

for individual insights as needed. In this respect it should serve admirably.

I will leave it to literary scholars in Slovenia (almost every one of whom is cited generously in this study, along with a few foreign Slovenists) to critique the substance of Kos's work. And I am certain that they will oblige, for there are many daring assertions and new understandings concerning Slovene literary history contained in these pages. Particularly striking is the overarching importance Kos assigns to romanticism: as pre-romanticism (or "enlightenment sentimentalism," as he prefers to call it), romanticism proper (in Prešeren's case, however, a romantic classicism), post-romanticism, neo-romanticism (the Slovene Moderna) and perhaps (though Kos does not use the term himself) even a "post-neo-romanticism." This trend may be said to run from the very beginnings of Slovene literature, in the 1770s, up to about 1930. Only then, with the advent of social realism, is the hold of romanticism on Slovene letters broken, though again and again elements of it seem to surface, even in the struggle between the existentialists and the modernists which characterizes the era since 1950. Also of fundamental importance in Kos's view are Slovene literature's organic ties to European literatures other than Yugoslav: from the Balkan or South Slavic realm only Miroslav Krleža and Vasko Popa are mentioned by name (the latter very briefly indeed) in the course of the entire book.

These points notwithstanding, Kos's survey succeeds in making a grand synthesis. With a breadth and depth few if any could match, he has unfolded for his readers the whole panoply of European letters as they have influenced Slovene literature over the last two hundred years. In and of itself therefore this study is a remarkable and very valuable achievement. It will be plumbed by students and scholars for generations to come.

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Marjan Dolgan, comp. & ed. *Slovenska muza pred prestolom: Antologija slovenske slavilne državniške poezije*. Ljubljana: Univerzitetna konferenca ZSMS: Knjižnica revolucionarne teorije, 1989. [= Knjižna zbirka Krt, 57]. 272 pp.

Encomia and odes—hymns of praise to earthly leaders—rank among the oldest of literary forms, and are probably to be found in the literature of every language. Yet for reasons that are fairly obvious if given any thought, they are rarely studied and even less frequently anthologized. By and large such works are usually embarrassing after the object of their praise has left the scene or lost his power; or they are dreadfully pedestrian even as they strain to reach rhetorical heights or plumb bathetic depths; for any mature person they are invariably insulting in their implication that rulers are parents and the rest of us storm-tossed children. Sealed forever as hyperbole's own with the mark of exclamation—one wonders what sycophants used before the "!" was invented—encomiastic verse makes for slow reading even in small doses. Imagine then a whole book of such poetry!

Fortunately the editor of the anthology entitled "The Slovene Muse before the Throne" brings a hefty sense of humor to his task, as well as scholarly care and wide-ranging erudition. Dividing his prey into three parts—emperors, kings and presidents; Holy Fathers; and the "discreet charm of internationalism," i.e., newsmakers, as we would say—Dolgan dissects each specimen with all the sharp tools of the literary analyst: footnotes, indexes, translations where necessary, a foreword and a lengthy afterword, a bibliography and a range of annotations to satisfy even the most demanding reader. He starts with the earliest text by a Slovene litterateur (though not in the Slovene language):

a 'poem for pay' in Latin by the fifteenth-century humanist Bernard Perger. He offers examples of laudatory verse from some of the best-known names of nineteenth- and twentieth-century Slovene literature, such as Vodnik, Stritar, Gregorčič, Župančič—praising both kings and presidents!—Gradnik, Zlobec and Matej Bor; the last-named refused to have his ode to Stalin printed in this volume, but Dolgan gives all the scholarly references for looking it up and then—delicious irony—quotes it in the afterword! He juxtaposes an ode "To the memory of Comrade Kidrič" by Manko Golar with the all but identical verses lamenting the passing of Comrade Tito twenty-seven years later: artistic (and not only artistic!) sincerity would seem to suffer in the process. Endless paeons to Franz Joseph I, Alexander Karadjordjević and Tito are adduced, as well as more restrained pieces (really some of a different nature altogether) celebrating such varied figures as Marx, Lenin, Nicholas II, Rosa Luxemburg, T.G. Masaryk, F.D. Roosevelt, Patrice Lumumba, Salvador Allende and Martin Luther King. Only the popes seem to get off easy: the section devoted to them is the shortest and the least humorous. But almost any page contains its own surprises: the piece entitled "Le Avstrija je naša domovina", to be sung to the tune of "Deutschland, Deutschland über alles!"; an apparently sincere work extolling the leader of the domobranstvo during World War II; the dreadful ditty equating Tito with Kralj Matjaž, by a figure very prominent in contemporary Slovene literature and politics; even a serendipitously-timed piece celebrating the Empress Zita, who died just this year.

If I cannot agree absolutely with Dolgan's closing appraisal of encomiastic verse—"in short, it is a matter of mass sadomasochism" (270-71)—which strikes me as an awfully heavy conclusion to reach about such awfully airy verse, nevertheless I do recommend his work. I have it on good authority that *Slovenska muza pred prestolom* has rattled more than a few teacups in Ljubljana these days, and I can easily understand why. It is painful to be reminded how readily any writer may divert his—less often her—mighty pen to the glorification of the scepter that wields the sword.

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Charles Simic, ed. *The Selected Poems of Tomaž Šalamun*. With an Introduction by Robert Hass. New York NY: The Ecco Press, 1988. xxviii + 93 pp., \$17.50.

An "angry young man," as he is even nowadays occasionally referred to in Slovene literary scholarship, Tomaž Šalamun is beyond a shadow of a doubt a leading figure in post-war Slovene literature. The reputation is hardly repudiated even among those who clandestinely dislike his daring, penetrating, and compelling poetic vision. Šalamun started off his literary career with a chapbook published at his own expense that entered school textbooks as a classic twenty-five years later. Forced for ideological reasons to be a village teacher, he ended up a celebrity with international prominence. Šalamun has alternately been silenced and put in the spotlight, scornfully laughed at and praised sky-high; venerated and yet never squarely integrated into the Slovene paradigm. The reason for this is a simple one: Slovene cultural space has until recently been permeated with a suspicion directed toward his unrestricted and forceful desire always to be already somewhere else—moving through the past and the present, traversing the many different vocabularies and strange provinces of the mind and geography, always on the go. Thoroughly consumed by "the process of becoming" (Gilles Deleuze), for Šalamun all that really counts is a flush of images, not an easily discernible story. *Selected Poems*, meticulously edited by Charles Simic, offers a very good display of some of the author's