



UDK 821.163.6.09

Marjan Dolgan

ZRC SAZU Institute of Slovene Literature and Literary Studies, Ljubljana

THE CAPITAL AND CENTERS OF SLOVENE LITERATURE

Geographical analyses reveal the diversity of capital cities, their mobility, and impermanence. Of significance to Slovene literary history is the existence of separate political and literary capitals. The latter, the seat of literature, gradually came into being in the course of history as a function of socio-political conditions. In addition, smaller centers of Slovene literature were formed in partially Slovene or completely foreign cities. Differing literary relations between the seat of literature and literary centers are the consequence of political processes.

Key words: geography, state capital, typology of political capitals, seat of national literature, Slovene literary history, Dunaj – Vienna, Ljubljana, Celovec – Klagenfurt, Trst – Trieste, Buenos Aires, Kirsch

1 Introduction

The *Slovar slovenskega literarnega jezika* [*Dictionary of the Slovene literary language*] defines the word »capital« as »stylistically unmarked« name for a »capital city« and as a »journalistic« designation for »city or town that is the center of some activity«. Etymologically, it means a town where an enthroned ruler governs citizens of the town and vicinity. Many speakers of the language associate the word »capital« with the word »metropolis«. The *Slovar slovenskega literarnega jezika* defines it as a »stylistically unmarked« designation for »the main, principal town of a state or region«. In the same dictionary, »town« is defined as »a population center that is the administrative, economic, and cultural center of a wider area«. The phrase »the capital of a state« further means a population center in which »the headquarters of the highest state bodies are located«. One of the definitions for word »center« is »capital city, town, or place where a certain activity is centered«, »place where something emerges, is concentrated, and from which it further spreads«, »whatever is the most significant, the most important for something«. (SSKJ 1997: 544, 548, 1022)

The words cited bear meanings that pertain to a concentration of political, military, economic, and cultural power that subordinate the main town and its surrounding area. The words »seat« and »metropolis« are therefore not value neutral, but are emotional and reflective designations for a »capital city«.

Regarding their expressiveness, the use of both words can be either positive (favorable or approving) or negative (critical or disapproving). The tone is only evident from the spoken or written context. However, the goal of this article is not a linguistic comparison of these terms. The aim is to define the importance of certain towns and cities that became political capitals, seats, metropolises, or centers in Slovene literary history; to describe the reasons some towns gained such a status; and to describe their mutual relationships in different historical eras. For utmost clarity, this article



on literary history also addresses conceptual relationships between words not found in the dictionary.

2 In this article, by the stylistically unmarked name »capital« is meant the headquarters of political, economic, and cultural power of a larger geographical entity, normally a state, country, region, or province. Whereas the dictionary terms »seat« and »metropolis« are normally defined as synonyms, they are used in this article with slightly different meanings. I consider the fact that the »capital city« of a given country is not always necessarily the literary capital. This is even truer for multinational states with literatures in different languages. In these cases, the capital is primarily the political center of the state and a center of literature for the national majority. The seats of national minorities and their literatures are smaller towns within the state, which at the same time are seats of provincial, regional, or county political, and economic authority. Because of this differentiation, the term »capital city« will be from here on used for the headquarters of the state with the attendant political, economic, and cultural implications. The term »metropolis« is a synonym for »capital city«, but will not be used further in order to avoid its terminological complexity.

Term »seat« will be used for a city with a nation's highest cultural and literary concentration, even when this nation is not politically independent and has a separate political capital. There are examples of political capitals doubling as cultural and literary seats, as well as cases where besides a political capital and seat of culture there also exists a smaller town with less concentrated culture and literature. In this article, the term »literary center« refers to such a town.

The fundamental relationship between sites of national literature is hierarchical due to the differences in cultural intensity. The political capital of a nation state that is at the same time the seat of a national literature occupies the highest position. In this case, the nation is politically independent. When a nation is politically dependent, the political capital may be only one of the nation's literary centers. Usually its literary seat is in a smaller town that is politically and indirectly also culturally—and in terms of literature—subordinate to the political capital. In second or third place in the hierarchy is a literary center, which is by definition on a lower level than literary seat or political capital city. This hierarchy of towns in national literature and mutual political-literary relationships is not permanent, but changes through the history as a function of socio-political changes. In addition national literatures tend also to have geographical specificities, which result from different political and cultural contexts.

This presentation of the three types of towns gives the impression that capital cities are the most permanent element in the hierarchy; however, historico-geographical facts show that the status of a capital city can vary. Paris and London have several centuries' long traditions as capital cities. Rome, which is considerably older, was the capital of a state since antiquity; however, it became the capital of Italy in 1870 only with difficulty. Two hundred years ago Switzerland had a rotating system for the capital. Peter the Great moved the capital in 1712 from Moscow to Saint Petersburg, which then remained the capital for about two hundred years. After the October revolution, Moscow again became the capital and has retained this function. Brazil's



national capital was moved in 1960 from Rio de Janeiro to the newly founded city of Brasilia, which was built to accelerate the development of the country's central region. Bolivia has two constitutionally defined capital cities. The Republic of South Africa has three capital cities. A surprising exception is The Republic of Nauru in the Pacific, the only country in the world that has no official capital city because of lack of urbanization and no nation-state tradition (KIRSCH 2005: 9, 18).

Another exception is the German capital. Each of Germany's lands had, since Medieval times, its own capital—for example, Berlin of Prussia and Munich of Bavaria. After these lands joined, in 1871, a unified federal Germany, Prussian Berlin became the German capital; however, the awareness of belonging to individual lands that were formed from past princedoms, and of their capitals persists even in current federation. After WW II, Germany was divided into two states, each with its own capital. Bonn was the capital of the Federal Republic of Germany (West Germany), and Berlin was the capital of the Democratic Republic of Germany (East Germany). However, Berlin was yet again partitioned, with one side belonging to the East and the other to the West. This situation was further complicated by the fact that West Berlin was an enclave inside East Germany. Due to its small size and primarily administrative function, Germans often referred to Bonn sarcastically as a »governmental village«, Frankfurt-am-Main, the financial capital of West Germany, was scornfully called »Bankfurt«. Munich has often been perceived as »Germany's secret capital city«. The writer Thomas Mann moved not to Berlin but to Munich in 1891, where he lived until 1933, when he moved abroad to escape the Nazis. His preference for Munich itself testifies to the level of culture in the Bavarian capital city. Berlin regained its full status capital city after the union of East and West Germany in 1991, despite some resistance due to the city's historico-political baggage.

Two examples will suffice to show that not every capital city is necessarily the cultural and literary seat of the country. The current Swiss capital, Bern, is on the cultural periphery in comparison to Zürich. A similar relationship exists between Washington and New York in the United States. Migrations, status changes, and inter-city rivalries explain why capital cities are affirmed, approved, and praised, just as they are the objects of biting criticism. For some people they are »a destiny, a blessing, or the death of the country«; others see them as »just a remnant that is a cash cow for silly tourists« (KIRSCH 2005: 12).

3 These examples demonstrate that political capitals are differentiated with respect to historical tradition, permanence, size, and their economic and cultural development. This led the German geographer Martin Schwind in 1972 to cast the following hierarchical typography of capital cities: *world metropolis, multifunctional capital city, governmental town, capital city with stunted development, undeveloped capital city* (SCHWIND in KIRSCH 2005: 12). Schwind's typology was improved upon in 2005 by another German geographer, Jens Kirsch. He omitted the category *undeveloped capital city*, which three decades ago applied to capitals of new African states that have since developed. He also added the category *former capital city*. The revised typology is:

- *Globally influential metropolis* (e.g., Tokyo, London, Paris, Moscow);
- *National center of a highly developed country* (e.g., Washington, Brussels, Seoul, Berlin);
- *National center of a less developed country*, (e.g., Addis Ababa, Damask, La Paz, Dhaka);
- *Government city of relatively low economic, cultural, and demographic importance* (e.g., Brasilia, Canberra, Ottawa);
- *Former capital city* (e.g., Istanbul, Saint Petersburg, Rio de Janeiro). (KIRSCH 2005: 49)

The same geographer also defined four ways of selecting a political capital:

- When a new state is formed on a territory without a city that previously functioned a capital, then an entirely new capital city is established.
- When a state is formed on a territory with a city that had once functioned as a capital, then its function is renewed.
- When a new state is trying to overcome a former political system on a certain territory, then the previous capital city is replaced with a new one.
- A political capital is moved not only for symbolic reasons, but also for practical, spatial ones. (ibid.: 17-18)

There are several other factors that affect the selection of a capital city: »demographic or economic spatial structures, historical symbolism, military strategy, spatial planning«, and »the personal preferences of the decision maker« (ibid.: 12). Yet the same geographer rightly emphasizes that age, size, development, and other characteristics are not essential for choosing a political capital; its »national symbolic function« is important, »persisting through past and present power relations and the country's cultural or political achievements. This is what in the end differentiates capital and non-capital cities« (ibid.: 12).

It is necessary to examine how the Slovene political capital, Slovene seat of literature, and Slovene literary centers came into being in light of geographic findings on the variability of political capitals.

4 After the ancestors of today's Slovenes settled in the Alpine region at the beginning of ninth century, the central territory of the settled space was »Carinthia, which was already in ancient times highly cultivated« (Pogačnik 1968: 10), and so it was there that the Slovene state of Karantanija was established. However, the loss of its political independence prevented formation of a pre-Slovene political capital. The Christianization of the Slovenes from the foreign cities of Salzburg and Aquileia shows that these were at the time political and religious centers, ones that began subjugating the Slovenes. Consequently, the two principal manuscripts of the initial phase of Slovene literature were not written in one area. The oldest preserved Slovene literary manuscript is the »Brižinski spomeniki« [Freising Manuscripts], written around the year 1000. Most likely it was written in Carinthia for the bishop of Freising, who required it for work with the local Slovene believers. However, the Freising Manuscripts was kept in the diocesan seat, Bavarian Freising, which controlled



estates in Carinthia, the Canale Valley, and Škofja Loka (*Brižinski spomeniki* 1996). The second, a manuscript of prayers from the vicinity of Rateče in the upper Sava valley, was written in the fourteenth century, and is also known as the »Celovski rokopis« (Celovec/Klagenfurt Manuscript) after the place where it was found. It testifies that the ecclesiastic administration of the upper Sava valley was in one of the Carinthian dioceses and, indirectly, in a larger religious center outside of what is today Slovenia. Yet another manuscript, the Stična Manuscript, written in the fifteenth century at the Stična Monastery, indicates the existence of a Medieval religious and cultural center in the Dolenjska region.

It is possible to assume that the Celje counts, who had conquered a significant amount of Slovene land in the fourteenth and fifteenth centuries, would have continued expanding their territory and founded not only a political, but a cultural center as well. This would have positively impacted Slovene literature, but the counts' line ended. Celje would probably have prevented or slowed Ljubljana's rise. The Celje estates passed to the Habsburgs, who reigned over most of the Slovenes, divided among several provinces, from Vienna, which was for several centuries, until the end of the Habsburg monarchy in 1918, the capital city of Austria and of the Slovenes living in the Austrian provinces.

Ljubljana advanced as a unifying political and cultural force in Slovenia after acquiring two administrative functions, secular and ecclesiastic, elevating the city to the level of a local political and religious center. In the thirteenth century, Ljubljana became the political capital of the Carniolan province, which in the following century came under Habsburg rule. In 1461, it became the seat of the Ljubljana diocese, which was gaining in importance by gradually incorporating parishes from other ecclesiastic administrative units. Carinthia was the only province at the time with a majority of Slovene population; therefore, it played an important role in the emancipation of Slovendom over the following centuries. It was somehow natural that the most intense manifestation of the sixteenth-century Reformation was precisely in Ljubljana. The printing of Slovene books during the Reformation set the foundation for the future development of Slovene literature as a special secular and aesthetic phenomenon.

An important turning point in literature was the separation of secular from religious literature with the release of the literary almanac *Pisanice* in the Enlightenment period. This is the first evidence that Ljubljana was the seat of Slovene literature. The modeling on Viennese almanacs evidenced the influence of one of the centers of German literature on the seat of Slovene literature, which, compared to Vienna, the political capital of a state, was only a provincial administrative city. Despite later Slovene political gains and the qualitative and quantitative development of Slovene literature, this basic relationship between Ljubljana and Vienna persisted into the 1920s, when most Slovenes lived in the Kingdom of Yugoslavia. For instance, after WW I, the playwright Slavko Grum did not attend a university in Ljubljana, Zagreb, or Belgrade but went to Vienna, where he found models for modernizing Slovene drama.

The Enlightenment was important not only because of the establishment of a seat of Slovene literature, but also because it strengthened Ljubljana's administrative role, as seen in the decision of the French to make it the political capital of the Illyr-

ian Provinces (1809–1813). Ljubljana was promoted from its position of provincial capital city and advanced towards the status of political capital of a larger state entity. Further, Zois and Kopitar attempted to exert political influence to form an Illyrian Kingdom of, which was to be a state of the Slovenes and other South Slavic peoples in Austria. The state was in fact founded, but only formally and partially, since it preserved former provincial borders. Ljubljana only became the capital of the Ljubljana district, not of a kingdom within Austria (VIDMAR 2010: 276–288). Yet the concept of the Kingdom of Illyria contained the kernel of the idea of a United Slovenia, which from the mid-nineteenth century on became the Slovene political project. Both the project of the Kingdom of Illyria and United Slovenia project were important stages towards Slovene statehood, which became a reality in 1991, when the Republic of Slovenia was founded. Beside administrative dependence, Ljubljana maintained its strong dependence on Vienna in literary sphere. Slovene dependency on Vienna, including in literature, is seen in censorship of the almanac *Krajnska čbelica*, which went to the censor in Vienna. The almanac was censored not by some German, but by the Slovene Jernej Kopitar. He was not disposed to it and so impeded publication. This was not an isolated instance of a politically influential Slovene acting non-supportively and adversely affecting Slovene literature. These kinds of actions reached their climax under the communist regime in the late twentieth century.

Although Ljubljana gained ground as the national seat of literature throughout the nineteenth century, it was not a favorable place to live and publish for all Slovene literati. The rise of its administrative, political, and literary power was weakened by the German and majority Slovene populations' colliding views, as well as by ideological and party divisions among the Slovenes. In addition, administrative moves in Ljubljana applied only to the region inside the borders of Carniola and did not extend to other lands, like Gorizia, Carinthia, and Styria. Hence they had absolutely no validity in the Hungarian part of the dual Habsburg state (current Prekmurje). Slovenes were a minority in these regions and were therefore, in comparison to Carniola, much more exposed to pressures from the majority populations. The status of Ljubljana as the seat of Slovene literature was further threatened by certain unresolved questions regarding the Slovene literary language, its alphabet, and differences between Slovene dialects that were native to Slovene writer, as well as by Croatian unitarism and Illyrianism. This caused some writers who were not originally from Carniola to reject Ljubljana. For instance, Stanko Vraz weighed Ljubljana versus Zagreb and finally decided for Croatian literature and moved to Zagreb.

Opposite tendencies were present as well, since Ljubljana was appealing as a seat of literature for some Slovene writers who were not originally from Carniola. Anton Aškerc moved there after having difficulties in Styria. Even though he planned to, the poet Simon Gregorčič did not move to Ljubljana from the Gorizia region; however he was attached to Ljubljana by political support from the Slovene liberal camp.

In the nineteenth century, Celovec, the capital city of Carinthia, concurrently developed as a German and Slovene literary center. Some of the institutions there surpassed those in Ljubljana. The initial motivators were Slovene language courses for seminarians taught by Anton Martin Slomšek, later bishop of the Lavantall Diocese. The most important was the founding of the St. Hermagoras Society (»Društvo



sv. Mohorja«, later »Mohorjeva družba«), the largest Pan-Slovene publisher, which published books for wide range of readers. The initiator of this idea was Slomšek as well, who correctly anticipated that Slovene literature would be strengthened by a successful Slovene house with a program that would serve the literary needs of the predominately rural population, gradually advancing readers with entertaining, educational, and popular technical literature. Publication runs grew. The collection *Slovenske večernice* [Slovene evening tales], still published today, led to a new genre, the so-called evening tale. Even though literary critics, writers, and supporters of elite literature were hesitant and sometimes dismissed its value, the evening tale became an important genre. It was even practiced by writers like Jurčič and Cankar, the latter of whom was prepared to overlook his high literary principles for money.

Ljubljana envied Klagenfurt for its success and often caused it problems. This is evident from Slomšek's letter of 1853: »You cannot forget that we are Slovenes as well, and so do not claim always to have the last word« (*Arhiv za zgodovinsko narodopisje* 1930–1932: 316). His words demonstrate one of the fundamental laws of the relationship between the seat of literature and a literary center: the first is tolerant so long as the second is peripheral. However as soon as the seat is outshone in some literary matter, it starts hampering the other in different ways. At that point, the seat forgets about national, pan-Slovene interests, because it respects only partial, private, party, political, conceptual, or ideological interests. This has harmful effects on literary as well as national interests, which those at the seat of literature do not recognize because of their partisan blindness. The negativity in such cases has been marked in the twentieth century.

However, Celovec surpassed Ljubljana not only by having the largest and most successful Slovene publishing house, but also with its literary journal, *Slovenski glasnik* (1858–1868), edited by Anton Janežič, who used some literary works by »Carniolan« authors to enforce higher aesthetic standards for Slovene literature of the kind Ljubljana did not enforce. A journal of comparable significance was published in Ljubljana no earlier than in 1881, when *Ljubljanski zvon* was opened. The Celovec journal *Kres* (1881–1886) was not able to compete with it. By that time the majority of the best Slovene literary talents in Carniola and neighboring lands, like Aškerc and Gregorčič, had oriented themselves to the capital city of Carniola. In 1888, Catholic-oriented writers from all Slovene regions received their own journal, *Dom in svet*. Both journals continued to be the main Slovene literary channels until the end of WW II. Because they introduced various literary trends, they were also the foundation for the development of all Slovene literature. The journal *Zvon*, published in Vienna by Josip Stritar in 1870 and again between 1876 and 1880, filling a void between *Slovenski glasnik* and *Ljubljanski zvon*, indicates how difficult it was for Ljubljana to win recognition as the seat of literature, since it was incapable of bringing out a major Slovene literary periodical until 1881, one that could compete with Slovene literary journals published elsewhere.

In the beginning of the twentieth century, Ivan Cankar changed the fundamental literary relationship between Ljubljana and Vienna. At that time, many Slovene writers lived for only a few years in Vienna, while at the university. After graduation most of them returned to Ljubljana or other Slovene towns, where they continued



their literary activities and collaborated with Ljubljana, the seat of literature. Despite his unsuccessful university studies in Vienna, Cankar stayed there for many years, using his formidable literary creativeness to define new literary standards for the national seat of literature. He was often rejected in Ljubljana, which had lower literary criteria. During his stay in Vienna, Cankar was exposed to foreign literary trends, as well as the cultural and bohemian perspectives of a metropolis such as did not exist on Slovene ethnic territory. From Vienna he had an external view of the Carniola capital's rural market nature, the provincialism of the Slovene seat of literature, and Slovene conditions. This influenced the development of his ambivalent attitude towards Slovendom, which is most picturesquely presented in his syntagma: »homeland« as »health« and »homeland« as a »prostitute« (CANKAR 1974: 253–256, 413; CANKAR 1969: 92).

Cankar must also be mentioned because he belongs to the group of writers who voluntarily lived outside of their national literary space. Frequently they chose a peripheral city of some other national literature (Joyce in Trst, Pound in Rapallo), an enclave in the middle of other national literature (Kafka in Prague), or they moved around to cities of various literatures (Rilke to Prague, Munich, Berlin, Paris, Devin/Duino and Switzerland).

5 A great reversal in relationships between Slovene literary cities occurred after WW I. The Austro-Hungarian Empire had broken apart, and Slovenes were politically too weak to realize the concept of United Slovenia, and so they were divided between Yugoslavia, Austria, Italy, and Hungary. Most Slovenes entered into their first state, Yugoslavia, with great illusions. They were soon disappointed because of Serbian unitarism, political dictatorship, and differences between Central European and Balkan mentalities. Their new subordinate position was flagged by the fact that the Slovene territory in Yugoslavia never received the administrative name »Slovenia«. After having various names, it was designated as the Drava Banate from 1929 until the beginning of WW II, with Ljubljana as its administrative capital city and seat of Slovene literature. The 1939 plan for an autonomous Banate of Slovenia was never realized because of the outbreak of WW II (ŠMID 1994). The former Slovene literary center in Celovec faded between the two wars. The Mohorjeva družba moved first to Prevalje, and later to Celje. Slovene cultural life in Gorica and Trst also waned under Italian fascism. Despite its multinational character, at the beginning of twentieth century Trst was becoming one of the Slovene literary centers thanks to certain Slovene journals and organizations, as Cankar's lectures there attest. After WW I, Belgrade became the political capital for Slovenes living in the Kingdom of Yugoslavia. However, Belgrade never became as influential in Slovene literature as Vienna had been. Due to the political conditions in Austria and Italy between the wars, the Slovene literary space was reduced to the Slovene territory in Yugoslavia. This happened despite the increased political power of Slovenes, which was not actually as significant as expected before they joined the Kingdom of Yugoslavia. Despite Serbian unitarism, which replaced Germanization, Ljubljana, with the help of newly established institutions, including a partial (incomplete) university, strengthened its cultural status in comparison to the one it had in the Austrian-Hungarian Empire.



WW II threatened the existence of Slovene nation, its literature, and its seat of literature. War activities in ethnically Slovene territories were simultaneously a foreign occupation, anti-occupation resistance, communist revolution, and civil war. Because of the occupation and censorship, the seat of literature had limited functions and only in the Ljubljana district, having lost its bases in Gorenjska and Štajerska. An unforeseen development was the formation of underground center of Slovene literature in Vienna, which was established by a small group of Slovene writers that found themselves in occupied Vienna. They started publishing a literary periodical, *Dunajske domače vaje*, edited by Janez Remic. The main poet in the group was Ivan Hribovšek (PIBERNIK 1991). The war and unfavorable socio-political conditions prevented continuation of the periodical; however, it is evident from the materials that have been preserved how persistent Slovene writers were in trying to maintain the high quality, elite Slovene literature pioneered by Prešeren.

In the meantime, in ethnically Slovene territories, an incomparably greater, intensive, and diametrically opposed process was taking place in partisan units and the areas they controlled (e.g., Bela Krajina). It had appeared less noticeably in the pre-war debate on the literary left (JENŠTERLE 1985): the planned degradation of Slovene literature into a propaganda instrument. This process was camouflaged as counter-occupation resistance and communist revolution (DOLGAN 1988: 34–46; 1990: 100–119, 244–246; 1993: 60–69). Many Slovene writers supported the resistance against the occupation during the WW II. They cooperated in the utopian belief that they were helping to establish absolute social and political »freedom« and the most »progressive« political system in the world, which would in turn furnish maximum creative »freedom« for Slovene literature. In fact, after WW II the maximum, worst political violence in the literature's history befell it, lasting until the end of the communist system (*Temna stran meseca – The Dark Side of the Moon* 1998; GABRIČ 1995).

The majority of Slovene territory came under the »second« Yugoslavia after WW II. Ljubljana was no longer the capital city of a banate, but the capital of first the »People's« and later the »Socialistic Republic of Slovenia«; however, Belgrade remained the political capital of the state. Despite a new political doctrine and repetition of the cliché about »brotherhood and unity of our nations«, Belgrade did not shed Serbian unitarism, but preserved it in different ways. For example, Slovene was to be used for communications in partisan units during the war; after the war, the »Serbo-Croatian« language was mandatory in all Yugoslav military units; »Serbo-Croatian« was mandatory in Slovene elementary schools, but Slovene was not a subject in the schools of other Yugoslav republics; in the 1980s, a plan appeared for a »common core« curriculum for all Yugoslavia. Like nineteenth-century Illyrianism, the new Illyrianism at the beginning of the twentieth century, and pre-war unitarism, these unitaristic actions were variants of a constant attempt of a neighboring Yugoslav nation not only politically to subjugate, but also to eliminate Slovenes as a nation. Due to Slovenes' political naivness, both twentieth-century political formations were successful in politically overpowering them. The obstacles to complete subjugation were the Slovene language, culture, and literature; therefore, the dominant nations in both political formations tried to achieve cultural assimilation of the Slovenes. The attempt was actually the same as Germanization, Italianization, and Magyarization,



only it came from a different geographical direction. Slovene power was no equal for WW II occupiers or other foreign political agents after the war, and thus was eventually transformed into introverted aggressiveness, national sadomasochism and national self-destruction.

Violence against Slovene literature took different forms: a list of forbidden books immediately after the war; following the Soviet pattern, socialist realism was mandatory; mythologization of the partisan movement and revolution; forbidden, taboo topics and persecution of Western European »bourgeois« and »decadent« literary movements. Though political ties with the Soviet Union were sundered in 1948, the government, in line with its totalitarian nature (JESSE 1999; BENOIST 2001), interfered with literature by applying Stalinist measures. This continued almost until the end of the political system in 1991, with actions like arrests of writers and dissidents and closings of literary journals. The government carried out two campaigns against Kocbek, prohibiting publication of his works for years and eavesdropping on him. It also watched ideologically questionable writers, hindering publication of controversial books and appointing trusted personnel to leading positions at cultural and literary institutions.

6 Even before the end of the war it was already possible to predict the forthcoming violence against Slovenes who disagreed with communism. Thus several thousand of them emigrated abroad after the war ended in 1945. Among them were several writers from Ljubljana (POGAČNIK 1972a; 1972b; *Slovenska izseljenska književnost* 1999). About 7,000 Slovenes settled in Buenos Aires, Argentina, where a well organized center of Slovene literature appeared with adequate infrastructure: primary schools, secondary high schools, and for some time even a Slovene studies department within the Ukrainian university; cultural clubs, publishing houses, and several newspapers and magazines, among which was the literary journal *Meddobje*, founded in 1954. Contributors to this journal were Slovene writers from all around the world, except from Slovenia, because contributing would have been punished by the communist regime. An exception was Stanko Majcen, who nonetheless dared to publish in Argentina under a pseudonym.

It is significant that the Slovene literary center in Argentina, as one would expect due to its political emigre status, did not revive the model of sentimental literature about the homeland, but continued the model of aesthetically high literature. This is seen in the translations of poets like Valéry and T. S. Eliot; in reprints of Balantič's poems that were forbidden in the »People's« or »Socialistic Republic of Slovenia«; in discovering and printing the second best WW II poet, Ivan Hribovšek (Kos 2005/2007: 178–184); in the narratives of Zorko Simčič, whose motifs, ideas, and style outshone contemporaneous narratives in Slovenia. This is especially noticeable in his novel *Človek na obeh straneh stene* [*The man on both sides of the wall* 1957]. The same is true of the novel *Ljubljanski triptih*, by Ruda Jurčec, which was published in Buenos Aires the same year. With a multi-perspective narration and the first literary discussion of post-war Stalinist »Dachau« trials in Slovene literature, this work exceeded prevailing literary standards in Slovenia. For several decades these trials were a taboo topic in Slovenia and were not to be discussed in public or in literature.



All Argentine-Slovene publications were forbidden in Slovenia, but individuals were smuggling them from foreign bookstores. Writer and dramatist Drago Jančar was arrested for such an »indiscretion«. The national and university libraries in Ljubljana received these publications, but they were kept in a special vault »D«, which was not accessible to the public but only to rare individuals.

A great many Slovene writers from the seat of literature personally did not oppose the activities of the Buenos Aires literary center, since they were aware of the unpleasant divisions between Slovenes and the post-war consequences. However, the Slovene political center in Ljubljana acted against it in accordance with the doctrine of permanent revolution and paranoid fear of any opposition, fighting against former ideological and military opponents. The latter used documentary and memoir publications to demythologize the varnished war past of the governing Slovene leadership and to reveal its pre- and post-war executions. Therefore it is not surprising that the second political campaign against Kocbek, because of his writings about these massacres, resonated beyond Slovenia's borders and attracted attention abroad. The German writer Heinrich Böll also became involved (A bibliography of German responses at the time was published in the collection *Jugoslawien-Österreich* 1986: 210–11).

The other important post-WW II Slovene literary center was established in Trst, where previous Slovene political, cultural, and literary activities were renewed with the help of emigres from Ljubljana. At the same time, because of their political affiliation and party pluralism in Italy after the war, right and left political-cultural blocs formed. Some Slovene institutions, publishers and newspapers gravitated diametrically to both sides, like the Slovene Radio Trst A to the right, and the Slovene theater in Trst to the left. The Slovene communist government was financially and ideologically supporting the left bloc, which was favored by the homeland, while it was obstructing the right bloc. Writers, poets, essayists, and other artists from the homeland were allowed to cooperate with the Slovene left bloc in Trst, but not with the right. The writer Vladimir Bartol was during the first decade after the WW II the president of Yugoslav-oriented Slovene-Croatian Union in Trst and often visited his family in Ljubljana. However, the Ljubljana-based Marjan Rožanc, who was co-editor and journalist for the Trst journal *Most*, was prosecuted a decade later.

The writers Boris Pahor and Alojz Rebula, too, were members of the Slovene literary center in Trst. They both were disliked by the government in Ljubljana and were spied upon because of their ideological beliefs and friendship with Kocbek. During the second campaign against Kocbek, Pahor was even forbidden for some time to enter Slovenia. The resistance movement during its rise in WW II had tolerated Kocbek as a valuable ally and used him to attract Catholics. However, after the war the government discarded him as a needless and disruptive political character. He was prevented from publishing and viewed as a potential opponent to the government, which spied on him until his death, but then hypocritically celebrated him at his funeral (OMERZA 2010).

The third and smallest post-war Slovene literary center was established in Celovec with the restoration of the St. Hermagoras Society; however, it was not allowed to supply communistic Slovenia with their publications. The reason was that

the publisher was a part of the Carinthian Slovene right bloc that fostered contacts with the center in Buenos Aires and with the Slovene right bloc in Trst. The government in Ljubljana supported the Carinthian Slovene leftist political and cultural bloc. The most prominent Carinthian literary name on both sides of the Slovene border is the writer Florjan Lipuš. The idea of realizing a »unified Slovene cultural space« arose towards the end of Yugoslavia. However, the government in Ljubljana continued to watch their opponents and to favor their ideological supporters, regardless over which border.

It was so until 1991, when the communist regime in Slovenia ended and a new, politically pluralistic, independent state was created. This resulted in the opening of borders and facilitated the flow of literature between the seat of literature and the three literary centers abroad. Ljubljana is no longer only the seat of literature, but has become the political capital of the Slovene state. The century-long process of the parallel but unbalanced literary and political rise of Slovendom finally ended in one place. Just as in the Hegelian model, the Slovene »spirit« reached its highest fulfillment in culture and literature, and then in the political sense as well. To cite the young Hegel, the state is “the highest manifestation of spirit” (VORLÄNDER 1997: 79).

7 When viewed from the perspective of Kirsch’s geographical measures, Ljubljana has become the political capital of a new state because, even before it was so in actuality, it had already been the headquarters of lower political and administrative units; it is almost in the center of the current Slovene ethnic territory; and is for all Slovenes the cultural and literary center as well, and therefore has symbolic meaning. A problem arises when trying to categorize Ljubljana in a hierarchical typology of capital cities by using Kirsch’s measures. Some Slovene cultural workers anticipated that Ljubljana might become a »new Athens«; however, this turned out to be but a pretentious illusion. Even though Ljubljana is now the capital city of the independent state of the Republic of Slovenia, a member of the European Union, it still has not gained enough cultural importance to garner this metaphoric epithet. In addition, it is best to avoid emphasizing Ljubljana’s possible global importance—something that can be viewed as a contemporary version of megalomania—because the Slovene capital city will probably never attain to this level. However, this prudent opinion does not imply that Ljubljana should stop trying to outgrow provincialism. Slovenes perceive that they live in a relatively well-developed state, yet Ljubljana’s status is hard to compare to that of cities listed in the second of Kirsch’s categories. Therefore, Ljubljana ought to be categorized in an undefined class between the second and third category, between »national center of a highly developed country« and »national center of a less developed country«. Still, we need to take into account that as with any typology, this one, too, takes into account only the main characteristics of the phenomena being examined. Details are neglected, which leads to simplifications. Nonetheless, it is beneficial to view the status of the Slovene city from the other perspective.

With respect to political, economic, and cultural potential, Ljubljana is not able to compete with foreign metropolises. However, when Slovenia is compared to other, larger nations that do not have their own state, Ljubljana as a capital of an independ-



ent state is, with respect to Slovene literature, in a favorable position. In general, production, distribution, and reception of the national literature are optimal within a nation state; however, they are not and never will be ideal. A people's political independence in the form of a nation state is reason in itself for forming governmental institutions. These simultaneously stimulate concentration of educational and cultural institutions and directly or indirectly accelerate the development of literature. Most Slovene writers live in Ljubljana, where the seat of their national professional society, the Društvo slovenskih pisateljev [Slovene Writers' Society] is located, and the seat of the international association PEN. It is also the place where most of the Slovene literary journals are published, and it has the most active publishers and theaters that stage Slovene playwrights' works. There are also the majority of libraries, including the central national library, which has the largest collection of books and of Slovene writers' manuscripts. The majority of educational institutions are there, as well as three of the most active research institutions for Slovene literature (Slovene Studies and Comparative Literature at Ljubljana University's Filozofska fakulteta, and several departments at the Research Center of the Slovene Academy of Sciences and Arts). Even without a detailed listing of facts and other data, it is obvious that Ljubljana is the seat of Slovene literature. The capital city of the Slovene state has finally become the identified with the seat of Slovene literature. It accepts other Slovene literary centers as legitimate.

Contemporary Slovene literature has, therefore, a single seat but also several centers, which makes it hierarchical. It contains a spatial dominant, which in terms of literary potential surpasses and influences the other three, spatially dislocated centers. However, this is not a rigid, closed, or one-way hierarchy, since Slovene literary centers are not influenced only by the Slovene capital, but often even more by literary centers and capitals of other foreign national literatures (e.g., Italian, Austrian-German, Argentine-Spanish). The Slovene literary seat is not self-sufficient, but is rather influenced by larger foreign literary seats, like Paris and London. Hierarchy of influences between individual spatial units of different literatures is therefore present on several levels:

- between seats of national literatures (e.g., between Paris and London);
- between a national literary seat (e.g., Ljubljana) and its smaller centers (e.g., Trst, Celovec, and Buenos Aires);
- between centers of two different national literatures, especially when a dislocated center of one literature resides within the center of a different national literature (e.g., the Slovene center in Trst is influenced by local Italian literature or some other Italian literary centers, like Milan, or indirectly by some other foreign literary center like Paris);
- between centers of one national literature and a seat of a different national literature when existing in the same geographical space (e.g., the Slovene center in Buenos Aires, which is also the seat of Argentine literature).

In general, the answer to the question of whether a small (numerically) literature like Slovene needs several centers besides the seat of literature is negative. However, this analysis showed that spatio-geographical status of Slovene literature is not only a



consequence of its immanent development, but also of foreign, socio-political events. Slovene literature has taken different approaches to adapt to foreign influences, and so secured its existence and development. The price it paid was not small, but that is the subject of another article.

WORKS CITED

- Alain de BENOIST, 2001: *Totalitarismus: Kommunismus und Nationalsozialismus – die andere Moderne: 1917–1989*. Berlin: Junge Freiheit Verlag.
- Arhiv za zgodovinsko narodopisje 1930–1932 [*Archive of national history*]: Book I. Ed. Fran Kovačič. Maribor: Zgodovinsko društvo.
- Ivan CANKAR 1974: *Zbrano delo XVII* [*Collected works*, vol. 17]. Ed. and commentary by France Bernik. Ljubljana: DZS.
- , 1969: *Zbrano delo IV* [*Collected works*, vol. 4]. Ed. and commentary by Dušan Moravec. Ljubljana: DZS.
- Marjan DOLGAN, 1988: Logotehnika partizanskega tiska [Obligatory regulations of the partisan press]. France Bernik, Marjan Dolgan: *Slovenska vojna proza*. Ljubljana: SM.
- , 1990: *Slovenski literarni programi in manifesti: Fanfare in tihotapci* [*Slovene literary programs and manifestos*]. Ljubljana: MK (Kondor, 256).
- , 1993: Kako pisati ideološki kič in pri tem uživati [How to write ideological kitsch and live on it]. *Vitomil Zupan*. Ed. Aleš Berger. Ljubljana: Nova revija (Interpretacije, 3).
- Aleš GABRIČ, 1995: *Socialistična kulturna revolucija: Slovenska kulturna politika 1953–1962* [*The socialist cultural revolution: Slovene cultural politics 1953–1962*]. Ljubljana: CZ.
- Marko JENŠTERLE, 1985: *Skeptična levica* [*The skeptical left*]. Maribor. Obzorja (Znamenja, 81).
- Jugoslawien – Österreich*, 1986: Literarische Nachbarschaft. Ed. Johann Holzner and Wolfgang Wiesmüller. Innsbruck: Institut für Germanistik (Innsbrucker Beiträge zur Kulturwissenschaft, Germanistische Reihe, Band 28).
- Jens KIRSCH, 2005: *Hauptstadt: Zum Wesen und Wandel eines nationalen Symbols*. Berlin: LIT Verlag.
- Janko KOS, 2005/2007: Hribovškova poezija včeraj in danes [Hribovšek's poetry today and yesterday]. *Glasnik Slovenske matice* 29–31/1–3. 178–184.
- Igor OMERZA, 2010: *Edvard Kocbek – osebni dosje št. 584* [*Edvard Kocbek – personal dossier no. 584*]. Ljubljana: Karantanija.
- France PIBERNIK, 1991: *Slovenski dunajski krog 1941–1945* [*The Slovene Vienna circle 1941–1945*]. Ljubljana: CZ.



- Jože POGAČNIK, 1968: *Zgodovina slovenskega slovstva I* [A history of Slovene literature, vol. 1]. Maribor: Obzorja.
- , 1972a: *Zgodovina slovenskega slovstva VIII* [A history of Slovene literature, vol. 7]. Maribor: Obzorja.
- , 1972b: *Slovensko zamejsko in zdonsko slovstvo: Oris izhodišč in ocena vrednosti* [The Slovene abroad and domestic literature: An outline and consideration of values]. Trst: Zaliv.
- Slovenska izseljenska književnost 1–3* [Slovene emigrant literature, vols. 1–3]: 1999. Several authors. Ed. by Janja Žitnik in collaboration with Helga Glušič. Ljubljana: Založba ZRC, Rokus.
- Gašper ŠMID, 1994: Osnutek uredbe o banovini Sloveniji iz leta 1939 [A summary of the organization of the Slovene Banate from 1939]. *Arhivi* 17 1 /2. 118–119.
- Temna stran meseca*, 1998: *Kratka zgodovina totalitarizma v Sloveniji 1945–1990: Zbornik člankov in dokumentov* [A short history of totalitarianism in Slovenia 1945–1990: A collection of articles and documents]. Ed. Drago Jančar. Ljubljana: Nova revija.
- Totalitarismus im 20. Jahrhundert: Eine Bilanz der internationalen Forschung*, 1999. Ed. Eckhard Jesse. Bonn, Baden-Baden: Nomos Verlagsgesellschaft.
- Luka VIDMAR, 2010: *Zoisova literarna republika* [Zois's literary republic]. Ljubljana: Založba ZRC (Studia litteraria).
- Karl VORLÄNDER, 1977: *Zgodovina filozofije III/Prvi del* [The history of philosophy, vol. 3, part 1]. Ljubljana: SM.
- Zbornik Brižinski spomeniki* [The Freising manuscripts], 1996. Ljubljana: ZRC SAZU, Inštitut za slovensko literaturo in literarne vede.



Slavistična revija (<https://srl.si>) je ponujena pod licenco
[Creative Commons, priznanje avtorstva 4.0 international](https://creativecommons.org/licenses/by/4.0/).

URL https://srl.si/sql_pdf/SRL_2012_3_12.pdf | DOST. 25/11/24 3.44