

MEETINGS AND CONFERENCES

Papers on Slovene Topics

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LITERATURE IN A MULTILINGUAL STATE: THE CASE OF SOUTH SLAVIC LITERATURES. (Sponsored by the Association for Croatian Studies, North American Society for Serbian Studies and Society for Slovene Studies.)

Chair: Vasa D. Mihailovich, University of North Carolina.

Rado L. Lencek, Columbia University, "Language and Literature."

In his presentation, the author discussed a model of language-literature relation developing in the Serbo-Croatian speech area in Yugoslavia today, which was typologically defined as follows: two or more literatures based on one literary language; or one literature based on several literary languages all of which belong to one linguistic base.

After positing the inherent relation between language and literature, the author qualified this relation by pointing to basic differences in the *use* of a language in literature and in communication, and to basic similarities in the *functions* of language in literature and in communication. The language of literature as opposed to the language of communication is rarely only referential; it is essentially connotative and therefore charged with the cultural heritage of a sociolinguistic group. In performing its inherent functions, the language of literature in the same way as the language of communication serves as a symbol of the sociolinguistic solidarity of those who speak it.

On these premises, the following proposition was formulated: Literature is governed by the same three social functions as its medium—its language: by the unifying, the separatist, and the prestige functions which inspire the same attitudinal factors in its sociolinguistic community, language loyalty and pride. One would therefore be inclined to speak of the unifying, separatist, and prestige functions of literature in literary languages, and of attitudinal

factors of *loyalty* and *pride* operating in literary linguistic communities of individual literary languages, as well.

Two additional theoretical propositions were made in the paper. Literary languages and literatures are growth-motivated and growth-oriented models which follow the universal dictum on the process of life in nature: Life is living, and living is affirmation of life, dying its negation. The essence of all living is that it always affirms itself. The other: every effort toward integration through promotion of individual, involves a most paradoxical contradiction. To promote the individual cannot mean anything but to retreat from the common. By building stability and self-centeredness in the individual, one weakens the possibility of integration. Accordingly, the more a particular written language is supposed to affirm its existence and the more it develops its own literature, the less it can be expected some day to renounce its specificity in favor of universality. Here lies the fundamental contradiction in the evolution of growth-motivated and growth-oriented models such as languages and literatures, which defies any linguistically and literarily meaningful common denomination.

After having applied this theory to the situation developing in the Serbo-Croatian speech area in Yugoslavia today—with a Croatian, a Serbian, a Bosnian, a Montenegrin, a Vojvodinian literature, each in its own dynamic evolution, claiming its own distinctive life and tradition, catapulting it back into the past, therefore living and affirming its growth, its individual, separate life and prestige, in defiance of all their more or less common linguistic unity—three questions must be asked about literatures in the Serbo-Croatian literary language, viz.: is there in fact still a place for a label such as “Yugoslav literature” in today’s Yugoslav reality? Is it not possible that the defacto recognition of a Croatian, a Serbian, a Bosnian, a Montenegrin, a Vojvodinian literature induces the aspiration and will for differentiation-regionalization of its literary language? Is it not perhaps possible that the recent drift into regionalization reflects a dialectics of the evolution toward unification? A need for assertion and reassertion of the basic existence of the national, ethnic, regional will, before the concession of the fact of unity? Is not perhaps today’s Yugoslav cultural regionalism and sectorialism a precondition for final reduction of diversity to identity?

Topics in Slovene Studies (sponsored by the Society for Slovene Studies).

Chair: Joseph Velikonja (University of Washington)

John P. Nielsen, "The Slovene Immigrant and His Stay-at-Home Counterpart—A Case History." (New York University)

There is a fundamental process of any people to explore other lands for a possible new homeland for themselves and for their progeny. There was a large Slovene migration around the turn of the century, part of a mass migration from Central Europe to the USA peaking about 1910 when American mines, mills, and factories needed a large labor pool. One Joseph Plevnik came to the Cleveland area about 1901, followed by seven other of his nieces and nephews, leaving behind, in a small village near Ljubljana, an additional six or seven nieces and nephews. Today there are about 150-200 descendants in each category; those who migrated and their progeny after some five or six generations, and, those who stayed behind and their progeny, called the stay-at-home counterparts. This offered an opportunity to make comparisons as to longevity, education and careers between the two groups. Also an attempt was made to follow the Slovene culture and customs, since the immigrants who came here tried very hard to retain their ethnicity. No real statistically significant comparisons could be made as to longevity, education and careers. Indeed it appears that the third and later generations after 1900 of the two groups are about equal in entering the professions, about 70%. However, some interesting insights seem to emerge from the analysis of all the data available. The Slovene language was adhered to by the first generation (the immigrants), but not at all by their third generation. And whereas the stay-at-home second and on to the fifth generation in Slovenia for the most part married other Slovenes, the progeny of the immigrants, by the third generation were marrying into other ethnic groups: Croatian, Polish, German, Italian, Irish, etc., and mixtures of them. Perhaps the most striking difference was in the range of life style. The stay-at-home for the most part did not venture far geographically—80-90% remaining within 50 kilometers of the original home base, near Ljubljana, even after five generations. In America the geographical spread and the range of life styles were very large indeed. Geographically the spread was perhaps 5,000 kilometers, from New England to Guam and including many of the northern and southern states. In life style the range was from large city urban living (New York, Chicago, San Francisco), to the various type suburbs and on into the small towns of, say, southern Ohio. The pre-World War I immigrants paid a "price" on migrating from Slovenia to the USA—they lost their old culture, except for clinging to some customs, without adopting a new one, and accepting second-class citizenship in addition. The second generation was prevailed upon by the first generation to stick to the

Slovene language, to marry other Slovenes, to stay in the local ethnic neighborhood, etc. Those who did so seem to have paid their price in that they denied themselves the mobility that they might have experienced had they gotten out into the American stream. However, there appears to be no such restraint on the third and subsequent generations.

While accentological classes manifest themselves in a variety of ways throughout the history of Slovene, this paper confines itself to a discussion of two accentological classes established centuries ago in all Slavic languages, namely, the oxytonic class (characteristic of many underived nominal and verbal forms and exhibiting an absolutely final stress) and the final-columnar class (characteristic of derived nominal and verbal forms and usually exhibiting the stress on the first syllable of any given desinence). The paper attempts to demonstrate how the critical difference between these two accentological classes gave rise to the so-called circumflex account. It seems that oxytonic forms and final-columnar forms fell together accentologically in the case of monosyllabic desinences, and that this confrontation was resolved by the migration of the stress in the oxytonic (essentially accentless) forms to the initial syllable (the other extreme) of the word to produce the circumflex accent in Common Slavic. The data in Slovene are quite useful in advancing this hypothesis.

Joseph L. Conrad. "Folklore of an Area Along the Kolpa (Kupa)."
(The University of Kansas)

This paper discusses three major aspects of the folklore of Bela Krajina and certain corresponding phenomena in the Gorski kotar area immediately across the Kolpa/Kupa River: (1) elements of pre-Christian demonology and protection against such semi-supernatural demons as village witches; (2) superstitions concerning life and fertility of the family and fields; and (3) customs deriving from

agriculture, i.e., domestic rituals and practices, and village processions during major holidays.

Belief in witches (*coprnice*), especially those who are "known" to be active in the village (stealing milk from someone's cow, inflicting babies and other innocents with colic, disease, and nightmares, etc.) has not entirely disappeared. Domestic rituals such as young girls' attempts to find out the names of their intended husbands through divination (*vedeževanje*) may no longer be practiced, or if so, only as parlor games. Other customs which involve decoration of the eaves with evergreen or special herbs as a safeguard against hail, lightning, disease, and general calamity may still be observed.

Among the most important calendar customs are those associated with the Twelve Days of Christmas (December 24-January 6), the beginning of Lent (*Pust*), Easter, and certain saints' days, especially those of St. George (April 23) and St. John (June 24). On the eves of these days bonfires were lighted, there were processions of young villagers (especially pre-adolescent girls), which included symbolic cleansing of the participants by rites involving the sacred fire, and ritual blessing of the fields for the coming agricultural season. Common to most of these periods was a type of "caroling" (*koledovanje*) by children who went from house to house singing ritual blessings to each family in the village and expecting treats in return. On those rare occasions when no treat was given, it was not uncommon for the singers to wish the household bad luck. Finally, there were several rituals concerning the special foods to be eaten on given days, e.g., pork for Christmas, ham for Easter, and the special breads and cakes (e.g., *pogača*, and *potica*).