

SUMMARY

The Taste of the Road

Travels in Croatian Romanticism

My main interest is in Croatian journeys particularly between the years of 1839 to 1860. The starting date is the year of the publication of the first Croatian journeys of the Romantic period (Illyrianism), authored by Ivan Trnski, but at the same time, these mark the beginnings of Croatian Romanticism. In a nutshell, the closing date is connected to the end of Romanticism (which was also the end of absolutism, in the years of 1851–1860). It was a time of incredible development when it comes to travelling and travel writing. However, in contrast to Western European countries or even Poland, where we can speak of 'black romanticism' and the uncanny (cf. Janion *Niesamowita Słowiańszczyzna*, 2006), in Croatia the first half of the 19th century was a time of national revival (*narodni preporod*) and Illyrianism, which resulted in literature being subordinated to patriotic, didactic and enlightenment purposes and in the creation of arcadian-idyllic images of a harmonious nation inhabiting beautiful and fertile lands.

In nineteenth-century Croatian travelogues, a special role was assigned to the framework of the text. In the introductions, prefaces, and opening sections of a work, the authors state the motivation driving them both to embark on the journey and to disseminate their own experiences while on the journey. In these metatextual passages, they verbalise the problem of the utilitarianism of travel writing, especially its cognitive and mediative role, and thus address the issues of poetics and textual function (genre). However, irrespective of the motives for travelling officially formulated in their textual realisations, their attention is drawn to individual variations with regard to the taste for travel and the choice of the road. These tastes also include the bitter taste of roadless, muddy journeys, lack of food and of life being in danger. The analysis of the texts confirms the fundamental importance of the road itself, the quality and especially the (non)presence that makes travelling and traversing space (im)possible. The rhythm of the narrative and the structure of the texts - the beginning, the duration/course, the ending - are subordinated to moving, to spatial, geo-cultural, geo-sensory categories.

Among the best-known travel writers from 1839–1860 are Ivan Trnski, Matija Mažuranić, Stanko Vraz, Antun Nemčić Gostovinski, Ivan Kukuljević Sakcinski, Adolf Ve-

ber Tkalčević and the Bosnian Franciscans Grgo Martić and Ivan Frano Jukić (functioning within both Bosnian and Croatian literatures). It is to their travels that I devote my attention to, the object of interest being all the travel accounts that appeared in book form during this period, as well as Trnski's accounts published in the press (due to their pioneering character) and the Franciscans' travels that are important to be able to visualise a comprehensive picture of Bosnia. I therefore focus on an analysis of nineteenth-century Croatian travelogues that are representative of the time and the dominant ideologies, first of Illyrian Movement (Revival Movement) and then that of Yugoslavism, while illustrating the geographical multidirectionality of Romantic peregrinations. Bosnia seemed to be of particular interest, inhabited as it was by the Illyrian brothers and fulfilling the criterion of a journey into the unknown. The uneducated Matija Mažuranić (author of the first travelogue *Pogled u Bosnu ili kratak put u onu krajinu, učinjen 1839.-40. po Jednom Domorodcu*, depicts his perspective (*pogled*) (1842). Bosnian Franciscans Martić and Jukić also write about this, the Croatian nobleman, member of the intelligentsia and politician Ivan Kukuljević Sakcinski (*Putovanje po Bosni, A journey through Bosnia, 1857*) and Adolf Veber Tkalčević, visiting Bihać while on a trip to Plitvice (*Put na Plitvice, The Road to Plitvice, 1860*). Stanko Vraz journeys through the 'upper regions of his homeland', travels through Styria, Kraina and Carinthia, among other places, and publishes accounts in the form of letters, first in the Revival press and then in the book *Put u gornje strane* (1844). Antun Nemčić Gostovinski sets out for the cities of northern Italy (especially Venice), but also describes in detail the Croatian regions he traverses (*Putositnice* 1845).

Reading the travel accounts from the early modern period means reading the cultural geography of that time, studying a *putopis* atlas (Moretti 1999), taking a close look at representations of space and ideology in texts from the field of intimacy and autobiography, mainly drawn from popular literature, and also treating the Other and the self, the described/observed and the describer/observer. The study of territorial imagology, the cultural representation of one's own and a neighbouring country, required tracing the mechanisms of historical image production and most often points to the ideological background of cultural landscape representation. I depict landscape as a construction, composition and perception of the world (Cosgrove 1998), as a discursive construct characterised by corporeal and allowing for a sensory experience. Collective and individual memory also play an important role in constructing the landscape, hence *memory studies* were also an inevitable research path. For in-depth research into Croatian (Western) accounts of Bosnia (East), a postcolonial research perspective thus became inevitable.

Regardless of the direction of the march, the state and administrative affiliation of the territory visited, in the Croatian Slavocentric imagology of the time, the protagonist meets *his own* in its various varieties. In the case of Venice, it is the place lost to the Venetian Slavs earliest; in the case of Bosnia, reference is made to Turkish Croatia and the territories seized from the Slav brothers by the eternal enemy of Christianity. The travel cartography realised within the Croatian imaginary geography of the time is thus created from a fragmented Croatia, under the political dependence and cultural influence of European centres and spaces originally Croatian or Illyrian (Slavic).

The map drawn by Croatian Romantic travel writing presents the local land and local (*domorodac*) tasting different varieties of peculiarity and peculiar strangeness. The intricate relationship between the familiar and the foreign means that the journeys studied here

present a nuanced picture of the Croatian lands and the Balkans. Although they engaged in what might be termed a form of self-Balkanising, as is best illustrated by their identification with the Montenegrins in Ivan Mažuranić's romantic epic *The Death of Smail-aga Ćengić*, the Croats looked at their eastern neighbours with the eye of a western European and a citizen of the Central European empire. At the same time, they corrected Western travellers' observations about the inhabitants of the Croatian lands and expressed their dissatisfaction with Western indifference to Turkey's actions and the fate of the Slavs in the Ottoman Empire. Romantic admiration for the Orient is less frequent here than disgust. The pleasures of the landscape are marred by the ugliness of the inhabitant and the current ruler. Describing Bosnia as wild, beyond civilisation, conflicted, colonised, without a voice of its own, abandoned, dead and stinking, the authors see the only salvation for stagnation in the Europeanisation of a country that is unable to follow its own path because it has turned, literally and symbolically, into a river of mud.

The mechanism of looking through the prism of entering a lost territory is also activated when visiting northern Italy and southern Austria. The discourse of memory dating back to ancient times then comes to the fore. The restoration or consolidation of the knowledge of the originally Slavic character of known places was as important a task as being introduced into the culture through 'entextualising' places that were poorly known or unknown, such as the Plitvice Lakes. Travelogue writers shunned spaces that had already been described, tending to focus instead on expanding national culture by visiting new places. They created cultural new text-spaces by incorporating them into the space of universal culture and the 'human conversation', which they sought to participate in along with buffeting emotions: subjective, national, ideological. The travellers of this time were excited and engaged, experiencing with all their senses, savouring. However, the perspective and narrative of the craftsman storyteller is different, that of the nobleman, that of the clergyman, and the background of the pre-texts are also diverse.