

The Impact of European Structuralism on Slovenian Literary Criticism, 1960–2000:¹ Local Reception and Main Achievements

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European formalism and structuralism could only have appeared in Slovenia in the first half of the twentieth century, after the collapse of the Austro-Hungarian Empire and the establishment of the Kingdom of Serbs, Croats and Slovenes (as the Kingdom of Yugoslavia was called during the first decade of its existence), when the University of Ljubljana was founded in 1919. Until then, Slovenian literary scholars (Vatroslav Oblak, Karel Štrekelj, and Matija Murko) were employed at the philological departments of the Austro-Hungarian university system, or worked as secondary school teachers (Fran Ilešič, Avgust Žigon, Ivan Grafenauer, Fran Tomišek, and Fran Vidic).²

At the newly founded University of Ljubljana, literary scholarship was considered one of the principal national sciences (*Wissenschaften*), a position still very much in the spirit of nineteenth-century cultural nationalism (Dolinar 2007: 119). Not only was the department of Slovenian Literature institutionally separated from the department of Slavic Literatures, the founding fathers of Slovenian literary studies (i.e. Ivan Prijatelj, Boris Kidrič, Avgust Žigon, and Ivan Grafenauer) also conceived of an empirical and positivistic national literary history as their main research area (Dolinar 1992: 209). However, comparative literature, literary theory, and methodology were also, to a certain extent, covered by their research. Historical empiricism remained the prevailing paradigm for the entire period up to WW II and even later, until the late 1950s and the beginning of the 1960s, although some of the scholars also integrated the perspectives of intellectual history in their research. Compared to this dominant trend, the impact of formalism of Russian or German origin (the

¹ Choosing the term literary criticism instead of scholarship or studies I would like to stress the “trinary nature” of the term, covering literary history, theory, and the methodology of literary research; as relates to “structuralist heritage,” I will also mention some authors whose work transcends the traditionally conceived boundaries of literary scholarship as a philological discipline. To further illuminate my intentions with this article, I will expand the time frame of 1960–2000 substantially, for I will briefly shed light both on the beginning of the *story* (the impact of structuralism on Slovenian literary criticism) and its context that—to a certain degree—shaped the development of the *plot* in question.

² Most of them worked at universities in Austria; only Murko was first in Leipzig and later in Prague. For more information, see Dolinar (2007).

latter drew its inspiration from Neo-Kantian aestheticism, Oscar Walzel, the work of art historian Heinrich Wölfflin, and others), was rather marginal in the first part of the century. All these, and some additional circumstances (e.g., the age of the researchers, assuming that older scholars are less inclined to introduce new approaches, perspectives, and discoveries), form a contextual framework that enables us to understand the very critical attitude towards formalism exhibited by Anton Ocvirk (1907–80). Although he had just started his career, Ocvirk was nonetheless an important literary scholar of the pre-war period and author of the early comparatist work, *Teorija primerjalne literarne zgodovine* (Theory of comparative literary history), which was in fact his habilitation thesis, published in 1936 in Ljubljana.

In the late 1930s, Ocvirk, who was educated in Ljubljana and completed his postgraduate studies in France, provided the very first information on Russian formalism in Slovenian literary scholarship. In his article “Formalistična šola v literarni zgodovini” (The formalist school in literary history 1938) he presented a historic overview of Russian formalism, relying mostly on an essay, “Les nouvelles méthodes d’histoire littéraire en Russie,” by Nina Gourfinkel, published nine years earlier in the review *Le monde Slave*. He followed Gourfinkel (1929) in, for example, citing Veselovskii, Peretts, and Potebnia as the earliest representatives of formalism, and in emphasizing the influence of the Russian symbolists (Briusov, Belyi, and Blok) on the formalists, but not in his presentation of Opoiazov’s three *Sborniki po teorii poetičeskogo iazyka* (Collected works on the theory of poetic language 1916–19), which is less thorough (Smolej and Stanovnik 2007: 91). In this article and in another from the same year, entitled “Historizem v literarni zgodovini in njegovih nasprotniki” (Historicism in literary history and its adversaries 1938/1979), where he presented similar views, Ocvirk advocated, as a true historicist, causal, and genetic explanations of literary phenomena, and a holistic literary history, severely criticizing the anti-historicists—the Russian formalists and Roman Ingarden among them. He also had second thoughts about the formalists’ ideas because of their fixation on artistic accomplishments, poetic language and literariness, as he wrote:

How can we Slovenians discuss, in the spirit of this school, the Reformation, Counter-Reformation and also the Enlightenment, since from the literary and artistic points of view they created nothing! Should we simply eliminate those periods from our literary history or what? (1938/1984: 228–29)

Despite his reservations, Ocvirk nevertheless made an effort to integrate formalist procedures and perspectives into his historicist

conceptions,³ for he was also very determined to deal with literary artifacts as primarily verbal, linguistic phenomena. His favorites were Tomashevskii and Zhirmunskii, whom he held in high esteem for his comparativist research. Another convergence with the formalists was Ocvirk's interest in versology and stylistics; indeed these fields, not narrative or drama theory, were the main subjects of his first lectures in literary theory at the beginning of his career as a teacher (Smolej and M. Stanovnik 2007: p. 205–10), and they were to remain at the center of his work all his life. This can be observed from his work after WW II—for example, his study “Novi pogledi na pesniški stil” (New perspectives on poetic style 1951) and his three posthumous books: *Evropski verzni sistemi in slovenski verz* (European verse systems and the Slovenian verse 1980), *Literarno delo in jezikovna izrazna sredstva* (Literary work and the means of linguistic expression 1981) and *Pesniška podoba* (The poetic image 1982). As can be inferred from these publications and from his other texts and lectures, Ocvirk modernized Slovenian versology by drawing on Russian formalism, but the general feature of his approach, clearly visible in his late 1960s studies on the prose style of the early writings of Ivan Cankar, is the inclusion and subordination of formal analysis to the historical and comparativist contexts (Kos 1979: 639).⁴

The main achievement of the formalist tradition before WW II was clearly *Slovenski verz* (Slovenian verse 1939) by linguist Alexander V. Isačenko (1910–78). Born in St. Petersburg, he was a true cosmopolitan scholar of his times. He emigrated from Russia as a child and was a student of Slavic Studies in Vienna under Nikolai Trubetzkoy, whose daughter he later married. He continued his studies in France and stayed a year in Prague, where he became a member of the Prague Linguistic Circle. In 1938 he arrived in Ljubljana as a lecturer (*Privatdozent*) and stayed there until 1941, when he moved to Bratislava, where he was offered a better position at the university.⁵ In *Slovenski verz*, written in the very best formalist tradition,⁶ he carried out a research of Slovenian poetry, especially

³ Janko Kos expressed a similar view in his article “Anton Ocvirk in slovenska literarna veda” (Anton Ocvirk and Slovenian literary studies 1979: 624). Kos was of the opinion that Ocvirk's discussions of the Russian formalists' tendencies “should be understood primarily as a warning to Slovenian literary studies that they should direct their attentions to a greater extent towards the explicitly literary and aesthetic problems in literary art, and not halt at the mere external description of biographic, genetic or cultural-historical materials.”

⁴ See also Ocvirk (1967, 1969).

⁵ For more on Isačenko, his life and work, as well as links with Slovenians, see Derganc (1978).

⁶ He quotes the works of Andrei Bely, Roman Jakobson, Jan Mukařovskii, Boris Tomashevskii, Viktor Shklovskii, Nikolai Trubetzkoy, and Paul Verrier as the main sources of his research (Isačenko 1939: 6, 103–104).

the poetry of France Prešeren, in an attempt to foreground the basic characteristics of Slovenian prosody. In light of the sparse research of the history of Slovenian verse and the lack of stylistic analyses of Slovenian poetry he focused primarily on the question of rhythm. He also compared Slovenian verse with other Slavic versification systems and found it to be “less bound to strict rules than the Czech, Bulgarian, and Russian, for it was more distant from the French example, which was the yardstick of all European poetry” (1939: 102). It was not until our late colleague Tone Pretnar and his work of the 1970s and 1980s, which is closely connected with Polish versology, that Isačenko was to get a true descendant.

The last person from this period I will mention only anecdotally (because of his loose connection with Algirdas Julien Greimas); he is the French linguist Lucien Tesnière (1893–1954). Greimas quoted Tesnière as his point of departure for his renowned theory of actants. Tesnière may well be a minor figure in the world of linguistics—his main work, *Éléments de syntaxe structurale* (Elements of structural syntax 1959) was issued only posthumously—but he did share with the formalists of his times a lively interest in contemporary artistic (and not popular) literature. He worked in Ljubljana as a lecturer of French language and studied Slovenian literature and language, especially the Slovenian dual, which was also a topic of his doctoral dissertation, defended in Paris.⁷ In 1931 he published a French monograph on the most celebrated contemporary Slovenian poet, entitled *Oton Joupantchitch, poète slovène; l'homme et l'œuvre* (The Slovenian poet Oton Župančič: His life and work), introducing the man and his poetry to foreign audiences. However, in his book he did not in any way follow the formalist/structuralist tradition.

Compared to the pre-war period, the first two decades after the war were far less cosmopolitan. There was less international communication between researchers and they had fewer opportunities to travel and study abroad. Clearly the totalitarian regime in Yugoslavia, as well as the conditions of the Cold War period restrained scholars' international mobility. At the University of Ljubljana, then still the only university in Slovenia, only two elder professors retained their positions on the faculty, which had been educated in Ljubljana and not abroad. The prevailing methodological approach remained empirical historicism and positivism combined with intellectual history; the national literary history was still the focus of attention. However, the post-war generation of researchers, who were only starting their careers in the late 1950s and the beginning of the 1960s, introduced some very obvious changes to the paradigm. They would

⁷ For more on Tesnière's life and work see: www.slovenska-biografija.si/oseba/sbi695060/ Accessed 15 March 2015.

quite often focus on modern literature instead of the older periods; concentrate their research on specific genres, especially narrative, dramatic, and popular genres; and the literary interpretation of artistic texts instead of concentrating on the author's life. Although the dogmatic Marxist approach was politically imposed on literary scholarship, it may seem strange that in practice it did not gain many followers. The younger scholars somehow spontaneously affiliated with the interpretive direction, the "turn to the text," or philosophical reflexion in order to block the ideologically aggressive interference of dogmatic Marxism in academia and to guarantee a minimal autonomy of scholarly research. Some of the scholars were informed by the so-called immanent interpretation and analysis of literary text. Their main references were Hugo Friedrich, Wolfgang Kayser, Emil Staiger, René Wellek, and Austin Warren. The comparativists, on the other hand, favored a more philosophical approach, Sartre's existentialism, phenomenology and Roman Ingarden, the philosophy of Martin Heidegger, and philosophical hermeneutics (Dolinar 2001: 541–43).

Such was, roughly speaking, the background of Slovenian literary criticism when, in the middle of the 1960s, structuralism started to spread widely. The reception was almost simultaneous with the increasing French intellectual influence and consisted of two waves. Information on structuralism as a new, general intellectual paradigm was distributed in student magazines and reviews, where the translations of important structuralist texts and the representatives of the *Tel Quel* group were being published and discussed. The new intellectual wave was received with enthusiasm within a group of young philosophers and sociologists (e. g., Slavoj Žižek, Rastko Močnik, Mladen Dolar, Zoja Skušek, Braco Rotar, and Vojo Likar), some of whom later became world famous celebrities and the neo-avant-garde or ultra-modernist artists, writers, poets, painters, and visual artists (e. g., Franci Zagoričnik, Iztok Geister, Matjaž Hanžek, Marko Pogačnik, Milenko Matanović, David Nez, Andraž Šalamun, Naško Križnar, and Srečo Dragan). The majority of the group, whose activity culminated in a movement (OHO, Katalog) for a certain period (Brejc 1978), shared and cherished the idea of structuralism as an icon of a new inter- and trans-disciplinary Theory (Dolinar 2001: 551; Juvan 2000a: 109–224).

However, the influence of structuralism and early post-structuralism was not limited to francophone sources. With the Serbian translations of Saussure and other linguists, the Russian formalists and the works of Lotman, Bakhtin, Uspenskii, and many others, which were read and critically discussed in the 1970s and the early 1980s,⁸ the canon of

⁸ Knowledge of Russian was a rarity among younger intellectuals of the period. After the Informbiro resolution of 1948, political relations between the Soviet

influential texts diversified to also cover semiotics and the semiology of culture, together with their dissemination and reception in other linguistic areas. In addition, the theoretical production of the Slovenian group was also highly influenced by the Frankfurt school and other neo- and post-Marxist trends and by the end of the 1970s, as well as by Lacan and theoretical psychoanalysis. Because of its politically subversive engagement, materialist criticism of ideology, and radical new-left stand, the movement, which later split into (1) the partisans of the sociology of culture, who identified with “the theory of signifying practices” and “the materialist theory of signifier” (Rastko Močnik, Braco Rotar, and their followers) and (2) the adherents of theoretical psychoanalysis (Slavoj Žižek and others), was put under surveillance by the orthodox Marxists. The communist party ideologue Boris Majer, severely criticized what he saw as the philosophical implications of structuralism in his 1971 book, entitled *Strukturalizem. Poskus filozofske kritike* (Structuralism: A philosophical critique). Other Marxists tried to moderate the enthusiasm of the pro-structuralist adherents more discretely, using their influence on editorial boards of philosophical journals. But the criticism of the scientific ambitions of structuralism came from another quarter, too—namely, from the proponents of philosophical phenomenology (e.g., from Tine Hribar).

The members of this circle—the ones that I have mentioned and several others—wrote many interesting contributions to the study of literature, one of the most important being *Mesčevo zlato. Prešeren v označevalcu* (The moon gold: Prešeren in the signifier 1981) by Rastko Močnik, a post-graduate student of Greimas in Paris. The author introduces it as an example of a materialist, trans-linguistic, semiotic interpretation of Prešeren’s sonnets; he argues for the non-existence of a meta-language and explains that his work deals with discourse and not language (Močnik 1981: 21–22). Seen from today’s perspective, the book is nevertheless more an exception than the rule, for the widest part of the circle’s production nevertheless consists of philosophical, sociological, and cultural studies texts that mostly focused on popular culture, music, media, film, etc. Another rather exceptional contribution to the “materialist theory of the signifier” is *Gledališče kot oblika spektakelske funkcije* (The theatre as a form of the spectacle function 1980) by Zoja Skušek Močnik, who set

Union and Yugoslavia cooled to the extent that Russian almost completely disappeared from high school and university curricula, to be replaced by English. Serbo-Croatian was also part of the primary school curriculum in Slovenia until the break-up of Yugoslavia, but for only two hours a week, and it was completely absent at the high school and university levels; all other education in Slovenia took place in Slovenian. School policies thus supported Slovenian cultural autonomy.

theatrical discussion into a semiotic context⁹ interwoven with the contemporary political events of the period. Some members of the group achieved global renown, but they never stopped acting locally:¹⁰ they themselves provided or organized numerous individual or collective Slovenian translations of the classics of structuralism, post-structuralism, as well as the philosophy of language and semiotics, in a book series called *Studia Humanitatis*. Translated authors included Saussure, Jakobson, Ingarden, Derrida, Benveniste, Austin, Searle, Levi-Strauss, Lotman, Ducrot, Propp, Barthes, Bakhtin, Vološinov, Červenka, and many others. Furthermore, of the utmost importance was the participation of the members of this group in the processes of the democratisation of political life in the 1980s, which led to the downfall of the communist party and free elections, as well as their role in the democratization of political culture after those first elections.

The second wave consists mostly of literary scholars. In the period from 1960 to 2000, their response to formalism and structuralism was far less critical than that of orthodox Marxists, but more reserved than that of the first group. Neither did they favor neo- and post-Marxism. Teachers of Slovenian literature were more open to formalism and structuralism than the comparativists. In the beginning of the 1960s, the former advocated a so-called integral interpretation, which would combine intellectual critique and formal analysis in a dialectic synthesis; it would treat the literary text as a functional and coherent organism on all the different levels of the literary text in order to get to the fundamental structural unity of the whole (Zabel 1990: 26–27).¹¹ Some scholars were under the influence or even close collaborators of the Zagreb school, where Aleksander Flaker, Zdenko Škreb, Ivo Frangeš, Viktor Žmegač, Fran Petrè, and others were active; through their work the impact of formalism and structuralism became even more intense. The comparativists were far more philosophically oriented, but it needs to be pointed out that Dušan Pirjevec, who was a comparativist, drew on Lotman more than on the French authors in his essays and in the

⁹ Her central semiotic or semiological influences were Barthes, Lotman, and Julia Kristeva. However, she distanced herself critically from Julia Kristeva, perhaps also under Žižek's influence, who dealt with Kristeva already in his essays *Temna stran meseca I–III (Dark Side of the Moon 1972)* and drew closer to Lacan.

¹⁰ In this, the group's functioning is probably completely comparable to that of similar groups of enthusiastic adopters in other European countries.

¹¹ Among the approaches made use of by the proponents of integral interpretation Zabel cites the representatives of New Criticism, immanent interpretation and the Zagreb school; however, he does not mention, for example, the Russian formalists or even Manfred Kridl, who could be a Polish influence of integral interpretation. It is possible that Slovenian literary scholars nevertheless knew the latter indirectly, through the work and discussions of other authors.

posthumously published book entitled *Strukturalna poetika. Kibernetika, komunikacija, informacija* (Structural poetics: Cybernetics, communication, information 1981), based on his lectures from the beginning of the 1970s. Pirjevec was specifically critical of the scientific ambitions of the structuralist project when he was trying to elucidate the implicit premises of structuralist poetics, but he unnecessarily equated structuralism with information theory. However, he also discussed the principal issues of the post-structuralist critique of fundamental structuralist postulates (Koron 1991). In addition, his reflections encouraged an interest in structural and information poetics and mathematical aesthetics from the early 1980s onwards—for example, the research of Denis Poniž in his book *Numerične estetike in slovenska literarna znanost* (Numeric aesthetics and Slovenian literary scholarship 1982). However, the book was a solitary attempt, which did not find many followers.

More important are the achievements in versology, narrative and drama theory that developed approximately from the mid 1970s to the end of the 1980s. The work of Tone Pretnar is closely connected with Polish versology as he was a member of the Commission for versology at the Polish Academy of Sciences and participated in the elaboration of the rhythmic vocabulary and in investigations of comparative Slavic metrics. His studies on Slovenian versology were published in a book entitled *Iz zgodovine slovenskega verznege oblikovanja* (From the history of the Slovenian versification system 1997) only posthumously, edited and commented by Aleš Bjelčevič, who has been continuing Pretnar's work in recent decades. In his work, Pretnar drew on the findings of Jeří Levý, Morris Hall, Miroslav Červenka, Zdzisława Koczyńska, Lucilla Pszczółowska, and Maria Dłuska, as well as on his forerunners who studied Slovenian materials—primarily Ivan Grafenauer, Boris Merhar, Isačenko, and others. Pretnar also thoroughly researched verse in translations; his Polish language doctoral dissertation on Prešeren and Mickiewicz, which dealt particularly with Prešeren's translations of Mickiewicz into German, was only posthumously translated and published in Slovenian, is a capital achievement in the field, as Lucilla Pszczółowska has written in a 1994 memorial article. The focus of the book is on verse forms and their linguistic (non-contextual) realization, the question being nearly neglected in the otherwise rather abundant Slovenian research of Mickiewicz's influence on Prešeren.

The same period (i.e., from the mid 1970s to the end of the 1980s) also witnessed an expansion of narrative theory. It is a common feature of the contributors to this field (such as Matjaž Kmecl, Aleksander Skaza, Darko Dolinar, and Janko Kos) that they followed the legacy of the Russian formalists and semioticians (especially Tomashevskii, Shklovskii, Lotman, Bakhtin, and Uspenskii), and particularly the German and anglophone pre-

structuralist narrative theory (for example, of Franz Stanzel, Eberhardt Lämmert, Percy Lubbock, Edward M. Foster, Edwin Muir, and Norman Friedman), far more eagerly than they adopted the models of so-called classical French narratology. Such was also the case in the two monographs of Marjan Dolgan, *Pripovedovalec in pripoved. Njegovo vrednotenje pripovedovanega* (The narrator and the narrative 1979) and *Kompozicija Pregljevega pripovedništva* (The composition of Pregelj's narratives 1983). Particularly the latter may be considered an original approach to the structural analysis of narrative. Its goal was—clearly in the tradition of Vladimir Propp and the generative grammar approach—to demonstrate the invariable compositional model of the artistically most accomplished narratives of Ivan Pregelj and to present this model as a mathematical algorithm.

An additional common feature of Slovenian contributions to narrative theory was that their authors mostly confined themselves to applications of models or parts of models to certain texts in an effort to interpret the text. To put it simply, in most cases they did not construct their own narratological models. In a sense, they conformed to the tradition of the integral interpretation and mostly struggled to combine the structural narratological analysis of the text with their literary-historical expertise. A rare exception to the rule was a theoretical model offered by Janko Kos in several articles and systematized in his *Očrt literarne teorije* (Outline of Literary Theory 1983) and its two enlarged editions (1994, 2001).¹² However, in regard to the time of its conception, Kos proposed a rather conservative, pre-structuralist morphological model constructed without a view to contemporary achievements in the field on an international scale.

In the remaining decade-and-a-half, to the end of the 1990s, the referential background of researchers dealing with narrative theory has expanded. Miran Hladnik; Miran Štuhec, who published an eclectic synthesis in 2000 entitled *Naratologija. Med teorijo in prakso* (Narratology: Between theory and practice); Jelka Kernev Štrajn; and I, together with some other colleagues, have also included the theories and models of the so-called classical and post-classical narratological authors in our writings.¹³ Although we have widened the narratological theoretical and meta-theoretical reflections, we have also to some extent preserved the predominant tradition of previous Slovenian narratologists in the sense that we did not elaborate original models—at least not thusfar.

In the field of drama theory there is the important work of Lado Kralj. In his 1998 book, *Teorija drame* (Theory of drama), informed by the

¹² See also Kos (1998).

¹³ Hladnik (1980), Štuhec (1996, 2000), Štrajn (1995, 1998), Koron (1988, 2001, 2007, 2008).

semiotic theories of drama and theatre, as well as theoreticians such as Peter Szondi, Tadeusz Kowzan, Anne Ubersfeld and Patrice Pavis, but also by the early structuralists, he radically modernized our theatre studies. There are several younger researchers who continue his work and research and one of them is Tomaž Toporišič. However, his books are a novelty of the last decade and transcend the time span of my text.

Finally, I have to mention a very lively and fruitful discussion on post-modernism in Slovenian culture in the 1980s and 1990s that also intensified the interest of literary scholars in post-structuralism, deconstruction and the general semiotics of culture. There were several interesting studies written on Bakhtin, the concepts of dialogism¹⁴ and intertextuality.¹⁵ Literary scholars were also prominent contributors at the international Ljubljana conference on Bakhtin, on the centenary of his birth, and to the ensuing monograph (Juvan 1997: 5). The concept of intertextuality proved quite useful in literary scholarship and was successfully integrated into studies on Slovenian literature by Marko Juvan in his book *Imaginarij »Krsta« v slovenski literaturi* (The imaginarium of the “Baptism at the Savica Waterfall” in Slovenian literature 1990), and in his 2000 monographs *Intertekstualnost* (Intertextuality) and *Vezi besedila* (The bonds of the text). The first of the two monographs was also greeted with appreciation by international audiences after it was translated into English.

To conclude: (1) the reception of formalism and structuralism in Slovenian literary criticism was specific. Despite the long enduring belief that there is a constant temporal delay when importing new ideas and methodologies in the work and attitudes of our literary scholars, this was not exactly the case with formalism and structuralism. At certain points the reception was rather synchronous with the international movements themselves, although not without discontinuities, which are sometimes due simply to the fact that our cultural sphere covers only approximately two million people. (2) Despite the fact that the reception coincided with the movement for the artistic autonomy of literary work in the conditions and times of a repressive totalitarian state, it paradoxically produced an exceptionally pertinent and globally successful inter- and trans-disciplinary trend of cultural studies and the research of popular culture. (3) Drawing on the structuralist legacy literary scholars often produced somewhat eclectic

¹⁴ Jola Škulj and Aleksander Skaza wrote on Bakhtin and dialogism already at the beginning of the 1980s. Škulj (1981, 1983), Skaza (1982).

¹⁵ According to Marko Juvan (2000a: 220–224), the concept of general intertextuality in Kristeva’s sense was first problematized in the Slovenian arena by Žižek. Žižek first criticized Kristeva from Derrida’s positions (1975) and later (the late 1970s) from the perspectives of materialism and Lacan.

combinations with previous paradigms. However, it seems that this was one of the impulses that eventually modernized our literary criticism.

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POVZETEK

VPLIV EVROPSKEGA STRUKTURALIZMA NA SLOVENSKO LITERARNO VEDO (1960-2000): LOKALNA RECEPCIJA IN GLAVNI DOSEŽKI

V prispevku pregledno obravnavam vpliv evropskega formalizma in strukturalizma ter semiotike v slovenski literarni vedi med letoma 1960 in 2000. Posebnosti slovenske recepcije in glavnih dosežkov na tem področju pa ni mogoče primerno zajeti brez upoštevanju nekoliko širšega časovnega obdobja ter avtorjev in del, ki presegajo okvire tradicionalno pojmovane literarne vede kot filološke discipline. Iz obdobja pred drugo svetovno vojno zato na kratko prikažem tedanji slovenski literarnovedni kontekst, prve informacije o formalizmu, ki jih je zainteresirani javnosti posredoval profesor primerjalne književnosti Anton Ocvirk, delo Aleksandra V. Isačenka Slovenski verz (1939) in mimogrede omenim nekaj časa v Sloveniji delujočega Luciena Tesnière.

Povojno dogajanje v stroki, ki sta jo tako v slovenistiki kot komparativistiki še vedno usmerjala empirični historizem in pozitivizem, kombinirana z duhovno zgodovino, je v petdesetih in zgodnjih šestdesetih letih zaznamovala izrazita težnja k interpretaciji literarnih besedil in zavirala celo razmah marksizma. Sredi šestdesetih let je začel širiti svoj vpliv francoski strukturalizem in bil sprva v krogu mladih filozofov, sociologov (Slavoj Žižek, Rastko Močnik, Mladen Dolar, Zoja Skušek, Braco Rotar, Vojo Likar) in skupine neoavantgardnih umetnikov, pisateljev, pesnikov, slikarjev in vizualnih umetnikov navdušeno sprejet kot nova obča mišljenjska paradigma. Strukturalistični vpliv se je kmalu prepletel z recepcijo ruskih avtorjev (formalistov, Lotmana, Bahtina, Uspenskega in drugih), zajel semiologijo in semiotiko kulture, vključil ideje franfurtsko

šole ter drugih neo- in postmarksističnih usmeritev in proti koncu sedemdesetih let še Lacana. Strukturalizem so kritizirali »uradni« marksistični filozofi (Boris Majer) pa tudi fenomenologi (Tine Hribar). Med avtorji prispevkov, zanimivih tudi za literarno vedo, omenjam Rastka Močnika in Zojo Skušek Močnik in Slavvoja Žižka.

Drugi val strukturalistične recepcije zadeva literarne znanstvenike. Slovenisti so bili, nekateri tudi po zgledu zagrebske šole, bolj odprti do formalizma kot komparativisti in so v začetku šestdesetih let zagovarjali t. i. integralno interpretacijo. Komparativisti (npr. Dušan Pirjevec v postumnem delu *Strukturalna poetika. Kibernetika, komunikacija, informacija, 1981*) pa so bili bolj pod vplivom filozofskih pristopov in ruskih semiotikov. Toda medsebojni vplivi so se kmalu prepletli. Pomembni dosežki so nastali na področju verzologije (Tone Pretnar, Aleš Bjelčevič) in teorije pripovedi, kjer so avtorji sledili bolj nemški in anglofoni predstrukturalistični (morfološki) teoriji pripovedi ter ruskim formalistom in semiotikom (Matjaž Kmecl, Aleksander Skaza, Darko Dolinar, Janko Kos, Marjan Dolgan) kot francoskim in drugim strukturalistom. Tem in mednarodnemu dogajanju v disciplini so se v osemdesetih in zlasti devetdesetih letih ter še pozneje bolj odprli mlajši naratologi (Miran Hladnik, Miran Štuhec, Jelka Kernev Štrajn, Alenka Koron). Pomembno delo je nastalo tudi na področju dramske teorije (Lado Kralj, *Teorija drame, 1998*). V osemdesetih in devetdesetih letih je diskusija o postmodernizmu spodbudila zanimanje literarnih znanstvenikov za poststrukturalizem, dekonstrukcijo in občo semiotiko kulture. Nastalo je nekaj zanimivih razprav o Bahtinu, pojmu dialogizma in intertekstualnosti (Jola Škulj, Aleksander Skaza, Marko Juvan). Marko Juvan je v več monografijah (*Imaginarij "Krsta"* v slovenski literaturi, 1990; *Intertekstualnost, 2000*; *Vezi besedila, 2000*) uspešno vpeljal intertekstualnost tudi v literarno teorijo in zgodovino.

Čeprav je bila recepcija formalizma, strukturalizma in semiotike v slovenski literarni vedi specifična in pogosto eklektična, pa jo lahko imamo za enega od impulzov, ki so temeljito modernizirali slovensko literarno vedo.