

THE BEGINNINGS OF MODERN SLOVENE LITERARY SCHOLARSHIP*

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The period of the Slovene Moderna, also known as Neo-Romanticism (1899-1918), brought with it, in addition to revolutionary changes in the understanding of the essence of art and the nature of the creative act, new views in the area of literary scholarship, particularly of literary historiography. We will not err if we establish at the outset that this period marked as well the birth of modern Slovene literary scholarship.

The principal merit for this belongs to a few literary representatives who, each in his own way, saw to it that Slovene literary-historical scholarship was liberated from a mixture of dilettantism, philological speculations and dry "factography", while being included in the vital currents of European literary scholarship. We think here of Matija Murko (1861-1952), France Kidrič (1880-1950), Ivan Grafenaur (1880-1964), Avgust Žigon (1877-1941), and, of course the most significant among them, Ivan Prijatelj (1875-1937), to whom a special section of this paper is devoted. These authors were intellectuals educated in the European school; they transferred contemporary methodological studies in German, French and Russian literary scholarship to Slovene soil and applied them to domestic literary considerations. When the significance of the Slovene Moderna for Slovene national culture is pondered, this fact is frequently and unjustly missed. If in fact the artistry of Ivan Cankar, Dragotin Kette, Josip Murn and Oton Župančič was, in creative potential, the most brilliant in Slovene literary history, nevertheless the fact is also important that at the same time the modern Slovene literary-scholarly concept was born.

This of course does not mean that Prijatelj, Kidrič, Grafenauer and the others were not preceded by a relatively rich tradition of Slovene literary historiography or the theoretic or esthetic considerations. On the contrary, that tradition is quite significant and without it the work of the scholars mentioned unthinkable. At the same time, however, it is only in comparison with their predecessors in the same field that the significance of the later figures and the innovations they introduced would shine in all

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their brilliance. Let us look, therefore, in brief outline at the tradition of Slovene literary-historical scholarship.

I

Although Primož Trubar's *Register* (1561), in which he described his works till then, stands among those texts that "demonstrate a literary-historical conception and inclination,"¹ nevertheless the real initiator of Slovene literary scholarship or literary historiography, must be considered to be Marko Pohlin (1735-1801). In the spirit of classicist desires to reevaluate ideological concepts (which desires resulted also in new views of literature), Pohlin wrote the first poetological tract for Slovenes. In his *Kraynska gramatika* (1768) he appended chapters in which the theory of poetry was discussed, and that in a typical classicist-rationalist manner, supporting, for example, the quantitative principle of versification even though this was completely inappropriate to the nature of the Slovene language.² For the development of Slovene literary-historical scholarship, however, particularly significant is Pohlin's *Bibliotheca Carnioliae* (completed 1799, published 1803 and 1862), in which the author outlined, in the form of biographies and bibliographic references, Slovene literary activity and proved its relatively rich tradition. Although there are in the work a rather large number of mistakes and uncritical estimations (especially of Pohlin's contemporaries), *Bibliotheca Carnioliae* is "the first Slovene text which in regard to the subject and intent of the treatment deals with literary scholarship, that is, it is constrained by no other impulses."³ Pohlin's text is even today a significant bibliographic source for the investigation of the literature of Slovene Classicism.

At the end of the eighteenth and beginning of the nineteenth century we note a number of men of letters who worked to gather material from domestic literary history (for example, Pohlin, Herbic, Zois, Primic, Hoff, Breckerfeld, Kopitar and others). We encounter moreover the first attempts at a more substantive depiction of the history of Slovene literature. Among these Matija Čop's history of Slovene literature, written at Kopitar's instigation, for the second edition of P. J. Šafařík's *Geschichte der slawischen Sprache und Literatur*, is particularly outstanding.⁴ Although weighed down with all the biobibliographical and philological balast characteristic of literary-historical works of that time, nevertheless the spirit of more contemporary views of literature shines through in Čop's work, together with the new romantic understanding of spiritual phenomena and the thirst for the affirmation of a national identity. In general, in the middle of the nineteenth century the interest in literary-historical research was growing, though it exhausted itself in subschol-

arly works such as the gathering of materials and documents from cultural and literary history, descriptions and outlines of cultural-political conditions and the like.

In the qualitative sense, therefore, progress was relatively modest; more modern methodologies were penetrating slowly, and even the most renowned European critic of that time, Sainte-Beuve, had little impact on Slovene cultural reality.

A short but brilliant interlude, in the qualitative sense very significant for the future development of Slovene literary scholarship, is represented by the work of Fran Levstik and Josip Stritar. Though one could not say that they fashioned a firm and coherent esthetic system, and though directed to the day-to-day problems of the cultural moment (the so-called "current criticism"), both played a key role in the formation of Slovene critical awareness and the development of the Slovene language for the expression of the most complex esthetic problems. Moreover, Stritar's volume *Prešernove poezije* (1866),⁵ in which he pointed out, under the influence of romantic esthetics and Schopenhauer's pessimism, the true value of Prešeren's work, represents the first modern critical text on Slovene soil, complete with the necessary essayistic refinement and polished language.

Only the second half of the nineteenth century sees truly significant changes in the structure of Slovene literary-historical scholarship. The changes occur in connection with the positivism that reigns at that time in Europe, a doctrine that was reflected in all segments of social scholarship as well as in literary scholarship.

Though today we look, largely as a result of certain vulgarizing digressions in various branches of this method, almost completely negatively on positivism, the fact is that it was European positivism of the second half of the nineteenth century that gave rise to literary scholarship in the modern sense of the word; it also provided that the study of literature became a scholarly activity. It managed to do this above all by a relatively precise definition of literary scholarship, understanding it as an empirical domain accessible to scholarly, objective investigation. The positivist methodological orientation, which we might most briefly define with the formula "by induction to synthesis", directed its attention (in keeping with its well developed determinism), to the investigation of individual phenomena and their relationships as well as to the investigation of the determinants of literary phenomena in various extraliterary areas.⁶ Thus, though it exhausted itself in what today we call "the background of the literary work" (cultural and socio-political circumstances, acquaintance with the life and personality of a writer, establishment of a genetic tie between the writer and his work, and so on), the positivist method in its best examples (Taine, Scherer, Lanson) provided a powerful impulse to the further development of literary scholarship,

giving it as an inheritance not only an abundance of dependable material, without which no scientific work would be possible, but also that painstaking severity of its method, that "dispassionate curiosity, severe respect, laborious patience, submission to fact, the difficulty of believing oneself or others, the constant necessity of criticalness, checking and confirmation," which, in Lanson's words, comprises the fundamental presupposition of the "objective" study of literature.⁷

Positivism began its invasion of Slovene territory in the seventies of the nineteenth century—at a period when we encounter names such as Darwin, Comte, Mill, Spencer and others—but took residence only at the turn of the century.⁸

In the area of Slovene literary-historical scholarship the first to develop a positivist methodology was Fran Levec (1846-1916), a professor in Ljubljana and the editor of the *Ljubljanski Zvon*. He wrote biographies of Slovene writers in conformity with the positivist thesis that the real existence of a writer determines him. Thus Levec, as a typical positivist biographer, linked Slovene writers (Vodnik, Prešeren, Jenko, Levstik and others) to the external factors which "determined" their existence: he adduced the broadly cultural and social circumstances in which a writer created, he wrote about a writer's background and sought out all possible materials which he could use to illustrate a writer's biography (correspondence, documents, literary remains, etc.).

Typical products of the positivist methodology in the bad sense of the word are two histories of Slovene literature from the end of the nineteenth century: Kleinmayr's *Zgodovina slovenskega slovstva* (1881) and the extensive, four-volume *Zgodovina slovenskega slovstva* of K. Glaser (1894-1898). About the first Levstik wrote in a most important critical review that in it:

vse zmeteno in skodračano, [and that] profesor Kleinmayr ni še nikdar nobene književne zgodovine prečital pažljivo, niti sam nikoli ne premišljaj, kako se je te vrste dela poprijeti in kako mu je razvrstiti gradivo.⁹

Glaser's literary history is much more fundamental and systematic, but completely overwhelmed by facts, bio-bibliographical data and extraliterary circumstances, which compromise his literary considerations.

In general we must agree with Kmecl's conclusion¹⁰ that Glaser's *Zgodovina slovenskega slovstva* marks the end of one period of Slovene literary-historical scholarship, a period we would, I think, call philological and vulgarly positivist, but which, as a result of the gathering of material and the accumulation of data, nevertheless prepared the ground for the formation of a modern, national scholarly investigation of literature.

II

It was only at the turn of the century that the development of Slovene literary scholarship reached a key transitional point. Modernizing changes were linked directly with a general change in spiritual, ideological and esthetic concepts, with the crisis and decline of positivism and the inauguration of new methodological concepts (Veselovskij, Dilthey, Bergson, Vossler, Croce and others).

The first stage in the formation of Slovene literary-historical scholarship in the modern sense was Europeanization, its inclusion in European esthetic and literary-scholarly currents of the day. It was necessary, namely, above all to "get into step": to free Slovene literary scholarship from outmoded methodology as well as from excessive ethnocentricity and parochialness.

In this sense a most important mediator of various reigning European literary-scholarly tendencies for the Slovene milieu was at that time Matija Murko (1861-1952). He had studied with Heinzl, Erich Schmidt (Scherer's pupil), Miklošič, Jagić and Veselovskij, thereafter taught in Vienna, Graz, Leipzig and Prague. In this way he was at the very sources of information and events.

Murko's works, for example his well known *Deutsche Einflüsse auf die Anfänge der böhmischen Romantik* (1896) or his synthetic treatment *Geschichte der älteren südslawischen Literaturen* (1908), though significant from the point of view of comparative Slavic literary history, do not reveal any major innovations in the methodological or literary-theoretical sense. Under the influence of Pypin and Veselovskij Murko developed his positivist philological method above all in the sociological direction, being interested in the socio-historical determinants of a literary work, but completely neglecting esthetic analyses.¹¹ For Slovene literary history, Murko's essayistic text, *Misli k Prešernovemu življenjepisu* (1901) is particularly important in that it represents a critical date in the more modern reception of Prešeren's work.¹²

Let us also note here, however, Murko's contributions above all as a mediator of new methodologies, as a pedagogue (his students were, among others, J. Glonar, F. Ramovš, A. Cronia, A. Žigon), and as a director of young Slovene literary investigators, for whom he was a "signpost toward higher scholarly points of view" (Slodnjak). Precisely in this connection did Murko at the turn of the century make a significant contribution to the formation of modern Slovene literary-scholarly thought.

III

If Murko is significant in the first place as an intermediary and animator, a fateful step from the philological, pre-scholarly phase of Slovene literary-historical studies toward a systematic and methodical study of literature was taken by Ivan Prijatelj (1875-1937), the first professor of Slovene literature at Ljubljana University. Appearing as he did at a key moment in modern Slovene literary history, Ivan Prijatelj did for Slovene literary scholarship approximately what the Modernist foursome (Kette, Murn, Cankar and Župančič) had accomplished in the area of literary practice: he cleansed literary research of dilettantism and the haphazard accumulation of material, and organized it according to literary concepts grounded in the modern period. In the words of Štefan Barbarič,

Dosegel je tisto, kar je konec koncev služilo tudi uveljavanju slovenske literarne misli, namreč, dvignil jo je na razpravno raven, ki je bila po zastavitvi problemov in po tehtnosti njihovega reševanja enakovredna zglednim primerom v svetovnih književnostih.¹³

In the formation of Prijatelj's literary ideas and intellectual curiosity and breadth a key role was played by Vatroslav Jagić, with whom he had studied Slavic philology in Vienna. In Jagić's seminar Prijatelj had become thoroughly acquainted with his methods of philology, and aware of both their possibilities and limitations; he also learned (under Jagić's influence too) of the newest literary-theoretical and methodological concepts. Particularly important was his year of study in Russia (1903-1904), where he became thoroughly acquainted with the sociological methods of A. N. Pypin and the historical poetics of Veselovskij. If we add to that his familiarization with contemporary currents in West European literary-scholarly thought (Taine, Dilthey, Scherer, Hennequin and others), we may assert that Prijatelj was in the methodological regard very quickly enabled to do serious and systematic work. In any event he attained in a very brief time that first, necessary precondition for any sort of serious scholarly work (which was for the most part so lacking in his predecessors): he was extraordinarily well informed about all the events in his field.

Prijatelj's literary-scholarly development did not proceed linearly; he was distracted, burdened by wanderings and seeking, sometimes even by doubts and contradictions, but he was always marked with a lively critical sense, curiosity and openness to new experiences.

A good part of his scholarly work, both in his first years and later, was marked by his adherence to the positivist school. He wrote typical sociological-political and factographic-analytical texts in which a literary

phenomenon or problem could easily be lost in a sea of extraliterary facts. Prijatelj was seeking a so-called historic reconstruction, for the social, cultural and political circumstances in which a work arose or a writer wrote interested him.

A typical project of Prijatelj's lingering indebtedness to positivism is his extensive monograph on Kersnik, *Janko Kersnik, njega delo in doba* (Part I 1910, Parts II-III 1914). The monograph is actually composed of a combination of political and cultural events which are often only in indirect relationship to the subject. It frequently happened that Kersnik himself was often lost in this "broad historical panopticum" (Slodnjak). This monograph is however in Prijatelj's corpus an isolated example of the consistent application of the positivist method. Generally, in other works he combined it for the most part with other methodological approaches or supplemented it with purely impressionistic remarks. Most important, Prijatelj from the beginning made adaptations in his critical stance toward the positivist method, aware that by positivism alone he would not be able to reach the essential aspects of literary creativity.

In an essayistic text on A. N. Pypin (1906), Prijatelj expressed the following judgment of positivism: "At a time when facts—bitter, hard, ugly—talk and even shout, all lovely theories should keep silence." Thus wrote Prijatelj, but this sentence should serve only as an illustration of the wishes of the Russian positivists and not as a truth in which he believed. He reproached Pypin above all for seeing some of the giants of Russian spiritual life only from a social perspective, and thus for failing to regard the artist's individual creative impulses:

Za tisto, kar je pesnika neslo nad družbo in pred njo, kar ga je hranil poet v sebi čisto drugačnega kakor drugi, dasi v posodi, podedovani od družbe in svojega časa, še nima smisla sin evolucijskega svetovnega nazora.¹⁴

Pypin's method was also supported by German philology, a discipline which sought to embrace in its studies all that the human spirit in its development is organized and characterized by, as well as all the works and actions in which man leaves the traces of his existence. As Prijatelj wrote:

Ali vse to, ker se s tem potom odkriva in pridobiva, je sedanji literarni zgodovini samo sredstvo, ne namen, ji služi, samo v to, da tem razločneje sine iz nje edini nadprirodni stvarnik na zemlji—človeški duh. A to metodo, ki se sedaj prehaja do nje sistematično, je s svojim genijem že pred pol stoletjem instinktivno našel francoski literarni zgodovinar Taine.¹⁵

And it was precisely Hippolyte Taine who had the greatest influence on Prijatelj's literary-scholarly profile. Not only did he refer very fre-

quently in his own works to Taine, but he also took over his deterministic epistemology, amplified later with some newer methodological currents as well as with a greater respect for an artist's individual capabilities. It is worthwhile pointing out, however, that Prijatelj did not accept Taine's theses without reservation; on the contrary, from the beginning he was conscious of their shortcomings. The most complete revelation of his stance toward Taine's as he calls it "sociological literary criticism" can be found in the Slovene scholar's famous treatment *Uvod v zgodovino kritike*, which appeared as the result of his university lectures on the history of criticism, given during the academic year 1927-28. Here Prijatelj turned his attention most completely to Taine's conceptions, especially his "theory of the milieu"; here he also formulated some serious critical reservations. He reproached the French critic for ascribing too much significance to external factors in the study of artistic texts and for losing from sight "that artistic knowledge is esthetic knowledge which must be evaluated above all by esthetic measurements."¹⁶ Taine had, in Prijatelj's opinion, completely lost sight of the artistic text as an esthetic value, regarding it rather as a direct "expression of society" and a passive product of the milieu. Thus he studied it not from the point of view of its beauty but rather from its importance as a document in the study of the civilization of some nation. Says Prijatelj:

Ustanovitelj sociološke kritike še ni dovolj zavedal, da je treba literarna in umetnostna dela presoјati z drugačnimi merili takrat, kadar nam služijo zgolj kot kulturnozgodovinski dokument in popolnoma drugače takrat, kadar jih vrednotimo kot estetične tvorbe človeškega duha.¹⁷

Furthermore Prijatelj reproached Taine for involving himself exclusively in peripheral problems or ancillary and often, for the artistic work, unessential relationships. In this he perceived even some tragic elements:

Mož, ki se je tolikanj trudil, da bi izoblikoval dušo različnih narodov, je puščal ponavadi najvišjo duševno silo individualnega genija izpred oči. Mož, ki se je toliko bavil z umetninami, je pozabljal, da moreš biti umetniti pravičen samo takrat, kadar jo razločiš iz njene lastne strukture.¹⁸

Prijatelj concluded his critique of Taine with the affirmation that the sociological method was a product of a time in which the spirit of historical collectivism reigned.

IV

Prijatelj's critical observations are serious and truly hit upon the weakest points of Taine's system, while those parts in which he explicitly supports the immanent study of the literary work seem quite modern. It is not possible to maintain, however, that Prijatelj always applied these precise insights to his own critical work. An interesting paradox was at work. Prijatelj saw a problem, illuminated it with precision, but fell himself into the same kinds of digressions as the French critic. Thus his own works often suffer from the same shortcomings for which he reproached Taine: the sociohistorical coordinates can occupy much more space than the esthetic considerations themselves.

Of the categories with which Taine's critical system operated Prijatelj accepted both the idea of the discovery of a general historical determinism, as well as Taine's fundamental determinants comprising the spiritual state: race, environment and time. Thus in this study *Literarna zgodovina* (1919) Prijatelj defined literary history as

ono vedo, ki spravlja v doživljeno in osmišljeno zaporednost in vzporednost leposlovce in njih umetnine, označujoč njih postanek in razvitek glede na poreklo in pogoje časa ter kraja . . .¹⁹

The Slovene scholar put particular stress on the category of time, the historical moment, and lingered longest on that determinant. For example in his study *Duševni profili slovenskih preporoditeljev* (1920), after a (too) long analysis of the social, political, cultural and religious circumstances of Prešeren's time, he concluded: "These were the conditions of time and place that could not remain without impact on the spiritual organizations of our poet."²⁰

It is also, however, important to stress that in many things Prijatelj was broader than Taine and that in many of his works he managed to avoid methodological digressions and exaggerations. He devoted much more attention than the French critic to esthetic analysis. Esthetic evaluation, in fact, he considered the highest goal of literary history. Furthermore the Slovene scholar in his work placed a particular accent on personal experience and impressions.

It is clear, however, that Prijatelj was unable to free himself entirely of positivism in part because Slovene literary scholarship before him had not provided the preparatory works for serious literary investigations: there were few systematic analyses, monographs or critical editions, and few confirmed facts for further synthetic operations. Positivism remained thus the constant methodological component of Prijatelj's work, but he did manage to "tame" it and keep it within specific limits. Positivism for him meant keeping to real issues and a faith in only firmly grounded judgments and analyses; he rejected, however, positivist

schematism and the reduction of relationships between an author and his work or an author and his socio-historical context to mechanical or simplistic ties. In the same way, in contrast to the positivists, he devoted a great deal of attention to value analysis.

Prijatelj was constantly developing; he was in step with all the contemporary movements in European scholarship on literature. Thus he enriched and modernized his own methodology as a result of the new things he learned.

It is very difficult to assign a general name to Prijatelj's method, however. In the course of all his creative work he showed an interesting methodological hesitation which makes any one-sided conclusions invalid in advance. In his ideational system, the goal determines the method, and since the goal of literary-historical scholarship is the demonstration of the spiritual manifestations of a particular nation, Prijatelj took into account all the methodological positions that could be of use to him in his investigation. There is no doubt that such an approach was the fruit of a desire to build a particular methodological synthesis of his own on the basis of the positive elements of many approaches. Only thus would such an "integral method" allow for the investigation of all elements and aspects of literary communication.

The methodological eclecticism which characterizes Prijatelj's work created, however, controversies which were difficult to resolve. A fundamental controversy was caused by the tension between his rational-analytical and intuitive-impressionistic methods of working. Thus all of Prijatelj's work bears the signs in it of a certain duality, which almost all the investigators of his scholarly labor have pointed out (Slodnjak, Barac, Ocvirk, Štampar, Barbarič, Pogačnik and so on). In Dolinar's opinion,

Prijatelj hoče izdelati empirično, objektivno, zanesljivo literarno-zgodovinsko metodo, ki bi ustrezala znanstvenim kriterijm, vendar pa z njo ne more ujeti tistega, kar po njegovem prepričanju velja za središče njenega predmeta, namreč literarne umetnosti oziroma njenega estetskega bivstva; to mu je sicer dostopno po intuitivno doživljajski poti, ki pa ni znanstveno objektivna, temveč esejistično subjektivna.²¹

Precisely in this methodological opposition between the rational and the essayistic, the logical and the intuitive, lies hidden a specific feature of Prijatelj's literary-scholarly work. Some have in this antithetic tension sought also the reasons why Prijatelj in the final analysis did not manage to create a great synthesis from all his collected material.²²

How do we explain this second, let us call it "essayistic half" of Prijatelj's work? The answer is not, it would seem, particularly difficult. First of all, Prijatelj himself had artistic ambitions. In his youth, as a

friend and fellow traveler of the Slovene Modernists, he wrote prose of a rather solid literary sort. His artistic inclinations certainly influenced his literary-historical work significantly.²³ Furthermore the currents of European artistic practice of the day had an unusually powerful impact on him; especially powerful was the impact of impressionism and symbolism. In Slodnjak's thinking it was precisely the stimuli of symbolist art that enflamed Prijatelj's artistic giftedness and conditioned the changes in his literary-historical and philological-positivistic views.²⁴

Thus almost the entirety of Prijatelj's investigative work stands under the sign of this fundamental dichotomy: he wished to establish literary history as a scientific discipline, and on the other hand it seemed to him that rational, logical operations did not lead to the essence of the problem. This dichotomy is evident in his perhaps key theoretical study, *Literarna zgodovina*. There he slowly built the foundations for a firmly conceived history of literature and then, suddenly, in almost a fit of romantic ecstasy, he summoned intuition and ascribed to it the crucial role in the activities of a literary historian:

Vobče se mora reči, da bo znal in vedel uporabiti značilne poteze dela za karakteristiko prirojene osebnosti avtorja in jih ločiti od priučenih samo tisti zgodovinar, ki lahko podozirljiva pesnika in njegovo delo z neko kongenialno intuicijo, z nekako slutnjo, nekakim čustvenim doumevanjem, ki ne hodi po logičnih stopnicah do cilja, ampak preskakuje kakor električna iskra s kondenzatorja na privlačujoči predmet. Intuicija je vsakega isledovatelja duševnosti zadnji zakrament z onimi nevidnimi milostmi, ki se ne dajo nadomestiti, a seveda tudi ne primerjati z nobeno znanstveno eksaktno metodo.²⁵

Finally, in that same study, Prijatelj spoke also of some ideal rapprochement of the artist and the researcher; in order to succeed the researcher must feel and experience the same things the artist felt and experienced as he created. Literary history, in this fashion, becomes in the final analysis a kind of 'co-poetry:'

Ne samo tisti bo avtorja najbolje razumel, ki mu je enoroden, v nekatere umotvore moreš prodreti celo samo v istem razpoloženju in pravijo celo v istem fizičnem položaju, v kakršnem je bil ustvarjajoči umetnik. Tu postaja literarna zgodovina *sopoezija*, znanstvenik in pesnik se strneta v tisti točki, h kateri sta stremela, čeprav hodeč po docela različnih potih.²⁶

There is no doubt that the influence of Bergson and especially Nietzsche contributed to this split in Prijatelj's work. For in contrast to works in which a mosaic is composed of firmly grounded literary-historical scholarship resting on objectively verifiable facts, there are

texts in which the neoromantic cult of the artist-genius is developed or where "in his subjective ecstasy over the created beauty, at times he sees in the artistic work, or perhaps better feels, a certain magic fascination, almost a mysticism of creation."²⁷ For example in the essay *Perspektive* (1906) he wrote that art is in its essence of a religious character, for it "seeks the revelations of Mystery, exposes and establishes them." In his famous essay *Pesniki in občani* (1917) he said of the poet that he is a sovereign, "obedient only to his inner demon, a producer, the spokesman for beauty and for the higher truth born of beauty."

Thus one equally significant part of Prijatelj's creativity developed a truly Baudelairean cult of art and the artist-genius; it made a counterweight to his discursive, logically deduced theses about the essence of literary history and the tasks of the literary historian.

V

Given that Prijatelj's literary-historical scholarship "lives from two impulses, conceived poles apart and complementarily developed" (Barbarič), the same polarity is detectable in the form as well, the generic assignments of his texts. On the one hand are his strict literary-historical studies equipped with all their necessary critical and scholarly apparatus, on the other the subjective, unrestricted essays. Even a superficial glance at Prijatelj's opus shows, however, that it was the essayistic form of expression that triumphed completely. In the majority of Prijatelj's works a kind of Montaigne-like position can be detected and a desire that literary history be regarded from a subjective perspective. Of course the foundations of a "scholarly" literary scholarship are then destroyed, but that discord is characteristic of not only Prijatelj's literary-scholarly system.

In a very influential treatment, "Iz slovenske nauke o književnosti," Antun Barac points out that an inclination to the essay does not immediately mean a flight from scholarliness. "The essayistic manner of writing does not of itself mean a lack of learnedness," thinks Barac, "but on the contrary, it is a sign that the writer has completely assimilated the material about which he is writing, and is displaying it alive, as his own experience."²⁸

If we accept the customary division of the essay into the informal, which is characterized by optionality, discursiveness of thought and imaginative experience, and the formal, in which the accent is on the authoritativeness of the presentation, totality in one's knowledge of the material and great learning,²⁹ we can say that the majority of Prijatelj's essays are of the formal, Baconian type. They are characterized by a logical flow and certainty of presentation, intellectual imaginativeness

and limitation of theme, and not by the leaps of free association. Such, for example, are the essays on Aškerc, Stritar and the majority of the essays on Russian literature (Turgenev, Gogol, Tiutchev, Chekhov etc.). In some works, however, a subjective note breaks through in almost poetic terms. In an early essay on Murn (1903) Prijatelj makes known from the very beginning his particular view. The review begins with the sentence: "He was my friend," and paragraphs follow in which personal meetings, pictures from life and interpretations of the poet's works all mix. In the language of the essays the discursive parts intertwine with completely lyrical, almost melancholy passages:

Takoj za zadnjo mesto hišo se pričenjajo polja in gredo na obeh straneh pota prav dol do onega mesta, ki je kakor morebiti ne kmalu kak drugi kot na Slovenskem sposoben, da vzubuja v mladem človeku fantazijo: Fužine. Tu stoji grad z mostom pred vrati in starinskimi grbi odspred—ves v zelenju in goščavi, podoben začaranemu gradu, ki je v njem spala Trnuljčica. Pred gradom je velik gosposki park, hladen, vlažen in gost. A pod gradom šumi, bobni in se peni voda, zaganjajoč se ob otočič in gledajoč ga kakor besen pozoj. Toda drevje na otoku je prepreglo zemljo in kamen s fantastično zavozlanimi koreninami, s sto in sto rokami braneč in ščiteč svoja tla pred elementom. Neprestano se bojuje z njim. In noč in dan se vrši ta boj in brez prestanka klokota voda v podmolih. Ta voda, ki se tu v neznanih množinah strmoglavlja preko skal, tvoreč prekrasne slapove, je tekla od nekdanj samo za lepoto.³⁰

It is interesting that even when he is talking about the elements of Murn's lyrics, those elements that are more open to precise examination, Prijatelj does not fail to dress his analytical conclusions in strikingly personal phrases. He writes for example about Murn's style and rhythm:

V izrazu otroško naiven, je v verzu strog in trd. Gladkotekoče ritme sovraži. Kakor na naši grudi je na polju njegove poezije: bujnega cvetličja ni, vse je krivenčasto, pogosto trdo ko skrilovje gorenjskih planin ali pečevje Krasa, posejano s skromno floro. Samo sem pa tja kaka krepka in ljuba pesniška slika, čvrsta, še ne rabljena, po njem samem v vasi odkrita besedna zveza, tako sveža v svojem miljeju kakor kmečko dekle, ki se ti pokaže sredi pokrajine pri nas na deželi.³¹

It was just this peculiar temperament of Prijatelj's, his sentence which did not wish to submit itself to rational dictates, which became the trademarks of his style. At the same time it was the characteristic which all the students of his work valued and exalted. Barac in his comparison of Prijatelj and Kidrič (in his study *Iz slovenske nauke o književnosti*) opted for the former precisely because of his essayistic freedom and his

ability to take the material he studied and make it literary, live. And Anton Ocvirk even called Prijatelj's method of writing literary-historical story-telling:

Pri Prijatelju lahko govorimo o literarnozgodovinskem "pripovedništvu", tako je njegova beseda vroča in neposredna, tako je prepojena z njegovo osebno prizadetostjo, čeprav je vseskozi stvarna in se ne prepušča hipnim domislicam ali kakršni si bodi pristanosti.³²

VI

The oppositions rational-affective, discursive-essayistic, logical-intuitive formed contradictions which "took a bite" out of the coherence of the system. Prijatelj of course saw this and tried to overcome the antinomies in a completely personal way: through the distinction of *slovstvo*, *književnost* and *literatura* as three qualitative levels in the development of the national cultural consciousness.

In the essay *Pesniki in občani* (1917) the title itself points to a differentiation that he would later extend to the general plan. The poet is an artist who creates according to an internal drive, and that drive is mysterious and secret like all other natural forces. With Nietzsche in view Prijatelj divided this artistic force into two essential elements: The Apollonian and the Dionysian. The first creates beauty, peace, harmony, concord, and the second artistic truth, motion, passion, intoxication. Both currents are joined in the artist-genius into one harmonious whole. In distinction to the poet, who belongs to the sphere of the esthetic, the "citizen" belongs to the field of sociology and it is possible to label him the intermediary between the artist and society. Literature is for the "citizen" only a means of raising the spiritual level of humanity, which means that the "citizen" is a pragmatist and organizer. On the basis of this opposition Prijatelj, like Croce, made a fundamental distinction between poetry and literature. Poetry is an art that arises from the individual experience and belongs to the area of esthetics; literature is a cultural activity and belongs to the area of literary and cultural history. The difference is therefore functional: poetry is a relatively autonomous activity and submits only to the laws of autonomous beauty; literature is on the other hand dependent upon practical, moral, didactic and other goals.³³

The opposition between poetry and literature is so strong that, as D. Dolinar concludes correctly, in it "it is truly possible to see the fundamental reason why literary history or scholarship in general cannot embrace or encompass the esthetic, that is basic, extent of verbal art."³⁴

Prijatelj deepened the opposition poetry-literature even further in his study *Literarna zgodovina* (1919). In it he like Belinskij, introduced

the triad *slovstvo-književnost-literatura* as three levels in the development of national cultural awareness. The concept *slovstvo* encompasses everything a particular nation has created and expressed in its language; *književnost* is made up of all texts fixed in books and manuscripts (thus, all that is written down); under *literatura* he understood art, that is,

poslednji izraz duševnosti kakega naroda na najvišjem stupnju njegovega razvitka, na kateri prihaja narod do popolne svoje samozavesti v osebah svojih izabrancev—leposlovnih umetnikov.³⁵

Precisely in this triple distinction did Prijatelj find the modes for overcoming the tension in his system. *Literatura* is the subject of literary history (to distinguish it from the history of *slovstvo* or *književnost*); literary history in fact utilizes in its logical operations ideas from philology, psychology, cultural history, sociology and other ancillary sciences, but given that *literatura* represents the highest, esthetic level, the road to the essential in the literary work, toward the concealed beauty, is opened nevertheless by “congenial intuition”:

Vsa čast intelektualnemu spoznanju filologije in eksperimentom eksaktnih ved, tudi mi stopamo ob njih varni roki, a tu, ko tipljemo in trkamo po vratih zadnje ‘zaklenjene kamrice’ pesnikove, govori konec koncev samo intuicija.³⁶

Thus the circle is closed, though some problems remain and further questions are possible: for example, how exactly to determine the boundaries between *književnost* and *literatura*, when does the competence of logical operations cease and we enter the “metaphysical” sphere, how to “harmonize” varying evaluations of the same work if they were arrived at by intuition, etc.

VII

Even with the contradictions we have mentioned in Prijatelj’s work, we can with full justification claim that both in the breadth of issues he treated and the depth of his thinking this first literary-scholarly system to arise in a Slovene context was erected on rather modern foundations. What is also particularly significant, only with Prijatelj’s work did Slovene literary-historical thought become constituted as a national science. Under the influence of *Geistesgeschichte*, Prijatelj comprehended *slovstvo*, *književnost* and *literatura* as three levels in the development of national cultural awareness. *Literatura* is however the last, highest expression of the spiritual state of a nation, a spiritual state that longs to express itself in ideal form with the help of language. That therefore is the task of literary history, according to Prijatelj, “to show art as an

organic function of the life of a nation, with which the nation thrives to get somewhere, seeks something." And that something is of course Beauty. Ascribing Beauty too to the category of nation as a fundamental esthetic category, Prijatelj managed to unite the esthetic and literary-historical spheres. In his thinking, literary historians will achieve their goal

ako kaže živ, osmišljen razvitek posameznih avtorjev v njih samih in v medsebojni zvezi z drugimi proti smeri lepote in to v dramatični sliki, ki je ogledalo naroda in obenem zanj reflektor kažoč mu pot navzgor in naprej.³⁷

In relation to his predecessors Prijatelj displayed a far greater degree of awareness, intellectual curiosity and sense for the resolution of literary problems. The themes which they had only begun and the material they had gathered he deepened, creating the preconditions for serious literary-scholarly work. His methodology, the means by which he comprehended a particular series of problems, may seem from today's point of view outmoded. But Prijatelj's dilemmas, hesitations and hopes reveal in miniature the ways of European literary scholarship of his time. Though he sometimes bridged with difficulty the rational and affective sides of his being, he created crucial and today essential works treating the most significant problems and themes of Slovene literary history. It was precisely he who had assigned to the Modernist foursome the place which Slovene culture still gives them, he who made of Prešeren's poetic production a scholarly theme, which would become the touchstone for all future Slovene literary-historical scholarship, he who wrote a series of outstanding essays on many Slovene writers. And finally, with his work and energy he created an influential spiritual atmosphere from which the future giants of Slovene literary-scholarly thought would grow. We will not be mistaken if we affirm that even today the place of honor in Slovene literary-historical scholarship belongs to Ivan Prijatelj.

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NOTES

1. M. Kmecl, "Slovenska literarna zgodovina," in: *Lirika, epika, dramatika* (Murska Sobota: Pomurska založba, 1971), p. 97.

2. The influence of Pohlin's poetological writings on the poetic practice of his day is particularly visible in the verses published in *Pisanice* (1779-1781). Here Valentin Vodnik also published his first verse in hexameters, alcean and sapphic strophes

3. Kmecl, op. cit., p. 98.

4. M. Čop, "Slowenische Literatur," written 1831, published 1864.
5. Written as the introduction to the edition of Prešeren's poetry in *Klasje z domačega polja*, 1866.
6. See on positivism: D. Dolinar, *Pozitivizem v literarni vedi* (Ljubljana: Državna založba Slovenije, 1978), esp. pp. 38-57; and Z. Lešić, *Razvoj književnokritičke svijesti od kraja XVIII do kraja XIX stoljeća*, in: *Moderna tumačenja književnosti* (Sarajevo: Svjetlost, 1981), pp. 21-26.
7. Lešić, op. cit., p. 26.
8. See Dolinar, op. cit., pp. 79ff.
9. See Fran Levstik, *Zbrano delo*, Vol. 6 (A. Slodnjak, ed.), (Ljubljana: Državna založba Slovenije, 1935), p. 410.
10. Kmecl, op. cit., p. 101.
11. On Murko see A. Slodnjak, "Matija Murko", *Slavistična revija* 5-7 (1954), pp. 41-75.
12. M. Murko, "Misli k Prešernovemu življenjepisu," *Ljubljanski Zvon* 21 (1901), pp. 122-37. Murko's treatment of Prešeren had an influence on the redirection of more recent Prešernology in the works of Prijatelj, Kidrič and Žigon.
13. Š. Barbarič, "Temelji Prijateljevega literarnega nazora," in: *Prijateljev zbornik* (Ljubljana: Slovenska matica 1975), p. 57.
14. I. Prijatelj, "A.N. Pypin," in: *Izbrani eseji in razprave*, vol. 2 (A. Slodnjak, ed.), (Ljubljana: Državna Založba Slovenije, 1953), p. 105.
15. Ibid.
16. "Iz Uvoda v zgodovino kritike," in: *Izbrani eseji in razprave*, vol. 2, op. cit., pp. 40-1.
17. Ibid., p. 41.
18. Ibid.
19. "Literarna zgodovina," in: *Izbrani eseji in razprave*, vol. 1 (Ljubljana: Državna založba Slovenije 1952), pp. 6-7.
20. "Duševni profili slovenskih preporoditeljev," in: *Izbrani eseji in razprave*, vol. 1, op. cit., pp. 322-3.
21. Dolinar, op. cit., p. 90.
22. Cf. for example, Jože Pogačnik's opinion: "Avtorjeva razpetost med tradicionalno pozitivistično, njemu sodobno estopsihološko in porajajočo se duhovno-zgodovinsko raziskovalno šolo ni dovolila resnične velike sinteze v njegovem delu, za

misel o literaturi pa je odprla dilemo, ki je bila značilna za slovensko literarno vedo prav do današnji dni." J. Pogačnik, "Primerjalno načelo v Prijateljevi literarno-raziskovalni praksi," in: *Prijatelj zbornik*, op. cit., p. 81.

23. On Prijatelj's youthful proze, see Š. Barbarič, "Prijateljeva mladostna leposlovna proza," in: *Prijatelj zbornik*, op. cit., pp. 149-66.

24. A. Slodnjak, "Uvod," in: *Izbrani eseji in razprave Ivana Prijatelja*, vol. 2, op. cit., pp. vi-vii.

25. I. Prijatelj, "Literarna zgodovina," in: *Izbrani eseji in razprave*, vol. 1, op. cit., p. 24.

26. Ibid.

27. E. Štampar, "Ivan Prijatelj—Slovenski književni kritik i historik," *Republika* 9/4 (1953), p. 372.

28. A. Barac, "Iz slovenske nauke o književnosti," *Hrvatsko kolo* 6 (1953), p. 67.

29. On this see K. Nemeč, "Priroda eseja," *Republika* 37/7-8 (1981), p. 682.

30. I. Prijatelj, "Aleksandrov (Josip Murn)," in: *Izbrani eseji in razprave*, vol. 1, op. cit., p. 523.

31. Ibid., pp. 545-6.

32. A. Ocvirk, "Ivan Prijatelj, *Izbrani eseji in razprave*," *Slavisticna revija* 5-7 (1954), p. 363.

33. I. Prijatelj, "Pesniki in občani," in: *Izbrani eseji in razprave*, vol. 1, op. cit., esp. pp. 12-19.

34. Dolinar, op. cit., p. 92.

35. I. Prijatelj, "Literarna zgodovina," in: *Izbrani eseji in razprave*, vol. 1, op. cit., p. 6.

36. Ibid., p. 24.

37. Ibid., p. 36.

Translated by Henry R. Cooper, Jr.