

But sometimes there is too much of a primary source included directly in the text, and it disturbs the fluency of reading. As an example, in the chapter on "Traveling and emigration agencies in Ljubljana," there are eight pages (134 through 141) entirely taken up with the reproduction of an advertisement about the steamer "George Washington," bound for the United States, enticing potential customers. Interesting and relevant but lengthy materials should be placed in appendices, rather than inserted in the main body of the work, where they can create lengthy breaks in the actual text. They cannot be a substitute for description and analysis of concrete data within a broader framework of a historian's pursuit, even for the general public. This is the impression that the reader, unfortunately, receives from time to time.

This is, of course, not to detract from the tremendous accomplishment that Drnovšek achieved with his work, or from the undeniable usefulness of the data he assembled and analyzed, through which Slovene emigration, almost without precedent in the history of small nations, can be better understood.

*Pot slovenskih izseljencev na tufe* is a well-designed and well-written book on Slovene emigration, and makes inviting and stimulating reading for the general readership as well as for professionals who are interested in the topic. In addition to the notes, an index, and a bibliography, the book also contains résumés in English and German.

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Miran Hladnik, *Slovenska kmečka povest*. Ljubljana: Prešernova družba, 1990. 205 pp.; illustrations, map, tables.

Such a concise and lucid exposition of the genre's century-long development (1859-1945 to be precise) is to be admired. One surprise is that a succinct definition of Slovene rural prose of the type found in literary dictionaries fails to emerge. Yet this minor point but attests to the author's wisdom.

He contents himself with manageable guidelines — historical, national and quantitative (i.e., works of 10,000-words or more) — explaining that a summary definition of the genre would be either too broad and thus empty or leave out important individual writers and works. His disclaimers regarding the genre's Sloveneness aside, students of other literatures may derive much from this study. It is surprising to note that standard literary reference works, including Slavic ones, often omit rural prose altogether.<sup>1</sup> (This, of course, cannot be said of German reference works.) Hladnik's

<sup>1</sup> If anywhere, one would expect to find an entry in *Slovar'* (Moscow, 1987); but this has no entry for *derevenskaiia proza* (rural or village prose) on the pages where one finds *detektivnaia* (detective) and *detskaia* (children's) literature. Victor Terras's definition of "country prose" is extremely limited, and the term itself awkward (1985). A respected American handbook lacks any mention of such literature (Holman 1980).

observation that Slovene rural prose has been ignored for social and ideological reasons gains weight in light of its treatment in other parts of the world.

The author has assembled a sizeable body of data pertaining to the geographic distribution (i.e., settings) of the works and their authors' origins. A map inside the cover illustrates these well. He adds quantitative measures of structural characteristics and briefly considers them in light of his background research on rural prose elsewhere in Europe. While in this book Hladnik reviews such "hard" evidence as is exhaustively reported in the source dissertation (Hladnik 1987), and also foregoes lengthy comparisons with other literatures, the study plainly shows that he is the authority on the Slovene genre. Doubtless his expressed sympathy for popular literature and this variety in particular strengthens his insight and invigorates the discussion. How else to explain the risk he took in addressing the book not only to a scholarly audience but also to the general reading public in the hope of bringing the genre, though no longer productive, back into public view?

Although Hladnik begs scholars' indulgence for what may seem simplified literary concepts, his review of motivation in rural prose, for example, is skillful and may provide a welcome refresher to some. Yet it must be said that in this self-acknowledged cross of literary history and narrative interpretation he seems to prefer the former. Evidence can be found in the ordering of chapters: the first on theoretical questions, including the history of applicable terminology; the second on quantitative measures of publishing, containing seven pages of graphs and four pages of authors' portraits; and the third on literary structures. Chapter four gives a thirteen-page history of the genre, and it may be the place for one knowledgeable about Slovene literature to start, since here are briefly recounted the pertinent authorial influences, characters, motifs and motivations.

The historian, sociologist and political scientist will be interested in possibly confirming his or her ideas about the development of Slovene society. The study highlights the concept of continuity among the peasant population as shown in the institutions of marriage and inheritance, to give one example. He finds inheritance along the male line to be the key motif in village prose, but anyone interested in an in-depth discussion of this issue should refer to the dissertation. Not surprisingly, folkloric motifs also figure prominently in Slovene rural prose. The author points out in his discussion of motivation (realistic, metaphysical, ethical, esthetic and combinations thereof) that esthetic motivation is comparatively rare, and precisely for this reason the social scientist may appreciate the study: the representation of social forces and the peasants' perceived outlook on life supersedes artistic considerations in rural literature.

On balance the study mixes sociology of literature, insofar as authors' origins and publication data are concerned, and literary sociology, where interpretation of values is of foremost importance. The former strand is of historical interest because it reflects on Slovenia's cohesiveness as a nation of regions; however, the author does not devote much attention to this

phenomenon, relying instead on biographical information about writers. (For an expanded explanation of regionalism see Hladnik (to appear).) The final approximately sixty pages bring the genre to life with examples.

Thirteen popular works are summarized (133-141), there are thirty-eight representative excerpts accompanied by illustrations (142-194), a chronology of works (125-130) and a ranking of thirty-four writers by output (in words). Ranking highest are France Bevk, Miško Kranjec, Fran Detela, Janez Jalen and Fran Jaklič (131). The book is casebound in a black cover displaying a silvery crosscut of a stump and adorned with a white marker ribbon.

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Edvard Kocbek. *Na vratih zvečer / At the Door at Evening*. Translated by Tom Ložar. Ljubljana: Aleph & Dorion, Québec: The Muses' Co./La Compagnie des Muses, 1990. 116 pp. ISBN 0-91999754-24-4.

In this beautifully-produced Slovene-English book Edvard Kocbek's enchanting poetry is for the first time brought before an English-speaking audience. The timing could not be better. With the collapse of the Berlin wall the old political divisions may have become obsolete, but the experience of totalitarian limits to the human spirit lingers on in different forms. Kocbek's poetry, as well as his biography, is a remarkable witness to and document of the modern dark ages in Yugoslavia in particular and Eastern Europe in general. A top official in the postwar Slovene government, he was—although a Christian Socialist—deeply aware of the Communist failure to live up to its utopian program. He exposed the existential dilemmas of the revolutionary vagaries of the partisan movement in a series of war memoirs and, after becoming increasingly critical of his once-dear comrades, he fell out of favor and once again turned to his first love, poetry. He had, to be sure, been at the fore of Slovene literary life before the war as well. A brilliant essayist and a highly-respected mind among non-Communist progressive intellectuals, he nevertheless is remembered best for his poetic vision. His poems, which have been aptly translated with a sensitive ear and evident passion by Tom Ložar of Montreal, testify to the human condition in revolution-torn countries better than any historical record. A writer with not only wit and clarity of style, but also substance, he is concerned with the depth of his metaphysical contemplations on the nature of compassion, suffering, and hope. His poems, which are almost epic in form but vulnerably lyrical in content, convey the sense of correspondence which places the most intimate love