

prison. These are hard to come by because during the existence of communist Yugoslavia no one dared to say what happened on the island, while few individuals in the post-Yugoslav era want to “stir up old soup” and revisit negative chapters in their own history.

The prison island was not just a place of detention and labor under the sweltering sun, where provisions and water were in short supply. It was also an ingenious place of psychological and physical tortures. The structure was deviously devised so that the prisoners acted as their own wardens and guards. Deserving of a chapter in Michel Foucault’s *Discipline and Punish* (1975), an atmosphere of mistrust was intentionally cultivated among the prisoners, and it began with new arrivals. New inmates coming by boat would be forced to walk a gauntlet of veteran inmates, who were expected to punch or kick the new arrivals. Veteran inmates who failed to attack with sufficient vigor would be punished. At the end of exhausting work days, inmates would gather in their shared barracks and, one by one, would have to stand up and admit to the sins for which they were imprisoned. Many inmates did not feel they had actually committed a sin and, as mentioned, many of them were stalwart Partisans who were great admirers of Tito. But failure to admit your crimes meant another beating. However, admission of your crimes also led to a beating. So what was ostensibly the time to recuperate after a hard day of labor under the sun was actually another form of psychological torture coupled with physical suffering. With inmates like this, who needed guards?

Yugoslavia rightly has the reputation of having been the best experiment in socialism, the most successful with the least social turmoil and the best experience of day-to-day life for its population. There are, of course, some stains on even the finest reputations, and Goli Otok is one of them.

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**Lujiza Pesjakova and Urška Perenič.** *Beatin dnevnik: Roman. Prvi slovenski družinski roman v obliki dnevnika.* Critical introduction by Urška Perenič. Ljubljana: Filozofska fakulteta, 2019. 235 pp., 19.90 euro. ISBN: 978-961-06-0178-4. (e-book) 978-961-06-0178-4.

First about the novel: Regardless of the genre markers that might prejudice a reader and the standard motifs and plotting, one has to be impressed by the novel’s forceful narrative voice and the narrator’s sense of self. She is a young orphaned woman just arrived at a manor house to become twin girls’ governess (non-Slovenes might perceive in this an opportunity to display the dual number!). A facsimile copy of the 1887 novel appears on p. 51–164. Reproducing the original lends a certain charm to the text. There are sixty-six annotations to help the reader with possible difficulties—from the name

of card game to biographical and geographical information, literary allusions, and so forth, and an index of personal names. The presentation of the novel and Urška Perenič's accompanying study are obviously based on painstaking archival research and full consideration of the Slovene literary system.

Perenič's thoroughgoing study of the novel (p. 7–49) validates the reader's impression of the work's quality. She first alludes to Slovene literary historians' contrary, negative views of the novel, which were first questioned by Miran Hladnik (1981), who underlined its (popular) literary characteristics as a *Frauenroman*. Katja Mihurko Poniž would later urge consideration of *Beatin dnevnik* as a psychological novel, pointing to English and French equivalents. More recently, Perenič has focused attention on the diary form—see the subtitle of her book—and pointed out a connection with Scandinavian family novels. Analyzing the work as a diary novel, she shows how the narrator takes advantage of the form for a variety of purposes—for example, socio-economic criticism of members of the upper class, her employers in this fictional work.

The largest part of the introductory study (16–32) is devoted to establishing the actual setting, Snežnik Castle, based largely on Pesjak's diary entries, which also furnish details for understanding various aspects of the novel. There is information on other nearby sites and geographical features in the novel as well. Perenič concludes that the close association with an actual locale in Notranjsko is a feature shared with Slovene rural prose works and the historical novel, and thus gives *Beatin dnevnik* patriotic weight as well. This interesting line of interpretation is not at the heart of the analysis, and thus unfortunately not expanded.

In the last part of her study, Perenič turns again to Pesjak's diary for data on what the author read, including works by the Swedish writer and feminist activist Fredrika Bremer. German definitions of the family novel are employed, and the possibility of genre mixing acknowledged. Eight pages of this section compare *Beatin dnevnik* with Bremer's *Die Töchter des Präsidenten*, revealing parallels, especially between the novels' characters. As a result, new significance accrues to the topic of women's position in society in *Beatin dnevnik*. Here and throughout the study Perenič presents precise evidence for her conclusions. She quotes extensively from Pesjak's diary and provides three photographs of Snežnik Castle along with a map of the locale.

This book is part of a larger project, which includes publication of Pesjak's German-language diaries. It is in part the fruit of recent Slovene scholarship on literature and geography, in which Perenič has been active, as well as of greater inclusion of multicultural writers in Slovene literary history.

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