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# Literature and space

## Spaces of transgressiveness

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(articles)

(Link: [ABSTRACTS page](#))

### CONTENTS

[Jean Bessiere](#): A propos de la transgression – de la règle à la sémantique et au questionnement. En un commentaire des avant-gardes, de Joseph Conrad, de Carlos Fuentes et de Gertrude Stein

[Jola Škulj](#): Literature and Space: Textual, Artistic and Cultural Spaces of Transgressiveness

[Dean Komel](#): Philosophy and the Constitution of the Intercultural Sense

[Jelka Kernev Štrajn](#): Château de Coppet – A Site of Modernity?

[Marijan Dovič](#): Literary Repertoire and Interference among Literatures

[Bertrand Westphal](#): Approches méthodologiques de la transgression spatiale

[Marko Juvan](#): Spaces of Intertextuality / The Intertextuality of Space

[Darja Pavlič](#): The Lyric Subject and Space. A Comparison of Romantic and Modern Lyric Poetry

[Bart Keunen](#): Moralism and Individualism in Urban Fiction: A Deleuzian and Bakhtinian Critique of Spatial Transgressions in Contemporary Crime Novels

[Katia Pizzi](#): "Self" and the Modernist City: Stelio Mattioni and Trieste

[Igor Škamperle](#): Space of Changeable Identity and the Margins of Literature

[Igor Zabel](#): Art at the Limits of the Visible

Jean Bessiere : **A PROPOS DE LA TRANSGRESSION – DE LA REGLE A LA SÉMANTIQUE ET AU QUESTIONNEMENT. EN UN COMMENTAIRE DES AVANT-GARDES, DE JOSEPH CONRAD, DE CARLOS FUENTES ET DE GERTRUDE STEIN**

La définition de ce colloque de Lipica[i], "Spaces of Transgressiveness : Verbal Act at the Edge", croise les notions de transgression, d'espace, de transgression de l'espace, d'historicité, d'identité traditionnelle et renouvelée, et finalement d'avant-garde, dans des contextes littéraires et des contextes culturels. On propose ici un cadrage de ce que présuppose, de ce qu'entraîne ce croisement, et, en conséquence, des implications de ce colloque. Ce cadrage est fait en trois temps : selon un commentaire de ce croisement et selon les reformulations des notions de transgression, d'avant-garde ; puis, selon les manières de fables que proposent, a propos de la transgression, du nouveau, de la frontière, trois écrivains, Joseph Conrad, Carlos Fuentes, Gertrude Stein – c'est-à-dire deux écrivains qui encadrent la période des avant-gardes européennes, et un écrivain qui appartient à ces avant-gardes ; puis, enfin, selon une réflexion sur le contraste qui se dessine, au regard de la transgression, entre les avant-gardes et ce que nous disent ces manières de fables.

I.

On fait d'abord deux commentaires sur cette définition du colloque. D'un point de vue typologique, elle allie transgression, espace, identité, nouveau et littérature. D'un point de vue historique, si nous comprenons bien, elle croise des références aux avant-gardes, au modernisme et au post-modernisme, à la mémoire culturelle, au nouvel espace européen et à la littérature slovène. Chacun des points de vue croise, de fait, un rappel de la définition des avant-gardes et un rappel des transferts d'identité, dans le temps et dans l'espace. La vulgate de la critique contemporaine, particulièrement la vulgate des études culturelles et du post-modernisme, qui est donc un arrière-plan de cette définition du colloque, ne reconnaîtrait pas de tels points de vue et de tels croisements, puisque cette vulgate se dit précisément en rupture avec la pensée des avant-gardes, avec le modernisme, placés sous le signe d'un eurocentrisme. Donner, dans cette définition du colloque, ces points de vue et ces croisements, c'est donc à la fois rompre avec cette vulgate et en proposer une lecture. Celle-ci peut se formuler dans les termes suivants : il peut être précisé les termes qui permettent de faire, de lire le changement, le nouveau, la continuité du changement et du nouveau dans les littératures européennes en rapportant ce changement et cette continuité aux données culturelles internationales, particulièrement européennes.

Cette reformulation a pour condition que l'on réinterprète la transgression dont se sont réclamées les avant-gardes. Dans les avant-gardes européennes, telles qu'on les comprend historiquement, cette transgression était une transgression symbolique, idéologique, formelle, qui se voulait internationale. Il y avait bien alors une transgression des cultures, mais cette transgression des cultures n'était pas pensée pour elle-même, ni considérée comme une détermination essentielle des avant-gardes – c'est le propre de l'internationalisme que de se penser comme une composition des critiques des cultures à travers la critique de l'idéologie, du symbole, de la forme, et comme une composition des cultures, par la-même, sans qu'il soit fait l'hypothèse de transferts culturels. Il suffit de dire à ce propos toutes les avant-gardes européennes des trente premières années du XX<sup>e</sup> siècle. Ce constat n'exclut pas de marquer que ces avant-gardes se sont reconnues des origines nationales spécifiques – origines allemandes pour l'expressionnisme, origines françaises pour le surréalisme, etc. (Dada est certes un contre-exemple de cela ; il faut cependant noter la brièveté de ce mouvement.) Cette reconnaissance n'est donc pas un interdit mis à la visée internationale et cosmopolite. Ainsi, rompre avec la vulgate critique contemporaine et la corriger, comme le suggère la définition du colloque, revient d'abord à conserver l'hypothèse du nouveau et de la transgression, et à modifier la référence à l'internationalisme – cela revient à dire que celui-ci doit être lu dans des termes culturels, dans des termes de passage et de transgression culturels. Cela peut encore se commenter de la manière suivante : les avant-gardes des trente premières années du XX<sup>e</sup> siècle se pensaient comme globales, parce qu'elles étaient une réaction à ce qu'elle percevait comme un état global du monde, particulièrement du monde défini par une guerre mondiale, par son avant et par son après, à une époque où, pour utiliser un terme contemporain, les puissances européennes étaient les figures de la mondialisation. Cette rupture et cette correction reviennent aussi à ne pas lire la série des avant-gardes sous le signe de la tradition du nouveau[iii], ni sous celui d'une manière de poursuite de l'art et de la littérature pour eux-mêmes[iv]. Lire ainsi les avant-gardes sous le signe de la tradition du nouveau et de la poursuite de l'art et de la littérature revient à perdre la notion de transgression et sa réalité, alors que l'on entend dire le nouveau, qui suppose la transgression idéologique, symbolique, formelle. Il faudrait donc tenir ensemble les propriétés transgressives et culturelles des avant-gardes, bien que les avant-gardes se soient données comme internationales – c'est pourquoi le surréalisme se reconnaîtra d'abord dans le communisme.

Cette reformulation a encore pour condition que l'on réinterprète l'hypothèse de la transgression

culturelle, telle qu'elle est présentée aujourd'hui dans les études culturelles. La caractérisation de cette transgression a pour conditions deux hypothèses. Première hypothèse : toute culture en elle-même et les cultures les une par rapport aux autres sont dans un rapport du même et de l'autre – le problème de l'identité et de la différence devient celui du même et de l'autre ou que ce soit : identité et différence, affirmation de celle-ci ou abolition de sa différence, telle est la question. C'est suivant ce dilemme que les études culturelles lisent les littératures contemporaines, à travers le monde. Il faut aussi bien dire les diverses littératures que le jeu des littératures entre elles. Il suffit d'un seul exemple : les littératures de la Caraïbe sont vues à la fois comme des littératures qui présentent, en elles-mêmes, un tel dilemme et comme des littératures qui font lire partout ce dilemme. Deuxième hypothèse qui est indissociable de la première : il est alors impossible de dire une universalité, ou un droit reconnu par tous – c'est la notion même de transgression qui est défaite puisqu'elle suppose un droit et une règle qui sont brisés. Il est alors une double vision des réalités culturelles : d'une part, le jeu constant de l'implication du même et de l'autre, de l'identité et de la différence ; d'autre part, l'affrontement, également constant, dans une même culture, entre cultures, du même et de l'autre, de l'identité et de la différence. On comprend que, dans ces perspectives, la visée internationaliste des avant-gardes ne vaille plus, et que l'on puisse jouer, entre autres choses, de la distinction du moderne et du post-moderne. Utiliser, dans le rappel implicite de telles données, la référence à la transgression revient, non pas à rétablir la référence à l'internationalisme, mais à recaractériser le jeu du même et de l'autre. Ce jeu n'est plus à considérer ni suivant l'implication du même et de l'autre, ni suivant son opposition à une universalité, à un droit reconnu par tous, mais suivant le fait même de ce que donne à entendre la transgression, alors assimilée à une transgression de l'espace : il faut ici comprendre le passage des frontières, quelles qu'elles soient, et d'abord les frontières nationales et les frontières temporelles et historiques. Il en résulte des références à l'histoire, à l'espace, et à l'identité. Celle-ci ne se comprend plus seulement suivant le jeu du même et de l'autre, mais suivant ce qu'elle devient selon le passage de la frontière, selon le changement temporel et historique.

Sans que l'on soit capable de considérer la littérature slovène, on va tenter de nouer les reformulations qui viennent d'être caractérisées et de préciser un peu plus les jeux de la transgression, de l'espace, de l'identité, de l'histoire, dans le cadre des avant-gardes du XX<sup>e</sup> siècle et dans des exemples littéraires qui permettent de recaractériser ces jeux.

## II.

Soit d'abord le rapport de la transgression et de l'avant-garde. La définition la plus simple qui puisse être proposée de la transgression est celle donnée par Montaigne dans ses *Essais* et qui est indirecte mais explicite : les règles et les lois sont établies pour ne pas être observées. Il faut comprendre : la transgression n'est que par rapport à une règle ; elle n'est que selon cette règle. Elle n'a qu'une seule finalité la rupture de cette règle. Elle est à elle-même sa propre loi par rapport à cette règle. Il est une variante contemporaine, sémiotique, et littéraire de cette définition de Montaigne, la définition que donne Youri Lotman dans sa *Structure du texte artistique* : tout texte littéraire est l'exposition de divers champs sémantiques, et l'exposition du passage d'un champ à l'autre – par exemple, de la vie à la mort –, et, en conséquence, chaque fois, une transgression des caractérisations et des limites du champ sémantique initial et des caractérisations et des limites du champ sémantique suivant. Dans la logique de Y. Lotman, cela correspond au constat du défaut de traductibilité réciproque des diverses unités sémiotiques et sémantiques. Dans la seule perspective de la transgression, cela revient à marquer que celle-ci est donc son propre mouvement – ce mouvement qui permet de passer –, sa propre fin – cette fin qui permet de toujours aller. Montaigne et Y. Lotman sont ici utiles pour préciser le jeu des avant-gardes, celles des trente premières années du XX<sup>e</sup> siècle. La recherche et la réalisation du nouveau sont choix de rupture, autrement dit, transgressions de telles règles, de telles représentations, suivant la reconnaissance du mouvement propre du nouveau – il est à lui-même sa propre fin et doit donc poursuivre. Il suffit de rappeler le mot d'ordre d'Ezra Pound : "Make it new!" La transgression se définit donc doublement : rupture et mouvement propre de la rupture. C'est pourquoi les avant-gardes peuvent se succéder ou rivaliser. C'est pourquoi la transgression de l'avant-garde se donne toujours pour ultime et pour un jugement sur ce avec quoi elle rompt et pour un recommencement absolu du temps. Rupture de la limite, l'avant-garde est ainsi sans limite – elle est sa propre loi. On comprend dès lors qu'elle puisse se dire internationale : elle est la rupture de toute frontière et de tout temps. On doit aussi comprendre que, parce qu'elle est sa propre loi, elle est l'ignorance de la différence comme telle ; elle n'a pas même besoin de se penser comme la différence. Cela explique, dans une perspective polémique, que l'on puisse noter une proximité entre les avant-gardes et les mouvements politiques autoritaires, totalitaires, ou fascistes. Cela explique encore que les avant-gardes puissent être vues comme leur propre mouvement de totalisation, suivant par exemple, la tradition du nouveau – il faut alors dire l'autonomie de l'art et de la littérature –, suivant, par exemple encore, une manière de totalisation temporelle – il faut alors dire la fin de l'art, de la littérature<sup>[iv]</sup>, qui se réalisent dans cette assomption constante du nouveau. Cela explique enfin, comme l'a bien souligné Octavio Paz<sup>[v]</sup>, que les avant-gardes, dans ce souci du

nouveau, entendent figurer le renouvellement du temps, de l'histoire, de tout temps, de toute histoire, qu'elles puissent se donner par la comme internationales, comme capables de tout reconnaître – tout temps, tout lieu, toute culture –, sans qu'elles soient cependant reconnaissance de la différence : elles sont le passage par le tout autre, selon leur mouvement propre. C'est pourquoi elles peuvent jouer des anachronismes historiques, culturels, utiliser divers témoins artistiques et culturels : il n'y a pas la reconnaissance de la différence pour la différence, le jeu du même et de l'autre, mais la reconnaissance de la différence selon le jeu de la transgression qui est sa propre fin.

Au regard de l'histoire, il est une manière simple de caractériser ces avant-gardes et leur transgression. Ces avant-gardes ont pour conditions la conscience de l'histoire, l'historicité, la conscience du problème qu'est l'histoire. C'est pourquoi s'impose la thématique du nouveau. Mais, précisément par ce nouveau, elles deviennent comme leur propre histoire, leur propre historicité, comme quelque chose qui n'a plus accès véritablement à l'historicité, lors même que sont utilisées des références historiques. Il faudrait dire ici Ezra Pound et ses *Cantos*, le passage de T.S. Eliot à la thématique religieuse, et, chez André Breton, l'importance croissante des mythes. Le paradoxe se formule simplement : il peut y avoir une question de l'histoire ; le nouveau saisit ce qui fait ainsi question sans considérer les implications, pour le nouveau, de cette question, ni les suites de cette question. Contradictoirement, le nouveau des avant-gardes ne conçoit pas le temps autre, ainsi qu'il ne conçoit pas l'espace autre.

Ces paradoxes des avant-gardes – un internationalisme qui n'est pas la reconnaissance de l'autre, mais sa citation, une réaction à l'histoire qui circonscrit la reconnaissance de l'historicité à la pratique du nouveau – ont une seule raison d'être : les avant-gardes, parce qu'elles sont la poursuite du mouvement de transgression, ne peuvent concevoir leur propre limite, ce qui leur fait absolument limite, ce qui est l'autre de ce mouvement de transgression – et qui ne soit pas assimilable à l'ordre<sup>[vii]</sup> – que ce soit l'ordre du nouveau ou celui que suppose cela qui est transgressé.

### III.

Contre un tel jeu de transgression, il peut être lu et défini une autre caractérisation de la transgression, dans la littérature qui précède les avant-gardes et qui illustre la transgression et dans une littérature plus récente, qui illustre également la transgression. Cette figuration de la transgression, qui encadre historiquement la figuration de la transgression que proposent les avant-gardes, se résume dans une notation simple : la transgression est un mouvement qui trouve sa limite dans l'indéterminé, auquel la transgression fait finalement face. Cela se dit selon deux fables, celle de Joseph Conrad dans *Heart of Darkness*<sup>[viii]</sup>, celle de Carlos Fuentes, dans *Valiente Mundo Nuevo*<sup>[ix]</sup>.

On sait que *Heart of Darkness* de Joseph Conrad commence en évoquant la manière dont les Romains se sont perdus aux frontières invisibles de l'Angleterre. Cette invisibilité est figurée par les brumes et par la nuit. On sait que cette frontière invisible est, dans le roman, également la frontière invisible de l'autre, du cœur du monde noir. Il est remarquable que, dans ce roman qui est usuellement interprété comme un roman colonial et impérial, Joseph Conrad indique explicitement la limite de tout empire, la limite de tout pouvoir de dire : l'autre en tant qu'il est la raison d'être de l'empire, de la colonisation ; l'autre en tant qu'il est invisible et en tant qu'il est, en conséquence, une détermination de la conquête et de la limite mise à la conquête ; l'autre invisible en tant qu'il fixe une frontière certaine et cependant impalpable.

Cela même commande de lire doublement le roman de Conrad. Suivant son argument explicite et suivant son argument implicite. *Suivant son argument explicite* : Kurz est la représentation du colonialisme ; il figure l'appropriation du territoire et le dessin autoritaire de l'espace, en même temps que l'asservissement de l'autre. *Suivant son argument implicite* : Kurz répète la conquête romaine de l'Angleterre et la perte devant l'autre et la nuit. Sa conquête est la fin de la conquête, à ce point où elle entre dans la nuit de l'autre. Cette fable, que propose *Heart of Darkness*, dit ultimement qu'il y a toujours au moins deux mondes en un seul, même lorsqu'on entend dessiner seulement un monde, même lorsque l'on récuse tout principe dialogique. Aussi *Heart of Darkness* peut-il se lire aisément, à l'inverse de son titre, à l'inverse d'une primauté de la notation de l'obscurité. Paradoxalement, la conquête fait voir, à l'occasion de la guerre, à l'occasion du litige, un lieu commun : celui de la frontière invisible et de l'espace conquis. Cela peut encore se reformuler : bien que, dans l'obscurité qui entourait les campements romains de l'extrémité de l'Angleterre, rien ne put être entendu, rien ne put être vu, ce monde même faisait sentir un *dissensus*, qui est d'abord un écart du sensible à lui-même – le jour et la nuit, le clair et l'obscur –, et qui ne suppose pas l'expression de cet affrontement – à cette frontière du jour et de la nuit, du clair et de l'obscur, il n'y a précisément plus d'affrontement. Le *dissensus* devient la figure du partage commun : celui du même et de l'autre, qui font partage par l'invisibilité et par la certitude de l'autre, par cette évidence, qui ne porte aucune clarté, que l'autre est une proximité et une détermination. Quelle que soit la conquête, quel que soit son achèvement, cette conquête est sa propre limite, sa propre frontière. La transgression qu'est la conquête est finalement le constat de l'implication

du meme et de l'autre.

On ajoutera une autre indication qui peut être tirée de *Heart of Darkness* et qui est essentielle : dans une telle rencontre de l'invisibilité de la frontière et du sujet de la frontière, cette frontière, ce sujet et celui qui ne les voit pas appartiennent au même temps – le sujet qui établit la frontière ne figure plus ici le temps du progrès, fut-ce seulement le progrès technique, il est seulement du temps de cette invisibilité. Cela donne à comprendre que l'histoire suivant son développement n'est pas ce qui peut déterminer le temps de la frontière invisible. *Heart of Darkness* reste cependant un roman incomplet. En substituant la figure de la noirceur à celle de l'invisibilité, il ne dit pas la leçon de son propre implicite : l'autre ne peut être atteint ; il est la constante frontière. Il ne dit pas le pas au-delà de la fable de l'affrontement, du récit de la conquête et de l'oppression : celui de l'inaliénable que suppose toute conquête et qui en est à la fois la détermination et la limite. La transgression ne peut être son propre mouvement ni sa propre loi ; elle est le constat de l'espace autre.

Carlos Fuentes dispose la leçon de cet inaliénable selon l'expérience du continent américain et de la conquête ambivalente de ce continent. C'est alors explicitement formuler la possibilité du dessin de la frontière et de l'espace public selon la notation de l'invisibilité de l'autre, proposer le bon usage de l'invisibilité de l'autre et la solution littéraire à cette invisibilité. Dans un petit essai, qui peut être lu en parallèle avec bien d'autres essais, particulièrement ceux de *Geografía de la novela*<sup>[ix]</sup>, qui traitent à la fois de la littérature hispano-américaine et de la littérature européenne, donc dans un petit essai, "Conoscimientos y reconocimientos", recueilli dans *Valiente Mundo Nuevo*, Carlos Fuentes expose une thèse simple : la littérature hispano-américaine est une littérature du réel et une littérature de l'imagination. Cette thèse est banale à propos de la littérature en général et évidente à propos de la littérature hispano-américaine. Elle est cependant spécifique en ce qu'elle définit cette dualité de la littérature comme un jeu d'adresse à l'autre, n'importe quel autre, et à la réalité naturelle du continent. L'invisibilité de l'autre est ici attestée par l'absence de nom et, s'agissant de la nature, par le fait que la nature américaine est une excroissance qui échappe d'abord à la nomination. Dans la logique des remarques que nous proposons ici, il doit se conclure : les réalités et les hommes du continent hispano-américain sont ce qui doit être nommé parce qu'ils sont ce qui est dans l'invisibilité du nom et, en conséquence, dans l'altérité certaine et dans une manière d'appel de symbolisation. L'invisibilité de l'autre est, selon Carlos Fuentes, une invisibilité disponible, qui est le moyen de la littérature. C'est là encore suggérer que les frontières historiques et spatiales du continent ne sont que frontières vaines au regard de cette invisibilité paradoxale et constante de l'autre et de la nature – invisibilité paradoxale puisque cet autre et cette nature sont manifestes et cependant sans noms. C'est la enfin indiquer que la littérature est connaissance et reconnaissance de ces invisibilités et, au total, geste moral : connaître la littérature, dit Carlos Fuentes, rend plus probable la possibilité de nous reconnaître dans les autres, parce que, faut-il ajouter, la littérature est ce qui nomme tout autre ici. Cela se formule simplement et brutalement dans les termes de Carlos Fuentes : nommer l'anonyme. Le paradoxe de la transgression est qu'elle reconnaît son autre même, sous le signe de l'innommé.

Rapportées à *Geografía de la novela*, ces remarques définissent une spécificité littéraire latino-américaine dont l'équivalent, dans les littératures européennes contemporaines, par exemple chez Kundera, note Carlos Fuentes, est, non pas dans ce jeu de nomination, mais dans le dessin explicite d'un espace commun des différences, dans le dessin explicite de la présence de l'autre, dans le dessin explicite d'un espace de l'autre, qui ne défait pas cependant un espace commun. C'est la probablement une lecture idéaliste de la littérature européenne contemporaine. Cette lecture est cependant symptomatique en ce qu'elle offre une correction aux thèses contemporaines sur la nation et un complément à la notation de l'invisibilité paradoxale du continent américain. *Correction des thèses contemporaines sur la nation* : il ne faut pas dire, d'une part, la nation et, d'autre part, le droit universel des différences ; il faut dire que la pensée et la figuration de l'universel sont ce qui ouvre au constat des différences. La conquête, à l'image de celle des Romains, à l'image de celle du continent américain, peut être complète et la réalisation d'une sorte d'universalité. Elle est d'abord cependant ce qui rend manifeste les différences, qu'elle ne peut pas, par ailleurs, dire. C'est cela l'invisibilité. *Complément à l'invisibilité paradoxale du continent américain* : cette invisibilité est cela à quoi fait face celui qui entend de nommer ; elle est aussi ce qui inclut ; elle est à la fois la certitude d'une frontière constante et d'un espace commun, l'évidence de l'inaliénable des différences et la manifestation que cet inaliénable fait l'espace commun. Ces deux compléments disent le paradoxe constitutif du politique et, en conséquence, des frontières : les communautés ne sont, selon leurs différences, dans un espace partagé que par une manière d'impolitique – l'inaliénable des différences, qui est par l'invisibilité de l'autre – ; la frontière est tout autant la certitude de l'autre que le partage des communautés sous le signe de l'état et de la nation. Il faut répéter que le *dissensus* devient la figure du partage commun. L'invisibilité de l'autre selon le nom se réinterprète : elle est la condition de la communauté et de la frontière, parce qu'elle est la possibilité du *dissensus* et la désignation de toute archéologie de la communauté et de la nation.

Ces deux fables sont donc explicites. Elles substituent au dessin de la transgression suivant une limite, suivant une frontière, le dessin d'une transgression qui vient au *limes*, ce mot latin, qui désignait l'autre côté indéterminé de la frontière. A l'inverse de la transgression des avant-gardes, la transgression que sont la conquête de nouvelles terres, la découverte du Nouveau Monde, est une transgression qui trouve sa limite, reconnaît toujours des espaces spécifiques, n'est plus sa propre fin, mais la reconnaissance de l'implication du même et de l'autre, lors même que cet autre reste indicible. Cette transgression n'est pas sa propre universalité puisqu'elle est toujours limitée par l'indicible que marque le *limes*. Elle est passage de frontières, mais aussi venue à une autre frontière, celle du *limes*. Elle est transgression, mais aussi venue à toute communauté, parce qu'elle est le commun même de la transgression et du tout autre. Elle est reconnaissance de l'histoire : au-delà du *limes*, il y a une autre histoire, qui n'est pas cependant dissociable de l'histoire à laquelle correspond la transgression. Elle est aussi une pratique des identités indissociables : identité de celui qui transgresse – les conquérants romains dans *Heart of Darkness*, les *conquistadores* et tous les nouveaux venus dans le continent américain –, identité de celui qui est au-delà du *limes*, identité du Nouveau Monde et de ses anonymes. Elle est enfin le dessin d'une interdépendance : celle de celui qui transgresse, celle de celui qui est au-delà du *limes*, de celui qui est anonyme dans le continent américain. Le *dissensus*, que fait la transgression, implique l'espace commun du même et de l'autre.

La caractérisation de la transgression, lisible dans ces fables, est donc une caractérisation suivant un espace double – celui du connu et de l'inconnu –, qui est cependant un espace un, suivant un temps double – celui de la transgression, celui du temps qui est comme au-delà de la transgression –, qui est cependant un temps un – celui des conquérants romains et des hommes du *limes*, celui des nouveaux venus sur le continent américain et celui du continent même. Sont ici défaits le temps et l'espace des avant-gardes. Subsistent les temps des identités et des nations et, en conséquence, leurs espaces, à l'occasion même de la transgression, et se dessine leur espace commun à l'occasion du *dissensus*.

Ces deux fables ont leur parallèle dans une autre fable, celle que propose Gertrude Stein, un écrivain contemporain des avant-gardes, et écrivain d'avant-garde. Dans *Wars I have seen*<sup>[x]</sup>, Gertrude Stein joue sur la notion de nouveau pour noter que le nouveau est, de fait, ce qu'il y a de plus ancien. Il faut comprendre que le nouveau, qui est peut-être transgression, a pour condition une conscience complète du passé, et qu'il traduit mieux cette conscience que la simple affirmation du passé ou que le seul attachement à ce passé. S'il en est ainsi, le nouveau est l'ancien et, en conséquence, une fausse transgression du temps. S'il en est ainsi, le nouveau dans le présent n'est que le point d'échange de temporalités – le passé, le présent et le futur. Il est donc moins le nouveau comme nouveau que l'occasion d'une expérience temporelle spécifique. Si le nouveau est donc ainsi, il fait de celui qui le pratique et de celui qui le reconnaît, la composition de tous les temps selon un ordre sans chronologie et sans calcul du temps. Un tel nouveau fait de tous les temps des différences réciproques, alors qu'il est la possibilité même de la mémoire.

À cette méditation sur le nouveau, *Wars I have seen* ajoute une méditation sur les guerres. Sans qu'il y ait la référence spécifique à Gertrude Stein, il peut d'abord être dit que la guerre est paradoxalement un ordre, en ce qu'elle suppose une préparation, une stratégie, des ordres, et un désordre, en ce qu'elle est une destruction et l'inévitable défaut de calcul sur ce qui vient après la guerre. On le sait de Clausewitz : la guerre est tout autant la guerre suivant les combats menés que la guerre suivant l'incertitude de l'après-guerre. Il y a donc, dans une référence à la guerre – et nous nous tenons d'abord à cette notation générale avant de revenir à Gertrude Stein même –, la référence à une transgression. Cette référence porte une caractérisation spécifique de la transgression : la transgression est un calcul qui sait ce qu'elle transgresse, mais qui ne sait pas son résultat ultime. On a là à la fois la reprise de la notation de la transgression telle nous l'avons dite selon les avant-gardes, et une reprise de la notation de la transgression, telle que nous l'avons dite à partir de Joseph Conrad, de Carlos Fuentes, et de l'indication du *limes*. La guerre est sa propre fin, mais aussi la venue à un indéterminé. On est là enfin dans une transgression qui concerne des États, puisque la guerre moderne est, en principe, une guerre entre des États. Par quoi, l'on retrouve l'indication du *dissensus*, d'une part, et, d'autre part, l'indication que ce *dissensus*, autrement dit la transgression, devient la figure du partage commun – celui-même de cet indéterminé.

Gertrude Stein joue ainsi avec les guerres et, plus particulièrement, sur la notation de la préparation, sur l'indication que la guerre actuelle se fait toujours suivant ce que peut être la guerre future – la guerre est toujours selon les calculs et les technologies les plus avancées. Remarquablement, la guerre est un calcul actuel sur le nouveau qui est manifestement à venir. De même qu'elle est une entreprise de prise d'une autre armée, d'un autre territoire – autant de réalisations parfaites de la transgression selon l'espace –, de même, elle est une sorte de prise du futur. La guerre est ainsi un moyen de requalifier le nouveau, qui se veut absolument nouveau. Ce nouveau est donc une tentative de captation du futur. Il y a là, de fait, un commentaire du nouveau, que sont les avant-gardes par un écrivain qui est un écrivain

d'avant-garde. Il faut comprendre : dans sa transgression, ce nouveau est une manière d'ordre, qui entend s'appliquer même à l'avenir. Il y a donc, dans cette caractérisation de la guerre, l'inverse de la manière dont Gertrude Stein caractérise ce qui est véritablement nouveau : le nouveau est la conscience extrême du passé. Ces notations ne sont pas le dernier mot de Gertrude Stein sur les guerres, qu'elle dit avoir vues – soit dit, entre parenthèse, qu'elle n'a pas vue la guerre de Sécession qu'elle évoque, elle a seulement vu la première guerre mondiale.

Gertrude Stein peut parler des guerres qu'elle n'a pas vues comme des guerres qu'elle a vues, parce que, si la guerre est à la fois cet exercice du nouveau et du futur, elle est donc aussi, comme tout ce qui est véritablement nouveau, un échange temporel. En d'autres termes toutes les guerres sont composables, comme un tableau cubiste compose des objets. Mais en indiquant cela, on indique quelque chose de plus à propos des guerres, telles qu'ont été vues par un écrivain et telles que sont évoquées par cet écrivain : les guerres jouent les unes par rapport aux autres comme jouent le même et l'autre ; elles jouent, pour reprendre des termes que Gertrude Stein applique à l'écriture, comme des répétitions, comme des différences, comme des compositions. Il peut paraître surprenant de comparer la guerre à l'écriture. La comparaison se justifie donc par des notations de Gertrude Stein même. Dans sa conférence, "Composition as Explanation"<sup>[xi]</sup>, elle définit l'écriture selon la répétition et la différence, autrement dit, selon un calcul – la répétition –, selon une transgression – la différence –, qui font ensemble un défaut de calcul et de l'écriture une manière d'indéterminé. Ainsi, l'écriture n'est du nouveau, au sens où Gertrude Stein caractérise ce mot, qu'à la condition d'être elle-même, en elle-même, une transgression, qui est donc proche, *mutatis mutandis*, de la transgression qui a été caractérisée à propos de Joseph Conrad et de Carlos Fuentes. Cette écriture, qui a été, pour Gertrude Stein, contemporaine de deux guerres – les deux guerres mondiales –, apparaît remarquablement et à la fois comme une récusation du calcul sur le futur que constitue la guerre, et comme l'équivalent de l'exercice d'incertitude qui caractérise l'après-guerre. Bref, l'écriture, parce qu'elle est ce nouveau qui est la plus grande conscience de l'ancien, et parce qu'elle répétition et différence hors de la loi d'un calcul, est la réalisation d'une transgression heureuse, qui, faut-il ajouter, dans un contraste avec ce qui a été dit à propos de Joseph Conrad et de Carlos Fuentes, n'a pas même besoin d'un indicible.

Il faut encore poursuivre selon Gertrude Stein : la guerre ne défait pas les identités, pas plus que l'écriture ne les défait. Elles sont placées dans le jeu paradoxal du nouveau, de la répétition et de la différence, de la transgression : ces identités s'impliquent mutuellement et elles s'échangent, comme les temps s'échangent dans le nouveau. Il faudrait ici rappeler la manière dont Gertrude Stein caractérise Pablo Picasso dans *The Autobiography of Alice B. Toklas*<sup>[xii]</sup> : seuls les Espagnols peuvent être véritablement cubistes. Le cubisme est donc une transgression en peinture, qui n'abolit pas l'identité culturelle, mais qui rend celle-ci comparable à d'autres identités culturelles – ainsi, l'identité américaine.

#### IV.

Ces trois fables portent donc une commune leçon. Il peut y avoir du nouveau qui ne contredit pas le passé – ou il y a le paradoxe du nouveau et celui de toute avant-garde qui sait cela. Il peut y avoir une transgression qui n'est pas sa propre fin, mais la reconnaissance du *limes* – l'indétermination qui fait la véritable frontière et la finalité de la transgression. Il peut y avoir une identification des identités culturelles et nationales qui n'interdit pas le passage des frontières et qui ne s'enferme pas dans l'affrontement du même et de l'autre ou dans leur mélange – ce mélange ne veut littéralement rien dire puisque, dans n'importe quelle situation d'hybridité culturelle, pour reprendre le terme des études culturelles, subsiste toujours l'implication du même et de l'autre. Il faut comprendre que l'identification de l'identité ne vaut que selon cette implication – celle-ci interdit la seule reconnaissance de la différence pour la différence. Cette commune leçon est donc une contre-lecture des caractères les plus manifestes des avant-gardes européennes du XX<sup>e</sup> siècle et des transgressions qu'elles affichent. Elle est, ainsi que nous l'avons dit au début de cette contribution, une manière de reformuler les termes du débat proposés pour ce colloque. Elle n'interdit pas cependant de reconsidérer les avant-gardes européennes et leur transgression suivant ces termes mêmes. Un tel ré-examen doit être moins une redéfinition des avant-gardes qu'un effort pour caractériser ce que font lire les avant-gardes, telles qu'elles ont été esquissées ici selon la transgression, et ce que font lire simultanément les fables de Joseph Conrad, de Carlos Fuentes, de Gertrude Stein, qui encadrent et accompagnent, dans la chronologie, ces avant-gardes, et qui sont aussi des histoires de transgression.

Il y a, dans ces avant-gardes et dans ce que disent ces fables, un même constat et une même question qui en résulte. Constat : l'histoire oblige à penser le temps et l'espace en concomitance – il faut fixer le changement en des lieux pour maîtriser le changement – ; mais finalement, l'expérience du temps et de l'histoire l'emporte – les contenus du temps et de l'histoire ne sont envisagés qu'en rapport avec cette succession, et ne peuvent plus être fixés en extériorité. Question : quelle peut être la réponse à cette évidence du temps et de l'histoire ? Il y a la l'épreuve de la modernité : celle du temps et de l'histoire, qui

semblent valoir pour eux-mêmes. Les avant-gardes européennes du XX<sup>e</sup> siècle peuvent se lire comme un effort à la fois brutal et désespéré pour répondre à cette épreuve : ces avant-gardes thématisent à la fois le fait de l'histoire, du temps, de leur séquence – c'est cela qu'il faut comprendre par le choix et la pratique du nouveau –, et l'extériorité à laquelle on peut attacher cette séquence, et grâce à laquelle celle-ci peut être extériorisée – c'est cela qu'il faut comprendre par l'internationalisme des avant-gardes, par leur aptitude à citer bien des lieux. On le voit : la transgression, idéologique, symbolique, formelle, spatiale, n'est ultimement qu'une façon de reprendre et de recomposer les éléments caractéristiques de l'épreuve du temps. Dans cette perspective, la maîtrise et l'autorité que se reconnaissent les avant-gardes, traduisent moins un hégélianisme, qu'une manière de dédoublement du geste des avant-gardes : prendre en charge le temps et l'histoire, assigner leurs données à l'extériorité, et, simultanément, donner celui qui accomplit cela comme l'observateur de cela, comme celui qui est face à cela – autrement dit, comme celui qui, par cet exercice de l'avant-garde, échappe à l'épreuve du temps et de l'histoire, et entreprend de sortir de tout questionnement qui soit lié à cette épreuve. C'est pourquoi les avant-gardes ne posent pas la question de l'identité : l'identité de ce qui est transgressé est conservée par la transgression – ainsi, dans un tableau cubiste, la perception de l'objet est transgressée, mais non son identité –, comme est conservée l'identité de celui qui transgresse.

Les trois fables de Joseph Conrad, de Carlos Fuentes, de Gertrude Stein sont encore les fables de l'épreuve du temps et de l'histoire. Gertrude Stein répète les termes exacts des avant-gardes et avec *Wars I have seen* dispose la guerre comme ce qui illustre exemplairement cette épreuve, en même temps qu'elle fait de l'art et de la littérature par leur identification au nouveau ce qui pose explicitement la question qui est attachée au nouveau : le nouveau ne peut être seulement lui-même ; il ne peut être seulement un jeu dans la succession des contenus du temps – le nouveau comme hypertrophié traduit seulement qu'il est un autre élément dans la succession des contenus du temps. S'il n'était qu'un élément dans la succession des temps, il ne ferait que répéter l'épreuve du temps et de l'histoire. C'est pourquoi le nouveau est indissolublement la question du passé – non pas d'un passé qui serait une part du jeu de la succession temporelle, mais un passé qui est comme inclus dans le nouveau alors qu'il en est, bien sûr, distinct –, et la question du futur, en tant que ce futur est indéterminé – il ne peut être calculé, ainsi que l'après-guerre ne peut être calculée. Les identités personnelles, les identités culturelles et nationales sont ce qui permet cette manière d'abstraction à l'égard de l'épreuve du temps, cette manière d'abstraction que constitue donc la pratique du nouveau. (C'est, dans ces termes, qu'il faut comprendre, chez Gertrude Stein, la reconnaissance de la peinture abstraite, du cubisme, et le rappel constant que Pablo Picasso et Juan Gris sont des Espagnols.)

Joseph Conrad et Carlos Fuentes suggèrent que, même si l'homme se donne pour l'inventeur de l'histoire – celui qui, dans les conquêtes impériales, assigne une nouvelle histoire à des lieux qui lui sont extérieurs, et c'est la transgression maximale –, cet homme trouve toujours la limite de sa conquête dans le *limes* – dans l'invisibilité d'une autre histoire, dans l'innommable d'un autre lieu, d'une autre identité. La transgression devient l'apprentissage qu'il n'y a pas de finalité de la transgression, qu'il n'y a pas de loi de la transgression. Celle-ci doit se lire comme la réponse à un constat simple : l'altérité est constitutive de ce que je suis ; l'autre est ce que je suis et ce que je ne suis pas. C'est pourquoi, aux frontières de l'Empire romain, dans *Heart of Darkness*, et, dans le continent américain de Carlos Fuentes, cet autre est à la fois manifeste et invisible. Il est remarquable que Joseph Conrad et Carlos Fuentes ne distinguent pas cette épreuve de l'autre de l'épreuve de l'histoire – celle de la colonisation qui vient au *limes*, celle de la colonisation qui vient à l'anonyme du continent américain. Autrement dit, la question de l'autre n'est qu'une autre façon de dire la question du temps et de l'histoire et que ce temps et cette histoire peuvent toujours être autres, être ailleurs, comme notre propre temps et notre propre histoire ont été autres – le passé – et peuvent être autres – le futur –, comme ils sont, en conséquence, à la fois manifestes et invisibles. Ici, se justifie le croisement, que suggère la définition du colloque, entre le rappel des avant-gardes et les questions culturelles : d'une part, celles-ci peuvent se lire comme les figures de l'épreuve du temps et de l'histoire ; d'autre part, elles permettent de reconnaître que le temps et l'histoire ne doivent pas seulement se définir comme la succession de leurs éléments, mais aussi comme le jeu du même et de l'autre que porte toute identité dans le temps et dans l'histoire.

À ce point, on peut revenir aux avant-gardes. Celles-ci n'ont cessé de jouer de l'anachronisme. Il suffit de dire les surréalistes, Ezra Pound, T. S. Eliot, et d'autres. L'anachronisme est une transgression de la séquence temporelle, qui peut impliquer une transgression des espaces – l'anachronisme ne transgresse pas les identités. Il fait lire dans les avant-gardes cela même que les fables de Joseph Conrad, de Carlos Fuentes, de Gertrude Stein donnent à lire : notre temps est et n'est pas l'autre temps. Il y a la suggestion d'une entreprise à mener : celle de la définition d'un *ethos* de la littérature, qui serait pertinente pour l'ensemble du XX<sup>e</sup> siècle et pour les littératures occidentales, et qui permettrait de lire une réponse continue à l'épreuve du temps et de l'histoire, de préciser le jeu, dans cette transgression, du national et de ce qui passe le national, non pas dans un post-national, mais dans la question du national, venue au bord du *limes*.

## NOTES

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[i] Voir cette définition aux pages 4 et 5 du programme du colloque.

[ii] Voir Harold Rosenberg, *The Tradition of the New*, Freeport, N. Y., Books for Libraries, 1971. Ed. originale 1960.

[iii] Voir Clement Greenberg, *Art and Culture : Critical Essays*, Boston, Beacon Press, 1961.

[iv] Ce sont les thèses d'Arthur Danto, mais aussi celles de poétiques et de pratiques littéraires issues des avant-gardes – il suffit de dire Maurice Blanchot.

[v] Octavio Paz, *Conjunciones y disyunciones*, Mexico, 1969.

[vi] Il faudrait préciser bien des choses ici. Qu'il y ait une sorte d'hégélianisme des avant-gardes est un fait certain, qui explique aussi bien la tradition du nouveau que la poursuite de l'art et de la littérature pour eux-mêmes. Cet hégélianisme des avant-gardes peut être même projeté, comme en témoignent les travaux d'Arthur Danto, sur l'ensemble de l'histoire de l'art au XX<sup>e</sup> siècle et faire conclure à une identification de cette histoire de l'art à l'histoire de la fin de l'art. À l'inverse, il y a un caractère de rupture des avant-gardes qui peut être lu sous le signe d'un vaste performatif, dont il faudrait faire aussi l'histoire au XX<sup>e</sup> siècle. On n'a pas la place d'entrer dans ces considérations.

[vii] Joseph Conrad, *Heart of Darkness*, publication originale en 1902.

[viii] Carlos Fuentes, *Valiente Mundo nuevo*, Mexico, Fondo de Cultura Económica, 1990.

[ix] Carlos Fuentes, *Geografía de la novela*, Madrid, Alfaguara, 1993.

[x] Gertrude Stein, *Wars I have seen*, New York, Random House, 1945.

[xi] Gertrude Stein, "Composition as Explanation", in *Look at Me Now and Here I am : Writings and Lectures 1909-45*, Londres, Penguin, 1971. Pour des commentaires sur ces points, on peut se reporter à Peggy Kamuf, "Peace Keeping : On the Other War", *Revue de Littérature Comparée*, à paraître.

[xii] Gertrude Stein, *The Autobiography of Alice B. Toklas*, New York, Random House, 1945. Ed. originale 1933.

### Jola Škulj: LITERATURE AND SPACE: TEXTUAL, ARTISTIC AND CULTURAL SPACES OF TRANSGRESSIVENESS

"We *communicate* by *crossing barriers*: leaving our [svoj], or making another's [čужoj] our own. Transmission of information is therefore always simultaneously an appropriation (or assimilation) of it. But there is always a *gap* between our own intentions and the words – which are always someone else's words – we speak to articulate them. The gap may be greater or smaller, however, depending on the "fit" between what we believe and what we are saying."

(Holquist 1981: 424)

"The other is the stranger" whom it is impossible to reduce to myself, to my thoughts and to my possessions."

(Emmanuel Levinas)

An exchange of views on the issues of space and literature involves a variety of possible standpoints. It implies both space in literature and literature in space. Thus divergent concepts of space can be considered with reference to literature: the *semiotic* space of text, the space of *artistic* representation within it, or more generally, the domain of literary art forms (which is a spatial arrangement in itself also when intertextuality is implicated), space as a *cultural* code of literature and other artefacts, *geocritical* space related to the ramification of literatures and cultural grounds, and so on. We can also focus on literary topographies – the space as grasped in representations. A comprehensive theoretical analysis of the spatial aspects of literatures (as textual, artistic, cultural, geocritical, topographical concepts) appears to be a pertinent project to examine closely and re-evaluate the existing and future reality of smaller (e.g. Slovenian, Estonian, Dutch, Macedonian, etc.) as well as of other European literatures in the face of globalization. Literature as the body of writings of a particular language – or just of a particular cultural territory – and as a specific textual activity, allocates in semiotic (and artistic) space manifold interpretative strategies. Literatures, no doubt, inscribe in themselves cultural memory, and as verbal praxes of art through their forms of enunciation they preserve consciousness of our own cultural terrains and represent a historical record of our own living reality elapsed in time. In any of its senses space represents a *reference frame* for literature.

Focussing the discussion on the idea of space (and the *spatial*) as we find it in the case of literature, and scrutinizing it in depth, perhaps can not guarantee in advance that our thoughts, observations and arguments can be reduced to instances of carefully limited field of reflections. We can neither anticipate nor presume conclusive or strictly fixed angles from such expert talk if the framework of the debate is restricted to the theme “Spaces of Transgressiveness”. Anyhow, being *limited* in the debate of a peer group can indeed imply *unimaginative* debate – a debate *lacking inventiveness* and, consequently, fruitful dialogue on the subject. The heterogeneous scope of the topic “Literature and space: Verbal Art at the Edge” and a wide-ranging view of the idea of space as grasped by the word *extent*, Latin *extensio* (*extendere*, to stretch out) can not prevent us from examining and thematizing it from selective viewpoints, oscillating between more concrete meanings of space (geographical, geocritical, even geopolitical etc), its more strict literary sense as a textual (and, of course, also intertextual) space, and even more evasive aspects of literature and art (and its constitutive elements) as terrains of the poetic (as well as existential or ethical) value.

The idea of space itself is rather tricky and troublesome. Space is – according to *Routledge Encyclopedia of Philosophy* – “meant to stand for a *boundless extension* which supposedly contains everything of every thing of a certain sort [...] it does not refer to anything that can be exhibited in sense-perception” Following the same source, the idea of space is “rather the nothingness outside all things”, “a *boundless all-encompassing expanse*”, an expanse “identical with the void postulated by the atomist philosophers” “According to Cornford (1936), the ‘invention of space’ as a boundless, all-encompassing container occurred in the fifth century BC. However, it is more likely to have occurred in the late middle ages. At any rate, the idea was rampant in Cambridge in the 1660s, when Newton made it a fundamental element in his work on motion. In a posthumous paper, Newton stressed that *space evades the traditional classification of entities into substances and attributes, and has ‘its own manner of existence’*. Until the publication of this paper in 1962, philosophers took Newtonian space for a substance, and most of them thought this to be utterly absurd. In view of the role of all-encompassing space in Newtonian physics Kant regarded it as a precondition of human knowledge, contributed once and for all by the human mind Newton had written that *the points of space owe their individual identity to the relational system in which they are set*. [...] Thus, Newton’s concept of *space* provides the prototype for what is now known as a (categoric) mathematical *structure*, which can be roughly described as *a collection of objects fully specified by a list of mutual relations*.” (*Routledge Encyclopedia of Philosophy*, V. 1.0, London Routledge; my italics.)

Choosing a restrictive framework to elaborate the theme “Literature and space: Verbal Art at the Edge” can probably not prevent lively scholarly engagement and intellectual exchange. Among the objectives to launching the discussion and opening up the sub-theme of “Spaces of Transgressiveness” is the need to reconsider and re-evaluate the views on a number of spatial aspects of literatures, on present claims about the status of literatures, and on their ongoing existence. A particular point is to revise certain judgments and considerations about our cultural histories, to rethink the ideas of our cultural identities views on national literary corpuses and literary canons, which have all certainly changed in the last hundred and fifty years, as the idea of the nation has. Literature is a unique and irreplaceable materialized record of inventive existence of people in a particular language territory, and through its inscriptions it transparently exposes to view articulated powers, abilities and the distinct self-understanding of people in given situations through history. Behind the idea is the need to re-examine some of the key arguments and positions in contemporary literary criticism, cultural theory and artistic

policies and to reformulate the epistemological issues underlying debates on literature in views of a post-colonial initiative of planetary reality of cultures and cultural pluralism. The idea of transgressiveness implies Bakhtin's notion of *otherness* [Russian *čuzoj*], all that is the opposite of one's own [Russian *svoj*, – place, point of view, possession, or speaking person. Otherness as a fundamental concept in Bakhtin's philosophically-grounded approach to dialogism “does not (as does “alien” in English) imply any necessary estrangement or exoticism; it is simply that which someone has made his own, seen (or heard) from the point of view of an outsider. In Bakhtin's system, we are all *čuzoj* to one another by definition: each of us has his or her own [*svoj*] language, point of view, conceptual system [*krugozor* or horizon] that to all others is *čuzoj*. Being *čuzoj* makes dialogue possible.” (Holquist 1981: 423) The theme of “Spaces of Transgressiveness” is launched to promote a stronger theoretical debate on issues of the intercultural openness of literature in Slovenia (as well as elsewhere in the region of Central Europe) and on the ever redefined cross-cultural identities of Europe. The aim of the proposed exchange of ideas is to explore the role of culturally heterogeneous spaces inscribed in modern literary production (i.e. central/peripheral, natural/urban, private/public, national/trans-national/regional), and to consider more closely the multilingual experiences of authors whose works transgress cultural and linguistic borders.

To address the problem indicated by the title, two aspects of transgressiveness related to semiotic space are to be touched on at the start: the textual and the cultural.

### **Textual Space, Open-ended Semiosis, Transgressive Competence**

As an entity of invention and (of reading consumption) literary art – although the claims about autonomous status of its representational strata can be in a sense justifiable – puts in writing a set of interests and concerns. Literature as an illocutionary act, inscribes in itself verbal instances, their immediacies and urgencies. As a praxis of language communication it purports a “way of thinking, a form of life, shares us, and implicates us in a world of already-in-place objects, purposes, goals, procedures values, and so on” (Fish 1982: 304). Literature is apprehended through reading contracts, and is available “within a universe of discourse that also includes stipulations” (id). But literature has the prerogatives to authorize an understanding that operates across given language situations. Recent literary studies have become aware of literature as a *logic and structure of response* and find it necessary to reconsider a naïve theory of utterance meaning. The earlier structuralist views of proponents of a deviation theory of poetic language (e.g. Mukařovský) had been overcome when the focus was relocated on the reader's role (their reading response) rather than the artefact. Although methodological scrutiny of literary phenomenology (cf. Ingarden) or literary hermeneutics (cf. Gadamer) took into consideration such a viewpoint much before post-structuralist debates on the instability of the text and the unavailability of determinate meanings, the angle of analytical insight into the issue became more exhaustively promoted only by current literary studies and their methodological platforms. An awareness of always already embedded differences in the relations between signs and their referents in the physical world or the world of ideas certainly introduces new instances of discerning literature. It generates advanced theoretical debates about it and also brings forth fresh inventions and matrices of writing literature. Recognizing “the *fluidity*, the ‘movingness’, *of the meaning experience*” post-structuralism claims to be a step bringing into focus the objective of “the active and activating consciousness of the reader” (Fish 1982: 44; my italics) In an early article, “Literature in the Reader” (cf. *New Literary History* 1970: 2, 123-162) – which Fish later called his manifesto on the theory of interpretive communities and reprinted it as an opening chapter in his book *Is There a Text in This Class?* – he asserts: “In place of the objective and self-contained text I put ‘the basic data of the meaning experience’ and ‘what is objectively true about the *activity* of reading’ and in order to firm up the new ‘bottom line’ I introduced the notion of the ‘informed reader’” (Fish 1982: 22) The ever-shifting factuality of text is extended to the territory of the reader's actualization, i.e. on the level of pragmatics, or to employ Manfred Jahn's view, to the reader's own context of “cognitive narratology”. “There are as many meanings as there are readers and no one of them is literal,” Fish argues, commenting “the infinite capacity of language for being appropriated” (1982: 305-306). Literature is indeed given to us in an open ended semiosis.

Peirce, long before Fish, had been quite aware of the semiotic situation we attribute to literature. In *A Letter to William James* he wrote: “We must distinguish between the Immediate Object, i.e., the Object as represented in the sign, – and the Real (no, because perhaps the Object is altogether fictive, I must choose a different term; therefore:), say rather the Dynamical Object, which, from the nature of things the Sign *cannot* express, which it can only *indicate* and leave the interpreter to find out by *collateral experience*.” (cf. EP 2:498, 1909) Reading instances involve us simply in the realm of “immediate objects i.e., the objects as represented in the signs”, and the reader's proximity to the text in the reading process of literature is nothing but a meeting with open-class elements. At this point Fish raises an objection about the objectivity of the text, arguing that, although it seems “immediately available” and was claimed to be a “palpable objectivity [...], the objectivity of the text is an illusion and, moreover a dangerous illusion, because it is so physically convincing”. (Fish 1982: 43) The immediacy of text related to the

reading process cannot corroborate textual objectivity, because in such cases immediacy is simply contiguous in space, time, or relation. The text certainly is the 'ongoing accomplishment' (in Fish's words), an infinite entity, a space transgressing the limits of its writing, or a boundless extent in which objects and events occur and have relative position and direction. The reading selves and texts are both "constituted by the way of thinking and seeing that inhere in social organizations". But could we in fact agree with Fish in his conclusion that "then there can be *no adversary* relationship between text and self because they are the necessarily related products of the *same* cognitive possibilities" (Fish 1982: 336 my italics)? As any dialogic relation – and it is essential that dialogue is, by rule, always characterized by *conflict and contradiction* – reading could not but involve negotiations between reader and text. Fish argues "that communication occurs only *within* [...] a system (or context, or *situation*, or interpretive community) and that the understanding achieved by two or more persons is specific to that system and determinate only *within* its confines". He maintains "that the more perfect understanding [...] – an understanding that operates above or across situations – would have no place in the world even if it were available, because it is only in situations – with their interested specifications as to what counts as a fact what it is possible to say, what will be heard as an argument – that one is called on to understand." (1982: 304) The weakness of the claim is that it categorically denies "*an understanding that operates above or across situations*" (my italics). But communications as exchanges of verbal ideas – and reading is an exemplary instance of communication – are, by rule, *instituting* processes, and at least to some degree inventive instances in their roots. So any participation in communicative process calls upon us basic economy, the management of *available resources*, i.e. the participation of our inventive or resourceful thinking. Communicative processes involve us in new situations and intricacies, transmit new details and disclose new facets of the world we are living in. Communication is never a one-way street. Any actual or effective transaction of verbal ideas or thoughts is a *responsive* enterprise enabling negotiations. It establishes an interaction of an individual with one or more other persons and demands that the other is able to deal skilfully and promptly with new situations, difficulties, etc. If transgressive thinking is not employed on the receiver's part of the communicative channel, if the addressee is not *open to otherness* or cannot trigger their own inventive potential and give power to new meanings, no one can expect communicative transactions of texts to be carried out or to be able to accomplish their mission. In this context we can employ the notion of transgressive competence.

### Cultural Spaces in Borderland Territories

Cultural spaces located at the crossroads of cultures, from remote periods and modern ones, are exemplary dialogic. How can the complex reality of cultural life behind the borderland literature be comprehended? How can the semiosphere that grounds the cultural reality of the literature in such territories be explained? The semiosphere is a notion invented by Lotman and defined as "the semiotic space necessary for the existence and functioning of languages" (Lotman 1990: 123), and as "the synchronic semiotic space which fills the borders of culture, without which separate semiotic systems cannot function or come into being" (Lotman 1990: 3). In cases of borderland literatures the semiosphere is certainly different and its complexity calls for critical re-examination now more than ever, when literary studies employ ground-breaking methodologies aware of the need to overcome totalizing insights and concepts. The semiosphere does not overlap with the notion of cultural code, nor with the view of national literature, and particularly not in the case of cultures in border territories. How can we consider (and evaluate) the semiotic space of the Slovenian cultural existence and the effects of its shifting realities through history if we agree that culture in borderlands creates "its own type of internal organization" and also "its own type of external disorganization" (Lotman 1990: 142)? Cultural spaces are semiotic realities which through their historical existence unfold the indeterminate and unpredictable role of the processes that remodel them. Being borderland (the land forming a border or frontier also in a cultural sense) implies an uncertain, intermediate district, space, or condition; but at the same time, the boundaries operate as a mechanism of semiotic (cultural) individuation. The boundary is a *zone of semiotic polyglotism*, which both separates and unites; it represents the co-existence of differences, an encouraging meeting point of ongoing cultural contradictions, and of confronting incongruent traditions. At boundaries, semiotic space transposes otherness and authorizes the one's own cultural potential to articulate the self in intersection with others. At boundaries the ever-shifting processes of cultural spaces are intensified. As a site of exchanges, borderland territory maintains the semiosphere in a state of creative ferment. As a border zone artistic experience of coupling and mixing different cultures, Slovenian cultural space openly – though probably unconsciously – embraced an idea of the *extreme edge of the semiosphere as a site of incessant dialogue*. Its best founding literary texts and "mythic" figures bear witness to how Slovenian cultural space willingly acknowledged otherness as *an open set*, and identified it as an eloquent image to activate the economy of its own cultural (and nation's) survival. But was not it paradoxically at the same time an obstruction to its own recognizable self?

To consider textual memory as a history of borderland territory more effectively (i.e. to read well the memory in texts as semiotic storage) two points in question are to be detailed: first, the nature (or

identity) of culture in borderland territory; and second, the culture as facts in a given semiosphere.

**On the nature of culture in borderland territory, and on identity issues.** Histories of literatures and cultures in borderlands (as well as border-crossing regions) testify to the presence of numerous multilingual residues and surviving traces of contacts. The multilingual nature of these areas in earlier periods and, simultaneously, the incidence of diverse interests (political, economic, cultural) on the territory, with disparities in philosophies (or in sets of principles) behind language differences, certainly empower the invention of a borderland cultural identity (as well as a political and economic one) through a different profile. Such cultures are not only defined by establishing their existence dialogically through their past cultural relations; they are also, as far as the features of their identities are concerned, much more essentially grounded in dialogism. The cultural sense of self, providing distinctiveness and continuity in its cultural existence over time, is in such places certainly much more alert to establishing itself on a solid basis and for its enduring existence. The realization of a cultural self in a border region is a responsive act. (Slovenia is good example: its national identity was long accomplished through cultural pursuits as a substitute for a state and economic sovereignty.) In border regions dialogism is a basic need: it is a philosophy and a way of life. Dialogue is not just a simple instrument foregrounding cultural identity; it is a more or less deep-seated structure. To understand better the invention of borderland identities Derrida's note on invention is quite helpful. He argues that it "distributes its two essential values between two poles: the *constative* – discovering or unveiling, pointing out or saying what is – and the *performative* – producing, instituting, transforming". (Derrida 1991: 206) Concerning the invention of cultural identity and the scenarios of a nation's being the first value focuses the Self in *its very presence* in the state of being present-at-hand (as things are), *identity as sameness* (Latin: *idem*) and the second the performative value which implies "producing, [ongoing event of] instituting, transforming", brings into focus the self as self-ness, *identity as selfhood* (Latin: *ipse*). Performative value focuses on the self in a pragmatic relation, involving (the interests of) the co-existing other. Selfhood is, to quote Heidegger, "one of the existentials which belong to the mode of being of *Dasein*" and "to the same sphere of problems belong such concepts as being-in-the-world, care, being-with, etc." (Ricoeur in Wood 1991: 191). Specificity in the constitution of borderland culture can be found in its innate experience of cultural differences, in its approval of the reality of differences, in its recognition and respect for the existence of the other (and otherness). Borderland cultural identity is grounded in the acknowledgement of validity of the gap between the self and otherness of the other. Dialogue is its primary constituent, the very mode of its existence. Its mode of being involves its open identity. In borderland literatures, the self is irresponsive and interested dialogic relation with otherness, and the other is accepted as a distinct individual entity. The *hetero*-cultural experience ingrained in borderland identity grants the culture, which is usually minor or peripheral, its affirmative approach to the diversities of other cultures and, of course within itself. The specific, unstable history behind culture in border regions, which is very familiar with its own multifaceted reality in the passage of time, equips it with its inherent awareness that *selfhood is no* inevitably *sameness*. Self has a capacity for survival or strong healthy growth precisely because of its hybridity. The self of a borderland culture, its very status of being an individual reality existing over time enables the culture to unfold its different faces of identity not escaping or evading the very core of its being (nor its self-confidence) and not denying itself as a distinct entity in its many-sided dynamism. Self through its alterations (Late Greek *hetérosis*) – that is, through being hybrid (= formed or composed of heterogeneous elements) and not hubristic (= insolent or disrespectful or unaccustomed; Greek *hybris* excessive pride or self-confidence, arrogance) – cares for its future and economizes its qualities and intrinsic worth. *Hetérosis* or hybrid vigour – to employ terms used in genetics – with reference to selfhood or the identity of a culture, is a sign of a capacity for survival or strong healthy growth.

A borderland culture is a manifestly retold story. Through such an identity, cultures in border regions clearly reveal their capacity for survival. There is an inherent requirement for the continuation of a meaningful or purposeful existence of semiotic spaces having given and transgressed (constantly transformed) languages as a cohesive resource. Slovenian culture as a case of a cultural border territory confirms the persistence of such a force openly interacting with otherness – not from weakness, but as a forceful and promising, dynamizing option of survival economics. The nature of culture in border regions reminds us that reducing the meaning of identity to sameness (*idem*) and forgetting that selfhood (*ipse*) may imply diverse possibilities of existence arises from a metaphysical understanding of being which dominated European thought until the beginning of the last century and the modernist breakthrough. As memory kept in semiotic spaces demonstrates selfhood embodies an ample storage reshaping culture. Only in reductionist (metaphysical) thought can a blindness to complex issues of reality occur. Identity is a fact, an entity quite concrete in its being, an actual ongoing condition or circumstance, not something postulated. Culture is not a sum of phenomena, but a *living totality*, where the notion of totality should be understood pragmatically (not metaphysically), i.e., as something inconclusive in its character, an *open, non-finite entity*. Understanding cultural identity as dialogism implies that the measure of authenticity or originality of an inherent national subjectivity has a lesser role than it played in the minds of the romantics and throughout the nineteenth century. Culture is a meeting point of several cross-cultural implications. In the notion of the "soul of a nation" (Herder), which is related to the topic of cultural identity, the

conceptual frame of the idea of the national is due to a romantic view of an absolute and autonomous self which is, of course, inadequate at a time of a mutually related world and a post-national concept of state (citizenship).

It appears that in the globalizing world (and in the new reality of integrating Europe in process; borderland or peripheral countries, with their particular experience and the demanding task in their histories of inventing and instituting cultural identities on border crossing territories surely become well-equipped with views of dialogism or "scopic vision" (Spivak 2003: 108) to challenge and overcome still persistent totalizing attitudes (and politics of) a *planetary* vision of culture (and the world). Borderland cultures exhibit supplementary qualities of conceivably more sensitive and responsive approaches to otherness. Views on the heteronomy of cultural worlds are there more palpable, and in border regions the fact of "*the ungraspable other as the figured origin of our definitions*" (Spivak 2003: 32) is much easier to apprehend. The metropolitan countries – another geocritical notion found in literary and cultural studies (Moretti, Spivak) – lived through less distressing experiences of inventing their identities and are – as a result of their own cultural role in the past (as colonizers) – frequently less perceptive of the heteronomy of cultural worlds. Metropolitan cultures (far from the boundaries or *limes*) become used to their unthreatened position at the centre of a circle where there is no movement, nor other angles of insight. A central point or axis, a *line used as a fixed reference*, represents – as known from physics – a site of no exchange.

Franco Moretti (2000: 54-68) in his comparatist claims, finds peripheral views on cultures very instructive. The edge is resourceful; it enables a different point of view, and is highly aware of multiplied focuses. Awareness that the other is never accessed directly, nor with certainty suggests different reading practices. The same points in challenging task to overcome totalizing insight into a planetary vision of culture and to practice "scopic vision" are found by Gayatri Spivak in her Wellek Library lectures when charting her future view for the field of reformed comparative literature as a border-crossing discipline "honed by *careful* reading" (2003: 108). Aware of a "forever deferred arrival into the performative of the other in order not to transcode, but to draw a response" she advocates "a role of comparative literature in a responsible effort" (2003: 13). But the ingredients of such ideas were inherent in Bakhtin's concept of dialogue. Yuri M. Lotman also turned to the legacy of Bakhtin in the last decade of his life in his elaborate work *Universe of the Mind* (1990) on text, semiospheres and the semiotics of history.

**On culture as facts in a semiosphere.** Texts are semiotic data, although due to their semiotic life, i.e. their ongoing semiosis, their identity as "transmitted and received texts is relative" (Lotman 1990: 13). Lotman argues that because of "*cultural traditions* (the semiotic memory of culture) and the inevitable *factor of the individual way* with which this tradition is revealed to a particular member of a collective, /.../ it will be obvious that the coincidence of codes between transmitter and the transmittee is in reality possible only to a very relative extent." (1990: 13; my italics.) By reason of the "inner, as yet unfinalized determinacy of its structure" text "acquires semiotic life" (Lotman 1990: 18). Texts "preserve their cultural activity" and "reveal a capacity to accumulate information, i.e. a capacity for memory" (id). The text's memory, "the meaning-space created by the text around itself [always] enters into relationship with cultural memory (tradition) already formed in the consciousness of the audience" (id). This means that texts are to be seen as "important factors in the *stimulus* of cultural dynamics" (id) and are themselves "a *reservoir of dynamism* when influenced by contacts with new contexts". (Lotman 1990: 18, my italics) A text is involved in a semiotic space and it results in "the complex semiotic mechanism which is in constant motion" (Lotman 1990: 203). A text has its life in the reality of semiosis and a reality becomes "the single-channel structure" (Lotman 1990: 124) for decoding (or extracting meaning from) its encrypted message. When a reality happens to be the text's communicating channel – and we must bear in mind that natural language is constantly renewing codes and that (as Lotman also reminds us) "living culture has a 'built-in' mechanism for multiplying its languages" (1990: 124) – then that "single-channel" is realized in a plurality of options. An ongoing event of *cultural tradition* and *the individual mode* of entering into the text, both factors are involved in an ever changing platform of circumstances. Text turns out to be "immersed in a semiotic space and it can only function by interaction with that *space*" (Lotman 1990: 124-5; my italics). Semiosis entails "the whole semiotic space of the culture in question" and this is the space Lotman terms it the *semiosphere* (by analogy with the *biosphere* as Vernadsky defined it). "The semiosphere is the result and the condition for the development of culture, [...] the totality and the organic whole for living matter [JS culture] and also the condition for the continuation of [JS cultural] life." (Lotman 1990: 125) *Living culture is a function of the semiosphere in its particular space-time*. "The semiosphere is marked by its *heterogeneity*." (Lotman 1990: 125) A semiotic space is "at one and the same moment and under the influence of the same impulses" still "*not /.../ a single coding structure, but a set of connected, but different systems*". (Lotman 1990: 125; my italics) In Lotman's notion of the semiosphere "the possibility of a pre-verbal or non-verbal modelling system" is suggested, as Han-liang Chang commented in his paper *Is Language a Primary Modelling System? – On Jury Lotman's Semiosphere* at a conference on cultural semiotics: Cultural mechanisms, boundaries, identities, in Tartu

(Estonia, 2002). In his earliest explanation, published in Russian in 1984, Lotman found the semiosphere “a *semiotic continuum* filled with semiotic structures of different types and with different levels of organization” (republished in Lotman 1989: 42-3). In another definition he defined the semiosphere as “the semiotic space necessary for the existence and functioning of languages, not the sum total of different languages”; in a sense it “has a prior existence and is in constant interaction with languages . . . Outside the semiosphere there can be neither communication, nor language.” (Lotman 1990: 123-124)

Here we are back to the issue how to comprehend the semiosphere of the borderland literature. Are the effects of past shifting realities on border cultural territories as ever remaining in existence? Lotman considers a semiosphere “as a *single* mechanism” and argues “that all elements of the semiosphere are in dynamic, not static correlations, whose terms are constantly changing” (1990:127). Is it correct to say that all possible contacts having come down to us from the past are latent in the ever-modifying semiosphere? Lotman is affirmative on the issue: “In the history of art [...] works which come down to us from remote cultural periods continue to play a part in cultural development as living factors. [...] What ‘works’ is not the most recent temporal section, but the *whole packed history of cultural texts*. [...] In fact, everything contained in the actual memory of culture, is directly or indirectly part of that culture’s synchrony.” (1990:127; my italics) The semiosphere represents a holistic world model (as claimed by Mikhail Lotman) behind actual cultural processes, although one should see it as a constantly re-read entity, a reworked actuality, or a re-defined network of cultural traces shaped through ongoing dialogism. The idea of the semiosphere is an exemplary observation on spaces of transgressiveness. Lotman remarks: “Besides, at all stages of development there are contacts with texts coming in from cultures which formerly lay beyond the boundaries of the given semiosphere. These invasions, sometimes by separate texts, and sometimes by whole cultural layers, variously effect the internal structure of the ‘world picture’ of the culture we are talking about. So across any synchronic section of the semiosphere different languages at different stages of development are in conflict, and some texts are immersed in languages not their own, while the codes to decipher them with may be entirely absent.” (Lotman 1990: 126) The distinct notion of semiosphere is capable of grasping cultural deposits enacted in the extensive dormant network and the “continued process of emission and transmission of energy [...] not only between historical periods of one culture, but also between inter-cultural and cross-cultural systems” (Han-liang Chang 2003, here quoted from an electronic version of his paper). By employing the idea of semiosphere “as a generator of information” the debate on the literature and space can be more elaborate and can shift our views to a “post-positivist realist” conception of objectivity (Satya P. Mohanty). It enables us to grasp the cross-cultural realities of individual cultures and the valuable dialogue behind their historical routes, which are asymmetrical because the structure of the semiosphere as an expression of “the currents of the internal translations” (Lotman 1990: 127) is in itself asymmetrical. A thorough (semiotic and hermeneutical) approach to the semiosphere of cultures can provide insights into the obvious asymmetries of cultures in history and help us to bridge the inevitable “untranslatability” of art. Lotman’s “philosophy of culture”, his complex theoretical observations on the dynamism and phenomenology of culture actually semiotically intervened in the debate about history or, to be more precise, it brings to the fore a view of different routes behind the histories of literatures and their spatio-temporal contexts. His work responded to Bakhtin’s heritage, while at the same time attaining a more complex perspective on mechanisms of culture as that universe of mind, which in literature – like tales of Mnemosyne – preserves facts and advocates (re)readings of consciousness in the semiotic spaces of texts to map past modes of human historical existence. The challenging and inspiring idea of the semiosphere is one of those epistemological issues in the recent uncompromising critique of universalism which provide us with an elaborate and useful conceptual alternative to the earlier notion of objectivity. Such ideas seriously constitute an invitation to reconsider some of the key arguments and positions in contemporary views on literary histories. As a concept grasping comparativist residues in semiotic data it is at hand to be for a future planetary vision of a responsive comparative literature. Re-imagining the discipline, Spivak in her criticism of (cultural) area studies programmes, reminds us that comparative literature was made up of Western European “nations” (cf. 2003: 8), and through her further comments she re-evaluates certain aspects of literature teaching practice at philological departments. In her ideas for a “depoliticized” and “an inclusive comparative literature” (2003: 4) as a “loosely defined discipline [...] to include the open-ended possibility of studying all literatures” (2003: 5) she claims that “the real ‘other’ of Cultural Studies is not Area Studies but *the civilization courses* offered by European national language departments, generally scorned by comparative literature” (2003: 8). Similarly Moretti finds the close reading practiced by national literary scholars, especially, of peripheral or – as Evan-Zohar (1990) calls them – ‘weak’ literatures, very rewarding. Both actually support more detailed insight into literatures, into their spatio-temporal placement and their real, verifiable ties with other texts and literatures, and such answers can be well obtained through detailed analyses of the semiosphere. Such encouragement to focus on literatures and space can be understood as an advocacy to understand better the multitudinous world of literatures, their diverse cultural grounds and intricacies. Through notions like semiosphere on the list the discussion of literature and spaces can bring us closer to grasping representations of alterity in a remodelled comparative approach, to understand correctly the asymmetries of literatures and historical movements, and to realize within literatures their much more

incongruent nature, their heterogeneous development, and the inner hybridity outlining their “tradition” The view may well “confirm the inequality of the world literary system: an inequality which” – as Morett argues – “does not coincide with economic inequality [...] and allows some mobility – but a mobility internal to the unequal system, not alternative to it” (2003:78).

To conclude, I am back to the view of the semiosphere of Slovenian culture, which is due to border contacts exemplary asymmetrical. Diverse border languages certainly multiply its heterogeneous entities Slovenian edges (the Karst region, Carinthia, Prekmurje in Eastern Slovenia) are strong “area[s] of semiotic dynamism [...] where new languages [of art] come into being” (Lotman 1990:134). Formed by border-crossing reality and the intrusions of alien cultural codes into canonic norms, Slovenian culture has been actively exposed to the mechanisms of semiotic individuation, as its best authors Trubar Prešeren, Kosovel, Kovačič, Boris Pahor, Tomaž Šalamun, etc. testify. The periphery of a culture as a zone of contact with otherness is most sensitive for its own “untranslatability” in Lotman’s sense. As border-crossing literature its ground is rewarding for the working mechanisms of the semiosphere – for mechanisms of ongoing dialogue, as well as of constant “translations” – and manifestly inscribes in itself its own need for asymmetry and for its own otherness.

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#### Dean Komel: **PHILOSOPHY AND THE CONSTITUTION OF THE INTERCULTURAL SENSE**

Contemporary philosophy is conspicuously fragmented into numerous areas. Some contemporary philosophers deliberately renounce the possibility of rational argumentation; others reduce philosophical argumentation solely to logical analysis. Moreover, we are witness to constant redefinitions of the historical possibilities of philosophy. In such a situation, it is more than justified to raise the question of whether we can still put forward a philosophical claim for the *constitution of intercultural sense*.

Deconstructivism, as a philosophical basis of the post-modern age, claims that all that is available is the reduction of sense, and not reduction to sense. However, constitution is not reduction to sense, and even less construction of sense. Constitution points to the ongoing event of sense, which can also include its own negation, as Hegel pointed out. Hegel, however, and counter-Hegelian deconstructivism and critical theory, in principle fail to grasp the constitutional problem, because they state it within the world, rather than on the level of the *worldliness of the world itself*. And by so doing, they also overlook the boundaries of the philosophical consideration of interculturality as a possibility of an encounter within a culture, as well as among cultures.

The philosophical presuppositions of interculturality can be discussed in several ways. We can take philosophy, as it has developed in its two-and-a-half-thousand-year-old history, for the traditional ground of the intercultural sense of Europe and West. Then it is possible to consider how we can, on this very ground, philosophically handle intercultural phenomena. And finally, we can detect the influence of intercultural mutual understanding in the way contemporary philosophy understands its sense and purpose. Since the first line of thinking about the philosophical presupposition of inter-culturality is fairly far-reaching, we can focus only on its delineation.

Considering thoroughly how interculturality can employ philosophical thinking anew, implies that we already know what constitutes interculturality from the philosophical viewpoint. We thus find ourselves caught within a hermeneutic circle, in which both the philosophy of interculturality and intercultural philosophy try to find a way out for each other. Although this circle most probably cannot be totally avoided, we shall try not to get completely caught up in it and lose our stance. It is our *stand*-point that the path of thought which is trying to establish itself as an intercultural philosophy – as far as it is not merely some form of comparative culture studies – in principle overlooks the essential intercultural sense of philosophy, which has been present since its very beginning and which contributed essentially to the foundational idea of European humanity, and can in the future help bring about its redefinition. Such redefinition does not imply a repetition in the sense of historical restoration, with a renewed return and recourse to origins. The redefinition differs from repetition in the same way that constitution differs from construction: it does not accept historicity as a past identity, but rather re-establishes it in the openness of its future difference.

Within the philosophy of the 20th century, this foundational idea of European humanity, as well as the need for its redefinition, was given particular prominence by Edmund Husserl, the founder of phenomenological philosophy; among his followers, we should also mention Hans-Georg Gadamer, and more recently Klaus Held and Bernhard Waldenfels. Since Husserl's careful consideration on the *worldliness of world* has been acknowledged by critics as diverse as Habermas, Luhmann, Levinas or Derrida, it can serve as an exemplary hermeneutic problem of contemporary philosophy in general, which can be encountered in all its areas; it is related to the question of whether, and how philosophy should mediate a unified understanding of the world without disregarding the differences which determine it, and the exteriority it verges on.

The question is focussed interculturality in a specific way, such that it makes culture an agent of *mediation*, insofar as it opens its centre? *middle* and mediates itself interculturality. And it is here that the philosophical issue of the constitution of this mediating centre *middle* of the inter-dimension of interculturality appears. This mid-dimension is not given *per se*, but demands our involvement. We are justified in claiming that such philosophical involvement, already sketched by Edmund Husserl, contributes to the acknowledgement and recognition of common world experience, in that it does not set up a culture as "ours" or "yours", but rather in the mediation between "one's own" and the "alien". It does not take possession of the alien in order to achieve its own acknowledgement; neither does it exclude the alien in order to defend its own essence. The "essence", in the sense of "identity" as a mode of existence, preserves itself only in anticipation of its own mediation; otherwise it becomes alienated and is seized by a fear of annihilation. The annihilation of the *life-world*? is deeply related to the question of the foundational redefinition of European humanity, as is indicated by Nietzsche's idea of "European nihilism", Scheler's "age of reconciliation", Husserl's "crisis of European humanity", and Heidegger's "oblivion of being", not to mention literary examples.

It is this very mediating sense of culture as interculturality that may reveal that the alienation of the modern world does not imply only negation, which should be overcome, but also affirmation, which calls for the constitution of sense, and which first and foremost implies that a dimension of the world goes on "among" us, and also between "us and us". Even though in truth it can never be reduced solely to us, it is accepted by us already when we ask what is and what is not real. This is even a basic "lesson" given by philosophy – namely, that we cannot commune with the world as something private, not even when we ask for it to change.

The philosophy of culture today cannot rely, for example, on a critical theory of society which would be transformed into a revolutionary practice, or on any "pure theory" which shows no interest in the world and its alienation. Global development segregates "us" and "them", but in a special way, such that both "we" and "they" remain unacceptable in what is genuinely our own. The other cannot be accepted if we do not first accept and even change ourselves; and here a pure philosophical question arises: *who are we?*

In what way can we say that philosophy, since its very beginnings, has been interculturality effective, and that, on this basis, it historically affected the foundational understanding of European humanity?

Philosophy stems from speculation on what *is*, on questions of *being* as such and as a whole. Thus we refer roughly to Aristotle's definition of philosophy. It is obvious that such questions cannot persist in the closed environment of one's own culture, but have to be opened for themselves in – and towards – a world in which various cultures meet, transcending themselves as ordinary environments. *The world* means the *opening up of one's own culture*. In this trans-cultural sphere, philosophy manifests itself in the opening up of the world's horizons, in which various cultures find themselves as if within a certain whole or even a universe of sense. It starts raising questions as to what is the meaning of this and that, and what is the sense of it all. This cannot prevent one culture from outrunning another, nor can it directly enable one culture to cross into another. The primary effect of this loosening of global horizons is that culture as such *becomes a question*, that there arises the need for its definition, and that on the basis of this, a culture *itself* transforms into its constitutionality, which is the main criterion of its acceptability. A testimony of this first transformation of the sense of culture into a foundational sense, which makes culture meaningful for us, can be found in Cicero's statement "*Philosophia cultura animi est*", insofar as it explicitly co-defines culture and philosophy. Before that, the word *cultura* had the sense of "cultivation" and "growing", but not its own foundational sense, which was philosophically indicated already by Protagoras: "Of all things, the measure is man – of the things that are, that they are; of the things that are not, that they are not."

Precisely in the manner it is defined in its foundational sense, the world *cultura* from the beginning points to the crisis of its own definition, which in the late condition of European culture, in the work of Georg Simmel, turns out to be a "tragedy of culture". This crisis of culture is also connected with philosophy within the framework of mutual definitions. Culture does not presuppose only one, binding and all-embracing philosophy in the form of a world-view, and philosophy itself never includes only one, but by rule, several cultures. No doubt certain conditions had to be fulfilled for Cicero to be able to articulate the definition of culture in philosophical terminology; first and foremost, philosophy at its very beginning had to comprehend itself as an elucidation of mind.

What is the philosophical elucidation of mind? For the Greeks, the soul refers not only to human life, but living beings in general. However, only the human soul can be elucidated. It is precisely because of this "fact" that the elucidation of mind leans towards the education of the spirit, as is shown in Plato's metaphor of the cave. The elucidation of mind and the education of the spirit mean the search for the *unity of different* aspects of life. This search for *Unity in Diversity* is a concern for that which is, inasmuch as it is becoming and passing away, staying and leaving, growing and fading away. That the world shows itself in its diversity is an announcement of the freedom in which life fulfils itself as *praxis*; and at the same time, this life experiences the revelation of a world. Life and the world are different, but nevertheless unified. Human beings grow at the locus of this unity in difference by simultaneously yearning for it. A magnificent indicator of this yearning is Greek art, which makes sense – and not without reason – of our culture in general. This is why culture is up to this very day a synonym for life with a higher, excellent, and differentiating sense.

Since philosophy defines being as such and as a whole, which opens up a kind of global horizon, it is necessary that there arise the issue of the relationship between diversity and unity, between the One and the Many. Philosophy is thus searching for "unity in difference", in which differentiation itself is understood as ascending to something higher, which perfects the very human essence. In his novel *Hyperion*, Friedrich Hölderlin writes: "The great Heraclites' saying *hen diapheron heauto* (the One differentiated within itself) could only be discovered by a Greek, because it is the essence of beauty, and before it had been discovered, there was no philosophy ... The Egyptian was incapable of doing it. He who doesn't live with the sky and the earth in the same love and counter-love, he who doesn't live in harmony with this element, in which he moves, is by nature in himself disharmonious and doesn't experience eternal beauty, at least not as easily as the Greek."<sup>[1]</sup> This "One differentiated within itself", *hen diapheron heauto*, if we follow Hölderlin's notes, therefore proves a lot harder nut to crack than it might at first appear. Where do the difference and the differentiated stem from? What is the sense of the One and Unity in this difference? This question leads to the *disclosure of being as such*, the comprehension of *the world within Unity in Diversity*, which reveals a special type of the good, true and beautiful.

The actuality of this issue is shown by the fact that intercultural philosophy directs its primary attention to diversity rather than unity. This attention should, of course, be critically questioned, since the advocacy of diversity, and not unity, is not as simple as we would want or wish it to be. Difference and diversity are not to be considered as things "in themselves", but rather as things "in relation"; if, however, we would like to consider difference outside the relation, we have to think of it as the differentiating One, as something that is beyond comparison, which also holds for Derrida's *differânce*. However, this "differentiating One" was already pondered by Heraclites. Would it not be more appropriate to reconsider open-mindedly this original beginning of the One *in Diversity*, rather than forcefully – and at any cost –

prefer diversity to unity? If we make such a decision, there instantly arises the question of the coordinates of our own starting point.

“Unity in Diversity”, magnificently epitomized in Greek *logos*, is the founding event of European and Western humanity; it is not intra-cultural (*i.e.* an ancient Greek and then Latin event), it is emphatically intercultural, provided that it forms the ground for the development of European history and Western civilization. It enables contact and permeation among cultures, as is obviously the case in early Christianity, which would later ground its sense only in *logos*, understood in the unity of the universal, individual and particular. With Christianity, we can detect the formation of a specifically individual attitude to the world on the one hand, and that universalistic supremacy of the West, which in its eschatological pretensions often directs its destructive power against other cultures, if they are thought worthy of such a designation in the first place. This is where the problem of freedom comes into play, with its particular and universal senses, provided that a human being has to acknowledge the freedom of all human beings in order to attain their own freedom. The cultivation of this freedom can be understood as the development of humanity, which is no doubt a fundamental feature of the spiritual history of Europe; it is particularly characterized by the phenomenon of the Enlightenment, in which the human essence sets itself apart as something unique; the fact that human beings have free use of mental abilities, gives them the assurance that they can have at their disposal whatever can be rationally represented. The modern human of the Enlightenment is as self-reliant as the emancipated conqueror.

With humans placing themselves, through their mental faculties, at the base point of all knowledge and practice in the world, the understanding of Unity in Diversity changes at its very core. The world is in principle and primarily no longer grasped as a place in which life fulfils itself, but rather as something that is at our disposal already. Unity in Diversity is set up *systematically*, be it arithmetical, geometrical, transcendental, dialectical, or a positivistic model of systematics. This aspect of systematics is traceable not only in the field of philosophy and science; it is effective also on the intercultural level. European nations also establish themselves systematically as countries cultivating and enabling international relations. The basic positive heritage of this systematic regulation of international relations is the United Nations.

The systematic regulation of Unity in Diversity nevertheless suffers from exclusionism, in that the One of the system remains outside all the differences, while on the other hand diversity in the system can never be entirely subjected to the One if it is to remain diverse. Thus we are losing touch with the initial understanding of the world as Unity in Diversity. Within the framework of philosophy, this issue was tackled by Leibniz, who found his historical adversary in Voltaire; taken historically, systematically, the best possible world can also be the worst possible world. More far-reaching than this, however, is that we can methodically strive for history and nature taken as a system. This methodology of mastering history and nature each day turns more and more into a *method of power*, which can no longer be satisfied with acquired power, but desires to manipulate this power and become more and more empowered in this management of power, in ruling, mastering and prevailing.

Where systematics subjects historicity to its rule, we are faced with the disastrous consequences of this method of power, and the distinction is put into force between historical and non-historical nations, not on the grounds of historically manifested culture, cultural tradition, but on the grounds of systematically enforced power. The systematic regulation of history establishes itself as a historical world order and as that which even transcends this order with its power. Directly or indirectly, this inflames historical revolutions “from below”, and restorations “from above”, all of them culminating in the first half of the 20th century. They are not in decline, even today, at the beginning of the 21st century; on the contrary, they are gaining strength, even though we are inclined to speak of ‘the end of history’ after the establishment of the system of liberal democracy. We too easily forget that even an abolished history can strike back, not only in various aspects of traditionalism or even more threatening radicalisms and fundamentalisms, but also in the barely noticeable annihilation of the world.

The second half of the 20th century, the period of the so-called Cold War, already saw the consequences of such self-assurance in the power of the system, which is rooted in subjectivist views of the modern age, inasmuch as they seek to develop the ability of traversing from the unified to the diverse, the universal and individual, and the reverse. Undoubtedly, one of these is the positivism of the 19th century, which dared keep its “positive sense” even in the midst of contempt, annihilation, and the destruction of European humanity. Positivism is necessarily accompanied by ideologies which seek to enforce upon the world a historical sense on the basis of dogma, in which differences between ideas, ideals and idols are sooner or later lost.

Two world wars, totalitarianisms, the age of the Cold War, the deepening gap between developed and undeveloped nations, and the present general threat of terrorism, are living proof that the positions and

counter-positions of power can pass over, through the “formal emptiness” of systematic regulation, into a destructive history, also annihilating the political as such. “Formal emptiness” here means primarily operating with empty values, forgetting the loss of the unified value of life and diversity of its evaluations, enforcing supremacy instead, by continuously proving that everything can be regulated by being controllable. What is essential here is to maintain the virtuality of power, since this is apparently the only means of retaining the aspect of Unity in Diversity.

Although in a modified version, Nietzsche’s discovery of European nihilism is still relevant, inasmuch as it calls our attention to the possibility of a historical spirit turning into a phantom, which is especially dangerous today, when this is far more efficiently achievable by using the power of a system. According to Nietzsche, nihilism stems from the incapacity of power to acknowledge differences. However, he did not become fully aware of the nihilism of power regulating all the differences. What is the sense of nihilism in the sense of traversing from identity to difference and back? Firstly, this traversal gives the appearance of power, and secondly, as power, it leaves behind both the unifying One and differentiating diversity, circling self-contentedly within itself. This means that in the unconditional enforcement of power there arises a question concerning the *sense* of that which empowers this power. It is to the great credit of Edmund Husserl and other philosophers of the phenomenological and hermeneutic tradition that they warned us of the self-sufficient enforcement of the power of science as a system, which shows itself in the form of modern technology. Can, perhaps, a philosophical constitution of interculturality help form an alternative by taking culture as its mediator?

This is a question of a possible future sense of European humanity and of humanity in general, as far as it establishes itself in the values of “science”, “politics”, “freedom”, “management” and “solidarity”. Particularly from within the midst of interculturality, culture can mediate between these sectors in that it mediates Unity in Diversity in their worldly activities. This, of course, implies newly establishing culture in the direction of interculturality, which would *sensibly* build upon tradition rather than reject it. The perspective of this culture is as yet undetermined, but its horizon has already been revealed to us on the ground of the tradition of European humanity in its philosophical, artistic, religious, political, scientific and other aspects. On the one hand, it is supported by the complexity of the contemporary world dispersing into numerous worlds, and on the other, it has become quite clear that this complexity cannot be simplified on the grounds of a unified worldview, be it political, scientific, artistic, philosophical or economic. The world is not one on the grounds of an enforced worldview, the world is not dispersed into a multitude of unrelated worlds, and the world is common to us all in the encounter of differences. It is individual for everybody, and yet common to us all. Its counterpart is exclusionism, limiting the shared world, interwoven with the own and the alien, solely to what is “ours”, eventually reducing it to mere nothingness. This is perhaps one of the most difficult constitutive problems of the intercultural grounding of Europe, although its sense is strengthened by the fact that European culture has not constituted itself solely by defending its own essence, but more often in the element of crucial mediation between its own and the alien.

The direction towards a philosophy of interculturality is not limited only to the European internal sense; it has become, as it were, global, in that it *acknowledges the Earth* as a community of existence. The redefinition of European humanity points not only to the inner, but also to the outer dimension, in that it delineates to itself the fate of the whole planet, not only in the usual ecological aspect, but rather in the cultural, “inhabiting” aspect, already implied in the former. This sets the problem of interculturality in a much larger context of confronting Europeans with “Outer-Europeans” which also requires a changed concept of culture; it is no longer possible to cling solely to the notion of our own culture, not even the European one – every cultural self-representation comes to light in intercultural openness. “Leftist” theoreticians in particular detect in this nothing more than expansion of “Eurocentrism” and “hegemony and imperialism” by other means, directed by the power of the capital. However, we have to distinguish between the “economic propaganda” of multiculturalism and potential perspectives of interculturality, since we have no other starting point for confronting the most topical issues of contemporary society, including those compelled by the logic of capital. The possibility of *encountering* in the same world does not necessitate in advance imperialist global supremacy. On the contrary, this is what the philosophy of interculturality should demonstrate in reconsidering the concept of the world in a permeation of unity and diversity, without ideologically overthrowing the power of the One and suppressing diversity under the supremacy of the One.

“Encountering” is thus understood as the key word of the philosophy of interculturality, which has not only a methodological, but also a relational sense. Within encountering, we encounter someone or something, while we also encounter someone or something for the sake of the encounter itself.

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## NOTES

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[i] F. Hölderlin, *Hyperion*, Stuttgart 1998, p. 91.

## Jelka Kernev Štrajn: CHÂTEAU DE COPPET – A SITE OF MODERNITY?

Karyna Szmurlo, a theoretician and historian of literature, and an excellent connoisseur of French woman writers of the 18<sup>th</sup> and 19<sup>th</sup> century, defined Coppet as a space that "after two hundred years of rethinking this ideology, built not upon coercion, but on mutually supportive yet antagonistic principles,

remains an inspiration for us; we still recognise in its philosophical tone – irrevocably bearing the marks of the Revolution – the reality of our own modernity.” (Szmurlo 1991: 3). About the work of Madame de Staël, the central personality of the Coppet circle, she writes: “Geo-graphics infiltrate the titles and tables of contents of her work, illustrating how deeply her thought organized itself around ideas of wanderings, passages, crossings and transgressions. This corpus of the voyage, governed by a metonymic logic of spatial continuity, also functions as a metaphoric index /.../ As for the great novels, they can be classified as fictions of transgressed boundaries par excellence.” (Szmurlo 1991: 1) In addition to the transgressions discovered by Karyna Szmurlo, de Staël’s discourse can be attributed other similar features, such as intermediateness, marginality and the reflection. These must be pointed out, because they may not be immediately obvious.

Consequently, it may be proper to think that de Staël’s work cannot be approached without taking into consideration the entire context in which they were created, and that its temporal and particularly spatial coordinates must be explored. It is well known that the period in question is the end of the 18<sup>th</sup> and beginning of the 19<sup>th</sup> century. With regard to space, we could speak of Europe, if this term were not so loose and at the same time weighed down by numerous connotations. For this reason, we can use a rhetorical figure, a synecdoche, and say that the space in question is Coppet.

Château de Coppet is an old castle named after an idyllic town on Lake Geneva. The castle was known as early as the 11<sup>th</sup> century, its first proprietor being Pierre de Savoie (died 1268). After him, it was owned by the poet and knight Othon de Granson among many others. In 1784, the castle was bought by Jacques Necker. [1] It became Madame de Staël’s country home and gained in importance particularly after her irreconcilable dispute with Napoleon Bonaparte’s regime, after which she was exiled from Paris. She was forced to close her famous Paris literary salon in Rue du Bac and leave the capital, which under Napoleon’s rule became increasingly constricted. She moved her salon to the countryside and direct vicinity of the crossroads of three cultures: the French, German and Italian.

Between 1792 and 1815, although with short breaks, a special group of European humanists met at Coppet, which in literary history is known simply as “the Coppet group”. Its legacy is discussed at symposia that are nowadays periodically organised at the castle. The group, whose central figure was Madame de Staël, cannot be defined as a philosophical circle, nor as a literary school that existed within a single predominant trend. Neither did it resemble a codified academic society. And it was a far cry from a political party or a religious sect. Still, it was significantly different from traditional literary salons of the *ancien régime*. (Balayé 1994) The specific character of this space, which on the one hand continued the tradition of 18<sup>th</sup> century salons, while on the other greatly surpassing their aristocratic classicistic culture and aesthetics, is the very reason the phenomenon “Coppet” is discussed in this paper.

It is fascinating and significant that moving the salon from the capital to the countryside not only changed its location; it also greatly transformed its function and, consequently, its identity. This change was predominantly brought about by specific historical circumstances: the revolutionary and post-revolutionary period at the meeting point of two centuries and its cultures, which was undoubtedly a tectonic break in the history of western civilisation. Admittedly, Europe had experienced crisis periods before, but the feeling of profound change brought about at that time had never been so powerful (Hauser 1969: 193) It caused those European intellectuals who frequented Coppet for over two decades gradually to redirect their attention from the finite, transparent and hermetic past to the indefinite, opaque and open present, which can be discerned from the Coppet discourses. The term discourse is here used in Benvenisto’s sense, as a language adopted by an individual as their oral or literary practice. It is used in the plural because, due to its ideological, religious, linguistic and national heterogeneity, there was a special atmosphere of discursive plurality at Coppet. This plural and multi-national context gave rise to cosmopolitanism, within which there were differences in mutual interdependence that were reflected in the discursive practices of the Coppet circle, comprising all the guests of Madame de Staël. The French were mostly emigrants, but there were also others: Germans, Italians, Swiss, Austrians, etc. They were part of a group on the margins, seemingly excluded from the mainstream historical current of events, but in reality the group had a tremendous influence on European culture. This is not surprising, since it was there that a completely new, modern view of history gradually emerged.

The modernity of de Staël’s discourse, and the modernity of Coppet as the cultural historical context of this discourse, are concepts in the light of which should be reconsidered some implications connected with the topic of the eluded identity and the transgressions of space mentioned by Karyna Szmurlo in the quote at the beginning of the paper. Consequently, the first question is how we should understand modernity.

Above all, modernity should not be mistaken for modernism, the prevalent aesthetic trend of the first half

of the 20<sup>th</sup> century. Modernity is a much broader category that should not be associated with the general opinion that what is modern is anything new. Neither should the expression be given the meaning that emerged from the famous French dispute between the Ancients and the Moderns (*Querelle des Anciens et des Modernes*) in the second half of the 17<sup>th</sup> century. In this dispute, modernity was viewed as the opposite of the old and traditional. Contemporary definitions of modernity vary (cf. Weber, Habermas, Foucault, Calinescu, de Man, Vattimo, Touraine, among others), although none declares modernity to be the opposite of the old and traditional.

For the purposes of this paper, we should concentrate on the understanding of modernity as distinctly historical and based on the principle of otherness, while at the same time, it does not permit any form of totalising. The closest to this understanding are the post-structuralist insights of Paul de Man, although admittedly the author has still not fully articulated the difference between modernity and modernism (Škulj 1991: 42). Moreover, he has never completely revealed his understanding of modernity. Most of his statements on this topic can be found in his essay "Literary History and Literary Modernity" in *Blindness and Insight*, 1971. According to de Man, modernity can only be understood in correlation with the historical, which at first may seem paradoxical, since modernity and the historical seem to be contradictory terms. But they only "seem to be"; de Man points out that in reality modernity always represents a new beginning, a new origin: "Modernity exists in the form of a desire to wipe out whatever came earlier, in the hope of reaching at last a point that could be called a true present, a point of origin that marks a new departure." (De Man 1971: 148). Therefore, modernity "trusts in the power of the present moment as an origin"; the origin and the beginning are historical notions, which means that on the one hand modernity does indeed deny history, but on the other it justifies itself by it. History cannot be avoided, as Nietzsche already discovered, but de Man attempts to rethink Nietzsche's theory through the concept of modernity. Namely, modernity is not the opposite of the historical; it is in correlation with it: "Considered as a principle of life, modernity becomes a principle of origin and turns once into a generative power that is itself historical." (De Man 1983: 150) The historical is its essential component, which is not fixed; it is changeable and fluid. Thus, modernity implies that the historical is an interpreted and ever re-interpreted fact.<sup>[iii]</sup>

But considering the fact that the Coppet group is a phenomenon that cannot be compared with anything in the history of western culture and literature, for the purpose of shedding light on all its dimensions, it seems reasonable to combine de Man's views with the understanding of modernity as a process of radical differentiation between the world of objectivity and the world of subjectivity as defined by the French philosopher Alain Touraine, who formulated his extensive, and also somewhat problematic, interpretation of modernity under the influence of Habermas and Weber, among others. According to Touraine, this discourse excels in a balanced combination of two lines of thought and two discursive strategies: rationalisation, or objectification, and subjectification: "La modernité a rompu avec le monde sacré, qui était à la fois naturel et divin, transparent à la raison et créé. Elle ne l'a pas remplacé par celui de la raison et de la sécularisation, en renvoyant les fins dernières dans un monde que l'homme ne pourrait plus atteindre; elle a imposé la séparation d'un *Sujet* descendu du ciel sur terre humanisé, et du monde des objets, manipulés par les *techniques*. Elle a remplacé l'unité d'un monde, créé par la volonté divine, la Raison ou l'Histoire, par la dualité de la *rationalisation* et de la *subjectivation*." (Touraine 1992: 13) Thus, modern democratic discourse is a result of a dialogue between rationalisation and subjectification. This dialogue is indispensable, because according to Touraine, subjectification can become too obsessively focused on one's own identity, whereas rationalisation without subjectification can become merely an instrument of power: "Il n'y a pas une figure unique de la modernité, mais deux figures tournées l'une vers l'autre et dont le dialogue constitue la modernité: la rationalisation et la subjectivation. Gianni Vattimo cite des vers de Hölderlin: *Voll Verdienst, doch dichterisch wohnt / der Mensch auf dieser Erde*. Les succès de l'action technique ne doivent pas faire oublier la créativité de l'être humain." (Touraine 1992: 265) For the consideration of the role of Coppet as a domain of art, Touraine's interpretation of modernity is suitable as long as it evokes the balance between the thought of the Enlightenment and Romanticism, seeing that Coppet is not merely a cultural, historical and literary phenomenon, but also a political and sociological one.

Modernity "disenchanted the world" through a process of rationalisation. As a consequence, disintegrating representations of the world created a secular culture in Europe. But this process lasted only until modernity turned away from western rationalism, so that today, the process of rationalisation is no longer regarded as a "historical objectification of mental structures". Moreover, Habermas claims that Weber does not merely address the secularisation of western culture, but also the development of modern society. (Habermas 1988: 7) In this sense, modern society can be defined as the context in which modern democratic discourse emerges. This discourse is a manifestation of the modern democratic society, which is supposed to have defined extremely strict limits to the influence of political authority on an individual, thereby facilitating the subordination of state authorities to personal freedom. And this was the goal to which Madame de Staël and the entire Coppet circle aspired.

Coppet Castle was open to individuals of any nationality, conviction and religious belief. It was open to supporters of the Revolution and to some Royalists. But the lively and fiery confrontation of opinions there never caused any serious intolerance, although almost everybody who entered the castle was politically engaged. They rejected despotism and militarism, cherished freedom of thought and speech, and believed in the ability of the human spirit to constantly improve itself (Balayé 1994). Gradually, Coppet became one of the centres of the opposition to Napoleon's regime. Even in religion, there was a spontaneous and unrestrained dialogue between Protestants and Catholics at Coppet. Here, and nowhere else, there was interaction between philosophy, politics, morality, religion and literature, because the members of the Coppet circle not only took an interest in literature and criticism, but also in politics, philosophy, religion, linguistics, science and history, which gave the group its special interdisciplinary character and, in addition to its religious and national diversity, it significantly contributed to its elusive identity. Considering the fact that the phenomenon cannot be completely defined and that it is contradictory – here, I must point out the contradiction between the aristocratic *habitus* of Madame de Staël and her distinctly democratic convictions – Coppet undoubtedly exceeded the limitations of its socio-political and cultural historical context by becoming a site of a modern democratic discourse and thereby of modernity.

Coppet became a refuge in 1792. The first regular visitors began frequenting the castle in 1794 (Constant, Bonstetten, Meister). In 1798, they were joined by the linguist Wilhelm von Humboldt, who taught German to the hostess, two years later by Simonde de Sismondi, and in 1804 by August Wilhelm Schlegel. Other visitors were Mathieu de Montmorency, Bouterweck, the Danish poet Oehlenschläger, Friedrich Schlegel, Chateaubriand and many others. The Coppet group was never a static entity; de Staël's guests came and left, and frequently returned. The most intensive intellectual activity took place between 1805 and 1810. During that time A.W. Schlegel wrote a comparison between the Greek and French Phaedras and finished his famous *Lectures on Dramatic Art (Die Vorlesungen über dramatische Kunst und Literatur)*; Charles Victor de Bonstetten wrote an essay on imagination (*Recherches sur les lois et la nature de l'imagination*); Prosper de Barante explored 18<sup>th</sup> century French literature (*Table de la littérature française pendant le XVIIIe siècle*); Simonde de Sismondi wrote his extensive history of southern literatures (*De la littérature du Midi de l'Europe*); Constant adapted Schiller's *Wallenstein* for the French stage; and de Staël wrote her novel *Corinne ou l'Italie*, and her extensive work *On Germany (De l'Allemagne)*. In addition to an incessant emphasis on the equality of national literatures, the innovation of group activities at Coppet was the articulation of a realisation that European literature must be seen in the context of the connection between northern and southern literatures. In this light, in her work *De la littérature*, de Staël introduced the question of the plurality and equality of individual national literatures and reached a similar conclusion to A.W. Schlegel's in his *Briefe über Poesie, Silbenmass und Sprache*, where he observed that it was impossible to speak either of superior or lesser national poetries.

There was also lively translation activity at Coppet. The most prolific was A.W. Schlegel, who translated Shakespeare and Calderon. Madame Necker de Saussure (Madame de Staël's cousin) translated A.W. Schlegel's lectures into French, whereas A.W. Schlegel translated de Staël's essay *Considérations sur la révolution française* into German. De Staël incorporated many translated passages in her book *On Germany*, and so did Sismondi in his work on south European literatures. The members of the Coppet group saw translation as one of the main tools of communication among different cultures.

In view of all this, Remi Forycki's theory, although extremely roughly presented, may not seem exaggerated. Forycki declared that Coppet was a public space in terms of the Habermasian *Öffentlichkeit*. This notion denotes "the public and private sphere of political activity within civil society." (Forycki 1998: 48) Through the Staëlian context, Forycki explained what had happened to the Czech philosopher, and Husserl's student, Jan Patočka (1907-1977). He attempts to prove that cultural identity is what enables the individual to resist manipulation by authorities, and consequently it is undoubtedly part of the process that constitutes a modern subject. In the 18<sup>th</sup> century, the public and the private were not yet differentiated, although the process of differentiating and establishing a relationship between them started before the French Revolution. It was a long and complex development, so here we must focus on a particular aspect of this development, which was significantly connected with literature.

[iii]

In the mid-18<sup>th</sup> century, a literary public emerged from a certain stratum of the middle class, mostly reading literature, but also attending theatres, concerts and exhibitions. But the most important role in this phenomenon was played by literature, particularly by the novel. This literature was, namely, both from the point of view of reception and of subject matter, closely connected with private space, the most intimate family sphere. In bourgeois society, the centre of this sphere was the patriarchal nuclear family. [iv] Here, new, intimate relations among family members began to emerge. These relations were generated by new, humanism-based values that facilitated the emergence of a new type of subjectivity. The most suitable form for "experiments with subjectivity" was the letter, which was no longer merely a

means of communication. Through its first-person narrative, it became a medium for “imprints of the soul”. Gradually this subjectivity became public, since some examples of correspondence were intended for publication from the very beginning. (Habermas 1989: 65) This gave rise to a new type of literature: the epistolary novel (Richardson, Rousseau, Goethe, Madame de Staël). In these novels, subjectivity was an important subject matter, reducing the “distance between the subject and the object” to the minimum. In this way, the “reader became the author’s confidant”, and both intimately relived the fate of the novel’s heroes in their own way. For example, Richardson “directly calls on the reader to stand in the place of the novel’s hero”. (Hauser 1969: 82) Consequently, fictional reality in a way spilt over the edges of the novel, and the reader was able to blend it with his or her own reality. Thus it could be said that the most significant component of these novels was “reality-illusion” or the fictional. Therefore, it is no coincidence that according to Habermas, who quotes Hauser and Kayser, in this period – in the late 18<sup>th</sup> century – the term *fiction* finally became accepted in connection with literary prose, and that something similar also happened in theatre, where, with the introduction of the “fourth wall”, drama became fiction as well. (Habermas 1962, 1989: 66) It is probably no coincidence, either, that at Coppet guests used to retire to their quarters after lunch and write letters to one another. As their hostess keenly observed, they thus became real “sujets de fiction”. Indeed, fiction is one of the most frequently discussed notions in de Staël’s work. In her treatise *Essai sur les fictions* (1795), [V] for example, she tries to convince writers that the reader finds the greatest joy in being able to identify with the heroes of a novel, in other words, that the thematisation of the reading public represents the most attractive dimension of literature for this same public. This is why de Staël champions the novel, particularly the epistolary novel, which most successfully captured the most mundane human feelings: “*Mais dans les romans tel que ceux de Richardson ou de Fielding, ou l'on s'est proposé de côtoyer la vie en suivant exactement les gradations, les développements, les inconséquences /.../ les événements sont inventés, mais les sentiments sont tellement dans la nature, que le lecteur croit souvent qu'on s'adresse a lui avec le simple égard de changer les noms propres.*” (De Staël 1871: 68) The experience of heroes in a novel must therefore be similar to the experience of the reader, because only in this way is the reader prepared to cooperate directly with the author while following the story of the novel. In the second half of the 18<sup>th</sup> century, the best form for the thematisation of these feelings was the epistolary novel. But the intimate relationships that were the subject matter of these novels gradually expanded outside the living room of the nuclear family and began to emerge in the salon, the most important room in the bourgeois home. There, apart from family friends, a broader circle of people met, which in salons evolved into the reading public. Gradually, it became increasingly socially engaged and critical towards politics, and as a consequence, the private entered the political sphere through the literary public, becoming critical and even polemical. Therefore, the political and literary public, as two images of the public, intertwined in these salons. (Habermas 1989) At Coppet, this phenomenon was manifested in the fact that although this space could be clearly declared the undisputed peak of the salon tradition, it must be pointed out that from the point of view of cultural history, it surpasses this tradition. This fact manifests itself in the distinct plurality of this space, which is significantly connected with its unique historical context, which was determined by many factors, the most decisive being the following: the direct impact of ideas that led to the French Revolution, the rejection of the absolutism embodied in Napoleon’s regime, opposition to Napoleon’s efforts at the unification of Europe, classical German philosophy – particularly Fichte and Kant – the aesthetics and poetics of the early Romantic period and, last but not least, the personality of the proprietor of Coppet, Madame de Staël. In addition, special mention must be made of English philosophy (Hume), whose empiricist ideas probably to a certain extent influenced the specific Coppet subversion of the conception of organicism, among others.

The fact that Madame de Staël is a long-canonised author is indisputable, because it is well known that she has long occupied a specific place within the curriculum of literary history. But at the same time it cannot be ignored that gradually a considerably ambiguous attitude towards her texts has emerged, particularly in connection with her style. The hybrid genre and style that is an important characteristic of her writing has been understood by some (for example by Fontanes, Touchard) as a flaw, whereas others discover the beginnings of modern writing (Forycki) and even the first traces of *l’écriture féminine* (Marie-Claire Vallois, Margaret Higonnet) in her works. Moreover, it is a known fact that her book *On Germany* became world-famous immediately after its publication and was adopted by her contemporaries both in Europe and in the United States as a kind of cult text. Critics probably forget that certain contradictions in her essays may be a consequence of her conviction that literature must always be understood in the context of social relationships, which undoubtedly influenced her attitude towards rhetoric and style. This may also be why she consciously overlooked the laws of classic, academic style, contributing to its dethronement from its pedestal as an eternal and absolute value in that very period (at the end of the 18<sup>th</sup> and beginning of the 19<sup>th</sup> century). Consequently, she developed a special spontaneous way of writing that was supposed to contribute to clarity of thought, but in the process, she often went to the other extreme and in certain passages obscured her discourse. Nevertheless, sometimes this obscurity is a result of introducing new values, Romantic ones, at the expense of the old, Classicist ones. With de Staël, this introduction never takes place in the form of a complete break with

tradition. She is more interested in how to harmonise tradition with the demands of the new era. She advised writers, her contemporaries, to modify their view of Antiquity and begin to take an interest in recent history. She was convinced that literature must open up to modern experience, which was completely irreconcilable with the strict laws of French Classicist tragedy (the demand the three unities). For this reason she recommended plays with subject matter and motifs from modern history and proposed that alexandrine verse be abandoned. (De Staël 1968: I/256) With these and other similar proposals she paved the way later taken by the French Romantics that was most explicitly outlined by Hugo in his introduction to 'Cromwell' (1827). Similarly, she did not see the French Revolution as a turning point, although she was probably more aware than many that the Revolution had ushered in a new age. In an analogous manner, we can interpret her implicit poetics: an attempt at balancing respect for tradition with the introduction of the new. For this reason, she is in favour of expressing passion although in the process she never forgets philosophical reflection, which must confirm with reason what sentiment reveals to us: "*Il faut une philosophie de croyance, d'enthousiasme; une philosophie qui confirme par la raison ce que le sentiment nous révèle.*" (De Staël 1968: II/138) Accordingly, she ever attempted to adjust her role in her circle – in the group that gathered at Coppet – to the demands of the new time and co-create a discourse of the emerging modern democratic society.

All this considered, it might not be redundant to rethink the place of her work in the literary canon. This issue is particularly interesting because it is about a system that at the time she helped to create, since her critical work, like the work of most members of her circle, was much more exhaustive than her literary work. Therefore, Paul de Man in his essay, *Mme de Staël et Jean-Jacques Rousseau* probably with good reason defined de Staël's place in the literary canon as distinctly reflective. Here, this expression has two meanings: reflection as a distance in thought (the distance adopted by the narrator from the narrative) and reflection as a mirror image (the relationship of her work towards other works in the canon). This double meaning can be further extended with the evocation of this notion's third dimension of meaning, which in de Man's essay is merely implied, although it can be deduced because of de Man's broad theoretical context, which is significantly based on Kant's philosophy (Norris 1988), particularly Kant's *Third Critique*. According to Kant: "Judgment in general is the faculty of thinking the particular as contained under the universal. If the universal (the rule, principle, or law) is given, then the judgment which subsumes the particular under it is determinative. This is so even where such a judgment is transcendental and, as such, provides the conditions a priori in conformity with which alone subsumption under that universal can be effected. If, however, only the particular is given and the universal has to be found for it, then the judgement is simply reflective." (Kant 1790: BXXVI)<sup>[vi]</sup> Unlike the determining judgement (*bestimmende Urteilskraft*), the reflecting judgement (*reflektierende Urteilskraft*) is connected with the subjective, particular and contingent, which is the reason it can be presented as the third dimension of the meaning of de Man's notion of reflection, and at the same time be connected with the issue of an organicist understanding of art and society.<sup>[viii]</sup>

Reflection, detected in critical texts by Madame de Staël, for example, even in her first essay on Rousseau (*Lettres sur les écrits de Rousseau*, 1788), her favourite author, although it can also be found in some of her literary works, is closely intertwined with passion and enthusiasm (De Man 36). In this context, Georges Poulet states that de Staël's discourse is a combination of the "reasoning spirit" and "suffering heart". When suffering becomes unbearable, the individual finds the strength to become cool-headed, which enables one to think about one's pain, although the suffering does not cease. (Poulet 1971: 19) The establishing of a distance between the observing and the suffering parts of the self makes the sentiment more profound. In other words, each work of art contains elements that surface only when evoked by a distanced critical insight: "*Il n'y a que Rousseau (et Goethe) qui a su peindre la passion réfléchissante, la passion qui se juge elle-même sans pouvoir se dompter. Cet examen de ses propres sensations, fait par celui-la même qu'elles dévorent /.../ Mais rien n'émeut davantage que ce mélange de douleurs et de méditations, d'observations et de délire, qui représente l'homme malheureux se contemplant par la pensée, et succombant à la douleur, dirigeant son imagination sur lui-même, assez fort pour se regarder souffrir, et néanmoins incapable de porter à son âme aucun secours.*" (De Staël 1871: 329) What we have here is a contact between the directness of experience and the indirectness of thought reflecting on this experience. According to de Staël, this contact was best presented by Goethe and Rousseau. Following their model, she also reflects on passion: "Je me transporterai donc à quelque distance des impressions que j'ai reçues, et j'écrirai sur Héloïse comme je ferais, je crois, si le temps avait vieilli mon cœur." (De Staël 1871: 5) We find a similar approach in the introduction to the book *De l'Allemagne*, where the author explains: "Je m'étais cependant interdit dans ce livre, comme on le verra, toute réflexion sur l'état politique de l'Allemagne; je me supposais à cinquante années du temps présent; mais le temps présent ne permet pas qu'on l'oublie." (De Staël 1968: 38)

What this distance is about was very precisely expressed by Paul Valéry in his verses from *Fragments de Narcisse*, where he says:

Cette tremblante, frele, et pieuse distance  
 Entre moi-meme et l'onde, et mon âme, et les dieux [\[viii\]](#)

Reflection is therefore a much more complex term than it may appear at first glance, because on the one hand, through de Man's concept of Modernity, it extends to Bakhtin's notion of the dialogic, whereas on the other, through this same approach, as it turns out later, it questions one of the basic concepts of Romantic poetry: the concept of organism.

Regardless of whether she writes from the point of view of literary or social criticism, De Staël invariably establishes a distance from what is nearest to her. In the essay on Rousseau, it is the author of *Nouvelle Héloïse* himself. In the space of this distance, created with an act of reflection, the subject of enunciation of de Staël's discourse is constituted. (De Man 1966: 38) From the historical perspective, this region seems distinctly intermediate, situated between two centuries and their cultures and, moreover, during the time of the Revolution and the following years. Madame de Staël's position is invariably the point of view of a witness to historical events, observing them from a highly personal perspective, although it is history that always speaks through her testimonial discourse. (Omacini 1982) In other words, her subjective discourse constantly transcends rationality (Compare Forycki 1998: 54, 55). At least in the case of her work *On Germany*, this discourse can also be read as a complex dialogue between 18<sup>th</sup> century Enlightenment ideas and the Romantic sensibility that emerged at the turn of the century and became fully developed in the 19<sup>th</sup> century, or, in more radical terms, as the dialogue between French and German cultural identity. Identity is here meant as something that facilitates self-identification, while at the same time opening the nation or the individual and allowing them to establish a relationship towards the other. Because of this specific role of her discourse as both an intermediary and a connecting link, de Staël's place in the world literary canon can be defined as peripheral and not yet completely fixed, as fluid and transgressive, in terms of breaking through the borders of a fixed definition of a certain cultural entity or else as open to the historical, heterogeneous, the contingent and variable, in other words, for those very elements that according to Kant refer directly to the reflecting power of judgement. The latter is also "understood as an articulation of the experience according to which the demand for totality and universality implied by the logic of the universal explanation cannot be fully implemented by definition", and is therefore always open, "recording the irreducible heterogeneity of the specific and the inaccessibility of the universal". (Riha 1993: 89) According to Kant, this openness of the reflecting power of judgement enables the recognition of the "a-subjective Other" or, in other words, it facilitates openness to otherness, openness of the self to the non-self: "C'est un moi insatiable de non-moi ..." as Baudelaire put it in "*Le peintre de la vie moderne*". [\[ix\]](#) (Baudelaire 1980: 795)

Openness to the non-self or openness to the other is a prerequisite for any dialogue, including that between different cultures. This is also the reason that openness to the non-self, which is theoretically based on the reflecting power of judgement, is also the only appropriate defining feature of any intercultural dialogue. Thanks to this defining feature, the Coppet discourses at least here and there reveal elements that confirmed the theory that Coppet as a place of inter-cultural dialogue was not only a public but also a modern space. This means that it transcended the borders of its own time and space, which were decisively marked by the emerging national myths. What happened at Coppet was not only a break with the Classicist poetics and views of the Enlightenment period, but also a breakthrough – although only faintly indicated – the conceptual framework of Romantic poetics. These elements manifest themselves particularly in the Coppet treatment of fundamental Romantic notions, such as irony, longing, chaos, genius, organism etc. To create a true image of Coppet and how it outgrew its own milieu we should study the use of all these notions, a task beyond the scope of the present paper. For this reason, we focus on only one notion: the organism.

The organism as a fundamental concept of Romantic poetics and aesthetics, as an element of the Coppet discourses, is pivotal in the context of transcending cultural-historical definitions and for the issue of cultural identity. Moreover, in literary criticism, it has kept a more or less important role late into the 20<sup>th</sup> century. It is included in our discussion of Coppet because, on the one hand, among all Romantic concepts, it has the most powerful ethical and political connotations, which are not connected merely with and do not transcend only the Enlightenment and Romanticism, but are also correlated with de Man's and Baudelaire's concept of modernity [\[x\]](#) as well as with Habermas' concept of the modern democratic discourse; and on the other hand, because A.W. Schlegel was one of the main members of the Coppet circle and one of the most important theoreticians to solidify this concept. In addition, the organicist understanding of art and, above all, the criticism of this understanding in de Man's and – in a sense – even Baudelaire's insights of literary criticism, significantly marked the contemporary understanding of art.

The organism concept was developed by German Romantics: the concept in its metaphorical application

broke through the framework of scientific discourse and became anchored in the humanities, particularly in literary criticism. Nevertheless, it did not become limited to it; it also significantly affected ethics and politics. Within Romantic poetics, the organism concept evokes a harmonious whole that allows aesthetic pleasure in the presence of a perfectly organised work of art, and is based on the Kantian difference between the artificial and natural whole. This difference was supposedly also decisive in the solving of the old opposition between content and form. Romantics maintain that these are more closely connected than had been generally believed. While the mechanical form is external, the organic form is internal and thereby ingrown in the content of a work of art. This means that it is not only content that carries messages, but also the form of a work, which is artistic in as far as it is a result of spontaneous inspiration. A work of art that is intended and understood as an organism is defined primarily by the constant unification of typically Romantic oppositions between spirit and matter, the infinite and the finite, oneness and variety, attraction and repulsion, revolution and tradition, etc. These oppositions in Romantic poetics "are no longer only logical correlates or moral alternatives to be chosen from, but also potentials that man attempts to turn into reality at the same time". (Hauser 1969: 208) According to A.W. Schlegel, the most exemplary works of art are Shakespeare's plays, because their dissonances and consonances and contrasts within harmony represent true Romantic works of art *avant la lettre*. (A.W. Schlegel 1966)

These tenets of organicist aesthetics were also recognised by the Coppet authors, undoubtedly under Schlegel's influence. Schlegel's idea of bringing together opposites in a harmonic whole was adopted by S. Sismondi, who in his exhaustive work on south European literatures wrote that the laws of symmetry according to which all elements are arranged in the direction of a single goal, allow a level of unity and perfection in each of these elements, invariably leading from unity to variety. In addition to this, he initiates the reader into the secret of creation by facilitating the view of a single thought that guides a broad variety of actions and interests. (Becq 1994: 831) Variations of this thought on the inner dynamics of a work of art can also be found in de Staël's works, particularly *On Germany*: "*L'âme est un foyer qui rayonne dans tous les sens; c'est dans ce foyer que consiste l'existence; toutes les observations et tous les efforts des philosophes doivent se tourner vers ce moi, centre et mobile de nos sentiments et de nos idées*", (De Staël 1968: II/196); whereas somewhere else in the book, she says: "*L'idéalisme intellectuel fait de la volonté, qui est l'âme, le centre de tout.*" (De Staël 1968: II/169) They also appear in the work of P. de Barante, another author who mentions a centre that is equal to the soul, and in the work of Bonstetten, who speaks of unity in variety. (Compare Becq 1994: 825-830) From *On Germany*, however, it is evident that the author connects Romanticism with attributes such as the organic, modern, multi-layered, and varied; whereas she associates classicism with the mechanical, conservative, single-layered, and uniform. (De Staël: 1968/II) At the same time, she compares Romantic principles with the democratic bourgeois order, and Classicist principles with absolutist authority.

The Coppet authors in a sense adopted Schlegel's concept of organism, which is based on the opposition between mechanism and organism, but in the process, they nevertheless expressed a certain reservation that is far from insignificant from today's perspective. What stands out is the fact that the Coppet authors avoided the expression as such and, instead of the term organism, preferred to use the expression organisation, probably because they detected certain implications of this term which are connected with absolutism and totalitarianism and which in German Romanticism could not be expressed at the time. German Romantic authors did not understand society in terms of the activity of individuals who enter into contractual relationships with one another. They (Schleiermacher, Schelling) compared the state with an organism living according to its own needs, independently of the arbitrary will of the legislator. [\[xi\]](#)

They speculated that there exists a centre that, on behalf of the whole, manages the individual parts that are subordinated to it. Complete subordination to the whole is not only a characteristic of an anatomically perceived organism, but also of a mechanism, a system that all Romantic authors categorically rejected. It appears that at this point Romantic poetics produced a certain inherent contradiction that probably resulted from an anatomical perception of the organism. The Coppet authors, each in their own way drew attention to the mechanistic aspects of the perception of an organism. In this sense they warned also against the powerful influence that Paris as a centre had on the periphery. For example, in her essay on the French Revolution (*Considérations sur les principaux événements de la Révolution française*), de Staël lucidly, although with considerable sarcasm, states that the French capital plays the role of the state, while the court plays the role of the capital. Constant even more critically and explicitly addresses the problem of the relationship between the periphery and the centre: "*...dans les états, ou l'on détruit ainsi toute vie partielle, un petit état se forme au centre; dans la capitale s'agglomèrent tous les intérêts, la vont s'agiter toutes les ambitions. Le reste est immobile. Les individus perdus dans un isolement contre nature, étrangers au lien de leur naissance, sans contact avec le passé /.../ se détachent d'une partie qu'ils n'aperçoivent nulle part, et dont l'ensemble leur devient indifférent, parce que leur attention ne peut se reposer sur aucune de ses parties.*" [\[xii\]](#) (Constant 1957: 1193)

With their anti-centralist and anti-totalitarian approach, the Coppet group went beyond certain implications, not only those of the enlightenment, but also of romantic poetics. Although not completely intentionally, they succeeded in this, because the concept of organism as proposed by these authors is closer to modernism or to a physiological, rather than anatomical, understanding of the organism. With a modern or, if we use a somewhat paradoxical expression, with a non-organicist or non-anatomical understanding of organism, we aim at the understanding of this notion that was developed by the French philosopher G. Canguilhem on the basis of Claude Bernard's cell theory.<sup>[xiii]</sup> It was he who pointed out that in the early 19<sup>th</sup> century, an organism was perceived from the point of view of anatomy, individual parts being formulated in accordance with the purpose of the whole: "*C'est donc la physiologie, qui donne le clé de la totalisation, celle que l'anatomie n'avait pas su fournir. Les organes, les systèmes, d'un organisme hautement différenciée n'existent pas pour eux-mêmes, ni les uns pour les autres en tant qu'organes ou systèmes, ils existent pour les cellules, pour les radicaux anatomiques innombrables, leur créant le milieu intérieur /.../ qui leur est nécessaire. En sorte que leur association, c'est-à-dire leur rapport de type social, fournit aux éléments le moyen collectif de vivre une vie séparée /.../ La partie d'un tout dépend d'un tout, qui ne s'est constitué que pour son entretien.*"<sup>[xiv]</sup> (Canguilhem 1970: 330) Therefore, it is not only the cell that exists because of the organism; the organism also exists because of the cell. If Bernard's theory of the cell is applied either to the structure of society or the structure of a work of art, we find that communication within such an organisation flows not only from the centre to the periphery, but also contrariwise. Therefore, the whole does not have precedence over the individual part, and similarly the state does not have precedence over the individual. With a certain reservation we can say that at Coppet, the first examples of the anti-organicist view of society and art emerged, because in their own way the authors exposed the illusory nature of organicist metaphors. This not only challenged the organicist view of society and art, but also of language.

The Coppet authors largely focused on the latter, both in theory and practice. As we have already pointed out, there was very lively translation activity going on at Coppet, because of which the practical problems of various languages also needed to be solved. Difficulties with the translation of poetic language arose in the process. The specific nature of the latter was tackled by everybody alike, not only the linguist W. von Humboldt. He was particularly interested in the problem of the relationship between poetic and everyday language, or how the universal reality of a language as a sensory medium that facilitates thinking can be brought into harmony with the particular demands of poetic creativity. He discovered that this contradiction could not be solved with logic or through deduction. Instead, it had to be synthesised through the act of poetic creation, because: "Everything in a language is based on an obvious or concealed analogy; its structure is consistently *organic*." (Humboldt 1903-1904: III/315) (Italics added by J.K.Š.)<sup>[xv]</sup>

A similar conclusion was reached by A.W. Schlegel, who in his *Briefe über Poesie, Silbenmass und Sprache* analysed distinctive features of the poetic language relying on Herder's and Rousseau's statements. Although he perceived poetry as a generating force, in other words in terms of the organicist approach, his linguistic theory is transcendent because it contains rudimentary the beginnings of the structuralist linguistic theory. According to the lucid observations of Kurt Mueller-Vollmer, an expert on the romantic's linguistic theory, A.W. Schlegel anticipated the arbitrary character of the linguistic sign and formulated a theory that does not merely directly concern the object, but also the idea of the object or its representation (Kurt Mueller-Vollmer 1967). For this reason, an individual can assume a reflective attitude towards the self and the world only through language. But Kurt Mueller-Vollmer failed to notice that through his theoretical insights, A.W. Schlegel contradicted both Humboldt's theory of the organic structure of language and his own claims about the organicist nature of language and literature. The theory of the arbitrariness of the sign and the theory of language as an organic structure are namely mutually exclusive.

The beginnings of the anti-organicist understanding of art and society in Coppet discourses are significant because they prove that, in the early romantic period, there already existed elements revealing that from the very beginning romantic thought contained a certain sense of a plural reality that clearly shows that the organicist myth of the nation as a fixed and sealed totality can be surpassed and that its mythological nature can be exposed or rather demystified; this is despite the fact that, as it is generally known, the early Romantic period was a time when the process of the forming of nation states, national awarenesses, and national identities began, a process that in its present-day version is more important than ever.

The life and work of Madame de Staël (1776-1817) almost completely coincide with the period of the emergence of the first foundations of the formation of national states – Benedict Anderson places this period between the years 1776 and 1838 – in the period when national awarenesses began to emerge in Europe; when the "blend of capitalism, press technologies and unavoidable differences between human

languages created the possibility for the emergence of a new form of imagined community that through its basic morphology set up the stage of the modern nation". (Anderson 1999: 56) This unavoidably gave birth to the thought and social processes that from the French Revolution, during the Napoleonic Wars and the Spring of Nations in 1848, and through the Franco-Prussian War of 1870, brought humanity to the implementation of a host of nationalisms, including well-known catastrophic consequences in the 20<sup>th</sup> century.

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## NOTES

[\[i\]](#) Jacques Necker (1732-1804) was Minister of Finance under Louis XVI and the father of Madame de Staël.

[\[ii\]](#) For more on the topic, see Škulj 1991, 2, 42-46 and 1995, 2, 17-30.

[\[iii\]](#) For more on the topic, see Habermas, 1989.

[\[iv\]](#) These characteristics of the private sphere were among the reasons for the appearance of feminist literature in tis period, warning against the patriarchal nature of the public sphere that emerged from the reading public. As we know, the latter was mostly composed of women.

[\[v\]](#) Goethe translated the text into German and published it in *Die Horen* magazine.

[\[vi\]](#) Urteilkraft überhaupt ist das Vermögen, das Besondere unter dem Allgemeinen zu denken. Ist das Allgemeine (die Regel, das Prinzip, das Gesetz) gegeben, so ist die Urteilkraft, welche das Besondere darunter subsumiert, (auch, wenn sie als transzendente Urteilkraft a priori die Bedingungen angibt,

welchen gemäss allein unter jenem Allgemeinen subsumiert werden kann) bestimmend. Ist aber nur das Besondere gegeben, wozu sie das Allgemeine finden soll, so ist die Urteilskraft bloss reflektierend. (Kant 2001:19, 1795: BXXXVI)

[vii] This interpretation of the third dimension of de Man's "reflection" is not meant as completing his understanding of modernity, but only as one more view of modernity that could shed more light on this complex phenomenon.

[viii] Quoted from de Man 1966: 38.

[ix] For more on the topic, see Škulj 1991 and 1995.

[x] With his understanding of modernity, Baudelaire questioned the notion of an art work as an organism (Compare Škulj 1995:22)

[xi] For more on the topic, see Becq 1994: 809-851.

[xii] Quoted from Becq 1998: 90.

[xiii] Claude Bernard (1813-1878), the French physiologist who discovered nerve centres, independently of the central cerebral nerve-center.

[xiv] Quoted from Becq 1994: 828.

[xv] Quoted from Kurt Mueller-Vollmer 1998: 211.

## Marijan Dović: **LITERARY REPERTOIRE AND INTERFERENCE AMONG LITERATURES**

Contemporary empirical and systemic approaches to literatures (as they have evolved in the last two or three decades) can offer some interesting discussion points about the spatial/ transgressive in literature. One of these is the notion of literary repertoire that I would like to present here: it could be interesting in raising 'multicultural' questions about literatures on a theoretical level – from a more geographical and cultural point of view. I will focus on one contemporary systemic approach to literature: Itamar Even-Zohar's polysystem theory, also labeled the Tel-Aviv School, which has been developing in Israel since 1970. This theoretical enterprise is based on the achievements of Russian formalism, especially its second phase, which Even-Zohar calls dynamic functionalism, and the achievements of semiotics. Its practical grounds were actually provided by problems connected to research into translation carried out by the Tel-Aviv group.

### **Literary polysystem and literary repertoire**

The central notion in polysystem theory is a *literary polysystem* (which has not so much in common with a "literary system" from the sociological systems theory). The literary polysystem is not defined as a series of texts or authors, but – as in other systemic or empirical approaches to literature – as a whole network of activities and relations connected with texts. Even-Zohar tried to visualize this network with a Jakobsonian six-part communication scheme adapted to literature:

\* institution (context)

\* repertoire (code)

producer ('writer') \_\_\_\_\_ consumer ('reader')

\* market (contact/channel)

## product (message)

Literary repertoire. Although it could be interesting how Even Zohar changes the 'context' into institution, which redirects our attention from the so called 'referred context' – Even-Zohar argues that Jakobson's model does not pay enough attention to the role that socio-cultural institutions have on the production and dissemination of this code – in the discussion about the spatial, the notion of *literary repertoire* is more challenging. Literary repertoire is defined as an aggregate of rules for creating and using (literary) products that need to be shared at least in one part by all (active) participants in the system – this is indispensable to the system's functioning. It is more than merely the rules, which are usually referred to as 'code' – more than just grammar – this is also 'the lexicon' of a given system. It is structured on two levels: the first is the level of individual elements, repertoemes; the second is the level of more general models – complexes of pre-knowledge which are the basis for all our understanding (this sounds similar to Bourdieu's notion of habitus – individual schemes acquired in the course of time). Repertoire is one of the key elements of a literary polysystem that enables its ongoing processes and evolution. Even-Zohar's analyses show how a national literary system takes up foreign patterns and models when it needs them to maintain its 'systemic optimum' (Even-Zohar 1990).

The role of the repertoire in the system can be shown through the problems of literary translation, which is one of the favorite polysystem topics. Even-Zohar claims that the question of translated literature and its place and functioning inside a given culture has not been sufficiently investigated. It is often excluded from historical explanations of national literatures (also for ideological reasons). We always deal with two systems: the *source system* (SS) and the *target system* (TS). The translated corpus from a source system SS functions actually as an (important) subsystem of the target system TS. It is usual that translated literature remains something peripheral within the given system, but sometimes it happens that it occupies the central position and creatively helps model the literary center as a primary innovative force. Through translated literature new models entering the target system, which essentially changes the repertoire, introducing new composition patterns, techniques, genres etc. But it should be stressed that a target system always selects its source according to its own needs and preferences (Even-Zohar 1990, Toury 1995).

There are three circumstances in which the translated literature is likely to occupy a central position in a given system:

- if a young, not yet fully developed literature is in question;
- if the literature has a peripheral/minority position with regard to another literature;
- when it is weak because of an internal crisis.

(We will see later that in the case of Prešeren most of these conditions were present)

**Literary interference.** Nevertheless, creative connections between literatures need not be carried out by directly translating individual artistic creations. One of the key polysystemic concepts is *literary interference* – which seems to have much in common with the traditional comparativistic notion of influence (although Even-Zohar criticizes comparativistic research into influence, claiming that they have not moved beyond the level of individual studies towards general laws and mechanisms; most comparativists would probably not agree with that). Interference is when a source literature becomes a source of direct or indirect borrowings in the target literature. These processes are essential for every literature and should be studied intensively and be included in explanations of national literary histories (which in practice is rarely the case). But these borrowings need not be connected only to texts, genres or models – and I think it is here that we can look for one of the differences from comparative research into influence – it is possible to model all the relations in the target polysystem on those of the source system: this also includes, for example, the organization of literary critique, institutions, publishing system, state funding of art and so on.

The fact remains that every young literature was established on the basis of interferences – and its subordination to foreign influences could have lasted for a long time – which is especially characteristic of minority literatures. Many historical examples can be indicated: the subordination of American literature to English, Czech or Slovenian to German etc. The subordination lasts longer especially when the producers are bilingual and also take an active part in the dominant polysystem. The Slovenian romantic poet Prešeren also wrote poetry in German, and actually – as Kajetan Gantar has pointed out in an excellent study – he could use more sophisticated allusions, for example, from Latin poetry in his German sonnets because of his awareness that he could address more sophisticated, intellectual

readers. Actually, with Slovenian poetry he was not only creating the 'products', but he also had to create an adequate audience – which was quite a task, taking into account that he had to dispute with a strong faction advocating "rural" language and literature.

Anyway, if we observe it from this perspective, the relation dominant-subordinated becomes something "normal": it is no shame to recognize that at least once all European literatures were in a similar situation – which is when they 'separated' from Latin tradition. Even-Zohar's working hypotheses concerning the general principles of interference tell us that literatures are always in interferential relations (all of them once developed through interference from more developed: Accadian could not manage without Sumeric, Latin without Greek, the major European literatures without Latin), and that interference is usually one-way: source literature can have a strong impact on the target, and ignore the latter completely at the same time (still, two-way interference is possible). There are also some conditions necessary for the emergence of interference: first of all, certain contacts must exist. Usually, the source literature is selected with regard to its prestige, not necessary political or economic, but cultural. It can also be selected because of its dominance. But in most cases interference appears when the target literature lacks something, for example when the young creative generation feels the current norms existing in the repertoire/polysystem are inadequate. In this case they want to renew them, and if they find the things they need already developed in another polysystem, interference is very likely.

**Interliterary exchange mechanisms.** A high degree of responsiveness to interference can be found in so-called *dependent* polysystems – those that have been leaning on a foreign polysystem for a long time and become weak – not necessarily in terms of economy or politics, but when another system offers new, more developed functions. A weak polysystem cannot operate using exclusively its own repertoire, which is why it takes up foreign models and repertoires. This insufficiency cannot be numerically evaluated, yet on the level of the structure and repertoire it is possible to speak of a *systemic optimum*. If this optimum cannot be maintained within the framework of the domestic repertoire, the need to adopt foreign models is generated by systemic requirements: this happens through mechanisms of interference and transfer. In this way, systems *renew* their repertoires. The traces of these relations remain visible, structurally built into the polysystem's history, also when direct relations are long past.

In his numerous studies Even-Zohar has considered especially the complicated relations between Russian and Hebrew – this for him is an example of transfer, where Hebrew is in the position of a dependent (weak) polysystem. In its young phase in the 20<sup>th</sup> century the emerging Hebrew literature leaned strongly on the Russian repertoire and adopted the latter on all structural levels. Actually, it was more than just an influence, it helped to constitute the new Hebrew culture, its literary language, and (with that) also models of reality (The levels of transfer mentioned in Even-Zohar's studies include directly 'importing' avant-garde prosody and intonation models, syntax, calques – in fiction writing the use of indirect speech – dramatic dialogues; the use of 'void pragmatic connectives' as a marker of a 'live' spoken language etc.) An important point here seems to be that through taking up the elements of repertoire *more is going on than just a pure exchange of "patterns"* – because these patterns hide more than that – within them a culture's general models and the societal values are inscribed. And after the phase of direct transfer is over, the next generations take up what was already there, and often the new repertoire elements start developing their own dynamics. In the course of time the original source becomes less and less visible, but anyway these processes remain inscribed within the structure of a polysystem.

### **Prešeren and renewing the Slovenian literary repertoire**

These processes can be illustrated by one of the key periods in Slovenian literary history, a period in which the development of a repertoire became a central problem, which was dealt with consciously at least by one part of the participants in the system. In the early 19<sup>th</sup> century the literary system in Slovenia was evidently underdeveloped and weak, unable to perform aesthetic functions comparable to other European languages and literatures, having a little bit more tradition only in religious, utilitarian and quasi-nationalistic writing. Attempts to provide highbrow reading for the small educated population were mostly not very convincing in terms of aesthetics. Even more – a great number of intellectuals shared the opinion that it was first necessary to develop literature for simple, uneducated people, so more ambitious attempts were often condemned as being too early in regard to 'the state of the art' in Slovenia.

In this period (the 'twenties and especially the 'thirties) two men appeared with high potential and high aspirations: an unusually educated critic and essayist, Matija Čop, and an extremely talented poet France Prešeren – let it suffice to say that they, especially the latter, now represent the top canonical figures in Slovenia's history, bordering on national idols, and that 'Prešernoslovje', studies of Prešeren and his works, is actually one of the founding pillars of Slovenian literary criticism and historiography. It is

hard to say anything new on this subject – I will therefore only try to present (from a new vantage point) some of the well-known facts which are interesting in the context of the interliterary exchanges that take place through literary repertoire.

**'Cultivating' a poetic language.** The first thing that is interesting here is the idea of *cultivating a poetic language* through the systematic introduction of new poetic forms. This project, initiated by Matija Čop's famous literary program (the program itself was obviously based on the ideas of the Schlegel brothers) includes the development of complicated poetic forms mostly from Italian and Spanish poetry. A fortunate coincidence provided an able artist on the other side of this program – able not only to perform this 'metrical tasks', but also to pour a real lyricism into these verse forms (Prešeren's poetry can still please even a contemporary reader). The list of the forms introduced and mastered by Prešeren is impressive: the sonnet (in Schlegel's theory this form was a real test of artistic and linguistic ability), the wreath of sonnets, terza rima, ottava rima, Spanish romance with assonances, oriental forms (ghazal), nordic ballad, complicated forms of Latin poetry etc.

**Versification system.** One of the crucial repertoire questions that the Čop-Prešeren duet faced successfully was the *question of a versification system* that would best suit the emerging Slovenian literature. Here we must admit that both had a profound sensitivity to this problem, which was not only in Slovenia burdened by the tension to 'copy' the antique quantitative system. It is interesting how Čop's attitude towards the antique verse system (which he was very familiar with, besides being a great fan of Roman poetry) was ahead of his time. His analyses and argumentation are very clear: the most appropriate versification for Slovenian literature is a syllabotonic system which is also supported – unlike in some other Slavonic countries – by the fact that the accent of the word is not fixed to first, second, last or any other syllable. The quantitative verse system simply doesn't suit! Čop's conclusion becomes even more important when we take into consideration the fact that at least a small part of the learned literary production in Slovenia was – following German examples – trying hard to imitate ancient quantity and its complicated versification rules. Although Prešeren had also written some poetry in the "ancient" way, the general decision for syllabotonic versification system was made – and this gave Slovenian literature a chance to develop according to the natural conditions of its language: using the various rhythmical patterns of exchanging accented and non-accented syllables, combined with rhymes, as its primary expressive means. In this way this unstable systemic feature was stabilized – which was of extreme developmental importance.

**Opening new spaces.** Prešeren had really adopted many models (of his creative influences one could mention Petrarca, Dante, Ariosto, Tasso; Vergil, Ovidius, Horatius; Voltaire, Gleim, Uhland, Burger, Byron, Kollar, Mickiewicz and many others) – and here it is not crucial at all whether he adopted them directly or indirectly – the point is that these models became an important part of the Slovenian literary repertoire and began to live their own life (for example: the sonnet has been a very popular vehicle for poetic expression since then). Even more: Prešeren adopted these models so naturally, as if they were 'ours'. And this is how the worlds of the medieval troubadours, the Roman empire, medieval and renaissance Italy or Prešeren's contemporaries, European romantic writers, became the 'common property' of our culture and literature – we actually feel them to be Slovenian ways of experiencing life! It is possible to say that a by-product of Prešeren's enterprise – especially in regard to the later significance of his works for the development of the literary system – was also *anchoring* the connected 'semiotic spaces' of other cultures in the Slovenian cultural sphere.

There are also some other 'repertoire changes' provoked by Prešeren – I would like to mention his introduction of a new, 'bohemian' type of romantic poet into Slovenia's social life with his introduction of 'scandal' through poetry, with his interesting erotic life, his love for excessive drinking, rumors about pornographic ditties he is said to have written and so on. We can also mention the heavy conflict with the censorship system and the development of means for fighting against it: the censorship pressure lay heavily on this generation – they had to consider the possibility of their products being banned for ethical or political reasons at any time. In this situation they activated a network of supporters, intellectuals from other Slavic countries, which helped in this uneven cultural confrontation of concepts.

## Conclusion

Prešeren's example shows how repertoire development requirements are one of the crucial generators for changes and exchanges in literary polysystems. National(istic) literary historiographies resist and try to conceal these processes by overemphasizing the originality of national authors and their products, yet history shows clearly that no literary system could do without borrowing repertoire elements from other systems at least in one phase. In this way the historical interconnectedness – or transgressiveness – of literary discourse (which has been acknowledged by literary comparatists at least since thematological discoveries of 'travels' of fairy motifs in Euro-Asian) comes to the fore.

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Bertrand Westphal: **APPROCHES MÉTHODOLOGIQUES E LA TRANSGRESSION SPATIALE**

*To transgress* dérive du latin *transgredi*, dont le sens était essentiellement spatial : "passer outre". Chez les Romains, on transgressait lorsque l'on passait de l'autre côté d'une limite ou d'un fleuve, ou lorsque l'on passait d'un argument à un autre (sauter du coq à l'âne). On transgressait également lorsque l'on dépassait la mesure.

La *transgressio* était l'action qui consistait à *transgredi*. Le substantif était en principe le reflet du prédicat, mais la *transgressio* pouvait aussi être une figure de rhétorique, que l'on traduirait aujourd'hui par hyperbate. Or l'hyperbate est *a priori* la figure de l'inversion ou de la dissociation de mots normalement connectés. Pour d'autres, l'effet propre à l'hyperbate tient plutôt à "une spontanéité qui impose l'ajout de quelque vérité, évidente ou intime, dans une construction syntaxique qui paraissait close"<sup>[1]</sup>. Peut-être cet effet est-il présent dans la transgression même, qui agencerait une plage d'intimité au-delà de la clôture. Enfin, la *transgressio* pouvait être une infraction : c'est qu'on ne franchit pas une limite sans sortir de la norme. Mais les Romains n'accordaient pas la priorité à cette acception du mot.

Dans les langues germaniques (allemand, suédois, notamment), la racine *transgressio* n'a pas eu de succès ; elle n'a pas été incluse dans le *Wortschatz*. En français moderne (comme en italien et en espagnol), la *transgression* a pris un sens qui s'est développé à partir des marges de l'étymon : la *transgression* consiste à violer une limite plus morale que physique. On transgresse la loi. En anglais, le sens de *transgression* ou de *to transgress* est à peu près équivalent, mais l'acception du terme paraît plus dynamique. Sans doute parce que *to trespass* est un quasi-synonyme. La distinction entre *to trespass* et *trépasser* aurait été plus stimulante, le *trépas* étant la transgression ultime en français. L'italien aurait servi d'arbitre, *trapassare* se situant quelque part entre *transgresser* et *trépasser* (en français).

Quoi qu'il en soit, les espaces de notre *transgression* ne sont plus ceux des Romains. Pour ces derniers, il se serait agi d'examiner ce qui se déploie au-delà du seuil. Tout bonnement. Encore que... Le seuil lui-même était perçu selon deux angles différents : il était *limes*-ligne d'arrêt, mais aussi *limen*-frontière poreuse destinée à être franchie.

Or la *transgression* n'est pas le propre du franchissement des lignes poreuses. Elle suppose une volonté, en tout cas une effraction. Les Romains prenaient davantage attention à la nouveauté qu'à l'interdit. Peut-être qu'au fil du temps on a fini par croire que la nouveauté ne pouvait se situer que dans l'espace investi par effraction.

Dans ce contexte mouvant, parler des espaces de la transgression n'est pas une affaire simple.

On a d'une part l'espace de cette transgression, en quelque sorte la zone d'intimité qui s'ouvre au-delà d'une construction qui paraissait close, pour reprendre la définition de l'hyperbate. Cet espace-la peut être examiné selon une optique sociopoétique. Il s'agit alors de déterminer les règles en vigueur au seuil au-delà duquel la transgression est constatée et les manières dont elles sont appliquées, écartées ou violées. Plusieurs codes régissent les limites : le code de l'hospitalité, par exemple. L'intersection, la zone de contact entre les acteurs sociaux, est régie par des règles formulées. Ces règles supposent qu'un rythme soit partagé. À défaut d'un rythme commun, la transgression sera inévitable. Dans certains cas, la transgression est massive et se transforme en intrusion voulue : c'est notamment le cas lors des guerres, vastes transgressions d'État.

Mais la transgression peut entretenir un autre type de relation avec l'espace. Elle peut devenir une caractéristique propre à ce dernier et s'appliquer à de grands ensembles.

L'espace est généralement perçu dans sa stabilité (sauf lorsqu'il est sujet à la guerre, qui vise à modifier ce qui est établi). Mais, dans une optique héraclitéenne, on pourrait aussi bien estimer que l'espace est dans son essence même transgressif. Il n'est pas fixe, il fluctue, il est saisi dans des forces (ou génère une dynamique) qui provoquent (que provoque) sa permanente oscillation. Peut-être ce *perpetuum mobile* sanctionne-t-il non plus tant une transgression qu'une transgressivité inhérente à la spatialité et à toute perception du lieu. La philosophie s'est attachée à étudier cette mobilité/transgression permanente. *Panta rei*, déjà. Ses applications littéraires sont plus manifestement présentes dans les œuvres de Lotman (et sa "sémiosphère"), d'Even-Zohar qui a conçu la théorie des polysystèmes et surtout dans celle de Deleuze/Guattari (et leur "dialectique de la territorialité").

Enfin, et on l'aura compris, la transgression étant un franchissement spatial (un mouvement)

appréhendé selon une norme morale, elle relève principalement du point de vue. De même que l'espace est souvent perçu dans sa stabilité, le point de vue est fréquemment perçu dans son unicité. Mais, à partir du moment où l'espace se fait mobile (transgression, transformation), il entre dans le champ d'une multifocalisation (multiplication, voire prolifération de points de vue), qu'il s'agira d'examiner dans toute sa complexité. L'imagologie est l'étude du point de vue sur un lieu. La géocritique est l'étude de la multifocalisation. L'une est placée dans la perspective du modernisme, l'autre s'inscrit dans une "logique" postmoderne, où la transgression se relativise à mesure que les concepts de vérité (et donc de norme), ainsi que de réalité, s'affaiblissent.

### **Sociopoétique de la transgression : quelques pistes.**

La transgression présente des aspects variables – c'est même son apanage, mais elle répond à une série minimale de critères définitoires. Ainsi ne peut-il y avoir transgression que dans la mesure où l'on contrevient à un code, ou à un rite. La transgression ne peut donc être constatée qu'en présence de deux instances : le contrevenant et celui qui atteste la contravention. Parfois il s'agit de la même personne. Tel est le cas de Robinson Crusoë sur son île, qui trace des lignes de démarcation et cumule avec délices le double statut de juge et de partie. Mais Robinson lui-même sort assez vite – et inéluctablement – de son isolement ; la présence d'un Vendredi s'impose, sans doute parce que la transgression est par nature dans l'interaction. Se laisserait-on trop vite d'être le ressort exclusif de son propre tribunal ?

Le code est en principe monologique. Il est explicité dans un discours oral ou écrit, mais en tout cas articulé, à savoir : saisi dans une concaténation d'articles, qui laissent aussi peu de marge que possible à l'interprétation. La monologie du code s'étend bien entendu à son environnement : elle suppose que tout instant participe d'une durée homogène et que tout lieu relève d'un espace uniforme. La transgression intervient des lors que se dessine une alternative à la ligne droite temporelle, aux figures trop géométriques de l'espace policé. Elle est dans le *side step* qui laisse percevoir les incalculables déclinaisons de l'espace-temps.

Le code fait de l'espace-temps un bloc unique et destiné à le rester. Or la transgression impose le pluralisme, à savoir la polychronie et l'hétérotopie. L'hétérotopie connaît du reste plusieurs acceptions : c'est bien entendu l'espace appréhendé dans sa pluralité, mais c'est aussi, selon Michel Foucault, l'espace que l'individu soustrait aux intrusions extérieures. En d'autres termes, il s'agit de l'espace secret, l'espace de l'hyperbate, celui où l'individu déploie un supplément de vérité intime à l'abri des yeux du monde, des prescriptions du code.

La tension entre la volonté d'unité sanctionnée par la norme et le besoin de liberté qui s'esquisse dans les marges du code inscrit l'individu dans une société où coexistent des rythmes asynchrones, plus ou moins compatibles. Tout le monde ne vit pas à la même vitesse. Et la vitesse est elle-même un concept très relatif. Pour un Indien Hopi, la construction d'une autoroute ne mérite pas que le désert du Nouveau-Mexique soit lacéré. À quoi bon ? Les cycles régissant la vie du Hopi n'ont rien de commun avec la frénésie du Blanc. La polychronie et l'hétérotopie produisent une polyrythmie, que l'on a pu étudier dans des disciplines comme l'anthropologie (par Edward T. Hall, à qui j'ai emprunté l'exemple précédent). On en tient moins compte en littérature – ce qui est dommage. Car la pluralité des types d'inscription dans l'espace-temps, et la prolifération des rythmes qui en découle, sont en partie à la base d'une approche sociopoétique. C'est que le code écrit est certes une entité monologique, mais il est complété et parfois suppléé par un certain nombre de normes non-écrites, qui sont destinées à réglementer les marges, à assurer des transitions. La transgression n'est pas forcément le résultat d'un acte volitif ; elle provient aussi d'une transition mal négociée, d'une tension non contrôlée qui se transforme en turbulence. Je me demande avec inquiétude ce qui se passerait dans mon Limousin d'adoption si l'invité refusait d'obtempérer à la fameuse injonction : "Mais finissez donc d'entrer !".

De véritables rituels sont destinés à muer en transitions acceptables ce qui autrement seraient des transgressions.

Il m'est déjà arrivé d'examiner<sup>[iii]</sup> des situations de ce type à propos de zones où le mécanisme rituel est particulièrement bien huilé, et coercitif (la contravention pouvant entraîner la peine capitale ou le début d'une vendetta). Je songe notamment aux montagnes de l'Albanie, à la zone du Rrafsh en bordure du Kosovo, où était – est encore ? – en vigueur le célèbre *kanun*, le coutumier clanique attribué à Lek Dukagjini, et transcrit au moment de l'indépendance du pays (en 1912) par un père franciscain, Shtjefën Kostantin Gjeçov. Le *kanun* définissait le code de comportement censé régler tous les aspects de la vie quotidienne. Il lui incombait d'apporter une réponse à une question comme celle-ci : que se passe-t-il quand un étranger souhaite/doit franchir le seuil d'une demeure ? Le passage bien maîtrisé permet

d'opérer un rapprochement, d'autant que le *xenos* est réputé *theos* ; le passage échappant au contrôle des intéressés constitue en revanche une transgression. Par conséquent, d'un point de vue sociopoétique, la transgression sera ramenée à une mauvaise gestion de l'interface spatio-temporelle (non-synchronisation) et à une interactivité avortée (incongruence). La transgression peut avoir plusieurs mobiles : la malveillance, certes, mais aussi – et le plus souvent – tel petit glissement imperceptible, infinitésimal, résultant de la méconnaissance du code de la part de l'impétrant. Ismail Kadaré ne s'est pas privé de recourir à des cas de figure de cette sorte dans quelques-uns de ses romans les plus célèbres (*Le Dossier H.*, *Avril brisé*, ...). Kadaré explore en fait l'expérience que Edward T. Hall résume ainsi : "[...] comment les individus sont liés les uns aux autres et pourtant isolés par d'invisibles tissus de rythmes et par des murs de temps caché." [iii]

La gestion de l'interface spatio-temporelle, qui se traduit par une concordance ou une discordance rythmique – discordance d'autant plus probable et redoutable que l'on se rapproche du seuil, de la ligne de démarcation entre unités (sociales, etc.) cohérentes – est au cœur des préoccupations de tout ensemble légal visant à réguler les passages, à désamorcer les transgressions. Tel est bien entendu le rôle du code de l'hospitalité, qui s'efforcera d'éviter la confusion entre le statut d'*hospes* (hôte) et celui d'*hostis* (ennemi).

La typologie des interfaces ne se limite pas à l'étude du code de l'hospitalité. Elle englobe tous les aspects du franchissement des frontières. L'étude de la transgression est coextensive à une sociopoétique de la mobilité.

### **Dynamiques de la transgression. Oscillation des grands ensembles.**

Les transgressions spatiales peuvent porter sur les petites unités, et jusque sur la sphère d'intimité. À l'autre bout de l'échelle, elles peuvent concerner les grands ensembles. À un niveau macroscopique, tout déplacement peut entraîner une transgression. La définition traditionnelle du code, en tant que repère à ne pas transgresser, jette les bases d'une telle interprétation. En effet, "le code règle un domaine". Bien entendu, le législateur entend par là un domaine d'application de la norme, au sens thématique. Mais "domaine" peut aussi être entendu au sens spatial du terme. Le domaine est alors une vaste unité spatiale, dont la cohérence est assurée par une homogénéité de sens, une synchronie reconnue.

En fonction des approches, le domaine peut changer de dénomination. Pour un sémiologue tel que Yuri Lotman, il s'agira d'une "sémiosphère" [iv]; pour Gilles Deleuze et Félix Guattari, il s'agira plutôt d'un "territoire". Mais dans tous les cas l'instabilité constitue la caractéristique principale de l'unité prise en compte. Dans ce cadre, aucune représentation ne définira l'espace dans la stase : l'entropie semble gagner tous les plis de l'existant. Et la transgression est un processus inhérent au mouvement. Contrairement à ce qui se déroule dans la sphère d'intimité (considérée selon une optique sociopoétique), ce n'est plus un code figé qui fait office de repère. Ici, la transgression correspond à un chevauchement, qui résultera d'un mouvement perturbant les grands équilibres. La transgression est en quelque sorte le résultat d'une oscillation, aussi peu imputable à une responsabilité particulière que la dérive des continents, que le choc de socles géologiques.

La transgression correspond en principe au franchissement d'une limite au-delà de laquelle s'étend une marge de liberté. Elle est alors émancipatrice, mais aussi centrifuge : on fuit le cœur du système, l'espace de référence. Dans le contexte qui retient ici notre attention, il n'en va pas tout à fait de même. La transgression ne résulte plus d'une oscillation du centre vers la périphérie, mais plutôt en sens contraire : les entités périphériques pointent le centre, opèrent un rapprochement et visent à se substituer au centre consacré. Par la même, la transgression adopte une valence centripète. Voilà pour le moins la théorie que Yuri Lotman, héritier du formalisme russe et promoteur de l'école de Tartu (Estonie), a développée dans son idée de choc de "sémiosphères" (unités de sens spatialisées), et que Itamar Even-Zohar, de l'Université de Tel-Aviv, a repris sous forme de théorie du polysystème (la ou Pierre Bourdieu – sociologue, et non sémioticien ou sémiologue – parlait de "champs").

Une fois encore, l'idée de base s'inspire d'une constatation d'ordre temporel : la synchronie n'est pas homogène ; elle est traversée par une multitude de lignes diachroniques. En clair, l'actualité est un agencement de forces plus ou moins contradictoires (entropiques) qui troublent la cohérence du présent. Cela signifie que le centre spatial et l'actualité (en tant que repères ontologiques) coïncident, mais que cette coïncidence sera provisoire et, en tout état de cause, illusoire. De même que la synchronie est soumise à des forces diachroniques perturbantes, le centre au singulier est en relation avec une périphérie qui se décline toujours au pluriel. Comme le dit Even-Zohar : "It is, therefore, very rarely a uni-system but is, necessarily, a polysystem – a multiple system, a system of various systems which

intersect with each other"<sup>[v]</sup>. Il va de soi qu'une telle approche intègre la notion de transgression, et d'une certaine manière la prive de toute connotation négative. La transgression fait partie du système, ou plus exactement c'est elle qui fait d'un système apparemment unique un polysystème. La transgression est alors le nom que l'on donnera à l'oscillation que j'évoquais tout à l'heure. Elle correspond au principe de mobilité consubstantiel de l'entité examinée. Elle n'entrera plus dans une échelle de valeur sanctionnée par une légitimité préétablie, une hiérarchie, en somme. Car, comme le note encore Even-Zohar, "with a polysystem one must not think in terms of *one* center and *one* periphery, since several such positions are hypothesized"<sup>[vi]</sup>. La limite est donc intégrée dans un champ dynamique, ou ce qui évolue en périphérie est destiné à se rapprocher du centre selon une loi d'interférence. Par conséquent, la transgression est neutralisée : elle n'est plus forcément affectée d'un coefficient négatif, mais correspond à un simple acte de franchissement. Elle est débarrassée de son acception éthique. On en revient en quelque sorte aux origines, à l'étymon spatialisant *transgredi*, "passer outre", "aller au-delà".

Deleuze et Guattari aboutissent eux aussi à la neutralisation de la notion de transgression. Alors que chez Lotman, Even-Zohar et autres tenants du formalisme russe, c'est un système ou un ensemble de signes qui se met à proliférer – ce qui rend la transgression inéluctable –, chez Deleuze et Guattari, c'est le territoire qui s'agence de manière rhizomatique, et donc instable, selon un triple principe de connexion, d'hétérogénéité et de multiplicité. On note au passage que le même vocabulaire est à l'œuvre dans la plupart des théories qui neutralisent la transgression. Si cette dernière est propre à des systèmes fondés sur l'homogène et l'unique, elle adopte une valence différente dans tout système hétérogène et multiple engendrant sa propre ligne de fuite. Car il va de soi que la transgression au sens traditionnel est difficile à concevoir dans un ensemble où la ligne de fuite est intégrée, un ensemble pensé comme un territoire destiné à se déterritorialiser. Comme disent Deleuze et Guattari : "Un territoire emprunte à tous les milieux, il mord sur eux, il les prend à bras le corps bien qu'il reste fragile aux intrusions [...] Il a une zone intérieure de domicile ou d'abri, une zone extérieure de domaine, des limites ou membranes plus ou moins rétractiles, des zones intermédiaires ou même neutralisées, des réserves ou annexes énergétiques"<sup>[vii]</sup>. L'hyperbate continue à caractériser cet espace d'intimité, mais ce dernier ne se déploie plus en deçà d'une limite à transgresser : une simple membrane, au demeurant rétractile, suffit à le protéger des assauts d'un code qui chercherait à imposer ses privautés. "L'essentiel est dans le décalage que l'on constate entre le code et le territoire"<sup>[viii]</sup>, précisent Deleuze et Guattari. Or ce décalage désamorce la transgression entendue au sens traditionnel.

### **Focalisations multiples et transgression : de l'imagologie à la géocritique.**

Jusqu'ici, j'ai tenté d'examiner la transgression dans un cadre où triomphe la prolifération – pluralité des conceptions temporelles (polychronie et asynchronie), spatiales (hétérotopie), rythmiques (polyrythmie) et systémiques (polysystème, rhizome). Reste à prendre en compte la relation entre l'observant et la réalité observée (que l'on déclinera plutôt au pluriel) et le type de représentation qui en découle. Cela suppose notamment que l'on s'intéresse à la focalisation, au point de vue. À ce stade de mon étude, j'en reviens à la littérature ... qu'au plus fort de l'excursus sémiologique et philosophique je n'ai d'ailleurs jamais perdue de vue.

Pour qu'il soit question de transgression, il faut qu'une contravention soit constatée par un observateur (qui sera éventuellement l'agent de la transgression). En littérature, la focalisation est susceptible d'être étudiée de plusieurs manières. On peut – comme Gérard Genette – l'insérer dans une taxinomie narratologique. On peut aussi la poser plus étroitement en relation avec la notion de représentation – cette dernière constituant la transposition tangible du référent tel qu'il a été filtré par l'observateur. Appliqué à un contexte spatial, le point de vue s'avère unique ou multiple. L'imagologie prend en considération la représentation qu'un observateur précis fait d'un référent : c'est notamment ce qui se produit dans les récits de voyage, selon une logique du voyageur que décrit Edward Said : "Il n'y a aucun doute, en effet, que la géographie et l'histoire imaginaires aident l'esprit à rendre plus intense son sentiment intime de lui-même en dramatisant la distance et la différence entre ce qui est proche et ce qui est très éloigné"<sup>[ix]</sup>. L'imagologie examine justement cet écart, qui par essence empêche toute transgression. Le proche et l'éloigné restent immuablement séparés sans que la permutation soit envisagée, parce que le voyageur ne l'envisage pas non plus.

Le géocriticien n'examine pas l'espace du point de vue du voyageur, ou sur la foi d'une représentation unique. Il concentre son attention sur l'espace en soi (ce qui revient à dire à "la" somme de représentations dont il fait l'objet), plutôt que sur l'observateur. Il n'est pas dans mon intention de revenir trop longuement sur une approche que j'ai tenté de formaliser ailleurs.<sup>[x]</sup> Disons simplement que dans une optique géocritique l'espace est saisi à la fois dans sa dimension stratigraphique (souvenir deleuzien), dans sa dimension multifocale et dans sa dimension fictionnelle.

Comme nous l'avons vu, l'espace est essentiellement mouvant dans le temps. Du coup, il est en perpétuelle émergence. Il constitue en quelque sorte une oeuvre ouverte. L'espace, apparemment homogène dans l'instant, est un compossible de mondes mouvants. La "transgressivité" est coextensive à cette mobilité.

En outre, la géocritique ne vise pas seulement les espaces perçus dans leur dimension "étrangère", mais confronte plusieurs optiques – endogène, exogène, allogène – afin qu'apparaisse la dialectique sous-tendant tout processus de déterritorialisation. Des lors, l'accent est mis davantage sur l'espace observé que sur l'observateur singulier. A titre d'exemple, on s'attachera moins à étudier la manière dont Pascal Quignard ou Thomas Mann ont décrit *chacun* Lisbonne dans leurs romans que les aléas de la représentation de Lisbonne auprès d'un échantillon suffisant d'auteurs portugais (Pessoa, Saramago, Lobo Antunes, ...), auprès de Quignard et de Mann, outre Volodine, Munoz Molina et quelques autres, sans oublier des cinéastes comme Wenders ou Tanner, etc. (interdisciplinarité oblige). Sous cet angle, la géocritique contribue à mettre en relief les principaux stéréotypes inhérents à une représentation figée de l'espace humain (ou ethnotypes) pour mieux les démonter. Car la représentation repose souvent sur une statistique (d'idées reçues), qu'elle contribue à alimenter... ou qu'elle infirme, dans un élan transgressif.

La géocritique s'attache enfin à dégager les fondements de ce qui fait de toute perception humaine une re-simulation élaborée sur un plan imaginaire, de ce qui fait de tout espace un lieu intertextuel, un "espace littéraire au carré" (Claudio Magris). Il s'agira de décrypter la dimension fictionnelle de tout espace dit "réel".

Ces quelques principes rapidement énoncés laissent penser que la géocritique pourrait devenir une approche utile pour affronter la question de la transgression spatiale en littérature (et dans d'autres formes de représentation fictionnelle du réel). Elle permettrait de dégager ce que l'espace, des lors qu'il est représenté, possède d'intrinsèquement transgressif ; en outre, et parce qu'elle permet de débusquer les stéréotypes, elle consentirait aussi à la mise en place d'un discours transgressif à l'égard de la norme établie, de toute doxa s'évertuant à juguler les velléités transgressives de la représentation.

#### NOTES

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[i] Bernard Dupriez, *Gradus. Les procédés littéraires*, Paris: UGE, coll.10/18, 1984, p. 231.

[ii] Voir Bertrand Westphal, "Discordance/Concordance. Ismail Kadaré et les rythmes de l'hospitalité", in *L'hospitalité : Signes et rites*, Alain Montandon (éd.), Clermont-Ferrand: Presses Universitaires Blaise Pascal, 2001, pp. 141–155.

[iii] Edward T. Hall, *La Danse de la vie. Temps culturel, temps vécu*, Paris: Seuil (Collection "Points"), 1984, p. 11.

[iv] Youri Lotman, *La sémiosphère*, Limoges: Pulim, 1999.

[v] Itamar Even-Zohar, Polysystem Studies, in *Poetics Today*, 11: 1, 1990, p.11.

[vi] *Ibid.*, p. 14.

[vii] Gilles Deleuze, Félix Guattari, *Mille plateaux. Capitalisme et schizophrénie*, Paris: Minuit, 1980, p. 386.

[viii] *Ibid.*, p. 396

[ix] Edward Said, *L'Orientalisme. L'Orient créé par l'Occident*, Paris: Seuil, 1980, p. 71.

[x] Bertrand Westphal, "Pour une approche géocritique des textes", in *La géocritique mode d'emploi*, Bertrand Westphal (éd.), Limoges: Pulim, 2000, pp. 9–40.

## Marko Juvan: SPACES OF INTERTEXTUALITY / THE INTERTEXTUALITY OF SPACE

### The spatial in the intertextuality

The notion of intertextuality—the idea that each text produces meanings and structures by absorbing and transforming other texts, utterances, and sign systems—was one of those conceptions of the 20<sup>th</sup> century that in the wake of modernist art signalled a shift of imagination and reasoning from temporal dominants to spatial models.<sup>[i]</sup> It is, then, no surprise that intertextuality arrived on the scene of contemporary theory in the company of spatial metaphors. Let me mention some characteristic formulations of Julia Kristeva and Roland Barthes: “the volume of the social,” “the space of the text,” “text places itself in the history,” “the society inscribes itself in the text,” and “all the texts of the space that has been read by the writer function in the paragram of the text.”<sup>[ii]</sup> There are several contemporary and subsequent terms that could be added to the list, such as Derrida’s “writing” and “trace” and Genette’s “palimpsest” and “hypertext,” the latter used extensively in internet culture as well. Even some older notions should be recalled that were used to explain, in the paradigms of classical rhetoric and 19<sup>th</sup>-century historicism, relationships between new texts or utterances and the tradition of the *déjà dit*. The first one is *topos* or commonplace. Detached from its source in some classical, authoritative, or sacred texts *topos* transcended time and was preserved in spatial schemes of *memoria* (mnemonic art); thesauri of topics were a kind of repository of public good available to later poets and orators. The second one is imagery connected to the notion of influence (Juvan 2000b). In spite of its causal-temporal ground, the term “influence” shaped the discipline of comparative literature with geopolitical metaphors suggesting conquering and overwhelming another cultural territory by literary influxes, streams, and currents; their colonial and axiological subtext is not hard to decipher (“pure origins” vs. “unclean mixture,” “defining power” vs. “constituted subject”).

The stress on the spatial, so crucial for the idea of intertextuality, was provoked by the polemic against established notions of verbal interaction that represented communication as linear transmission of an information “package” from author to reader and backed by a monolithic common code. Intertextuality, with its spatial models, tried to put forward, in contradistinction to such views, at least two postulates. *First*, that each text is animated by an open dialogue generating a complex and ever changing network of inter-subjective relations and identity positions; *second*, that semantic and structural patterns of the text, like tips of icebergs, lie on an immense sea of the implicit, on several layers of codes, utterances, and cultural representations; for this reason the patterns are dynamic, indeterminable, and subject to heterogeneous regimes of ascribing sense to linguistic data.

However, the spatial aspects of intertextuality briefly outlined so far are more or less bound to theory and to metaphorical thinking, which cannot be avoided even when one tries to construct explanatory models. But how can we actually explain the relationship between the intertextuality and space represented in textual worlds?

### The experience of the textual space and spatial segmentation

In literary discourse, imaginative spaces produced by linguistic signs in the text exert an effect of presence. A *phantasma* arises of being present in the world, a sense of real time and of lived experience (*espace vécu*) is created—as if the represented space, although unfinished and only partially determined, were beheld by the reader’s “inward eye,” similar to psychic images triggered by personal memories or phantasies. Presence is established mainly by perspectivizing the phantasmatic space from a series of textually established point-of-views—that is, from implicit subject-centres of semantic-axiological coordinates. A fictional point of view upon a fictional space interpellates, so to speak, the subject of reading and calls her/him to take a specific position in the imaginary. The interpellated reading subject is capable of activating cognitive schemes of viewing appropriate types of spatial structures; he/she tries, by way of inferring, to adjust memorized schemata, which are always semantic and value laden, to the flux of textual data.

What I want to call attention to are textually represented spaces’ mutual relations and boundaries. Regardless whether those spaces are derived from chronotopes typical of specific literary genres (e.g., “realist,” “imaginary,” “allegoric,” “fantastic,” or “utopian” places), they normally presuppose discrete and structured delimitation and, within their boundaries, a coherent internal structure. This could be

described as spatial syntax or, rather, as paratactic or hypotactic structures of inter-spatial relationships. The spatial syntax articulates and segments textually represented spaces and constitutes their hierarchy; for example, character A goes from a room to a garden, then sets out for shopping to the market place (parataxis); in the suburbs of a big city there is the house of a character B, who possesses a romantic painting representing a picturesque sea gulf; B is constantly dreaming about going there (hypotaxis). In these examples, the boundaries between larger and narrower areas or between different kinds of spaces ("material," "psychic," and "artistic") are well articulated and at least implicitly stable. Various and distinct spaces are assigned fixed positions within the constellation of the textual world: they can exist parallel to each other within the same ontology, they can be embedded in a larger whole within the same world, or they belong to different ontologies (represented in the text as material, psychic, medial, virtual, etc.).

### Transgressive spaces

Forces that transgress the logic of spatial delimitation and hierarchy often invade discrete and delimited spaces structured by spatial syntax. These forces generate spaces of transgression—areas where different spaces dissolve, amalgamate, cover one another, or move over/through another. By these moves, spaces lose their presence and firmness and disclose their imaginary, phantasmatic, and mobile natures. Within the limits of this paper it is not possible to describe and classify all the kinds of transgressive forces that dissolve the logic of spatial syntax in literature. I will only mention four of them. The first one will be illustrated by Proust's novels, the other three by examples from poetry of Srečko Kosovel (1904–26), a modernist and transgressive poet recently labeled "the Slovenian Rimbaud":[\[iii\]](#)

1. *Figural transgression*. The first kind of transgression is underpinned by a long tradition, yet it is significantly modified in modern writing. In the domain of metaphor, schemes of one cognitive-semiotic field are projected upon another field: boundaries between two different semiotic spaces are blurred, spatial structures interfere and by their interaction they generate a new field of sense and imagination.[\[iv\]](#) This is characteristic of modern metaphor. For example, in Kosovel's lyrical poem *Po srebrni mesečini* ("In Silver Moonlight"), the original nocturnal maritime landscape begins to fork with the support of metaphors that open up other imaginative spaces, ones associated with the poet's body and psyche: "A dark boat floats / in silver moonlight, / from the green harbour / a boatman set sail, / from *the green crystal / of a silent heart. / From the heart of midnight.*"[\[v\]](#) The poetic space in this text with a symbolic touch is transgressive, oscillating between the representation of outward and inward worlds. As shown in this example from Kosovel, the traditional dual structure of semantic figures (direct vs. metaphoric meaning) that used to establish clear-cut spatial syntax (space compared vs. comparing space) in modern poetic discourse turns to spatial undecidability.

2. *Palimpsest transgression*. In contradistinction to figural transgression, the second way of creating transgressive spaces was first constituted by modern writing. In his study *Proust palimpseste*, Gérard Genette (1966: 59) pointed out that Proust's writing in *A la recherche du temps perdu* breaks the stability both of temporal sequence and spatial frames. Proust's narrator not only persistently compares isolated spaces using sophisticated and extended comparisons, metonymy, or metaphors (for example, by comparing Venice to native Combray, Venice becomes "another Combray, although *other* Combray: aquatic, precious, exotic"; Genette 1966: 46; italics original, translation mine), but also passes from one place to another, neglecting boundaries and leaving behind almost no traces of traditional tropes. Instead, he creates a narrative palimpsest that conjoins disparate places and moments by transposing fragmentary descriptions and attributes from one site to another: the conjoined places are active, connected to specific literary characters, and in the narrative they are being constantly "recalled, reintegrated, reinvested, always present together" (Genette 1966: 60). The fragments of specific places, either present simultaneously or, more characteristically, retrieved from memories and imagined, are superposed and/or blended. Their attributes coexist in a single narrative sequence, creating a unique though unbound transgressive sphere of psychic associations, perceptions, and reflections: fairy-tale figures projected from the magic lantern travel over the furniture and walls of the young Marcel's room, Combray emerges from a cup of tea, etc. (Proust 1969). The logic of delimitation between spaces is suspended, semantics and paradigmatic intra-textual relations predominate over syntax and syntagmatic axis of textual organization. As a result, in such kinds of modern writing the identities of spaces are hybridized. Proustian spaces could be described as floating (*espace flottants, navicules* – cf. Westphal 2000a: 14).

3. *Textual explosion*. In modern writing, this force obliterates textual coherence and erases linguistic links in the spatial syntax; because of this move, the relations and boundaries between the represented spaces as well as their internal structures become ambiguous and indeterminate. Thus the point of view is displaced and the subject-position deterritorialized (cf. Deleuze – Guattari 1980). See, for example, Kosovel's avant-garde construction ("kons") entitled *Pogovor v somraku* ("Talk at Twilight"). This text is actually a collage of immediate, flowing perceptions of the poet's intimate, private spaces and of

fragmentary images of places cut off from public discourse, scholarship, art, and newspapers: "Our windows are barred. / White barricades. / The American Indians know nothing / of gravity. / But dynamite explodes / in Novaja Zemlja, too. / You, Sir, in the astrakhan cap! / There is no arithmetic mean / between the old and the new worlds. / One is either old or young. / A golden boat on the horizon. /.../ People swinging hanged / from telegraph poles. / Entrance: one dinar. / It is raining. / Man talks to the cosmos. / A barn outside the window."<sup>[vi]</sup> The local and the global, the intimate and the universal are juxtaposed in Kosovel's poem; no explicit designation of the spatial syntax is supplied by the author.

4. *Intertextuality*. By its very definition, intertextuality cannot be held to be transgressive. The first advocates of intertextuality have perhaps exaggerated in this respect. Consider, for example, a historical novel that faithfully follows the topography of its historic sources, embedded quotes of lyrical texts in narratives, or a play-within-a play. Nonetheless, intertextuality no doubt remains one of the most powerful means of spatial transgression. It deserves to be discussed more thoroughly, especially in response to a proposal by Bertrand Westphal, who in his brilliant apologia of geocriticism notices how productive the effort of disfiguring the metaphor of "space as a book" may be if deciphered in terms of intertextuality: "Ne conviendrait-il pas d'explorer la métaphore ville-livre, voire espace-livre, et, allant du livre à l'espace, d'appliquer à ce dernier les principes de l'intertextualité?" (Westphal 2000a: 17).

### Spaces of intertextuality

In this context, I see intertextuality as the practice of transposing, juxtaposing, and blending heterogeneous semiotic spaces, not only those represented in the textual world but also those evoked by linguistic and genre forms on the textual surface. It seems reasonable to me to distinguish two types of semiotic spaces which are relayed by intertextual reference and derivations: intra- and extratextual spaces.<sup>[vii]</sup>

By the provisional term "intratextual space" I understand virtual, phantasmatic space constructed and perspectivalised in the reader's consciousness by linguistic signs of the text and processes of inference; i.e., the fictional, poetic, imaginary, or possible world. As we know from seminal explorations by Bakhtin (his notion of the chronotope) and Lotman, the textual representation of the space, with its horizontal/vertical segmentation and delimitation, is interwoven with acts, horizons, and perspectives of different agencies. As such, it plays a crucial role in building the semantic and axiological structures of the text. Intratextual space also makes up a significant part of the imaginary, because it is often attached to recurrent poetic images that carry archetypal values that organize the subject's consciousness and unconscious (cf. Bachelard 1974: 1–21). The notion "extratextual space," however, refers to spatial conditions and zones in the actual world that exert certain impact upon discourses and their structuring. Pragmatics, sociolinguistics, cultural semiotics, comparative studies, and geocriticism termed them with more precision. Extratextual spaces could be ranged from very specific, contingent situations/contexts of uttering, through socio-geographically and historically determined places, localities/territories, to maximally extensive space, occupied and regulated by a whole culture (semiosphere), or floating and border zones of inter- and transcultural exchange.<sup>[viii]</sup> I distinguish two possible means of intertextual spatial transgression, both intra- and extratextual:

1. *Intertextual transpositions of other text's space*. Quotations, allusions, borrowings, collages, parodies, imitations and other intertextual figures/genres implant semiotic foreign bodies in textual organisms; they transpose "intratextual spaces" or fragments thereof from other texts, textual series, and intertexts. Being able to break the norms of spatial syntax, alien spaces double the central space of the text, they open it up, interfere with it and generate spaces of transgression.

2. *Intertextual evocations of other extratextual space*. On the other hand, intertextual forms, such as stylisation or imitation of genre patterns, evoke "extratextual spaces" only indirectly, by use of connotation. These intertextual devices are not representations (i.e., fictional picturing of places). In this case, quoting or imitating alien discourse only recalls impressions of certain places, of their ideological atmosphere, of registers and voices that are usually found there. In other words, by transposing segments of alien discourse, intertextual practice indicates the traces of communicative context or socio-geographical, cultural space in which this discourse originally functioned.

Kosovel employed both ways of intertextual transgression in many of his modernist texts. *Blizu polnoči* (Close to Midnight), a fairly laconic poem, is assembled of divergent points of view, panoramas and close-ups of Trieste and its surroundings: "Close to midnight. / Flies dying in a glass. / The fire has died out. / Fair Vida, there is / sorrow in your memory. / Stravinsky in a car. / The roaring of the sea. / Oh, to be alone for 5 minutes. / The heart-Trieste is ill. / That is why Trieste is beautiful. / Pain blossoms in beauty."<sup>[ix]</sup> The text puts together miniature perceptions, flowing emotions and subtle reflections of

solitude. Among fragmented spatial impressions, an allusion to the folkloric motif of Lepa Vida (Fair Vida) attracts one's attention: a figure of a woman standing at the Adriatic coast is an intertextual analogue to one of several wandering subjective standpoints of Kosovel's text. The Fair Vida motif has acquired in the Slovene literary tradition since France Prešeren (in the mid-19<sup>th</sup> century) archetypal, mythic value precisely by its inherent ambivalence and transgressiveness of desire: the ballad narrative is about how the subject's desire to free herself from the primordial, patriarchal bonds of homeland is, after she is taken abroad, transmuted into yearning for her lost home. Allusion to the Fair Vida intertext interferes with the cut-up textual space of Kosovel's poetic construction; intertextual transposition of ballad space into a pluri-perspectival and contingent modern writing creates an impression of a double, of a palimpsest: an archetypal layer of semantic and spatial organization shines through the chaotic experience of modernity.

Kosovel evokes not only literary pre-texts and spaces represented by them but various social settings as well. He does this by imitating and/or quoting utterances, sociolects, and discourses that are generally associated with specific geo-physical places, contexts. In *Kons: XY* (Cons: XY), for example, the initial transgressive space where "inner" poetic subjectivity is blended with the "outer" scene of a circus is further transgressed by interventions of other extratextual places indirectly invoked by the connotative power of stylistically and semantically contrasting phrases. They are imitated from lyrical, almost romantic discourse on the one hand, and quoted from prosaic police and court records on the other hand: "Across my heart a huge elephant slops. / Circus Kludsky; 5 dinars to see. / Don't shout your sorrow from the house-tops! / She is smiling: ring a ring ree. / Human hearts are small and prisons big, / through human hearts I'd like to sail. / *Do you belong to this or that clique? / A thousand dinars or 7 days in jail. / The flowers in my heart cry no more / ...!*"[\[X\]](#)

### The intertextuality of space

Identities and social relations are constituted by the conjunctions of spaces and discourses. As a recent work on urban theory notes: "People's lives, networks, and identities were patterned geographically and discursively [...] across different sites of activity (work, home, community); [...] these different sites were contexts that transformed the meaning of actor's identities" (Tajbakhsh 2001: XIII). Geo-physical space is divided, ordered, and semiotised by cultural practices and their products (building houses, living in settlements, moving with traffic, developing technologies of communication), and above all by mental categories used in discourse. In this way the discursive interpretation and regulation of real space establishes or reshapes social relationships and hierarchies, and constantly shifts subject positions (cf. Keating 2001). Every space is related to the human subject, who delimits it with her/his words; human spaces are therefore permanently de- and recomposed by language and words (Grassin 2000: I–II).[\[xi\]](#) Differences in the nature of spaces (e.g., natural – cultural, static – dynamic, rural – urban, private – public, sacred – profane, central – peripheral) imply different patterns of behavior and social interaction, distinct registers and speech performances. Some places —especially those burdened with sediments of formulaic or ritualized practices—determine style or genre rather predictably (e.g., a church › prayers and preaching, a courtroom › testimony and verdict, a classroom › lecturing, a marketplace › bargaining); other places, however, do not condition linguo-pragmatic choices so strongly (e.g., a restaurant › amorous whispering, business or intellectual conversation etc., but not loud professing of political ideas).

Even volumes containing the material vehicles of communication (e.g., volumes of books, pages of a newspaper, TV or computer screens, advertising posters, etc.) have a place on the continuum of "extratextual," physical space. Based on McLuhan's dictum that the "medium is a message," it is understandable that the spatial dimension of media largely determines how contexts of utterances are marked. Patterns transposed or imitated from other linguistic varieties or discursive genres and grafted into a literary text may color their new environment with connotations evoking their original medium, including its spatial aspect. A literary text in which fragments of journalism, old-fashioned ode, or internet site are intertextually transposed can consequently, on the basis of contiguity, smell of newspaper or dusty old books, or give an impression of the light coming from a computer screen; even more, a text may recall person-types, conventional actions, and behavioral relations associated with those media.

Before concluding, let me summarize my main points. When speaking about spaces of intertextuality we have in mind the play and interference of heterogeneous semiotic spaces transposed in the text from elsewhere, either from other spatial representations (textual or visual worlds) or by evoking culturally characteristic locations, where specific languages, dialects, sociolects, registers, and genres circulate. Intertextuality produces transgressive spaces by doubling, splitting, and opening up central intratextual space and by deterritorialising the point of view.

The relation between space and intertextuality may be explained the other way around, too. Seen from this angle, “intratextual spaces” (fictional or factual) are able to invade, organize, and interpret “extratextual space,” making it intertextual. Spaces of our life-worlds are intertextual not only because our perceptions of living environment are structured through cognitive and axiological nets produced by existant texts, discourses and collective memories. From the views of Deleuze, Lotman and others it follows that intertextuality is inscribed in “extratextual space” (territory, semiosphere, etc.) due to the very “essence” of the space: it is always multiple, it exists only as a co-presence of disparate acts, gestures, messages, and symbolic forms (Westphal 2000a: 14–15). Life-worlds through which we pass are semiotised by cultural products, practices, and forms that stem from distant times, pertain to different communities and classes, and that have been in contact with thousands of individual life trajectories. We are comparable to Benjamin’s figure of the *flâneur* who reads (i.e., contextualizes and interprets) a modern city as a multitemporal texture of memory sites and traces, as a constellation of “allusions and intersections, of inscriptions, of the extension and transcriptions of texts” (Bettine Menke, qtd. in Frisby 1999: 108–110). Temporal stratification of human space as displayed in cities like Lisbon works intertextually: it brings together several, often contrary fragments or layers of historical and social rhythms, meanings, symbols, and forms (cf. Westphal 2000a: 24–26). Or, as Crossberg (1999: 28) puts it: “The space of a whole life is a fractured and contradictory space of multiple contexts and competing ways of life and struggle. Such a space – what I have called a context – is a complex articulation of discourses, everyday life and formations or technologies of power.” When we are moving through the space, crossing its boundaries, travelling from one location to another (say, from the intimacy of home to a global site at an airport), we are addressed by a multitude of overlapping texts (oral, written, visual, musical, gestural) that try to place us within their areas of sense; but, on the other hand, when we are moving through them we are also carrying with us memories and projections of other lived or imaginary places, cultural contexts, and social environments. This makes spatial boundaries fluid; under apparently static and well-delimited territories a structure of floating space is hidden (cf. Westphal 2000a: 14, 18). I cannot but agree with Mouffe (1999: 50), Westphal (2000a: 18), and Welsh (1999: 224, 233) that because of unstable spatial boundaries and due to the fundamental intertextuality of space, our identities are in permanent hybridization and mobility; they are volatile, flexible, and constituted as a transcultural patchwork. Tajbakhsh (2001: 8) puts this succinctly: “Individual and community identities are structured across multiple, sometimes contradictory spaces in complex patterns of imaginary representations and memory that suggest the need for a reconceptualization of identity and consciousness as fully constituted within fixed boundaries.” It is from transformation of texts, dispersed in time and space, that the elusive text of our lives is constantly being formed and reformed.

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## NOTES

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[i] Characteristic response to this shift is the introduction to volume 5 of the *Proceedings of the XIth Congress of the International Comparative Literature Association* (Space and Boundaries in Literary Theory and Criticism), entitled “The Shift of the Paradigm: From Time to Space? Introduction.” The author detects the change of theoretical paradigm in poststructuralism and deconstructivism and, within this turn, stresses the role of intertextuality: “In the *theory of intertextuality*, the relations between time and space occupy the center of discussion” (Fischer-Lichte 1990: 15; italics in the original). Similarly, in the same volume Reingard Nethersole in his paper, “From Temporality to Spatiality: Changing Concepts in Literary Criticism,” writes: “Briefly, today’s critical questioning is aimed at three important positions in the humanities, all constituted in their present stronghold in the eighteenth century: *Historicism*, the sovereign or transcendental *Subject* and *Meaning*. Each of these is erased by transforming temporality into spatiality. Thus, Foucault’s rereading of Nietzsche produced genealogy in the place of Historicism, Lacan’s rereading of Freud produced the notion of an ever split subject, and Derrida’s critique of the linguistic model (de Saussure, Peirce, and followers) produced *différance*, indeterminacy, and constant deferral of signification.” According to Nethersole, the ordering of the world in twentieth-century arts and theory (philosophy) seems to be governed by topological rather than geometrical spatiality (Nethersole

1990: 63, italics in the original).

[iii] On the genesis and development of the concept of “intertextualiy,” especially regarding Kristeva and Barthes, see Juvan 2000a: 92–138.

[iiii] For basic information on Kosovel and English translations of his poetry see the website *Slovenia – Poetry International Web* (<http://slovenia.poetryinternational.org/cwolk/view/18507#1>). Kosovel was transgressive in many respects. He remains an elusive poetic icon not easily encoded in the narrative of literary history, because he simultaneously wrote in different styles and established his modernist poetic identity by crossing the boundaries of several currents and hybridizing them. In his short life Kosovel was exposed to border anxiety (his native Karst came under government of fascist Italy, which set out to erase ethnic signs of Slovenes from the territory) and he was constantly moving from this rural region to Ljubljana, the urban center of Slovenes in the Yugoslav kingdom. Kosovel’s political and aesthetic stance was constituted by very different, even contradictory currents (e.g., Christianity, utopian socialism, communism, liberal humanism, nietzscheanism, neo-romanticism, and avant-garde). Textual spaces, represented in his poetry either by harmonic lyric writing or by heteroglossia of the modernist type, are also transgressive and dynamic: the textual subject often shifts from lyrical (rural, natural, intimate) places in the Karst to urban, global, and even cosmic spaces.

[iv] I am referring to interactive and cognitive theories of metaphor (Black 1981, 1995; Lakoff 1995).

[v] Transl. by Nike Kocijančič Pokorn. Italics added. “Po srebrni mesečini / plava temni čoln, / iz zelenega pristana / je čolnar odplul, / iz zelenega kristala / tihega srca. / Iz srca polnoči” (Kosovel 1974: 162).

[vi] Transl. by Nike Kocijančič Pokorn. “Naša okna so zamrežena. / Bele barikade. / Indijanci ne vedo nič / o gravitaciji. / A dinamit eksplodira / tudi v Novaji Zemlji. / Gospod z astrahanko ! / Ni aritmetične sredine / med starim in novim svetom. / Človek je lahko star ali mlad. / Zlati čoln na obzorju. / ... / Obešenci nihajo / ob brzozavnih drogovich. / Vstopnina: en dinar. / Dež pada. / Človek se pogovarja z veseljstvom. / Skedenj pred oknom” (Kosovel 1974: 38).

[vii] Geocriticism (*géocritique*) as a subject-bound, post-hermeneutic, critical, interdisciplinary, and constructivist postmodern science of the literary space (Grassin 2000: I–VI) usually distinguishes poetic, imaginary space of literary works from socio-geographic space, where literature operates, but it also stresses their inter-dependencies. Grassin, for example, speaks of *l'espace poétique/imaginaire* and *l'espace géographique/des littératures*—the latter is characteristic of the fragmentation of literatures along national, regional, religious, racial, linguistic, or geo-cultural lines; establishing centers and peripheries, building inter-literary communities, etc. Westphal promotes geocriticism precisely as a poetics of the “interactions between human spaces and literature”; it explores the role of interaction between the imaginary and geo-social spaces in determining cultural identities; there are, for example, many writers who created imaginary representations of cities or landscapes that influenced collective memory and perceptions of the actual spaces—Dostoyevsky’s St. Petersburg, Kafka’s Prague, Joyce’s Dublin (Westphal 2000: 17, 22; italics original, my translation). I would add at least one more example: Kosovel’s Karst.

[viii] Yuri Lotman defines semiosphere as “the semiotic space necessary for the existence and functioning of languages”; it is “the whole semiotic space of culture in question” and is “marked by its *heterogeneity*”; i.e., by relations between diverse languages, sociolects, dialects, registers, etc. that are used in a certain cultural area (Lotman 1990: 123, 125). Semiosphere is the precondition for establishing culturally significant units (that is to say, cognitive and communicative elements) on the basis of entities and practices of the actual world and for building cognitive and axiological models (cf. Lotman 1990: 131–134). Following Lotman, Jacques Fontanille claims that “the semiosphere is [...] the space of semiotic competence” (Fontanille 2000: 116–118; my translation). Daniel-Henry Pageaux, in his discussion of geocriticism, holds that culture occupies and organizes space—not only real, geographical space (countries, states, zones, areas, center, periphery, capitals, etc.) but also imaginary space (Pageaux 2000: 126, 128, 135).

[ix] Transl. by Katarina Jerin. »Blizu polnoči. / Muhe v čaši umirajo. / Ogenj je ugasnil. / Lepa Vida, bridkost je / v tvojem spominu. / Stravinski v avtomobilu. / Bučanje morja. / O biti 5 minut sam. / Srce-Trst je bolno. / Zato je Trst lep. / Bolečina cvete v lepoti« (Kosovel 1974: 55; italics added).

[x] Transl. by Nike Kocijančič Pokorn. "Skozi moje srce stopa veliki slon. / Cirkus Kludsky, vstopnina 5 din. / Ne obesi bolesti na veliki zvon! / Ona se smehlja: cin cin cin. // Srca ljudi so majhna in ječe velike, / rad bi šel skozi srca ljudi. / Si pristaš te ali one stranke? / Tisoč dinarjev ali zaprt 7 dni. // Rože v mojem srcu ne jočejo nikdar. / ..." (Kosovel 1974: 34; italics added.)

[xi] In literature, too, certain forms are more likely to be allied to certain spatial elements of the outer reality (Pageaux 2000: 138–39).

### Darja Pavlič: THE LYRIC SUBJECT AND SPACE. A COMPARISON OF TRADITIONAL AND MODERN LYRIC POETRY

"It makes no difference whether I walk down Kärtner or Čopova Street. /.../ It is all becoming me." (Peter Semolič)

The semantic scope of the concept of space depends strongly on the context in which it appears. In recent literary criticism it is often used as a metaphor for a literary work (one of the more famous is Barthes's identification of text and space, in which a variety of writings, none of them original, bland and clash); on the other hand, there has also been an increased interest in geographical space, which is – similarly to narrative time – an integral part of every narration, despite the fact that its role in the past was not researched in such detail as the role of time. The Middle Ages, as the famous Wheel of Virgil teaches us, associated narrative space not only with the style of the literary work, but also with the social status of the characters involved. The 19<sup>th</sup> century brought forward the connections between the environment and one's nature, whereas the contemporary point of view prefers to uncover connections between space and identity of the individual or group. Recently attention has also focused on the relations between space and narrative structure, because researches of narrative writing have actualised Joseph Franck's thesis that the structure of contemporary literature can be understood in the manner of spatial form.<sup>[1]</sup> This article will discuss the role of geographical space in the area of literature termed as lyric poetry. In analogy with narrative writing we may assume that space co-creates the identity of the lyric subject and affects the organisation of the lyric text.

A lyric poem can be defined as a means of self-expression and self-constitution of the speaker; however, it is well known that traditional, romantic definitions of lyric poetry were not familiar with the concept of the lyric subject. Charles Batteux, who was the first to devise a system in his book on the fine arts (*Les Beaux-Arts réduits a un meme principe*, 1746), which also included lyric poetry, defined it as an imitation of sentiments contrary to narrative writing and drama, which imitate action. F. Schlegel defined lyric poetry, narrative writing and drama from their relationship to the objective and subjective worlds; according to him the lyric form, contrary to narrative writing and drama, is purely subjective. A. W. Schlegel and Schelling adopted this definition, whereas Hegel developed the idea that the lyric poem conveys its author. In his *Aesthetics* he derived the philosophical and poetological definition of types of literature from the stipulated scheme of subject-object. To him, narrative writing is an objective type of literature concentrated on a totality of external events; lyric poetry is subjective and its focus is the inner world of sentiment; drama links the objective and subjective sides into a new whole. The central point of lyric poetry and its real topic is the concrete poetic subject, that is, the poet. When Hegel defines the subject matter of lyric poetry, he specifically calls attention to the presence of narrative elements within it. The subject matter of lyric poetry may be an event, which is epic in its essence and external manifestation (heroic poetry, romance poetry, ballads), or occasional (poems for specific occasions). In both cases it is essential that the basic tone remain lyric, meaning that it is not about an objective description of a real event, but rather about the subject's reflections and its moods. A true lyric poet does not necessarily work out of external circumstances; he is a closed world in himself, and can look for the material for the poems within himself and remain with the inner states, circumstances, events, with his own heart's and spirit's passions. However, even in this case the narrative element is not uncommon (Hegel states as an example the motif of a meeting in Anacreontics); or the poet will go beyond the limits of the inner world by presenting himself in a certain being, which is subjective as well as real. "[T]he poet both is and is not himself; he does his best to communicate not himself but something else; he is, as it were, an actor who plays an endless number of parts, lingering now here now there, retaining now one scenic arrangement for a moment, now another, and yet, whatever he may portray, there is always

vividly interwoven with it his own artistic inner life, his feelings and experiences" (Hegel 1998, 1121-1122). An example of such role-taking is once again Anacreontics – in it the poet describes himself as a kind of a hero among flowers, beautiful girls and boys, by wine and play, joy and pleasure ... Hegel's breakdown of lyric poetry into different possible forms indicates that he understood the role of the poet in a rather complex manner. His comparison of the poet and the actor is particularly interesting when seen in the light of later theories speculating that the speaker or "I" in lyric poetry can not be directly equated with the poet's self. It seems that Hegel's comparison might be supplemented by the assertion that even "I" in lyric poetry is no more than a role, played out by the poet. This brings us not far from the conclusion that the lyric subject is a more or less conscious construct of the author, his or her mask or persona.

In his essay *The Death of the Author*, Roland Barthes firmly stated that, "it is language which speaks, not the author," (Barthes 1992, 115) however, it seems that neither the past nor the modern lyric productions can entirely confirm his thesis on the impersonality of writing.<sup>[ii]</sup> Due to their use of the traditional, self-revelatory model of writing, many contemporary poets should be called post-romantics anyway; on the other hand, we may say that the language that speaks itself is a paradox and a mental construct, because every statement, either inarticulate or made of quotes, may be understood as a form of a certain, albeit totally undifferentiated or hyperinflated consciousness. Ron Silliman, a representative of American "language poetry" – a movement, which in the early seventies stemmed from the post-structuralist criticism of the author and the subject<sup>[iii]</sup> – has recently raised doubts as to whether "Barthes's theory of text construction hasn't gone too far," (Perloff 1998, 3). According to him, the "self" in poetry is a "relation between writer and reader that is triggered by what Jakobson called contact, the power of presence" (ibid. 4). According to this theory, both the author and the reader collaborate in constructing the lyric subject. In her analysis of the "de-authorized" poetry of the representatives of "language poetry", Marjorie Perloff has shown – despite some problems with identifying lyric subjects – that the poems are very personal and sometimes even autobiographical. According to her, gender, racial, social and other characteristics, which can be attributed to different speakers on the basis of their statements, are a kind of "birthmarks" or "signatures", by which individual authors may be identified. By doing so, it seems, she has once again attributed the leading role in forming the lyric subject to the author; however, this does not mean that "language poetry" can be viewed as self-revelatory, be it of the author or the lyric subject. According to Perloff, the meaning of the lyric subject of "language poetry" is radically different to that of post-romantic poetry, where its role is to observe the outside world and express its emotions by means of metaphors. In "language poetry", the difference between the inside and the outside is blurred; language constructs the "reality" we perceive; which means that the perspective is constantly shifting and that "the subject, far from being at the centre of the discourse [...] is located only at its interstices" (Perloff 1998, 16).

In the model of lyric poetry, as theoretically created by Hegel, geographical space is not explicitly mentioned, but nevertheless we may say that space in traditional, romantic lyric poetry is an element of the outside, objective world. Hegel's analysis of lyric poetry demonstrated that most of the time poets speak indirectly of what is within them, of their reflections and moods, by describing events, conditions and external circumstances, which also include descriptions of nature and landscapes. Nature is a metaphor used by romantic poets to describe their moods. When he wrote that art uses nature to make the soul visible,<sup>[iv]</sup> Shelling attributed to the images of nature a function of catachresis. The projection of the subjective inside world to the objective outside world is the basic principle of lyric poetry in the traditional sense, therefore the descriptive poetry of nature in which the outside world does not mirror the inside world, according to Gottshall, the author of *Poetics* published in 1857, cannot be part of lyric poetry.

The correspondence between landscape and subject was discovered, as it is well known, by Rousseau in the 23<sup>rd</sup> letter of his novel *The New Heloise*. The concept of projecting emotions onto nature was so successful that it has not only survived to this day and age, but can still be discerned in the so-called modern lyric poetry. In his book *The Aesthetic Experience and Literary Hermeneutics*, H. R. Jauss claims that Baudelaire in his collection *Fleurs du mal* accomplished "the aesthetic revaluation of nature" and quotes as an example the poem *Andromaque, je pense a toi*, in which "any trace of a predestined harmony between man and nature, or a hidden analogy between sensible appearance and suprasensible meaning, is gone" (Jauss 1982, 83). However, the break with anthropocentric understanding of nature was probably not abrupt enough to be applicable as a criterion for judging the modernity of poetry. Symbolist and modernist poetries do not deny the concept of projecting what is within onto the outside world; and this is the reason that the term lyric poetry could be employed to denote the poetry of Baudelaire, Rimbaud, Mallarmé, Eliot and others. Mallarmé's definition of the symbol, as well as Eliot's description of the objective correlate, come from the unspoken assumption about the separation between the subject and the object. With both poets we can speak of de-authorized poetry, but not of its impersonality.<sup>[v]</sup> Mallarmé's lyric subject, which appears together with the text, uses symbols to suggest the mood to the reader, whereas Eliot's, which also can not be regarded as the

source of speech, describes emotion with objective correlates. The closest ties to the (pre)romantic concept of projecting emotions onto nature can be seen in expressionist poetry where images of landscapes and hideous animals become a metaphor for the mood of the lyric subject, with images of towns performing a similar function. By including images of ugliness, the expressionists considerably widened their motifs in comparison to the romantic poets; on the other hand, the function of the lyric subject remained unchanged because its role was still to describe the mood by means of the images of the outside world.

In romantic as well as modern lyric poetry the identity of the lyric subject is formed in a similar way; in both cases it is based in the idea of the separation between the subject and object. The images of the outside world – and therefore space – are the projections of inner moods, and they are the essence of the subject. This means that the space in romantic and modern poetry is metaphorically connected to the identity of the lyric subject. As in modern lyric poetry, the lyric subject in “language poetry” is not the source of speech, but rather its product; however, the boundary between the outside and the inside in “language poetry” is essentially blurred and therefore the metaphoric role of space is cancelled out. If it is possible to claim that the cancellation of the boundary between the subject and the object in “language poetry” is a *fait accompli*, there still remains the question of whether the reader of such poetry is ready to give up the deeply rooted manner of metaphorical reading.

The second supposition argued in the introduction was that space affects the structure of the lyric text. Analyses of modern lyric poetry performed by various researches have shown that individual movements under the common term of modern lyric poetry introduced by H. Friedrich, exhibit differences in the way they link images, but that also many similarities exist among them. While in traditional poetry, images are primarily linked on a thematic level and cohesive elements include the lyric subject and temporal sequence, modern poetry is governed by fragmentary imagery. An important principle of structuring modern poetry is simultaneity – the images do not follow one another in a temporal sequence, but appear simultaneously. Rhythmic or sonic stringing of images is also common. In this context, H. Friedrich speaks of the linguistic magic of Baudelaire, Rimbaud, Mallarmé and other modern poets. Typical of the symbolists are “vast networks of images which are only connected in depth, at the level of the Ideas themselves, in other words, in the abstract” (Forestier 1984, 117). In surrealist “associative chains” or networks (Pastor 1972, 32), which form around an individual image, the principle of connection is subjective association. Futurists spoke of wireless imagination, due to their images being liberated of all logical or grammatical context. S. Vietta is convinced that the expressionists and all modern literature are characterized by “atomisation and isolation of individual images” (33). “The simultaneity of disparate and rapidly changing images” (ibid.) is connected to the mode of perception in modern metropolises and communicates the dissociation of the subject. In relation to the composition of modern poetry a phrase of collage technique is frequently used; less prevalent, but semantically related is Frank’s term spatialisation, which presupposes the undermining of “the inherent consecutiveness of language, frustrating the reader’s normal expectation of a sequence and forcing him to perceive the elements of the poem juxtaposed in space rather than unrolling in time” (quoted after: Škulj 1988, 45). Spatialisation in this sense does not mean that the quota or the meaning of the images that belong to the motif area of space increased in modern poetry. Similarly to other researchers, Frank stresses primarily the simultaneity of images in modern poetry, and it seems that the notion of space in the quote could also be understood as a metaphor for the poetic text or even its material support.

The conclusion that modern poetry is characterised by the simultaneity and disparity of imagery brings us somewhat closer to the answer to the question also whether space affects the organisation of the lyric text. In his article *The Code of Modernism*, D. W. Fokkema includes space among the ten categories by which, he feels, it is possible to describe the differences between modernism and some other trends of that period. [vi] Here we will not go into his statement that spatial relations in modernism have a subordinate function in comparison to time, while visualized spatial relations are dominant in expressionism. What is important for the discussion about the role of space in the structure of a lyric text is the finding that the lyric subject in modernist poetry can “transcend the spatial restrictions that were considered prohibitive in earlier period codes.” (Fokkema 1976, 684). As an example of transcending the spatial restrictions, Fokkema mentions the poetry of Eliot and Pound; another very illustrative example would be Appolinaire’s poem *Zone*. In it the images of various spaces (streets of Paris, Mediterranean shores, a garden of a tavern near Prague etc.) appear simultaneously and therefore break the rule that a person can only be in one place at once. The association between space and the composition of Appolinaire’s poem is obvious, although the relationship is not necessarily that of cause and effect: the space is not uniform and the text is fragmented. The spatial transgressions are in a similar relationship to the simultaneity of imagery than the two sides of a coin; in both cases it is about mutual dependence. In traditional lyric poetry, which follows not only the temporal sequence but also the restrictions of space, the structure of the text is different; the images of space assist in forming more closely knit poems in terms of motifs and themes.

The transcending of spatial restrictions in modern poetry does not affect only the structure of the text but also has a thematic function, since the disunity of space may be understood as a metaphor for the incoherence of the lyric subject. The images of various spaces, which are read as metaphors for the inner landscape of the lyric subject, indicate the fluidity, the plurality of self. By appropriating the various spaces, the lyric subject creates different identities for itself that may be experienced by it in various ways – either as a heroic act of self-constitution (an example would be Appolinaire's poem *Zone*) or as a regrettable loss of a firm foundation (which seems to be characteristic of expressionist poetry, for which S. Vietta has used the already mentioned term of dissociation of the subject). Besides the incoherent space, there is at least one more metaphor for the inconsistent or lost identity typical of modern poetry – the metaphor of departure. Modern poets use it as a variation of the old topos of life being a journey, because they use it to indicate the assertion that space cannot provide a consistent or firm identity to the lyric subject.

We may end this reflection on the role of space in lyric poetry by concluding that space in traditional lyric poetry is a metaphor for the inner world of the lyric subject, while in modern lyric poetry it is foremost a metaphor for an unstable or lost identity. The metaphoric function of space is an important criterion in determining the genre of a poem. Descriptive poetry is characterized by literal imagery, and is therefore, strictly speaking, not part of lyric poetry. In "language poetry" the boundary between outside and inside is blurred and the images of space have no metaphoric function, so once again we probably cannot speak of lyric poetry. Because space in "language poetry" isn't something that would exist "out there", but is a construct of language, let us mention in the end as a curiosity how the unreality of space entered the thoughts and poems of a Slovenian poet Gregor Strniša (1930-1987) who is normally regarded as a classic of modern poetry. As Kant, he was convinced that there is no Euclidian space in physical reality. In his essay *Universe*, he reflects that the *a priori* forms of space and time originated with the development of thinking consciousness as a defence mechanism without which human beings in the early stages of the development of their consciousness would instantaneously go mad or die. He clearly illustrated the higher form of consciousness that he called universal consciousness, with an image of a four-dimensional spatial-temporal being, because of the "purely organic connection of all living things in all places and all times into a dialectically greater whole of the entire living world" (Strniša 1983, 10). The reader who knows Strniša's views has no problems in understanding his seemingly paradoxical verses about the willow tree, which was cut down, and yet still stands in the same spot.<sup>[vii]</sup> The function of the imagery, which describes space in Strniša's poetry is unique, because through it the lyric subject indicates its higher, universal consciousness. In the consciousness of the average contemporary person, however, space is still something one can see oneself in as in a mirror.

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## NOTES

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[i] Jola Škulj wrote about this in Slovenia, in her articles: "The modern novel: the concept of spatialization (Frank) and the dialogic principle (Bakhtin)", *Space and Boundaries. Proceedings of the XIIIth Congress of the ICLA*. Munich, 1988; "Spacialna forma in dialoškost: vprašanje konceptualizacije modernističnega romana", *Primerjalna književnost* 12, 1989, 1.

[ii] As an example of the death of the author and the "self" as the source of speech, Barthes states Mallarmé's poetry but overlooks the idea that the lyric subject is "born" together with the poem and does therefore not exist independently of it.

[iii] "One of the cardinal principles – perhaps the cardinal principle – of American Language poetics (as of the related current in England usually labelled 'linguistically innovative poetics') has been the dismissal of 'voice' as the foundational principle of lyric poetry" (Perloff 1998, 19).

[iv] *Über das Verhaältnis der bildenden Künste zu der Natur*, 1807; Schellings Werke, 3. Supplemented tome, Munich 1959, p. 416.

[v] The difference between de-authorization (the eradication of the author) and impersonality (the eradication of the one who is speaking) is often overlooked. The impersonality, described by Eliot in his essay *Tradition and the individual talent*, refers explicitly to the poet and not to the lyric subject, therefore it seems it would be more appropriate to speak of de-authorization.

[vi] According to Fokkema, modernism differs from symbolism, futurism, expressionism, surrealism, socialist and documentary realism, as well as post-modernism.

[vii] "There used to be a willow here, / someone will say and walk on. // But by the endless river – / darkening, rustling behind him, – / in its beautiful leafy cage, / the same willow is standing still" (Strniša 1989, 67).

## Bart Keunen: MORALISM AND INDIVIDUALISM IN URBAN FICTION: A DELEUZIAN AND BAKHTINIAN CRITIQUE OF SPATIAL TRANSGRESSIONS IN CONTEMPORARY CRIME NOVELS

Historically, the 'urban novel' or 'city novel' was a strong discursive reality in both the production and reception of 19<sup>th</sup> and early 20<sup>th</sup> century fiction. To grasp the full extent of the contrast with the present situation we need to bear in mind, however, what this implies: that academic literary criticism often treated the phenomenon of the urban novel as something of a monolith, discussing it in tandem with generalizing, universalizing, or 'grand' narratives on 'the metropolis' and 'metropolitan life' by such early sociologists and urban theorists as Georg Simmel, Max Weber, Louis Wirth, or Lewis Mumford. The urban novel, as it was construed first by writers and then by critics, thus usually stood for a confrontation with the processes and symptoms of 'modernity' overall — a confrontation that was easily taken to transcend the particularities of place, race, lifestyle, ethnicity, gender, sexuality, or national origin that have come to complicate and refine academic discourse in more recent years. In itself, this traditional

approach is not surprising: literary representations of urban worlds were themselves inspired by a kind of metonymical motivation. The city was conceived as a privileged environment; it was seen as a space in which the most important social and historical processes came to the surface. Writers and critics had good reason to emphasize the exceptional social status of the metropolis. According to the most eminent urban sociologist that Berlin produced, Georg Simmel, the city around the turn of the century was not so much a "spatial entity with sociological consequences" as "a sociological entity that is formed spatially" (Simmel 1903: 35; quoted in Frisby 1986: 77). Urban space was the modernization process itself turned flesh; it was the "point of concentration of modernity". For this reason, literary representations of the city (and studies about them) were much more than descriptions of urban space; they were always also about a microcosm that metonymically, or better even, synecdochically, referred to major events and evolutions in the social world at large. I want to recall, very briefly, two of these events: on the one hand, the rationalization and fragmentation of moral discourses that accompanies literary representations of the city, and on the other hand, the commodifications and individualization of lifestyles that goes hand in hand with them (see Beck 1986). Both these social phenomena have been analyzed extensively by urban sociologists, but the most important observers of them have probably been the great urban novelists of the 19th and 20th centuries (see Keunen 2001 and Lehan 1998).

The main concern of these novelists can be described by referring to a historical phenomenon I would like to coin "the modernity syndrome". According to theorists of modernity like Simmel and Georg Lukács, who describe the first pole of the modernity syndrome, the moral order changed completely from the Renaissance onwards. Modernity can be considered as the period in which the bourgeoisie introduced capitalism and thereby installed a new type of morality. In the capitalist logic, nothing is sacred; everything tends towards a decoding of the ancient social relationships. In the name of individual liberties, traditions are done away with and social forms are transformed into functional societal structures. In a capitalist form of society, no universal value systems can thrive, as it is the axiomatic structure of capital flows that ultimately determines the foundational social relationships. Hierarchical structures based on social status and corresponding qualitative values crumble, to the benefit of a seemingly egalitarian society of free citizens. At the level of moral coding, a fault line can be discerned. Bourgeois culture moves away from the codes of the older, hierarchically organized social groups and is therefore plagued by self-pity caused by the "loss of values".

The interest of the great urban novelists in excessive manifestations of individual sovereignty is a second aspect of the modernity syndrome. It reflects the individuation process of modernity, a process that can be labeled a "recoding process". This recoding is related to the modern subjects' tendency to stylize themselves as sovereign moral individuals. In other words, the fragmentation of traditional codes by the capitalist process of decoding is undone by a new moral coding foundation: the individual. Going back to Elias' description of the civilization process, one can argue that the decoding that wins out in modern society goes hand in hand with a recoding of individual behavior. The demise of external coercion coincides with increased self-coercion. In the course of the modernization process, culture progressively functions as a strategy to manipulate culture participants - to *civilize* them, and to subject them to the requirement of "impulse control"; the moral codes are interiorized and assume the shape of individual codes of behavior. Deleuze and Guattari come to the same conclusions in their genealogical overview of cultural history in *Capitalisme et schizophrénie*. They observe that in the realm of "the brave and the free" the "oedipalization" of behavior becomes the most important mechanism of social coding (Deleuze 1972: 318). Anticipating the bio-political claims in Michel Foucault's *Histoire de la sexualité* and Negri's *Empire*, they argue that in capitalist societies the individual ideal of freedom paradoxically functions as a kind of psychological self-coercion. Deleuze and Guattari suggest that capitalist societies may very well exercise the most powerful kind of terror: psychological terror. Admittedly, capitalist individuals no longer live under the regime of despotic institutions, but they have to deal with an internal despot who burdens them with feelings of guilt and unattainable desires. The heroes of urban fiction certainly confirm this general tendency.

In what follows, I will shed light on both aspects of the modernity syndrome in order to clarify this somewhat abstract hypothesis. From time to time, I will refer to fiction writers, but in essence, my argument will be of a theoretical nature. My illustrations come from 20th century realist literature, more specifically the genre of the crime novel, because this genre can be seen as being the most familiar with the old strategies of urban writing. I will dwell on two images of the hero in the popular narrative culture of the 20th century. The first ties in with a traditional moralistic scheme; the second can be seen as a post-modernist stance that surmounts the traditional vision of the heroic act. The first seems to dominate most of our crime novel production in the West; the second can be considered as a more modest and marginal current within our popular culture.

### **Literary heroes and the spatial imagination**

Urban crime fiction, as it was “invented” by the pioneers of the hard-boiled tradition, is marked by a strong moral concern. When dealing with modern society, they project moral values on the city. Moral polarities are used to give a semantic foundation to plot structures and heroes. In the hard-boiled tradition this structure is particularized as an opposition between labyrinthine and anomic settings on one hand, and attempts at elucidation on the other. In this sense these murder stories can be seen as a powerful expression of one aspect of the “modernity syndrome”. They deal with the “decoding” of moral values in modern “civilized” societies. But the other half of the syndrome is present in crime fiction as well. The dual plot structure is often combined with heroes that express a strong sense of individuality and a predilection for private meditations. Like other types of modern fiction, urban crime fiction is organized by the actions of heroes who are tested for their personal integrity. This reflects the individuation process of modernity, the “recoding process.”

Urban crime fiction became respected because of its ability to depict modern society in its degrading and dysphoric aspects. The decoding process in the modern world (the aforementioned fragmentation of moral discourses and of life worlds) is central to the world of hard-boiled crime fiction. Raymond Chandler, one of the deans of this kind of world-making, captures the kind of morality that comes through in urban crime fiction in “The Simple Art of Murder”:

The realist in murder writes of a world in which gangsters can rule nations and almost rule cities, in which hotels and apartment houses and celebrated restaurants are owned by rich men who made their money out of brothels, in which a screen star can be the finger man for a mob, and the nice man down the hall is a boss of the numbers racket; a world where a judge with a cellar full of bootleg liquor can send a man to jail for having a pint in his pocket, where the mayor of your town may have condoned murder as an instrument of money making, where no man can walk down a dark street in safety because law and order are things we talk about but refrain from practising; a world where you may witness a hold-up in broad daylight and see who did it, but you will fade quickly back into the crowd rather than tell anyone, because the hold-up men may have friends with long guns, or the police may not like your testimony, and in any case the shyster for the defence will be allowed to abuse and vilify you in open court, before a jury of selected morons, without any but the most perfunctory interference from a political judge. It is not a very fragrant world, but it is the world you live in, and certain writers with tough minds and a cool spirit of detachment can make very interesting and even amusing patterns out of it (Chandler 1944: 59 ).

References to the second pole of the modernity syndrome complete the picture. For Chandler, an important feature of crime fiction is the wish to offer a picture of “redemption.” The appropriate answer to the decoding processes of modernity is the moral integrity of the detective. In a much quoted passage he states:

Down these mean streets a man must go who is not himself mean, who is neither tarnished nor afraid. The detective in this kind of story must be such a man. He is the hero, he is everything. He must be a complete man and a common man and yet an unusual man. He must be, to use a rather weathered phrase, a man of honour, by instinct, by inevitability, without thought of it, and certainly without saying it. He must be the best man in his world and a good enough man for any world. (...) If there were enough like him, I think the world would be a very safe place to live in, and yet not too dull to be worth living in (Chandler 1944: 59 ).

The enactment of recoded moral attitudes is a fundamental story pattern in modern societies. Modern subjects do not see themselves as devoted citizens, but like to cultivate the image of a person who acts morally in a spontaneous way. In essence, this attitude is a symptom of a phenomenon that Norbert Elias dubbed “emotional and moral self-coercion”. Crime fiction hyperbolizes this fundamental tendency: far from being a savior of the metaphysical order, modern heroes are extrapolations of our tendency towards self-coercion. In a sense they seem to be emblems of unbound freedom and of a life that is more adventurous than that of ordinary people, but their attitude is, in fact, more ambiguous. They hyperbolize not only our freedom, but also illustrate our troubled experience in a world that forces individuals into the “social correctness” of self-coercion.

In order to trace the basic structure of the crime novel, we can draw on two essays by Mikhail Bakhtin written in the late thirties (Bakhtin 1981 and 1986). One of the core concepts in his history of the novel is the concept of “ordeal”. According to Bakhtin, the Novel of Ordeal is “the most widespread sub-category of the novel in European literature. It encompasses a considerable majority of all novels produced” (Bakhtin 1986: 11). The novel of ordeal is a novelistic sub-genre of Greek origin which reached its peak between the second and the sixth century. It underwent countless metamorphoses (hagiography, chivalric literature, the baroque adventure novel). Moreover, this literary genre survived its

historical prototypes: in the Gothic novel and the 18<sup>th</sup> century sentimental novel, Dumas and Sue's 19<sup>th</sup> century adventure stories, and the contemporary Hollywood action movie and crime fiction are to a great extent also indebted to the narrative of the ordeal. The name of the genre derives from the fact that the story centers on the hero's trials in confrontation with (often adventurous and well-nigh insurmountable) obstacles. The nature of the test (the ordeal) is not so much determined by the concrete shape of the obstacles, but largely depends on the identity the author has chosen for his hero. Whether the test concerns the hero's loyalty, bravery, virtue, saintliness or magnanimity, the result is always the confirmation of the basic qualities of the heroic individual and the traditions that they incorporate like nobody else does.

One of Bakhtin's important insights is the observation that the "adventure novel of ordeal" is characterized by a high degree of *stasis*. The hero of these stories is thrown into a world dominated by ordeals or whims of fate, but these do not change him in the least. The ordeal is based on a set plot ("a typical composite schema"; Bakhtin 1981:87) and a stereotypical narrative worldview, the adventure chronotope: "The adventure chronotope is (...) characterized by a technical, abstract connection between space and time, by the reversibility of moments in a temporal sequence, and by their interchangeability in space. In this chronotope all initiative and power belongs to chance" (Bakhtin 1981: 100). There is hardly any interaction between the hero and the world; the world can test the hero, but is not capable of really changing him. In the same way, the hero cannot change the static order of the world. The ideological consequence of such a view of humanity is that our identity coincides with a predetermined self. The hero stands for vague, but in any case fixed values, and the world he has to cope with also has a fixed meaning.

The static world view that Bakhtin describes is a constitutive part of the literature of autocratic and theocratic societies. Epic literature is one of the most important types of literary expression from the Scandinavian Eddas and the *Carmina Burana* of the Carolingian Renaissance to the *chansons de geste*. It is a kind of allegorical narrative art that is structured by binary oppositions which are informed by aristocratic and religious codes. Through this kind of binary opposition, the epic romance glorifies the ruling position of social elites. For contemporary cultural historians (such as Deleuze and Jameson), this type of positional thinking constitutes the prime characteristic of the pre-capitalist narrative. As Northrop Frye put it: "Romance is the struggle between higher and lower realms, between heaven and hell, or the angelic and the demonic or diabolic" (Jameson 1981: 110-1). The epic romance is a genre that collects narratives in which the oppositions between the strong and the weak, between heroes and intriguers, between figures of order and figures of chaos, determine the plot. In these stories, the hero acts as the (representative of the) lawmaker, but at the same time as a metaphysical agent that renders society coherent (again). The sacrifices made to achieve this goal are superhuman; the protagonist is a superman. In *Anatomy of Criticism* Frye analyzes epic heroes as follows: "The hero of romance is analogous to the mythical Messiah or deliverer who comes from an upper world, and his enemy is analogous to the demonic powers of a lower world" (Frye 1957: 187).<sup>[1]</sup>

At first sight, the classical mythical patterns of thought seem to recur in 19<sup>th</sup> century realist fiction. Urban stories especially share a strong ethical preoccupation with epic romance, and in a sense they figure as "the missing link" between 20<sup>th</sup> century crime writing and the tradition of the adventure story. During the 19<sup>th</sup> century (until the interbellum period) cities were staged, described and evaluated as spaces of transgression, and opposed by a protagonist (or a series of characters) with a high degree of ethical self-consciousness. The mythical conflict implies a battle between an endangered moral world and an anomic world — a battle that cannot be brought to a conclusion and therefore always involves spleen and other signs of depression. Amy Kaplan supports this point of view in her study of American realism: realism has to be studied as "a strategy for imagining and managing the threats of social change – not just to assert a dominant power, but often to assuage fears of powerlessness" (Kaplan 1988: 10). The strongest expressions of these preoccupations can be found in city literature. In realist and modernist literatures many novels open with the image of an uprooted traveler who innocently enters a city. The image functioned as the strategy of choice to give shape to the grand parade of modernity. Especially works that can be categorized as realist, naturalist or realistically oriented modernist (like Dreiser's *Sister Carrie* and *An American Tragedy* or Dos Passos's *Manhattan Transfer*), as well as films from the interbellum (like Joe May's *Asphalt* or King Vidor's *The Crowd*), used the motif of 'arrival in the big city' to submerge the audience in a highly charged and emotionally gripping situation (see Keunen 2000: 206-7, 303). Even though the urban material selected by authors and film makers was usually characterized by diversity and heterogeneity, these works shared a fascination with the Big Confrontation between individual and city. The arrival in New York, Chicago, Paris, Berlin, or London was a symbol of the

encounter with historical developments everyone could recognize, and social tensions everybody could feel. For these reasons the image of this confrontation became one of the most potent symbols of modern culture. The attention shifts from superhuman heroes and aristocratic ideals to the experiences of normal citizens in everyday life. The struggles between good and evil disappear to make room for the existential vicissitudes of individual heroes, for what Erich Auerbach has called “the entrance of existential and tragic seriousness into realism” (Auerbach 2003: 481). In other words, the ordeal is primarily situated at the level of the confrontation with modernity, and decoding, anomic society (see Auerbach 2003: 463, 473, 550-2). In a large number of French realist novels of the first half of the 19<sup>th</sup> century (Balzac) and in French naturalism (from the 1860’s on), the urban hero strongly relies on an individualized heroism that runs parallel to the general recoding tendency in modern society. The plot of the realist novel, like that of the *Bildungsroman*, is constructed around the moral development of the protagonist, who, in a struggle with the social world (often symbolized by the city), reaches maturity or resignation. The urban individual is at the mercy of an ethically superficial and often threatening city. This is certainly the case in Anglo-Saxon naturalism: the confrontation between the individual and the city often takes the form of a tragic conflict from which the individual barely escapes (Williams 1985: 235; Göbel 1982: 90-92). Therefore, it is not surprising that the theme of the struggle between the individual and the city became immensely popular in the 19<sup>th</sup> and early 20<sup>th</sup> century.<sup>[iii]</sup> The metropolis became the narrative mould in which the author could test his heroes. Diane Wolfe Levy rightly argues that “the realistic city of early 19th-century novels functioned either as a backdrop or an objective test to be passed or failed by the protagonist. It was presented in highly symbolic terms of success or failure” (Levy 1978: 73)<sup>[iiii]</sup>.

City literature in this sense was an excellent expression of what I call the modernity syndrome. On the one hand, modern fiction addresses transformations in the social world (the tendency towards differentiation and fragmentation, and towards the relativity of moral absolutes); on the other hand, it addresses changes in the subjective answers to these transformations. The first can be called decoding phenomena; the second can be called recoding strategies. Thus, I would like to argue that, together with increasing anomy, modernity is also characterized by a different view of individual values. Theorists of modernity have observed that individuals in an anomic society take on an aura of subjective freedom. Literary historians find that there is a process of individualization in literature, that the modern author cannot fall back on the old moral polarities and that the ordeal of his heroes can no longer take place in a transparent, comprehensible world. As Jameson put it: “In the increasingly secularized and rationalized world that emerges from the collapse of feudalism” the author needs to look for themes that will have to replace “the older magical categories of Otherness which have now become so many dead languages” (Jameson 1981: 131). The modern author finds these themes especially in the psychological world – more specifically, in the polarity between subjective representations of morality and the value-indifference of the objective world.

In 20th century crime writing this enactment of both cultural mechanisms of the modernity syndrome, this symbolic attempt to cope with modernity, seems to be continued, as will be argued below. The decoding of moral values can be seen as a good conductor for ancient images of moral decay and metaphysical uncertainties. This image of the modern hero can be seen as a transgressive figure who replaces the ancient heroes of the epic. It certainly ties in with Lotman’s thesis on the transgressive nature of modern and ancient heroes: “He may be a noble robber or a *picaro*, a sorcerer, spy, detective, terrorist or superman – the point is that he is able to do what others cannot – namely, to cross the structural boundaries of cultural space” (Lotman 1990: 151).

### **The transgressive hero in recent urban crime fiction**

The quotes from Chandler show that urban crime fiction certainly revitalizes the old patterns of a general moral problem. Chandler is writing about the thirties, but in later phases of 20<sup>th</sup> century culture the basic premises are roughly copied by crime novelists. In contemporary crime fiction the pattern changes only a little. In many aspects contemporary crime stories resemble the older literature of ordeal, but they replace the old metaphysical and religious challenges by issues regarding the decoding mechanisms in modern society. What Michael Denning says about Eric Ambler’s work goes to the heart of contemporary crime fiction: “the obsessive story of the loss of innocence, and the demystifying reduction of all civilization to violence and brute force: all these aspects join to form a concern for individual ethical decisions in the context of certain established and permanent aspects of human nature and experience” (Denning 1987: 84). In crime fiction the older mythical structure is particularized as an opposition between, on the one hand, a spatial projection of a decoded life world and, on the other hand, heroic struggles with that urban space of moral transgression. The hero of the modern crime story does not seem to fight a specific kind of evil, or a negative moral agency; he often fights a more abstract

enemy, the lack of moral foundations. During this struggle, he discovers his own, idiosyncratic moral code; he develops his ego by falling back on a highly minimalist moral theory, a prudential ethics. In some cases, the ethical self-consciousness, the recoding strategy, of the traditional hero becomes an even more extreme individualistic stance; resistance to the transgressive environment takes on radical transgressive features itself. An extreme example of this can be found in the work of Andrew Vachss, a former administrator who specialized in cases of child abuse after reading law. In his crime stories (which nearly always take place in New York during the eighties or the nineties) he leaves the general picture of modern life intact and only updates the world described by Chandler. He primarily tackles the moral decadence of the modern world, the transgression of modernity in general, and of urban space and society in particular. As in older forms of realist fiction, the city takes on the role of the antipode. The city belongs entirely to the dark sector of the mythical world; Vachss's universe is characterized as follows by a *Playboy* critic: "Lower Manhattan dockside hell, populated by various baby rapers (sic), gun runners, pimps, and snuff film magnates." The hero moves "through the catacombs of New York, where every alley is blind, and the penthouses are as dangerous as the basements" (Shames 1986). Vachss's basic concept as a writer of crime stories is a recurring element in 20<sup>th</sup> century fiction. In that century's dominant stories, Hollywood's televisual stories, there is a similar tendency to take up the city in a mythical, static world. "The New York of *Taxi Driver* turns restless, although the alienated Travis moves towards a numbness, a growing repression that ultimately bursts into ferocious, massive violence. Haunted by its filth and brutality, Travis hates the city; New York is the City of Dreadful Night" (Willett 94-95).

What is important to me in this city imagery is the fact that the city elicits a slightly different kind of subjective response. In contrast with Chandler, the hero takes on a more "unethical" stance. The manifestly unethical attitude of the hero in Vachss's novels can be seen as a radicalization of the second pole of the modernity syndrome: the tendency to cultivate an image of transgressive freedom is turned into a new kind of image of individual sovereignty. *Mystery Guide* typifies Vachss's hero with the following adequate qualification: "The protagonist is named Burke; he has no first name, having been raised in state institutions from the beginning. He's a survivor, a grifter, a kind of man-hunter; he's a criminal in economic matters, but he feels burning hatred for the other kind of criminal: child molesters, rapists, pornography producers, neo-Nazis, woman-abusers, anyone who gets a thrill from the pain and fear of others. He has a moral code that owes little to what the conservative pundits like to call 'traditional Judeo-Christian values': in Burke's view, it is simply a public service to kill and scam his neighbors who happen to be 'maggots'" (*Mystery Guide* 2004).<sup>[iv]</sup> In spite of his unconventional moral stance, a hero like Burke still illustrates the recoding mechanisms in modernity. Without the re-adoption of moral values, albeit in a highly individualized form, there seems to be no chance of survival in a strongly decoded society. Consequently, the evocation of a predetermined self remains one of the dominant features of contemporary crime fiction.

Urban crime fiction is organized by the actions of heroes who are tested for their ability to survive in urban culture. We can clearly see how story tellers cope with the modernity syndrome (the paradoxical co-existence of decoding and recoding mechanisms): the public realm is pictured as a space of material and moral disorientation, but is also combined with a search for moral values. This search can be illustrated by the emergence of secondary plot lines that evoke closed private spaces. Crime novelists often refer to spatial settings which compensate for the loss of collective value systems. Statements in a recent overview of contemporary American crime novels confirm this observation. Theo D'haen and Hans Bertens conclude from their reading of James Ellroy that his characters "consciously and cynically implicate themselves in what they know to be a corrupt and even inhuman system. The alternative is that they opt out" (Bertens 2001: 112). This "opting out" very often takes on the shape of a movement towards alternative spaces; sometimes those spaces can be called "individualized gated communities"; sometimes they can be labeled as "emotional secure life worlds." A good example of what I would call "individualized gated communities" is the situation of the character named Burke in Andrew Vachss's work. Burke's office is an anonymous, non-registered dwelling in a warehouse.<sup>[v]</sup> The house is protected by all kinds of electronic equipment, but most of all by an enormous Great Dane, Pansy. The same kind of armoured biotope is the bunker in the Bronx in which The Mole lives, the technical genius of the Burke series. The bunker is protected by a multitude of wild dogs that keep neo-Nazis from taking revenge for the countless attacks of the Mole.

The second phenomenon worth mentioning is the appearance of what I would call "emotionally secure life worlds." An exponent of this is the systematic development of a specific secondary plot line devoted to the private life of the heroes, as in Robert Parker's Bostonian crime novels: the protagonist, Spenser, is often flying towards a kind of "nuclear family", his girlfriend and his dog. The attention paid to private life plots finds its best illustrations in contemporary crime series on television. Often contrasted with suggestive images of a chaotic, hectic city life (for instance, in the presentation of New York in *NYPD Blue*), television producers concentrate frequently on the sentimental or existential problems of their

heroes. This emergence of love or family idylls ties in with a general tendency in Western literature. Zola already opted, in one of his major novel on the complexity of modern city life (*Le Ventre de Paris*), for an idyllic subplot, and Dickens is, of course, one of the masters of idyllic plot lines. In fact, we can trace this narrative strategy back to the very roots of realist novel writing. In novels from the second half of the 18th century the development of the protagonist is closely tied to a world model dominated by an idyllic setting and cyclical time processes. Bakhtin calls this model the “idyllic chronotope” because it shows a specific temporal logic in combination with a particular setting, “a grafting of life and its events to a place, to a familiar territory” (Bakhtin 1981: 225). Central to these narratives are the intimacies of life in a small community in the country or in a non-urbanized culture. The flight from the city to the country house is a recurrent theme in early realist novels, used to illustrate the moral concerns of the heroes.<sup>[vi]</sup> Urban modernization processes, in contrast, are associated with the down-swing of cyclical time and described as phases of decay. In the 19<sup>th</sup> century heyday of realism these thematic clusters are redistributed and confronted with clusters describing the modern aspects of city life. The protagonist in realist novels, then, can be seen as a character who anticipates the moral stance of 20<sup>th</sup> century crime novel heroes. Their development is described as a process that includes moments of temporary resignation: in secondary plot lines they take on the appearance of victims who are forced to withdraw from a society plagued by modernization.

In both the case of an “individualized gated community” and of an “emotionally secure life world” the retreat can be considered the evocation of a recoded “authentic” space that strengthens the tendency towards moral autonomy and individuality; the sovereignty of the individual becomes the last refuge for a way of life that seems to be dominated by decoding processes.

### **No more heroes: Post-modern strategies of coping with the modernity syndrome.**

Besides the obvious realist or modernist tendencies in popular narrative culture, there are some developments that deviate from the general scheme. In the 20th century, the crime hero partly changes in shape. First, in *bellettrise*, and second, in popular fiction, we observe a clear tendency to demythologize the heroic stance that dominated traditional prose writing. James Ellroy, for instance, cannot be considered as an author of recoding-fiction. Some of his heroes contradict the thesis that crime fiction cultivates recoded authentic life worlds. In some of Ellroy’s novels, which were recently described as “a hypnotic trip to America’s underbelly and one man’s tortured soul” (Bertens 2001: 97), the direction of the dynamics of classic crime fiction is even reversed; the story “makes the ‘system’, the agent and the characters, however powerfully drawn, puppets-on-a-string, devoid of free will” (Bertens 2001: 112). The attitudes of the heroes do not coincide with a recoding process, but illustrate, on the contrary, the radical affirmation of the decoding tendency, as in Michael Connelly’s *Angels Flight* (1999), in which the hero “hands in his freedom” (Bertens 2001: 112). There are good reasons to believe that the predilection for heroes with a more or less predetermined self has to a certain degree waned in the last decades, at least in some exponents of crime fiction.

A good example of this fairly recent tendency is offered by the Spanish writer Eduardo Mendoza. In a lesser-known trilogy of crime novels, the author of “City of Wonders” reinvents the picaresque novel by adapting the genre to the contemporary urban world of political corruption, child abuse, and financial fraud. The nameless protagonist of the trilogy is a petty criminal who was raised in Barcelona’s underworld and who, after being caught, is living in an asylum, where he is writing his hilarious adventures in an almost lunatic manner. (Mendoza leaves it up to the reader to decide whether the adventures are a realistic report or the phantasmagoria of a mythomaniac). In the three novels the protagonist is either forced or seduced into solving crime mysteries, but in solving these, he does not resemble the ethical self-conscious protagonist of other modern stories. On the contrary, unlike Chandler’s heroes he lives “beyond good and evil” and, in contrast to those of Vachss, he is merely guided by the laws of chance and fate. The moral vocation that characterizes other stories of modernity, and that in a sense compensated for the rather static world view of the adventure stories, is replaced by the frog perspective of a *picaro*. He is only doing the right thing because of a superficial feeling of sympathy for a *femme fatale*, or because he is forced to engage in a struggle with criminality. His methods during this struggle are often as immoral as the deeds of his adversaries. Thus Mendoza injects the novel of ordeal with another important and distinct type of story telling: the picaresque novel. This fusion of two distinct narrative forms is remarkable because it shows clearly that the battle between morality and modernity has been transformed. There is still some confrontation with the amorality of urban space in this kind of fiction, and there is still a transgressive movement (in the sense of Lotman), but the quest for moral self-coercion seems totally absent.

The evolution (in the history of the novel of ordeal) from a positive moral message to a purely negative affirmation of subjective disintegration is, in the light of the aforementioned modernity syndrome, not surprising. It can be interpreted as a radicalization of the decoding process, as an enactment of the

impossibility of recoding strategies. The novels of Mendoza and Ellroy therefore picture a different kind of recoded space; they articulate environments and attitudes that I want to coin as “idiosyncratic psychological spaces”: their characters are pictured as individualists with pathological tendencies. Developments in other media confirm this observation. The movies of the eighties and nineties that Liam Kennedy analyzed in his collection of essays, *Urban Space and Representation*, can be seen as baring the same dichotomy. Kennedy works with the implicit documentary material of movies, with the “over-determined semiology of urban signs and scenes” he observes in them. Films like *After Hours* (1985), *Falling Down* (1992), *Heat* (1995) and *Seven* (1997) are read by him as symptoms of “paranoid spatiality”. The city images he analyzes are documents that refer to “an uncanny simulacrum of self, an always already interiorized space” (2000: 119).

This tendency in crime fiction points to a different reaction to modernity. Often the “self” is faced with the devastating problem that his personal representations and concepts can no longer simply be applied to phenomena of the outside world. The modernity syndrome seems to have caused, in some cases, a catatonic state of mind.

To understand this minimalistic kind of heroism concept, a broadening of horizons in the direction of some general tendencies in urban literature is necessary. The observation that urban fiction and urban modernity are closely intertwined — my starting point — applies both to traditional crime fiction and to the realist and modernist masterpieces that appeared in the heyday of urban fiction (which, I would claim, was between 1850 and 1930). When we want to investigate late modernist and post-modernist fiction, however, such an observation is no longer evident. It seems very doubtful whether urban fiction in the post-war period still functions as a synecdoche, and whether it continues to entertain the same connection with major social evolutions. In a sense, the different attitudes of some contemporary crime novelists towards the recoding mechanisms in our culture (the staging of heroes who live in an idiosyncratic state “beyond good and evil”) can be considered a symptom of the growing neglect of this kind of synecdochic thinking. [\[vii\]](#) The images of heroes we get from novels like those of Mendoza and from the films of Scorsese go hand in hand with changes in the portrayal of the decoding tendencies. The urban setting is no longer tackled directly, but seems to be filtered by a series of problems that are of an almost psycho-pathological kind.

The ambition of the major realist writers (crime novelists included) to represent the city in a “totalizing” manner as the symbol or embodiment of modernity has both waned and been displaced in past years. The tendency towards “emotional secure life worlds” and “individualized gated communities” can be considered a realist strategy. In the case of Zola, Dreiser, Döblin, Dos Passos, Chandler, or Vachss, would-be heroic attempts were made to describe the problems that are linked with the modernity syndrome. Other tendencies seem to reject this modernist project and focus on more complex phenomena. Comparing these narratives with the glorious past of the city novel, we cannot but observe a sharp contrast. In staging the possibility of a recoding strategy, the decoding processes are partly countered. In stories that minimize the heroic stance, however, a more culture-philosophical meta-reflection seems to reign. Implicit meditations on the pitiful status of the hero in the modern world are inserted into the story and, because of the prevailing notion of disintegration (the impossibility of recoding strategies) these novels have a much more critical attitude: the decoded world is exposed in its naked objectivity.

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## NOTES

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[ii] In this sense, the epic hero is the executor of an eschatological goal. Lotman has written extensively on the important role of eschatological and mythical thinking in traditional (and popular) narratives: "The action, set in linear time, is constructed as a narrative about the gradual decay of the world and the ageing of the god, after which comes his death (dismemberment, torment, eating, burial) and resurrection, which marks the end of evil and its final eradication. So the increase of evil is connected with the movement of time; and the disappearance of evil with the end of time, its stopping forever" (Lotman 1990: 158-9).

[iii] At the end of the twentieth century however this collective symbol seems to persist only in the popular imagination, or in post-colonial or lesbian and gay writings, in which migration to the metropolis often continues to be a stock ingredient (for example, in the form of au pair narratives or adaptations of the *Bildungsroman*).

[iiii] Descriptions of city life differ greatly from (pre)romantic imagery; they are strongly focused on those aspects of the world that aroused moral indignation in 18<sup>th</sup> century writers. Balzac, Zola, and Gissing usually focus not on idyllic community life or the flight from the city, but on the most advanced stages of modernization and the concrete spaces where this process takes place. Bakhtin's work suggests that these particular chronotopic images can be analysed as the reverse of the idyllic chronotope: "here the issue is primarily one of overturning and demolishing the world view and psychology of the idyll, which proved increasingly inadequate to the new capitalist world. [...] We get a picture of the breakdown of provincial idealism under forces emanating from the capitalist centre" (Bakhtin 1981: 234). In his study of the *Bildungsroman*, Bakhtin builds on this argument and points to the fact that the realist novel is capable of reading buildings, streets, works of art, technology, and other social organizations as signs that refer to historical developments concerning moral fragmentation: the changing nature of people, the succession of generations and eras, class conflicts (Bakhtin 1986: 25).

[iv] In the *Chicago Tribune*, Vachss's work was related to mythical polarities even more explicitly: "With his soiled white hat, this Lone Ranger of the 1990's asks difficult questions while shining light into the darkest recesses" (The Zero - Official Website of Andrew Vachss).

[v] This concept refers to a relatively recent phenomenon in urban planning. The tendency towards walling private property, and obsessive attention to security and control have found their most extreme expression in the much-publicized "gated community." Gated communities, which started mushrooming in the U.S. in the 1980s, are more than apartment buildings with private security services and a private parking lot. They are entire neighborhoods or subdivisions, newly built or existing, that are literally walled off with a fence and a gate. In their study of the phenomenon, Edward Blakely and Mary Gail Snyder define them as "residential areas with restricted access in which normally public spaces are privatized" (1997: 2).

[vi] Urban spaces may also embody the idyllic chronotope, but only in urban milieus where cyclical

regeneration takes place: intimate enclaves such as middle class houses, suburban villas, parks, and historical monuments. Other aspects of the city are avoided, or function as symbols for banal and unaesthetic experiences.

[vii] The exceptions to this tendency are crime novels situated in a post-colonial context. Here, the culture-sociological impulse is largely retained (See Christian 2001). Peter Brooker has extensively analysed this phenomenon in *Modernity and Metropolis* and comes implicitly to the conclusion that post-war fiction in general is much more concerned with responding to a sociological diversification in the literary field. Four out of seven chapters of his study are dedicated to the theme of community building in city prose and to the efforts of writers to reconstruct their own identities through their fiction.

#### Katia Pizzi: 'SELF' AND THE MODERNIST CITY: STELIO MATTIONI AND TRIESTE

The city of Trieste occupies a particular position in the imagination of Italians. Its geographical eccentricities are brought powerfully to the fore in the experience of the adjacent borders, veritable *chronotopes* in the Bakhtinian sense, and sources of displacement and anxiety. Compounded with a number of complex historical processes, Trieste has been constituted as peripheral, marginal, and irresolute: a quintessentially 'liminal' city locked between a number of conflicting cultures and heritages: Mitteleuropean, Slav, Jewish, Italian.

Trieste's eccentric position has typically been featured in its literature. Its topography has similarly emerged as uncompromising, angular, rugged and vertical: not accidentally, a variously inflected metaphor equating Trieste to a prison, concentration camp or isolation unit, recurs in literary portrayals of the city. As landscape of the mind, Trieste has of course been largely forged also by its literature becoming a sound chamber of memory where streets, corners, squares and banks have all acquired symbolical meaning and are continuously set against their numerous literary renderings.[i]

Trieste's contradictory and displaced position was well understood, for instance, by filmmakers. Without dwelling at length on the cinematic fortunes of Trieste, it is worth noting that themes of an exquisitely local nature, such as the quest for identity, the mystery embodied by women pursued in a coil of dark and dingy back streets and alleys, Trieste's role in the collective imagination as both *frontier* and military *front*, were thematics all prominently displayed in film particularly during the post-war and cold war, when Trieste's contended geo-political position was under close international scrutiny. In the Neo-realist film *Alfa Tau!* (1942; directed by Francesco De Robertis) Trieste stands as metonymy of a generic metropolis, a radically modern and crowded urban space. Trieste features as a seedy microcosm populated with spies, clandestines, refugees, exiles operating in a climate of ambushes, betrayals and unrestrained passions and violence in films such as *Sleeping-car to Trieste* (1948; directed by John Paddy Carstairs), *Clandestino a Trieste* (1951; directed by Guido Salvini) and *La ragazza di Trieste* (1951; directed by Bernard Borderie). Finally, in *Cuori senza frontiere* (1949; directed by Luigi Zampa and starring Gina Lollobrigida and Raf Vallone) the prevailing clichéd sentimental theme is overpowered by the pressing territorial concerns following the geo-political re-mapping of the area after the end of the war.

Consonant with historical developments, as well as the place and role played by the city in the collective imagination, the Trieste emerging in cinema complements Edward Timm's argument that in modern literature: 'there is no longer any position *outside* the city from which it can be viewed as a coherent whole. The poet, novelist or painter is trapped within the turmoil of the metropolis'.[ii] Although Trieste can only partially be viewed as a metropolis, despite many Futurist claims to the contrary, Timms implies here that a modernist approach to the city must be, first and foremost, existential. The artist's position must be that of an insider, whose experience of the city is 'from within', closely related to, indeed, conflated with, the turmoil of her/his unconscious mind.

I will argue here not merely that this is the case with much of modern Triestine literature in Italian, but also that a substantive number of Italian Triestine authors have superimposed, inscribed, as it were, their 'Selves' into the city. These authors include better and lesser-known writers of the pre-war and inter-war generation, from Italo Svevo to Scipio Slataper, from Carlo Stuparich to Virgilio Giotti, as well as contemporary ones such as Giuliana Morandini, Renzo Rosso, and Stelio Mattioni. All of these authors welcome the autobiographical genre as a means of enclosing, almost 'burying', themselves further and further within the city walls. In reflecting a difficulty in severing their umbilical chord with Trieste, their predilection for autobiographical narratives articulates a clear diffidence for alien horizons, powerfully illustrated in the Oedipal attachment binding these local authors with their native town.[iii] This inability,

or unwillingness, to escape the fetters of Trieste has frequently produced a compulsion to inscribe themselves, merge their 'Selves' with the city, or, to put it in Enzo Bettizza's words, 'essere una cosa sola con la città che brulicava alle sue [di Daniele Solospin] spalle, con l'aria stessa che respiravano insieme, lui e la città'.<sup>[iv]</sup>

The novels of Italo Svevo (1861-1928), the internationally renowned Triestine author who exercises to this day the most significant influence on local writing in Italian, provide a useful term of comparison. 'Svevo blurred the line between art and autobiography. [...] Trieste and his own life were always the source of his work', as Charles Russell puts it.<sup>[v]</sup> In his first novel *Una vita* (1892), the author's alter ego, Alfonso, marches up steep Triestine alleyways and the panoramic road leading to the village of Opčina in pursuit of his recovery from a nervous breakdown: through his climbing, Trieste's sharp verticality comes prominently to the fore. Recognizable sites and landscapes are distorted and reshaped by memory, remoulded on the basis of the author's mental geographies and topographies. Trieste's rigorous, even hostile, 'geometricity' is profoundly dissonant with the disorder, apprehensions and turmoil agitating the autobiographical protagonist's mind.

In Svevo's following novel, *Senilità* (1898), the presence of the city is equally pervasive. The protagonists Emilio Brentani and his lover, Angiolina, meet in 'Passaggio Sant'Andrea', a favourite boulevard for strolling on Sundays, and, later on, again along the rugged road leading to Opčina. The two kiss and 'make love' in every corner of Trieste: 'Amarono in tutte le vie suburbane di Trieste. [...] Si baciavano lungamente, la città ai loro piedi, muta, morta, come il mare, di lassu niente altro che una grande estensione di colore misterioso, indistinto: e nell'immobilità e nel silenzio, città, mare e colli apparivano di un solo pezzo, la stessa materia foggiate e colorita da qualche artista bizzarro, divisa, tagliata da linee segnate da punti gialli, i fanali delle vie.'<sup>[vi]</sup>

In its leaden greyness Trieste takes after Emilio's sister Amalia, who lives a desolate, self-constrained existence, while the city's ruthlessness is personified by Angiolina who conceals the materialism of a pragmatic 'Giolona' behind the glory of her sun-kissed hair and sky-blue eyes. Like Alfonso, the autobiographical Emilio is unable to escape a Trieste equated with unhappiness and betrayal. The city is carved out of a heavily layered oil painting, dominated by shadows and punctuated with sudden brushstrokes that cover the previous impression, continually imposing a new, if still uncertain, order.

In Svevo's best-known novel *La coscienza di Zeno* (1923), the meanderings of Zeno's own 'consciousness' replicate the wind-swept verticality of Trieste, in search of a direction that psychoanalysis appears unable to indicate. Zeno is progressively drawn to projecting his own tortuous, ambiguous and compromised 'Self' onto the city, in short, to collude Trieste with his own 'Self'.

A collusion between the disquieting 'geometricity' of Trieste and the 'Self' of the autobiographical protagonist is also laid at the foundations of the novel *Il richiamo di Alma* (1980) by Stelio Mattioni (b. 1921).<sup>[vii]</sup> Set in Trieste at an unspecified time of the XX century, *Il richiamo di Alma* displays a number of features already encountered in Svevo and other major Italian Triestine writers. Without ever mentioning the city by name, Mattioni details all the while an extremely accurate, circumstantial topography which coincides with Trieste's own. Rare, if non-existent, hints to a plausible chronology allow all characters, whose numbers are kept to an absolute minimum and who normally remain nameless, to interact awkwardly and within a historical vacuum. They move, though their movement is typically apparent rather than real, in a Trieste reduced to a metaphysical, De Chirico-like space, populated with few objects and forms of a highly abstract or symbolic nature, 'come in un'atmosfera rarefatta, fra case e persone che erano concrete sì, ma rese sfocate da un miraggio.'<sup>[viii]</sup> The narrative relies on a subtle dialectic of 'open' vs. 'closed' and 'up' vs. 'down' emphasising the psycho-geographical verticality of the city throughout.

The first person narrator, whose name is also never disclosed and who clearly functions as the author's alter ego, roams streets, marches up steep roads or down vertiginous sloping alleys in the exhausting pursuit of a mysterious young woman called Alma, whose name barely conceals a transparent metaphor. Name and metamorphoses undergone by Alma throughout the narration, from Persephone to Virgin Mary, from Eve in the Garden of Eden to Trieste itself as necropolis in the final pages, corroborate the hypothesis that she descends directly from the figurations of *Anima* as devised by Carl Gustav Jung. Not accidentally, Jung's symbols were extremely influential in Trieste via the local intellectual Roberto (Bobi) Bazlen, who not only brought Jungian analysis to Italy via the Triestine route, but also played a pivotal role in discovering and launching Mattioni as an author.<sup>[ix]</sup>

Alma is periodically, if elusively, found, and rapidly lost again in the most prominent streets, squares, corners and back-alleys of this metaphysical Trieste, and with a predilection for the semi-abandoned,

sordid area of Cittavecchia. The novel, however, opens in aunt Francesca's small flat, on the first floor of a building located in Via del Monte, and more precisely in her large garden, 'un giardino aperto e chiuso nello stesso tempo'.<sup>[x]</sup> Circumstantial topographic information details that from this garden: 'si udiva la città, ma come da dietro un muro, così che si poteva immaginarla come si voleva, e anche che non esistesse, che fosse il lontano rumore della risacca o il proprio sangue che scorre nelle vene.'<sup>[xi]</sup> Mattioni strikes a delicate balance here between a 'real' topography, registered by the eye, and a symbolic one, experienced through consciousness.

Complete absorption with the city, indeed the 'flowing' of the city inside himself like his own blood running through his veins, are recurrent states of mind for the autobiographical protagonist. Exploring the city's labyrinthine topography, being engulfed in the vortex of its back streets, coincides with losing himself in a pattern of sinister symbols punctuated with complex literary references and allusions. The resulting sense of estrangement is all-encompassing: the protagonist cannot help but walking down the familiar streets of his home town as if for the first time: 'nel mio girovagare [...], facevo sempre le stesse strade. Non staro a dire quali, [...], ma erano tutte intorno ad un punto, il punto in cui dovevo incontrarla. Quasi un labirinto.'<sup>[xii]</sup> Mattioni powerfully creates an illusion of movement within a very circumscribed, concentric and progressively shrinking space. Indeed, the protagonist's 'Self', his *Anima*, are to be found at the centre of these concentric circles, ultimately in his own psyche: he pursues a tour of his own mind disguised as a tour of Trieste.

Alma's mystery will never be fully revealed. After allusively exposing her naked body against a landscape steeped in literary references and allusions, drawn from classical mythology to Dante's *Divine Comedy*, Alma is never to be seen again by the protagonist who attempts to sever his umbilical chord with his native city by moving out of Trieste. However, a further clue to Alma's relevance is provided in the final pages of the novel, when, minutes before abandoning the city, the protagonist visits Trieste's necropolis: the 'Orto Lapidario' located on top of the hill of San Giusto. Here, an ancient tombstone carries the carved name of Alma, followed by the motto: 'SE TI AMI, AMAMI' (= 'you must love me, if you love yourself').<sup>[xiii]</sup> The circularity and self-referentiality of this motto leave little doubt as to the collusion of Alma/*Anima* with Trieste and with 'Self'. The 'Orto Lapidario' sits on one of the highest grounds in Trieste. From this altitude, intoxicated by a heady perfume of grass and soil, Mattioni contemplates Trieste itself as if reflected in a mirror: a necropolis, the custodian of a sterile archaeology of memory: 'vedevo la città dall'alto, [...] quasi fosse la continuazione del luogo in cui mi trovavo, disseminato di emblemi e di tavole di pietra, sulle quali in vario modo erano incisi dei messaggi, delle date e dei nomi che, [...], invece di comunicare qualcosa, ingeneravano solo monotonia, una scansione anonima senza fine.'<sup>[xiv]</sup>

At this highly charged juncture, the city is called upon as provider of 'Self', as well as in terms of its wider historical and literary status. Trieste itself is a graveyard where debris of memory, a useless 'scanning', a repetition of themes of strictly local interest prevails in similar fashion to the dusty tombstones filling the 'Orto Lapidario'. Strewn as it is with literary 'relics', Trieste's own topography is a primary condition for the protagonist's quest for 'Self'. The city demands complete identification: it is no accident that he feels compelled to leave Trieste once his *Anima* has been revealed to him. The city understood as fossil condemns the protagonist to a self-awareness he must expiate in the loneliness of ostracism knowing no return.

With *Il richiamo di Alma*, Stelio Mattioni has managed to produce an original novel while all the while talking about himself and about Trieste. If we conclude, with Timms, that 'there is no longer any position outside the city from which it can be viewed as a coherent whole', Mattioni has not merely successfully inscribed his own 'Self' in the city.<sup>[xv]</sup> He has also woven one more thread in the tapestry of Triestine literature in Italian. Under the guise of Mattioni's 'crypto-autobiography', Trieste's imagined topographies continue to thrive.<sup>[xvi]</sup>

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#### FILMOGRAPHY

*Alfa Tau!* (Francesco De Robertis; 1942)

*Clandestino a Trieste* (Guido Salvini; 1951)

*Cuori senza frontiere* (Luigi Zampa; 1949)

*La ragazza di Trieste* (Bernard Borderie; 1951)

*Sleeping-car to Trieste* (John Paddy Carstairs; 1948)

#### NOTES

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[i] The city in its literature has typically been personified with a view to reinforcing its status as particular and specific. Personification, usually employed in the iconic representation of nations, from Marianne to John Bull to Uncle Sam, is here applied to Trieste itself.

[ii] Edward Timms, 'Unreal city –Theme and Variations' in *Unreal City: Urban Experience in Modern European Literature and Art*, ed. by E.Timms and David Kelley (Manchester: Manchester University Press, c1985), p.3.

[iii] Claudio Magris analyses in detail the relationship between Triestine writing and the city in Oedipal terms, see 'Una storia si chiude', in *Dietro le parole* (Milan: Garzanti, 1978), pp.175-179.

[iv] E.Bettiza, *Il fantasma di Trieste* (Milan: Longanesi, 1958), p.123: 'being one with the city swarming behind him [Daniele Solospin], with the air they were breathing together'. The translation is mine.

[v] Charles C. Russell, *Italo Svevo: The Writer from Trieste: Reflections on his Background and his Work* (Ravenna: Longo, 1978), p. 127.

[vi] Italo Svevo, *Senilita*, in I.Svevo, *Romanzi*, ed. by Pietro Sarzana (Milan: Mondadori, 1985), pp.405-

637 (pp.430-431); trans. by Beryl de Zoete, I.Svevo, *As a Man Grows Older* (Harmondsworth: Penguin, 1977), p.22: 'They had made love in all the suburban roads of Trieste. [...] They remained folded in a long embrace, with the city at their feet, as silent and dead as the sea which, from that height, seemed one vast expanse of colour, mysterious, undefined. Motionless there in the silence, city, sea, and hills seemed to be all of one piece, as if some artist had shaped and coloured all that matter according to his own strange fancy, and dotted the intersecting lines with points of yellow light which were really street lanterns.'

[vii] Born in Trieste in 1921, Mattioni's first publication was the collection of poems *La città perduta* (Milan: Idos, 1956). Mattioni has however subsequently mainly published fiction in prose, featuring Trieste in all of his work. In a career spanning over forty years, Mattioni's novels and collections of stories include the prominent *Il sosia* (Turin: Einaudi, 1962) and *Il re ne comanda una* (Milan: Adelphi, 1968).

[viii] S.Mattioni, *Il richiamo di Alma* (Milan: Adelphi, 1980), p.76: 'in a rarefied atmosphere, amongst buildings and people who were real, but out of focus at the same time, as if in a mirage.' All translations from this novel quoted here and below are my own.

[ix] See in particular Bazlen's incisive influence in advising major publishers in Italy and in founding the publishing house Adelphi.

[x] S.Mattioni, *Il richiamo*, p.11: 'a garden which was both open and closed at the same time.'

[xi] *Ibid.*, p.12: 'one could hear the city as if from behind a wall, so that one could imagine it as one wished, even as non-existent at all, or existing merely as the distant whisper of the undertow or of one's own blood running through one's veins.' Cf. also with E.Bettizza's novel *Il fantasma di Trieste* quoted in footnote 4 above.

[xii] S.Mattioni, *Il richiamo*, p.26: 'in my wanderings I always walked down the same streets. I do not wish to mention their names, but they all circled round one specific location, exactly where I was destined to meet Alma, as if in the middle of a labyrinth.'

[xiii] *Ibid.*, p.156.

[xiv] *Ibid.*, p.154: 'I contemplated the city from high up, [...] as if it was an extension of the place where I was, strewn with emblems and tombstones. Engraved on those stones were dates, names, messages that [...] failed to communicate anything and bore nothing else but an anonymous, endless scanning.'

[xv] Cf. footnote 2 above.

[xvi] See Bruno Maier, 'Mattioni tra confessione e narrazione', in *Il gioco dell'alfabeto: Altri saggi triestini* (Gorica: Istituto Giuliano di Storia, Cultura, Documentazione, 1990), pp.139-148 (p.140): 'non c'è un'effettiva differenza di *Weltanschauung* tra il recente libro di "confessioni" e le opere anteriori di Mattioni [...] che [...] sono più "soggettive" e autobiografiche (o criptoautobiografiche) di quanto non si possa supporre'.

### Igor Škamperle: **SPACE OF CHANGEABLE IDENTITY AND THE MARGINS OF LITERATURE**

Identity is never static, unchangeable, or determined in advance. Such a view is commonly accepted, and certain regions corroborate it well. There are cultural topographies where identity simply cannot be but a dynamic event. Europe often experiences strong dynamics and transpositions of identities, all the while facing their differences and a vast possibility of choices. Social inertia effectively disclaims and indirectly weakens, suppresses and rejects identity as such, be it linguistic, cultural, national, religious, or as worldview. Identity – namely linguistic, cultural and national – is humanity's open project, both personal and communal. As such, *i.e.* as a personal, subjective and collective task, or a calling to build, research, create and appropriate forms through which we are more than eager to approach beauty and truth, it does not have a final definition. Construing identity reminds us of Martin Buber's observation that man is an uncompleted project. Similar principles were advocated by the Personalists, who related them to the ethical principle of man., Such a (very modern) notion had already been articulated by the Renaissance thinker Pico della Mirandola in 1486 in his *Oratio de hominis dignitate*. We find there the

evident position that humanity has no predestined form, and thus has to chose and form its own essence.

The creation, formation and mediation of identity seem to be related in the very core to art, literature and ethical principles of existence. It is, therefore, no surprise that we can detect in the last few years in Europe a growth of uneasiness and a certain hesitation regarding the process of globalization as dictated by the USA. In this process, the driving engine is economic consumption and the correlated levelling of practically all human criteria: aesthetic, axiological, communicational, applicable, essential, even ethical. Instead of a canon, hierarchy, evaluations, limits of expression and forbidden fruit, what has come to the fore is the apology of levelling of tastes, and expression, ever stronger relativity of criteria, whose sole principle is an increase in consumption. Instead of a vertical line, a horizontal; instead of a tree, a fern or rhizome, as Felix Guattary and Gilles Delleuze predicted years ago in an essay, and later in the introduction to *A Thousand Plateaus*.<sup>[1]</sup> A thousand plateaus of the network, each equally within one's reach, even though reduced to *elementary particles*, the title of a novel by Michel Houellebecq. Even certain metaphors, skilfully intertwined in the works of Borges or Italo Calvino, speak to us today with exciting realism: all we have to do is remind ourselves of the long corridors of the library labyrinth, of language, of the spider web, of paths branching out without end, where we feel comfortably at home. But is it a potential transgression of expression in the textual space of art, literature and in identity as such?

European countries identified themselves with their microcosmic, vertically created identities. We are constituted and defined by the common – the forest, yet there are trees in it. There are many, and each has its own name: oak, pine, birch, maple, elm, beech, cherry, yew, fir, and not simply 'tree'. The plurality is of essential importance here, for it provides grounds for identity and also transgression. Every tree descends into the depths and rises into the sky.

\* \* \*

I come from Trieste. That is where I was born and where I spent my childhood years. Although I live and work in Ljubljana, I go back to Trieste regularly every month to visit my relatives, or just to experience the space, its symbolic and real atmosphere, the nature of *Kras* (or Karst) and Istrian landscape, the urban and historical city landscape, determined by names, identities, history and imagination; because of the cultural geography. This has always been my home. There exists a space in which we live, but we leave it behind and transgress it, measure its margins, experience distance, and return to it. We experience it in our life, with literature as its true and vital witness. For me, however, transgression takes place in an oblique line. I don't take it to be a dividing line, drawing a clear delineation between well-defined categories: good/evil; canon/non- canonized forms of expression; right/wrong; ours/theirs; normative and acceptable/alternative; Slovenian/Italian; or, to put it differently, a dividing line between two worlds, the world of London and Paris from that of Moscow and Vladivostok, the line we lived with not so long ago right there; but the majority of the local population knew how to transgress it and knew how to live on the frontier. Transgression is not black or white; it cannot be founded on Manichean logic. It is evasive, implied, and indirect in its nature, traversing all the fields of our creativity and life. Every tree has its good and bad branches, its own creative, open direction, or a blind withered branch. I lay particular stress on transgression in aesthetics, art, and thinking in general. It incites our creative endeavour to think beyond canons, to go beyond margins, to look for new syntheses. Our goal is harmony. It is founded on this, on complementary, balanced entities.

However, before this can happen, we should come to know the margins, as they were experienced by Michelangelo, who loved his stone, but worked with it by seeking its limits of expressiveness, until his last, astonishingly beautiful unfinished creation *Pieta Rondanini* (1564). Art has always been the battlefield of the artist and form. I am very fond of two lines by the Slovene poet Srečko Kosovel about his struggle with form, with its limits, in search of a higher, complementary harmony:

"... I smash my *Kras*,

thinking of Beethoven's face."

Why is it important to experience the margins, to be able to create something new? Art is never mimetic, it is creative. In this sense, transgression and its transposition of identities, worlds and borders, with which the people of Trieste have been very familiar, has always been to me something positive. It seems stimulating, polyphonic, binding, and closer to a vertical line. Identity is an experience which comes about in meeting and struggling with form. The part of identity which has been given to us is never perfect: we draw closer to it, build it by the margins of the possible, creating the new, returning to and seeking complementary balance. I can think here of two figures, one mythological, literary, and one

religious, who as true archetypes fundamentally determine our civilization: Odysseus (Ulysses) and Abraham.

The first returns home, where his wife and son await him. After all manner of adventures, experienced on the margins of transgression, after experiencing numerous forms, women, perilous dangers and roles, and being Nobody, after losing his friends, Odysseus returns to his island, to his wife and son, to his microcosm and his tree.

Abram (Abraham) does not return to his homeland. His ethical commitment to God directs him to the new, brings him hope, the desire and obligation to transcend, create the new, perfect ideal non-space (utopia), which is the highest expression of man's calling, and is founded on the criteria of righteousness and covenant, on ethics and dialogue. Implicitly, it is grounded in the principle of otherness, the not-everything and the not-yet; as explicated in the title of one among the rare, if not the only, Slovenian novels on a Biblical theme, by a native of Trieste and the Kras, Alojz Rebula: *Tomorrow across the Jordan*; tomorrow, not today.

Transgression in literature is likelihood of margins. As an expression of the confrontation with form, as the fascination of the new, this keeps alive our hopes. As an expression of an endeavour transcending canonized forms – not because of its tendency towards nihilism and the denial of every positive existence, but rather because of its transcending the margins in order to shift and expand the limits of the possible; to enlarge worlds of and art, to name and humanize the boundless mass of chaos, to integrate it in their selves. This is one of the first cultural categories we encounter in Early Palaeolithic hominids, (c. 40,000 BCE), of which Leroi-Gourhan spoke very beautifully, notably of so-called colonising migrations. Humans appropriate and integrate space around their dwellings by naming the configuration of the terrain: the common, tree, pond, hill, crossroads, meadow... In mythology, which accompanied the further developed culture of the Neolithic and the nascent stage of agriculture and cattle breeding, this category of migrations is manifested as the path of a hero, such as Heracles, who has to overcome various dangers as expressions of chaotic forms: freaks, monsters, the limits of the unsettled. Odysseus' path is of the same kind, a true matrix of our literature, showing the grasping of limits, their transgressing, and a return, which is a comeback enriched by the experience of the new. A journey finds a solution to both the outer and inner worlds; with a delightful halt on the island of Scheria, inhabited by the Phaeacians, an island placed at the centre, between our real world and the semi-divine world of the imagination, creative memory or simply *storytelling*... there appears a world of narration. No sooner is he beside the Phaeacians, than Odysseus decides to tell his story, confessing it for the first time, giving it a narrative form, repeating it, for the first time becoming aware of certain things. This magically creative space of storytelling enchants the listeners. It makes possible a halt, self-recognition and return.<sup>[iii]</sup>

One code of perception, the acoustic or auditory, is occupied and gives itself in its form, motivating and encouraging us to active imagination, to self-recognition and mental creativity, only because the second code, the visual, is free and left undefined. By way of analogy, a similar effect can be traced in the visual arts, in graphics, painting, photographs, or slides. There is a visual image, and narration is given its full momentum in the active imagination.

On the other hand, contemporary film or video art, with their moveable tape, occupy both codes of perception simultaneously, making the spectator passive, since both forms, the visual and the auditory, are given and formulated in advance. Audiences are limited to chewing on popcorn. They might be thinking about getting home and what would happen afterwards. Is transgression here still conceivable, if we set aside principled moral criteria regarding conceptual questions, historicity or sexual domain? New forms of art and communication implicitly push us into a network, making us feel at home with the rhizome and fern, drawing us away from the tree. Physical reality is gradually becoming replaced by a cybernetic network which indirectly overturns and appropriates narrative, and does away with traditional heroes through new technology, which in consequence incites a certain kind of indifference to the world.<sup>[iii]</sup>

In Trieste, we have become fairly familiar with transgression. Despite terrible episodes in our history, facing us day by day and ever since early childhood with the margins of identity, as well as with the borders of the primary homeland represented by the mother tongue, we have continually experienced these margins as a stimulating principle of constituting one's identity. This could also serve not only as a metaphorical and historical, but also as a prime example of the margins and pluralistic unity of the newly unified Europe. The old continent's identity has rested on integrated polar principles since Late Antiquity. This should have become uppermost in the minds of all of us: Slovenians – here in Lipica, and not only on the occasion of a literary festival, and also in Ljubljana; my Italian friends in Trieste and elsewhere, who I believe still have great difficulties coming to the Vilenica Festival, because they somehow cannot

feel that this place is their own; the same goes for the Croats, who could recognize and admit that the cultural geography from the Kvarner, Lošinj and Cres all the way to Northern Istria and Kras is actually closely related, and to a great extent a common microcosmic world, in which we understand one another, drinking the same wines. We know that this common space in life and in literature is traversed by numerous margins and transgressive borderlines – sometimes with tragic outcomes. Despite all this, I believe they have also strengthened and polished us in forming our identities; that these tragic mistakes, like the monsters and fears of the mythical hero, enriched us with a unique experience as we made our way towards our own identity and complementarity in the world. There has always been something alchemistic about art: the desire to create gold from base metal.

Literature is a journey. Boundaries are a necessity; they create criteria for the right direction. Those that have marked the existential experience in the Trieste microcosm and the broader Kras-Littoral world have been carefully articulated by numerous texts. I have not spoken about this. So let me just mention some of the authors who have fully articulated their experience, their works being today precious witnesses of the existence of borders, as well as microcosmic gardens and trees, and the search for open, creative and complementary co-existence, although these authors have had several experiences of arguing for the fact that transgressive borders are not always only a domain of academic form, but a reality, which is the basic prerequisite for freedom, righteousness as well as the most elementary identity. Literature as form is a space of expression, a real labyrinth; in a maze we can not play academic games, it is better not to transgress.

Among Slovene writers, we should first mention Boris Pahor and Alojz Rebula. The former vividly described the Trieste existential and transgressive labyrinth. The latter is renowned for his epic narrative orientated to the concrete earthly world, as well as otherworldly spirituality. St. John in Trieste was the home of Vladimir Bartol. Like Pahor and Rebula, he was homely, amiable and flexible on the borders of transgression. His transgression, however, is not determined by the search for modernist form; rather, as in Pahor, Rebula and also Kosmač and at least in principle in Pregelj, it is orientated to the borders in terms of content. In Bartol, we encounter the Persian motif of Alamut, the wall as the dividing line between good and evil Al-araf, and also humour, set in post-war Trieste, which appears as an immensely interesting border region. In Pregelj, the role of transgression is played by erotic Catholic aesthetics.

An exceptional case is the poet Srečko Kosovel, who felt greatly inspired by transgressive modernist expression. Such are his *Cons*, most probably due to his close contacts with the fine-art avant-garde, and his friends Bambič and Černigoj. In the fine arts, form seems to cross borders more easily, or in a fashion different from others.

A similar outline can be traced in Italian authors in Trieste. Umberto Saba (of Jewish origin), Italo Svevo, Scipio Slataper, Fulvio Tomizza, who came from Istria, and nowadays, Claudio Magris and other contemporaries. In Triestine literature, we often encounter transgressions of motif and subject, as for example in one of the first literary transpositions of psychoanalysis in Svevo's novel *La coscienza di Zeno*. There are fewer attempts and ambitions to seek and find academic counter-canonical forms. For a couple of years, Trieste was also the home of Joyce. However, literature in Trieste was first and foremost experienced as a journey, in its archetypal role almost a colonising migration contributing to the constitution of identity, watching out for its borders, testing them, transgressing them, but also stepping back within the borders. After all, even Srečko Kosovel remains an expressionist.

I might say – using a Šalamun metaphor familiar to Slovenes – that in the literature one encounters in this region you cannot become fed up with the image of your tribe. Transgressive configurations are an everyday element of identity. Literary, as well as a broader formal, ideological and cultural challenge finds its form in manifesting a certain archetype, capturing the transcendent, transpersonal symbol, and mediating a specific archetypal form, which proves a constitutive, rewarding and precious part of the microcosmic tree and its identity. As such, it is not an easy task. The very titles of some works by Trieste authors make a crucial point, indeed almost an allegory: *Nomads without Oasis*, *Within the Labyrinth*, *Bay City*, *Itaca e oltre (Ithaca and the Region)*, *Lontano da dove (Far from Where)*, *Scholar of Devin*, *Odysseus at the Mast*, *Green Exile*, *In Sybil Wind*, *Better Life*, *Microcosms*, etc.

If a symbol or a deeper archetype cannot be embraced, expressed, balanced and integrated so as to profess an existential truth, which addresses us, motivates us and becomes a part of the whole, it can come back to us as a symptom, as a point of expression in which contrasts, suppressions and conflicts are manifested in pathological form. This story and its tragic transgressions are also well known in Trieste, extending from the irredentism of the last period of the Austro-Hungarian monarchy to the last decades.

All this notwithstanding, 16<sup>th</sup>-century Trieste saw Bishop Bonomo and Primož Trubar meet and encourage each other, the former the follower of Erasmus and a humanist, the latter a protestant and father of Slovene literary language. He was also in contact with the Bishop Vergerij of Koper, who was also an evangelist reformer and finally an emigrant, as a follower of Calvin in Switzerland. Borders can be creative and of great importance, if they are properly transgressed, if we know how to come back, dedicatedly to outline a new form of expression at the margins, finding traces of complementary harmony.

In conclusion, I would like to mention an interesting parable which is related to my own personal viewpoint, and also quite telling about this region's broader patterns of thought, identities and transgressions.

Not so long ago I talked to an Italian poet, Dedenaro, from Trieste, who was born, I believe, somewhere in southern Friuli. I told him about my home quarter St. John in Trieste and the high hill rising above it, representing a true Kras ridge. It is called Globojner; and the slopes of Dražce. Extending behind them is a Kras plateau. All through my childhood years and in all the seasons of the year, I would climb this high hill, rising from its marlite St. John base into white Kras limestone. It is a natural borderline of a kind, some sort of a Kras ridge, extending from inner Istria near Motovun, across Črni Kal, Socerb, Globojner Hill over St. John in Trieste, all the way to Devin, where it dives into the Adriatic. It is extremely interesting to discover that the geological borderline between marl and limestone is followed by a linguistic border. Above it, or rather to the East, a Kras dialect is spoken, whereas below, or to the West, the Mandrje dialect, and to the South, the language of the villages Ricmanje and Dolina, and then the Istria dialect. I told the colleague about the breathtaking view from the top, with Trieste city and its thousands of little houses lying far below, as if collected into a basket, with the sea in the background, and then in good weather you can see to your right, Northeast, the Soča estuary, named Punta Zdobca, and on the left, to the Southwest, you can see with the naked eye the slopes of Istria and the Church of St. George in Piran. I have carried this view within me ever since, partly also because you can clearly see towards the hinterland to the East and Vremščica, Nanos and Trnovski gozd. I told him how this view of the two worlds, downwards to the city, upwards to the Soča and on the other side to Piran, has always been mesmerising. He, on the other hand, was surprised to hear it, which was a surprise to me, too. He then said: "Interesting to say two worlds. I have always considered it to be one world. Because of my Italian Istrian roots I have also always found Piran to be part of the same world." This is what he said. I perfectly understand him, and I find it to be a well-articulated archetype, which has never even crossed my mind.

But as far as I am concerned, when I look from the Kras ridge towards the city, the Soča, Piran, I always see two worlds, partly also because of Nanos, Trnovski gozd, Krn and Kanin at my back. Worlds as old as the Roman limes, many a time eyeing each other coldly on the borders I know, each cherishing their own unique archetypes. With a difference in expression, language, beauty, humour, ritual, identity and transgression, this is worth retaining rather than losing. Since I can transgress it, I leave to alterity, to others and their hospitality, to forget all about myself for a moment, and then go back.

This much I do know, and trust my neighbour, that we breathe the same air, that we have similar frailties and fears, that we love the same women, and drink the same wines.

## NOTES

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[i] The philosophical essay *Rhizome* was published for the first time in 1976. It was later included as an introduction to the Book *Mille Plateaux, Capitalisme et schizophrénie*, Ed. De Minuit, Paris 1980.

[ii] This aspect was well described by Pietro Citati in *La mente colorata Ulisse el'Odissea*, Mondadori, Milano 2002.

[iii] This issue is tackled by several modern authors. Com. for example Jean Baudrillard, *Le crime parfait*, Ed. Galilée, Paris, 1995.

## Igor Zabel: ART AT THE LIMITS OF THE VISIBLE

*V klasičnem slikarstvu je slika mišljena kot beseda, dejansko pa je slika.*

V novodobnem slikarstvu je slika mišljena kot slika, dejansko pa je beseda.

I.G. Plamen, *Beseda in slika*

This is a quotation from a 1969 text called "Word and Image", by I. G. Plamen (Iztok Geister), poet, philosopher, ecologist, and former member of the avant-garde movement OHO in the 1960s. Plamen's texts often seem deceptively simple, yet they are highly complex, both in their language and their ideas (both aspects are, of course, very closely connected). Even the translation of the short passage quoted is not simple, due to the writer's love for ambiguity and multiplicity of meanings: "In classical painting, picture [or: image] is meant to be [or: is thought of as] word, but in fact it is picture [or: image]. / In the new-time [i.e., contemporary, modern] painting, picture is meant to be [or: is thought of as] picture [or: image], but in fact it is a word."<sup>[1]</sup>

It is no coincidence that this definition was formulated in the 1960s. This was perhaps a time when the complex relations between the visual and non-visual elements in the visual arts became particularly clear, and these relations strongly determined the development of the arts in the following decades. "What you see is what you see", the famous sentence of Frank Stella from 1966, marks a final point in the development that essentially influenced the visual arts in the 20<sup>th</sup> century. It is a process in which the visual arts were supposed to be rid of everything that does not essentially belong to them: illusion, narrative, the non-visual elements, etc. The history of so-called mainstream modernism has usually been understood as the progressive elimination from the work of art all elements that do not belong to its immediate visual presence, or better, to its basic visual means. Traditionally, works of art have not only represented recognizable objects (as in portraits, landscapes, still-lives, historical events, etc.), but they were also understood as having a sort of visual rhetoric, i.e. as visual representations of texts. The famous sentence by St. Gregory the Great, *Quod legentibus scriptura, hoc idiotibus pictura* (What is writing to those who can read, is image to those who cannot.), clearly defines images as an equivalent of writing. And indeed, in spite of the huge differences between the art of different periods, we could say that at least much of the visual arts in the Middle Ages, Renaissance, Baroque, Classicism and later is quite deliberately "readable". That means that they (re)present (sometimes almost in the sense of a theatre performance) a certain textual background. Even such a seemingly simple genre as still-life can be (due to the conventional meanings of the objects represented and so-called hidden symbolism in them) heavily loaded with verbal (for example, moral or religious) meanings and messages, and this even more the case in historical, mythological or religious pictures.

An excellent example of these relations is David's *The Oath of the Horatii*. The paradox with this work is that – because it is so famous and because it introduced gestures and compositional devices that later became commonly used – most people think they "understand" it. I believe, however, that very few really do. To really understand it, one has to know a relatively obscure myth from republican Rome. One also has to have at least some very basic knowledge about the visual rhetoric David used (the meaning of the gestures and expressions, the implications of the setting and depicted objects). Without knowing what is actually happening in front of us, what has been set on stage by this painting, one simply misses some of its most essential aspects, especially its moral messages. Only by knowing the "represented" text can one judge the quality of the "performance" and appreciate its particular meanings and messages.

The leading theoreticians of mainstream modernism stressed the importance of the fact that art rids itself precisely of aspects such as representation or narration and eventually reduces the work only to what is essential in it – its medium. Now, the medium is no longer used as a vehicle for presenting something else, it presents only itself; it is, as Greenberg said somewhere, "imitation of imitating". From many different passages that illustrate such an understanding, we can quote one from Greenberg's essay "Modernist Painting" from 1961:

It quickly emerged that the unique and proper area of competence of each art coincided with all that was unique in the nature of its medium. The task of self-criticism became to eliminate from the specific effects of each art any and every effect that might conceivably be borrowed from or by the medium of any other art. Thus would each art be rendered 'pure', and in its 'purity' find the guarantee of its standards of quality as well as of its independence. 'Purity' meant self-definition, and the enterprise of

self-criticism in the arts became one of self-definition with a vengeance.[\[iii\]](#)

And, as Greeberg stressed in the same essay:

Because flatness was the only condition painting shared with no other art, and so Modernist painting oriented itself to flatness as it did to nothing else.[\[iii\]](#)

Works that are reduced to their basic conditions, their medium, are therefore identical with the actual presence of flat painted surfaces. It is essential that these surfaces do not refer to or represent anything outside themselves. It is this very tendency that culminated with Stella's "What you see is what you see". A work of (visual) art is supposed to be completely tautological. In a sense, there is nothing what one could say about such works. Everything in the work is visible, and it is nothing but the visible.

Approximately at the time as Stella formulated his statement, there were – even in the circles that Stella himself belonged to – also other, very different ideas about the visual and verbal in art. In his "Paragraphs on Conceptual Art" (1967), Sol LeWitt spoke about art where the physical reality and the visual characteristics were only of secondary importance compared to the idea, the concept on which the work is based:

Three-dimensional art of any kind is a physical fact. This physicality is its most obvious and expressive content. Conceptual art is made to engage in the mind of the viewer rather than his eye or emotions. The physicality of a three-dimensional object then becomes a contradiction to its non-emotive intent. Color, surface, texture, and shape only emphasize the physical aspects of the work. Anything that calls attention to and interests the viewer in this physicality is a deterrent to our understanding of the idea and is used as an expressive device. The conceptual artist would want to ameliorate this emphasis on materiality as much as possible or to use it in a paradoxical way. (To convert it into an idea.) This kind of art, then, should be stated with the most economy of means. Any idea that is better stated in two dimensions should not be in three dimensions. Ideas may also be stated by numbers, photographs, or words or any way the artist chooses, the form being unimportant.[\[iv\]](#)

These references can also serve as a reminder that the construction of the tradition of "mainstream" modernism actually repressed different currents and approaches that did not emphasize any "pure" medium, mere presence, nor the purely visual nature of art. This is a line that can be followed back to the historical avant-gardes and, of course, the work of Marcel Duchamp. Instead of reduction (as in modernism), this line stressed the idea of "extension". It was no coincidence that Joseph Beuys spoke about an "extended notion of art". Principles of collage, multi- and inter-mediality, site-specificity, ready-made objects and the gradual de-materialization of art (Lucy Lippard used this expression in describing processes in art in the 1960s) created works of art that are heterogeneous and in which visual and non-visual, material and conceptual elements remain in tension and, at the same time, in a complex and often multi-layered unity.

Since the 1960s, the tension between the visual and the non-visual in the arts has remained a central point in art. Conceptual artist criticized the very idea of a "pure" visuality, pointing at the non-visual structural elements and conditions of the visual. The tendency to research the conditions of seeing and visuality and therefore to "dematerialize" works of art have been crucial issues in the art of the last decade. Found and ready-made materials, works and actions that are available only through documentation, non-visual elements, such as sound or even smell, have all been means in these efforts. The use of text has been a particularly important and interesting method (and one that refers to a long tradition, since the relation of text and image has been essential throughout the history of art). It has always been an effective way to dematerialize the work and eventually develop it as a (self)-reflection of its own conditions. On the other hand, of course, the written texts have a material, visual aspect, and the mode and context of their presentation can affect their meaning.

We could mention an endless number of examples of such complex relations of visual and verbal elements in art, and specifically of works where text has the leading role or even replaces the material presence of the work. I will just mention three such examples. In 1968 Lawrence Weiner mounted an exhibition with Seth Siegelaub, a leading curator and promoter of conceptual art. The exhibition consisted of 28 phrases, printed one per page in a book called *Statements*. Such statements are, for example, "One standard dye marker thrown into the sea", or, "A field created by simul/taneous TNT explosions". Weiner did not exclude the material side of such works; not only does he evoke a mental image of actual materials and event, but such statements could be executed as material situations and processes, and even bought by collectors or museums. But such execution is not unavoidable; words alone can also be sufficient. The artist defined this in the following way: "1. The artist may construct the

work. 2. The work may be fabricated. 3. The work need not to be built.”<sup>[v]</sup> Croatian artist Josip Vaništa, founder of the Gorgona Group, had produced a painting that exists only as a description already in 1964. His *Painting* looks like this: “HORIZONTAL CANVAS FORMAT / WIDTH 180 CM, HEIGHT 140 CM, THE ENTIRE SURFACE WHITE, SILVER LINE RUNNING HORIZONTALLY / ACROSS THE MIDDLE OF THE CANVAS / (WIDTH 180 CM, HEIGHT 3 CM)”.<sup>[vi]</sup> A famous case in the history of conceptual art is the so-called Air Show by the group Art & Language. Histories of conceptual art sometimes claim that the group exhibited an undefined column of air as their work. In fact, the case is even more complicated. The air column is just a virtual example in an essay written by the group. Art & Language are not interested so much in “producing” virtual objects (air column etc.), but in the process of critically describing the position and function of a work of art. Their art tends to be identical with such critical (self)-description.<sup>[vii]</sup>

In spite of the fact that such tendencies, in their dissent from the modernist orthodoxy revitalize a long artistic tradition of relations between texts and images, they often provoke doubts and criticisms. If a text takes on the leading role in a work and the material side is only marginal, if the work is radically dematerialized, can we still speak of works of (visual) art at all? Many people seem to think this is not so. I recently came upon a critical comment addressed to the work of Jenny Holzer, saying that a text cannot be a work of art. Here we should perhaps again turn to Sol LeWitt, to another text by him, “Statements on Conceptual Art” from 1969. In his 16<sup>th</sup> statement he says:

If words are used, and they proceed from ideas about art, then they are art and not literature; numbers are not mathematics.<sup>[viii]</sup>

We could now return to Iztok Geister and his notes on the relations between words and images in art. The quoted passage points to the complex relation of the visual and the verbal in modern art, as well as in the Western pictorial tradition. As he rightfully stresses, traditional painting very often understood itself as a particular form of text, e.g. as “writing for the illiterate” in the middle ages, or as a way of performing a text in the French art of the 17<sup>th</sup> and 18<sup>th</sup> centuries. And yet this art can be understood as essentially visual, as a particular use of its “medium”. On the other hand, however, Geister is explicitly critical of the ideas of “purely” visual and absolutely “autonomous” art. The “pure” visuality of modernist art is based on a particular narrative, on a critical discourse that determines its character and tradition. Only on the basis of such discourse is one able to perceive the “purely visual” nature of modernist paintings. Geister’s position is rather different to that of modernist critics such as Greenberg. He points to the complexity and multiplicity of relations between the visual and non-visual (especially verbal) in works of (visual) art, both traditional and contemporary. Much recent art has been described, in a very general way, as conceptual or post-conceptual. I believe that it is this complexity of relations, rather than any direct reference to the actual practice of the conceptual artists of the 1960s, that influenced the nature of this art.

To illustrate the different possibilities of these complexities I will briefly present the work of three artists: Jenny Holzer, Lewis Baltz and Jože Barši.

### **Jenny Holzer**

The work of this artist is based on texts she herself writes. These texts range from short statements to long poems. The texts, however, are always presented in a particular way and in a particular context, and the work is only established through this presentation and localization. In the late 1970s, she produced a series of short, pointed, sometimes paradoxical or oxymoronic statements she called *Truisms*. The artist introduced these statements in different (predominantly urban) surroundings, using a number of different media – posters, electronic billboards, T-shirts etc. Although she has always been attentive to the formal aspects of such presentation, the main issue is the possibility of addressing people from different social contexts. The main space for *Truisms* has therefore been (urban) public space.

Later, Holzer’s texts became longer, closer to poetry. Although they often remained directly critical and political (e.g., the Inflammatory Essays series), there has also been a more personal, intimate approach (e.g. the *Living Series*, *Under a Rock*, *Survival* and *Laments*). For these texts, too, the artists used similar presentation strategies (posters, T-shirts, displays, or metal plaques). Each of these media, of course, has its particular connotations, which, the artist always takes into account when she produces her pieces. Another essential aspect, of course, is the possibility of addressing people outside an artistic context, in a direct and unexpected way. Text, its formal design, the use of the media and the contextualization of the piece therefore produce the specific unity that could be described as the work of art.

It was an important step for her when she started to produce works for the museum context. Here, of course, she lost the quality of directness and unexpectedness that are characteristic of the works in public space, but she gained the possibility of a more concentrated and intimate relation that enabled more complex works. Her decision was perhaps partly connected with the wish to give even more accent to the traumatic aspects in her work, which the museum context enables. Nevertheless, the basic nature of her works remains the same. Texts gain specific, additional meanings when presented in a particular form and media and placed in a particular context. Her texts are to a certain extent independent of the actual presentation. She has used the same texts in different media and contexts; it is possible to read them in books or magazines. And yet one should say that the main subject of her work remain the relations between text, viewer, form and context.

### **Lewis Baltz**

In the work of the well-known contemporary photographer, Lewis Baltz, the project *Deaths in Newport* has a certain particularity. He was attracted to a case that took place in his hometown, Newport Beach, in 1947. A girl and her boyfriend were accused of murdering her rich parents. Baltz research and collection of materials resulted in an exhibition project that presented a number of photographs and other documentary materials about the case (such as portraits of the main protagonists, pictures from the trial, and articles from the local press). Baltz sometimes includes found images or their fragments in his complex photo installations; in this case, however, found material replaced his own work entirely. But these materials were supplemented by a longer text that also appeared as a book.

The text has several layers. It is a narrative about the circumstances that brought the artist back to his hometown and initiated his interest in the case. It is also a report (40 years later) about an event that was important for its time and has remained unresolved. It refers – although in a less immediate way – to the artist's own childhood and family. (His father, the local mortician, had a relatively important role in the process as one of the witnesses.) It also refers to the artist's personal conditions whilst preparing the project and writing the text. All these layers are, however, basically memories, personal and social. Not only that – they touch upon a number of past and recent traumatic events, again both personal and social. As such they are, of course, subject to the processes of the unconscious. In this sense, the memories and narratives could be understood both as mechanisms of repression of the traumatic events and as a means of their return and (re)presentation.

A seemingly minor, but in fact a crucial aspect of the book, are four quotations that Baltz uses at the beginning and at the end. They refer in an ambiguous way to the ideas of home, (false) memories and crime. Two of the quotations are from Freud, one of them from his essay "Dostoyevski and the Parricide". Freud's explanations about the writer's identification with criminals throw additional light on the intricate intertwining of narratives and relations. Here, too, we have an almost obsessive concern with the criminals who (perhaps) killed the girl's parents. It has an additional dimension in the childhood memories and the role that the artist's father plays in the text.

It seems to me that Baltz has indeed come to the limits of the visual and visible in his project. We are confronted with a number of photographs that take for their subject existing documentation. The systematic approach in collecting and documenting this material suggests a certain obsessive drive in artist's activities, and this is both elucidated and further obscured by the text. Since the artist used found visual materials, the individual point of view (in a photographer's work normally represented by the view of the camera) was replaced by the text. Art, in this work, happens as multi-dimensional relations between these layers and elements. In such a way, the work develops a highly intriguing narrative on love and aggression, home and exile, memory and forgetting, repression and revelation, personal and social, etc.

### **Jože Barši**

We have to introduce the project *Walking* by Jože Barši with the circumstances in which it was made. Most things Jože Barši does are initially very simple and basic, and eventually turn out to be quite complex. The story of *Walking*, too, was initially a simple one. Barši was awarded a grant for a stay in the USA. He was supposed to produce an art project and present it at the end of his stay. Barši decided to walk every day in the empty gallery space. After his daily walking, he would usually send an email to himself, describing his experiences. Far from being any kind of "New Age" enthusiast, he has nevertheless been for a long time interested in Buddhist thought and meditation practices. ("These practices interest me and, well, here I am sort of conservative. I always go for those practices which are a thousand years old.") The walking meditation is such a technique, and Barši became acquainted with it during his stay in a Buddhist monastery in Sri Lanka.

Was his walking an art project? First, walking itself was certainly not art. Following the instructions published in a book on meditation techniques he had been using, Barši tried to concentrate as much as possible on the walking as such. He tried to exclude all other thoughts and concerns, and to intensify the experience of moving the legs, of advancing, slowly, step by step, through the space: left foot, right foot. It is, however, the context of his decision to start walking every day, and the fact that he presented it in the form of an art show, which make his actions art.

His decision was also connected to his thoughts about himself as a visual artist and about the role of sight and the other senses in his work. His idea is that the traditional division of perception regarding different senses is too mechanical and that "there is only one sense, mind, which connects all doors and windows of perception in the act of sensing".<sup>[ix]</sup> Perception can be aimed outwards as well as inwards. "The important things are attention, perception and observation. Actions do not begin with thinking, but with very careful observation. [...] To see more, and more precisely, is a possibility of finding a way. This might sound a bit like some stupid esoterics, but the fact is that in the present-day surroundings which overwhelms us and constantly bombards us with sensations, it is hard to be an attentive observer. So, one does not need to work very hard to find an idea, it simply appears out of observation."

But the experience is not enough; it is completely personal, and Barši, being an artist, is interested in communication, in the "translation" of his experiences, too. He had to speak somehow about his decision and to point to his activity. Only by describing his experiences in the e-mail messages (a process which was a reflection, but also a "secondary revision", as Freud would have called it) and by presenting these messages in a show, could Barši re-connect his activity with art and thus make it meaningful to other people, too. "Of course, I am an artist probably because I want to show this to the audience. [...] I don't think that art is this piece of paper that I show to the visitor; art is the proposal that he or she can do it himself or herself, since it is so stupidly simple and difficult at the same time. Try it!"

"Walking" is therefore a depiction of a solitary process and of artist's own experiences during this process. But what is more important is that it presents an artist's decision in a situation where he is asked to produce (meaningful) art. The *Walking* piece is both simple and meaningful in showing that there is always the possibility of stepping aside and concentrating on oneself; but also that there is always a path back to others, to the inter-subjective world.

## NOTES

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<sup>[i]</sup> The text was originally published without title in the anthology *Pericarežeracirep* (Maribor: Obzorja, 1969). It was reprinted as "Besede in slike" in: Iztok Geister Plamen, *Plavje in usedline* (Ljubljana: Nova revija, 1996, 124).

<sup>[ii]</sup> Clement Greenberg, "Modernist Painting", in: Francis Francina and Jonathan Harris (Eds.), *Art in Modern Culture. An Anthology of Critical Texts* (London: Phaidon Press, 1992, 309).

<sup>[iii]</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>[iv]</sup> Sol LeWitt, "Paragraphs on Conceptual Art", in: Charles Harrison and Paul Wood (Eds.), *Art in Theory 1900-1990. An Anthology of Changing Ideas* (Oxford, UK & Cambridge, USA: Blackwell Publishers, 1992, 836-837).

<sup>[v]</sup> Lawrence Weiner, "Statements", in: Harrison and Wood, *op. cit.*, 882.

<sup>[vi]</sup> Branka Stipančić, *Riječi i slike / Words and Images* (Zagreb: Soros Center for Contemporary Arts, 1995, 17).

<sup>[vii]</sup> Terry Atkinson and Michael Baldwin, "Air Show". First published in: *Frameworks – Air Conditioning* (Coventry: Art & Language Press, 1968).

<sup>[viii]</sup> Sol LeWitt, "Sentences on Conceptual Art", in: Harrison and Wood, *op. cit.*, 838.

[\[ix\]](#) This and the following quotations are from a letter in which Barši explained me his project.



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