

**WAS THERE EVER A YUGOSLAV LITERATURE?  
DEBATING THE HISTORIES OF YUGOSLAV LITERATURE(S)**

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**WAS THERE EVER A YUGOSLAV LITERATURE?  
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**INTERNATIONAL WORKSHOP**

25 – 26 May 2018  
Belgrade – Novi Sad



## Introduction

The international workshop **Was There Ever a Yugoslav Literature? Debating the Histories of Yugoslav Literature(s)** is a forum for the discussion of the history of Yugoslav literature(s) in the 20th century, and of ways in which those issues are revised and reformulated in the post-Yugoslav cultural space. The event is organized by the Department of Modern Languages and Cultures, University of Nottingham, the Faculty of Philology, University of Belgrade, and the Faculty of Philosophy, University of Novi Sad. The accommodation expenses and travel subsidies for participants from abroad are funded by the Partridge Bequest, University of Nottingham; the conference rooms, refreshments, transfer between Belgrade and Novi Sad, and publicity including this booklet are provided by the Faculty of Philology, Belgrade, and the Faculty of Philosophy, Novi Sad. The members of the Programme committee wish to express their gratitude to these institutions for their support throughout the process.

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Monica Partridge (1915-2008), formerly Professor of Slavonic Studies at the University of Nottingham, made in her will a generous bequest to the University of Nottingham to be used to further contacts with the Slavonic world and develop research. In accordance with Professor Partridge's wishes, funds from the Bequest are used to support student mobility at all levels, conferences, workshops, invitations to guest speakers, and short term stays for visiting scholars.

**WAS THERE EVER A YUGOSLAV LITERATURE?  
DEBATING THE HISTORIES OF YUGOSLAV LITERATURES**

**WORKSHOP PROGRAM**

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**DAY 1**

25 May 2018, Faculty of Philology, Belgrade  
(Conference room, 1st floor)

**PANEL 1**

**Yugoslav Literature: The History of a Contested Notion**

Chair: Davor Beganović (University of Tübingen)

10.00-11.00h

**Part I - Yugoslav literature and its historians**

1. David Norris (University of Nottingham)

“Pavle Popović and Yugoslav literature”

2. Angela Richter (University of Halle)

“Literature as an integral part of the ideological superstructure: An early attempt to outline the ‘contemporary Yugoslav literature’ (Sveta Lukić)”

3. Adrijana Marčetić (University of Belgrade)

“Yugoslav literature(s) after World War II: Theoretical models of Svetozar Petrović”

11.00-11.15h Break

11.15-12.15h

**Part II - Yugoslav literature and its contests**

4. Bojana Stojanović-Pantović (University of Novi Sad)

“Cultural politics and ex-Yugoslav literatures: Theoretical Approach of Andrew Baruch Wachtel”

5. Marko Juvan (ZRC SAZU, Ljubljana)

“The invisible other? Slovene comparative literature and Yugoslav literature”

6. Ivana Živančević-Sekeruš (University of Novi Sad)  
“In quest of definition and meaning of ‘Yugoslav literature’”

12.15-13.00h Discussion (Part I and Part II)

13.00-14.30h Lunch break

## **PANEL 2**

### **(De-)Constructing Yugoslav Literature: Canons and Communities**

Chair: David Norris (University of Nottingham)

14.30-15.30h

#### **Part I: Modernist fusions**

1. Sonja Veselinović (University of Novi Sad)

“Anthologies of Yugoslav poetry 1945-1991”

2. Renate Hansen-Kokoruš (University of Graz)

“Intertextuality as a strategy of Yugoslav cultural connections”

3. Aleksandar Momčilović (University of Belgrade)

“Towards a canon of the non-aligned: Yugoslav literature(s) and foreign policy”

15.30-15.45h Break

15.45-16.45h

#### **Part II: Postmodern dissents**

4. Vladimir Gvozden (University of Novi Sad)

“Writing after the return of ethnicity: Can literature ever be emancipatory in the Balkans?”

5. Aleksandar Mijatović (University of Rijeka)

“(Post)modernity of (Post-)Yugoslav literatures: An outline of literary studies of temporalities of parentheses and hyphens”

6. Tomislav Brlek (University of Zagreb)

“‘A living anachronism’ — Deconstruction of Yugoslav literature”

16.45-17.30h Discussion (Part I and Part II)

19.30h Roundtable at Srpsko književno društvo (Francuska 7):  
David Norris, Stijn Vervaet, Elizabeta Šeleva, Angela Richter,  
Tomislav Brlek, Adrijana Marčetić

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## DAY 2

26 May 2018, Faculty of Philosophy, Novi Sad  
(Congress Hall, 1st floor/114)

### PANEL 3

#### **Framing Yugoslav Literature: Periodicals, Textbooks, Anthologies**

Chair: Renate Hansen-Kokoruš (University of Graz)

10-11.20h

1. Bojan Jović (Institute for Literature and Art, Belgrade)  
“Yugoslav literature(s) before and after the wars: Emerging, shifting and (unsuccessfully) fading away”
2. Dunja Dušanić (University of Belgrade)  
“The Construction of Yugoslav Literary Unity 1913-1919”
3. Miloš Jocić (University of Novi Sad)  
“The Yugoslav visual poetry scene”

11.20-11.50h Discussion

11.50-13.30h Lunch break

### PANEL 4

#### **Yugoslav Literature and Alternative Cultural Spaces: Empire, Region, (G)locale**

Chair: Marko Juvan (ZRC SAZU, Ljubljana)

13.30-14.50h

1. Stijn Vervaet (University of Oslo)  
“Yugoslav and post-Yugoslav literature as post-imperial constellations: Towards a Transnational literary history”



2. Vladimir Zorić (University of Nottingham)

“Complementary cultural spaces: Zoran Konstantinović’s mediation between Yugoslav and Central European literature”

3. Eva Simčić (University of Oslo)

“Assembling the multinational: The post-Yugoslav and the borderline work of culture”

4. Ivana Latković (University of Zagreb)

“Towards the Glocality of Regional (Literary) Comparative Studies ”

14.50-15.20h Discussion

15.20-15.35h Break

## **PANEL 5**

### **The Afterlife of Yugoslav Literature:**

#### **Nostalgic Glances and Perplexing Residues**

Chair: Bojan Jović (Institute for Literature and Art, Belgrade)

15.35-16.35h

1. Elizabeta Šeleva (Ss. Cyril and Methodius University in Skopje)

“YuTopia”

2. Andrea Lešić-Thomas (University of Sarajevo)

“Bosnian, Yugoslav and post-Yugoslav literatures as postcolonial polycentric literary polysystems”

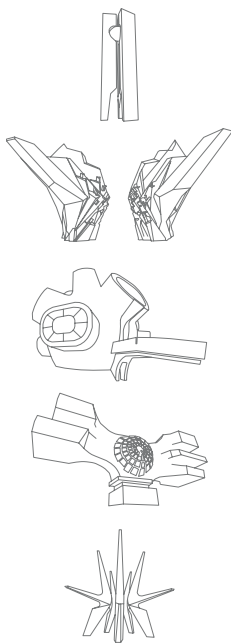
3. Davor Beganović (University of Tübingen)

“South Slavic literatures in their multicultural complexity”

16.35-17.00h Discussion



## ABSTRACTS



**Davor Beganović**  
University of Tübingen

## **South-Slavic Literatures in Their Multicultural Complexity**

Starting from the premise that South-Slavic literatures build a unity that is, in a strange way, broken, I would like to pose a thesis comprising this diversification in alleged unity. It could be seen as uncontested that Yugoslav literatures (and I would like to confine my research to those written in “the common language”) have a different diachronic development. One obvious reason for this is certainly the imbalance of languages – written as well as oral. Exactly as everywhere else in Europe, in the Yugoslav territories in the 19<sup>th</sup> century, the century of the nation-building process, there occurred a slow harmonization of dialects, which, for the first time in history, gave the possibility of forging a common culture. But one has to say immediately that this possibility was never fully realized. Even in times of the greatest convergence, a small margin was left that did not allow full assimilation. As the historical processes changed over the centuries, the processes of attachment and detachment substituted each other. Detachment reached its zenith in the periods of wars between South-Slavic nations, as was obviously the case at the end of the 20<sup>th</sup> century. Although multiple affiliation of South-Slavic authors was no particular exception in the previous epochs, too, it has become a fact that is

impossible to overlook now. The war brought with itself migration movements on an enormous scale, resulting in the dislocation of literatures, which is to be seen not only as territorial but cultural as well. Language appears to be the dividing and uniting line once again. Now it is enriched by authors who are connected with the Yugoslav space but express this closeness in languages other than South-Slavic ones. My paper is concerned with the problem of their incorporation in the body of Yugoslav literatures.

**Tomislav Brlek**  
University of Zagreb

## **“A Living Anachronism” – Deconstruction of Yugoslav Literature**

Entailing, as it does, any number of imponderables – the blurred boundaries between the linguistic and ideological assumptions underwriting the term; the intangible ratio of political to historical slant in its implementation; the pliability of its intension in a temporal as well as spatial sense; the contestable extension of the actuality it designates; the extent to which its viability is contingent upon the exigencies of method, as opposed to rule-of-the-thumb expediency – the issue of Yugoslav literature is nothing if not moot. Since the recalcitrance of this unmanageable manifold is first and foremost due to its referent being conceived of as concurrently beholden to incongruent historical, cultural, or socio-political contexts, small wonder that conceptual seepage should ensue in ideational slippage, in which the writing on the subject abounds. In view of such a predicament, a change of tack might be called for, whereby the noun and not the adjective in the phrase under consideration would be determinative. And, indeed, the notion seems much less of an inanity and its import not so intractable, should it be construed under the aspect of literariness, as it is understood by Jakobson, Rancière or Derrida, who all agree that the essential point in any definition of literature is that there is no essence to it, literary

writing being of necessity refractory, incessantly foreclosing its coincidence with itself. Tracing the incentives drawn out from the polymath writings of Vatroslav Jagić – in Pavle Popović’s appraisal, “the last Slavic philologist in the broad sense, a living anachronism” – as they come to fruition in the work of Miroslav Krleža and Svetozar Petrović, this paper argues that, since literature inevitably feeds back into its theoretical configurations even as it is predicated upon them, the relation that obtains between the concepts of literature and Yugoslavia is perhaps best understood as the work of deconstruction.

**Dunja Dušanić**  
University of Belgrade

## **The Construction of Yugoslav Literary Unity 1913-1919**

For a brief time, around the First World War, the issue of a unified Yugoslav (i.e. Serbian, Croatian and Slovenian) literature was at the forefront of literary discussions in Belgrade and Zagreb. The debates which began in 1913-1914, on the pages of the *Serbian Literary Herald* (*Srpski književni glasnik*), with Jovan Skerlić's survey of public opinion concerning the linguistic foundation of Serbo-Croatian literature, and continued, from 1917 to 1919, in such periodicals as the *Literary South* (*Književni jug*) and the *Croatian Field* (*Hrvatska njiva*), seemed more pre-occupied with the question of dialect and alphabet than with the task of establishing a shared literary tradition or a joint literary "agenda". Based on the notion that the existence of a shared language implies the existence of a single nation whose unity is simultaneously corroborated and enhanced by the existence of a single national literature, these debates left many questions unanswered and bore few tangible results. Interestingly, some of their participants were to become authors of influential histories and textbooks of Yugoslav literature, which defined the canon of national literature for subsequent generations. This contribution seeks to revisit the arguments put forward in the early stages of the debate on Yugoslav literature (on the eve and in the immediate aftermath of the Great War) and to trace their legacy in subsequent histories and textbooks of Yugoslav literature.



**Vladimir Gvozden**

University of Novi Sad

## **Writing after the Return of Ethnicity: Can Literature Ever Be Emancipatory in the Balkans?**

The most curious idea of Serbian and Croatian ethnicism in the 1990s was the idea of ethnic origin, with a whole bunch of quasi-historians and some real ones who “discovered” new facts from the past celebrating the nation’s future. It could be said that during the 1990s a deep *völkisch* sentiment was developed, based on the idea of a society based on a preestablished superindividual harmony that nullifies the diversity of the continent in order to promote the affirmation of the organic community. A society that primarily determines itself on the basis of identity cannot be democratic. The same is true of a society that defines itself in terms of its own uniqueness, which is very often in public discourses in the Balkans. But the *völkisch* sentiment completely destroys the emancipatory role of literature (be it in a national, liberal, international, supranational or European sense) characteristic of Yugoslav period. This article is an attempt to critically discuss the concept of community through the analysis of insights provided by older and newer authors (H. Plessner, B. Andreson, J. Derrida, A. Touraine, F. Fure-di, R. Esposito). A community can be determined only on the basis of a lack of that by which it is characterized, and this uncertainty is the result of its insufficient power.

The main idea will be that the emancipatory potential of literature in Yugoslavia was based on the similar idea of a lack that should be filled with a discourse that overcomes the ongoing political structures and creates a more secure “cultural” community of an “immunized” elite. Now this immunisation seems to work better with the concept of ethnicity. The article will demonstrate that this return of ethnicity in the Balkans could be compared to the global return of community.

**Renate Hansen-Kokoruš**

University of Graz

## **Intertextuality as a Strategy of Yugoslav Cultural Connections**

The intertextual approach will provide the methodological starting point for analysing an aspect of the artistic strategy of the targeted connection, with which authors have grasped the Yugoslav cultural space. The very same notion of intertextuality does not coincide with literature in the narrow sense, for it is founded on the fact that cultural treasures provide the basis for a dialogue with other authors, works and cultures – whether specific groups, regions or peoples. Starting from the various categories of citation to confirm or challenge this argument (see Oraić Tolić 1990), the purpose and functions of these intertextual links will be highlighted in this paper. According to this, we shall deal with the literary work of Ranko Marinković, who wrote his prose and plays for a long period of time, both in the “First” and “Second” Yugoslavia, between the 1930s and the beginning of the 1990s. This *poeta doctus* developed an extremely intense intertextual dialogue with other Yugoslav male and female authors, especially with the Yugoslav-oriented media (e.g. *Zenit*), but also with the Expressionist and Surrealist movements, lyrical poets and prose writers. The question of the appraisal and the function of these intertextual relationships will be considered in the meaningful concept of their own texts.

**Miloš Jocić**

University of Novi Sad

## **The Yugoslav Visual Poetry Scene**

The description Vojislav Despotov used as the subtitle for his anthology of neo-avant-garde poetry *The Hammer of Tautology* – “types of technical intelligence in the poetry of SFRY” – could double as an alternative headline for this research. Vojislav Despotov, also a prominent neo-avant-garde poet himself, never used the term “Yugoslav literature” in the aforementioned anthology; instead, he employed more neutral phrases such as “the Yugoslav poetry scene” and “Yugoslav poetic practices”. The term “Yugoslav literature,” admittedly, is problematic, in view of the fact that the territory of SFRY incorporated literary traditions and languages of different South Slavic and non-Slavic peoples and ethnic groups. On the other hand, the late 20th-century Yugoslavia could be perceived, in a way, as a unified cultural space where (in this case, neo-avant-garde) artists worked within the same literary frameworks and through energetic mutual cooperation. This was manifested not only through numerous joint editions, performances and exhibitions, but also through a mutual exchange of literary practices, influences and poetic material. Because of the syncretic nature of the medium and its specific relationship with the verbal material, this was exceptionally noticeable in visual poetry: a genre

which transcended language barriers of the traditional “monomedia” literature and in that way allowed for the more expressive artistic groupings of Serbian, Croatian, Slovenian and Hungarian authors. In this paper we will analyse the formal and genre-specific practices of the “Yugoslav scene” of visual and concrete poetry.

**Bojan Jović**

Institute for Literature and Art, Belgrade

## **Yugoslav Literature(s) before and after the Wars: Emerging, Shifting and (Unsuccessfully) Fading Away**

This paper discusses different concepts and activities regarding the making and breaking of (the notion of) Yugoslav Literature(s), the transformation and re-directing of (de)constructive energies before and after the World Wars, and the final dissolution of Yugoslavia. The Great War had an important role in the formation of a circle of collaborators around the literary magazine *Zabavnik* in Corfu, with the idea of a revival of cultural life during the exile of 1916-1918. This also represented a point of spiritual gathering of a “generation” of writers from different Yugoslav nations, who would continue their socializing in Paris and accomplish their artistic activities in the cultural centres of the newly created state of Yugoslavia, primarily in Belgrade and Zagreb, essentially through ad-hoc groups of artists, concentrated around short-lived magazines representing the ideas and practices of avant-garde art. Additionally, this period is marked by some genealogical characteristics, such as the introduction of free verse in poetry and the emergence of the short – lyrical or war – novel in prose. After the breakup of the first Yugoslavia and the formation of the second one, the themes of war and its aftermath became important again, in poetry and in fiction, this time impregnated with the ideological

requirements of a socialist revolution and the adequate worldview. This became the common denominator of Yugoslav writers of different national backgrounds, evolving into different poetic solutions, conceptual views and national(ist) attitudes.

**Marko Juvan**

ZRC SAZU Institute of Slovenian Literature and  
Literary Studies, Ljubljana

## **The Invisible Other? Slovene Comparative Literature and Yugoslav Literature**

Just like other national markers that classify literary discourse, the term *Yugoslav literature(s)* functions as a prominent ideologeme of methodological nationalism. Historically, ethno-lingual markers delineated the subject area of literary history, shaped its research methods and interpretative narratives, while the discipline – mediated through education – reinforced the ideological impact of ethno-lingual denominations upon the society. Connected to the earlier and related term *Illyrian*, the attribute *Yugoslav* belongs to variegated phenomena of Slavism. In the era of modern nationalism, various kinds of Slavism emerged in the Habsburg Empire. They expressed the tendency of the subordinate Slavic peoples to create real or imaginary alliances that relied on the ethnonationalist notion of kinship. By calling for such reciprocity, minoritarian national movements believed to strengthen their position in the Empire in which the national movements of the German and Hungarian bourgeoisie prevailed. In the Yugoslav kingdom, established after the nationalist-driven collapse of Austria-Hungary, and in the Socialist Federal Republic of Yugoslavia, a winner over the WWII Nazism and Fascism, the term *Yugoslav literature*



supported integralism and unitarism. It suited the official state ideologies that attempted to master particularisms of the constitutive nations. The plural version of the term, *Yugoslav literatures*, is a more recent compromise concept. Stemming from the Leninist idea of the self-determination of nations, the plural term enabled the recognition and fostering of an interliterary community composed of the individual literatures of Yugoslav nations and nationalities. Surprisingly, a preliminary survey has shown that Slovene comparative literature, in its fundamental works created in the first and the second Yugoslavia (from Ocvirk's *Theory of Comparative Literary History* of 1936 to Kos's 1987 *Comparative History of Slovenian Literature*), avoids discussing Yugoslav literature(s) while at the same time freely using the expressions *European literature* or *world literature* in singular. The reasons why Slovene comparative studies persistently neglected the nearest neighbourhood of Slovene literature are manifold. They range from methodological concerns (a break with the tradition of Slavic philology and a reorientation to cultural and spiritual history) to disciplinary divisions of labour within Slavic studies to ideological underpinnings (the affiliation of Slovene literature to the Western and Central Europe and distancing from the South or East). The paper will explore why the concept of Yugoslav literature(s) figured as a blind spot of Slovene comparative studies. Why was it not studied as the closest other of the national literature or otherwise as its historical-political context or, at the very least, as a typological analogy?

**Ivana Latković**  
University of Zagreb

## **Towards the Glocality of Regional (Literary) Comparative Studies**

The options and perspectives of regional (literary) comparative studies will be reviewed in a new light, starting with the rich tradition of comparative research of South Slavic literature, emphasising the context of transnational cross-linked society and modern redefinitions of world and national literature enhanced by it, as well as expanding the traditional disciplinary boundaries of comparative studies. The analysis will principally imply challenging the traditional category of the national in favour of the more permeable local and regional, but it will also attempt to define the research primacy of regional comparative studies within the context of the general propulsion of cultural studies, as well as inter- and trans-disciplinary approaches. In line with that, the implementation of inclusion, non-centeredness and variability will be considered as assumptions of regional comparative studies inscribed by tradition, their contact zones and interspaces, at the expense of pursuing methodologically only imitative models of “the centre”. While trying to recruit the existing models of considering the comparative horizon of researching South Slavic literature, both regarding the former integralist concept of the whole Yugoslav literary space (P. Popović, A. Barac) and the more recent comparative, interliterary,

intercultural approaches (D. Ďurišin, Z. Kovač), the paper will endeavour to present their anticipatory response to the recent conceptual design of world and national literature, and also to challenge their application scope within the trans-disciplinary reach (cultural studies, regional studies) in the traditionally understood field of the profession.

**Andrea Lešić-Thomas**

University of Sarajevo

## **Bosnian, Yugoslav and Post-Yugoslav Literatures as Postcolonial Polycentric Literary Polysystems**

The purposefully ugly title of my paper points to two frameworks, within which I propose to discuss the construction of three literary systems whose existence has, for various reasons, been contested, and which cannot, in a straightforward sense, be called “national”. Bosnian (or, to be more precise, Bosnian-Herzegovinian), Yugoslav, and Post-Yugoslav literatures seem to be, at this particular point in time, to a lesser or greater extent, cultural and political orphans; and yet some literary texts and phenomena can scarcely be understood without them as their hypothesized context. The two theoretical frameworks which could enable the methodological stabilisation of those contexts for the purpose of understanding the complexities of those texts and phenomena are Svetozar Petrović’s suggestion that “our literatures” can best be understood as structurally similar in their historical development to the literatures of other colonized nations (rather than to the major European national literatures, such as French or English literature), and Itamar Even-Zohar’s idea of literary polysystems, which include not just literatures written in a particular language, but also literatures which are drawn into the orbit of another literature through a complex of literary influences and translations. Both Petrović

and Even-Zohar provide us with ways of analysing literary systems which contain marked differences between the centre (or several centres) and the margins (or even several degrees of margins), and include multilingualism as part of their corpus. I shall aim to show how all of these features would apply to the three literary polysystems under discussion; examples are likely to include the literary journals *Nada* and *Sarajevske sveske*, and Derviš Sušić's novel *Ja, Danilo*.

**Adrijana Marčetić**

University of Belgrade

## **Yugoslav literature(s) after the World War II: Theoretical models of Svetozar Petrović**

The paper focuses on the political and ideological processes which boosted the idea of Yugoslav literature(s) in Socialist Yugoslavia, from 1945 – 1990, and on the reasons why this idea ultimately failed to meet the expectations of its advocates. I discuss a selection of chapters from Svetozar Petrović's book *Priroda kritike* (1972) which proposed that the idea of Yugoslav literature(s) had always been ideological. At that point, Petrović argued, two ideas of Yugoslav literature coexisted side by side, one based on leftist beliefs, and the other rooted in bourgeois liberalism. In his opinion, the earlier was progressive and democratic whereas the latter was conservative and reactionary. Pleading for an approach to Yugoslav literature(s), whereby no particular national literature (e.g. Serbian, Croatian, Slovenian) should gain predominance over any other, Petrović proposes a new model which I call a "philological" model of Yugoslav literature(s). In addition to these, I identify a fourth concept, not envisaged by Petrović, which frames Yugoslav literature as a canon: in this model, Yugoslav literature represents the corpus of the best and/or the most representative literary works from different Yugoslav literatures (Serbian, Croatian, Slovenian, Macedonian, etc.). I also discuss papers presented at a conference

on the history of Yugoslav literature held in Sarajevo in 1965, as well as the proceedings of four conferences organized in the last decade of the common Yugoslav state (1980 – 1990) by the Institute for Literary Scholarship and the Department of Yugoslav Languages and Literatures at the University of Zagreb. At these events, experts from all Yugoslav republics discussed the possibility and prospects of establishing a new discipline – comparative Yugoslav literature.

**Aleksandar Mijatović**

University of Rijeka

**(Post)modernity of (Post-)Yugoslav Literature(s):  
An Outline of Literary Studies of Temporalities  
of Parentheses and Hyphens**

The main concern of this contribution is to outline a new approach to the notions of “Yugoslav” and “(post-)Yugoslav”, used to describe the relationship between literatures of (former-)Yugoslav republics before and after the dissolution of Yugoslavia. In the pre-dissolution period there was a tendency to shift from the all-embracing notion of a Yugoslav literature, written in singular, in order to emphasize the underlining ethnic, national and cultural diversity of the second Yugoslavia. The diversity was supposed to be reflected or embodied in the pluralized expression of Yugoslav literatures. However, the notion of a (post-)Yugoslav literature is always used in singular in order to promote, implicitly at least, a transnational unity of the peoples of the former Yugoslav republics. The (post-)Yugoslav does not only refer to literary bonds, persisting after the break-up of the second Yugoslavia, but also to an idea of community which would supersede the irreconcilable ethnic, national and cultural diversity of the republics of former Yugoslavia. In both cases, literature is assigned the role of representing or embodying two kinds of experiences: the experience of difference in the case of Yugoslav literatures and the experience of community in the case of post-Yugoslav literature.



The irresolvable conflict between two experiences has led some scholars to draw parallels between post-Yugoslav literature and postmodernity. The aim of this contribution is to explain which aspects of postmodernity one must take into account in order to accept or reject the postmodern character of post-Yugoslav literature. The emphasis will be placed on the temporality of the label “*post-*” whereby Yugoslav literature is always already *a* postYugoslav literature, with parentheses and hyphen removed.

**Aleksandar Momčilović**

University of Belgrade

***Towards a Canon of the Non-Aligned:  
Yugoslav Literature(s) and Foreign Policy***

Opening up to the West after the conflict with the USSR in 1948 enabled Yugoslavia to take on a more important role on the international political and cultural stage. As it was not a rich country, it had to make the most of its culture when it came to foreign policy. The paper analyses the work of the Federal Commission for Cultural Relations with Foreign Countries in the field of literature. As one of the Commission's main tasks was to inform foreign institutions and individuals of the cultural achievements of the Yugoslav nations, the paper strives to reconstruct and explain the criteria for the selection of authors and literary works which were to be presented abroad as the peaks of Yugoslav literature(s) and, through translations, to be offered a place in the canon of world literature. The paper also takes a closer look at the role of literature in Yugoslav foreign policy and the importance of foreign policy for the promotion of Yugoslav literature(s), outlining a connection between the shift in Socialist Yugoslavia's diplomatic aims and its adjustments in the Yugoslav literary canon.

**David Norris**

University of Nottingham

## **Pavle Popović and Yugoslav Literature**

In discussions on literary history, defining the extent and borders of a national literature has been known to evoke the most fiery and polemical responses. Before the First World War, critics and literary historians in Serbia would more often write about Serbian, Croatian and Slovene literatures separately; although, some had already begun to mention other possible combinations of terms. Jovan Skerlić, for example, in his *Istorija nove srpske književnosti* (1914) describes the increasing collaboration between cultural institutions in Serbia and Croatia, drawing attention to a tendency toward “creating a single Serbo-Croatian literature”. As the end of the war approached, Pavle Popović published his book *Jugoslovenska književnost* in England (1918), portraying the literatures of the Serbs, Croats and Slovenes “as a single whole”. He continued to write on the same theme over the following decade. In my paper, I shall examine Popović’s thinking on the literary history of the Serbs, Croats and Slovenes as outlined in his study *Jugoslovenska književnost* and the developments to his initial model found in his inaugural lecture to the Serbian Royal Academy (1922) and in a series of lectures which he later gave on the subject in Paris (1930).

**Angela Richter**

University of Halle

**Literature as an Integral Part of the Ideological Superstructure – an Early Attempt to Outline the “Contemporary Yugoslav Literature” (Sveta Lukić)**

Prompted by the current discourses about post-Yugoslav literature, I would like to go back to what was there before this “post-”. Rereading Lukić’s work, which is most likely the only one to offer a systematization of a common literary field in the so-called Second Yugoslavia, from 1945 to 1965, centres on the dynamics between the shared and divergent features in the literature(s) of socialist Yugoslavia. It also raises the question of whether Lukić’s approach enabled the avoidance of a cultural unitarisation (Matvejević 1978) by using the term Yugoslav literature (i.e. culture). Considering the initial proclaimed unity, leading to a differentiated unity in diversity, and later to a strong reconsideration of ethnicity together with rejection, or evasion of the facts that spoke of the various degrees of interaction among Yugoslav literatures and in the field of culture generally, we could ask if Lukić’s attitudes are nowadays completely out of date. If we were not satisfied with the ethnic and national cultural markers, and approached the view that literature is the result and experience of a transgenerational and transcultural activity (Ette), what sort of effect would it have on us philologists? Finally, I would take a look at handbooks and other publications in Germany which deal with the questions concerning South Slavonic literatures.

**Eva Simčić**  
University of Oslo

## **Assembling the Multinational: The Post-Yugoslav and the Borderline Work of Culture**

Since the appearance of Andrew Wachtel's book *Making a Nation, Breaking a Nation* (1998), the idea that Yugoslav literature should be approached through the notion of *common culture* has become the debate-framing paradigm for understanding the relationship between Yugoslav and post-Yugoslav literature (Beronja 2014; Messner 2015; Milutinović 2013; Snel 2016; Vervaet 2016; Vuletić 2008). Amidst this discussion, a question arose around implementing the labels of modern and postmodern as additional explanatory concepts to explain the commonalities and differences between two "periods", the Yugoslav one and the post-Yugoslav one. The problem I want to address in this paper concerns the homogeneous notion of culture that is often implied in the assessments of the status of post-Yugoslav literature and culture. I argue that differences are to be found not (only) in the intricate nature of the periods but also in a significant shift in the broader (global) cultural dynamics. If the post-Yugoslav period cannot meet the same criteria for the label "common culture" as the Yugoslav period did, the reason for such discrepancy is to be found in the changed nature of the culture itself. Instead of envisioning the transition from Yugoslav to post-Yugoslav as a cultural continuum, I call

for a different approach, one that pays attention to what Bhabha calls the *borderline work of culture* (1994). This approach should shift the debate from the field of nostalgia and consequently establish possible directions for rethinking the past and present cultural and social phenomena.

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**Cultural Politics and Ex-Yugoslav Literatures:  
The Theoretical Approach of  
Andrew Baruch Wachtel**

In this paper, I will point out the theoretical and methodological approach of the American historian Andrew Baruch Wachtel to the complex issue of South Slavic literatures and their different historical attitudes to the supranational concept of Yugoslav literature. In his studies *Making a Nation, Breaking a Nation* (American edition 1998, Serbian translation 2001) and *Remaining Relevant after Communism. The Role of the Writer in Eastern Europe* (American edition 2006, Serbian translation in the same year, entitled *The Literature of Eastern Europe in the Age of Post-Communism. The Role of the Writer in Eastern Europe*), the author defines the assumptions of the national identity of various ethnic groups of the former Yugoslavia during their historical development in different state frameworks and political systems from the 1830s to the 1990s. Wachtel argues that the collapse of the Yugoslav national idea was from the beginning followed by the lack of a dominant cultural model that would connect different traditions and poetics of South Slavic literatures. This also refers to the question of the (non-)existence of the Yugoslav literary canon, although the separate national elites have repeatedly tried to establish it as a collectivistic-authoritarian, not as an individualistic-libertarian

model. In this sense, the ideological implications of such a concept have led, with certain exceptions, to the utilitarian-nationalistic character of literature in the so-called literary-centric societies. After the breakdown of the common state in the 1990s, the status of literature and the role of the writer changed considerably, as they did in the other Eastern European countries after communism. According to this, Andrew Wachtel discusses the changed, peripheral position of literature dealing with particular literary examples, as well as the ways (strategies) of transforming the symbolic cultural capital of ex-Yugoslav writers in the communist period into different positions in politics, journalism or in the private sphere.



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### Yu Topia

This paper is focused on the controversies following the period after the political fall of Yugoslavia and a series of its cultural implications, concerning the disciplinary framework, as well as opportunities for (re-establishing the once plausible) South Slavic comparative literature studies. The perspectives and challenges of the regional (South Slavic) comparative approach seem to be re-evaluated and renowned, once we accept the recent prefix replacement, shifting from the ex Yu, towards the post Yu – as a kind of rhetoric demarcation line, going beyond the stigmatizing effects of the past. Therefore, this contribution will point to the bright moments of still existing productive collaboration, providing the corpus of so-called *contact relations*, such as: publishing the post Yu literary magazine *Sarajevske sveske*, from 2003, supporting the regional literary competitions (like the Balkanika prize, from 1997), or specific collaborative – academic/art – projects (Project Yugoslavia, 2017), book festivals, editions and occasional round tables. We consider the notion of *culture* and the perspective of cultural studies to be a “passwording” tool and the most appropriate link, opened towards the reality of the still preserved, vital creative contacts among ex-Yugoslav literatures and cultures, despite the

actual political reality of separation. We propose here the interdisciplinary research of “YuTopia” – as a historically grounded cultural, or even art project – as one of the challenging topics of our specific interest in the future, taken separately from or together with the (re)consideration of the still provocative phenomenon of “Yugonostalgia”, as a subtype of the paradoxically coined term of “nostalgia” (as elaborated by Svetlana Boym in her comparative review of post-Soviet literature “The Future of Nostalgia”). One might also turn to research the phenomenon of now internationally renowned writers that suddenly became “no country’s, or apatriate authors”, being “deserted” by their homeland, due to the split and the reality of Yu wars, and sanctioned for their refusal to self-determine, according to the claims of any opportune (national identity) marker. Knowing that the Yugoslav project was also one of an axiological range, we argue that ex- or post-Yugoslav cultures are still connected to each other – because of their fundamental (linguistic and cultural) closeness, which contributes to all of them, and their multicultural dimensions, being productively alive.

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**Yugoslav and post-Yugoslav Literature as  
Post-Imperial Constellations:  
Towards a Transnational Literary History**

During the 1960s, Yugoslav scholars engaged in vivid debates about the nature of Yugoslav literature and the (im)possibility of writing a history of Yugoslav literature(s), either as an integral Yugoslav literature or as a conglomerate of different national literary histories. As a starting point for my paper, I will briefly revisit some of Svetozar Petrović's essays from *The Nature of Criticism (Priroda kritike, 1972)*. If updated with contemporary theoretical insights, Petrović's views are still relevant because: a) they address/locate some of the blind spots of national literary history and b) they urge us to think through key questions pertaining to the history of both Yugoslav and post-Yugoslav literature(s). Starting from Petrović's claim about the need to pay attention to the specific historical conditions in which Yugoslav literatures developed (at the periphery of European civilization, in a multinational country), I will discuss the relationship between (post-) Yugoslav literature(s) and the memory of empire. Against the backdrop of what Galin Tihanov (2011) called "the recalibration of the polis", I will argue that both Yugoslav and post-Yugoslav authors oscillated between cosmopolitanism and nationalism, simultaneously rejecting and mourning the lost multicultural and multilingual diversity

of the previous empire(s). Departing from Petrović's claim about the importance of bilingualism for the evolution of Yugoslav literature(s) in earlier centuries, I will discuss how different manifestations of bilingualism at the societal and individual levels characterize(d) Yugoslav and post-Yugoslav literature, ranging from diglossia (empire) and minority writers (nation-state) to the bilingual literature of writers in exile. I will argue that investigating these two interrelated clusters will not only shed light on the multiple entanglements of (post-)Yugoslav literature(s), which national literary histories tend to obscure, but also make clear why Yugoslav and post-Yugoslav literature offers both a fascinating example of and an exemplary testing ground for theories of transnational literary history.

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## **Anthologies of Yugoslav Poetry 1945-1991**

The aim of this paper is to consider the scope, criteria and poetics of several anthologies of modern Yugoslav poetry published during the period of the Socialist Federal Republic of Yugoslavia. These anthologies had both cultural and political roles, defining the image of the modern Yugoslav poet and the nation's representative and/or acceptable poetics. That concept is usually more obvious in the anthologies edited and published for specific purposes, such as educational ones; however, it essentially depends on the creativity, critical insight and integrity of the editor(s). There are a few key questions that highlight the difference between the work of a Yugoslav poetry anthologist and similar work performed by someone editing a national anthology, such as: Should the editor include the same number of poets from each of the SFRY's federal republics, or should they consider aesthetic criteria only when choosing the poets? Should poems by Slovenian or Macedonian authors be translated? Should representatives of national minorities be included as well? This research will seek to present some anthologies which include poetry from pre-Yugoslav times, such as *Novija jugoslavenska poezija* (Zagreb, 1962, 1966), edited by D. Mitrev, F. Petre, V. Popović and Š. Vučetić (beginning with

the poetry of Romanticism) or *Lirika pjesnika jugoslovenskih naroda* (Sarajevo, 1973), edited by P. Palavestra (from the period of Modernism to the present), as well as those narrower in their historical range, which include, for instance, only contemporary poetry or contemporary women's poetry (*Vrata vremena: poslijeratni jugoslavenski pjesnici* (Zagreb, 1958), edited by I. V. Lalić and J. Pupačić; *Antologija savremenih jugoslovenskih pesnikinja I, II* (Belgrade, 1988), edited by M. Tomić-Horvat and V. J. Nikolić). The ideas behind the selections will be examined in the context of their integrative and differentiating aspects, and through their contribution to the image of Yugoslav poetry as a whole.

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## **Complementary Canons: Zoran Konstantinović's Mediation between Yugoslav and Central European Literature**

Given the vexed nature of the ongoing debates about the legacy of Yugoslavia, it is unsurprising that the assessments of Yugoslav literary history have been polarized, involving both unreservedly positive appraisals and hostile perspectives. In addition to these antagonistic assessments, however, there were also scholars who were informed by the crisis and collapse of Yugoslavia but, rather than offering strong opinions on it, preferred to transform the terms of the debate and shift its geopolitical focus to a different zone. Zoran Konstantinović's book *Eine Literaturgeschichte Mitteleuropas* (2003, co-authored with Fridrun Rinner) is of the latter kind: it seeks a wider and more hospitable home for the South Slavonic canon after the notion of a Yugoslav literature has become discredited and unviable. Expanding the timeline to fifteen centuries and the geographical frame to Ukraine and Lithuania, Konstantinović embarks on a formidable task: articulate a different, supranational and genuinely humanist literary tradition which preserves the assets of both the Habsburg Monarchy and Yugoslavia and yet avoids their hegemony and ideological pitfalls. This paper will address two complementary questions. Firstly, how does Konstantinović's work inform us about the typological analogies and

contrasts between writing a history of Yugoslav literature and a literary history of Central Europe? Secondly, given that South Slavonic and Central European literatures interacted with each other, what status does Konstantinović's study accord to South Slavs within the Central European context and, vice versa, how does he see the role of the Central European context in the shaping of South Slav literary production?



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## **In Quest of the Definition and Meaning of “Yugoslav Literature”**

In 1974 Richard C. Clark raised the question “Is there a Yugoslav literature?” (in: Albert B. Lord, *The Multinational Literature of Yugoslavia*). 44 years later, the title of this workshop, “Was there ever a Yugoslav literature?”, echoes as a reminder that Clark’s question still remains. In my discussion, I will suggest that one should approach “Yugoslav literature” as a literature of cultural syntheses, especially in the age of post-Yugoslav studies.

