

PROTESTANTISM AND THE EMERGENCE
OF SLOVENE LITERATURE

Boris Paternu

Among Slovenes literature in the current sense of the word, i.e. literary works constituting a secular, independent and art-oriented cultural discipline, started to emerge first towards the end of the eighteenth and at the beginning of the nineteenth centuries—in the period of Enlightenment and of Romanticism, historically coinciding with the period of the national rebirth. At this time, and first and foremost owing to Prešeren's mature poetry of the 1830s, Slovene literature had become included in the evolutionary currents of the literary pursuits in Central Europe and, with its specifics, has remained such to this date.

The jubilee we are observing this year leads us to a much earlier period of Slovene literary culture—to the quatercentenary of the first translation of the Bible into Slovene (Jurij Dalmatin, 1584) and to the first published grammar of Slovene (Adam Bohorič, 1584). After the significant work by Trubar preceding them, these are two works of fundamental importance produced in the short-termed but culturally most prolific Protestant movement—which in the sixteenth century prepared religious literature in vernacular Slovene together with the first attempt scientifically to establish the linguistic norms of the Slovene tongue. To put it differently: after Dalmatin's translation of the Bible and after Bohorič's account of Slovene grammar, the Slovene literary language could never be erased from the list of European literary languages—despite the fact that Slovene is the language of one of the numerically smallest European peoples and as such in its history often seemed doomed to linguistic assimilation or virtual extermination.

In our present consideration of sixteenth century Slovene literature we are, among other questions, faced with the following fundamental topic: how much did this specific beginning—in contradistinction to other potential beginnings—of Slovene literary culture determine and help to shape the much later emergence of modern Slovene literature? Between this phase and the following one there was nothing but a century and a half of Catholic literature, again determined by the needs of the Church but in output much more modest than in Protestantism. To put it more succinctly: what are the roots of the more recent Slovene literature in its prime origin, in its distant Protestant 'prehistory'? Or: what stamp has this early origin left on its rebirth and on its more recent

spiritual and linguistic physiognomy? The question of the continuity is here anything but simple, for here considerably big distances in history, ideas and genres between the two phases of literary production are involved. Under scrutiny also are phenomena which are not measurable in experiential terms but are, as it were, below the surface and less readily accessible to investigation. The present paper does not pretend to be more than limited introductory orientation to the problems stated.

The first issue is the question of the language and of articulate thinking in the given language. When saying that language is the basic constituent element of literature, its 'materia prima,' we have not said much. In order that genuine, developed literature may emerge, there must exist already a special attitude to the language, be it either a conscious awareness of it or still latent in the subconsciousness, but in any case clearly oriented towards the language or rather to its heightened expressivity. This is today generally accepted and at least since Roman Jakobson a well founded view.

If looking from this angle at the sixteenth century Slovene Protestant movement, it is the very amount of the work performed in the Slovene language that surprises us, an amount which from the perspective of a distant, almost primitive period of Slovene writing comes as a sudden efflorescence of the written and printed word. With no literary tradition, there appeared during the comparatively short period from 1550 to 1595, as it were over night, more than 50 books, among them the Bible which was rendered into Slovene by one single translator. It is only the more recent research that seeks to trace with greater attention the prehistory of this unprecedented development: it is found to be an element in that "curve of development" of linguistic views which extends from the very first germs of humanism in Austria and on the Slovene soil in the fifteenth century, in particular from the humanist E. S. Piccolomini onwards, whose influential pedagogical tract from the year 1450 (intended for educational purposes at the Habsburg court) ranks him as the beginner of the modern view about the equal value of all the living languages in this part of Europe.¹ This trend of ideas might, via the humanistic teaching of the Trieste bishop Bonomo, have essentially influenced his pupil Primož Trubar when deciding to write books in Slovene. But of decisive importance in this respect was nevertheless the Reformation. Matija Murko, one of the first researchers to devote himself to this period, had ample reasons in his study of the Reformation and its influences on the spiritual life of the Slavic nations (from Czechs and Poles to Belorussians and Ukrainians and South Slavs) to claim that the most far-reaching consequences as regards language and literature can be seen among the Lusatian Serbs and the Slovenes.² France Kidrič made this point even more clear: he found that during the short period of five decades of their literary activity, the Protestants "had redressed to a

significant degree the unfavorable situation of the past eight centuries and had created conditions for a healthy prospective development.” Likewise he noticed an interesting fact as regards comparison: the Slovene Protestants had outdone the Protestants of other nations which at that time happened to be in a similar social, political and cultural situation—they had surpassed them in “the Protestant idea about the role of the vernacular in the Church”.³ Ivan Prijatelj went yet another step further, writing: “With the Reformation, we—young nations—began to live The Reformation had loosed our tongue, it raised its sanction to a degree that it may resound at the most sacred of ceremonies.”⁴ Albert Kos, the first scholar to penetrate more deeply into the philosophical and scientific core of the Slovene Reformation, paid considerable attention also to the Reformationists’ view of language. Eventually he focused attention on those achievements in language which represented something more than merely the emergence of a national written language, which represented a new, significant stage in shaping greater potentials of expression. Kos’s evaluation of Dalmatin’s translation of the Bible therefore offers new accents: “The translation of the Holy Scripture was evidence that it was possible in the native tongue, with native expressions for concepts, to measure out and to express in words what was at that time held to be ultimate secrets. Therefore the importance of this work has outgrown the time of its origin. This was a feat not to be surpassed in the prospective future. On that occasion the Slovene language had passed its test and demonstrated that it was neither poor nor deficient.”⁵ Up to Kos the emergence of the Slovene literary language was viewed in Slovene literary history merely as one of the national endeavors for full recognition among others—i.e., viewed along the cultural-political horizontal line. Albert Kos, while generally remaining on this horizontal line, called, however, specific attention to what was already the expressive vertical line in the language of the Protestants, i.e. to the already existing possibility of using the literary language for a more or less developed aesthetic communicative function.

The expressive vertical is not mere accident, not just the aftermath of Protestant translation practice. It is based also on the Protestant thinking about language. Literary history laid stress above all on that part of the linguistic views of the Protestants which were grounded in St. Paul’s dictum “Every tongue shall give praise to God” (Romans 14), and on which the Reformation founded its ideas about the equality of languages - it was the Enlightenment which among Slovenes transferred these ideas from a biblical basis to the basis of natural law and thus made up for the missing link in the development towards the Renaissance, which had in the developed literatures already established individual national languages. Less noticeable and also less investigated has remained that sphere of Protestant ideas which had raised the language

itself to a new and more valuable level, both in the theistic and the anthropological sense. It is no exaggeration to claim that the myth of the word and of the language had become an essential constituent of the Reformation. Its theology and its program were focused on the demand for man's personal contact with God's word, i.e. with the biblical, the evangelical word, which had become the foremost authority of religion and religious life. No longer the command of the clerical hierarchy, no longer the sacraments or the multitude of extraneous things—but the evangelical word itself, read, spoken or sung, had become the real basis for a personal relationship with God. In a song by Krelj drawn from a facsimile of his work published in Ljubljana this year, we find the following lines:

Ampak beseda Božja muč,
je prava sama svitla luč,
ta nam svejti v naši temi,
nas svejtu v sveti Raj spremi,
nas trošta, viža, posveti,
drugič rodi ter ponovi.

(But the power of God's word
Is in itself the bright light,
May it shine in our darkness
May it bring us to holy Paradise,
May it comfort, lead, and consecrate us
For rebirth and a new life.)

It is characteristic that the expression *beseda* (word) is one of those expressions which our Protestant writers spelled not in the dialect but in a more generalized, supra-dialectal form (the diphthong *ei* replacing the old *ě*).⁶ As soon as in the updated hierarchy of values the word attained such a high place, the door had to be opened to all of its functions: rational no less than irrational ones, pragmatic as well as expressive ones, applicative as well as philologically definable ones. In the socially and culturally modest circumstances of Slovenia, ideas about language were indeed oriented primarily to practical needs, yet the other, deeper dimensions of these ideas should not be overlooked. Among Trubar's most frequent reflections on language, his consideration of what intelligibility is in language stands out, what is intelligible for all strata of believers. At the same time, however, it is not possible to overlook the artistic, or the consciously cultivated rhetorical craft of his language, cultivated syntax, tropes, rhythm, euphony—displayed already in the first Slovene book, *Katekizem*, from the year 1550. Recent research-work, for instance, has paid considerable attention to the rhetorical articulation of Trubar's sentences, discovering in them a three or two-part pattern, even a kind of "artistic virtuosity," possibly due to the in-

fluences of the medieval, ancient or Renaissance poetics.⁷ Some of the other expressive stylistic features of Trubar's sentence (length of sentences, embedded sentences, numerous adjuncts) have also been pointed out.⁸ Less adequately investigated remains the phonic figuration of Trubar's language, another distinct part of his stylistic endeavors. In this connection we should perhaps mention that Prešeren's cultivation of the poetic style had a comparable development: first in the composition, next in euphony, and only finally in metaphor.⁹ But there still remains the open question of how much—just as in the case of Luther's linguistic culture—the linguistic culture of Trubar and other Slovene Protestants owed to the linguistic culture of Humanism. Kidrič's insight that Trubar's Latin "is remarkable for its skill" reasonably points in this direction.¹⁰ After all, Trubar's education at the court of Bonomo must have initiated him into the work of Erasmus of Rotterdam, who ranks as a master in combining Christian Humanism with the ancient form. In any case the views advanced by earlier Slovene literary scholars according to which Slovene Protestants "had no sense of the poetic expression or of the beauty of form", or that Trubar simply "did not recognize linguistic-aesthetic principles," are today untenable.¹¹ Also in other respects the Reformationists' ideas about language should not be narrowed to merely such practical issues as intelligibility, philological correctness and graphic adequacy of expression. Many of their ideas reach far beyond. Thus, e.g., in *Dalmatin*, we have a fairly comprehensive statement of what language is—again not only from the theistic but also from the philosophical-anthropological angle:

A mute man is in comparison with a man capable of using his tongue a man half dead; there is no stronger and no nobler feature in man than his language—therefore man differs from other animals through language rather than through facial expressions and through his deeds. For even a piece of wood may through the art of carving receive a human face, and even animals see, hear, smell, sing, walk, stand, eat, drink, fast, suffer thirt or hunger or cold, or rest on hard ground not less well than any man.¹²

Language is hence what is in man noblest, strongest, and most human; it is language which distinguishes man from all other living creatures and places him above them. This echos, as it were, the idea emerging in the context of Zwingli's heightened anthropocentrism, which placed man because of his reason above all other creatures in the world. It is at this point, in reference to language, that Reformationist thought also comes close to Renaissance thought, designated in his famous work on the Italian Renaissance by Jacob Burkhardt as follows: "The chief demand of the new period as regards language was the respect for language in speech and in writing."¹³ Naturally, the Renaissance was concerned

with the language in arts, science and social life, with the language operating in an unrestrained, full life. On the other hand, the Reformation cultivated the respected language from a different point of view: for the sake of a religious revival. What is significant is the fact that the Reformation was performing that and that these pursuits had for Slovene culture far-reaching consequences.

Interestingly, among Slovenes mature poetic art—Prešeren's poetry—emerged on the basis of linguistic ideas similar to those espoused by Dalmatin, but at an understandably new historical, philosophical and literary level and on the incentive from new fundamental sources. In Slovene cultural history this is the second period in which our language, this time already a language in its own right, had reached the center of literary ideas and pursuits. In 1837, having already accomplished most of his poetic work, Prešeren wrote to Stanko Vraz, "Die Tendenz unserer Carmina und sonstigen literarischen Tätigkeit ist keine andere als unsere Muttersprache zu kultivieren" (The tendency we pursue in our poems and in other literary endeavors is simply to cultivate our mother tongue).¹⁴ This idea is formulated possibly in too extreme terms, since it was addressed to Vraz, a poet who was at that time leaving the Slovene language and deciding for the "Illyrian" language. At the same time this idea is accurate, for Prešeren's oeuvre cannot be adequately interpreted if his planned and magnificent rise to a high linguistic culture is overlooked. More detailed analyses have shown that Prešeren's and Čop's concept of how to cultivate the poetic language was based on the linguistic philosophy of the brothers Schlegel, the leading theorists on German Neoromanticism.¹⁵ At the core of this philosophy was the idea that language represents the highest achievements of man's capability and of his values. Friedrich Schlegel called the word "the most precious gift of nature"; he placed human speech as man's advantage over all other creatures and regarded language as that specific feature which had created man.¹⁶ The cult of the word, of language, and of poetry was the basic tenet of Schlegel's wide-ranging pursuits and can be summed up as follows: just as a man may be judged by his speech, so a nation is judged by its language, as expressed in poetry and literature in general; it is only the constituting of cultivated poetry that means the constituting of a nation. These ideas are inherent in Humboldt's dictum: "The true homeland is in fact the language." Prešeren, pursuing his poetic endeavors, embarked on yet other, more substantial tasks, concerning man's personal and national liberation. Such an aesthetic perfecting of the poetic art was one of his strongest, most durable ways of raising the language to a sovereign medium of free artistic creativity.

In the same sense as Dalmatin's vehement linguistic endeavors proceeded from the religious Reformationalist belief, so Prešeren's endeavors stemmed primarily from his free artistic orientation. But both

were based on the belief in language as man's highest possible achievement and on the awareness that language represents the principal sign of national identity. While Dalmatin experienced this in the context of the last period of the Middle Ages, Prešeren was already aware of the new national and individual consciousness. If following up these developments, it is also the third, more important phase in Slovene literature—the period of symbolism, that displays a new rise to the belief in the power of the word and of the language. We should mention here just Župančič's poem *Naša beseda* (Our Word), written in 1918, which again places man's word as the highest affirmation of man's personal and national existence, as the Alpha and Omega, as the "logos" of this world:

Alpha and Omega! The word! The magic power
 That hath divided the Chaos into day and night.
 Mysteriously and creatively pronounced,
 Maintains the world and our orientation and the final aim.
 And with a triple God's Yes
 Awakes us from sleep.¹⁷

Now we can claim: all the three most prominent periods in the emergence of Slovene literature—the Reformation, Romanticism, and Symbolism—share the common feature that each of them represents something that can be reconstructed as a feature indicative of their internal continuity. In all three cases this feature could be designated as: increased awareness of the language, an awareness not only in the sphere of practical and philological issues but also at the level of opening new horizons of expression. This vertical line of expression, both in theory and in practice breaking through the level of pragmatically conceived language, had appeared in its distinct form in the Protestant literature of the sixteenth century.

This fact has to be, with appropriate adequacy, built into the underlying continuity of our literary language and incorporated into our understanding of the linguistic achievements of the Reformation.

In the first place this represents a more complete insight, that the language of the Slovene Reformationists was not, and could not be, merely the language of one Slovene dialect area. But the village dialect had been outgrown not just by its "striving for a language which is socially superior," i.e. through the tendency of "the language of a little village" towards "the language of the center," the town of Ljubljana.¹⁸ Social reasons have to be considered in conjunction with semantic ones. What is to be taken into account is a certain degree of heightened expressive culture as displayed by the religious ceremonies (sermons, prayers, etc.) which all called for a supra-national linguistic idiom. Here it should be noted that words frequently used in the religious sense (e.g.:

greh, večen, reč, človek, beseda—sin, eternal, thing, man, word) frequently differed from the dialectal forms (omission of the dialectal *ei*, spelled now as *e*).¹⁹ No matter how far such conclusions might lead, there remains a fundamental truth: the literary language of Slovene Protestants was at that time in no way either socially or culturally reduced to an inferior status, inside the clerical hierarchy it was perfect. All this had great consequences for the next developmental period—for the emergence of our modern literature.

The second basic characteristic of the Protestant language was its coherence. By basing the language used in church on the living and commonly understood expression—which was at the core of Protestant theological and linguistic principles—the Slovene literary language at a decisive stage of its development succeeded in avoiding the problem of diglosia, of a split between the “high” language of the church and the “low” popular language. This was to have great and far-reaching consequences for the development of modern literature. For Prešeren it was thus possible to pursue his concept of the cultivation of poetry in such a way that at a new artistic level he continued the organic fusion of the living language, in part still showing dialectal differences, with artistry—something that was, at a lower level, already done during the Enlightenment. Therefore he could surpass Kopitar’s narrow concept, which was, in the sphere of Serbian literature entangled in the dilemma of diglosia, most productive, but in Slovene circumstances already one-sided: possibly beneficial in one direction, but for a higher, artistic direction already retarding. Without the background which Prešeren had in the solid organic model of the Protestant language, which had been advantageous for the authors of the Enlightenment period (Zois, for instance, spoke about “our old classics Trubar and Bohorič”), his action would probably have been less straightforward.

The cultural maturity of the language of the Slovene Reformation and its internal organic degree of development are after all obvious also at those points which represent the shift to the expressive language of art, to the literary style. In this respect linguistic studies and literary history have already discovered not a few interesting features, even if a comprehensive and systematic investigation has not yet been made. In this sense the linguistic achievements of the Reformation are today known to us from one side predominantly, but much less from the other one. It is perfectly clear to us that the Protestants had created a purposefully conceived and in fact a comprehensive system of the Slovene literary language, that in theory and in practice they had preserved its national individuality despite attempts to merge Slovene with other South Slavic languages, and that they had decided for the Latin alphabet in preference to the Gothic one (which Trubar used in his first two books) or the Cyrillic, which also had an appeal. But it is much less clear

to us that the literature of the Reformation contained a significantly higher linguistic culture, or that this culture in fact meant the beginning of also literary art.²⁰

It should not be overlooked, however, that the extension of language from its pragmatic use to the level of art could not be carried out on any bigger scale at all. At this point the question of the language leads to a new question: to the question of man's free individuality and its potential, which is inevitably also the potential of his literary expression.

The emergence of developed literature and its language, hence of literature in the modern sense of the term, is feasible only when there has been a shift in the development of man's individualism, when man and his thought have become free. Needless to say, this does not mean that in developed literature there is no longer an important place for a supra-personal way of thinking—mythical or religious. But it does mean that the principal line of thought and of experience turns to man himself, to his fate, to man as the subject in the center of developments. Even the outstanding modern systematics of literary genres, from its beginnings before Lessing and Hegel to Sartre and Hamburger, follows the "subject—object" relation and in accordance with it determines the categories of the lyric, the epic and the dramatic. Also the original Slovene classification of literary genres is strictly based on the anthropocentric view. Thus, we find it in Josip Vidmar's formulation: "lyric poetry is an event in man, epic poetry man in an event, the dramatic poetry an event through man."²¹ In our exploration of the remote historical continuity we naturally cannot by-pass the question: how much had the Reformation, or rather its literature, contributed towards the freeing of the subject and towards establishing his personal relation to the world, and thus to personal expression of "the event in man" or "man in the event" or "the event through man."

One of the basic characteristics of the European Reformation is certainly the big step from religious universalism to religious individualism. The central determination of the Reformation was focused in the demand to overcome those theological, institutional, legal and linguistic obstacles which had been built up between the believer and God and had broken their true and original contact. In Erasmus's circle where Christ stands in the center and the believers near the circumference, the Reformation helped to clear and to free the space in between, up to that time filled by Catholic church authorities, material interests and formalism. The prime purpose of this was that man might regain a direct, personal relationship with God, with his original, pure Evangelical word and faith. The first Slovene book, Trubar's *Catechism* (1550), formulates this idea with remarkable clarity and simplicity:

A religious person's first concern and habit is to love God's word, to listen to it and to read it gladly, to regard this word

alone as true and to believe it. No matter what people speak, teach or do—be it holy fathers of the old or of the new faith, the false Christian church, councils, tradition, popes, bishops, priests, monks, or anybody else—the religious man shall look and consider if their teaching and action agree with God's word as written in the holy books, in the Bible. If they do not agree, he shall not believe them and shall not follow their teaching. On this account, this person will be religious and wise, understanding, rich and happy—regardless of the opinion of other people who hold him for a fool . . .²²

Also in the Reformed Church the interpreter of the Evangelical word was not removed from office, nor was church as an institution abolished; but the very possibility of laicizing the Biblicism as initiated by the Reformation and the principle that everybody should read the Bible himself meant a great step forward to personal religious experience and thought. Now a sphere had been opened in which also in his utmost anxiety man could seek relief—and no longer in a guided, externally determined dialogue but in a free, personal dialogue with the biblical experience, with the experience of the evangelical ethos. If Luther's teaching is today by some scholars called a "theological atomic bomb," this may be perhaps an exaggerated comparison. But also the diminishing of its significance, which might arise from considering Lutherism merely at the level of its external social role, would be a mistake. Both stands have to be taken into account—the philosophical vertical line and the social horizontal line, which are interconnected but not mechanically. At this point our interest should be centered on the former. Here we must certainly realize that the Protestant promotion of man's direct and personal contact with the Gospel meant a great deal. It meant, if we mention its ultimate possibilities, the following: the possibility of opening up the deeper existential dilemmas of human consciousness; the possibility of opening up the deeper social dilemmas of human thought, and thence also the possibility of protest or resistance in the name of evangelical love and equality; and finally the possibility of withdrawal from the twofold (existential and social) new experience to the principle of new devotion, humility and canon law. The Gospel in its original wording, now to freely interpreted, contained so to speak all of man's personal and social possibilities. But irrespective of all the areas reached by the Reformation currents and irrespective of how historical circumstances were shaping them, in the world of thought the Reformation meant a mighty upheaval and a great step towards liberating the human subject. This is confirmed also by the contemporary Catholic theology which today regards Luther as the founder of religious existentialism, personalism and church democratism.²³

In this connection it is naturally necessary to be aware of the strict

limits with which the Reformation, for instance Luther's teaching, placed the freedom of individual way of thinking. Luther's famous slogan "It is much better to look with one's own eyes than with the eyes of somebody else" is a slogan arising at the border-line of two worlds; therefore it can be today taken to mean something different than was understood by Luther's believers and by himself. Without overlooking its significant context, it is certainly appropriate to set this slogan in the context of Luther's time and be conscious of the fact that "one's own eyes" are nevertheless subordinated to something above man, to God and to faith as the two highest and obligatory categories of human thought. Hence this freedom of personal vision has to be seen within the framework of what is still the medieval thought, even if inside it there are already essential germs of something new to develop. This problem was skillfully dealt with by the German literary historian Fritz Martini, who observed and defined the phenomenon from both aspects. On the one hand, he discovered in Lutherism the possibilities of an existential position in thought: when man stepped out of the Catholic teaching, which with its established and consecrated order had offered him security, and when he "was cast" into a new state of being forsaken by God, placed into the situation of personal freedom and responsible choice—hence into a profound clash between this world and the other world. On the other hand, Martini confines the Lutheran "Faustian spirit—the thirst for knowledge and for the enjoyment of the world—nevertheless to the biblical experience, not to be outdone by any other experience; this is obvious also from the fact that the popular book about Faust as it existed at that time was by the Lutherans morally condemned.²⁴ Therefore humanists regarded Luther, despite all his reforms and drive towards personal thought, as a man of the Middle Ages; also Erasmus of Rotterdam did not remain sympathetic towards him.

With regard to the Slovene Reformation it is necessary again to take into account its specifics and some of its typological features, which determined the scope and the limit in the emergence of individualism. The existential vertical line of the Slovene Protestant literature has not yet been specially studied. This is understandable since nothing more than very modest results can be expected. Yet the existing material contains sections which draw attention not only to the great social hardships of the Slovene people in the century of peasants' revolts and Turkish incursions, but also to the deep distress suffered by the intellectuals of that time. Again it is in Dalmatin that we can find a most characteristic statement to that effect: "For the human heart is like a boat on a cruel sea, driven by different fortunes and storms in all directions. From one side fear and apprehension of an imminent disaster are blowing; from another anger and sadness because of the evil already suffered. From another side again comes hope and joyful anticipation of future happi-

ness, and from yet another pleasure and enjoyment of what is present. Such different fortunes, such storms teach man to speak from his heart. For he who is ridden by fear and want speaks about a disaster very much differently from him who leads a merry life . . .”²⁵ We have in front of us a record of the insight into man’s inner agitation, into his dwelling with hope and fear, into his “fortune” of the unhappy kind. In other words, a situation which from afar approximates that situation out of which sprang Prešeren’s poetry, his *Sonnets of Unhappiness*, his poem “To the Poet” and some other of his central works. It is interesting to note that from this situation of man’s inner anxiety, of man’s “fear and want” Dalmatin starts his consideration that it is only the experience of such inner states and agitations which leads man to deeper expressiveness, helps man to “speak very much differently” about his inner life. Dalmatin already associates personal experience with the expressive potential, he interrelates the expressive and the existential vertical line of speech. In this he is again from afar approximating a situation on which Prešeren founded his poetry. In drawing these comparisons we understandably must not overlook the essential differences between the one and the other. Dalmatin’s existential distress is not expressed as something clearly personal. It is meant as man’s distress in general and it is written down still inside, or on the margin of the translation of the Bible. It also contains a clear, instructive way out into Christian salvation. The words fear and hope are here used as the words of the believer, they are intended for communications with God and for prayer. Prešeren’s existential distress is written down in a different way: as personal fate and personal statement in poetic terms, but also as a statement indicating there is no longer a way out, reconciliation, salvation. At its end is the acceptance of the hell and heaven of man’s unprotected, open existence. Fear and hope are no longer religious concepts, they are philosophical ones. But despite the big distances between the one situation and the other it is possible to draw between them the line of internal logic—as a line between two marked points can in actual history be seen clearly or not, their deep continuity exists. To put it somewhat more explicitly: the existential germs of modern Slovene literature are to be found already in the literature of the Reformation.

At the same time, however, it has to be remembered that in its fundamental ideational system and in its principal orientation the Slovene Reformation did not offer many opportunities for the development of these germs in the direction of individualism of thought.

The research into Slovene Reformational thought, and especially into Trubar’s, as carried out so far has in the main led to the following insights. First, that the course of Trubar’s ideas, which was the principal course in Slovenia, represents a tolerant variant of Reformation, it represents a Protestant religious movement for revival free from any ex-

tremes. It is markedly different from the Lutheran course through its "Swiss" and in part "Italian" orientations (Zwingli, Bullinger, Bonomo), which are intimately related by some accents of rationalism and humanism, and in a way also by the practical orientation to realistic horizons and to the needs of people's faithfulness.²⁶ With all the specifics of this ideational course, specifics which in a peculiar way bring together the northern and the southern variants of the European Reformation, the Protestant Church in Slovenia, as Albert Kos says, held to "a moderate middle course" with a firm dogmatic basis presented in the Augsburg Confession from the year 1530, which was founded on Luther's teaching and formulated by official protestant theologians. Trubar publicly declared himself against all other courses and also against all extremes: against Calvin's, Zwingli's and likewise against Flacius's teachings as well as against Münzer's religious and social rebellions and against any re-christening whatsoever. Highly characteristic is his emphasis on a reasonable course, which in the preface to the *Register* (1561) he formulated as follows: "In this book as well as in my books one can see and find that . . . so far we have not printed—and also in the future we shall not—any frivolous or useless thing, nothing dreamy, apostate, riotous, pugnacious, doubtful or highly contentious, no libels—but only what is in the service and for the prospering of a deeper understanding and the honor of God, of the growth of the true Christian Church, the highest solace of Slovene and Croatian people suffering from the Turks and the Anti-Christ, and also of the conversion of the Turks."²⁷

In view of such a principal and practical concept of the religious literature of the Reformation there could not have been, even if allowing for an occasional deviation, much room for the flights of personal thought into a freer existential direction. All of man's hardships were eventually channeled into the teaching that salvation is to be found only "in faith, prayer, and readiness to suffer" and that salvation of the soul may be found only in "the holy biblical scriptures and in catechesis" and nowhere else.²⁸ It is no mere accident that in his *Artikuli* (1562) Trubar had severely limited man's free will and "natural reason," assigning to them only the concern for just practical affairs of everyday life but excluding them from any role in things of deeper interest. Also in the sphere of social thought, apart from the significant endeavors for awakening the linguistic, national and cultural consciousness, the Slovene Reformation did not offer any special opportunities. Since in the given historical context it was bound up with feudal lords, it remained within the confines of legitimism and, despite all democratic feelings, remained far from any idea of changing the social order. Therefore in this field as well the flights of any more free thought had sooner or later to conform to the established social practice and convention. In Dalmatin, for in-

stance, we come across an idea, at first surprising in its argument for freedom: "As long as you are alive and can breathe, you shall not subject yourself to any other man!" But soon after this follows an idea readily admitting the unchangeable and eternal order of masters and servants: "For the donkey fodder, whip, and his pack—for the servant bread, punishment and work. Keep the servant working, so that he will not disturb you. If you permit him for a day to be free, he already wants to be a little master. The yoke and the rope keep the neck down, a bad servant needs to be put in stocks and caned. Make him work so that he does not become easy-going—that leads to great evil. If he is disobedient, put him into stocks."²⁹

The fresh and revitalized contact with the evangelical ethos certainly invigorated or at least awakened man's personal and free thought. But it did not lead to a deeper revolution in either the existential or the social direction. At the new, now more reasonable and also more democratic level, it again gave the groundwork for fundamental Christian morals and dogmatics, as well as their practical juridical basis. When on such a groundwork of Slovene Protestantism we take into account also the social, cultural and religious circumstances, we are bound to see new and deeper possibilities for the advancement of the cultivation of thought. Trubar had found himself in the position where he had to begin from scratch and engage all of his powers to struggle against idolatry and superstitions of the most primitive kind, against underdevelopment and spiritual misery.³⁰ Therefore it is understandable that in formal matters concerning ceremonies he did not always adhere to what was new but again decided for the middle course, for what was the established tradition, thus under the given circumstances making it easier or at least not so alien to people.

But even inside these restricting situations a great deal of work was performed during the Reformation. The first significant and historical step was made on the long way towards the freedom of man's thought and word. The following, the next decisive step involved the creation of conditions for the beginning of free literature, literature as art.

This second and decisive shift, as already said, occurred in Slovenia during the period of the Enlightenment and Romanticism. In stricter terms, in its mature form, this was signalled by Prešeren's poetry. Clearly on first sight there is no connection between Prešeren's poetry and sixteenth century Protestant literature. Still, such a connection exists under the surface and literary history cannot ignore it.

First, there is the system of the literary language. In the first scientific grammar of Slovene, J. Kopitar (1808) closely related the literary language with the Protestant linguistic tradition; by expanding its basis through forms existing in the dialect of Gorenjska, he made it easier for Prešeren to accept the linguistic norm proceeding from the earlier tradi-

tion. Kopitar had mightily consolidated the awareness of the linguistic continuity, as coming down from the Protestants. In his grammar he expressed surprise that after two hundred years the language of Dalmatin's translation of the Bible was not at all "archaic" and that from the sixteenth century until his days it had not changed, as had for instance Luther's German or Montaigne's French.³¹ He even thought that Slovene had not—since the sixteenth century until his time—"undergone any change".³² Prešeren was thus in a position to write by following the comparatively established tradition of the literary language and its initial organic receptiveness for the living language of the people as well as on the tradition of artistic, literary cultivation. In this second respect he was much more faithful to the Protestant tradition than Kopitar, whose purist fear resisted any "urbanization," any poetic urbanization of the literary language and narrowed it down to the "rural" idiom (the slogan: language has to be taken from the mouth of the peasant; his criterion of what is good language is the speech of peasants not affected by school training: "Der Stockslovene würde sagen . . ."). Here Kopitar was much closer to Luther than to Trubar, whose language he was accepting with many reservations and finally with the belief that Trubar wrote for the clergy rather than for the people. Luther's radical principles about the popular language as criterion of linguistic well-formedness were for Kopitar much more acceptable. For instance the well-known saying by Kopitar, "Man muss die Mutter im Hause, die Kinder auf den Gassen, den gemeinen Mann auf dem markt drumb fragen und demselbigen auf das Maul sehen, wie sie reden . . ."³³ Prešeren was closer to the Slovene Protestant stand also as regards the choice of the alphabet. He was clearly opposed to Kopitar's idea and to Metelko's reform, together with Čop defending the old Bohorič alphabet.

But the emergence of modern Slovene poetry does not contain in itself merely linguistic traces leading back to the sixteenth century, to the period of Protestant church literature. It is also in the sphere of spiritual and artistic problems that we find in the emergence of modern Slovene poetry a series of phenomena, the inner logic of which becomes obvious only when we take into account also the 'prehistory' of these developments. Prešeren's way of cultivating poetic art distinctly shows specific features, which are not accidental but have deeper historical reasons, reaching as far back as the Reformational literature.

Here it would be impossible to overlook at least two facts.

First, that the development of Slovene Protestant literature, after no less than five decades of vitality, was stopped by the Counter-Reformation. The Protestants were expelled and the movement suppressed. No more significant attempts were made to transfer or creatively to extend the achievements of the Protestant literature from the Church to the sphere of secular literary creativity. Now there followed a

century and a half of Catholic literature, which was much more modest in its output, but not without significance for the advancement of linguistic and stylistic culture, especially in the sphere of sermons and religious plays. But Slovene social, political and cultural circumstances such as they were until the second half of the eighteenth century could not give rise to secular literature and thus to a developed literary language. Therefore Prešeren found himself with his plan to reach the heights of contemporary European poetic culture in a most demanding position. For such an unexpected rise Slovene literature up to that time had had anything but favorable conditions: what it had was two centuries of religious literature and a few decades of secular literature (since Vodnik's *Pisanice*, 1779-1781), but even this was in mostly instructional genres. Here was a situation extremely indicative of underdevelopment.

But at the moment when Prešeren decided to overcome it and to keep pace with contemporary developed European poetry, this situation revealed one of its very essential aspects: complete absence of the Renaissance, hence the absence of that developmental link which signified the spiritual and expressive culture of the now free personality, the culture of modern individualism. The place of the Renaissance was in the Slovene literary past occupied by the Protestant Reformation. While giving a national literary language, enriched already with some expressive potential, and giving the first germs of the individualism of thought, it remained still within the framework of dogmatics, for the most part inside the medieval way of thinking. In Slovenia Reformationist literature broke through neither to developed humanism nor to the Renaissance; what existed were merely individual components of modern thought, feeling, and expression. Among the men of the Slovene Reformation there was no personality like Erasmus of Rotterdam or Ulrich von Hutten, who could establish a firm spiritual link between reformed Christianity and classical Humanism, or a lasting interaction of highly developed Latin and the vernacular in the linguistic cultivation of Slovene. While the popular tongue was being cultivated, it never entered—because limited to practical religious needs—into an ambitious competition with Latin. This was a big, even fateful shortcoming of the Reformation, both in it and along with it.

It is only when we look from this angle, from the period of the Reformation, at Prešeren, that we become aware that in his constituting of modern poetry—belonging by its characteristics to contemporary Romanticism—he did not overlook the Renaissance, but paid it every attention, mastered it, and incorporated it in the fundamentals of his art. In an original way he appropriated motifs from Horace, Catullus, and Propertius, constructed his main message through modernized Ophean, Promethean or Sisyphean myths, and put into the center of his poetic work the love theme—one of the most inhibited themes of Slovene lit-

erature, with no Renaissance in its tradition, but a theme through which first man's personal experience of the world and then his expression were becoming gradually free.³⁴ And what is most characteristic: from the Italian Renaissance Prešeren chose the leading and most demanding forms for his poetry: terza rima, stanza, Petrarchan sonnet. It is no accident that Prešeren found most congenial the theoretical school of the Schlegels, i.e. that course in the program of European literary thought which founded contemporary Romantic poetry on the actualization of Renaissance poetry, in particular on the Italian poetic forms as reliable tests and means for achieving a great literary culture in individual languages. And also it is no accident that Prešeren found in the Slovene circumstances most suitable the Schlegel school of poetic universalism centering around the idea that contemporary cultivated poetry must master all "means and organs" of world poetry in order to achieve a concise synthesis of its overall development.³⁵ This idea was certainly familiar to Prešeren's friend and tutor M. Čop, and for overcoming the belated development in Slovene literature, or for overcoming its historical empty places, the idea of a concise synthesis was truly productive. For Prešeren it must have been most stimulating on his way towards what he finally achieved: that among all other things performed he also eminently made up for the biggest vacant place in Slovene literature or rather in Slovene poetry—for its Renaissance, which for understandable reasons remained by the sixteenth century Protestant literature untouched. His mastery is overcoming that is clear from the fact that he did not recreate it in a historicistic or eclectic way, but mastered its nuclei in a wholly personal and contemporary, romantic manner.

That Prešeren's Romanticism carries in itself the nucleus of classical and of Renaissance poetry is therefore not a mere accident nor it is merely a consequence of the poet's personal nature and its expression. It is also a consequence of its specific developmental logic in the history of the Slovene literature from its very beginnings; more clearly: a consequence of one of its greatest shortages—the absence of a Renaissance. In some adequate form this shortage had to be made up for, if poetry was to develop fully along new lines.

The emergence of modern Slovene poetry thus shows, despite the distance of two centuries from the Reformation, obvious Reformationalist tendencies: on the one hand in the continuation of its significant achievements, especially in the organic concept of the literary language and its already developed expressive potential; on the other, in making up for blanks, due to the strict limits imposed on individualism and to the absence of the entire Renaissance poetic culture—all of which had to master and make up for as late as in the nineteenth century. In one case or in the other—at one time its strength is in the background, at another its lack of strength—the old literature of the

Reformation has given incentives that have been instrumental in the shaping and emergence of modern Slovene literature.

University of Ljubljana

REFERENCES

1. P. Simoniti, *Humanizem na Slovenskem* (Ljubljana: Slovenska matica, 1979), 153-154, 228-235.
2. M. Murko, *Die Bedeutung der Reformation und Gegenreformation für das geistige Leben der Südslaven* (Prague and Heidelberg: 1927).
3. F. Kidrič, *Zgodovina slovenskega slovstva. Od začetkov do Zoisove smrti* (Ljubljana: Slovenska Matica, 1929-1938), 65.
4. I. Prijatelj, "O kulturnem pomenu slovenske reformacije," *Izbrani eseji in razprave Ivana Prijatelja* (Ljubljana: Slovenska matica, 1952), 60.
5. A. Kos, "Družbeni nazor slovenskih protestantov," *Slavistična revija* 1 (1948), 189.
6. M. Molè, "Z historii prasłowiánskiego ě w słoweńskim," *Rocznik slawistyczny*, 16 (1948), 24-27.
7. B. Pogorelec, "Trubarjev stavek," *VIII. Seminar slovenskega jezika, literature in kulture* (Ljubljana: 1972), 305-321.
8. J. Toporišič, *Slovenski knjižni jezik* 2 (Maribor: Obzorja, 1966), 22. Cf. also: J. Pogačnik, "Stilprobleme im slowenischem Reformationsschriftum," *Abhandlungen über die slowenische Reformation* (Munich: 1968), 90-110.
9. B. Paternu, *France Prešeren in njegovo pesniško delo*, Vol. I (Ljubljana: Mladinska knjiga, 1976), 39-48.
10. Kidrič, op. cit., 27.
11. Kidrič, op. cit., 80, 83.
12. J. Dalmatin, *Biblia* (Württtemberg: 1984), 279.
13. J. Burckhardt, *Renesanča kultura v Italiji* (Ljubljana: 1963), 276.
14. Prešeren's letter to Vraz, dated July 5th 1837; *Zbrano delo* II (Ljubljana: Državna založba Slovenije, 1966), 197.
15. Paternu, op. cit., 95-107.
16. F. Schlegel, "Geschichte der alten und neuen Literatur," in F. Schlegel, *Kritische Ausgabe seiner Werke*, VI (Zürich: 1961), 14 ff.
17. O. Župančič, *Zbrano delo*. Vol. III (Ljubljana: Državna založba Slovenije, 1959), 51.
18. J. Rigler, *Začetki slovenskega knjižnega jezika* (Ljubljana: SAZU, 1968), 235.
19. Molè, op. cit., 24-27, quoted from Rigler, op. cit., 13.
20. B. Pogorelec, "Slovenski jezik: Jezikovna politika in praksa," *XV. Seminar slovenskega jezika, literature in kulture* (Ljubljana, 1979),

- 3-44. Cf. also Rado L. Lencek, *The Structure and History of the Slovene Language* (Columbus, OH: Slavica Publishers, 1982), 266-267.
21. E. Kocbek, *Tovarišija* (Ljubljana, 1949), 88.
 22. As cited in: *Slovenski protestantski pisci* (ed. M. Rupel) (Ljubljana, Državna založba Slovenije, 1966), 59.
 23. V. Grmič, "A Modern Catholic Theologian's View of Luther" (in Slovene), *Znamenje* 1316 (1983), 501-7.
 24. F. Martini, *Humanismus und Reformation, Deutsche Literaturgeschichte* (Stuttgart, 1965), 109-111.
 25. Dalmatin, op. cit., 279.
 26. Prijatelj, op. cit., 49-50, 54, 63, 65, 71; Kidrič, op. cit., 67 and ff; Kos, op. cit., 59-84; J. Rajhman, *Prva slovenska knjiga v luči teoloških, literarnozgodovinskih, jezikovnih in zgodovinskih raziskav* (Ljubljana: Partizanska knjiga, 1977), 126-131; J. Pogačnik, "Vloga socializma pri nastanku slovenske razsvetljenske misli," *Obdobje razsvetljenstva v slovenskem jeziku, književnosti in kulturi* (Ljubljana, 1979), 97-111; J. Rajhman, "The Development of Trubar's Theological Thought" (in Slovene), *Znamenje*, 1216 (1983), 510-16.
 27. P. Trubar, Register und summarischer Inhalt, 1561, quoted after M. Rupel, *Slovenski protestantski pisci* (Ljubljana: 1966), 114.
 28. P. Trubar, *Ta celi psalter Davidov*, 1566, quoted after Rupel, op. cit., 178-82.
 29. J. Dalmatin, *Jesus Sirah*, 1575, facsimile edition (Ljubljana: 1974), 141-2.
 30. Trubar's letter to A. Bohorič dated August 1, 1565, published in: *Cvetnik naše reformacijske misli: Ob 400-letnici slovenske knjige, 1551-1951* (Ljubljana: Državna založba Slovenije, 1951), 3.
 31. *Grammatik der slawischen Sprache in Krain, Kärnten und Steiermark* (Ljubljana: 1808), 39.
 32. Op. cit., 158.
 33. Martini, op. cit., 118.
 34. Cf. "Thematic Continuity in the Introduction of New Styles in Slovene Poetry from the Baroque to the Modern Period" (in Slovene), *Pogledi na slovensko književnost*, I (Ljubljana: 1974), 111-58.
 35. A. W. Schlegel, "Vorlesungen über schöne Literatur and Kunst" (1808), in A. W. Schlegel, *Kritische Schriften und Briefe*, IV, (Stuttgart: 1965), pp. 6-7.