

The Learning Chain of Excerpts Didactic Model: The Example of the Novella “Tantadruj” by Ciril Kosmač¹

Zoran Božič

The paper presents a case study of the interpretation of a medium-length narrative text in pre-college settings based on a learning chain of excerpts model supplemented with questions for close reading. This didactic approach had already become widespread in Slovenia prior to WW II, and achieved a more systematic realization with the publication of two workbooks for home reading: *Zlati poljub* (The golden kiss; Božič 1998) and *Poljub zlata* (The kiss of gold; Božič 1998) in 1998. After almost two decades of its application in schools, it is time for a more detailed assessment of the approach and its usefulness, which has been carried out by also comparing two learning chains that were created for the well-known novella “Tantadruj” by Kosmač. The paper concludes with a learning chain that connects Tantadruj’s search for happiness with the narrator’s search for creative inspiration.

Key words: Ciril Kosmač, learning chain, close reading, home reading, literature didactics

Introduction

With the introduction of personal computers in the 1970s, and later also PC tablets and smart phones, a completely different (i.e. audio-visual) reception and other forms of entertainment considerably reduced the interest of the young in reading in general, and especially in reading more demanding classical literature. Elementary and secondary school teachers were faced with the question how to motivate young people to get to know classical literature. In 1999, four Harvard students established the website (to be followed by the publishing house) known all around the world as www.sparknotes.com. The website gives, for example, Shakespeare’s original plays on the left side of a display, while on its right side the entire text is prosified in contemporary English, following the principle “line for line.” Users can read only the simplified updated text or they can familiarize themselves with Shakespeare’s poetic language.

Less successful are adaptations of lengthy classical prose and drama texts for secondary school use, also published in printed form within the Sparknotes collection, such as Orwell’s *Animal Farm* (2014) or Shakespeares *Hamlet* (2014). Such manuals also appeared in Slovenia under the title *Kresnice* (fireflies; Šink 2010). The fundamental didactic

¹ Translated by Darja Teran.

problem of the Sparknotes collection is that there are summaries of particular chapters or events rather than excerpts of literary texts. This means that manuals merely reproduce the knowledge of others: they are a sort of metatext, and are intended for secondary school and university students primarily as a substitute for reading.

The learning chain of excerpts presented in this article can also be used to replace the reading of a literary text; however, it provides students with better insight than if only one lengthy excerpt was treated (the latter is a regular practice in secondary school literature textbooks). The basic purpose of the learning chain is that the first reading performed at home is followed with a second, close reading at school, which keeps students active all the time and sometimes requires as many as five periods for a comprehensive treatment. This paper describes current developments in Slovenian literature didactics, the creation of *Zlati poljub* and *Poljub zlata* workbooks, the development of the didactic model of the learning chain in Slovenia, and a comparison between two different learning chains. At the end by way of illustration the learning chain for Kosmač's novella "Tantadruj" is provided—an example of Slovenian existentialism: events in the very specific world of Primorska valleys convey a distinctly universal message.

Changes in Slovenian didactic literature

At the turn of the twenty-first century, soon after the creation of an independent Slovenian state in 1991, significant changes began to develop in the teaching of Slovenian literature, particularly at the applied level, aimed primarily towards two-way communication in working with literary texts. *Branja* (Readings; Krakar Vogel 2013) and *Svet književnosti* (The world of literature; Kos 2000–2003), two modern grammar school literature textbooks, appeared almost simultaneously, and the literature textbook *Umetnost besede* (The art of the word; Lah 2007–10) a few years later. Having taught in secondary school for two decades, I joined this didactic current myself by contributing two workbooks for home reading. All these teaching aids have remained in use until today, and after almost twenty years, the time has come for an assessment of the learning chain of excerpts didactic model.

The creation of *Poljuba* (Kisses) workbooks for home readings

Credit for the publication of two workbooks for home reading, *Zlati poljub* and *Poljub zlata*, by the publishing house DZS in 1998, accompanied by a teacher's manual (Božič 1998), goes to reviewer Boža Krakar Vogel, then assistant professor of literature didactics at the Department of Slovenian Studies at the Faculty of Arts in Ljubljana. Preparation of the workbooks

started in the early 1990s, when as a Slovenian language teacher at the Secondary School of Social Sciences and Economics in Nova Gorica I felt the need to supplement literature textbooks that were didactically very limited in scope by providing literary excerpts, particularly for home reading assignments. The textbooks had been designed for use in vocationally oriented education and were reworked after the independence of Slovenia (Kolšek 1993–96).²

My awareness that, without the text, the school interpretation of home reading can only be a discussion about the story, literary characters and their interrelationships, while the treatment of excerpts with questions for close reading can broaden the approach to the literary text towards reception aesthetics, grew more or less spontaneously. My experimental educational products were presented as they were developed to Slovenian studies professionals and teachers so as to gain professional assessments of their value. In so doing I stressed the importance of home readings for the development of the literary capabilities of students (Božič 1993, 1994, 1995, 1996 and 1997).³

Several years of intensive work (the selection of texts, excerpts, formulation of questions for close reading,⁴ creation of learning chains and additional tasks) resulted in two workbooks with sixty prose, drama, and poetry texts, including canonical works from Slovenian and world literatures. These are primarily texts that have passed the test of time in the development of Slovenian didactics (taking account of the curricula and literature textbooks) after the WW II.⁵

The DZS publishing house took over the publication. Both workbooks in A4-format contained contributions from the editor Majda Degan Kapus and illustrator Marjanca Prelog and were published with a total count of five hundred pages in August 1998. They were intended for general and technical grammar schools.

In most cases, the workbooks were received well by teachers⁶ and at some schools they have continued to be in use up to the present time,

² Literary textbooks were also modest in scope, since almost all texts from other Yugoslav literatures were omitted.

³ These were mostly collections published by the Slavistično društvo Slovenije (Slavic Society of Slovenia) and manuals by the National Education Institute.

⁴ Close reading is the method of reading a literary text at school; using this method students and teachers together read the whole text or mere excerpts, the teacher explaining and revealing literary narrative details through dialogue.

⁵ *Zlati poljub* contains twenty-two foreign and eight domestic texts and *Poljub zlata* twenty-two domestic and eight foreign texts.

⁶ Some were disturbed by the titles, supposedly not suitable for school use, so the presentation of both manuals in the journal *Slovenščina v šoli* (Slovenian

mainly by teachers photocopying individual learning chains and assignments for consolidating or assessing knowledge. A broader validation of the workbooks was prevented by two factors: the simultaneous preparation of a series of two new literature textbooks *Branja* and *Svet književnosti*, which were in terms of size, contents, and didactic concept a big step forward compared to previous textbooks, and especially by a lack of support from the National Education Institute, which objected to the use of short excerpts in both workbooks and therefore did not include them on any list of recommended material.

Opposition by the Institute was based on the authority of Meta Grosman, who already in the monograph *Bralec in književnost* (The reader and literature) and also later questioned the use of excerpts of literary texts at school (Grosman 1989 and 2004). In her opinion, reading excerpts lacks characteristics of literary reading. She argues that [such reading] “convinces students that an excerpt with added details on the author and a summary is merely another unattractive set of data as part of boring teaching and hardly more interesting literature” (Beg 2015: 74–75). This position, only weakly based in didactic practice, met with reasoned opposition by Silvo Fatur even before the publication of both *Poljub* workbooks. In his paper “Didaktični problem odlomka iz leposlovnega besedila, ob primerih iz romana Pavleta Zidarja *Sveti Pavel*” (The didactic problem of a literary excerpt, using examples from the novel *Sveti Pavel* by Pavle Zidar), Fatur points out that “the text of an excerpt and the metatext which emerges with it and out of it, and usually has the role of providing background context or connective text between excerpts, forms a new and different quality which is not necessarily or *a priori* something inferior” (Fatur 1995: 63).

The significance of this didactic question is attested to by a subsequent empirical study by Boža Krakar Vogel, “Recepcija odlomka v primerjavi z recepcijo kratke pripovedi pri književnem pouku” (The reception of an excerpt compared with the reception of a short story in literature class), in which she tested differences in reading and perception of an excerpt and a short story with a group of students. Krakar has rehabilitated the school use of an excerpt by establishing that secondary school students understand an excerpt “as a representative part of a whole,” and that their conception is essentially enhanced by giving the substantive and didactic background. They do not seem to perceive the excerpt as another uninteresting data set, since they may sometimes be inspired even more by it than by a less interesting complete text, and most of them sometimes experience an increased motivation to read the whole text, which undoubtedly is another positive effect of these readings. (Krakar Vogel 2006: 663–64)

language in school) could not be published under the title *Poljuba v razredu* (Two kisses in class).

The second problem connected with both *Poljub* workbooks is the length of the excerpt included. The modern grammar school literature textbooks *Branja* (2000–2003), *Svet književnosti* (2000–2003), and *Umetnost besede* (2007–2010) as a rule contain longer excerpts (one or two), often consisting of several pages. The excerpts included in both *Poljub* workbooks are substantively complete, but essentially shorter, mostly because of their higher number (from eight to twelve) and their adaptation to the reception abilities of modern students.⁷

The suitability of such an approach is confirmed by modern educational findings: Although grammar schools are generally attended by linguistically more capable students, everyday educational practice shows that they too may have problems with concentration when following a longer text (a radio/TV programme or a lengthy explanation and a lecture), with understanding the text they read and with expressing their thoughts about the text they heard or read. (Jožef Beg 2015: 260)

Outline of the development of the learning chain of excerpts didactic model

Only in the new millennium, while preparing and writing my doctoral thesis “Poezija Franceta Prešerna v srednješolskih učbenikih in njena recepcija” (The poetry of France Prešeren in secondary school textbooks and its reception 2010a), could I give better arguments to confirm the long tradition of the learning chain of excerpts together with questions for close reading as a didactic concept in Slovenian territory. As early as the nineteenth century, close reading as a way of approaching a literary text was spreading in primary school, as presented in detail by Janko Bezjak in his text *Posebno ukoslovje slovenskega učnega jezika v ljudski šoli* (*Special didactics of Slovenian language in folk schools*) at the beginning of twentieth century. As she was starting her research career, Boža Krakar Vogel discovered Bezjak as an important educator (Bezjak 1906–07, Krakar Vogel 1991: 10). During the interwar period, this didactic approach spread to the level of lower secondary school in literature textbooks by five authors (Bajec 1931–35). These renowned textbooks were created under the influence of contemporary French literature textbooks (Božič 2010b: 114–19).

The learning chain of excerpts with background context provided appeared after WW I, in higher grade textbooks for secondary schools by Janko Bezjak, Anton Breznik, and Ivan Grafenauer (Grafenauer 1921–30,

⁷ Short excerpts are particularly suitable for work with less motivated students, who quickly lose attention in class, such as the students of economics grammar schools or economics technical secondary schools.

Božič 2010b: 109–13). The tradition was continued by Vinko Beličič and Martin Jevnikar in the exceptionally high quality textbook *Slovenska čitanka za višje srednje šole* (Slovenian literary textbook for higher secondary schools), published after WW II in Zone A, under the Allied Military Government (Beličič 1947, Božič 2010: 200–204). Only later, in the 1970s, were excerpts and background context complemented with questions for close reading, specifically in the textbooks by Vera Gregorač for economics secondary schools (Gregorač 1973–79, Božič 2010b: 164–68). In the 1980s, the learning chains of excerpts with questions for close reading were included in textbooks for secondary vocational education by Silvo Fatur (for the first two years) and in textbooks by Franček Bohanec, Peter Kolšek, Rajko Korošec, and Tine Logar (for the last two years) (Fatur 1981–82, Bohanec 1983–84, Božič 2010b: 174–78).

The current theory and practice of didactics mostly confirm the usefulness of the learning chain of excerpts with questions for close reading. Close reading is particularly well established in the fourth year of grammar school for studying texts connected to the topics for the school-leaving examination essay (Krakar Vogel 2004: 234–47), and in recent times even as an effective method for assisting students with reading problems (Krakar Vogel 2014). Boža Krakar Vogel in *Poglavja iz didaktike književnosti* (Chapters from the didactics of literature) defines the home reading workbooks *Zlati poljub* and *Poljub zlata* as a well-established supplement to the literature textbook, aimed at “encouraging students in a more demanding and independent activity, such as deepening knowledge, reading and creative ability alongside the home reading or creative writing” (Krakar Vogel 2004: 144).

In her critical presentation of partial and comprehensive school interpretation, Alenka Žbogar estimates that, for example, “the learning chain that combines home reading of the whole text with treatment of a number of short excerpts at school (using the method of close reading) is effective” (Žbogar 2013: 87). In her proposal of the Slovenian contribution to the European literary framework within her doctoral thesis, Jožica Jožef Beg concludes that in dealing with home reading it is appropriate to use, rather than a textbook excerpt,

the method of close reading with the learning chain established in the *Zlati poljub* (1998) and *Poljub zlata* (1998) workbooks by Zoran Božič, as it serves to develop precision in observing the texts: students perform close reading of a text in pairs or groups (their reporting is combined with interpretative reading), place it in context, analyze it, take up positions regarding characters’ actions, connect it to the elements of the texts they are familiar with, etc. After reporting back, students have an overview of literary interpretative elements and are

prepared for various actualizations which were not included in the learning chain. (Jožef Beg 2015: 284)

A comparison of two learning chains and didactic presentations in modern literature textbooks: the case study of Kosmač's "Tantadruj"

In the first edition of her manual *Teme iz književne didaktike* (Topics from literature didactics), Boža Krakar Vogel refers to three practical examples of literature, treated according to the methodical system of school interpretation (Krakar Vogel 1995: 20–32). The first example is Aleksandra Belšak's learning chain treatment of *Tantadruj* in the third year of secondary school (LC1⁸). This publication enables its comparison with the learning chain in *Poljub zlata* (LC2) (Božič 1998: 145–49). A difference in the "didactic toolbox" is visible right at the outset: LC1 has seven excerpts with questions for close reading, and no background for the excerpts is given. In LC2 the introductory excerpt with a motivational illustration is followed by initial tasks connected to the author and his work, and then with ten excerpts with questions for close reading, but also with questions and tasks referring to the story and positioning the excerpts in the text as a whole.

A comparison of the contents shows that LC1 has two excerpts from the frame narrative and five excerpts from the mother's story about Tantadruj. None of the excerpts make up a text unit but are rather collages of individual motifs, and moreover they fail to follow the story line and are arranged in an unclear, illogical succession. Only one excerpt deals more precisely with Tantadruj. LC2 has three excerpts from the frame narrative and seven excerpts from the Tantadruj story: their placement is linear, following their succession in the short story. The beginning and the end of the whole text and the beginning and the end of the mother's narration are included. The excerpts are substantively complete texts. Tantadruj appears in all the excerpts of the mother's narration, either as the central character or as one of the fools. Thus it can be concluded that the making of an efficient learning chain is not a simple matter—it requires detailed knowledge of literary history and literature didactics and includes interpretative abilities.

Kosmač's novella is presented with only one excerpt of considerable length in the *Svet književnosti* and *Umetnost besede* textbooks, while there are two—namely, from the beginning of the frame narrative and of Tantadruj's story—in the *Branja* textbook.⁹ *Svet književnosti* and *Umetnost besede* have the same excerpt, which includes the fairground scene and presents the other three fools (Luka, Furlan, and Matic) in more detail; the excerpt in the first textbook is slightly longer and includes also

⁸ LC1 = learning chain 1, LC2 = learning chain 2.

⁹ The titles of the excerpts are "Resurrecturis..." and "Tantadruj and his death."

Peregrin, The Found One. The selected excerpt actually includes Tantadruj's search for happiness, but the presentation of the central character is markedly static and does not allow tracking the story, which only through its rising and falling action conveys a conclusive message. The solution in *Branja* is didactically more appropriate, bringing Tantadruj's existential problem in the second excerpt, while the connection with the frame narrative of the first excerpt enables a problem-solving approach.

All three textbooks give the background to the excerpt(s): in *Branja* it is more rudimentary, in *Umetnost besede* very detailed. Since students do not have the conclusion of the text in front of them, they cannot critically assess the references that, "with the final vision of the frozen world the short story ends" (Krakar-Vogel 2000–2003: 151); and "The short story ends with the conclusion of the narrative frame, which is much gloomier than the introductory part, as the vision of the frozen world provokes sadness, anxiety, the thought of death." (Lah 2007–10: 114). Only the explanation in *Svet književnosti*, where the narrator "finds out that the Tantadruj story is no longer as bright as it was forty years ago and that it 'got bitter,' but that nevertheless he experiences how 'fruitful longing and fertile anguish' returned to him, restoring his joy of life," is in accord with the end of the short story (Kos 2000–2003: 88).

Interpretative incentive for use of a learning chain in schools

Kosmač's short story *Tantadruj* was first published in 1959 in the journal *Naša sodobnost* (Our Contemporary Times), and the entire text is also available online. The first book edition appeared as late as in the year of the author's death (1980).¹⁰ Almost two decades of the use of the learning chain in class signify a test of time in which its potential shortcomings would be revealed. Although today I might replace some excerpt, in essence it would remain unchanged. It should be emphasized that excerpts are the basis of a learning chain: questions and tasks may only give support to teacher and student. Teachers can also build on them and provide their own, they may omit or add them, change their order or emphasize them differently. Almost every treatment in class brings unsuspected findings and revelations: proof that a perfect work of art is an open text. It is important to convey that feeling to students, so we must embrace the specific characteristics of their readings.

¹⁰ The first publication is entitled *Tantantadruj* and this longer version appears in the text as the name of the literary character and at the beginning of each his uttering. It is still unknown why the reduction happened in the book edition. Then editor Miha Mate and the author of the literary study Helga Glušič are unfortunately deceased, nor has my enquiry on the slovlit forum yielded a result.

The characteristics of the learning chain in a novella by Kosmač

Kosmač's existentialist novella *Tantadruj* is scheduled for home reading in the fourth year of the four-year secondary school as a representative example of Slovene modernist prose from the period after WW II and as an illustration of Kosmač's personal writing style. The novella focuses on the existential distress of Tantadruj, the village fool, whose life revolves around his desire to die, since his mother persuaded him that he would only be happy in heaven. In 1994, the novella inspired a colour full-length film, produced under the director Tugo Štiglic; however, the frame narrative referring to the issue of creative inspiration was omitted.

The learning chain contains eleven short excerpts, which represent about ten percent of the entire text. The beginning and the end of the frame narrative as well as the beginning and the end of the retrospective narrative about *Tantadruj* are included, demonstrating substantive symmetry and illustrating Kosmač's aesthetic approach, typical, for example, of his more lengthy narrative, *The Ballad of the Trumpet and the Cloud*. Other excerpts are selected to illustrate the dramatic structure of the text: they include exposition, complication, climax, consequence, and resolution. The climax is a stylistically specific, poetical excerpt with the fools watching through the window what is happening in the parish dining room, where the opposition between life and death, happiness and unhappiness, between longing and aimlessness is symbolically pointed out.

The learning chain of excerpts enables various didactic approaches. A common practice is that one of the students reads an excerpt while the teacher poses questions one after another and comments on the answers. Another possibility is for students to read excerpts and answer questions by themselves; this is followed by a guided class discussion. As a third option the teacher, after the excerpt has been read, poses spontaneous questions, starting with the most topical element. Along with this, new meanings and partial messages are often revealed in the text, which can skilfully be used as an interpretative challenge by the teacher. Probably the most appealing for students is to come up with relevant questions that can be asked about the excerpts themselves. A large number of excerpts also enables working with a literary text in pairs or groups.

Ciril Kosmač: Tantadruj (learning chain of excerpts)

- a) After WW II, Kosmač lived in a) Piran, b) Slap ob Idrijci, c) Most na Soči.
- b) Kosmač was only eighteen when he was imprisoned for several months.

TRUE /FALSE

- c) Kosmač's novel *Tistega lepega dne* (That beautiful day) was made into a color movie. TRUE /FALSE
- d) Tantadruj is a short story because the story develops in a single day. TRUE /FALSE
- e) Tantadruj takes place in Yugoslavia and Austria-Hungary. TRUE /FALSE

On a late, clear and slightly windy night I was on my way back from Piran. I was slowly climbing uphill, along a narrow and steep street, repeatedly murmuring a refrain from a foreign pop song that was stuck in my head, and I frequently stopped, absorbed in watching and listening how the autumn wind was playing with the moonlit night. It played with it as if it were a veil: its silky rustling was around and above me, pale gold light was softly spreading across gently sloping roofs and playfully dancing on the rippling sea.

It was pleasantly breezy in my heart, too, and unusually light in my soul. Again I was visited by those golden hours that fill me with light and resonate all through me, so that it sings in me with as much joy as a high summer day sings when it stops in the midst of a green valley. It was too beautiful, so I knew that everything would soon turn dark into that unknown and inconceivable longing, mixed with bittersweet anxiety which starts pushing me towards writing. (1st excerpt)

1. What are the contents of the first and of the second paragraph? Which sentence connects them?
 2. Which senses does the narrator perceive his environment with? What is his present mood?
 3. Find and underline all personifications in the excerpt. Describe Kosmač's language.
 4. Find all antithetical places in the second paragraph. What does the last sentence tell us about essential features of Kosmač's artistic creation?
- a) The inscription *Resurrecturis* above the graveyard gate reminds the narrator of his sister and her narration about their father's death. TRUE /FALSE

Frosty earth crunched under their nailed boots and the cold moon shone on them from the sky, for the winter sky was clear and morning still far away. People, too, marched from far away: farmers and smallholders, traders and craftsmen, pedlars and vendors, traffickers and brokers, farm hands and maids, boys and girls, vagabonds and petty thieves, lost souls, beggars, fools from birth, who were named God's children in those times, and those who became crazy later, but were not so dangerous as to have to

be kept behind bars. Individually and in groups, they hastened along all four valleys which were opening in front of them. They went to Most, and they went to the fair, so they walked silently, in order to more easily calculate and consider their needs and dream of their wishes. (2nd excerpt)

1. Why is Tantadruj classified as a classical short story? Compare the three-part composition (on the way to the fair – main event – return) of Tantadruj with the composition of Pregelj's short story Matkova Tina and Hemingway's short story The Old Man and the Sea.
 2. Find alliteration in the first sentence of the excerpt. Distinguish what is realistic and what is highly expressive in this sentence. Among well-known Slovenian authors, who are two of Kosmač's predecessors with their characteristic artistic language (rhythmic prose!)?
 3. Which various groups of people are mentioned in the excerpt? What do these people have in common?
 4. How does the author express his positive attitude towards the fools in the excerpt?
- a) Due to the convergence of several valleys, Most used to be an important traffic crossroads.

TRUE /FALSE

"Yeah, take this little kreuzer as well, so that you will choose well," said the farmers and slipped some change into his hand.

"Tantadruj, I will choose, I will choose well. And then, quickly to the priest!"

"Of course. And then to the priest!"

"Tantadruj, and then I will die!" he jumped joyfully. "I would like so much to die!"

"You will! You will!" the farmers agreed; promptly and assertively they lengthened their strides to be able to wipe away the tears that had gathered in their eyes due to the cold.

Tantadruj could not keep pace with them, since he was short and had very short legs. He lagged behind, but he was not sad: he believed that this time he would die for sure. Joyfully he set out along the road, joyfully he rang his bells and the song he sang with a warm voice joyfully glided towards the cold red dawn:

"There is sun in the sky, on the earth there is chill.

I collect the bells, all for you, and I will..." (3rd excerpt)

1. Why is Tantadruj the first to be presented? Along which valley is this fool coming?
 2. How did Tantadruj get his name? What is his greatest wish? Do farmers really have tears due to the cold or does the author convey some other meaning by mentioning tears?
 3. Which girl is Tantadruj's sweetheart? How does he imagine a happy life with her? Why does his idea of a happy life remind us of the Baptism at the Savica?
 4. How is the conclusion of the chapter ("he sang with a warm voice") the antithesis of its beginning?
 5. What can the sun or chill in Tantadruj's song symbolize?
 6. What do you know about the other three fools? How are the names of all the fools connected with the material, spiritual, temporal and social dimensions of existence?
- a) In the following text Tantadruj chooses bells at the fair, talks with children, listens to birds singing, and waits for the local priest, who is at the church service. TRUE /FALSE

Finally they arrived at the church and youngsters quickly dashed through the sacristy, for the solemn mass had just begun. Tantadruj would have liked to go to church, because it was so beautiful inside, but he knew that he was not allowed. He stepped to the large mulberry tree by the church walls and became absorbed by three light grey pigeons that were hopping around not far from him. The organ sounded and beautiful singing permeated the air. Tantadruj listened eagerly and became cross with the sparrows quarrelling noisily in the branches above him. He looked upwards and shook in anger. The bells started to ring and sparrows flew away; but so did the three beautiful pigeons: they darted towards the sun that suffused them in glittering silver, and then, all silvery, they glided along the diagonal path across the sky. (4th excerpt)

1. Why was Tantadruj not allowed to attend the service? What about the other three fools? What does the author communicate with this kind of attitude towards the outcasts?
2. What is his attitude towards the three pigeons and to the sparrows? Which characteristics of the bird species are emphasized by the author?
3. What is the symbolic message of the end of the excerpt about the acceptance of good and evil in this world?

“Tantadruj, it’s winter now and there are no vipers!” He lifted a finger and continued sternly, as if nailing word after word into his head: “But even when they are out and you encounter one and it bites you, you will not die, you will only be poisoned!”

“Tantadruj, poisoned!” groaned the fool and pure immeasurable sadness spread over his tiny wrinkled face.

“Poisoned,” repeated other priests in chorus and pointed threateningly with their plump pinkish forefingers.

“Poisoned!” confirmed the local priest and once again pointed threateningly himself. “Wait till it tolls your hour. We all have to suffer before we come to the grave!” He said that and then turned towards the parish house.

“We all have to suffer before we come to the grave!” solemnly sighed the other priests, then they again lifted their cassocks, took hold of their birettas and waddled after their host.

Powerless, Tantadruj leaned against the mulberry tree and stared with wide-open eyes after the giant black figures disappearing through the shiny parish house door. Then the door closed and he shivered as if it had closed on his happiness. (5th excerpt)

1. Describe all of Tantadruj's efforts to reach his goal as soon as possible. How does the priest denigrate each of Tantadruj's solutions? Explain why the priest cannot approve of Tantadruj's ideas even if he wanted to.
 2. Why does Tantadruj's situation allow no solution from a “normal” person's point of view? What is the author's message on the attitude of the modern world to life after death?
 3. In which novel by Cankar do sick girls seek comfort in their faith regarding life after death? Why? What is the last scene concluding that novel?
 4. Which stylistic and linguistic means does the author use to create an ironic perspective?
 5. What is the symbolism of the last paragraph? How does Tantadruj feel now?
- a) After that the fools enjoy a hearty dinner in the pub.

TRUE /FALSE

“In the name of the law, repeat!” roared the sergeant, hit the table with his fist, eyes blazing, so that Peregrin smiled to him and nodded. He played again and again, and then he played and sang until the night itself. People drank, laughed and wept.

When it became dark, Luka, Furlan Rusepatadis and Matic Equal Stick entered the room. They came to collect Tantadruj in order to go together to sleep at the Hotejec farm. But they stopped, absorbed in listening to the cow bells. It was so marvellous that even Furlan Rusepatadis did not once snort with contempt.

Finally, they had to take their leave. Tantadruj stepped closer and asked Peregrin to give him the bells back.

"Tantadruj, leave us the bells!" pleaded people from the bottom of their melted and excited hearts. "We will buy you others! Even nicer! Completely new!"

"No, no!" Peregrin laughingly shook his head. "For him, only these bells are right. You will certainly understand that, you are still smart enough!" (6th excerpt)

1. Explain who Peregrin is. Why did people admire but also fear him?
 2. What did Peregrin do with Tantadruj's bells? How did the guests accept his creative experiment? Why did they understand Tantadruj's song in a different way after that?
 3. Compare Peregrin and his influence with the mythological Orpheus and Cankar's Kurent.
 4. In the excerpt, how does the author question the attitude of "normal" people to the fools? What does he wish to convey to readers by this? What does it mean that "For him, only these bells are right"?
- a) Next, the fools discover a freshly dug grave pit in the graveyard.

TRUE / FALSE

They turned around, left the graveyard and descended from the terrace. They tiptoed to the parish house, tiptoed to the window and looked through the slits of half-closed shutters – and they stared in amazement, holding their breath, because the room was all golden. The Christ on the wall was golden, the bookcase was dark golden, and inscriptions on the backs of the books were golden. A golden six-branched candelabra stood on the table, holding thick pale golden wax candles which burnt with lively golden flames. There were dark golden roasted geese on an oval plate with a golden trim, pale golden was the inside of the butter cake and dark golden was its crust. There were golden flowers on the bottle and glasses and the wine shining in them was a sunny golden colour. Priests sat around the table and their round faces were crimson gold; the crowns of their heads leaned against the wall, closing their eyes and opening their mouths, so that their golden teeth glittered, and they sang with full dark golden baritones:

"Oo-ooo...Oo-ooo..."

"Tantadruj, are they happy?" asked the fool. (7th excerpt)

1. How are the expressions of colour and sound presented in this excerpt?
 2. Underline all the places in the excerpt where the golden colour does not seem real.
 3. Why is this excerpt expressly in contrast to what the fools are doing at the same time?
 4. Think over and answer what the fool's question at the end of the excerpt tells you.
- a) After that the fools bury Tantadruj alive and he is happy.

TRUE /FALSE

"And remember one more thing!" said the priest in a deep voice.

"You will not die at all!"

"Tantadruj, I will not die at all?" The fool quivered so much that all his bells tinkled.

"No!" said the priest firmly. "If you will still want to die, you will not die at all!"

"Tantadruj, I will not want to die any more!" cried the fool and with folded hands rushed towards him. "But I will not want to die any more!"

"Indeed?" asked the priest.

"Tantadruj, no, not any more!" the fool shook his head and then immediately, with new hope in his voice, asked: "Will I die then?"

"Well, then we shall see!" answered the priest graciously. "Now each go your own way and peace be with you! And you too go your way," he turned to his parishioners, "and be thankful to God that nothing worse happened!" Then he nodded to his fellow priests and they all solemnly left for the parish house. (8th excerpt)

1. How does the local priest get Tantadruj out of the grave pit? Why is the priest's statement that Tantadruj will not die if he wants to ironic?
 2. After the priest's statement, what happens to Tantadruj's longing?
- a) Then Hotejec, the embodiment of goodness, suggests that the fools may sleep at his place, but the priest does not revoke his order for them to go home.

TRUE /FALSE

In the meantime, while the priests were singing in the golden room and farmers and smallholders, traders and craftsmen, farm hands and maids, traffickers and brokers, young and old, were drinking and roaring in smoky pubs, the four idiots were already walking far out there, each along his empty valley. Frosty earth crunched under their feet and the cold moon shone on them from the sky, for the winter sky was clear and the morning still far away... (9th excerpt)

1. Define the difference between the initial and the final paragraph of the Tantadruj story.
2. Why are the fools now presented as outcasts from the social community? Explain how the way they are named was changed to reflect this.
3. Name some literary characters who were outcast from their environment.

And I didn't see only the landscape around me, I saw the whole earthly globe, and it was all frozen and dead. Icy and empty were those four valleys of mine, the ones through which my four gentle idiots once went away. Everything was dead. The wind itself had died long ago, completely died, died to its last breath. Only one cloud slanted in the dead sky, long and thin like an icicle. And I knew that it wasn't a cloud, but the last extended human cry that had turned into ice. The moon was hanging low beneath it. It hung by the sharp tip of the old cathedral's icy tower and it was split into two pieces. And such it was now shining on the earthly globe, above the extinguished human fairground. (10th excerpt)

1. Which word in the last sentence serves as the connection with what was happening before?
2. Underline all expressions which denote the absence of movement and warmth. What is symbolized by this apocalyptic scene and how do you experience it?
3. Explain whether this scene is naturalistic, impressionist or grotesque.

On the road, I glanced towards the graveyard. The inscription above the gate glittered with a silvery sheen, as if it wanted to smile at me encouragingly.

"Resurrecturis!" I nodded to him gratefully.

"Resurrecturis!" was its silvery answer.

I waved to it and headed towards home. Again was I brimming with fruitful longing and fertile anguish. I walked along the road, swaying slightly, because I was everything: mother's son and cruel buccaneer without an ear and with a black eyepatch, an aged eagle and orphaned carousel, the split moon and the graveyard pencil pine, the echo of my voice and the extended frozen cry, resounding in the dead lull; I was Luka and Rusepatadis, Matic Equal Stick and Tantadruj. It was not easy, yet I carried them all with unfathomable joy, for I was also the flock of light grey pigeons that flew through my soul in an uninterrupted silver ribbon. Everything buzzed around me and I admit, although it might harm the solemnity of the literature, that sometimes I hopped just like Tantantadruj. And why shouldn't I hop? I was quietly singing his song too: "There is sun in the sky /.../" (11th excerpt)

1. The word "resurrecturis" refers to resurrection. How did the author Ciril Kosmač ensure Tantadruj's resurrection?
2. Underline the sentence which proves that in the imagination, an artist can be anybody or anything. Which value does the imagination present to the artist?
3. In which poem does Prešeren stress a similar revelation about creating? Which similes remind you of the poems *The Sail* and *The Albatross*?
4. Which important dimension of literary art (and a special textual and linguistic role!) is emphasized by the simile of the flock of light grey pigeons?
5. Why is the conclusion of Tantadruj's story nevertheless optimistic? In what way is an artist equal to God as creator? What does the verb material-ize (Slovenian: u-stvar-iti) actually mean?

Conclusion

The end of the learning chain spontaneously links to an important, perhaps crucial didactic question of whether the school treatment of literature means suffering or joy for students. When students are but passive observers or listeners, they often experience the explanation of a poem, prose, or drama text as suffering. However, when the teacher not only allows students to express their opinions to complement his or her explanation, but also encourages them to think and connect, constantly challenging them with problem-based questions, those students, who would otherwise be bored, may also experience creative joy. One of the suitable didactic models for such schoolwork is precisely the use of the learning chain of excerpts.

Works Cited

- Bajec, Anton, et al. 1931–1935. *Slovenska čitanka za prvi–četrti razred srednjih in sorodnih šol*. Ljubljana: National supply of school textbooks and teaching materials.
- Barbarič, Nada and Zoran Božič. 1994. *Priprava na razpravljalni esej v drugem letniku srednje šole*. Ljubljana: ZRSŠŠ.
- Beličič, Vinko and Martin Jevnikar. 1947. *Slovenska čitanka za višje srednje šole I–II*. Gorica: Allied Military Government in Julian Venetia.
- Bezjak, Janko. 1906–1907. *Posebno ukoslovje slovenskega učnega jezika v ljudski šoli*. Ljubljana: Slovenska šolska matica.
- Bohanec, Franček et al. 1983–84. *Književnost III–IV: Učbenik za srednje izobraževanje*. Maribor: Obzorja.
- Božič, Zoran. 1993. Problemske obdelave slovenskih klasikov. In *Vprašanje slovarja in zdomske književnosti*, ed. Martina Orožen and Mateja Hočevar, 237–56. Zbornik Slavističnega društva Slovenije. Ljubljana: ZRSŠŠ.
- . 1994. Ivan Tavčar, *Visoška kronika*. In *Književnost v drugem letniku srednje šole: priročnik za učitelja*, ed. Vinko Cuderman, 65–73. Ljubljana: ZRSŠŠ.
- . 1995. *Sveti Pavel: šolska interpretacija z metodo učne verige*. Fatur, Silvo (ed.): In *Šolska ura s Pavletom Zidarjem*, 48–62. Ljubljana: ZRSŠŠ.
- . 1996. Prešeren, Sonetni venec; Pregelj, Matkova Tina and Camus, Tujec. In *Književnost v četrtem letniku srednje šole: Priročnik za učitelja*, ed. Vinko Cuderman, 268–272; 289–299; 311–323. Ljubljana: ZRSŠ.
- . 1997. Obravnava domačega branja z učno verigo: ponazoritev s Cankarjevimi Hlapci. In *Stodvajsetletnica Ivana Cankarja in Dragotina Ketteja*, ed. Jan Zoltan, 71–85. Zbornik Slavističnega društva Slovenije. Ljubljana: ZRSŠ.
- . 1998. *Zlati poljub*. Delovni zvezek za domače branje. Ljubljana: DZS.
- . 1998. *Poljub zlata*. Delovni zvezek za domače branje. Ljubljana: DZS.
- . 1998. *Zlati poljub Poljub zlata*. Priročnik za učitelje. Ljubljana: DZS.
- . 2010a. *Poezija Franceta Prešerna v srednješolskih učbenikih in njena recepcija (The poetry of France Prešeren in secondary school textbooks and its reception)*. Doctoral thesis. Ljubljana: Oddelek za slovenistiko Filozofske fakultete.
- . 2010b. *Slovenska literatura v šoli in Prešeren*. Ljubljana: Tangram.

- Fatur, Silvo. 1981–82: *Književnost I–II: učbenik za srednje izobraževanje*. Maribor: Obzorja.
- . 1995: Didaktični problem odlomka iz leposlovnega besedila, ob primerih iz romana Pavleta Zidarja *Sveti Pavel*. In *Šolska ura s Pavletom Zidarjem*, ed. Silvo Fatur, 63–78. Ljubljana: ZRSŠ.
- Grafenauer, Ivan, et al. 1921–30. *Slovenska čitanka za višje razrede srednjih in njim sorodnih šol I–IV*. Ljubljana: Kraljeva zaloga šolskih knjig in učil.
- Gregorač, Vera. 1973–79. *Slovenščina I–IV: Književnost z berilom za ekonomske srednje šole*. Ljubljana: Dopolna delavska univerza.
- Grosman, Meta. 1989. *Bralec in književnost*. Ljubljana: Državna založba Slovenije.
- . 2004. *Zagovor branja: Bralec in književnost v 21. stoletju*. Ljubljana: Sophia.
- Jožef Beg, Jožica. 2015. Razvijanje ključnih zmožnosti pri književnem pouku v gimnaziji. Doctoral thesis. Ljubljana: Oddelek za slovenistiko Filozofske fakultete.
- Kolšek, Peter et al. 1993–96: *Berilo I–4*. Maribor: Obzorja.
- Kos, Janko et al. 2000–2003: *Svet književnosti I–4*. Maribor: Obzorja.
- Kosmač, Ciril, 1959: Tantantadruj. *Naša sodobnost* 7(1): 9–45.
- Kraker Vogel, Boža, 1991: *Skice za književno didaktiko*. Ljubljana: ZRSŠ.
- . 1995: *Teme iz književne didaktike*. Ljubljana: ZRSŠ.
- , et al. 2000–2003. *Branja I–4*. Ljubljana: DZS.
- . 2004. *Poglavja iz didaktike književnosti*. Ljubljana: DZS.
- . 2006. Receptija odlomka v primerjavi z receptijo kratke pripovedi pri književnem pouku. *Slovenska kratka pripovedna proza*, ed. Irena Novak Popov, 655–65. Series Obdobja 23. Ljubljana: Oddelek za slovenistiko, Filozofska fakulteta.
- . 2013. Razvoj slovenistične didaktike književnosti. *Slavistična revija* 61(1): 157–67.
- . 2014. Tesno branje kot dodatna podpora učencem z bralnimi težavami. *Slovenščina v šoli* 17(3–4): 117–21.
- Lah, Klemen et al., 2007–10. *Umetnost besede I–4*. Ljubljana: Mladinska knjiga.
- Orwell, George. 2014. *Animal Farm*. New York: Spark Publishing.
- Shakespeare, William. 2014. *Hamlet*. New York: Spark Publishing.
- Šink, Jurij. 2010. *Ločil bom peno od valov, Feri Lainšček*: priročnik za spoznavanje književnih del (Manual for getting to know literary works). Ljubljana: Rokus Klett.
- Žbogar, Alenka. 2013. *Iz didaktike slovenščine*. Ljubljana: Zveza društev SdS.

POVZETEK**DIDAKTIČNI MODEL UČNE VERIGE ODLOMKOV: NA PRIMERU NOVELE TANTADRUJ CIRILA KOSMAČA**

Članek obravnava primer šolske interpretacije srednje dolgega pripovednega besedila, in sicer po modelu učne verige odlomkov z vprašanji za tesno branje. Še zlasti v sodobnem času, ko je zaradi razvoja privlačne digitalne tehnologije velik problem motivacija srednješolcev za poglobljeno domače branje, je tovrstni didaktični pristop lahko koristna dopolnitev srednješolskega pouka književnosti. Ta didaktični model se je sicer na Slovenskem uveljavljal že pred drugo svetovno vojno ter v sedemdesetih in osemdesetih letih 20. stoletja, bolj sistematično uresničitev pa je doživel z izidom delovnih zvezkov za domače branje Zlati poljub in Poljub zlata leta 1998. Po skoraj dveh desetletjih šolske rabe je čas za natančnejšo presojo pristopa oz. njegove uporabnosti, tudi s pomočjo primerjave dveh učnih verig, nastalih po znani Kosmačevi eksistencialistični noveli Tantadruj. Članek zaključuje primer učne verige, ki Tantadrujevo iskanje sreče povezuje s pripovedovalčevim iskanjem ustvarjalnega navdiha, z enajstimi skrbno izbranimi odlomki pa bodisi nadomešča domače branje celotnega besedila bodisi omogoča učitelju, da ob ponovitvi zgodbe novele in označitvi posameznih literarnih oseb poglobljeno predstavi tudi dogajalni prostor in čas ter estetske prvine Kosmačevega pripovednega sloga.