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## IMAGINING SLOVENE LITERARY HISTORY

This article applies Hayden White's theory of tropes as presented in *Metahistory: The historical imagination in nineteenth-century Europe* (1973) to select major works of Slovene literary history in order to elucidate their ideological stance. White's theory is an obvious if underutilized tool for clarifying the ideological implications of historical writing, which have received increased scrutiny in this decade. Based upon the arrangement of materials in the example of *Zgodovina slovenskega slovstva* (1968–1970) by Jože Pogačnik and Franc Zdravec, the article proposes that the work has a conservative outlook (i.e., a teleological view favoring the status quo) that is seemingly shared with other prominent histories of Slovene literature.

Članek izhaja iz teorije tropov Haydena Whitea, kot je predstavljena v delu *Metahistory: The historical imagination in nineteenth-century Europe* [Metazgodovina: zgodovinsko umišljanje v Evropi 19. stoletja] (1973) z namenom, izbrati glavna dela slovenske literarne zgodovine in osvetliti njihovo ideloško izhodišče. Whiteova teorija je očitno, četudi premalo izkoriščeno orodje za razlago ideoloških implikacij zgodovinopisja, ki se jim v preteklem desetletju posveča vse več pozornosti. Na osnovi razvrstitve gradiva v Pogačnik-Zdravčevi *Zgodovini slovenskega slovstva* (1968–1970) avtor ocenjuje, da delo razkriva konzervativne poglede (tj. teleološki pogled, naklonjen statusu quo), za katerega se zdi, da je značilen tudi za druge pomembnejše slovenske literarne zgodovine.

**Key words:** Slovene literary history, Hayden White

**Ključne besede:** slovenska literarna zgodovina, Hayden White

The purpose of this article is to apply Hayden White's theory of tropes in the writing of history, specifically literary history, and more specifically Slovene literary history, as set forth in *Metahistory: The Historical Imagination in Nineteenth-Century Europe*. If White's scheme is applicable, then the result should be a determination of the ideological implication(s) of a given Slovene literary history. Specifically, I will argue that, using White's terminology, certain standard Slovene literary histories adopt an Organicist vision of their subject matter, relating the phenomena to one another synecdochically, with a resulting Conservative view of literary history. The result of this argument may suggest both how to understand a Slovene literary history and what alternative kinds of history may exist.

I would like to anticipate five possible objections to using White's apparatus. First, it might be objected that White described socio-political and not literary histories,<sup>1</sup> and limited his description to the Enlightenment and the nineteenth century. The fact that literary history is history writing is perhaps so obvious that, for example, the contributors to *Kako pisati literarno zgodovino danes* (2003) hardly address the question. Yet it is the first question taken up – and answered affirmatively – by one of the contributors

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<sup>1</sup> White's four primary examples are Alexis de Tocqueville, Jules Michelet, Leopold von Ranke, and Jakob Burckhardt.



to the influential 2002 volume *Rethinking Literary History* (Valdes 2002: 63). Since Hegel, literary history has generally been considered part of universal history, though late twentieth-century doubts about the literary canon, for instance, may prevent us from taking this as a given. Universal history implies a unified view, against which a diversified canon militates.

Further, questions about the tools for constructing literary history, like the category of genre, employed by White, might call into question longitudinal studies. Zupan-Sosič (2003: 12–13) argues, for instance, for an expanded definition of the category of genre for the purpose of describing the contemporary Slovene novel. If such a definition is necessary for describing Slovene novels over the course of only a decade, it is fair to ask whether the genre of the novel as conceived for earlier literary histories still exists. Yet such misgivings about changes in the crafting of literary history do not adequately support the contention that it is not history – a narrative about past events, whichever events are selected and however they are categorized. For the purpose of this discussion, we will assume that literary history is a division of history.

A third possible objection is that inadequacies and certain concepts in White's *Metahistory*, published three decades ago, make the present exercise ill-advised, not to mention the fact that White later distanced himself from his theory of tropes (Clark 2004: 102). Moreover, there was confusion among readers about what the tropes were in the first place. Finally, some might object that White's later writings, which are also cited numerous times in *Kako pisati literarno zgodovino danes* (e.g., by Juvan, Biti, and Škulj), might be better sources of his views on narrative and history. My reply is that first, as Richard Vann pointed out in his 1998 essay on the reception of White, the theory of tropes was actually tested on historical writing only once (Vann 1998: 151),<sup>2</sup> and it has not been tested on literary history at all. To the part of the objection that says *Metahistory* is outdated, I reply that it is far from clear that very many historians have read the entire work, and thus its usefulness has received scant examination. Despite White's acknowledged importance to history's so-called linguistic turn (Clark 2004: 98–104), it would be erroneous to say that his views are widely respected by historians or are recommended reading in educational institutions (Jenkins 1995).

As to the definition of tropes, I propose that they refer to ways of relating the historical data to each other and not to labels for history writers' characteristic rhetorical devices. In other words, tropes are ways of relating phenomena, not characterizations of writing styles.

The fifth possible objection I anticipate is that post-WW II Slovene literary historians were not writing in the nineteenth-century modes that White analyzes in *Metahistory*. While the data that mid- to late-twentieth-century Slovene literary historians take into account is far more comprehensive than that of their predecessors, the way

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<sup>2</sup> Donald Ostrowski 1990. Ostrowski considers four Russian histories and finds that White's analysis is applicable and revealing; however, Ostrowski concludes, there may be ambiguities in the correspondences that White predicts. The most troublesome aspect of White's framework, in Ostrowski's view, is that it does not explain why a historian may be predisposed to one of the four general views of the past – in other words, it does not explain ideological motivation (229).



they imagined literature's past continues nineteenth-century traditions.<sup>3</sup> By »imagination,« of course, is meant the equivalent of White's term »prefiguration«; imagination does not mean that literary historians engaged in fancies about the past; rather it refers to their ideological dispositions when viewing – the visual analogy is key – and narrating the past.

Before turning to an application of White's analysis, it would be useful to acknowledge that there is an array of general problems in dealing with the topic of literary history that contribute to its prestige and contentiousness. Let me allude to just two major ones. The first is that which in discussing literary history Claire Colebrook calls the difficulty of our historical conditioning. It seems that to give a description of most anything we in the West revert automatically to describing the thing's past (Colebrook 1997: 2–3). To understand what something is, we must know from whence it came. A result of nineteenth-century historicism and the scientific quest for causality, this tendency increases the value and prestige of literary history: only a discipline that can trace origins can ultimately define the subject matter, in this case literature.<sup>4</sup>

The second general problem is related to the first. It has to do with interpretation, historical and esthetic. The personal and esthetic relations between literary historians and writers from the inception of modern literary history have been noted by Marko Juvan, especially insofar as critics' literary preferences reflect their socio-historical views.<sup>5</sup> The unity of the beautiful and true thus has a historico-ideological dimension as well. This connection holds in particular for a (Organicist – White's term) view of history that has been prevalent in Slovene culture and which I will discuss below.

Contemporary Slovene (but not only) historians are prone to underline the key role that language played in the process of nation building.<sup>6</sup> Peter Vodopivec, for example, posits the starting point of the process in Slovenia in 1768, the year Marko Pohlin's

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<sup>3</sup> Marko Juvan observes that »since literary history emerged in the pragmatic context of nineteenth-century national identity policies, it cannot surprise us that it remained firmly bound to the idea of nation. It is still the prevailing factor that delimits literary history's field of reference and cultural functions« (Juvan 2008: 27). Juvan concludes that »When compared to recent developments in the most »progressive« fields of literary historiography in the world, the structure, methods, and scope of contemporary Slovene literary histories seem rather conservative« (33).

<sup>4</sup> The historical reflex is evident in other fields as well. To give a simple example, Peter Herrity (2000) devotes fully half of the less than four-page introduction to his marvelous grammar of Slovene to a historical definition of Contemporary Standard Slovene. This reflex is present in other disciplines as well. The first lines of Janez Bogataj's *Domače obrti na Slovenskem* are: »Pojem domače obrti se je izoblikoval in ustalil šele v drugi polovici 19.stoletja /.../« (1989: 3); the first chapter takes up crafts in the Middle Ages. The collection *Democratic Transition in Slovenia* opens with an uncommented, eight-page »Chronology of the Slovenian Lands, « beginning in 250,000 B.C. (ix–xvi) (Ramet and Fink-Hafner 2006)!

<sup>5</sup> »Zgodovinarji so se nemara tudi zaradi genetske bližine z literaturo pogosto vse do danes istovetili z besedno umetnostjo in s stališči izbranih pisateljev. V literarnozgodovinsko pripoved, ki sicer /.../ skuša biti verna rekonstrukcija preteklosti, vstopa zaveznitvo s književnostjo prek primese interpretativno-kritičkega razglabljanja o posameznih besednih mojstrovinah /.../ Mojstrovine vzorno utelešajo dobo nastanka, obenem pa jo tudi presejajo; razlagalno slikanje zgodovinskih 'ozadij' naj bi omogočilo, da bodo veličino umetnin spoznali tudi bralci in bralke literarnih zgodovin« (Juvan 2003: 25).

<sup>6</sup> For an instructive exception, see Bogo Grafenauer's introduction to *Zgodovina Slovencev*, which dates Slovene historiography to Anton Tomaž Linhart but nowhere makes mention of the Slovene language.



grammar was published (Vodopivec 2006).<sup>7</sup> The importance of the language, and by extension literature, in constituting the nation further enhances Slovene literary history's prestige and solidifies its ties with socio-political history. This connection urges a teleological view of history, based on the logic that to describe a language and literature's past is essential to understanding it, which in turn forms a basis for legitimizing and understanding nation, which becomes literary history's ultimate goal. Because of this, Slovene literary historians sometimes justify dispensing with esthetic criteria that they might prefer to use in determining which data, or objects of study, are artistic and which are not. The parts depend upon the *a priori* existence of the whole (language, literature, and nation).

To return to White's scheme, let us consider what »prefiguration of the world of experience /.../ in object-whole terms,« synecdochically, means (36), as it relates to a history of Slovene literature.<sup>8</sup> Let us consider an example from the six-volume *Zgodovina slovenskega slovstva* (Pogačnik and Zadavec 1968–1972), which is one of the last, chronologically, of such comprehensive histories. Volume 3 of *Zgodovina slovenskega slovstva, Klasika in romantika* (1969) is, for obvious reasons, a good place to start. This is how it is structured: Seventeen sections (18–134) treat topics assumed to be of relevance to literature (appendix 1). These sections are preceded by a general historical introduction (»Kulturno-zgodovinska določenost dobe«, 8–17) and followed by a conclusion (»Literarna določenost dobe«, 134–139), which comments on the general literary characteristics of the period 1830–1834. Thus the volume begins with the period's »cultural-historical« and ends with its »literary« character.

What surely must surprise the reader about this structuring is the absence of direct connections between the sections. For example, demographic, economic, social, and political data and observations in the introductory section on cultural-historical characteristics are not explanatory grounds for the following sections – the first sections are on education (17–25) and cultural organizations (25–37). On the contrary, the cultural-historical overview ends with an 1851 quote from Matija Majar advocating a retreat from politics into literature. The author's use of Majar's view seems to undercut the relevance of the preceding socio-historical information.

Rather than giving a comprehensive account of what he considers relevant historical developments from 1830–54, Pogačnik describes the situation in each sphere – education, cultural organizations, journalism, theater, and so on – separately. Thus the reader learns about Janez Bleiweis's newspaper *Novice* in the section on journalism but only finds out about its role in theatrical life in the section on the crisis in drama (89–92). Likewise, literary history (95) and criticism (96–108) in periodicals are handled apart from one another. Similarly, information on the society found early in the volume would

<sup>7</sup> Note that Vodopivec is, however, careful to characterize his history as a »zgodovina ljudi, ki so se od konca 18. stoletja naprej posamično in od začetka druge polovice 19. stoletja v vse večjem številu čutili in označevali za Slovence, in ne zgodovina Slovenije ali slovenskega naroda« (7). Further, Vodopivec's history is truly a comprehensive consideration of the Slovene past, in which literature is treated alongside most other aspects of life. For another historian's statement on the importance of language and literature to the Slovene nation, see Gabrič (2001).

<sup>8</sup> White's four modes of emplotment are comedies in an Organicist, tragedies in a Mechanistic, satires in a Contextualist, and romance in a Formist mode.



seem relevant to the later section on literary style (119–130), where Pogačnik attributes the *Weltschmerz* of some poetry in the 1830s to the disjunction between individuals' ambitions and the possibilities for self-realization that society offered (119).

If the thesis that *Zgodovina slovenskega slovstva* prefigures the world synecdochically – that the author perceives the past in object-for-whole terms – is correct, then these kinds of disconnects, or lack of apparent cause and effect argumentation, or even description of processes, are to be expected. They are not shortcomings; I certainly do not mean to imply that they are failings. The overriding object-to-whole organization links the phenomena treated in the discrete sections of volume 3 to the theme of Slovene linguistic, literary, social, and political integration. Each of the sections, then, is important insofar as it exemplifies in microcosm (White's terminology) the situation in macrocosm. Thus the section on journalism opens: »Podoba časnikov and časopisov, ki so izhajali med letoma 1830 in 1854, najbolj natanko razkriva idejno in estetsko valovanje tega obdobja« (37). Periodicals' unified image (*podoba*) rather than their diversity is crucial, again reflecting the microcosm-macrocosm relation. This approach permits the author to reconcile what he otherwise points out are polarities in journalism, such as between *Kranjska čbelica* and *Novice*. Each member of a binary opposition contributes in its own way to the overarching historical movement towards integration. Therefore the conclusion in the case of Bleiweiss's *Novice* is that

Ni pa mogoče trditi, da ta «lepa laž» ni bila narodotvorna in funkcionalna. Konstituiranje slovenstva s kmečkim prebivalstvom je med sredstvi za dosego postavljenega cilja uporabljalo čuvstveno gledanje na stvari ter uporabljalo v svoj namen prilagojeno razlago zgodovine. Poglavitni cilj je zahteval, da se mu vse drugo podredi. (48)

Further: »Ideje sloge, narodnostne integriranosti in slovanske usmerjenosti so bile tiste sile vodnice, ki so usmerjale to glasilo in mu s svojo konkretizacijo vsaj eno desetletje dajale velik pomen v oblikovanju slovenskega slovstva in kulture«. (49) The periodical's relevance is to the global idea, instead of to, for example, genre developments or individual writers' careers.

A correlate of a synecdochal-Organicist narrative is integration of the empirical and intellectual.<sup>9</sup> Pogačnik's conclusion about journalism of the period captures precisely this approach:

Časopisi in časniki s seizmografsko natančnostjo zapisujejo duhovne tokove, značilne za obravnavanih petindvajset let. Urednikovanje se je namreč ravnalo po vnaprej premišljenih načelih, ki so bila prilagojena vsakokratnemu položaju in slovstvenim potrebam. V tem kompleksu kulturnega življenja so so sodobne izkušnje neprenehoma soočale s imaginarnim idealom. Uredniški koncepti so rasli iz slovenske, posebne in določene zgodovinske situacije, in so to situacijo osvetljevali z občega vidika, ki jih je sodobno življenje dvigalo v konkretnost. Zato je podoba revialnega in časnikarskega življenja hkrati izraz osrednjih vprašanj dobe in mera njihove vsebinske nabitosti. (53–54)

<sup>9</sup> Ostrowski uses the terms »physical« and »spiritual« (1990: 228). A reviewer of Pogačnik's contribution on poetry to *Slovenska književnost III* finds him a »traditional literary historian« in part because of the form-content dichotomy he establishes in analyzing works and literary periods (Pavlič 2001: 71).

That periodicals recorded, judged, and arbitrated current issues seems like a statement of the obvious, at least from today's perspective. Its significance is in the way it posits a microcosm-macrocosm relationship between journalism and Slovene history in general, in White's synecdochic manner, thus suggesting manifestation of ideas or intellectual trends in the mundane world (*v konkretnost*).<sup>10</sup>

Volume 3 of *Zgodovina slovenskega slovstva* covers the key period in the formation of the Slovene literary language. A central thesis of this volume corresponds to the views of two chief actors of the period, Matija Čop and Jernej Kopitar. Pogačnik notes the importance of Wilhelm von Humboldt's thought to both these men in the section »Boj za individualnost slovenskega jezika« (57–63). The use of the word »individualnost« in the section title is telling, because the anthropomorphization of the language harmonizes with Pogačnik's presentation of the period as one in which there the Slovene subject (subjekt) or individual's vital goals were happiness (*sreča*) and freedom (*svoboda*), though tempered with a certain pessimism about social progress (113). Pogačnik views Matija Čop's position on language in this vein: »/.../ je Čopovo pojmovanje jezika (in literature) tam, kjer je dobil njegov celotni umetnosti nazor srediče: v subjektivnosti estetskega in romantičnega individualizma« (60). Now it might seem that this individualistic project is at odds with the communal one of social and linguistic integration; however, in Čop's (and Herder's) thinking, the two – individual and communal – are in isomorphic relation: As the individual cultivates his or her naturally given talents, so does the nation develop, with language being key evidence of the latter's uniqueness (Seigel 2005: 353–351). The period 1830–1854 is thus not only the subject of volume 3 but the source of the approach to the entire history of Slovene literature, because it is at this point in Slovene literary history, according to the author, that the integrative idea of harmony between individual and communal aspirations arises.

The introduction to volume 3 is clear on the point that the book will describe the integrative forces at work in the nineteenth century. This is the principle (*načelo*) at work, the »/.../ spopad med različnimi zgodovinskimi silami in integracijsko težnjo, ki je prevzemala ter gibala slovstvo in usmerjala kulturno zavest k univerzalnosti in sklenjenosti slovenskega besednega ustvarjanja«. (5) In the individual sphere, the development is one towards the »ustoličenje besedne umetnosti kot človekove avtonomne duhovne dejavnosti v slovenščini« (5).

Pogačnik treats the idea of the subject in what seems to me the most cogent section of the book, on »Analysis of the Worldview« (*Svetovnonazorska razčlenitev* [108–15]). This section bears out the importance of literature as an expression of the new individuality, although the author admits difficulties with the genealogy of supporting ideas and is apparently disappointed that they are not part of public discourse outside

<sup>10</sup> This particular view of literary history does not necessarily follow from this period. Nor is the duration of the period (twenty-five years) a factor. A scholar analyzing a number of Slovene novels published between 1986 and 1990 adopts a similar approach: »V njihovih delih se utelesi preobrazba sistema duhovnih koordinat, ki odlikuje narod kot samostojno, samobitno celoto« (Sozina 2003: 325). A methodological criticism that reflects this view is leveled against Silvija Borovnik's overview of prose in *Slovenska književnost III*: »Brez poglobljenega kronološko-generacijskega, predvsem pa duhovnozgodovinskega ozadja pa niti ni tako očitno, zakaj so vrhovi sodobne proze in zakaj so pravzaprav tako pomembni za njen razvoj« (Dragojevič 2001: 89).



of literature: »Svetovnonazorsko razčlenjevanje se ni razvijalo po formalnih idejnih ali političnih skupinah, marveč je ostajalo v okvirih literarnih konceptov.« (108) In the face of meager evidence of individuals espousing new views of selfhood (»*kategorija* «*jaz*»») the author must speak of the ideas as simply »being in the air« at the time (109). This section references people and topics in other sections of the volume – for instance, Stanko Vraz, Matija Čop, Bleiweiss's *Novice* – in ways that buttress the history's teleological argument. However, it still evidences the dispersive, part-to-whole structure of the entire work. Given the centrality of this section to the book's theme, the reader might be puzzled to find it buried exactly in the middle. On the other hand, there is a distinct tension between this section on worldviews and that on poetry (»*Pesniška ustvarjalnost*« [72–81]), which emphatically asserts poetry's nation building role. In fact, the alignment of worldview with individuality and poetry with nation building seems rather anomalous. One might expect the opposite. Perhaps because the written evidence in the latter section is stronger, Pogačnik expresses his point of view more forcefully. Or maybe he considers poetry's nation building role more important, or sympathizes with what he calls the Herderian view of individuality preserved in humanity. In any case, both the placement and composition of these sections indicates that these aspects of the period have not been fully reconciled.

The Humboldtian isomorphic view of individual and communal is influential in Slovene thought from the 1830s to the mid-twentieth century and an ideological source of Pogačnik's treatment of Slovene literary history; it is also a key point in White's analysis of the nineteenth-century historical imagination. For White, Humboldt is an originator of the synecdochic view of history, in which »all events are conceived to bear a relationship to the whole which is that of microcosm to macrocosm« (180). According to Humboldt, reproducing events in historical narrative is inferior to showing »the formal coherence of the total fabric of events« (180). White terms this »intrinsicity,« similar to the unity of presentation in the Aristotelian ideal that was again championed in the Enlightenment and that Mink and others have returned to over the last several decades in juxtaposing literary and historical recounting of events (Grossman 1978: 28, 30, 35).

Slovene writers and their works occupy an odd place in *Zgodovina slovenskega slovstva*, appearing in this and the other five volumes at the end. Authors' entries are arranged by year of birth. Fortunately, this puts Prešeren (born 1800) immediately after Čop (born 1797), and safely separated from Stanko Vraz (born 1810) by two associates of the review *Kranjska čbelica* (Jožef Žemlja, born 1805; Jernej Levičnik, born 1808). Each of the entries is an illustration of the volume's main theme of unification and its attendant theses. Thus, for instance, Žemlja »was a poet of some talent, yet his spiritual potential could not contend with the contradictions contained in the historical situation of his time« (167); and Anton Žakelj ».../ was only lyrical when expressing his deep existential disquiet. But he had to repress it in society, resulting in an experiential-creative tension that enabled the birth of his lyrics« (184). The literary history's placement of the authors, like the arrangement of the preceding sections in the volume, is consistent with the Organicist mode of argument White associates with synecdoche.

The aim of Organicist argumentation, explains White, is to depict particulars in the historical field as components of a synthetic process, the components in aggregate being greater than their sum as parts. Organicist historians »/.../ structure their narratives in such a way so as to depict the consolidation or crystallization, out of a set of apparently dispersed events, of some integrated entity whose importance is greater than any of the individual entities analyzed or described in the course of the narrative« (15). The presentation that follows from an Organicist stance is teleological. In the Slovene case that we are considering the aim is integration. Thus on Pogačnik's historical account, while oppositions between lay and clerical liberals, proponents of different orthographies, and panslavists and their opponents are important, the reader senses no suspense or danger to the project of unification. In the case of Illyrianism in the 1840s, for example, it is impossible to tell from this history how great was the threat to the Slovene language's integrity, since for all the reader knows, the half dozen proponents that Pogačnik describes may have been lone renegades, in effect straw men who exist only to build a strong case for unification. The terse, one-sentence conclusion to the section reinforces this suspicion: »Odmikajoče se jezikovne težnje so podlegle združujočim silam, ki so dokončno izoblikovale individualnost slovenskega jezika« (71).

White's primary example of Organicist history writing is Leopold von Ranke, whose synecdochic apprehension of history White dubs a comedy of obligation because in it the community triumphs, as opposed to, for instance, Michelet's comedy of desire, which focuses on the individual. Comedy in general tells of reconciliation. While there might be setbacks in progress towards the goal, there is no doubt that eventually it will be achieved. Thus, for example, in his two-volume *History of the Reformation in Germany* (1905), the Germans appear already from the eighth century as a »nation« in a Europe unified by Christianity. Von Ranke projects a modern religious outlook backwards as well:

The domain of mind, too, was enclosed within rigid and narrow boundaries. The immediate relation in which every intellectual being stands to the Divine Intelligence was veiled from the people in deep and abiding obscurity.

Those mighty developments of the human mind which extend over whole generations, must, of necessity, be accomplished slowly; nor is it always easy to follow them in their progress.

Circumstances at length occurred which awakened in the German nation a consciousness of the position for which nature designed it (20).

Given that nature had already assigned the German nation the leading role in Christendom, the historian's task is to show how events – in von Ranke's case, political events – manifested the preordained goal. When there are failures along the way, von Ranke attributes them to internal divisions. Thus, in the eleventh century, »If we seek for the causes of these unfavourable results, we need only turn our eyes on the internal condition of the empire, where we find an incessant and tempestuous struggle of all the forces of the nation« (11). Von Ranke does not elaborate on what these »forces of the nation« were; it is not important to, because treating part-to-part, or cause-and-effect relations is not his mission.





Before considering the ideological implication of *Zgodovina slovenskega slovstva*'s prefiguration of the literary world synecdochically, let me answer the questions of 1) whether this finding for volume 3 applies as well to the other five volumes, some of which have a different author (i.e., Franc Zadavec, V and VI), and 2) whether this finding could be applied to roughly contemporaneous literary histories. As to the first question, Zadavec's volume 5, *Nova romantika in mejni obliki realizma*, is structured very differently from the preceding volumes. Volume 4 still retains the kind of sectioning found in volumes 1–3; however, it has already devalued the importance of Slovene unification by a peculiar move that equates unification with the Romantic literature of the previous period: »Od politike ideje in koncepta, ki jo je označevala vizija Zedinjene Slovenije, je šla pot v politiko uspešnosti, kar pomeni v pragmatistično pojmovanje političnega delovanja. Med politiko koncepta, ki računa s prihodnostjo, in politiko pragmatizma, ki upošteva sedanost in resničnost, prav tako leži nasprotje, ki je očitno izraženo v književnosti z nasprotjem med romantiko in realizmom«. (16–17) It is as if the historian senses that the teleological argument that complements the period of Slovene Romanticism so well is not as applicable later in the century. However, what in fact appears to be happening is that the context shifts in volume 4 from the Slovene lands to Europe in general, and the historical approach becomes more comparative, regularly referencing literary developments in other lands.<sup>11</sup> The shift is completed in volume 5. I would point to Zadavec's comments on Ivan Cankar as an expression of this theme: »Hotel je, da bi slovenski narod postal skupnost, ki bi v zboru evropskih narodov imel ugled tudi z visoko kulturo in umetnostjo; iz razmerja umetnik in narod naj bi zrasla tudi nova kvaliteta v razmerju narod – Evropa. Drugi cilj tega boja pa je bil ta, da bi se po družbi priznani umetnik zavzel za naravno in odgovorno službo resnici« (215).

When I assert that the historical field has changed, that does not mean that major themes in the multi-volume work are abandoned. For example, the volume 7 entry for Ciril Kosmač concludes that »Pomemben navdih njegove proze je boj za osebno in narodno svobodo. Junak tega navdiha je sprva avtor sam, kasneje, v tematiki iz osvobodilne vojne, pa objektivni junak, vzdignjen v simbol (172). Zadavec's conclusion makes sense in the tradition of interpreting the isomorphic relation between the individual and communal established in preceding volumes of *Zgodovina slovenskega slovstva*. Further, Zadavec sees in the partisan resistance a parallel to and fulfillment of the nineteenth-century national cultural revival.

Zadavec explains in the introduction to volume 5 that his original intention was to restrict the material to literary works of esthetic quality, but that certain genre considerations caused him to expand the field. Despite the different selection of material and shift in theme, this volume of the history still does not concern itself with cause and effect, part-part relations. Nor is it properly what White terms a contextual presentation, one that examines key factors in a delimited period. Volume 5 is still part of

<sup>11</sup> The development of increasingly divergent points of views on Slovendom after WW I also complicates the authors' task of defining the historical field. The entry on the literary critic France Vodnik in volume 7 (213–216) treats this difficulty explicitly: Zadavec notes that Vodnik opposed a pluralistic view of Slovendom to, for example Josip Vidmar's idea of a more homogenized one (215).



an Organicist, part-to-whole account, only now the historical field is made up of (for the most part) »quality« works that demonstrate how Slovene literature earned a place among other European literatures. Of course, this move corresponds to the period when creative writing became an autonomous field of Slovene culture.<sup>12</sup> The teleological end has shifted from Slovene internal integration to similar developments in Slovene letters and other European literatures.

As to point 2, whether my finding could be applied to other literary histories, consider, for example, Janko Kos's one-volume *Pregled slovenskega slovstva* (1980).<sup>13</sup> The arrangement of materials resembles that in *Zgodovina slovenskega slovstva* in that writers and their works follow general characterizations of corresponding periods. However, in place of the socio-cultural information found in *Zgodovina slovenskega slovstva* we have 1) the European context, 2) literary trends in the given period, and 3) genres. Kos does include a section on society for his first four periods – old Slavic, the Middle Ages, the Reformation, and Baroque. Starting with the Enlightenment, however, the section on society disappears, presumably because literature becomes a more autonomous field. In his contribution to *Kako pisati literarno zgodovino danes*, Kos advocates an intellectual history of literature of the kind he demonstrates in *Pregled slovenskega slovstva*. (Incidentally, he also justifies the term *pregled* 'overview' as opposed to »history« because, he reasons, it dispenses with the expectation that literature will be treated in a socio-political complex [2003, 53].) Kos seems to be making a strong argument that Slovene literary developments are a function of pan-European philosophical trends. (By »strong argument« I mean that these trends are necessary and sufficient explanations for Slovene literary developments.) For example, Romanticism is a result of Enlightenment thought, plus the French Revolution, plus Kant's dualism. These influences move geographically. Thus verbs tracing Enlightenment thought are *pojavit se*, *razširiti se*, *prodreti*, *boriti se*; then *podreti se* and *upasti*. Kos has woefully little space to explain Slovene reception of European intellectual and artistic currents or what he means, for instance, by Kant's dualism, but the suggestions are nonetheless helpful to the reader. Kos presents a Contextual – in White's terms – view of Slovene literary history, one that strives to show developments within separate periods without trying to link the periods with some organizing principle. A second example of a contextualist approach may be found in France Bernik's work; for instance, the lucid essays collected in *Slowenische Literatur im europäischen Kontext* (1993).

Bernik shows how ideas in other European cultures were adapted in different periods and evidenced in writers' styles. Bernik focuses his discussion on such literary

<sup>12</sup> Once esthetic preferences are introduced, the historical presentation becomes complicated by the author's proclivities. Zadavec obviously prefers clearly mimetic works of prose. Note his odd logic in explaining why the novelist Miško Kranjec's rural subject matter forced him to reject contemporary »stream of consciousness« narration: »Kranjčeva proza ima torej vzporednico v evropski realistični kmetški literaturi. Kakor hitro si je za družbeno in socialno središče svoje proze izbral kmetškega človeka, se je moral odpovedati romanu 'struje zavesti' oz. zapleteni psihoanalitični prozi, ki je v Evropi tedaj postala moderna. Bolj kot katerokoli psihološko teorijo osebnosti je izbral za osnovno motivacijo dejanj svojega junaka njegovo sociološko, s tem pa tudi duševno in naravno določenost« (157). By this logic, William Faulkner should not have used stream of consciousness narration because many of his characters lived in the rural American South.

<sup>13</sup> Although Kos's book is primarily a pedagogical tool, it will still do for sake of comparison.



developments as naturalism in the 1880s and 1890s, and he recounts how non-Slovene models shift in different periods. In the cases of certain writers, like Ivan Cankar, he emphasizes originality rather than modeling, so that the individual writer's *oeuvre* itself becomes a context. Bernik readily acknowledges continuities between literary periods (55), but his interest in esthetic shifts tends to highlight change and discontinuity. So the answer is No, not all later twentieth-century Slovene literary histories adopted a teleological approach.

So the answer is No, not all later twentieth-century Slovene literary histories adopted a teleological approach.<sup>14</sup>

White's analysis of nineteenth-century histories allows for Formist, Mechanistic, Organicist, and Contextualist explanations. The first might be described as catalogs of not necessarily related data; the second are explanations that rely on laws; the third is informed by some guiding idea or inspiration; and the fourth usually applies to delimited periods in which data are interrelated. Each of the four explanations corresponds to a Fryean mode of emplotment (Romantic, Tragic, Comic, or Satirical) and approach, or ideological implication. (As one might expect, narrative histories may conform to this alignment imperfectly or ambiguously.) According to White, then, an Organicist explanation ought to accompany a Comic story, one of overcoming obstacles and succeeding. The ideological implication is conservative (as opposed to anarchist, radical, or liberal, which correspond to the other three kinds of historical explanation). A conservative view is one that sees existing arrangements as satisfactory and, given the alternatives, the best possible for the moment. In contrast, a liberal view would likely adopt a Contextualist explanation and narrate a satirical story. A liberal would likely advocate adjustments or reforms, although not radical structural changes.

On the whole, White's analysis appears to describe the characteristics of *Zgodovina slovenskega slovstva*. I have argued that *Zgodovina slovenskega slovstva* prefigures the historical field synecdochally, emplotting the history of Slovene literature as a comedy of responsibility. If this is accurate, according to White's alignment of typical prefigurations and emplotments, the ideological implication is a conservative one. By »conservative,« White means satisfaction with the status quo and preference for incremental change. In the Slovene context, regardless of Slovenia's political status at any time, conservatism implies focus on the nation and national literature (Juvan 2008: 30–31), for which related scholarly and educational institutions might be essential. Relatively greater political autonomy for the Slovene lands has strengthened these institutions. The most obvious example is that formal courses on Slovene literary history begin

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<sup>14</sup> Anton Slodnjak's *Zgodovina slovenskega slovstva* offers a more comprehensive example of a contextual history. It may be a better comparison to Pogačnik and Zadavec's history because it includes similar categories. Slodnjak's narrative interweaves accounts of social, political, journalistic, literary, and other developments. For instance, volume 4 (*Nova struja [1895–1900] in nadaljnje oblike realizma in naturalizma*) opens with the story of how Ivan Tavčar and Janko Kersnik ended their cooperation on the review *Ljubljanski zvon* (5), digresses on political and journalistic matters, and returns to Tavčar and Kersnik six pages later (11). Unlike the other two histories discussed, Slodnjak considers the influences of individuals' lives and social backgrounds on the genesis of their works. Slodnjak's use of metonymy – describing how parts in the historical field relate to other parts – probably seems more customary to readers; it is, White observes, the preferred model of professional historians.



with the opening of first national university in 1919. Therefore, it is probably just to interpret Slovene independence as a conservative change, one that advances the cause of preserving national integrity. Why the authors of *Zgodovina slovenskega slovstva* should have held a conservative position in the 1960s and 1970s might be explained on the basis of their life experiences, mentors, institutional loyalties, and/or other factors. Our object, however, is to appreciate literary histories' organization and meaning, and not to identify historians' motivations.

Moreover, a (literary) historian's ideological predisposition and attendant historical explanations can well change. Zadavec's two-volume *Slovenski roman 20. stoletja* (1997, 2002) would seem to be, judging by its title, a history of the genre, but it is, rather, a compendium of close readings whose main concern is individual artists' perceptions. This work might hypothetically be viewed as a Formist approach with Romantic emplotment and thus possibly anarchist implications. An anarchist position certainly does seem to be evident in a work that dispenses with any historical explanation other than the artist's life, and thus any supra-individual structure. On the other hand, Zadavec has elsewhere been criticized for overemphasizing socio-political context at the expense of artistic considerations in his introduction to *Slovenska književnost III* (Fridl 2001: 66).<sup>15</sup>

It must be conceded that the ideology of *Zgodovina slovenskega slovstva* does not necessarily have to be conservative because its narration is organized in an Organicist mode. Like any other human endeavor, writing history can be inconsistent, and White's prediction can thus be wrong. However, in this case the Organicist-conservative parallel is valid. The teleological arguments of Slovene unification and cultural membership in Europe may be convincing from a late-twentieth-century position because they were, at least to some extent, validated in the second Yugoslavia. A conservative outlook on the part of proponents of Slovene language and literature is thus eminently reasonable at this time. We might likewise look at EU accession as fulfilling the teleological argument of unity and integration. That is to say, a conservative, nationalist stance makes sense retrospectively. Perhaps because of historical coincidence, one can appreciate why Organicist historians with conservative views might be suspect of proposals to modify how literary history is written (Juvan 2008: 33–35), or even to adjust the canon of Slovene literature.

This very brief sketch of applying White's theory seems to show, first, that the question of what materials are included in a history is of lesser importance than the way they are arranged in relation (or not) to one another; and second, if materials are prefigured in a part-to-whole relationship – that is, synechdocally – then the likely result is a conservative view. To the extent that professional literary history influences people's perceptions of the society they live in, its origins, and development, the way that history is imagined would seem to be important.

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<sup>15</sup> Fridl's criticism of Zadavec's views may be justified. I do not wish to judge. However, the criticism that politics and society do not belong in a historical description of literature can just as well be leveled at *Zgodovina slovenskega slovstva* or another, Contextualist history. The real issue is that Fridl perceives Zadavec's introduction to be a tendentious, personal political statement.



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*Appendix 1. Sections part 1 (čas in prostor), volume 3 of Zgodovina slovenskega slovstva*

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POVZETEK

Članek izhaja iz teorije tropov Heydena Whitea, kot je predstavljena v delu *Metahistory: The historical imagination in nineteenth-century Europe* [Metazgodovina: zgodovinsko umišljanje v Evropi 19. stoletja] (1973) z namenom, izbrati glavna dela slovenske literarne zgodovine in osvetliti njihovo ideloško izhodišče. Whiteova teorija se ponuja kot samoumevno, četudi premalo izkoriščeno orodje za razlago ideoloških implikacij zgodovinopisja, ki se jim v preteklem desetletju posveča vse več pozornosti. Teorija temelji na splošni zgodovini 19. stoletja, vendar jo je mogoče aplicirati na posebne zgodovine (npr. na literarno), posebej na tiste, ki upoštevajo družbeno-zgodovinski kontekst. Razprava se osredotoča na razvrstitev in razmerje literarno-zgodovinskega gradiva za ugotavljanje npr. vrste vzročnosti. Na osnovi razvrstitve gradiva v Pogačnik-Zdravčevi *Zgodovini slovenskega slovstva* (1968–1970) avtor ocenjuje, da delo razkriva konzervativne poglede (tj. teleološki pogled, ki je naklonjen statusu quo), za katere se zdi, da so precej (a ne v celoti) značilni tudi za druge pomembnejše slovenske literarne zgodovine.