also asked to write a statement explaining that choice' (Ognjanović 2019, 27–28). Škart/Đo & Dju choose *courage and/or cowardice*. The words constitut-

[12] See, for example, the discussion at the book launch of *Vojna* in Ljubljana, 23 February 2023, available at ZRC SAZU (2023). Although it might have not been the author's intention or ambition, *Vojna* thus joined a body of other texts and works of art which problematize the idea of Slovenia's morally unquestionable and superior role in Yugoslavia's breakdown and the narrative which is the foundation of the Slovenian independent state. Among them are the theatre play *Republika Slovenija* (2016), and Zoran Smiljanić's and Marjan Pušavec's comic *Zadnji let Tonija Mrlaka* (2017).

Figure 3 Frames from *Rat* (acrylic on cardboard, reproduced with permission of the author)

ing this pair seemingly function as antonyms, but actually demonstrate that 'in the given context, it was difficult to discern between choice and coercion, that is, between the possibility of stepping out of the discourse of absolute victimization and passivization' (pp. 25–26). This is how the artists reflect upon the meaning of these words (Škart 2019, 169):

> What did it mean, in the nineties, to be brave, and what did it mean to be cowardly? To head on to a war one did not know the reason for, or to avoid it? Now, almost thirty years later, when it is known that the war resulted in approximately 140,000 killed and that around 4 million people became refugees (most of whom left Yugoslavia), the extent of the evil brought on by nationalism is clear and why it is so important to recognize it in time, and stop it.

This statement is accompanied by several frames from the comic book *Rat* – those depicting the conversation between Saša and his father, those in which the officer asks whether anyone feels incapable of participating in the forthcoming action and everyone is silent, an image of Saša on the monument pedestal with his pants down, and some others. Frames from *Rat* were also exhibited in Sarajevo in the summer of 2023, in the framework of the exhibition *Art War* curated by the artist Slaven Tolj. The Škart was faced with negative reactions by some visitors of this exhibition because of the frames depicting differences in reporting on the war operations in Sarvaš on TV channels in Belgrade and Zagreb – for these visitors, even after so many years, it was unacceptable to publicly present the 'Serbian side' of the story in such a negative light.[13]

Rat and *Vojna* are graphic narratives of the wars in Yugoslavia in the 1990s that both offer individualized accounts and tell of personal experi-

[13] Interview with Đorđe Balmazović, 10 January, 2024.

ences, traumas, fears and moral dilemmas. Due to their testimonial nature, immediacy and high affective charge, they are capable of emotionally mobilizing different publics in various localities. However, the focus on personal and individual stories and memories by no means implies that these comic books de-politicize events, persons and their voices. On the contrary – as Žole emphasized, 'it is very important to collect as many documents and testimonies about the 1990s as possible. That is one of the reasons Saša and I made this book. Documenting events through testimonies prevents perpetuation of myths and legends. Myths and legends are either exaggerations or lies, they fabricate history, and we witness this fabrication almost daily in Serbia' (Balmazović in Kalaba 2019). Manifold ways in which these two comic books engage with dominant narratives about the Yugoslav wars, traveling from one post-Yugoslav state to another, from the web to printed media, from printed pages to the exhibition halls, from one language to another, demonstrate the capacity of these individual and personal voices to challenge and destabilize fixed, hegemonic and binary discourses and imaginations of the wars through which Yugoslavia disintegrated, and to point to alternative ways of building a collective, thinking subjectivity and responsibility, remembering the past and imagining the future.

Note

This article is a result of the research programme Historical Interpretations of the 20th Century (P6-0347) financed by the Slovenian Research and Innovation Agency.

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Anthropos 56 (1): 151–169 | ISSN 0587-5161 | E-ISSN 2630-4082

Engaging Miki Muster's Legacy: Remembering Zvitorepec (Slyboots) in Contemporary Slovenia

Nina Cvar
University of Ljubljana, Slovenia
nina.cvar@ff.uni-lj.si, nina.cvar@fe.uni-lj.si

Zora Žbontar
National Museum of Slovenia, Slovenia
zora.zbontar@nms.si

Abstract. This paper explores Miki Muster's work and its reception in both socialist and contemporary Slovenia, arguing that a certain type of public corresponds to a specific aesthetic regime. The central thesis is that the socialist public behaves differently compared to the contemporary configuration, resulting in a changed reception of Muster's work. With reference to Miško Šuvaković, the socialist social configuration follows a distinctive mode of governance, meaning that the heterogeneity of acting in public needs to be taken into account. This paper demonstrates that Muster intertwines Western visual images of his comic characters with the historical aesthetic configuration of Socialist Yugoslavia. Due to the change of the political system, the current reception of Muster's work operates as a nostalgic phenomenon, which is demonstrated by the questionnaire distributed to different generations. In the concluding part, the paper presents a synthesis via Ann Rigney's dynamic model of cultural memory and elaborates on the future potential of Muster's comic imagery.

Key Words: Miki Muster, Slyboots, political cartoons, nostalgia, capitalism, socialism

Spominjanje Mustrovega Zvitorepca v sodobni slovenski družbi

Povzetek. Članek obravnava delo Mikija Mustra in njegovo recepcijo tako v socialistični kot sodobni Sloveniji, pri čemer izpostavlja, da določen tip javnosti ustreza specifičnemu estetskemu režimu. Osrednja teza je, da socialistična javnost v primerjavi s sodobno učinkuje drugače, kar vpliva na spremenjeno recepcijo Mustrovega dela. Po besedah Miška Šuvakovića socialistična javnost sledi posebnemu načinu delovanja. Članek predstavi načine, kako Miki Muster prepleta vizualne

https://doi.org/10.26493/2630-4082.56.151-169

podobe z Zahoda z (zgodovinsko) estetsko konfigurcijo socialistične Jugoslavije. Zaradi spremembe političnega sistema sodobna recepcija Mustrovega dela učinkuje kot nostalgičen fenomen, kar dokazuje tudi anketni vprašalnik, ki so ga izpolnile različne generacije. V sklepnem delu članek predstavi sintezo preko koncepta kulturnega spomina Ann Rigney in podrobneje obravnava potencial Mustrovih stripovskih podob.

Ključne besede: Miki Muster, Zvitorepec, politične karikature, nostalgija, kapitalizem, socializem

Introduction

Our first encounter with Miki Muster, and in particular with his famous Slyboots comics, is inherently linked to school summer holidays, which, at least in the time of Yugoslavia were usually spent somewhere on the Adriatic coast (figure 1). On one occasion, luckily for us, the summer sweetness of a child's boredom was saved by a series of Slyboots comics, given to us by a neighbouring camper. However, the tranquillity of the childhood rivilege of not needing to care about the labyrinthine complexities of social reality abruptly ended with the Balkan wars in the 1990s, when innocence and naivety was turned into asking questions that did not have an easy answer – or to refer to the 1960s phrase, personal suddenly became political. While growing older, we ran into Muster's political cartoons, many of them functioning differently from Slyboots comics, read in our childhoods. How was this possible, we asked each other, encouraging us to think about the reception of Muster's work today.

In this manner, this article will investigate the relation between Miki Muster's work Zvitorepec (Slyboots) and the public in both socialist and contemporary Slovenia; we argue that a certain type of public corresponds to a specific aesthetic regime.

Jovita Pristovšek's (2019) argument in which she claims that the aesthetic regime blurs the boundaries between art and other spheres of production will allow us to rearticulate all three key spaces of social (re)production – i.e. the aesthetic, the public and the political – as actual regimes, demonstrating that socialist and contemporary regimes have distinctive sets of norms, rules and protocols around which the expectations and actions of the subjects are constituted.

Accordingly, this paper argues, in reference to Miško Šuvaković, that the socialist social configuration follows a distinctive mode of governance, meaning that the heterogeneity of acting in public needs to be

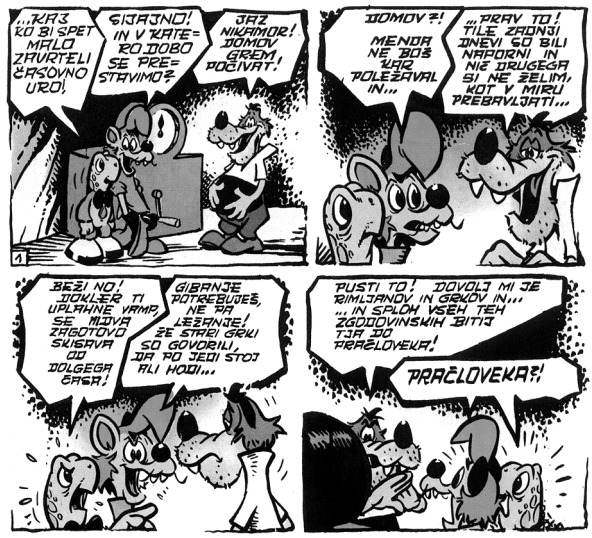

Figure 1

Slyboots (Zvitorepec), the Wise Tortoise Trdonja, and the Always Hungry Wolf Lakotnik (reproduced with permission of the copyright owner)

taken into account (Šuvaković 2011). Thus, this study's central thesis is that a socialist public acts differently in comparison to the contemporary configuration, resulting in a changed reception of Muster's work.

Furthermore, this paper will demonstrate that Muster intertwines Western visual images of his comic characters with the historical configuration of Socialist Yugoslavia. Along these lines, Muster's work seems to resonate Fredric Jameson's (1991, 54) claim concerning the effacement of the older (essentially high-modernist) frontier between high culture and so-called mass or commercial culture. Additionally, we claim that due to the change of the political system, the contemporary reception of Muster's work operates as a nostalgic phenomenon, which is demonstrated by the questionnaire handed to different generations.

In the concluding part we will deliver synthesis via Ann Rigney's dynamic model of cultural memory and elaborate on the future potential of the image of Muster's comics.

Public Sphere, Life and Aesthetic Regime

To be able to connect Muster's image with a specific aesthetic regime, we need to articulate the relation between the public sphere, life and aesthetic regime. We will start with Habermas's concept of the public sphere.

Much has been said about Habermas's (1989, 49) conceptual idea of a public sphere, where supposedly all citizens would be able to gather

and discuss matters of common interest in an 'unrestricted fashion.' However, the Habermasian model of a public sphere is a normative one and is an effect of the process of marking boundaries, resulting in exclusion (Deutsche 1998). Another challenge with the Habermasian model is that it is based on the dividing line between state and society, separating the private sphere from the public sphere, neglecting specifics of, for example, socialist states, underlining Nancy Fraser's (1992) claim that it is almost impossible to separate matters of public and private concern, especially for historically marginalized groups.

Fraser's (1992) criticism of the Habermasian model that overlooks marginalized groups, which nonetheless form their own spaces, has been taken as an epistemic base for this paper in order to inspect the structure of the socialist model of the public sphere, examining its specifics through an analysis of Muster's works.

In her book Structural Racism, Theory and Power, Pristovšek (2019) evocates Rancière's notion of the aesthetic regime to – among other things – rethink aesthetics in the vicinity of the nation-state. The importance of Rancière's understanding of aesthetic regime is his underlining of a link between the production of works (or artistic practice) and the forms of visibility that these forms take (Deranty 2010), enabling us to think art production and life on the same plane.

'Aesthetic regime' thus represents a field in which a new paradigm of community can be conceived, epistemically positioning itself as a place that opens to political thinking, which, as Habermas shows, is after all connected to the public. In regard to Rancière' s analysis, we have identified two distinctive historical public forms, which has allowed us to address specific themes of socialist and contemporary Slovenia with reference to Muster's work.

Structuring the Public Sphere in Socialist Yugoslavia and Postsocialist Slovenia

The public sphere is a space of social reflection which is constructed differently in specific historical formations. Jasmina Založnik (2017), for instance, writes that in Socialist Yugoslavia various unitarisms proclaimed social egalitarianism, brotherhood and unity; a project of language and cultural unitarisms, gender blindness, etc., structuring the public in Yugoslavia as enmeshed with politics to usher in the revolutionary project.

Despite some of the common traits, the socialist public sphere did change over time. Already in the 1960s, Yugoslav praxis philosophers de-

manded a free public sphere, although in the context of understanding public discourse as a medium for facilitating socialist society in Marx's sense (Križan 1989). Further changes took place with the formation of civil society in the late 1970s and early 1980s (Mastnak 1990), with civil society being seen as separated from the state; in this regard new social movements, e.g. punk, were essential in constituting an alternative public sphere and new political subjectivities.

Despite the common opinion among western philosophers and sociologists arguing that the Yugoslav system was where socialist humanism was well-anchored, and where, accordingly, emphasis was placed on the greater respect of individual rights, compared to its Soviet counterpart (Ramšak 2018). This propelled the so-called self-management system, however even in the 1980s, it was according to Marina Gržinić (2023), difficult to enter the public space, which was characterized as a distinctive space.

With respect to Muster's work, in his interview for *Dnevnik,* he explains that when he started drawing, anything which resembled America was not allowed (Mehle 2015), clearly demonstrating the unique relation between the public sphere, collective life and aesthetic regime. However, as we will later show, Muster's comic image drew importantly on Western influences.

On the other hand, the Slovenian contemporary public sphere cannot be adequately understood without taking into account the unique processes of the Slovenian media sphere's privatization that took place within the change of the political-economic system.

In their analysis of the Slovenian media space, Sandra Bašić Hrvatin and Lenart J. Kučić (2004) stress that at the beginning of the 1990s a specific privatization model was implemented in Slovenia; they also argue that the main feature of the present day media space in Slovenia is corporatization of media discourse, resulting in media content being subordinated to the interests of media owners and the largest advertisers. Referring to Bašić Hrvatin and Kučić (2004), in contrast to other socialist East and Central European countries that sold off their media to foreign owners at the beginning of the transition period, Slovenia took a decade to carry out the privatization process; however, in the end it experienced a rather similar outcome that it otherwise aimed to prevent. In a similar vein, other researches claim the same, arguing that the process of trading and exchanging ownership shares of state-owned companies from 1995 to 2006 resulted in a consolidation of ownership, where a small num-

ber of 'domestic' (Slovenian) owners enabled both horizontal and vertical concentration of ownership via numerous interlinked and cross-owned companies (Ribać 2019). To summarize with Marko Milosavljević (2016), the Slovenian media landscape has been influenced by the economic and political restructuring of the former socialist society. Furthermore, with the economic crisis of 2008/2009, the Slovenian media sector exhibited a considerable level of weakness, leaving various actors, e.g. media companies, weaker and exposed to both political and advertising pressure from owners and other 'key agents' in society (Milosavljević 2016).

The structural conditions of the Slovenia contemporary media space – among other things, in Slovenia there are more than 2,000 media outlets, more than 2,000 journalists and only 2 million inhabitants – and wider technological transformation, e.g. social media channels, are undoubtedly playing an important role in shaping this space's content, which is characterized by the use of tabloid narratives, and even verbal excesses in journalistic stories (Vezjak 2024). In addition, we are seeing an expansion of hate speech and phenomena linked to fake news and overall spread of misinformation, encouraging a culture of subjective opinions. To encapsulate, both public spheres, i.e. socialist and contemporary, are related to a specific social bond, which is reflected in distinctive content production. By delineating the characteristics of both the socialist and contemporary Slovenian public space, elaboration of each of the aesthetic regimes can be conducted to demonstrate the reception of Muster's Slyboots in both versions of the public space. We will now focus on the case study of Muster's Slyboots.

Case Study: Miki Muster's Slyboots

Who is Miki Muster?

Miki Muster, born in 1925, is a pioneer of Slovenian comics and one of the most successful creators in the field of comics, known for his iconic comic series Slyboots (1952–1973). Slyboots's characters gained an iconic status very quickly, literally from its launch in the 1950s, when Western cultural novelties were more or less reluctantly introduced to the socialist environment. He is regarded as one of the most successful creators of cartoons in Slovenia as well. His overall oeuvre is enviable in scope, quality and diversity.

Between 1952 and 1973 he published in *Slovenski poročevalec,* a predecessor of *Delo,* a central Slovenian newspaper, where he worked as a journalist and illustrator. In 1973 he moved to Munich, where he was engaged

in production of cartoon films. During this time Muster also made his legendary commercial advertisements and created a world-famous series of cartoons based on the ideas of the French cartoonist of Argentine origin, Guillermo Mordillo. In the 90s, Muster worked as a political cartoonist for *Mag* and later *Reporter* magazine. In 2015, Muster was awarded the Prešeren Prize for Lifetime Achievement, which is considered as one the most prestigious national awards in arts.

Already during his lifetime, Muster was like a rock star: people stopped him and asked if they could shake his hand. Even today, if (in particular older generations, as we will later show) asked about Muster, they will usually respond that Muster still makes them feel like they have a child inside them.

Historical Development of Slyboots

Let us now focus on the historical context of Slyboots. Slyboots was first published in July 1952 in a predecessor of *Delo.* However, his debut, according to Alja Brglez's (2011) extensive study on Muster, was not really a result of a deliberate desire to instigate home-grown comic strip production. On the contrary, seven years after the end of the Second World War and four years after the Informbiro, influenced by Stalin, the editor Igor Šentjurc commissioned a Disney comic to be published on the most famous and most prominent back page. But the comic did not arrive in time – in one of his interviews, Muster hinted, 'that the comic had arrived, but that it was then taken to customs or wherever, so as not to spoil the youth' (Brglez 2011, 59).

Leaving his suspicions aside, Muster, at that time employed as a journalist-illustrator, was asked to draw one of his own comics, which would resemble Walt Disney's animal-like characters, but with some Slovenian touches, so that readers would be able to identify with them more easily.

Handily, within the early socialist period, a quintessential (Western) content in a distinctly modern form was introduced to Slovenia, questioning the belief that the first years of the Yugoslav and Slovenian socialist development were sealed from everything which was not ideologically consistent and defined by the definitions of the new social order.

Muster's comics and his protagonists resembled Disney-like characters, but were adapted to the Slovenian cultural heritage of local fairy tales (to prevent Muster being accused of Americanism) and made a strong connection with their audience (Brglez 2011).

In one of his interviews, Muster underlined the role of his readers, who

Figure 2

Road to the Moon (reproduced with permission of the copyright owner)

were making eager demands to editors to enable a constant flow of the comics, easing the threat, so to speak, of possible censorship (Brglez 2011). Muster also explained how he was allowed to draw, albeit on condition that he would not draw American-like comics.

When the atmosphere liberalized and when it became clear that his comics could do no (political) harm, Muster started drawing picture books. However, there was in fact one reported incident of political censorship. In his comic story Road to the Moon, published in 1959 (Muster 2011a), Muster's vision of space exploration and above all, a critique of geopolitical tensions between the United States and the Soviet Union and their respective allies, the Western Bloc and the Eastern Bloc, Muster's protagonists were stopped by the Soviets, which happened to be drawn like bears. Slyboots's main characters have anthropomorphic animal traits; nevertheless, the Soviet embassy protested to the Muster's editor, who asked Muster, 'What are we going to do?' and Muster responded:

'Nothing, give me a week to think of something' (Brglez 2011, 71). Muster continued the story, so the Soviets let the matter go; the Americans did not really care how they were represented (figure 2).

Slyboots's Image in Socialist Yugoslavia: Traces of Western Aesthetics in the Socialist Aesthetic Regime

In the following section of the paper, we would like to show the mechanisms by which Muster intertwines Western visual images of his comic characters with the historical configuration of Socialist Yugoslavia.

In one of the first in-depth studies on comics in Yugoslavia, France Zupan (1969), an art historian and sociologist of culture, underlined the character of mass culture in comics. Zupan (1969) also stressed the importance of regular publication and the unique set of values and tradition of the Slovenian cultural space; however, he also emphasized the intermeshing between Western and socialist aesthetics.

Yet, Muster's comics are devoid of official socio-ideology, although the wise tortoise Trdonja openly wears a middle-class bow tie, while the always-hungry wolf called Lakotnik dresses akin to Uncle Sam (without the stars and stripes). This indicates that Muster by no means shied away from conceptual messages. Therefore, he was politically incorrect, which is typical for youth comics. Additionally, there is one story, a direct criticism of the socialist economy, Problems with Construction (figure 3 and figure 4) from the early years of economic liberalization (before Kavčič's

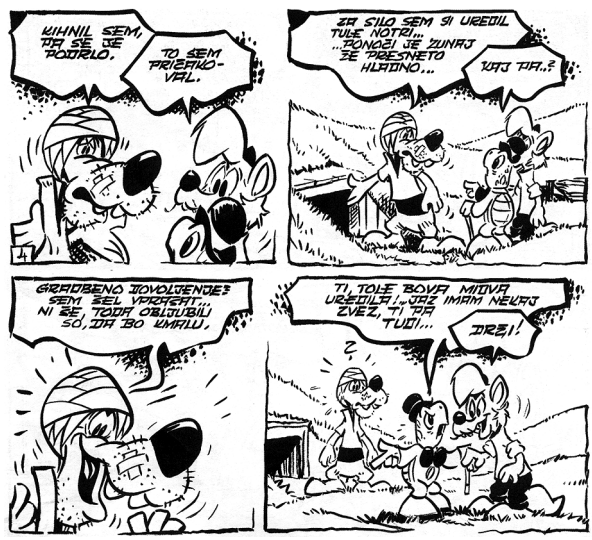

Figure 3

Problems with Construction (reproduced with permission of the copyright owner)

Figure 4

Problems with Construction (reproduced with permission of the copyright owner)

reforms) in 1963 (Muster 2011b). It serves as a direct and clear satire on bureaucracy and social corruption, revealing that socialist Slovenia was not totalitarian (Vidmar 2011, 4).

Igor Vidmar states that Slyboots (Zvitorepec), the tortoise Trdonja, and the wolf Lakotnik (figure 5) remain vivid in his memory, not merely as nostalgic figures but as joyful, vibrant, native, comic animal-human hero-archetypes. They represent his initial encounter with the high-quality and dynamic use of comic language, which consistently transcended the mundane aspects of socialist society, leading us into the realms of a global state of mind (Vidmar 2011, 4).

Miki Muster, a pioneer of Slovenian comics and a world-class animator, did not receive many awards for his work. However, in 1978, the Yugoslav association established the Andrija Award (named after the Croatian comics pioneer Andrija Maurović) for achievements in the field of comics, with Muster being the first recipient for his lifelong contributions. The accompanying explanation stated (Modic 2011b, 8):

> Miki Muster, as the most prominent Slovenian creator of graphic literature to date, is recognized for his unique quality achievements in the tradition of Disney's caricature animal comics, particularly in the earlier period. His work, characterized by drawing integrity and script processing, lays the foundation of Slovenian and Yugoslav comics while simultaneously earning its place among the classics of the European ninth art.

Figure 5

Slyboots (Zvitorepec), the Wise Tortoise Trdonja, and the Always Hungry Wolf Lakotnik (reproduced with permission of the copyright owner)

Max Modic revealed that Muster remarked that without socialism, he might have established his own studio much earlier in Slovenia. In 1973, as already stated, Muster relocated to Germany for better creative conditions and while there, he crossed paths with Guillermo Mordillo, a world-renowned French cartoonist of Argentine descent, who sought a European studio to adapt his caricatures into cartoons. Muster produced nearly 400 films for Mordillo, albeit without receiving credit (Modic 2011a, 5–8). He conceptualized animated films as moving comic books. Upon his return from Germany in 1990, Muster's body of work in comics and cartoons was extraordinary. He devoted sixteen hours a day to drawing (Modic 2011b, 5–6).

Stylistically, Muster's work in Slyboots is distinguished by his transparent framing, effective comic dynamics, inventive scripts, fluent dialogue and an overall reliable composition. Muster used a concise outline drawing, initially a pen drawing technique, later ink, with his style gradually maturing into a distinctly precise contour drawing, stylisation and realistic perfectionism (Brglez 2011).

In terms of the characters, demand resulted in characters' development in stages, as not all of his main protagonists were developed together. Gradually, the series ended in three anthropomorphic, animal-like char-

acters, with the witty and inventive fox, clever and good-natured tortoise, and edgy and greedy wolf who became most popular with the readers (Brglez 2011). To quote from one of Muster's interviews (Teran Košir 2011):

> Sometimes there are stories in which he is the only protagonist. He was enough because he was a figure you could do a lot of things with. I also liked him. At the beginning he was bloodthirsty, because in the fable the wolf is just like that, but over time he became a positive character.

France Zupan (1969) also identified a set of values promoted by the central Slyboots characters, i.e. optimism, chivalry, honesty, camaraderie, not being too fond of individualistic ambitiousness, self-importance, or authoritarian personalities, and furthermore, always being on the side of the weak. In Slyboots, this value set is played via evocation of the narratological framework of adventure, the use of narrative techniques such as gags and innovative scripts.

Back to the Present: Slyboots's Image in the Contemporary Aesthetic Regime

Let us now jump to contemporary times. Muster's comic series offers a potent research ground for analysing the historical reception of capitalist content in early socialist Yugoslavia (Brglez 2011) and beyond.

But perhaps even more interesting is how Muster's work is remembered within contemporary Slovenia, which cannot be fully understood without taking into account its specific transition from socialist Yugoslavia to capitalism – a process marked by different stages of neoliberal capitalization (Hočevar 2021) and its accompanying cultural mode of production, which in regard to Muster in particular, comes to light in his later work from the 1990s and first decade of the 21st century, when he was active as a political cartoonist.

Study on the Reception of Miki Muster's Work: Beyond Slyboots

For the purposes of identifying reception of Muster's work in contemporary times, we constructed a survey using Google forms. The survey, which consisted of 8 open questions,[1] took place between 15th and 20th of January 2023. Thirty-nine responses were received, with women and men being almost equally represented. In terms of age, the most responses

[1] The questions are listed in the appendix section.

came from persons aged 40, followed by persons aged 36 and 44.[2] But it was important for us to check if there are any differences between age groups, especially in people born in the late 1990s vs. people born in the 1950s. Unfortunately, it was rather difficult to gain data from the second group, which we attribute to the lack of digital skills and competences.

In terms of education, the majority of respondents obtained a high school degree, followed by a bachelor and a master degree.

A question at which age the readers were introduced to the comic series is semi-demographical and more content related. Nevertheless, most people started reading comics at the age of 10.

Due to the open-ended questions design, we were able to get access to more nuanced sentiments about Muster's work. The questions aspired to understand respondents' remembrance modes; furthermore, the survey wanted to 'test' the dimension of forgetting by checking if the respondents remembered the main Slyboots characters, although identification of the so-called critical distance was also installed into the survey, by asking whether the comics and Muster's work are problematic in any way, e.g. by putting focus on his later work in reference to his political cartoons.

What the results show is an obvious sentiment of nostalgia; quoting some of the responses:

> They [Slyboots comic series] are a very nice reminder of my youth, when I had the passion, time and energy to read and learn about the world. I would recommend them to today's generations, perhaps with notes about the time and place in which they were written.
>
> Even to me they were presented as a kind of legacy, a memory of the past, and in that sense I can imagine that they could be entertaining for the younger generations of today.
>
> They remind me of relaxed summer days, so I have fond memories [...] quite nostalgic. I would also recommend them to the present generation.

What we have found interesting is that out of 39 responses, almost 75% of respondents remember Slyboots's characters. In regard to 'contemporary lenses,' 14 respondents problematize representation of women, which they say evokes patriarchy and orientalism. In terms of controversy, related to political cartoons, only 6 respondents are aware of them, of which 5 problematized them, with one response wrapping up nicely:

[2] Figure 6 in the appendix.

> I saw the cartoons and I didn't really like them. Miki is primarily a children's author and I don't think he's good at political cartoons.

In terms of relevance, again the sentiment of nostalgia is evoked, especially in terms of the value of camaraderie, although we also found out that at least two respondents commented on the issue of comics being outdated due to the type of language Muster was using and the issue of technology. To quote one response:

> I'm afraid [the comics are (not) relevant]. Because the stories are very non-digital, non-technological, very often linked to past eras (stone age, knights, cowboys …), the language and the characters suffer the 'teeth of time.'

On the other hand, underlining Muster's comics as a national legacy, and perhaps more importantly, the factor of nostalgia has been again underscored in respondents' reactions.

Engaging Miki Muster's Legacy: Remembering Zvitorepec (Slyboots) in Contemporary Slovenia; The Contemporary Aesthetic Regime

What to make of the collected data in regard to Muster's work, including his political cartoons, with reference to nostalgia? Let us first start with the definition of nostalgia. Christopher Lasch (1991, 83) understands nostalgia as an evocation of a time that is lost forever, and is therefore timeless. The prevalence of nostalgia can of course be very well observed in the conducted survey, as 6 respondents out of 39 speak about nostalgia directly. But can evocation of nostalgia address the intertwining of Western and socialist aesthetics and furthermore, give an insight into the functioning of both aesthetic regimes, socialist and contemporary?

Following Susan Stewart (1993, 23), 'nostalgia – like any other form of narrative – is always ideological: the past it seeks never existed elsewhere than in narrative,' and exactly this dimension of the narrative construction is key, as on one hand it enables us to obtain an insight into cultural memory of Muster's work, shedding light on the role of comics in transmitting and distributing these memories and on the other hand, it reveals Muster's complex reproduction of the ideological position towards socialist Yugoslavia. Muster spoke about Yugoslavia's political-economic system in many of his interviews (Bratož 2015):

> I lived in a system that instilled fear; the post-war period was the worst, when you didn't dare open your mouth, even among family, relatives or friends, because you never knew who would report you.

In his interview with *Dnevnik,* along with *Delo,* another central Slovenian newspaper, Muster directly declared his political position (Mehle 2015). Interestingly enough, only three respondents in the survey associated Muster with his declared ideological position. But even these three, along with the rest of the respondents, remember and relate Muster and the Slyboots comics with their pleasant childhood memories, underlining the role of the narrative as something which is shared and as such provides a common channel for the transmission of memorability via which different generations articulate their experiences and convert them into a transferable form of disseminating narratives about the past.

Nostalgia Stumbles upon Dissonance

Let us go back to the moment when our childhood nostalgia stumbled upon dissonance, detected in Muster's later work. We will try to address it via Ann Rigney's (2018) thesis on the *dynamic and generative model of cultural memory,* which is about memorability being culturally produced in changing contexts. Conceptually potent is, in particular, Rigney's (2018, 243) claim that 'memory of recent events can work against the power that myths have acquired over much longer periods of time.'

In regard to Muster's case, Rigney's argument proves especially useful as his readers do not really problematize the socialist past; on the contrary, following their responses, Muster's claims are ontologically closer to myth. Furthermore, Muster is actually perceived as an indispensable part of socialist Yugoslavia – for instance, one respondent very clearly and directly wrote that Muster's comics were a mirror of the Slovenian society of that time, but not in a way Muster had perhaps envisaged. If Muster held a grudge towards socialist Yugoslavia, it can be provocatively claimed that it was the sociopolitical and cultural context of socialist Yugoslavia which functioned as a 'source' and impetus for his work, demonstrating that remembrance is an active process, occurring within specific historical relations. But remembrance is also a resource for redefinition of the past, albeit in this case of Muster's work operating as a reservoir for production of images for the purposes of consumerism (for instance, Muster's images are still used today for selling different products, for example, Nutella-like products) and further capitalist valorization, omitting Muster's sometimes problematic political cartoons and images of patriarchy, orientalism, etc. In terms of the narrative aspect, it is important to add that this reservoir functions as some kind of narrative, which according to Stewart (1993) is directly linked to nostalgia.

Conclusion

If we have started this paper with nostalgia, it is only adequate to finish with it again. Clearly, Muster's comics are not achieving the popularity today that they did during socialism. And for this, there are several reasons, be it transformation of the aesthetic form (analogue to digital), be it the changed conditions of the medium's formats in terms of production and distribution (digitization and digitalization together), or be it the changed conditions of how creative industries contents are consumed, with circulation being, to refer to Jonathan Beller (2006), a mode of capitalist production on its own (Beller 2006).

However, the strange twist, or even irony of history, is that reception of Muster's comics nowadays is more or less based on the somehow lost values of socialism, e.g. camaraderie and collectivism, which are, at least for the neoliberal organization of the social bond, more or less abolished in favour of individualism, which is clearly detested by at least one of Muster's central characters, if not all of them, emphasizing the unique traits of the socialist aesthetic Yugoslav regime. Muster's comic figures are an example of the regime, where artistic form, mass or commercial culture, collective life and politics come together. Based on the responses from the respondents, Stewart's argument on nostalgia being always ideological resonates well, underlining the proposed argument to think about Muster's work via aesthetic regimes.

When analysing Muster's comics, we attempted to identify the reception of the contemporary audience. During this process, we observed a certain duality. In his late interviews, Muster encourages his readers to contemplate broader social issues, but on the other hand, his discourse is the discourse of the 20th century.

If the contemporary aesthetic regime is the regime of global capitalism together with its associated art forms and modes of subjectivities, characterized by a burden to create their own biographies (Beck 1992), narration of memories becomes indispensable for the reproduction of not just individual, but shared memories too. Following the conducted survey, it is interesting that most of the participants who responded to our invitation to take part in the questionnaire are in their late 30s and early 40s and what most of them have in common is their shared memory of the socialist past. But perhaps even more interesting – and a proposal for the next research – would be to get younger people to participate in the survey and delve into Maja Breznik and Rastko Močnik's (2021) hypoth-

esis on being able to have a shared memory of the past events which the involved individuals *did not* experience – solely based on experiencing Muster's comics and political cartoons.

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Appendix

The survey on the reception of Muster's work was conducted via Google forms between 15th and 20th of January 2023, consisting of 8 open questions and also demographical data. We received 39 responses. For the purpose of this paper, the responses were appropriately anonymized and used for interpretation purposes only. Below, we reproduce the 8 open-ended questions from the survey:

1. Have you ever read Muster's comic strip Slyboots? If so, could you give your approximate age when you read them?
2. If you answered yes to the above question, how do you remember them – perhaps you can share with me some of your memories, associations, etc.?
3. If you answered yes about reading the comics, perhaps you could indicate how you remember the characters of the main characters?
4. If you have read these comics, do you find them problematic in any way today: e.g. how are gender, social inequality or social systems (socialism vs. capitalism, the Cold War, new technologies, etc.), criticism of social systems, the value system (e.g. patriarchy, etc.) dealt with?
5. In the case you have read the comics, do you think they are still relevant today – can you briefly explain?
6. Do you know any other works by him? If yes, please indicate which ones.
7. If you answered yes to the last question, and if you have mentioned Muster's political cartoons, I would like to ask you for a brief comment on them: do you remember them, where did you see them, what ideas and values did they convey?
8. What do the Slyboots comics mean to you today – would you recommend them to today's generations?

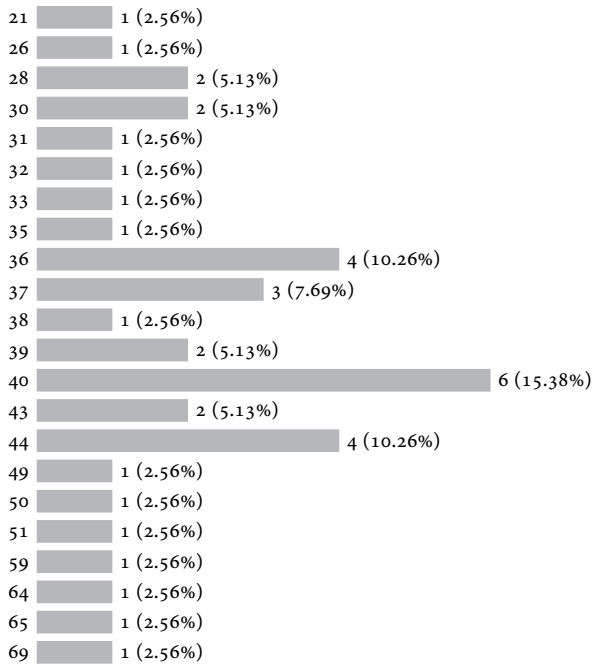

Figure 6 Age of the Participants Who Responded to the Survey

Anthropos 56 (1): 171–195 | ISSN 0587-5161 | E-ISSN 2630-4082

Saudek and Macourek's *Muriel:* (After)Lives of a Czechoslovak Anti-Normalisation Superheroine

Robin R. Mudry
Leipzig University, Germany
robin.mudry@egs.edu

Abstract. This paper presents a symptomatic rereading of four of Kája Saudek and Miloš Macourek's collaborative works around the female double-heroine of Muriel/Jessie through the lens of critical theory. The film *Who Wants to Kill Jessie?* (*Kdo chce zabít Jessii?*) (Vorlíček 1966), the two first and only existing episodes of the Muriel comics series Muriel and the Angels (*Muriel a andělé*) (Saudek and Macourek 1991) and Muriel and the Orange Death (*Muriel a oranžová smrt*) (Saudek and Macourek 2009), as well as the comics-comedy *Four Murders Are Enough, Darling* (*Čtyři vraždy stačí, drahoušku*) (Lipský 1971) are conceived of as intermedially connected and socio-politically relevant to date. By analysing in particular the political context in which these works were created and extrapolating the underlying, yet often ironic critique of ideology inherent to them, the present study for the first time methodologically foregrounds their investigation along political and ideological lines. Special attention is paid to the counterfactual openings and the political imagination at work that can be designated as communist utopian. The paper thus aims at demonstrating that it is not enough to praise the import of American-style imagery, or the comic genre itself, into the Czechoslovak pop culture of the 1960s, if we are to grasp the continuing significance of one of its most famous superheroines (Muriel/Jessie) and creative duos (Saudek and Macourek).

Key Words: Czechoslovak comics, communist comics, Czechoslovak film, post-socialism, communist utopia, ideology critique, counterfactual narratives, female comic heroes, comics-comedy

Muriel Saudeka in Macoureka: (po)življenja češkoslovaške protinormalizacijske superjunakinje

Povzetek. Članek podaja simptomatično ponovno branje štirih del Kája Saudeka in Miloša Macoureka o dvojni junakinji Muriel/Jessie skozi lečo kritične teorije. O filmu Kdo hoče ubiti Jessie? (*Kdo chce zabít*

https://doi.org/10.26493/2630-4082.56.171-195

Jessii?) (Vorlíček 1966), dveh prvih in edinih obstoječih epizodah serije stripov o Muriel – Muriel in angeli (*Muriel a andělé*) (Saudek and Macourek 1991) ter Muriel in oranžna smrt (*Muriel a oranžová smrt*) (Saudek and Macourek 2009) – ter stripovski komediji Štirje umori so dovolj, draga (*Čtyři vraždy stačí, drahoušku*) (Lipský 1971) razmišljamo kot o intermedialno povezanih ter še danes družbenopolitično relevantnih. Z analizo političnega konteksta, v katerem so bila ta dela ustvarjena, in ekstrapolacijo temeljne, a pogosto ironične kritike ideologije, ki je v njih inherentna, pričujoča študija prvič metodološko postavlja v ospredje raziskovanje avtorjev v politični in ideološki smeri. Posebna pozornost je namenjena protidejstvenim vrzelim in politični imaginaciji na delu, ki jo lahko označimo za komunističnoutopično. Članek tako želi pokazati, da ni dovolj samo hvaliti uvoza podob v ameriškem slogu ali stripovskega žanra nasploh v češkoslovaško pop kulturo šestdesetih let prejšnjega stoletja, če hočemo razumeti trajni pomen ene njenih najbolj znanih superjunakinj (Muriel/Jessie) in ustvarjalne dvojice (Saudek in Macourek).

Ključne besede: češkoslovaški strip, komunistični strip, češkoslovaški film, postsocializem, komunistična utopija, kritika ideologije, protidejstvene pripovedi, stripovske junakinje, stripovska komedija

A Strange Fairytale

In the short text 'Podivná pohádka' (A Strange Fairytale) (Saudek 1991), which oscillates between preface and prologue, Kája (Karel) Saudek, probably the best-known Czech comics illustrator, retraced the peripeties of the convoluted and much deferred publication history of his Muriel and the Angels (*Muriel a andělé*) (Saudek and Macourek 1991). Ever since 1969, when Saudek, together with the scenarist Miloš Macourek, planned a series of twelve graphic novels narrating the adventures of the young, smart and extremely attractive physician Muriel, the first episode had been waiting in the drawers of Mladá fronta.[1] It eventually saw the light of day on the Czechoslovak book market in 1991, only to become one of the author's most appraised comic strips. A Strange Fairytale amounts to a comico-cinematographical note where Saudek's hopeful race to the editorial office not only transpires the spirit of the just kicked-off Velvet

[1] Founded in 1945, Mladá fronta (The Young Front), was one of the most important publishing companies in post-war Czechoslovakia. As with any other publisher, it was subjected to state censorship in varying degrees throughout communist dictatorship. After a turbulent, and later much criticised, privatisation in the 1990s, the publishing house ceased to exist in 2021.

Revolution, but also textually evokes comic bubbles – 'Uf! Gasp!' (1991, 2). Saudek had made it to the office just in time, yet without achieving any publishing perspective. In the same vein, a couple of (seemingly rhetorical) questions and exclamations are addressed to the readership of an unsteady 'post-revolutionary' time which appeared to have only little in common with the equally uncertain moments of the Prague Spring and its disillusioning aftermath two decades earlier.[2] That is to say, also with the moment when *Muriel* and her fantastically utopian multi-temporal world were born. Remembering that context of hopeful change, Saudek asked 'Would all of this [the crazy genesis of *Muriel* in the liberated momentum of 1968] *still* be true *today,* in a time of videos, *devoid of ideas* and inflationary in about every sense?' (1991, 1, emphasis added).[3]

It is precisely this presumed lack of ideas that stands in stark contrast with the political imagination and audacity of Saudek and Macourek's erstwhile *Muriel* story. A story full of scathing socio-political and ideological criticism, unfolding both on the level of its scenario, including interplanetary journeys, time travel and alternate history (Macourek), as well as on the level of its visual execution full of irony, intericonic and intermedial citations and Western, mostly American, references (Saudek). *Muriel*'s universe includes versions of a different utopian future where the idea of communism seems to have been fully realised (Muriel and the Angels) as well as a scenario of how such a historical trajectory could be hampered by the invasion of orange monsters, which bears strikingly analogous resemblances to the 1968 Warsaw Pact occupation of Czechoslovakia (Muriel and the Orange Death). Even in the face of outspoken censorship and the sweeping political shifts that stifled the country's springtime awakening and converted it into the depoliticised apathy of the so-called 'normalisation' – both of which rendered regular publication of the first two and only existing *Muriel* episodes impossible – Saudek would find ways to smuggle *Muriel* into other media he was working on, such

[2] Whereas the Velvet Revolution of 1989 quickly ushered in the demise of Czechoslovak state socialism and subsequently led to the splitting of the Czech Republic and Slovakia, the Prague Spring of 1968 had aimed at realising 'socialism with a human face,' but was soon crushed by a Soviet invasion. The years following the end of the Prague Spring are commonly designated as 'normalisation.' The term is problematic in itself as it reproduces the reactionary perspective of the occupier since what had to be normalised were the reformist tendencies of 1968 deemed too liberal.

[3] 'Platilo by tohle vše *ještě dnes,* v době videí, *žádných idejí* a inflace všeho?' (Saudek 1991, 1, emphasis added); all translations from Czech are by the author.

as the feature-length comics-comedy *Four Murders Are Enough, Darling* and the movie poster of Roger Vadim's *Barbarella* (1968) for Czechoslovak distribution (Diesing 2013, 278, 374–375). Thus, a lack of ideas and, especially, political imagination would be the last things that come to mind to characterise Saudek and Macourek's work. It comes as a striking sign of foreclosure, then, that exactly such a fear is uttered in the face of the 'democratic transition' and 'economic transformation' Czechoslovakia was about to undergo in the 1990s (Offe 1991) and, moreover, as history seemed to have ended (Fukuyama 2006) and the new uni-polar world rid itself of any alternative utopias. In what follows, this fear will be read as a symptom for the unrealised utopias whose loss we continue to mourn in the third decade of the twenty-first century.

Comics and Politics

The current paper proposes a (re)reading of Saudek and Macourek's *Muriel* and her multiple lives by politically and ideologically contextualising them and, thus, opening a perspective of comics studies that, in the 'post-socialist' predicament of Central Europe, has been widely neglected for the benefit of mostly depoliticised chronological and positivistic accounts (Kořínek 2010; Pospiszyl 2015). These hitherto prevalent methodological choices symptomatically indicate the ongoing failure to grasp the discrepancy between 'actually existing socialism (a later expression)' (Jameson 2017, 269) on the one hand and a utopian communism on the other, the latter being far from absent in Saudek's comics. For instance, Tomáš Pospiszyl attests to the most ambitious project thus far of mapping the History of Czechoslovak Comics in the 20th Century (Prokůpek et al. 2014) and the effort to go beyond 'the creation of a detailed factography lacking necessary interpretation,' only to ascertain the adjournment of a more theoretical approach (Pospiszyl 2015, 767). In his review of the most extensive monograph on Saudek to date (Diesing 2013), Pavel Kořínek (2010, 685) goes so far as to conclude that, '[u]nfortunately, the accompanying text could not shift away from elementary descriptiveness.' In 'Comics, Comics Studies and Political Science,' Kent Worcester, himself a political scientist and co-editor of *A Comics Studies Reader* (Heer and Worcester 2009), more generally states that '[t]o date, scholars of comics have done a better job of analyzing individual narratives, and recovering the lives and works of past cartoonists, than of finding ways to measure the social, political, and economic impact of comics and cartoons' (Worcester 2017, 692). Furthermore, such assessments not

only hold true with regard to secondary literature, but can also be applied to the presentation of comics in an exhibition context. When I first researched this paper in 2023, there were altogether three distinct shows on display in the Czech Republic where the work of Kája Saudek in general and *Muriel* in particular prominently featured. Whereas one Prague exhibition at the Dancing House Gallery was completely monographic, the shows at the Western Bohemian Gallery in Plzeň and the Moravian Museum in Brno focused on genealogies and authoritatively displayed the work of Saudek in his capacity as 'the king of Czech comics'[4] (Galerie Tančící dům 2022; Moravské zemské muzeum 2022; Bendová and Šlajch 2022).[5] However, Muriel and the Angels were reduced to pop icons, superheroes and fantastic creations without any emancipatory potential. Their visual qualities were preferred to narratological or utopian ones where the protagonists' features were reduced to iconographic innovation and their main strength perceived in the import of Western pop culture syntax. Finally, in the introduction to *Comics and Ideology* – the very first book to directly link comics with questions of ideology[6] – the editors laconically observe that '[c]ertainly much research about comics has focused on elements other than ideological' (McAllister, Sewell, and Gordon 2001, 3). Pointing out both comics' formal specificities and social significance (2001, 3–4), they go on to formulate two questions: 'Why

[4] It is not only in light of the collective background of the creations here examined – all of them emerged in cooperation with Miloš Macourek as scenarist and others with regard to the motion pictures – that we abstain from the *ex post* designation of Saudek as 'the king of Czech comics' ('král českého komiksu'). Furthermore, such a title does not reflect the historical reality of the Czechoslovak state, given the importance of Slovakia as a publication site, especially in *Technické noviny* (Technical News), when printing Saudek's comics in the Czech half of the state had become increasingly difficult throughout the 1970s (Prokůpek 2014a, 570; 2014e, 657). It is, in the geographical context of this journal, noteworthy that, in 1971, Saudek managed to publish a double-page spread comic strip on Jan Hus as the founder of the Czech reformation ('Jan Hus – osnivač češke reformacije') in issue no. 37 of the Croatian youth magazine *Sve oko nas* (Prokůpek 2014a, 569; Diesing 2013, 322–323).

[5] The exhibition in Plzeň was entitled *Linky komiksu* (The Lines of Comics) which, however, were based on associative conjectures rather than historiographical genealogies and did not really take into account the lines singled out in the History of Czechoslovak Comics in the 20th Century (Prokůpek et al. 2014; Schmarc 2015, 773). Yet, both genealogical approaches attribute one specific 'line' to Kája Saudek and his stylistic followers.

[6] We subscribe to the understanding of ideology as 'a theory of [sic] which is necessary for an understanding of constituted interests within systems of representation' (Spivak 1999, 252).

and how may comics challenge and/or perpetuate power differences in society? Do comics serve to celebrate and legitimize dominant values and institutions in society, or do they critique and subvert the status quo?' (p. 2). These queries are of equal importance to the present endeavour, as we shall examine both Saudek's particular use of American-style comic features to subvert and ironise the official discourse on comics of 1950s and 60s Czechoslovakia as well as the (lack of) reception of Muriel in the early 1970s and then again after the demise of the state socialist regime.

Let us return, for a last time, to Worcester's review on comics and political science in order to further pin down our methodological approach. The author continues by broadly distinguishing 'three very different approaches to the challenge of mapping the relationship of politics and comics' (Worcester 2017, 692). First, area studies most often group comics along geographical lines – e.g. A History of Czechoslovak Comics in the 20th Century – and enable comparatist perspectives. Second, there is a more theoretical approach aimed at applying the methodological tools developed by social theory as well as postcolonial and cultural studies to graphic narratives in order to identify how power relations and cultural struggles are negotiated, yet often without touching upon the medial specificities of the comics form. A third approach finally consists in taking formal considerations of the comic genre more seriously into consideration and exploring its unique possibilities of pictorial, spatiotemporal and medial rendering of (political) narratives. It elaborates 'the medium's capacities, advantages, and liabilities when it comes to presenting political material' (p. 693). Even though such an approach has been associated with the comic journalism of Joe Sacco and its engagement with history, it turns out to be equally useful for older comics, especially when they closely interacted with other media (such as film) and enacted the concept of time and interplanetary travel – a particular form of the 'abrupt shifts in chronological and spatial location' that 'comics tend to comfortably accommodate' (p. 698).

While it would make no sense to dogmatically uphold Worcester's threefold distinction, it is mostly the third approach, with some allegiances to social theory questions, that best underpins my own revisiting of Macourek and Saudek's work. This quest is, however, also a visit *tout court* as Saudek's comics have to this date mostly been analysed from the perspective of area studies. Moreover, they have frequently been framed along black-and-white anti-communist narratives, according to which we would have had to partake in the following trajectory. First, the artist's early private works remained secluded from a wider audience,

given Saudek's 'bourgeois' class background. Second, his public productivity finally gained some traction under the impression of Prague Spring liberalisation tendencies in the late 1960s, only to be crushed by Soviet-imposed censorship in the course of the so-called 'normalisation' period, i.e. after Czechoslovak society had gone too far in its quest for 'socialism with a human face.' Finally, Saudek's work could be published after communist dictatorship ended, albeit the 'wild 1990s' with their uncontrolled deregulation and rise in criminal activities would bring along tedious legal and editorial struggles that only gradually enabled the author and, after his 2015 death, his family to recover the abducted or missing comic panels for an eventually wider publication (Diesing 2013, 269).[7] However, the regime's relationship to the comic genre had become far more nuanced (Foret 2014, 550–554) and Saudek turned out to be a proficient visual contrabandist. As for the publishing turmoil, it was Mladá fronta which refused to publish Muriel and the Angels after 1989 because of an alleged lack of profitability (Saudek 1991, 2).

Despite the consistent censorship and marginalisation of his work by the Czechoslovak state authorities in the 1970s and 80s, we will also argue that the artist-cum-author's relationship to communism *as a promise* (Derrida 1994, 74) was far more complex than the often too quickly assumed straightforward opposition. Our preliminary thesis would therefore be that it is *Muriel*'s status of ambivalent superheroine who is fighting for peace and universalist ideals, as well as Saudek's untimely appropriation of American comics visuality and prototypes, that seem to have made this compound of work so apt of subversion. In what follows, we will moreover focus on the strategies of intericonicity and intermediality, interconnecting both comic strips among themselves and with movies. Also, the use of counterfactual narratives will be taken into account. As the editors of a recent anthology on Counterfactual Narrations and Culture of Remembrance (Nicolosi, Obermayr, and Weller 2019, 3–6)

[7] This line of historico-biographical interpretation, further underpinned by the biological metaphor of awakening, heyday and decline, can be easily followed by taking a look at the titles of the chapters dedicated to Saudek in A History of Czechoslovak Comics in the 20th Century: Saudek's Belated Debut ('Saudkův opožděný debut'), Searching for an Emergency Exit [from censorship] ('Hledání únikového východu'), A Light at the End of the Cave [Saudek was drawing for the Czech Speleological Society in the 1980s] ('Světlo na konci jeskyně'), Out of the World of Stalactites ('Ven ze světa krápníků'), A Somehow Unhappy Happy End ('Poněkud nešťastný happy end'), Saudek Is Leaving ('Saudkovo odcházení') (Prokůpek 2014d, 467–472; 2014a, 565–570; 2014e, 653–657; 2014f, 739–742; 2014b, 832–837; 2014c, 914–917).

pointed out, every counterfactual project is always also an intervention in time and expresses a desire to have the present changed by altering the course of history at a decisive point of bifurcation, i.e. a moment (nexus) in time where events turned out differently from how history had recorded them: a retroactive opening (also Morson 2003). Hence, Saudek was juggling with official discourses on the trajectory towards communism and, at the same time, appropriating the motif of a technological race towards the conquest of space much popularised by Soviet discourse (Schaber 2019). Eventually, it was the control over time as frequently displayed in contemporary sci-fi films and especially in comedies succeeding the Czechoslovak *Nouvelle Vague* cinema in the early 1970s that was at stake (Selingerová 2016). In pursuing these lines, we will focus on four of Saudek's works associated with or directly featuring what we call an 'anti-normalisation superheroine.' These are, in chronological order, the film *Who Wants to Kill Jessie?* (*Kdo chce zabít Jessii?*) (Vorlíček 1966), the two first and only existing episodes of the Muriel series – Muriel and the Angels (*Muriel a andělé*) in 1969 (Saudek and Macourek 1991) and Muriel and the Orange Death (*Muriel a oranžová smrt*) in 1970 (Saudek and Macourek 2009) – and finally the comics-comedy *Four Murders Are Enough, Darling* (*Čtyři vraždy stačí, drahoušku*) (Lipský 1971).

Whoever Wants to Kill Jessie Is Denying Freedom to the Dreams

Although the movie scenarist Miloš Macourek and the comics illustrator Kája Saudek had known each other since 1960, it was only in the second half of the decade that their joint work would intensify and yield fruits. Together with filmmaker Václav Vorlíček, who initially had the idea to introduce comic characters into a film strip (2004, 94), they came up with a complete formal and genre novelty. *Who Wants to Kill Jessie?* consisted in the conflation of film and comics for the first time in Czechoslovak cinematography (Vacovská 2016, 105–106, 110). The use of 'a unique spatial grammar of gutters, grids, and panels' (Chute 2016, 4) in a motion picture included not only the interjection of comic strips in the opening credits of the film and the dreams of the male anti-hero, engineer Jindřich Beránek, but also integrated speech bubbles into the very film once the comic strip's protagonists had exited the world of dreams.[8] Sig-

[8] There is a whole history of how speech bubbles fought their way into Czech comics, which is echoed by the trouble Macourek and Vorlíček encountered upon introducing comics and their bubbles into film (Kořínek and Prokůpek 2014a; Vorlíček 2004).

nificantly, we have to deal with the breakup of the, albeit always fuzzy, boundaries between dreamlands and reality. Jindřich's tyrannical wife – docent[9] Beránková whom we could describe as a ruthless careerist loyal to the interests of a state-owned positivist science – had successfully developed a technology by means of which the subject's dreams could be optimised.

Upon application, nightmares and disturbing elements in the oneiric realm are supplanted by what are deemed to be pleasant and uplifting replacements in order to optimise the day-time labour productivity of the worker. The work of dreams (Freud's *Traumarbeit*) is taken over by the state and its ideologists who effectively undertake the displacement of objects (*Verschiebung*). There is only one catch, namely that the undesirable elements which make up our agitated nightmares escape from these only to enter reality and cause even more terror.[10] It is tempting, following Slavoj Žižek (Fiennes 2012), to read this kind of experiment not only as an ideology critique of the communist dictatorship aiming at controlling the dreams of its subjects, but also as a meta-medial critique of cinema as the supreme machine of dreams itself, an aspect going well beyond the bipolar world view of the Cold War. That the end of such bipolarity would not automatically lead to a utopian state of peace was very clear to Macourek and Saudek, as is demonstrated by the peripeties of their *Muriel* story where only time travel and interplanetary journeys with their interventions in history pave the way for a truly anarchic and peaceful future.

Jessie is an extremely good-looking blonde female heroine played by Saudek's earlier love Olga Schoberová, whom engineer Jindřich encountered in the comic strip episode of the fictitious journal *Svět techniky* (World of Technics) and who then appears in his dreams. The fact that she is an inventor herself precisely does not identify her with the dogmatist docent Beránková. On the contrary, she is trying to save her invention – anti-gravitational gloves – from *the* icon of American comics, i.e. Superman, who is accompanied by his Wild West villain aide (called Pistolník, the gunman). In what seems to be an inversion, the best-known

[9] At that time, it was not yet today's gendered title 'docentka.' In its abundant use, however, the appellation designating university faculty in the broadest sense conspicuously demonstrates the contemporary 'titulomania.'

[10] In Lacanian terms, one could argue that they *are* the Real hitting back at the regulations of the Symbolic Order.

Figure 1 Left: Kája Saudek, *Kdo chce zabít Jessii?* (*Who Wants to Kill Jessie?*), 1966; Right: Kája Saudek, *Kdo chce dobít Bessii?* (*Who Wants to Recharge Bessie?*), 1966 (Film Posters, Courtesy of Berenika Saudková)

American comics hero, who had historically been chasing fascists (Krohn 2019), appears as a wretch. Once more, formerly clear division lines are turned upside down and make it difficult to reproduce Cold War reception schemata such as the general rejection of comics as an American imperialist and decadent genre widespread in Czechoslovak postwar discourses (Foret, Jareš, and Prokůpek 2014).[11] It remains nonetheless unclear to what extent such an interpretation of the film was common among contemporary viewers, since they were, unlike Saudek and a small esoteric circle,[12] not acquainted with the standard visual and narrative

[11] The question of ideological import when it comes to the role comics are set to play in different (geo)political contexts has been singled out by McAllister et al.: 'How these comics fit in with the socio-political context of these countries, given the different roles that the comics may play in these countries, is a question of ideological import, as is the potential of the role of the comics in the creation or resistance of cultural identity and imperialism, given the economic and cultural dominance of such countries as the United States and Japan' (McAllister, Sewell, and Gordon 2001, 4–5).

[12] The question of motivation remains in part open also with regards to Saudek himself, since he mostly knew about American superheroes from comic strips printed in newspapers that the food his family received from relatives in the US after World War II was

Figure 2 Still Frame from *Kdo chce zabít Jesii?* (Vorlíček 1966, 28:30) (Courtesy of Czech Film Fund, Národní filmový archiv, Prague)

features of American comics and might not have perceived the incongruities of the film's cast. What certainly must have been perfectly understandable to everybody, though, was the variation of the first encounter between Jessie and her persecutors which makes appearances in a one-page comic strip both in the movie and on its promo posters (figure 1) (Diesing 2013, 151, 154). The variation shows a different continuation as the movie poster was torn off by a censor named Prokop Fišer who seems to have been disgusted by the display of explicit material – the ever-erotic intensity of the fight between Jessie and Superman taking a sexual turn – only to be transposed into a dumb workers' story. Following a different script of 'Com[munist] Comics,' comrades Superman and Jessie attend a meeting of the labour brigade after which they are told to get back to work, i.e. to perform an activity they do not really master. The slight yet significant shift in the title to *Who Wants to Recharge* [being a pun on conquer in the Czech title] *Bessie/the Beast?* (*Kdo chce dobít* [dobýt] *Bessii/bestii?*) makes things even more ambivalent, ironically evading the all-too-omnipresent grip of censorship.[13]

The attempted censorship even of dreams is openly broached in the

wrapped in, and had to creatively make sense of them (Průkopek 2009, 147–148; Diesing 2013, 21).

[13] The threat of censorship is similarly addressed in the one-page comic strip entitled Confrontation of the Century ('Souboj století') Saudek was privately working on in the second half of the 1960s. While the foreground confrontation is between two female superheroines embodying Olga Schoberová and his wife Johana, a giant intruder destroying the entire setting and emblazoned with the lettering 'Censura' might well have signified the real 'confrontation of the century' (Diesing 2013, 150, 157).

movie when Superman interrupts his vandalism in Beráneks's flat to exclaim 'Svobodu snům!!!' ('[I demand] Freedom to Dreams!!!'; figure 2), which is to be read as a direct answer to apparatchiks like docent Beránková who had just denied the right to freedom to dream-like phenomena in a preceding conversation with her husband.[14] That this speech bubble was unmistakably interpreted along such lines is confirmed by the reportedly enthusiastic reactions it received during the first live projections of the film (Vorlíček 2004, 95, 98). Toward the end of the movie, Jessie and the gunman are introduced as the new (dream) workers to engineer Jindřich's superior – a pun working around the semantically decisive disappearing 's' of 'snoví pracovníci' ('new *dream* workers'). In the meantime, docent Beránková was herself swallowed by the dreamlands of her dog Czar, whither she blindly followed Superman by means of an antidote, thus ending the controlling grip on her husband's and society's dreams. Or so it seems, as the assumption of a dream come true with Jindřich and Jessie eventually united in his bedroom is thwarted as soon as the heroine unlearns her speech bubbles only to start speaking like docent Beránková and ordering Jindřich what to dream of.[15]

Muriel and the Angels

Muriel (or Jessie) is certainly an atypical name for the Czechoslovak context, mostly reminiscent of the Anglophone role models in Saudek's work but maybe also alluding to the archangel Uriel. The whole *Muriel* story can be considered a pastiche of the American superhero plot with a remarkable gender inversion. The import of American (or more broadly speaking Western) pop culture and imagery is certainly one of the subversive aspects that are worth emphasising in Saudek's work. We have to deal with a formal circumstance that was in itself already perceived with scepticism and aversion by the state authorities, since it no longer actively undermined or ridiculed a visuality which had been considered to be a product of bourgeois degeneration with particularly deleterious consequences for young readerships (Foret, Jareš, and Prokůpek 2014). Let us, in this regard, exemplarily mention the artist's usual signature,

[14] 'Takový zjevy nemají právo na svobodu!,' 'Such phenomena are not entitled/have no right to freedom!' (Vorlíček 1966, 28:01).

[15] It is noteworthy that a particular structure of temporal circularity and repetition, much popular in the post-*Nouvelle Vague* Czechoslovak films of the 1970s, is foreshadowed here. The author's study on this temporal configuration, especially in the films of Jan Švankmajer and the so-called 'crazy comedies' of the 1970s, is in preparation.

'kres*by* Kája Saudek,' which is a condensed play on words conflating the Czech plural of 'drawings' ('kresby') and the English 'drawn *by*.' It is not insignificant that this gesture allowed Saudek to avoid the use of the seventh Czech case, the instrumental, which has no equivalent in the English language and would have profoundly impacted the Western aspect of his signature if applied, e.g. by writing 'kresleno Kájou Saudkem.' Also, Saudek playfully combined the 'o' of Mac*o*urek with the 'i' in Mur*i*el on the cover page for Muriel and the Angels so as to make his surname sound Irish: MacOurek. Finally, he opted for the Anglophone 'comics' instead of its Czech counterpart 'komiks' and, later on, would even use 'k/comi*x*,' the appellation used for underground comic strips in the West since the 1960s (McAllister, Sewell, and Gordon 2001, 8–9). Yet, as we are showing in the unfolding of the plot, Saudek was not uncritical of (American) forms of militarism and imperialism and it was a very particular United States pop culture he turned to, namely that of the civil rights, peace and hippie movements (Diesing 2013, 257, 268).

Enthusiastic about their introduction of comics into film and infused with the freer atmosphere of the Prague Spring which enabled the imagination of all kinds of futures, Saudek and Macourek (1991) were ready for their next joint venture: *Muriel.* This time, a female superheroine, whose visual and character genesis can be directly traced back to Jessie, is set in a not-too-distant future – the late 1980s – where she works as a physician for the United Nations which by then has taken over the world government. While the Cold War seems to have ended, the rule of force and capital are still in place and the UN present themselves as a techno-military complex.

After a UN plane and a UFO crash over the Atlantic, Muriel takes care of the fatally wounded passenger from another time. While she cannot save what appears to be an angel and with whom she immediately falls in love, soon enough the united armed forces of humankind capture another UFO and question its angelic occupant in front of the World Assembly. It turns out that the angels are highly sophisticated and genetically optimised humans coming from the tenth millennium AD. Since they retrieved 'an age-old book which was created at the dawn of history, a book called Bible' (1991, 29) wherein they most identified with the angels of God, they decided to develop wings with which to fly. Of course, they can also resuscitate Muriel's deceased lover, the angel Ro. In the end, humankind sends two delegates to accompany the angels to the future: Muriel and Xeron, the sergeant-general of the UN armed forces whose name badge –

EGO ARMY – epitomises both his character and his synecdochical function with regards to the army.

Travelling through time and space, they end up on a geographically completely changed planet with an island of love in its centre. What seems to be a quasi-paradisiacal, anarcho-communist world, a remake of the garden of Eden depicted in colourful, flowery and psychedelic tones, where free love among humans and complete harmony between all species reign, where money, armies or weapons belong to the things people know only from history classes and museums and where the only punishment imaginable is to temporarily deprive someone of their glasses, which render the others visible, soon, however, turns out to be based on the exploitation of other planets and their equally anthropomorphic, yet giant inhabitants. While the amazed Muriel explores everything alongside her requickened partner Ro, general Xeron could not be more displeased by what he sees. As soon as he learns about the historical role of their 1980s contemporary Mike Richardson who would be responsible for abolishing the military and bringing about lasting peace, he decides to change the course of history and kill that youngster once back in the present. It comes with no surprise that he can also not understand how consensual love has become the standard, as, in his view, violence and hierarchy seem to have made sex attractive in the first place. Xeron vainly attempts to impress the local beauties with his phallus both in the Jungian (represented by his 20cm-long cigarette) and Lacanian senses (his general-cum-macho-style indecency failing) (Saudek and Macourek 1991, 54; Žižek 2008, 175–176), only to be chastised for sexual harassment. Of course, the angels are aware of the dangerous insights Muriel and Xeron gained, which is why they take some amnesic measures before the two return to the intradiegetic present day. Nevertheless, everybody involved manages to keep their memories and, once back from the future, a race to save Mike and thus that very future begins.

In this brief summary of Muriel and the Angels, we can discern a conflation of utopian, sci-fi,[16] futurist and also always counterfactual patterns. The latter is not unusual for how comics work with history (Zimmermann 2019, 20), especially in the context of time travel (Weller 2019, 167), and serve as a contrasting programme of ideological worldviews. Al-

[16] While on their exploratory trip to retrieve the resource that ensures the humans of the future their 'relative immortality,' the angels compare their mission to the plot of some 20th century film (Saudek and Macourek 1991, 65–66).

Figure 3 Kája Saudek, *Muriel a andělé* (Muriel and the Angels), 1969; First Published in Saudek and Macourek (1991, 96–97) (Courtesy of Berenika Saudková)

ternative futures near and distant are thus imagined, but always already threatened, as prefigured in the opening credits where Muriel and the angels sit not only on the comic strip's title but also above a huge pair of glasses reflecting the cosmic changes to come. This is probably most strikingly illustrated by the quasi-cinematographic cut between the two worlds and eras, between pages 96 and 97 of the comic strip (figure 3), as flowers rain down onto the UFO taking Muriel and Xeron back through space and time to the 1980s. Upon return, the spacecraft flies over a desperate scene of drudging workers. The shot is framed with signs reading 'Dig we must' and 'Danger' as well as an empty bottle characterising the proletarian condition (of alcoholism) and filled with intermedial citations including Honza Hrom, with a Saudek comics in his trouser pocket, and Karel Kanál,[17] as well as the inscription 'Fanny Hill,' referring to the pornographic paradigm of sexuality as explored in John Cleland's homonymous erotic novel (1748). The hyperbolic use of ironical allusions and puns which characterises the entire fight for the future, however, also constantly undermines the seriousness of any underlying (ideology) critique. For instance, we read about Mike Richardson that he is the front singer of The Flowers, performing at a Woodstock-like festival, and that he is going to sing peace songs by the 'national artist' ('národní umělec' –

[17] The two protagonists were taken from another of Saudek's partially censored comic strips which was published in 1968 in the magazine *Pop Music Expres* (Prokůpek 2014d, 469; Diesing 2013, 220–227).

a typical distinction for culture workers in socialist Czechoslovakia) Bob Dylan. The festival's poster ends with the motto 'Make Love Not War' now pointing towards US counterculture. While such chiasmic designations – combining communist jargon with evident American references – clearly made fun of the socialist state nomenclature and the 'titulomania' characteristic of its cultural politics, the very end of this first *Muriel* episode – Mike was saved and evil Xeron escaped into outer space with a stolen UFO – enacts and parodies the typical filmic zoom-in of any romantic happy ending, the only thing missing being the voice-over stating that they – Muriel, Ro and Mike – lived happily ever after (Saudek and Macourek 1991, 126–127). Yet, Muriel was to be continued ('pokračování příště') …

Muriel and the Orange Death

Even though the publication of Muriel and the Angels was announced several times in the print media of the publishing house Mladá fronta – in 1969 the first 29 pages were even printed in the guise of a preview in the weekly *Mladý svět* – it had to be postponed given the tragic events of August 1968 (Prokůpek 2014d, 471). Already, Saudek and Macourek were working on the second episode of the series as they readily reflected the change in political circumstances – the invasion of Czechoslovakia by the Warsaw Pact forces and the crushed Prague Spring hopes – yet without realistically anticipating their ultimate societal and cultural consequences. Muriel and the Orange Death (Saudek and Macourek 2009) can be considered a title in displacement, whereby the colour orange takes the place of red and the announced death comes, once more, from another planet. All of this is from the outset staged as a filmic intro reminiscent of *Jessie* and, most of all, anticipating *Four Murders Are Enough, Darling*. It is exactly this Orange Planet where Muriel is kidnapped to by one of its secret agents who took the happy family triangle – Muriel, Ro and Mike – by surprise as they were having a picnic in the forest and, thus, smashed their idyll just in time to prevent them from turning into mediocre petty bourgeois.

Saudek's depictions of Orangeland show a desperate, highly mechanical place where some sort of artificial intelligence – the central brain – controls almost everything, from what its inhabitants think to how their humours and emotions go. This kind of mental *Gleichschaltung* is ensured by means of little antennae that are implanted on everybody's heads and directly oversee their brains by transmitting the central computer's mind

control. While all able men are part of the armed forces, women carry out the necessary physical work, including ploughing fields and digging tunnels for a gulag-like system where prisoners from other planets and rebels are kept in forced labour. There is no parental education and children are directly taken care of, i.e. militarised, by the central brain. Only presumed everyday activities are left to individual decision-making but, as the people's wardrobes are empty, there are not many outfits to choose from and this kind of derived freedom turns out to be obsolete. One needs no particularly gifted imagination to recognise many features of a Stalinist, or indeed any totalitarian, regime in the state organisation of the Orange Planet, including the abovementioned lack of consumer goods.

By accident, Muriel and her abductor collide with Xeron's UFO while on their way to the Orange Planet. Still highly opportunistic and thus without any committed ideological position, the general seizes the chance of leading the Orange Army to invade planet Earth. As Saudek would later write (1991, 1), Xeron's character traits were inspired by Jan Šejna, a fraudulent general who had made a splendid career in the Czechoslovak Communist Party after World War II only to escape into exile and collaborate with the CIA in early 1968 once his crooked business had been exposed (ČT24 2012). As the comic strip unfolds, Mike and Ro had been frantically driving across America, meeting Batman on the way for the first and only time in Czechoslovak culture (Saudek and Macourek 2009, 44; Prokůpek 2009, 150), and realising how 'škoda,' 'what a shame' it will be to sell their sports car[18] in order to get the angelic walkie-talkie fixed so that they can call the future for help. Yet, all their projects fail as the invasion of the Earth has started and is live-streamed on a hijacked TV channel – certainly not how the Warsaw Pact invasion of Czechoslovakia could be covered. Xeron, in a Herodian gesture, has his lackeys capture all youngsters who look like Mike Richardson as he still wants to eliminate him and secure a bright militaristic future.[19] As Xeron goes on to confront the World Assembly, we also learn more about the continuous ideological differences among UN nations – from the Frenchman's elegant

[18] The Czechoslovak car brand Škoda literally means 'pity' and Saudek might well have lamented the fact that his passion for fast American engines was never met by the state-owned car producer.

[19] The comparison to Herod is explicitly made by Muriel in the opening sequence where she inserts the hitherto adventures into a teleological narrative common to both Christian salvific history and the Marxist-Leninist understanding of a directed History (Saudek and Macourek 2009, 8).

remarks while hiding away his Scandinavian porn[20] to the Soviet and Chinese references to the proletariat's force of resistance – not without a pungent thrust against Maoism when the chairman's portrait bears the small-lettered title 'Haepatitis Epidemica' (Saudek and Macourek 2009, 81). On the ground however, all states have quickly fallen and we see the last fighters fleeing from the orange terror intermedially accompanied by Pat Boone's 1960 *Exodus* film score 'This Land Is Mine' (p. 78) or the gospel-cum-protest song 'We Shall Overcome' (Saudek and Macourek 2009, 63; Diesing 2013, 268; Prokůpek 2009, 151). Again, it is a very particular America that Saudek is referring to – that of the civil rights and peace movements – and Western capitalism is not spared from (indirect) criticism. It is notable that companies such as Nestlé and IBM are depicted in relation to the Orange Planet where the first seems to be carrying out some extraction works (Saudek and Macourek 2009, 94) while the latter is the brand which had produced the hardware for the central brain (p. 137), i.e. the planet's totalitarian ruler.

Unlike the aftermath of 1968, where nobody came to help protesters in Prague, Bratislava and elsewhere, the inhabitants of the tenth millennium get soon informed, in fact ripped out from their land of 'Flower Power' (Saudek and Macourek 2009, 97) and 'Super Kyč' (p. 98),[21] and send a heavenly army to disband the orange forces. Whereas these will still try to break the morale of their abducted prisoners and manipulate young Mike into docility by implanting in him invisible antennae, Muriel, who is by now allied to the underground resistance on the Orange Planet, will destroy the central brain just in time to prevent the execution of all our heroes. While jobless General Xeron once again escapes into orbit, we end up with a family reunion that echoes the finale of *Muriel*'s first episode

[20] Pornographic literature again plays an important role and underscores the sexual subtext of the 20th century paradigm depicted, as it also happens to be the main source material the erstwhile secret agent from the Orange Planet had retrieved (Saudek and Macourek 2009, 23). While most of Saudek's visuality partakes in heteronormative stereotypes (Playboy-style beauties in need of male salvation being rescued by hypertrophic athletes), however, the orangers' study of humankind is further ironised as they mistake the almost naked Ro and his angelic companion Bur for homosexual wrestlers, remembering a gay nudes ad from the March/April issue of the 1969 *International Times* which Saudek collaged into the comics bubble (Saudek and Macourek 2009, 111; 'Gay Young Men, With Style & Pose & Lack of Clothes ……' 1969).

[21] Both are written with flowers and vegetable patterns, respectively, adorning the island of love which, in this *Muriel* sequel, has put forth blossoms in the form of hearts and breasts (Saudek and Macourek 2009, 102; Diesing 2013, 268).

and, inversely, raises the expectations for another continuation. Finished by early 1970, with Muriel and the Angels still unpublished, it must however have been clear to the authors of this overtly anti-normalisation instalment staging any orange/red occupation as temporary, that Muriel and the Orange Death would not meet its audience through any official channel any time soon. Indeed, Tomáš Prokůpek (2009, 149) goes so far as to perceive in Macourek's scenarios the only optimistic answer to the overthrow of the Prague Spring.

Four Murders Are Enough, Darling or Why Four Times Saudek Are Still Not Enough

It was certainly in great part thanks to Macourek's manoeuvring aptness that Saudek, in spite of being increasingly hindered in having his comic strips printed elsewhere, could collaborate on another movie in 1970/71, this time with filmmaker Oldřich Lipský. *Four Murders Are Enough, Darling* was presented as a comics-comedy ('komixkomedie') and the Saudek-Macourek duo did not omit any chance to smuggle the artist's comic strips, and mainly *Muriel,* into the film. To start with, the front credits of *Four Murders Are Enough, Darling* can be considered to be a citation from the opening of the two *Muriel* episodes, but especially Muriel and the Orange Death, with one of the panels used being a direct variation of Ro fighting the orange monsters (Saudek and Macourek 2009, 121). Furthermore, there are several flying comic panels throughout the film that are directly taken from that unpublished book, including page 61, which explicitly depicts the attack of the Orange Planet, imitating a bottom-up film shot showing two girls jumping over a crimson puddle of blood and shrieking. We can observe a similarly contrabandist gesture that Saudek had undertaken with the Czechoslovak 1971 movie poster for Roger Vadim's *Barbarella.* Jean-Claude Forest's comic strip of the same name had been both Vadim's as well as Macourek and Saudek's literary model for *Barbarella* and *Muriel,* respectively (Prokůpek 2014d, 472; Diesing 2013, 374–375; Kořínek and Prokůpek 2014b, 546). The knowing eye will therefore immediately have identified the poster's protagonist with Muriel and have recognised Ro in the flying angel next to her. Also, a folded page ripped from Muriel and the Angels is among the mingle-mangle of flying objects surrounding Barbarella (Jane Fonda).

While the convoluted plot of *Four Murders Are Enough, Darling*[22] shall

[22] A rich gentleman carrying a cheque over 1 million dollars from the central bank of the

not interest us in detail here, it is once more a refined intermedial play that Macourek enacts with the help of Saudek's comics in order to blur the lines between 'reality' and the fantastic world of the comic strip. Indeed, this happens *ex post*. The opening scene in a train compartment prominently features one of Saudek's comics as the nervous money courier is trying to dissipate his fears by reading the strip and is soon surprised by the first gangsters. The plot carries on and the scenes are always segued by means of drawn images and interrupted in the manner of TV ads featuring non-existent commodities. The very existence of comics-style advertisements, which would have been unthinkable in 1960s Czechoslovakia, is made plausible inside the movie. At the very end of the film, after the dénouement has already happened, the camera returns to that same train compartment where our initial carrier has just finished reading the entire plot of the film in his comic strip. This circular configuration of time[23] is taken even further when the protagonist opens the compartment door and a corpse falls onto him just as it happened countless times during the entire film, which now, in a sort of *mise-en-abyme,* starts all over again, redoubling the circularity of time.

The movie can thus also be read as a meta-commentary on comics, especially in the advertisement breaks and with the integration of comic signs indicating movements and sounds. Furthermore, the comic strip is materially present at various locations throughout the movie (both in the classroom of the foolish literature teacher who despises comics and in the press office where they are being prepared for publication). The metaphorical or medial use of the comics and comics' aesthetics is a guiding thread when the panels are turned into a film inside the film, a story inside the story, thus becoming a kind of paratext. Finally, we also have to deal with a commentary on the authority position regarding comics, which come to play an important deictic role as the filmic plot unfolds. Yet, at times, the panels deal with censorship directly – as the poster deemed too lascivious by a 'Bonzensor,' i.e. a censor of Bonzania, is quickly removed (Diesing 2013, 179) – and indirectly as in the surreptitious instances of *Muriel*'s appearance. When comics are derided as an inferior genre by the equally ridiculous figure of the literature teacher who does not understand their popularity and discredits himself for fail-

fictitious state of Bonzania is being chased by two opposite mafia gangs whose members are continually murdered as they try to get hold of the money.

[23] Not unfamiliar to Czech filmmakers of the *Nouvelle Vague* and beyond; see footnote 15.

ing to grasp different registers of language, he rebuts his erstwhile claim by eventually morphing into a comic hero himself and thus underlines the genre's significance in a self-sabotaging way.

Is it then the kind of restart, of reset enacted at the end of *Four Murders Are Enough, Darling,* the kind of rolling things back only to let them start again, yet in a slightly different way, that makes for the seriality of the comic strip and interconnects it with the kindred medium of film? Can we then assume that every narrative and its mediations can have different issues, different lives, afterlives (in the full Benjaminian meaning of *Nachleben;* Weidner 2011; Vargas 2017)? And what would the afterlives of the declared anti-normalisation superheroine Muriel look like 'after communism,' i.e. after the fall of state socialism when her only destiny was to be commodified? That is also a predicament where the very utopia of communism has become unimaginable (Fisher 2009), while the old scenarios of war and exploitation seem to be repeating themselves in the absence of new ideas (Saudek 1991). Unlike those critics who deemed the *Muriel* plot 'a nostalgic memory of the naive ideals of the 1960s' (Prokůpek 2014b, 832), its rereading along socio-political and ideological lines seems to make all the more sense in the second decade of a millennium that has not only undone the alleged 'end of history' (Fukuyama 2006) but, in instances such as censorship and the lack of political alternatives, seems to be regressing even further. Or are we maybe going too far in asking these questions so seriously and forgetting Saudek's life-long (self)ironical stance? After all, the name he chose for his personal company spoke of Duté fráze bezduchého kýče, that is Hollow Phrases of Soulless Kitsch. Yet again, this appellation consists of a combination of the most frequently uttered allegations against comics ever since the late 1940s (Foret, Jareš and Prokůpek 2014, 419–420), i.e. their being a form of simple-minded kitsch.[24] It is therefore another highly connoted intertextual allusion that raises the ideological premises of its socio-political situation only to immediately ironise them.

By highlighting the political and ideological dimensions embedded in the narrative enactments of four of Saudek and Macourek's joint works – two movies and two comic strips – the present paper has tried to demon-

[24] The words 'prostoduchý' ('simple-minded') and 'kýč' ('kitsch') figured in one of the most poignant attacks on a comic strip: Václav Stejskal's 1947 lampoon article against Jaroslav Foglar's *Rychlé šípy* as published in the weekly paper *Vpřed* (Foret, Jareš and Prokůpek 2014, 419–420, 424).

strate that it is not enough to praise the import of American-style imagery, or the comic genre itself, into the Czechoslovak pop culture of the 1960s if we are to grasp the continuing significance of one of its most famous superheroines. Muriel, or Jessie, still manifest anti-normalisation qualities in the sense that their character traits and their actions point to unrealised utopias whose very possibility has been erased from a globalised post-historical imaginary. A symptomatic rereading of Muriel's adventures through the lens of critical theory is thus far more than a nostalgic return. The missing continuation of her story does not merely point to Saudek and Macourek's incomplete lifetime achievement as most of comic studies hitherto would have it. While it partakes in the ongoing lack of historical agency, it also hinges on the necessity to think anew the world historical. In the absence of the presumably ten missing Muriel episodes, it is thus first and foremost given to her readers to continue imagining the very possibility of a utopian communism.

Note

A first version of this text was presented at the conference Comics in Communism – And Beyond: Propaganda and Subversion which took place in Leipzig on 2–4 February 2023, and was co-organised by the University of Leipzig and the University of Ljubljana. My thanks go to the conveners Tanja Zimmermann, Gal Kirn and Mirt Komel as well as to Nina Cvar and Pavel Liška.

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Anthropos 56 (1): 197–209 | ISSN 0587-5161 | E-ISSN 2630-4082

Alan Ford Goes to Yugoslavia: From Tautology to Ideology

Mirt Komel
University of Ljubljana, Slovenia
mirt.komel@fdv.uni-lj.si

Abstract. Alan Ford, originally an Italian comic book created in 1969 by Max Bunker and Magnus, soon after its translation into Serbo-Croatian, gained huge popularity in Yugoslavia. Its ironic take on the genre of espionage, combined with a surreal black humour and a satirical critique of Italy and the West in general, apparently brilliantly translated as an ironic depiction not only of Yugoslav party politics of the period, but also of contemporary politics in post-Yugoslav countries. The article thus deals with the comic aspects of the Yugoslav *Alan Ford,* focusing on its specific irony and tautology, since both provide a direct link between the spheres of comedy and ideology.

Key Words: Alan Ford, comedy, Yugoslavia, ideology

***Alan Ford* gre v Jugoslavijo: od tavtologije do ideologije**
Povzetek. Alan Ford, italijanski strip, ki sta ga leta 1969 ustvarila Max Bunker in Magnus, je kmalu po prevodu v srbohrvaščino pridobil izjemno popularnost v nekdanji Jugoslaviji. Njegov ironični pristop k žanru vohunjenja, združen z nadrealističnim črnim humorjem in s satirično kritiko Italije ter Zahoda, je očitno odlično preveden kot ironična upodobitev jugoslovanske politike tistega obdobja, ki je večinoma vplivala tudi na sodobno politiko v postjugoslovanskih državah. Prispevek se osredotoča na komične vidike jugoslovanskega Alan Forda, še zlasti pa na ironijo in tavtologijo kot dvoje specifičnih tehnik proizvajanja komičnega učinka, ki si jih komedija deli z ideologijo.

Ključne besede: Alan Ford, Jugoslavija, komedija, ideologija

Perhaps it is not a coincidence that *Alan Ford* by Luciano Secchi and Robert Raviola – *in arte* Max Bunker and Mangus – started its journey in the revolutionary year of 1969, when the post-war optimism was slowly fading away and the dominant liberal ideology started to crumble. The comic book is basically a satirical take on the classic secret agents genre,

https://doi.org/10.26493/2630-4082.56.197-209

spiced with black humour and cynical references to certain specific aspects of Italian society of the period, but also a mockery of certain universal aspects of Western society at large. Although it became widely popular in Italy shortly after its introduction, *Alan Ford* remained relatively unknown outside its country of origin, except for one formidable exception: Yugoslavia. Curiously enough, leaping from capitalist Italy to its socialist neighbour, *Alan Ford* became such a huge success that even later on, after the violent dissolution of Yugoslavia, in its successor states it remained one of the most popular comic books. Thus, if in Italy *Alan Ford* was intended and interpreted as a satire of capitalism, then it is even more interesting to know that on the other side of the so-called Iron Curtain in Yugoslavia, it was, to the contrary, read as a political satire of socialism, or even, to put it in 'Alanfordistic' terms, as its 'accurate depiction.' How, therefore, to reconcile these two contradictory perceptions/receptions of the comic book? How can one satire of society become such an effective ironic critique of two such different ideologies? Rather than asserting a kind of comic universalism as if comedy is so universal that it can take on different ideologies and function in different historical contexts – the error would be the same as if asserting the universal validity of this or that ideology – I would like to propose a certain particularism of comedy, focusing on its specific techniques of irony and tautology as two hallmarks of how *Alan Ford* functions in these two very different contexts.

Max Bunker's and Magnus's *Alan Ford*

The original idea for *Alan Ford* as conceived by Max Bunker along with illustrator Magnus was to create a satire of James Bond, the iconic British spy, who for the decades to come defined the whole genre in literature, cinema, and TV shows, and pop-culture in general.

The initial script for *Alan Ford* was written in August 1967, and included its six main characters that form the legendary Group TNT: Alan Ford, Bob Rock, Sir Oliver, The Boss, Jeremiah, and Grunf. Group TNT is an assembly of misfit secret agents, who operate from a flower shop in New York, which they use as a front for their secret headquarters. They are depicted as lazy, poor, and incompetent, yet somehow also intelligent and cunning, especially when it suits their own personal interests. Their outlandish biographies are dwarfed by that of their leader, the wheelchair-ridden Number One or Broj Jedan (introduced in the series only later on in the eponymous 11th issue, see Bunker and Magnus 1970), who embezzles the millions paid to the group for various secret missions while pay-

ing a pittance to his agents, leaving them poor to the bone in the process (Lucchesi 2014).

The now legendary first issue of the comic book, entitled *The Group TNT* (Bunker and Magnus 1969a), was received mildly by its audience, and thus the second issue, *The Hollow Tooth,* which appeared in June 1969 (Bunker and Magnus 1969a), was overshadowed by the first issue's fiasco. However, the reputation of *Alan Ford* grew steadily with subsequent issues. Magnus drew the first 75 issues, after which he was replaced by Paolo Piffarerio in 1975, who was also replaced in 1983, when the comic book moved to the Max Bunker Press. Currently the comic book is drawn by Dario Perucca with inks by Omar Pistolato, who retained the same drawing style as set by Magnus. The comic book has been adapted to animated film and theatre plays, as well as used as a source of inspiration in books and movies, most notably a low-budget 30-minute animated short called *Alan Ford e il Gruppo TNT contro Superciuk,* which was directed by Max Bunker in 1988.

Max Bunker initially wanted to create a comic book that would not fall into either of the then predefined categories of adventures and dark comics, like *Satanik* or *Kriminal* (Bunker and Raviola), or funny comics like Mickey Mouse (Walt Disney), but rather would employ a mixture of genres (adventure, romance, etc.) held together by the main spy storyline (Terzi 2011). This pastiche of genres could be read as one of the distinctive elements of postmodernism (Jameson 1997, 64); however, we must be precise that in *Alan Ford* the element of parody still prevails over the pastiche since the different genres are always parodied despite the anchoring on the spy genre which is itself an object of parody – and therefore it would still fall, according to Jameson's own criteria as laid out in his book on postmodernism (1997), nearer to modernistic than postmodern art.[1]

The difference between *pastiche* and *parody* is important to understand the subversive effect of *Alan Ford:* 'Pastiche is, like parody, the imitation of a peculiar mask, speech in a dead language: but it is a neutral practice of such mimicry, without any of parody's ulterior motives, amputated of the satiric impulse, devoid of laughter and any conviction that alongside the

[1] Jameson, in his book on postmodernism, is adamant about the difference between the two concepts, while pinpointing the historical origin of 'pastiche' (as theoretical concept) (1997, 76): 'This concept, which we owe to Thomas Mann (in *Doktor Faustus*), who owed it in turn to Adorno on the two paths of advanced musical experimentation (Schoenberg's innovative planification, Stravinsky's irrational eclecticism), is to be sharply distinguished from the more readily received idea of parody.'

abnormal tongue you have momentary borrowed, some healthy linguistic normality still exists' (Jameson 1997, 65). Pastiche is, in short, 'blank irony, a statue with blind eyeballs' (p. 65). Parody, on the other hand, could be thus defined as a very special kind of irony that imitates a peculiar mask with its specific discourse, and it does so in a very vivid language that is far from neutral, but rather engaged, motivated by its satiric impulse that bursts into laughter as soon as it touches the serious reality it tries to mimic with its process. *Alan Ford* is definitely such kind of parody, for its pastiche of different artistic genres is in function of its more general – and at the same time very idiosyncratic, as we will see later on – ironic take on reality.

However, what kind of reality exactly? *Alan Ford*'s New York is not exactly New York, and neither is the rest of the World that the protagonists visit during their exotic voyages abroad when sent on this or that mission (a distinctive feature of the spy genre): reality is 'seen' from a very specific angle, shaped through the substance of the genre that defines what is real and what is not, which is true also in many other comic books that are not set in alternative realities but rather in real locations seen from a very particular perspective (as, for example, the London of *Dylan Dog* that is shaped through the lenses of the horror genre). One would imagine that the world of *Alan Ford* would be shaped and defined by its predominant genre so that we would get a glimpse into the secret world of spies, but what the comic book actually evokes is a world as seen through the perspective of class-struggle: 'Reality as such is first presented as split into two separate worlds that do not share any "common reality" [...] In *Alan Ford,* the central scission runs between the reality of the "poor" and the reality of the "rich" that *coexist on the same spot without really existing for each other*' (Bunta 2016, 893). The world of *Alan Ford,* is thus split through class struggle, where the parodic reality of the poor and the reality of the rich antagonistically collide with each other in satirical bursts of laughter.[2]

Point in case: *Superciuk,* one of the main reoccurring villains in the comic book series and Alan Ford's antagonist *par excellence.* As Ezechiele

[2] Bunta, in his article dedicated to Crepax and Magnus, argues that there are two principal methodological concepts linking Crepax's and Raviola's respective approaches in *Valentina* and *Alan Ford,* namely, the 'pornological' and the 'metaphysical,' the former referring to the sexual aesthetics, the latter to the above-mentioned split in reality, where, however, he constantly and systematically avoids the term 'class struggle' but rather speaks of 'antagonism' (Bunta 2016, 891–894).

Bluff he is depicted as a typical underdog member of the working class, but as Superciuk with his deadly alcoholic breath as his main weapon, he is portrayed as a sort of anti-Robin Hood, for he 'steals from the poor and gives to the rich,' thus encapsulating both realities as a living paradox or embodiment of class struggle itself.

However, if one can still understand why such a satirical take on reality through parody was so effective in post-war capitalist Italy, one cannot marvel enough at why it was even more effective in socialist Yugoslavia, as if with the translation from one language and cultural context to the other something was produced as surplus.

Alan Ford Goes to Yugoslavia

Considering the distinctive Italo-American character of *Alan Ford* with its direct references to local Italian reality with many terms in Milanese dialect, as well as its open ridicule of certain aspects of contemporary capitalist society, especially the (anti-)utopic 'American Dream,' it is almost incredible that it achieved such a great success in SFR Yugoslavia almost immediately after its first translation of 1972 on an already vividly crowded comic book market (Draginčić and Zupan 1986), and even more incredible that it survived Yugoslavia's violent dissolution and kept its momentum afterwards with its Croatian, Bosnian, Serbian, Macedonian and Slovenian editions (Patruno 2006).

Alan Ford was first published in former Yugoslavia by the state-owned company Vjesnik from Zagreb, where the first few issues did not gain much success until the appearance of the above-mentioned antagonist Superciuk, translated as Superhik, in issue #25, with his famous motto of 'steals from the poor and gives to the rich,' which apparently was read not only as a perfect critique of American-style capitalism but of Yugoslav socialism as well. Although from two very different, irreconcilable perspectives, emphasised by the two different names given to the same character: while Superciuk denotes the 'perverse logic' of capitalism where the poor are exploited in favour of the rich, Superhik denotes a similarly 'perverse logic' of socialism where the poor are exploited by themselves (and Superhik fits this role marvellously since he is himself a proletarian).

A lot of the comic book's success in Yugoslavia is due to Nenad Brixy's free-form witty adaptation and translation, both linguistic, into Croatian slang, and of course also political in terms of the many implicit references to the Yugoslav socialist system (Džamić 2012). Certain pictures from the book were removed or repainted in some editions, while in some

other editions those very same pictures appeared in the original version, and unsurprisingly, some of Vjesnik's editions were occasionally also censored by the publisher.[3] Even Max Bunker acknowledged Brixy's contributions to its popularity in Yugoslavia, which at a certain point exceeded even the domestic Italian one, praising him as 'one of the rare translators who successfully depicted the black satire of the *Alan Ford*'s story and drawings.' When Brixy died in 1984 the date marked, in many ways, the end of an era for *Alan Ford* in Yugoslavia.[4]

If we refer here to Williams's three-part theory of dominant-residual-emergent culture (1977, 121–127), and understand *Alan Ford* as an implicit critique of the Yugoslav socialist system due to its parallelism with the society of the period, the translation of *Alan Ford* – in terms of language as well as culture – could be regarded as part of the 'emergent culture' in opposition to the 'dominant' and 'residual' elements of Yugoslav society.[5] In terms of parallelism and satire, Flowershop uncannily resembles the Kuća cveća, the mausoleum of Tito, and the man himself resembles broj Jedan or Number One, as noted by Džamić (2012) in his book on *Alan Ford* with the brilliant and telling title: *Cvjećarnica u kući cvjeća* (Flowershop in the House of Flowers) (Ivic 2013). However, despite the fact that the parallels between the Yugoslav situation and the world of *Alan Ford* are one step short of uncanny, one must still be precise about where the parallelism starts and where it ends: while the 'outside world' of *Alan Ford* depicted the other, 'poor,' flip side of capitalism, it is only the 'inside world'

[3] For example, in issue #16, 'Don't Vote for Notax,' a line making fun of distinctively American racism, reading 'Firstly, I promise that we will get rid of the Blacks […] This is a country of the white race, and whoever doesn't think that way will get punished' was changed to 'Firstly, I promise that we will get rid of *our enemy.* This is *our* country and whoever doesn't think that way will […].'

[4] The edition continued after Brixy's death, eventually ending in 1992 with the outbreak of the Yugoslav Wars, after which it was Borgis who picked up the publishing rights for the Croatian market, keeping the original series title *Alan Ford Superstrip.* Maverick from Kraljevo initially started publishing for the Serbian market, and in 2003 the comic was picked up by Color Press Group from Novi Sad. In the 2000s, the original episodes in Brixy's translation have been republished by the Croatian Strip-agent under the title *Alan Ford Klasik,* who also published *Alan Ford Extra* (new Italian episodes), and *Priče broja 1* (Number One's Stories).

[5] Williams, in his *Marxism and Literature* (1977, 121–127), devotes one chapter to the dialectical development of culture as the interplay between these three concepts, where *dominant* elements refer to the hegemonic values and practices of society; *residual* to those past elements that still operate within the dominant ones; and *emergent* to those elements that go against and defy both the dominant and residual ones.

of the Flowershop from where the TNT group operates that portrays Yugoslav socialism. If the social dynamic of the group TNT – chaotic relations, dysfunctionality, bad organisation, incompetent agents – was seen as depicting the Yugoslav society, then its outside world can be taken as the Yugoslav 'outside' as such, i.e. the capitalistic West in general.

Despite the fact that initially *Alan Ford* functioned as an emergent counterculture, it soon gained such an immense popularity that it become dominant soon after Tito's death, and later on, after the dissolution of Yugoslavia, residual in its successor states. Attesting to the immense popularity of *Alan Ford* in Yugoslavia are the numerous movies, theatrical and other artworks that were directly inspired by the comic book in its Yugoslav variant: in 1994 a theatre play titled *Alan Ford* was staged at Teatar T in Belgrade, and in 2002 Radio Belgrade performed a radio drama based on the play; Emir Kusturica's *Black Cat, White Cat* from 1998 features a character who reads an *Alan Ford* comic book throughout the film; Prljavo kazalište, a Croatian rock band, was named after the translated line from an *Alan Ford* issue called Broadway; Pero Defformero, a Serbian heavy metal band, was named after one of the minor characters of the comic book; as was Superhiks, a Macedonian rock band; in the 1980s the Yugoslavian software studio Suzy Soft made a game titled The Drinker, inspired of course by Superhik.

Besides these pop-cultural references one must not fail to mention that *Alan Ford* catchphrases become part of everyday slang in almost all of post-Yugoslav successor states regardless of their (different) national languages: Broj Jedan is used to refer to any old, grumpy, influential person; Superhik is used for anyone with a serious alcohol problem; and Jeremija for someone who is easily hurt, as synonymous for 'snowflake'; and Sir Oliver's line 'Cijena, prava sitnica' ('Price? A bargain!') as commonplace for 'it's too expensive.'

This last line especially is, I think, emblematic of one of the distinctively dialectical characteristics of *Alan Ford,* namely, its ability to express the true meaning via its opposite, or what was in classical rhetoric referred to as *antiphrasis,* or in philosophy as *irony.*

The Ideological Function of Irony and Tautology

Perhaps the most famous philosophical form of irony is Socratic irony, a dialectical method of inquiry where, to put it simply, one fakes ignorance in order to gain an admission from the interlocutor, whose knowledge is then shown as null and void.

Hegel, a fan of both Socrates and his method – as Brecht puts it (1967, 1460–1462): 'He has the makings of one of the greatest humorists among the philosophers, like only Socrates otherwise, who had a similar method' – developed his dialectics in close connection with irony, which worked in a similar fashion, for he 'faked absolute knowledge in order to gain an admission of ignorance from the interlocutor,' and whose knowledge is again shown as null and void.

And could one not regard *Alan Ford* as precisely such an exercise in Hegelian irony? The main protagonists of the comic book are comical first and foremost because they adhere to the Hegelian principle of comedy where the relationship between substance and subject as enacted in tragedy is reversed: instead of the ethical substance affirming itself over the subjective action of tragic individuals, the comic individual affirms its subjectivism over ethical substance (Hegel 1997, 1380). While the naive Alan Ford himself is faking ignorance while in fact enacting what could be understood as the ethical substance of the comic book, his idiotic comrades from the Flowershop are faking absolute knowledge for they are so sure of themselves even when their own actions collide with reality and prove them wrong, and this discrepancy between their subjectivity and reality is the subject of laughter.

The irony, even double irony is, that if in the original Italian *Alan Ford* the satire of capitalistic reality was explicit – and therefore comes as no surprise that it did not make it into the Anglo-Saxon world where capitalism itself originated and is at home with itself – in the Yugoslav translation it was only implicit that the Flowershop and its inhabitants were a satire of socialist society, as if the comic book enabled an indirect satisfaction of an unconscious desire to ridicule a system that allowed none.

Freud referred to *antiphrasis* as one of the ways in which the unconscious works in order to avoid the conscious censorship of the ego, where the opposite of what is otherwise censored is shown precisely as *vorstellungs-reprasentanz* of the repressed content: as shown extensively in his *Interpretation of Dreams,* this process can affect characteristics of objects or people, thus transforming a small object into a very large one, or someone whose intelligence is envied in real life appears stupid in a dream, or climbing the stairs instead of falling, and so forth (Freud 2010). Or, more pertinently related to our topic, in his book on the *Witz,* where a similar process takes place in order to disguise a taboo content in its contrary by way of euphemisms (Freud 1916), like in one of Žižek's eminently Freudian jokes: 'What is a Freudian slip of the tongue?' – 'When

you say one thing and mean your mother.' Althusser, who in many of his works tried to combine Marxism and psychoanalysis, detected a certain conceptual parallel between the Marxist understanding of ideology and the psychoanalytical conception of the unconscious, thus paving the way for his pupils – most notably Balibar, Macherey, Pecheux – and their specific critique of discursive ideology, where art in general and literature in particular is understood as a potentially subversive practice of class struggle.[6]

There is, however, another similar usage of contrary meanings as in irony, which has, however, a directly opposite function: an ideological assertion rather than subversion of the existing order of things. The direct opposite to the dialectical use of irony in general and the rhetorical device of antiphrasis in particular is what is called 'subversive affirmation' or 'over-identification,' as first employed in performing arts and literature, most notably in Vladimir Sorokin's exaggeration of socialist realism in his novels. Žižek later on (2006) popularized the concept through his contribution on 'Why Are Laibach and the Neue Slowenische Kunst Not Fascists?,' where he discusses the totalitarian aesthetics of the group and collective as a style that relinquishes irony in order to achieve a subversive over-identification with the dominant ideology. The conceptual nuance is minimal, but important: in order for such a subversive over-identification to work, one must, so to speak, 'take it seriously,' and that is also why Laibach denies that what they do is intended to be either ironic or subversive. [7]

The most minimalistic form of such a mechanism of over-identification can be identified in a special usage of *tautology,* otherwise from times immemorial the linguistic tool of ideological conservatism, as attested, for instance, in the Christian expression 'God is God.' Jean-Jacques Lecer-

[6] Althusser (1991, 17–30) argued, most notably in his 'On Marx and Freud,' for a parallel reading between Marx's theory of class-struggle and Freud's discovery of the unconscious, both being conflictual theories demonstrating their essential epistemological break from tradition in their resistance to the dominant capitalist ideology. For the complex relation between Althusser and psychoanalysis see also Pascale Gillot's (2009) *Althusser et la psychanalyse*.

[7] Gregor Moder, in his 'What can Althusser Teach Us about Street Theater – and Vice Versa' (2014, 86), discusses several such tautological examples where performers do precisely what the oppressive government directs them to do, often simply copying the gestures or commands of authorities, thus producing a 'blind spot' of ideology, a point of view from which such performances 'become subversive with respect to the dominant ideology.'

cle (2008, 162–166), in his 'A Marxist Philosophy of Language,' writes that a tautology is a grammatical marker of 'the ideology of consensus' in that it 'deliberately ignores economic, social, and political problems at the very moment it promises to resolve them.' If someone, for example, points to the cruelties of ongoing wars, to the persistent problem of poverty, and how does God justify all these, the most ideologically conservative reply is precisely 'God is God,' asserting the identity of the Almighty as explanation for the atrocities while avoiding the historical causes for them, and at the same time implicitly asserting its existence as the 'Big Other.' But if the same tautology of 'God is God' is employed by the above-mentioned Laibach as the title and refrain of their song, the effect is quite the opposite, the futility of such an explanation and negation of its existence, or again in Lacanian terms: 'There is no Big Other.' Conversely, a simple denial of an ideological statement operates much in the same vein, as in the statement: 'The one that sacrificed for us on the cross does not exist.' A denial can always be only a denial of a presupposed, already existing content, that is thus re-affirmed through its very denial. Michel Pêcheux in his 'Discours and Ideology(s),' following step-by-step Althusser's theory of ideological interpellation in connection to Lacan's logic of the signifier, at a certain point notes that there is an implicit identity-affirming process at work in the ideological interpellation, and that the symptomatic absurdity of its 'evidence' is shown in its twisted, humorous, ironic usages, like in the following joke: 'Mr. Tainta, tell us your name!' Or: 'I have three brothers, Paul, Michel, and me' (Pêcheux 1975, 125–166). By ironically counting 'myself' as one of the 'three brothers' one denounces the absurdity not only of the elemental structures of kinship, but also of counting.

There is, in short, a specific ironic usage of tautology that can be best described as subversive over-identification, and what *Alan Ford* does is precisely such a twist of the tautological ideology of interpellation inside-out so that in the final analysis it becomes its opposite, not an 'ideology of consensus' but rather an 'ideology of conflict' that emphasises economic, social, and political problems, as best attested from the gradual development of the following few examples that go from basic tautology to ironic antiphrasis up until a most direct critique of the ruling ideology.[8]

[8] Despite the fact that Alan Ford is, as a comic book, first and foremost *graphical,* we will nevertheless focus on its *discourse,* thus leaving aside the visual functioning of ideology, which is pivotal for the comics in general, and which, for instance, Bara Kolenc elaborates

The Ironic Tautology of *Alan Ford*

Alan Ford has a plethora of memorable quotes that are, as already mentioned, still in use in present day Yugoslavia's successor states, and are also reproduced on T-shirts as well as recurrently circulated on social media, especially during voting periods, which already in itself attests to their political meaning, at least in the post-Yugoslav context.

'Tko spava nije budan.' – 'Whomever sleeps is not awake.' This is a simple tautology, a no-shit-Sherlock statement, that states the obvious, and is similar to another one: 'Ako kaniš pobijediti, ne smiješ izgubiti.' – 'If you want to win you must not lose.' However, look now how this one is turned about in the following: 'Ne predaj se nikad, osim kad moraš.' – 'Do not concede defeat ever, only when you must.' And in the final form the capitalist ideology of competition, as embodied in the sports as an allegedly ideologically neutral sector of society: 'Nije važno sudjelovati, važno je pobijediti.' – 'It's not important if you participate, but rather if you win.' By emphasizing the opposite of the Olympic slogan 'it is not important if you win but rather to participate' it shows the ideological falseness of the statement via its comic development into its contrary, 'It is not important if you participate but rather if you win,' thus demasking also the capitalistic ideology of competitiveness inscribed in the very essence of sports.

Another brilliant, eminently philosophical graduation from tautology to ideology, can be found in the following two aphorisms from the comic book: 'Bolje nešto od nečega, nego ništa od ničega.' – 'Better something of something than nothing of nothing.' It works best in our languages because of the genitive that changes the two apparent tautologies ('nešto … nečega' and 'ništa … ničega'), thus linguistically deconstructing the identity of 'something' on the one hand and of 'nothing' on the other, while apparently stating the evidential obvious.

And, based on this, my last example, the best political joke ever, with an ultimate ironic twist in terms of ideological subversion: 'Mi ništa ne

in her essay 'Voyeurism and Exhibitionism on the Internet: The Libidinal Economy of the Spectacle of Instanternity.' Among other examples, she points to the visual aspect of tautology in the form of 'stating (or, rather, staging) the obvious' in the sense that what is most hidden is what is shown in the most obvious way, a visual strategy of a lure which is certainly present in Alan Ford: 'In trying to grasp what is beyond what one shows me – an indefinite something that I assume is hiding behind the curtain – I fail again. There is nothing behind what one shows. For the subject is itself but a picture, a lure, a play with a screen' (Kolenc 2022, 201–237).

obećavamo i to ispunjavamo – stranka istine' – 'We promise nothing and we deliver. The Truth Party.' The nothing is delivered, and therefore not nothing, but something, and that is the truth of the Truth Party, the only honest party in any given republican party-system of political representation.

Conclusion

So, to return in conclusion to my initial question: how can we reconcile the apparently contradictory tendency implicit in *Alan Ford*'s ironic political satire, namely, that it can serve as a critique of capitalism as well as socialism?

The difference lies in its ideological function: *Alan Ford* provided a serious satirical critique of the capitalist system as seen in the world of the 'rich' outside the Flowershop, while its 'poor' inside – the caricature of its main tenants – delivered an ironic critique of socialism. The real kernel, however, lies not in the parody of capitalism or socialism, but rather in its distinctive use of irony that the comic book demonstrates precisely in its dialectical doublespeak, that is universal in form, but historically anchored in its usage and interpretation (it is, in short and to put it bluntly, 'funny' not in an universal, but rather in a particular way).

And to continue on the lines of historical materialism: we have noted in terms of Williams's dominant-residual-emergent culture, if the Yugoslav translation of *Alan Ford* at the beginning functioned as an emergent, countercultural element, it soon gained momentum and became dominant, but – with a true dialectical turn in terms of historical Marxism – one could say that with the dissolution of Yugoslavia and its capitalistic aftermath it again holds the potential to become a countercultural element.

Thus, in the post-Yugoslav context *Alan Ford* can still serve as both a critique of contemporary capitalist society – since most if not all of its successor states embarked on the neoliberal boat – and at the same time as a regulatory idea for what socialism truly is: the theory and practice of class struggle.

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Miscellanea

Anthropos 56 (1): 213–225 | ISSN 0587-5161 | E-ISSN 2630-4082

Effect of Cognitive Reflection on Escalation of Commitment

Petra Rekar
PhD student at the University of Ljubljana, Slovenia
petra.rekar@gmail.com

Mitja Perat
Inštitut za razvoj človeških virov, Slovenia
mitjaperat@institut.burnout.si

Abstract. Sunk costs are known to be one of the drivers of escalation of commitment. One explanation for the effect is the overgeneralization of the waste not rule, or the utilization of automatic Type 1 processing, when the more deliberate Type 2 would be needed. The objective of the study was to test if the cognitive reflection test (CRT), as a measure of an individual's tendency to engage in analytical thinking, is related to the escalation of commitment. We hypothesized that individuals scoring lower on the test will exhibit the tendency to honour sunk costs. Using a continuation with investment problem we found that CRT is not related to decision making which includes sunk cost. We can infer that CRT is not the only or the main predictor of the escalation of commitment.

Key Words: decision making, cognitive reflection, escalation of commitment, sunk costs, analytical thinking

Učinek kognitivne refleksije na stopnjevanje zavezanosti

Povzetek. Poslovno nepovratni stroški so dejavnik, ki vpliva na stopnjevanje zavezanosti k izbiri. Ena od razlag za nastanek učinka je pretirana posplošitev pravila, da se z denarjem ne razmetava, oz. uporaba avtomatiziranih hevristik prvega reda, takrat ko bi bila potrebna uporaba analitičnega razmišljanja. Namen raziskave je preverjanje, ali se test kognitivne refleksije, kot mera posameznikove nagnjenosti k analitičnemu razmišljanju, povezuje z zavezanostjo k določeni izbiri. Predvidevali smo, da bodo posamezniki, ki bodo dosegli nižjo mero kognitivne refleksije, v večji meri upoštevali nepovratne stroške pri investicijskih odločitvah. Pri nalogi nadaljevanja z investicijo smo ugotovili, da se test ne povezuje z odločanjem, ki vsebuje nepovratne stroške. Na osnovi tega sklepamo, da testa kognitivne refleksije ne moremo uporabiti kot prediktorja za ugotavljanje stopnjevanja zavezanosti.

https://doi.org/10.26493/2630-4082.56.213-225

Ključne besede: odločanje, kognitivna refleksija, stopnjevanje zavezanosti, poslovno nepovratni stroški, analitično razmišljanje

Literature Review

Honouring sunk costs is a well-documented effect, where an individual continues with an investment or endeavour once an initial amount of assets (money, time or effort) have been allocated to it (Arkes and Blumer 1985). This type of behaviour goes against the standard economic theory (Von Neumann and Morgenstern 1947), which is normative in its essence and provides a norm that is the correct course of action. The normative approach to decision making provides standards of how decisions should be made, with the aim to assist individuals to maximize the outcome. According to economic theory, the normatively correct decision is that only future (or incremental) revenues and costs should be considered when evaluating an investment (or project). A sunk cost has already occurred, is irrecoverable and as such is not affected by the decision, hence it should not be considered when evaluating an investment. However, research indicates this is not the case and that sunk costs commonly drive the escalation of commitment (Schmidt and Calantone 2002; Sleesman et al. 2012; Soman and Gourville 2001) in finance (Tan and Yates 2002), customer loyalty (Jang, Mattila, and Bai 2007; Liang, Lee, and Tung 2014), or the continuation of an activity (Åstebro, Jeffrey, and Adomdza 2007). Familiarity with economic theory or with rational decision making alone does not always reduce or eliminate this effect (Fennema and Perkins 2007; Roth, Robbert, and Straus 2015), nor is it reduced by one's cognitive ability (Haita-Falah 2017; Stanovich and West 2008). On the contrary, it has been argued that being more analytical might actually amplify the effect, as individuals who make logical arguments for a prior investment might be more inclined to allocate additional resources (Wong, Kwong, and Ng 2008). The effect is well researched from the angles of instruction (Tan and Yates 1995), frame (Klaczynski 2001; Salter and Sharp 2001), the level of sunk costs as the percentage of the total investment (Garland 1990), and the completion of an investment (Boehne and Paese 2000), as well as some differences in the characteristics of the individual. The effect is strengthened by state orientation (van Putten, Zeelenberg, and van Dijk 2010), agreeableness and conscientiousness (Fujino et al. 2016), and younger age (Bruine de Bruin, Strough, and Parker 2014; Eberhardt, Bruine de Bruin, and Strough 2019). It is believed that experience reduces the effect in older individuals; however, the type of sunk cost appears to play

a key role. When the cost is monetary, experience plays a positive role; however, experienced inventors who receive a negative review of their idea (costs were effort and time) continue to invest more assets (money and time) in further development than their more inexperienced counterparts (Åstebro, Jeffrey, and Adomdza 2007). Domain-specific knowledge is believed to be helpful, but only when the situation cues its use. In one of the studies, individuals with knowledge of standard economic theory (CPAS, MBAS, and accounting students) made more normatively correct decisions when dealing with a clearly economic decision problem (Fennema and Perkins 2007). In a similar manner, providing individuals with training in the sunk cost rule positively affected normative decision making (Larrick, Morgan, and Nisbett 1990).

There appears to be several explanations of the causes, ranging from mental accounting (Thaler 1999), loss aversion (Arkes and Blumer 1985), commitment to project completion (Boehne and Paese 2000), effort justification (Cunha and Caldieraro 2009), agency (Harrison and Harrell 1993), or the waste not rule (Arkes and Ayton 1999). Although depending on circumstances, the type of sunk costs (money, time, effort), or individuals' characteristics, any of these mechanisms could explain the effect. In the case of a monetary sunk cost, an individual acquainted with standard economic theory should be able to make a normatively correct decision, assuming they either reflect on the task (engage in analytical thinking), or they obtained sufficient relevant experience, which would facilitate a correct automatic response. Arkes and Ayton (1999) propose that the sunk cost effect is a result of the overgeneralization of the 'do not waste' rule, where ceasing the project would be considered a waste of money already spent. Essentially, they posit that the effect is a result of the so-called Type 1 processing. In cognitive science, there is a consensus that individuals switch between two qualitatively different modes of processing, namely the autonomous and fast Type 1 and the more effortful and slow Type 2. By default, individuals have a tendency to utilize Type 1, as it is cognitively less costly; however, this type of thinking can lead to 'irrational' decisions (Evans and Stanovich 2013; Toplak, West, and Stanovich 2014), as it is dependent on the cues from the environment, as well as intrinsic factors (such as motivation or mood) (Klaczynski 2001). The cognitive reflection test (CRT) is a popular measure to distinguish between individuals more prone to Type 1 processing (automatic, fast) and those who are more analytical. In spite of its wide use, it is stable over time (Stagnaro, Pennycook, and Rand 2018) and robust to multiple exposures

(Bialek and Pennycook 2017). The test is composed of 3 logical problems, which cue incorrect 'intuitive' answers that need to be suppressed to deliberate on the correct answer (Frederick 2005). The higher the number of correct answers, the more analytical an individual is. The test seems to be a good predictor of performance in tasks that require engagement in more effortful deliberation, such as heuristics and biases (Frederick 2005; Toplak, West, and Stanovich 2011). Additionally, it is related to impression management, with colour manipulations affecting judgements of less analytical (more impulsive) individuals (Cardoso, Leite, and de Aquino 2018). Stanovich (2012) proposes that deviations from normative decision making may be the result of individual differences in thinking dispositions. To successfully perform on a variety of heuristics and biases tasks, an individual needs to first detect that there is a need to override Type 1 processing and inhibition, but they also need to possess the right mindware, including knowledge (Stanovich 2018; Stanovich and West 2008). As CRT requires an individual to suppress their initial (intuitive, though incorrect) response, Ronayne, Sgroi and Tuckwell (2021) showed that the capacity for reflection predicts sunk cost effect, where the 'cost' is effort exerted.

To elicit the sunk cost effect, two types of tasks are commonly used – utilization tasks, where an individual needs to select between two equally appealing options – and progress decisions, where an individual needs to decide whether to escalate a commitment. To measure the effect of monetary sunk cost, utilization decisions could be potentially problematic, as they might not be recognized as economic decisions and individuals might not apply domain-specific knowledge. In the case of progress (or the escalation of commitment) decisions, individuals should be aware of the type of decision they are making and apply the necessary knowledge (Roth, Robbert, and Straus 2015), assuming the context cues relevant domain knowledge.

The aim of the study was to inspect whether more analytical individuals would more often reach a normatively correct decision in an escalation of commitment task. We hypothesized that if the sunk cost effect stems from the overgeneralization of the waste not rule, individuals with a higher propensity for analytical thinking should not succumb to sunk costs. We used the cognitive reflection test as a measure of propensity for analytical thinking, as it is believed to be associated with good decision making, when deliberation is paramount, such as on heuristics and biases tasks. However contrary to research so far, we failed to find an associa-

tion between CRT and sunk costs, which is a classic heuristic in the financial sphere. We demonstrated that simply being more analytical (scoring higher on the CRT), even when possessing the right knowledge, is not sufficient to overcome the fallacy.

Participants

A total of 188 participants were included in the study (127 women; 61 men; mean age = 19.54, SD = 4.24). A convenience sample was used, where the majority of the participants (n = 164) came from a pool of 4th year students of an economics high school, while a minority (n = 24) were professionals working in finance with degrees in economics or a similar subject. In the case of the students, we were allowed to modify their curriculum by including information regarding the valuation of investments (which included the treatment of sunk costs); however, no particular stress was placed on this information. This information was given roughly 5–6 weeks before the testing took place to ensure that it was not too fresh in their memory and that they could make the connection. As the valuation of projects is a part of the standard curricula at the university level, it was assumed that professionals had this knowledge. All the materials were in the Slovene language as all of the participants were native speakers.

Methodology

For the students, testing took place during their regular economics class. Upon being informed about the study they were asked to give their consent. The experiment was a paper and pencil one and consisted of a short financial assignment, a CRT test and a demographics questionnaire. Firstly, the participants were presented with an investment problem which involved sunk costs, modelled after the airline company problem by Arkes and Blumer (1985), where they had to decide whether to continue with an investment of the development of a virtual reality headset when the competition had just launched a similar product, while their company would need 3 more years to complete it. A certain amount of sunk costs related to the development so far had already been incurred, which was clearly stated. We included the information on expected revenues and the uncertainty associated with them, as this information would normally be available. Moreover, the expected revenues are vital information as it enables individuals to set a budget without using subjective expectations about the value of the investment (Heath 1995).

Table 1 Results of Statistical Analysis

Item	Whole sample	Women	Men	Students	Employees
n	188	127	61	164	24
Mean	0.840	0.630	1.280	0.683	1.920
Std. error mean	0.078	0.084	0.154	0.074	0.255
Median	0.000	0.000	1.000	0.000	2.500
Standard deviation	1.070	0.940	1.200	0.950	1.250
Variance	1.150	0.890	1.440	0.910	1.560
Minimum	0	0	0	0	0
Maximum	3	3	3	3	3
Skewness	0.953	1.390	0.275	1.190	−0.562
Std. error skewness	0.177	0.215	0.306	0.190	0.472
Kurtosis	−0.489	0.822	−1.480	0.265	−1.420
Std. error kurtosis	0.353	0.427	0.604	0.377	0.918

Table 2 Chi-Square Statistics for Sunk Cost Task by Gender

Sunk cost task	Women		Men		$\chi^2(1)$
	n	%	*n*	%	
Incorrect answer	62	32.98	29	15.43	0.027
Correct answer	65	34.57	32	17.02	

NOTES $p = 0.870$.

The participants had to decide whether they would continue with this investment. The correct solution was to continue with the project (since the projected revenues surpassed the projected costs) and disregard the sunk costs. The use of calculators was not allowed as only a very simple calculation was needed (adding/subtracting digits up to 10). Upon completion, they were given a 3-item cognitive reflection test (Frederick 2005), which was translated into Slovene using forward/backward translation. Although some have questioned the reliability of the test on adolescents, as it could be too difficult (Primi et al. 2016), we deemed it would be appropriate given that all participants were at least 18 years old at the time of taking the test. Lastly, we collected demographic data.

Results

Firstly, we inspected for any differences in the sample, where we found no differences between participants in reaching the correct decision. Employees did not perform any better than students ($\chi^2(1, n = 188) = 1.086$, $p = 0.297$). Additionally, we also found no difference with respect to gen-

Table 3 Chi-Square Statistics for Sunk Cost Task by Participants

Sunk cost task	Students		Employees		$\chi^2(1)$
	n	%	*n*	%	
Incorrect answer	77	40.96	14	7.45	1.086
Correct answer	87	46.28	10	5.32	

NOTES $p = 0.297$.

Table 4 Chi-Square Statistics Split by CRT Score

Sunk cost task	CRT_Score				$\chi^2(3)$
	0	1	2	3	
Incorrect answer	51	16	12	12	1.463
Correct answer	50	24	11	12	

NOTES $p = 0.691$.

Table 5 Chi-Square Statistics for Participants with Different Levels of Cognitive Reflection

Item	Incorrect answer	Correct answer	$\chi^2(1)$	*p*
High_analytical	12	12	0.028	0.867
Rest	79	85		
Low_analytical	51	50	0.382	0.537
Rest	40	47		
Mid_analytical	28	35	0.595	0.441
Rest	63	62		

der ($\chi^2(1, n = 188) = 0.027, p = 0.870$). To test our assumption that more analytical individuals would more often reach normatively correct solutions (would not honour sunk costs), we started by calculating the participants' CRT score. In line with other reports (Campitelli and Labollita 2010; Frederick 2005), 46.3 % of the participants correctly solved at least one problem. The average number of correct answers was 0.84 (SD = 1.073), with 21.3 % solving one problem correctly, 12.2 % solving two problems correctly and 12.8 % solving all three problems correctly. We did find some differences in how well the two groups scored on the test; employees performed better, correctly solving 1.92 tasks (students 0.68), which was statistically significant ($\chi^2(3, n = 188) = 35.694, p = 0.000$). We applied a Chi-Square test (where we separated individuals based on number of points on the test), which rejected our hypothesis. We found that CRT is not related to the escalation of a commitment in the presence of sunk

costs, ($\chi^2(3, n = 188) = 1.463, p = 0.691$). To confirm the results, we made a distinction proposed by Frederick (2005) on highly analytical participants (who solved all 3 problems correctly), medium (those who solved 1 or 2 problems correctly) and low analytical participants (who did not solve any problem correctly). Dividing the participants in this way (by separating the extremes) corroborated our initial results. For highly analytical participants, we obtained ($\chi^2(1, n = 188) = 0.028, p = 0.867$), for low analytical ones ($\chi^2(1, n = 188) = 0.382, p = 0.537$), and for participants classified as medium analytical ($\chi^2(1, n = 188) = 0.595, p = 0.441$).

General Discussion

We wanted to inspect whether the disposition towards analytical thinking can explain the results on a monetary sunk cost task in a group of individuals acquainted with standard economic theory. With respect to sunk cost fallacy being related to the age of participants, our result is contrary to other studies, where older participants were less likely to continue with the commitment to a failing plan (Bruine de Bruin, Strough, and Parker 2014; Eberhardt, Bruine de Bruin, and Strough 2019; Karns 2012). Our results did not find a connection between reaching normatively correct decisions and a CRT score, implying that analytical thinking is neither the main nor only factor preventing the sunk cost effect. These results are in line with some previous research, which shows that the sunk cost fallacy is not related to measures of executive function processes (Del Missier, Mäntylä, and Bruine De Bruin 2012). Our findings are unlike those of Ronayne and colleagues (2021); however, this could be due to a difference in the task used. The propensity for analytical thinking might be a good predictor when sunk cost is in the form of effort expended, where it would be sufficient for an individual to pause and consider the expenditure of effort so far vis-à-vis alternatives before continuing. However, in the case of money spent, reflection (switching to analytical thinking) alone might not be sufficient, even when the task is clearly from a domain the participants are familiar with and they should apply knowledge-based decision making. It is likelier that the interplay of several factors determines whether an individual will behave normatively correctly on such tasks. In our sample, even though the participants would have learned about sunk costs before, we cannot rule out the lack of appropriate mindware. Individuals first need to recognize the task and then apply the necessary knowledge, implying a certain level of the inhibition of impulse. As CRT is a measure of inhibition, we only controlled at the level when

an individual already needs to apply knowledge, whereas we did not control for how the participants interpreted the task. Although instructions pointed out that the assignment had a correct answer, we did not emphasize that it should be solved based on the knowledge they had received in class or during schooling, to keep it in line with decision making in reality. It might be that participants interpreted the assignment as if we were asking for their preference and they had not applied the necessary knowledge in the first place. Although the materials were pilot tested and we did not receive any ambiguity regarding the interpretation of the questions, such an explanation cannot be ruled out. In the cases where participants did not have much practical experience treating (monetary) sunk cost, a problem of task recognition might arise, which results in the application of the wrong decision rules, indicating that the use of knowledge in less experienced individuals needs to be prompted by the environment to prevent the sunk cost fallacy.

Furthermore, some researchers suggest that either general or statistical numeracy has greater predictive power in superior decision making than CRT (Cokely et al. 2018; Sobkow, Olszewska, and Traczyk 2020). Although we collected the average grade in mathematics class, we did not control specifically for this type of numeracy, which is a limiting factor in our research.

Certain design features also limit the ecological validity. Firstly, in reality sunk costs would normally be known to a decision maker and not necessarily explicitly stated in the analysis. By explicitly stating sunk costs, the saliency of this information might override the application of relevant knowledge. Secondly, although the use of hypothetical scenarios is common in such settings, it might be problematic. The stakes are clearly not real, which might reduce the motivation that would be present in a real world setting. Participants need to position themselves in the role of a CEO; moreover, the amounts of money (millions) can be too abstract. However, making the assignment more familiar (e.g. by using a smaller amount, investment in common items) can also be problematic, as it might be unduly influenced by recent experiences.

The biggest hurdle to the generalizability of our results is the sample size and composition. Although students are commonly used and they were supplemented with participants who work in the field of finance, our sample was relatively young and perhaps lacking some experience. To counterbalance this, the sample would need to include older individuals with more work experience in the field of finance. The task also required

a moderate cognitive effort, meaning participants needed to be motivated to engage in solving it, though we do not deem this as particularly problematic, as participation was voluntary and they could withdraw at any point.

Although the area of the escalation of commitment received significant interest, it might be prudent to inspect the effect by using new instruments that would provide a slightly different view and contribute to a better understanding of the phenomena.

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Appendix

Assume you are a director of a company 'Innovation Ltd.' Your company embarked on a new R&D project – a VR headset which would enable an improved experience of several popular computer games. However, at this point in time one of your competitors announced a launch of their own VR headset, which has better characteristics than yours and is cheaper.

The project is two years underway and your team informed you they would need another three years to complete it. Due to aging of technology, your team believes the bulk of the sales revenues would occur in five years after introduction, should you decide to continue with the project. Your marketing and development team provided you with the following data:

Costs incurred to date: 7 million EUR.

Costs/sales	Years				
	1	2	3	4	5
Expected future costs	3	2	2		
Expected sales	1	3	3	2	1

Note. In million EUR.

Cognitive reflection test (CRT):

1. A bat and a ball cost $1.10 in total. The bat costs $1.00 more than the ball. How much does the ball cost? ____ cents
2. If it takes 5 machines 5 minutes to make 5 widgets, how long would it take 100 machines to make 100 widgets? ____ minutes
3. In a lake, there is a patch of lily pads. Every day, the patch doubles in size. If it takes 48 days for the patch to cover the entire lake, how long would it take for the patch to cover half of the lake? ____ days

Anthropos 56 (1): 227–236 | ISSN 0587-5161 | E-ISSN 2630-4082

Baudrillard, Ballard, Virilio: potencial integralne nesreče v dobi simulacije

Branko Žličar
Alma Mater Europaea, Slovenija
branko_zlicar@yahoo.com

Povzetek. Namen pričujočega članka je interpretacija nekaterih vidikov Baudrillardove teorije simulacije in simulakra s pomočjo Ballardovega romana *Trk* ter Viriliovega pojmovanja integralne nesreče. Baudrillard in Virilio vsak na svoj način analizirata sodobno družbo simulacije in simulakrov, ki z novimi tehnološkimi zmožnostmi v temelju spreminja človekov ontološki položaj v svetu. Ballardov roman *Trk* je eno redkih del, ki jih Baudrillard v svojem delu (1999) citira, pri čemer ga opredeljuje kot roman, značilen za dobo simulacije. Baudrillardovo teorijo simulakra in simulacije opredeljuje vtis temeljne brezizhodnosti, ki je posledica implozije smisla, brisanja mej med resničnim in lažnim, ukinitve same zmožnosti zunanje reference ter konca pozicije (kritičnega) subjekta. Medtem ko ima pojem integralne nesreče pri Viriliu apokaliptične podtone, Baudrillardov ekvivalent pa najdemo v koncepciji implozije sistema/smisla, se obravnava osredotoča na odkrivanje morebitnih pozitivnih oz. »emancipatornih« zasnov, ki jih lahko najdemo pri branju obeh avtorjev. K temu dodajamo še Ballardov roman *Trk* kot tretji element, ki raziskuje kompleksnost odnosa med človekom in njegovimi tehnološkimi dosežki. V tem okviru članek poskuša odgovoriti na vprašanje, ali obstaja pot izven simuliranega labirinta hiperrealnosti, ki bi lahko bila začrtana v sami zasnovi Baudrillardove misli.

Ključne besede: trk, integralna nesreča, simulacija, simulaker

Baudrillard, Ballard, Virilio: The Potential of the Integral Accident in the Era of Simulation

Abstract. The purpose of this article is to interpret some aspects of Baudrillard's theory of simulation and simulacra through Ballard's novel *Crash* and Virilio's notion of the integral accident. Baudrillard and Virilio each, in their own way, analyse the contemporary society of simulation and simulacra, which is fundamentally changing man's ontological position in the world through new technological capabilities. Ballard's novel *Crash* is one of few books that Baudrillard cites in his

https://doi.org/10.26493/2630-4082.56.227-236

work, defining it as a novel characteristic of the age of simulation (Baudrillard 1999). Baudrillard's theory of simulacra and simulation is defined by the impression of a fundamental hopelessness, resulting from the implosion of meaning, the blurring of the boundaries between the real and the false, the abolition of the very possibility of external reference, and the end of the position of the (critical) subject. While Virilio's notion of integral accident has apocalyptic overtones and Baudrillard's equivalent is found in the concept of the implosion of the system/meaning, the focus of this paper is on discovering the possible positive or 'emancipatory' conceptions that can be found in the reading of both authors. To this we add Ballard's novel *Crash* as a third element, which explores the complexity of the relationship between man and his technological achievements. In this context, the article attempts to answer the question of whether there is a way out of the simulated labyrinth of hyperreality that might be outlined in the very conception of Baudrillard's thought.

Key Words: crash, integral accident, simulation, simulacra

Uvod

Članek skozi obravnavo izbranih delov Baudrillardove teorije simulakra in simulacije, Viriliovega pojma integralna nesreča ter Ballardovega romana *Trk* išče povezavo med tremi avtorji, ki bi lahko odprla pot do alternativnih interpretacij Baudrillardove misli. Besedilo se začenja z obravnavo Viriliovega pojma integralne nesreče, nadaljuje z obravnavo Ballardovega romana *Trk,* zaključuje pa z sklepnim poglavjem, ki predstavljeno zasnovo poveže in postavi v okvir Baudrillardove teorije simulacije ter simulakra. Tri avtorje združuje skupni horizont, v katerem se pojavlja tematizacija pojma nesreča/nezgoda, ki se na eni strani nanaša na človekovo problematično umestitev v družbo, zaznamovano z razvojem informacijske tehnologije, na drugi strani pa na nesrečo kot napako v sistemu. Nesreča ima tu pomen nepredvidene napake, ki prekine ustaljeno delovanje sistema: gospodarske krize, virusne pandemije, terorističnega napada, računalniških virusov itd.

V pričujočem uvodu na kratko pojasnimo izbiro naslova. »Doba simulacije« označuje četrto stopnjo podobe v Baudrillardovi kategorizaciji, ki ponazarja postopno brisanje meja med realnostjo in podobo oz. modelom, simulakrom. Podoba kot odblesk globoke realnosti, podoba, ki maskira in ponareja naravo globoke realnosti, podoba, ki maskira odsotnost globoke realnosti, ter podoba, ki nima zveze s katero koli realnostjo, je svoj lastni čisti simulaker (Baudrillard 1999, 15). Po Baudrillardu se nahajamo v četrtem stadiju podobe, v katerem podoba ni več reprezentacija

v smislu relacije z izvirnikom, temveč neodvisen, simuliran model realnosti, hiperrealnost. Temeljna zagata dobe simulacije je v tem, da ni več nobenega kriterija, ki bi omogočal razlikovanje med resničnim in lažnim, teritorijem in zemljevidom, originalom in kopijami. Posledično pride do »implozije smisla«, ki onemogoči klasično pozicijo subjekt – objekt ter izniči vsakršno možnost kritične distance. Doba simulacije ni smiselna, racionalna, prav tako ne absurdna ali iracionalna: proces simulacije deluje tako, da proizvaja vse možne naracije na ravni medsebojno zamenljivih znakov.

»Potencial nesreče« se nanaša na pozitivno pojmovanje nesreče/akcidence v sistemu hiperrealnosti, ki »zmoti« delovanje procesa simulacije, s tem pa odpira možnosti za nove konceptualne zastavitve. Realno kot drugo simulakra v Baudrillardovem delu ne izgine, ampak na paradoksalen način vztraja kot nedefinirani preostanek. Baudrillard v svojem delu mestoma na sublimen način pokaže točke, s katerih bi lahko zarisali prihodnje strategije upora proti sistemu simulakrov: ena strategija je, denimo, v izzivu kritične teorije, da najde nove načine pisanja. Članek v tem okviru obravnava različne pomene nesreče pri Baudrillardu, Viriliu in Ballardu.

Virilio: integralna nesreča

Virilio »integralno nesrečo« definira kot tisto, kar je inherentno vsakršni ideji tehnološkega napredka. V tem smislu ima tehnološki razvoj vselej že svojo hrbtno, negativno plat. V delu *Izvirna nesreča* Virilio (2007, 10) zapiše: »Izum ladje ali parnika hkrati pomeni izum brodoloma. Izum vlaka pomeni izum železniške nesreče ali iztirjenja. Izum družinskega avtomobila obenem prinaša verižno trčenje na avtocesti.« Integralnost nesreče razumemo v dveh pomenih: nesreča je inherentna vsakemu tehnološkemu dosežku, na drugi strani pa jo zaznamuje paradigmatska sprememba v sami percepciji nesreč, ki jih v dobi visokorazvite informacijske družbe lahko spremljamo na daljavo. V tem smislu nesreče niso več lokalizirane (vezane na specifičen čas in prostor), temveč so univerzalno dostopne v neposrednem medijskem prenašanju (večje število ljudi, ki spremlja televizijski prenos iste nesreče ali istega dogodka). V času hipnega prenosa informacij in medijske pokritosti dogodkov se zdi, da se je svet »skrčil«, postal manjši, s tem pa tudi klavstrofobičnejši. Pri Viriliu je ključnega pomena nesreča oz. nezgoda, ki jo prinaša tehnologija komunikacije na daljavo, ki hitrost prižene do skrajne točke takojšnjega prenosa, pri čemer gre za postopno zmanjšanje oz. ukinitev tako časovne kot prostorske razdalje med odhodom in prihodom, začetkom in koncem

v različnih družbenih kontekstih. S tem pride do nesreče/nezgode v sami temporalni strukturi. Virilio v delu Informacijska bomba (2000) predstavi tezo, da je katastrofi atomske bombe sledila nič manj katastrofalna informacijska bomba, ki jo je omogočil napredek informacijske tehnologije. Apokaliptični ton je med drugim treba postaviti v kontekst časa, v katerem je knjiga bila izdana: leta 2000, torej na prelomu tisočletja.

Pri Viriliu v kategorijo človeško ustvarjenih oz. »izumljenih« nesreč, ki se ločijo od naravnih katastrof, spadajo tudi vojni konflikti, gospodarske krize in dogodki, kot je nedavna pandemija virusa covid-19. Na drugi strani Virilio piše tudi o »nesreči vseh nesreč«, s tem pa odpira horizont apokaliptičnega mišljenja. Pri tem ni povsem jasno, kaj natančno je ta ultimativna nesreča, nezgoda vseh nezgod, pri čemer obstaja več možnosti: nesreča kot dokončna prevlada virtualnega nad fizičnim, popolna inercija (pasivnost), gospodarski zlom virtualnih trgov večjih razsežnosti. V kontekstu nesreč/nezgod/katastrof Baudrillard posebno pozornost posveča terorističnim napadom, ki jim posveti knjigo z naslovom Duh terorizma (2003). V delu *Hitrost osvoboditve* Virilio (1996, 28) zapiše:

> Če je, kot trdi Epikur, čas akcidenca akcidenc, tedaj s tehnologijami splošne interaktivnosti vstopamo v dobo *nezgode sedanjika*, saj slovita teleprisotnost na daljavo ni nič drugega kot nenadna katastrofa realnosti tega sedanjega trenutka, ki je naš edini vstop v trajanje. Od Einsteina naprej pa vsakdo ve, da je prav tako tudi naš vstop v razsežnost realnega sveta. Odslej se realni čas telekomunikacij ne nanaša več zgolj na zamaknjeni čas, temveč na neko drugo kronologijo.

Ena ključnih razlik med obema mislecema je v tem, da Virilio v svojih obravnavah privzema klasično opozicijo med fizično neposrednostjo in abstraktnostjo simulakrov, pri čemer favorizira vse, kar spada v prvo kategorijo. V tem okviru podoba nadomesti materijo, neposredno izkušnjo. Baudrillard je v svojem delu precej radikalnejši, saj hiperrealnost ne nadomešča tradicionalno pojmovane realnosti, ampak jo v procesu simulacije izniči s tem, da jo producira in reproducira z modeli realnosti. Če že govorimo o apokalipsi, se je pri Baudrillardu ta že zgodila z implozijo smisla. V delu Izven zaslona[1] Baudrillard (2002, 110) v citiranem odlomku neposredno naslavlja Virilia:

[1] V angleškem prevodu se naslov glasi *Screened Out,* kar lahko prevajamo na različne načine, izzasloniti, raztegniti zaslon, biti izključen iz zaslona, pri čemer vsaka variacija implicira specifične pomene. Pri tem se pojavljajo številna vprašanja, kot je denimo naslednje: kdo je tisti, ki je izrinjen iz »zaslona«? Je to morda subjekt?

> Sanjati o končni nesreči pomeni podleči iluziji konca. To pomeni pozabiti, da je virtualnost sama virtualna in da po definiciji njen dokončni prihod, njena apokalipsa, ne more prevzeti moči realnosti. Apokalipse virtualnega in realnega časa ne bo ravno zato, ker realni čas ukinja linearni čas in trajanje, s tem pa tudi razsežnost, v kateri bi se lahko razvila do svojih skrajnih meja. Ni nobene linearno-eksponentne funkcije Nesreče, prav tako ni nobene tovrstne funkcije za nič drugega. Možnost udejanjenja ostaja stvar naključja. Radikalni prelom z realnim, ki ga povzroča virtualno, zaton ali kolaps časa, ki ga prinaša realni čas, nas varuje pred končno eksterminacijo. Virtualni sistem, kot vsak drug, je pogubljen s tem, ko s širitvijo uničuje lastne pogoje obstoja.

Ballard: trk

James Graham Ballard v romanu *Trk* iz leta 1973, ki ga v *Simulakru in simulaciji* obravnava tudi Baudrillard, raziskuje tematiko človeške umeščenosti v sodobno družbo, spolnosti in nasilja. Trk se na eni strani nanaša na dobesedni trk v smislu avtomobilskih nesreč, na drugi pa na problematično srečanje med človekom in tehnologijo, ki odpira kompleksna razmerja med spolnostjo, nasiljem, življenjem in smrtjo. Po romanu je bil leta 1996 posnet istoimenski film v režiji Davida Cronenberga. *Trk* lahko v skladu z opisom avtorja razumemo kot »tehnološko pornografijo«, v kolikor večji del romana zavzemajo podrobni opisi seksualnih aktov v avtomobilih, ki se osredotočajo na možnost seksualnega vzburjenja ob katastrofalnih dogodkih, kot so avtomobilske nesreče, vendar zgodba z naslavljanjem eksistencialne problematike tematsko presega klasične okvire pornografske literature. Oglejmo si opis doživljanja avtomobilskih nesreč enega izmed likov v romanu (Ballard 1997, 10):

> Pri Vaughanu je vsak razbiti avto sprožil drhtavico vznemirjenja, tako je bilo z zapletenimi geometrijami vdrtega odbijača, z nepričakovanimi različicami zmečkanih hladilniških reber, z groteskním previsom instrumentne plošče, ki jo je potisnilo proti voznikovemu koraku kot v nekakšnem kalibriranem dejanju strojne felacije. Intimni čas in prostor enega samega človeka je za vselej okamenel v tej pajčevini kromiranih nožev in razpokanega stekla.

Avtomobilska nesreča tu deluje kot vpis v realnost, ki omogoča vznik subjekta v prostoru in času nesreče. Subjekt se paradoksalno vzpostavlja šele s tem, da v nesreči umre ali pa je vsaj življenjsko ogrožen. Obenem

gre za proces individualizacije v smislu izhoda iz anonimnosti: en sam človek, ki »okameni« v nasilnem trčenju med organskim telesom in materijo, pri čemer trčenje pridobi naboj spolnosti. Avtomobilske nesreče nimajo nobenega moralnega predznaka: Ballard vseskozi poudarja, da so nesreče same po sebi nesmiselne, absurdne. Problem Vaughanove morbidne obsedenosti je v tem, da avtomobilske nesreče išče, jih vnaprej načrtuje, s tem pa ravno izključuje kvaliteto naključnosti, akcidence, organskosti. Nesreča je po definiciji dogodek, ki ga ni mogoče predvideti: je anomalija, odklon od vsakdanje racionalnosti načrtovanja. Baudrillard (1999, 141) o *Trku* zapiše naslednje:

> V *Crashu* ni več fikcije niti realnosti, hiperrealnost ukine obe. Celo ni več možne kritične regresije. Ta mutirani in spremenjeni svet simulacije in smrti, ta nasilno seksualni svet, a brez želje, poln posiljenih in nasilnih, a kot nevtraliziranih teles, ta kovinski in intenzivno pločevinasti svet, a brez čutnosti, hipertehničen, brez finalnosti – je dober ali slab? Tega ne bomo nikoli vedeli. Preprosto fascinanten je, ne da bi ta fascinacija implicirala vrednostno sodbo. V tem je čudež *Crasha*.

Seksualnost je tu izpraznjena vseh afektov: ni želje, zadovoljitve, izpolnjenosti, prav tako ni nobene možnosti vzpostavitve intimnega odnosa dveh subjektov. Chaudhuri kot prevladujoče občutje tako v romanu kot filmu vidi žalovanje v obliki melanholije. Protagonisti romana s prometnimi nesrečami vedno znova poskušajo vzpostaviti željo, ki funkcionira kot izgubljeni objekt. Vsakič znova je treba doživeti intenzivnost trka, ki udeležence vsaj trenutno zavaruje pred apatijo, praznino (Chaudhuri 2001, 64). V zvezi s tem Baudrillard (1999) izpostavlja opise genitalij in seksualnih aktov v izključno tehničnem ter sterilnem jeziku

Kljub Ballardovemu namenu, da bi *Trk* razumeli kot »prvi tehnološki pornografski roman«, se pri branju zdi, da v celotnem besedilu ni nobene pornografske vsebine (Ballard 1997, 211). V seksualnih aktih ni nobene zapeljivosti, erotike, prav tako ni namigov o možnosti zadovoljitve. Protagonisti hitijo od ene nesreče k drugi, dokler ne prispejo do tiste, ki se konča s smrtnim izidom. Njihovo delovanje bi pri tem lahko med drugim razumeli v smislu Bataillovega pojmovanja ekonomike presežnosti in trošenja, ki se zoperstavlja načelom racionalnosti (Cord 2017). Tu je treba poudariti, da ima fascinacija pri Baudrillardu poseben pomen: gre za »hladno« fascinacijo znakov nad znaki, ki ne predpostavlja nobene vrednostne sodbe ali potenciala za vzpostavitev relacije med subjektom

in objektom. Vsakršna realnost je produkt simulacije, ki je vseobsegajoča

Day v članku o Baudrillardovem branju *Trka* izpostavlja pomen Vaughanovega spodletelega poskusa, da bi povzročil samomorilsko prometno nesrečo, v kateri bi umrla filmska igralka Elizabeth Taylor. Day (2000) ta moment v romanu bere kot realno, ki se upira oz. zoperstavlja simulaciji hiperrealnega. Dejstvo, da je ta spodleteli poskus postavljen na sam začetek romana, lahko beremo kot »napako« v sistemu simulakrov. V tem smislu gre za interpretacijo, ki se zoperstavlja Baudrillardovi. V zvezi s tem lahko izpostavimo ironičen podton romana, ki se nahaja v dejstvu, da prometne nesreče kot take v sodobni družbi, prepredeni s prometno infrastrukturo in cestnim omrežjem, izgubijo naboj fascinantnega, šokantnega spektakla. Reducirane so na raven vsakdanje statistike v rubrikah črne kronike. Če si protagonisti romana prizadevajo z načrtnimi nesrečami kogar koli šokirati, jim v tem prav gotovo spodleti. Nesreče so že inkorporirane v sistem, kar pomeni, da ga ne morejo ogroziti. Če izhajamo iz marksističnega mišljenja, kapitalistični sistem že vsebuje »semena« lastnega uničenja, ali v Viriliovem kontekstu: v sebi kot negativnost že nosi integralno nesrečo. Ponavljajoče se gospodarske krize v tem smislu niso izjema, ampak so lastne notranjemu delovanju kapitalističnega sistema. Eden od osrednjih likov romana, ki pomenljivo nosi ime avtorja, opisuje svojo prvo izkušnjo udeleženosti v prometni nesreči, pri čemer dogodek nosi težo iniciacijskega obreda, paradigmatskega preloma v njegovem osebnem življenju (Ballard 1997, 34):

> Po puhlosti vsakdanjega življenja in njihovih pridušenih dramah je bila vsa moja organska sposobnost za spopad s telesnimi poškodbami že davno otopela ali pozabljena. Trčenje je bila edina resnična izkušnja, ki sem jo doživel po dolgih letih. Prvikrat sem se fizično soočil z lastnim telesom, z neizčrpno enciklopedijo bolečin in izločkov, s sovražnim pogledom drugih ljudi in z dejstvom mrtvega človeka. Ker so me nenehno bombardirali s propagando o prometni varnosti, mi je bilo skoraj v olajšanje, da sem se zapletel v resnično nesrečo.

Nesreča fascinira predvsem zaradi fizične realnosti trka, ki »aktivira« telo s tem, da ga odpre intenziteti bolečine, odprtih ran, adrenalina. Cord izpostavlja, da lahko ta moment v romanu med drugim razumemo s pomočjo konceptov »želečih strojev« in »teles brez organov«, ki sta jih v njunem skupnem delu razvila Deleuze in Guattari. Avtomobilske nesreče v tem okviru odpirajo možnosti nove produkcije želje, ki ni negativno za-

znamovana z mankom ali s kompenzacijo, ampak s pozitivno produkcijo novih oblik »železih strojev«, ki so produkt srečanja organske in neorganske materije (Cord 2017).

V svetu simulakrov kot generiranih modelov realnosti so merila za »resnično izkušnjo« prignana do skrajnosti: občutek resničnosti je tu pogojen s kontekstom smrtne nevarnosti, v katerem se odvijajo prometne nesreče. Če se želimo prebiti iz sistema simulacije, je treba zastaviti življenje. Zadnji del odlomka implicira pomen avtomobilske nesreče kot strategije upora proti sistemu, ki seže onkraj individualnega okvira (samouresničitev v spolnem užitku, nasilju, destrukciji). Protagonist romana najde olajšanje v tem, da z udeleženostjo v prometnih nesrečah na nek način kritično naslavlja »propagando o prometni varnosti«. Tu se lahko ozremo v morebitno prihodnost samovozečih oz. »avtonomnih« avtomobilov, ki vozijo na podlagi kombinacije senzorjev, radarjev, kamer in umetne inteligence. Eden izmed glavnih ciljev avtonomnih avtomobilov je zmanjšanje števila prometnih nesreč. Eden izmed argumentov je v tem, da je za veliko večino avtomobilskih nesreč odgovoren »človeški dejavnik«, ki ga je posledično treba zmanjšati oz. regulirati. Hiperrealni svet simulakrov temelji na modelih, ki različne vidike življenja poskušajo urejati po vnaprej določenih »scenarijih« oz. predvidevanjih: sem spada tudi organizacija prometne infrastrukture in optimizacija omrežij, katere končni cilj je eliminacija nesreč kot nepredvidljivih, nezaželenih »napak« v sistemu. Cord (2017, 18–19) v tem kontekstu predlaga tezo, po kateri ekstremno obnašanje protagonistov romana lahko razumemo kot obliko radikalnega odpora oz. katastrofično strategijo ali strategijo katastrofe.

Baudrillard: realno kot nesreča hiperrealnosti

Kljub splošnemu vtisu fatalizma in brezizhodnosti ob natančnejšem branju pri Baudrillardu najdemo številne točke, ki odpirajo možnosti za mišljenje odpora proti sistemu simulacije in simulakrov. Namig, ki podpira mišljenje v tej smeri, najdemo v sami zasnovi Baudrillardovega pojmovanja hiperrealnosti. Baudrillard ves čas govori o »izgubi realnosti«, s tem pa privzema prav tisto nostalgično držo, ki jo sicer kritizira. Doba simulacije z logičnega vidika ne bi smela dopuščati nobenega »prej« ali »potem«, ki bi funkcioniral kot »drugo« simulakra, saj smo vselej že v sistemu simulakrov, ki ne dopušča nobene zunanje pozicije. Če tovrstna zunanja pozicija ni mogoča, potem Baudrillard sploh ne bi mogel pisati o hiperrealnosti oz. privzeti kritične drže v pomenu filozofske teorije. To velja tudi v primeru, če pristanemo na možnost, da Baudrillard piše »zgolj«

na deskriptivni ravni. Vsak opis že nujno predpostavlja kritično držo. K temu dodajmo, da Baudillard z referencami na »patafiziko« in občasnimi namigi, da bi bilo treba izumiti nov način pisanja, še zdaleč ne zapade v apatičnost ali fatalizem, ki ne bi dopuščal možnosti odpora proti sistemu simulakrov. Številne kritike, ki Baudrillarda označujejo za nihilista, so površinske ali enodimenzionalne. V zvezi s tem Merrin (2001, 88) trdi, da nihilizem, ki ga opisuje Baudrillard, ni *njegov* nihilizem, temveč nihilizem same podobe in procesa simulacije. Realno kot »drugo« simulakra v Baudrillardovem delu ostaja nedefinirano, kar ni nujno pomanjkljivost njegove misli: lahko jo razumemo kot odprtost za nove interpretativne možnosti. Ena izmed možnosti je branje Baudrillarda s pomočjo Derridajevega pojma, ki je v angleškem prevodu zapisan kot *hauntology,* nanaša pa se na spektralno prisotnost nečesa, kar preganja, tudi straši (Derrida 2006).[2] Realno je v hiperrealnosti prisotno na način spektralne prezence. V jedru procesa simulacije realno vztraja kot nesreča, »negativni« element, ki se ga ni možno znebiti z modeliranjem hiperrealnosti. Pri tem je v ospredju predvsem pomen nesreče kot akcidence: je tisto, česar ni moč v celoti predvideti, napovedati, nadzorovati. Na abstraktni ravni lahko pojmovanje nesreče apliciramo tudi na Baudrillardovo teorijo simulacije in simulakra, pri čemer realno v hiperrealnosti dobi značaj akcidence oz. nepredvidenega elementa. Na tem mestu je treba izpostaviti pomen situacionističnega gibanja in Deborda, ki je s svojim konceptom spektakla pomembno vplival na Baudrillardovo misel (Debord 1999). Emancipatorni zastavek situacionistične misli je predvsem v tem, da je realnost, ki bi se zoperstavila spektaklom, treba šele izumiti. Simulacija ne more povsem uspešno ustvariti ali reproducirati realnosti, ne da bi se v tem procesu nekaj izgubilo. Če v sklepnem delu ostanemo v horizontu romana *Trk:* sodobni človek se na različne načine zapleta v nesreče, pri čemer gre za trčenje z realnim. Prav tu lahko iščemo možnosti nove subjektivitete, ki se odpira na mejah hiperrealnosti.

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[2] V angleškem prevodu *hauntology* gre za združitev besed *haunting* (preganjanje, strašenje) in *ontology* (ontologija). V slovenščini ni ustreznega prevoda, ki bi ohranil Derridajev pomen sintagme, zato v članku navajam angleški prevod.

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Anthropos 56 (1): 237–239 | ISSN 0587-5161 | E-ISSN 2630-4082

In memoriam

Milestones in Nenad Miščević's Philosophical Career (1950–2024)

Janez Bregant
University of Maribor, Slovenia
janez.bregant@um.si

Zagreb, 1965. Nenad's high school philosophy professor, as he himself recalled, always wore a spotlessly bright suit and a bow tie. He had a habit of addressing his pupils in a formal manner, which made a great impression on Nenad, who interpreted this as an ironic equality between teacher and pupils. The professor hosted the Marxist Circle, which Nenad, a self-proclaimed 'nerd,' joined in his first school year. Nenad adored writing papers and the Circle was a good opportunity for him to speak publicly, something he also enjoyed. For his first performance Nenad chose one of the Stalinist Informbiro books, which he thought would fit well with the nature of the Circle. After the presentation of the paper, the professor called Nenad aside to tell him that he had not been very lucky in his choice of topic: evidently, Nenad did not have the faintest idea what he was talking about in his presentation.

His mother was a professor of English and Russian, so to spite her, Nenad wanted to do science. Nevertheless, he asked the professor what this philosophy was that he was lecturing on. Even though the professor considered the fifteen-year-old Nenad too young for it, he suggested that he read Bertrand Russell's *History of Western Philosophy.* After reading the first hundred pages, the thick, brown book took him by surprise and changed his view on what he wanted to do with his life. As a high school graduate, Nenad became the youngest member of the Croatian Philosophical Society. 'Life was nice,' as he recalled.

Paris, 1978. Disillusioned with postmodernist philosophy, Nenad, in search of something else, accidentally discovered the Philosophy of Language seminar on Wittgenstein done in a somewhat analytical way. He soon came across the works of Quine, which he did not understand because of his continental philosophical upbringing. Everything changed

https://doi.org/10.26493/2630-4082.56.237-239

when Nenad began to read Austin, whose style made a great impression on him. Proving that something does not make sense does not necessarily mean hiding behind metaphors, literary theory, and erudition. A disagreement can also be expressed by means of arguments: with them we say openly what we think and do not seek to hide. Nenad thereby found out that philosophy can also be done in a different way from the continental one, i.e. in the analytical way. He received the advice that it would be good to start learning analytic philosophy by reading Dummett's book on Frege, the book that was very much in fashion in analytic philosophy back then.

Despairing of the postmodernist scene, Nenad abandoned his PhD in Paris, even though it was already finished, and began to work on a new one in Ljubljana under the analytical supervision of Frane Jerman. Here he finally obtained his PhD in philosophy and broke new ground in Slovenia concerning the philosophy of mind, philosophy of psychology, cognitive theory, and political philosophy.

Maribor, 1993. The first generation of philosophy students at the University of Maribor eagerly awaited their first lecture. Nenad entered the lecture hall, huge, alive, curious, a giant in every sense of the word. The embodiment of the students' idea of a philosopher, a Socrates of our time with an extraordinary talent for languages. An animator, an endless developer of ideas, a passionate debater, and an engaged public intellectual. One of the pioneers of analytical philosophy in Slovenia and, paradoxical as it may sound, one of the most influential ones, who always treated students as equal commentators. Nenad was able to explain philosophical problems, no matter how complex, in a simple way that everyone could understand. He was a versatile philosopher, which is rare nowadays. There was hardly a philosophical problem that did not attract Nenad's attention and hardly a philosophical debate to which he did not contribute original insights. Philosophy, which is regarded as an abstract discipline that explores complex questions about the world and society, sounded easy coming from his lips.

Philosophical thinking is generally believed to have few practical implications, but Nenad was proof to the contrary. Following the geographical and political changes in the former Yugoslavia, he engaged in public debates on human rights, civil liberties, democracy, nationalism, patriotism, etc. from the very beginning and significantly enriched the debates with his extensive interdisciplinary knowledge and incisive analytical mind.

Nenad's regular columns in the Rijeka newspaper called *Novi list,* his public appearances at round tables and his interviews, which are still today a model for clear, honest and reasoned public dialogue on the complex issues of coexistence, are, among other things, an invaluable contribution to the popularisation of philosophy. Nenad dismissed the myth that analytic philosophers were not politically and socially engaged critical intellectuals and always put the search for truth at the forefront. He was truly a Renaissance figure and the embodiment of philosophical eros. To meet Nenad was to be permanently influenced, and to be his friend was a privilege.

He will be greatly missed!

Anthropos 56 (1): 241–244 | ISSN 0587-5161 | E-ISSN 2630-4082

Recenzija

Vita Poštuvan in Mojca Čerče (ur.), *Psiholog v dilemi: etične vsebine in etična zavest v praksi*

Samanta Hervol
Univerza na Primorskem, Slovenija
hervol.samanta@gmail.com

Lucia Rojs
Univerza na Primorskem, Slovenija
lucia.rojs@iam.upr.si

Psiholog se tekom svoje kariere skorajda neizogibno sreča z različnimi etično občutljivimi situacijami in etičnimi dilemami, ne glede na to, na katerem področju deluje. Etični izzivi, s katerimi se soočamo, so vse kompleksnejši, ob tem pa v slovenskem prostoru do sedaj ni bilo znanstvene monografije, ki bi sistematično in celovito obravnavala različne vidike etike na področju psihologije. Knjiga *Psiholog v dilemi: etične vsebine in etična zavest v praksi,* katere urednici sta izr. prof. dr. Vita Poštuvan, univ. dipl. psih., in dr. Mojca Čerče, univ. dipl. psih., je bila objavljena leta 2023 pri Založbi Univerze na Primorskem. V njej je sodelovalo kar 63 avtorjev, ki delujejo na različnih področjih psihološkega dela. Delo predstavlja nepogrešljiv vir informacij in oporo pri etičnih vprašanjih ter dilemah, ki se nam porajajo, obenem pa ponuja številna izhodišča in smernice, ki nas lahko pri tem vodijo. Bralcu ponuja celovit pregled etičnih vsebin ter prinaša poglobljen vpogled v specifične etične vidike, povezane z različnimi področji psihološkega delovanja.

V prvem sklopu, »O etiki in etiki v psihologiji« knjiga ponudi poglobljen vpogled v opredelitve etike in predstavi osnovne etiške paradigme. Avtorji poudarjajo, kako pomembno je, da vedenja in odločitve strokovnjakov niso prepuščene le osebnim etičnim standardom, ampak da pri tem sledijo poklicni etiki. Ravno poklicna etika v psihologiji je tema, ki je obravnavana v nadaljevanju, saj nam knjiga ponuja zanimiv vpogled v razvoj etičnih standardov v psihologiji tako v tujini kot pri nas ter nam s tem hkrati nudi pregled etičnih standardov (Kodeks poklicne etike psihologov, Metakodeks etike Evropske zveze psiholoških združenj (EFPA),

https://doi.org/10.26493/2630-4082.56.241-244

Univerzalna deklaracija etičnih načel za psihologe (Mednarodna zveza psiholoških združenj), Moralni kodeks etike (EFPA) itd.), na katere se psihologi, ne glede na področje dela, naslanjajo. V Sloveniji za etični kodeks psihologov skrbi Komisija za etična vprašanja (KEV), ki sledi novostim na področju etike in tudi aktivno izvaja dejavnosti za izboljšanje etične zavesti.

Knjiga nam v sklopu »Etične vsebine pri delu psihologov na različnih področjih« ponuja dragocen vpogled v raznolikost dela psihologov v Sloveniji in etične dileme, s katerimi se pri tem srečujejo, po drugi strani pa tudi v skupna in nekatera vedno znova ponavljajoča se etična vprašanja. Čeprav se poglavja nanašajo na številna različna področja, so enotno strukturirana, kar omogoča enostaven vpogled v vsebino. Tako avtorji vseh poglavij sprva orišejo področje, na katerem delujejo, ter izpostavijo pomembne etične standarde, na katere se naslanjajo, nato pa izpostavijo etične dileme, ki so specifične za njihovo področje psihologije. V zadnjem koraku predstavijo proces etičnega odločanja tako, da predstavijo ustrezna etična načela, ki so relevantna za specifičen primer. Vsebinska širina knjige se kaže v tem, da avtorji poglavij, objavljenih v tem delu knjige, delujejo na zelo raznolikih področjih dela psihologa (v vzgoji in izobraževanju, v zdravstveni dejavnosti, v psihološkem svetovanju, v centrih za socialno delo, v varstveno delovnih centrih, v delovnih organizacijah, na področjih medicine dela, prometa in športa, na področju športne psihologije, v policiji, v kriznih situacijah ob nesrečah, v Slovenski vojski, v zaporih, na področju sodnega izvedenstva, na področju raziskovanja in v glasbenopsihološkem raziskovanju) in predstavijo zapletena etična vprašanja, ki jih je na posameznih področjih treba ustrezno nasloviti.

V sklopu »Etično občutljive teme pri delu psihologov« so naslovljena področja, kjer so etični premisleki še posebej kompleksni. Posamezna poglavja so usmerjena v različna področja prakse ali raziskav, ki vključujejo zapletene moralne vidike in zahtevajo skrbno upoštevanje etičnih načel ter smernic. Izpostavljeni so izzivi, s katerimi se psihologi srečujejo v sodobni družbi, vključno z vprašanji. povezanimi s kulturno raznolikostjo, tehnološkim napredkom, samomorilnim vedenje ter z ustvarjanjem medijskih vsebin za otroke in mladostnike. Poglavja v tem skopu predstavljajo celovit vpogled v specifične etične izzive, hkrati pa ponujajo smernice za etično odločanje in ravnanje v praksi, kar predstavlja ključen vidik etičnega delovanja psihologov. Poudarjeno je, da se od psihologov pričakujejo nenehna etična refleksija, skladnost s strokovnimi smernicami ter

sprejemanje premišljenih odločitev, ki dajejo prednost dobrobiti in pravicam posameznikov, skupnosti in družbe.

Nadalje je v sklopu »Etične vsebine v procesu učenja in formiranja psihologa« predstavljeno poučevanje etike v okviru študijskih programov različnih oddelkov in fakultet: Oddelka za psihologijo Filozofske Fakultete Univerze v Ljubljani, Oddelka za psihologijo Filozofske Fakultete Univerze v Mariboru, Oddelka za psihologijo Fakultete za matematiko, naravoslovje in informacijske tehnologije Univerze na Primorskem, Psihologije na Univerzi Sigmunda Freuda – podružnice Ljubljana. Posamezna poglavja v sklopu se osredotočajo na strategije poučevanja in posredovanja etičnih načel bodočim psihologom, pri čemer se poudarja raznolikost področij, na katerih delujejo. Avtorji poglavij ponujajo vpogled v različna področja, kjer se lahko pojavljajo etične dileme, tako v formalnem poučevanju kot tudi skozi neformalne aktivnosti. Poseben poudarek je namenjen prenosu etičnih vsebin v prakso, s čimer se priznava pomembnost odgovornosti pedagoških delavcev in mentorjev pri oblikovanju bodočih etično ozaveščenih strokovnjakov. Poglavja obravnavajo tudi etiko v superviziji psihologov, kjer se poudarja ključna vloga supervizije pri razvoju etičnega zavedanja in kompetenc etičnega ravnanja. Supervizija zagotavlja strukturirano in podporno okolje, ki s pomočjo izkustvenega učenja in nenehne refleksije lastnega delovanja spodbuja strokovno rast. Še posebej psihologom pripravnikom nudi smernice za etično delovanje ter jih spodbuja k stalnemu razmisleku o etičnih standardih. Omenjeni sklop ne zajema le raziskovanja in naslavljanja etičnih izzivov na področju izobraževanja v psihologiji, ampak tudi aktivno prispeva k razvoju pedagoških praks. Avtorji zagovarjajo stališča, v katerih poučevanje etike postane dinamičen in razvijajoč se proces. Vključitev odprtih vprašanj na koncu posameznih poglavij dodatno spodbuja razmislek o potencialnih izboljšavah na področju poučevanja etike.

Zaključni sklop, »Krepitev etične zavesti in razreševanje etičnih dilem«, vsebini knjige daje pomembno dodatno razsežnost, saj predstavlja smernice, orodja in okvire, ki služijo kot praktični vodnik za krepitev veščin etičnega odločanja v realnem življenju. Poudarja, da etična zavest ni zgolj abstrakten koncept, temveč dinamična lastnost, ki jo morajo psihologi sistematično gojiti za učinkovito sprejemanje odločitev v svoji poklicni praksi. V poglavjih tega sklopa je posebna pozornost namenja ključnim načelom pri poučevanju in učenju etike. Poleg tega so predstavljeni različni modeli in tehnike, ki predstavljajo uporabna orodja za strokovnjake pri razvoji in krepitvi procesa etičnega odločanja. Ko govorimo o mode-

lih in tehnikah, se nanašamo na konceptualne okvire in teoretične strukture, ki zagotavljajo sistematičen pristop k razumevanju in obravnavanju etičnih izzivov. Ti modeli pogosto vključujejo niz načel, smernic ali korakov, ki strokovnjakom služijo kot usmeritve pri reševanju kompleksnih etičnih dilem. S predstavitvijo različnih modelov in tehnik knjiga strokovnjake opremi z raznolikim naborom orodij, ki jim omogoča prilagajanje njihovega pristopa različnim etičnim situacijam, s katerimi se lahko srečajo v svoji praksi. S tem sklop prispeva k nadgradnji kompetenc in k utrditvi etičnih standardov v profesionalnem delovanju psihologov.

Urednici s svojimi dolgoletnimi izkušnjami, vsaka izhajajoč iz svojega področja, v knjigi skupaj z drugimi avtorji sistematično pristopita k etičnim vsebinam na področju psihologije, pri čemer knjiga zajema temeljne koncepte, posebnosti posameznih področij, primere iz praks, izzive v izobraževanju in praktične strategije za etično odločanje. Njena struktura omogoča poglobljeno razumevanje razsežnosti etike v kontekstu psihologije in zagotavlja dragocen vpogled v kompleksnost teh vidikov. Kljub kompleksnosti so primeri, predstavljeni v knjigi, konkretni, s čimer bralcem omogočajo lažje učenje in prenos etičnih načel, vodil in zakonov v prakso. Knjiga nadgrajuje znanje in etično orientacijo, ki ju ponujajo etična načela, kodeksi in pravilniki, spodbuja razvijanje visokega osebnega moralnega kompasa ter krepi etično zavest. Pričujoča znanstvena monografija zato nedvomno predstavlja nepogrešljivo branje za strokovnjake z različnih področij dela, študente psihologije in vse, ki jih zanima etika v psihologiji.

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