

DEAN SLAVIĆ

TITO DORČIĆ AS A FORERUNNER OF THE IRONIC MODE

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According to Northrop Frye, 20th-century literature is marked by characters whose intelligence and capabilities are lesser than those of the average human. Typical such figures are the protagonists of Kafka's and Beckett's works, who lack even the most basic information regarding their own position – due to which the reader has the sense of looking down on scenes of bondage, frustration or absurdity. Vjenceslav Novak's Tito Dorčić, from the eponymous novel, is a forerunner of this type of character. He is trapped by his own predisposition and social environment and becomes unhappy in the "better life" imposed on him by his father. He is utterly unsuccessful in his career as well as in his family life. 20th-century interpreters found the cause of Tito's state, or the source for such a character, in Darwinist theories supposedly praised by the novel's author; a more recent critic emphasises the psychoanalytic motifs. Both theories unconsciously bear witness to the reduced power of the action of the protagonist. The novel's final scene, in which Tito Dorčić's left leg is stuck in a crevice whilst the upper part of his body immersed in the sea is a metaphor of his entire life.

The scapegoat mechanism, as proposed by René Girard, also explains the events in Tito Dorčić's life: the social crisis is seemingly only slightly present, yet Tito is depicted as a person holding a position in the judicial administration which, because of his low intelligence, immorality and lack of cultural refinement, he does not deserve. He commits mistakes in his prosecutor's work and is punished because an innocent person has been hanged. Tito had previously been marked by the collapse of his marriage. Eventually, he loses his job, falls into madness, which might also be an act of self-punishment, and at the end, he dies. The text, or the narrator, kills him, in the last step in the long procedure of attacking the protagonist.

Keywords: *Tito Dorčić*, ironic mode, the scapegoat mechanism

Introduction

The article intends to show that the Darwinist theories and psychoanalysis already stressed by the critics in the context of Tito's misfortune, are symptoms

of the minimized capabilities and lack of intelligence, showing the novel's protagonist to be a forerunner of leading 20th-century fictional characters. Furthermore, the hero's general position, and the narrator's ill will towards him, put the protagonist in the role of a scapegoat in the sense explained by Girard.

After the introduction, the second part of the article interprets the characteristics of antiheroes in the ironic mode of literature.

The third part discusses the previous understandings of Tito Dorčić's character concerned with inherited traits and psychoanalysis; and adds the application of some of Lacan's ideas.

Enslavement to alcoholism, a sense of guilt and mimetic desire are also investigated. The interpretation touches on the similarity between the trapped hero and the circular structure of the novel in the spatial sense.

The fourth chapter depicts the bondage of other characters in the novel, while the fifth compares the position of the female hero from *The Last of the Stipančićs* (*Posljednji Stipančići*) and that of Tito Dorčić.

Part six is dedicated to the relationship of the narrator with his protagonist, which introduces the seventh part, in which Girard's scapegoat mechanism is applied to the novel. The last part of the article explains the possible influence of the hero's name on the novel's reception during the communist era.

Protagonists possessing less power and intelligence than the average human

Northrop Frye explains the development of the history of literature in his notable First Essay from *Anatomy of Criticism*. He uses "fictional modes", progressing from myths and sacred stories, which means from the Bible and the polytheistic culture of Ancient Greece, right up until the 20th century. The heroes from the modes gradually lose their capabilities and intelligence. Eventually, the following situation is present: "If inferior in power or intelligence to ourselves, so that we have the sense of looking down on a scene of bondage, frustration or absurdity, the hero belongs to the ironic mode."¹ Hamlet fought corruption in his kingdom, and although he lost his life, his cause won – in the already third mode. Father Goriot had a task on a much lower, familial, level and he used all his strength on affording a better life for his daughters, yet he still did something for them. Goriot showed he understood his position in the great deathbed monologue. His pessimistic instruction to the young friend Rastignac – claiming he will give his children life, and they will give him death in return – might have been wrong, but showed intelligence. The ominous utterance of the unhappy father was true

¹ N. FRYE, 1979, 34.

when applied to Goriot himself, and the old man exhibited an awareness of the surroundings. The protagonist of the fourth mode thus proves to possess an intellect strong enough to grasp the system of the world and himself placed in it.

Franz Kafka's hero Gregor Samsa, an insect and a human at the same time, will never fully understand what is going on in his life and why the dreadful metamorphosis took place. Yet another hero of the fifth mode, Josef K., remains in the utter darkness of intelligence regarding the mysterious tribunal that is torturing him. Estragon and Vladimir would not improve their position much and would not possess any real knowledge of the hidden Godot they are waiting for.

In the year 1906, Tito Dorčić anticipates many traits of the aforementioned antiheroes he does not understand his life's failures and does not comprehend the reasons for his fall. A rather low intelligence that he displays early in his life announces his later mental illness. The hero of Novak's novel fits well into the row of protagonists of Croatian literature around the turn of the century. In terms of epochs, we are dealing here with late realism and early modernism. New heroes are no longer devout Catholics and fighters for national freedom: "The primacy belongs to characters with mixed and changing good and evil attributes, to people unsure in their self and the world surrounding them, to people with shaken principles."² Madness is a topos of the time: probably the first modernist Croatian short story, *The Thought of Eternity* (1891), introduces Đuro Martić. The hero Radmilović by Ksaver Šandor Đalski (1894) will become crazy because his milieu does not understand him. The novel about the mentally ill Tito Dorčić was published in 1906. "The most renowned novel hero of the modern Croatian literature Đuro Andrijašević, from Milutin Cihlar Nehajev's work *The Escape (Bijeg)*, 1909) will become crazy and will raise his hand against himself. He was an overlysensitive and nervy type, although at the same time not too moral and rather a hedonistic character, without strong moral convictions."³ The most prominent Catholic critic of his time Ljubomir Maraković maintains that Andrijašević expressed the inner breakdown of his entire generation.⁴

² "Primat preuzimaju likovi u kojima se dobro i zlo miješa i mijenja, ljudi nesigurni u sebe i svijet, ljudi poljuljanih načela." (V. LONČAREVIĆ, 2005, 54)

Translations from Croatian, including from Novak's novel, by Dean Slavić and proofread by Graham McMaster.

³ "I najpoznatiji romaneskni junak moderne Đuro Andrijašević u romanu *Bijeg* (1909.) Milutina Cihlara Nehajeva poludjet će i podići ruku na sebe kao preosjetljivi imoralizmom i hedonizmom izmučeni nervčik, čovjek bez čvrstih načela." (Cf. V. LONČAREVIĆ, 2005, 56)

⁴ Cf. V. LONČAREVIĆ, 2005, 56.

The real troubles for both Croatia and the whole of Europe would begin when frenzy takes on a collective trait, the aftermath of which we still feel to the present day.

Tito Dorčić as a hero of reduced power

Kafka published his *Metamorphosis* in 1915, and *The Trial* was written about that time and was published in 1925. Beckett's play *Waiting for Godot* appeared in 1953. It is necessary to stress an important particularity by mentioning that the named works do not attack the moral stance of their heroes, while Novak's text does perform such an action, which significantly undermines the possibility of its recognition.

On the other hand, Tito Dorčić is, by the bondage imposed on him by the narrator, quite similar to the heroes who marked the first part of the 20th century. Tito is utterly impotent when faced with the forces acting in and around him, and cannot withstand his destiny if it can be called destiny. Kafka's protagonist Gregor Samsa will be exactly powerless against his ominous transformation into a huge insect; Beckett's heroes are unable to get any relevant information about Godot. It is just the same with Winston from *1984* whose actions against the Party and Big Brother do practically no harm. Although the critique I am about to list have proved a large part of the elements which I will name, I have not noticed any previous connection with Novak's powerless antihero to Frye's theories of modes. I have found Tito as a very good forerunner of the last ironic mode, rife with heroes in thrall to their ignorance and their simple lack of power.

Slave to Darwinism

Commentaries in the second part of the 20th century regularly assert the strong influence of theories claiming that Tito Dorčić, as well as other people, are completely dependent on the law of nature and inheritance. The novel's narrator derives this thought from Darwinist and similar ideas⁵. Ivo Frangeš's evaluation represents this kind of thought: "The hate for the bureaucratic rat-race, the wish to show the way to a more equal and diverse, richer development of Croatian intelligentsia, drove Novak to an unscientific fallacy claiming that Croatia was threatened by the hyperproduction of intellectuals

⁵ CF. D. DURIC, 2011a, 102.

and, worse, to areactionary and so-called scientific conviction: who is born to be a fisherman (like Tito Dorčić), has no other options, regardless his efforts and pains, and he has to remain a fisherman. Novak, it is true, tried to justify to himself and others, his idea by some kind of Darwinism and by the alleged moral of the theory of evolution."⁶

Jelčić approached the matter with a more cautious stance and mentions love and liabilities, which Tito lacks when it comes to intellectual work: "A fisherman's son, extraordinarily gifted in the work of his ancestors, a boy into whose nets fish rush by themselves, becomes a victim of his parents' ambitions. The pupil who 'knows everything, and yet understands nothing' managed to accomplish his secondary education and legal studies, but does not reach happiness in his life. The reason is not that he, the son of a fisherman, is incapable of an intellectual vocation, but because he had neither the love nor the propensities."⁷

Slave to the Oedipus complex

Dejan Durić offers an interpretation based on psychoanalytic literature, which he quotes extensively. Summary of the exposition is expressed in the following sentence: "Tito always did what he was told to: he went to school although he did not want to, he learned in spite of his lack of interest and motivation for studying; he went to university because it was in tune with the grandiose image his parents had of him."⁸ The critic emphasised the relationship between the father figure in the hero's family and the upper class in capitalism, which was expounded by Fromm, and which further amplifies the weakness of the unintelligent Tito.

⁶ "Mržnja prema trci za birokratskim uspjehom, želja da ukaže put ravnomjernijeg i šarolikijeg, bogatijeg razvitka hrvatske inteligencije, gurnula je Novaka u neznanstvenu zabludu da Hrvatskoj tobože prijete hiperprodukcija inteligencije i, što je još gore, do nazadnog, nazoviznanstvenog uvjerenja: tko je rođen za ribara (kao Tito Dorčić), uzalud mu trud i muka, nek samo ostane ribar. Novak je to, doduše, sebi i drugima, opravdao nekakvim darvinizmom, i tobožnjom poukom teorije evolucije." (I. FRANGEŠ, 1975, 431)

⁷ "Ribarski sin, neobično obdaren za posao svojih predaka, dječak kojemu ribe same hrle u mrežu, postaje žrtva nezdravih ambicija svojih roditelja. Đak koji "sve zna, a ništa ne razumije" uspio je završiti i gimnaziju i pravni studij, ali nije uspio dosegnuti sreću u životu: ne zato, što bi, kao ribarski sin, bio nesposoban za intelektualna zvanja, nego zato jer za njih nije imao ni ljubavi ni sklonosti." (D. JELČIĆ, 2004, 254)

⁸ "Tito je uvijek činio ono što su mu rekli da čini: išao je u školu iako nije želio, učio je unatoč manjku interesa i motivacije za učenje, studirao je jer je to odgovaralo velikoj predodžbi roditelja o njemu." (D. DURIĆ, 2011b, 121)

Slave to an imaginary phallus?

The articles I have listed in the works cited use Lacanian terms, and amongst them is a special and composed form of lust or desire, signified in French by the term *jouissance*. I believe it is pertinent to the present investigation to add a further element, which is probably active in Novak's novel.

Lacan distinguishes a penis, or a real phallus, which is an anatomical organ, from an imaginary and symbolic phallus – although he is not consistent in his procedure regarding this matter.⁹ The image of a penis, of a real phallus, is an imaginary phallus. A child in his or her pre-Oedipal stage, according to Lacanian doctrine, thinks the imaginary phallus is the object of the mother's desire. The child, therefore, seeks to identify with the imaginary phallus, with the picture, in order to instigate and to reinforce the mother's desire for himself, or herself.¹⁰

The imaginary phallus could be detached from the body by a sort of castration. The child, a daughter or a son, therefore thinks their mother has lost her imaginary phallus by her castration, and she desires to have it back. The child tries to identify with the lost phallus to satisfy her and its own desire. The child also supposes that the father possesses the imaginary phallus. The relation between the mother and the child is therefore not bilateral but is trilateral, because it includes an imaginary phallus, and the father is also in the game. As for a symbolic phallus, Lacan believes that the imaginary phallus is a sort of signified being, so the phallus becomes a symbol of the mother's desire. Or, to put it correctly, it is like this in the child's mind.¹¹ This outline of Lacan's phallus theory is useful in the scope of the present paper. A reader looking for a more detailed presentation of the system can consult works listed at the end of this essay. According to Lacan, the structure could be transformed into many variations and could be present in works of literature. Shakespeare's Ophelia is, already by her name, close to the symbolic phallus in the unhappy game between Hamlet and Gertrude; and Claudius is also such as phallus.¹² The interpretation seems to be far-fetched, but there are some fine demonstrations of Lacan's theory sometimes really at work in literature. A solid example would be Hervé Basin's novel *Viper in the Fist* (*Vipère au Poing*). The young hero Jean Rezeau hates his mother who tortures him and his brothers with her forced religion. The central scene of the work depicts Jean who clenches the viper in his fist and thinks he is killing his hypocrite parent.

⁹ Cf. J. LACAN, 1991, 153.

¹⁰ Cf. J. LACAN, 1977, 315, 319.

¹¹ Cf. J. LACAN, 1991, 191.

¹² Cf. J. LACAN, 1982, 11–52.

In the context of the Lacanian phallus projection, Novak's novel offers an instructive scene towards the end of the work. The hero is tantalized by guilt because, when he had been a prosecutor, he had accused a farmer, Dulapić, of murder. The tribunal found the man guilty as charged and sentenced him to death. However, later another person confessed to the crime while dying. The sick Tito, burdened by guilt, sees the dead man in various forms, among other things in the form of an eel. Tito stretches his hand out to his father and his mother, so they could smell it, claiming he has the eel Dulapić in his fist. "It crawled on the table, and I caught it, but of course it slithered off and fell on the floor: Come, you look for it too!"¹³ Later the drunk Tito would imagine the animal is on his mother's shoulder and his father's knee.¹⁴ Lacan would have certainly enjoyed it if somebody had shown him the text quoted. The Lacanian interpretation would inescapably conclude: the defunct Dulapić is just a transformation of an imaginary phallus, representing the mother's and Tito's desire, which, exactly because it is imaginary, could not be quenched. The proof of such claims could be the fact that the arm is an old symbol for the penis. Even in the Bible one might read: *My love thrusts his hand /through the hole in the door; / I trembled to the core of my being*¹⁵. In psychoanalysis a snake is a regular sign connoting a penis, so Dulapić's or Tito's eel would carry a similar meaning.

It is not of paramount importance whether the above interpretation is true, or the novel just depicts Tito's illness, caused by alcohol, morphine and the insurmountable guilt of the calamitous protagonist, thinking he has sent an innocent man to his death. What really matters is the fact that Tito cannot control the forces that are so much stronger than he is. He becomes a slave to these forces leading him to illness and eventually to death. Tito does not understand the above-presented mechanism but is also incapable of controlling them in an instinctive way. His intellect and his entire being are simply below the level that would allow him to understand the essence of the situation and command it. If this interpretation is correct, then the narrator is also not conscious of it, so he himself is trying to satisfy his own and his mother's desire. However, Shakespeare was also not aware of the possible psychoanalytic interpretations of the motifs from *Hamlet* and *King Lear*, but he managed to write great works. It seems the Bard intuitively established a structure, forerunning Freud. Now,

¹³ "Puzila je po stolu, uhvatio sam je, ali se dakako ispuzla i pala na pod: Ded je i vi potražite." (V. NOVAK, 1964, 320)

¹⁴ V. NOVAK, 1964, 321.

¹⁵ Songs of Solomon, 5:4.

the scenes of madness from *Tito Dorčić* are certainly among the best parts of the novel. Maybe we could say that Novak's chapter also foreshadows these Lacanian ideas.

A reader interested in boundary conditions close to madness would certainly recall Lady Macbeth washing her bloody hands and Dostoyevsky's Ivan Karamazov, dreaming of the devil. Scenes depicting the growing madness of Ducina, from Budak's novel *The Hearth*, are also along the lines of these motifs.

Slave to his own low intelligence

As shown above, Frye sees that the typical hero of 20th-century literature is a person of reduced power; and poor intelligence is mentioned in particular.¹⁶ The narrator of Novak's novel, through the utterances of his characters, inexorably emphasises Tito's limited intellect. The headmaster of Senj high school does indeed speak to Tito's father about the pupils who in general really should attend this kind of school, but the obvious target is Tito himself, who is without the required intelligence: "This kind of student should go to other types of schools, with a totally different curriculum, while high schools and universities would be shrines of pure science dedicated to the chosen ones, who are gifted in an intellectual and moral sense to fit into the structure implementing noble ideas..."¹⁷ Regina was obviously not meant to be Tito's life partner, but her father and her own uncanny position drew her to him. Still, she also evaluates Tito using the important word intelligence: "Never could I find in him anything that revealed an intelligent, independent man. Even that might not be the right word."¹⁸

Regina related intelligence and independence in a lady-like way indeed, but we still have to return to her and her judgment capabilities. Tito's father-in-law, and Regina's father, sees just the same: "From Regina's words he sensed that something binds him to this young man, who was of poor intellectual talent, but nevertheless truly endowed with moral and ethical feeling."¹⁹ Regina's father Puhovec did not show much of a judicious sense regarding the characters either –

¹⁶ Cf. N. FRYE, 1979, 34.

¹⁷ "Za takove bi trebalo da postoje druge škole, sa skroz drugačijom naukovnom osnovom – a gimnazija i univerzitet to bi bili hramovi čiste znanosti za odabrane koji su dovoljno nadareni i moralno i intelektualno za asimilaciju i provadanje plemenitih ideja..." (V. NOVAK, 1964, 184)

¹⁸ "Nikada ne mogu naći u njem nešto što odaje inteligentnoga, samostalnoga muškarca. Ni to nije možda prava riječ." (V. NOVAK, 1964, 260)

¹⁹ "A sada je iz Regininih riječi počutao kao da ga nešto tješnje veže o toga mladoga čovjeka koji je bio slab talent intelekta, ali doista nadaren moralnim i etičnim osjećajem." (V. NOVAK, 1964, 261)

it is one more problem as to whether the narrator is aware of the fact. Regina will repeat to herself the realisation of her husband when observing how he drinks far too much: "At first she only felt a little embarrassed at not understanding why an intelligent man would cloud his mind with wine every evening."²⁰

Returning to Tito's first teachers, we shall recall an expression that truth does not use the very word intelligence, but is equally effective in the condemnation of the novel's protagonist: he learns everything, but does not understand anything.²¹ The headmaster will be even harsher when, in the abovementioned conversation with Tito's father, he indirectly refers to a parrot that can utter a prayer but is incapable of understanding it.²²

Slave to alcohol, sex, morphine, guilt and madness

Tito will be a slave to wine, which is partially already depicted, and the narrator also mentions morphine in the final stages of his life: "He noticed brandy appeases this uncanny state of his; he treated himself with brandy in the morning, and he began to inject morphine in order to get rid of the endless and sleepless nights and the heavy mental condition; morphine brought a wonderful feeling of harmony to his rickety body."²³

The novel's narrator describes Tito's student period somewhat vaguely, and it is not easy to determine whether the protagonist really consumed his wishes in superficial relationships with women. In his marriage he demonstrates a lust that seems to be aggressive, or at least he shows no regards for his wife's wishes: "His crude and brutal satiation of his low lust was related to drink. He behaved as if he had not the slightest inkling of the fact that a woman had tender and fine feelings that were not to be touched recklessly. He did not care for her shame. He humiliated her, and this humiliation was so sudden and brutal that she was not able to grasp it at the beginning."²⁴

²⁰ "Isprva je osjećala tek neku neugodnost od toga što nije shvaćala da inteligentan čovjek omagli svake večeri svoju pamet vinom." (V. NOVAK, 1964, 281)

²¹ V. NOVAK, 1964, 180.

²² V. NOVAK, 1964, 182.

²³ "Opazio je da to neugodno stanje najbrže popravi rakija; njome se »liječio« jutrom, a da se otme beskonačno dugim besnenim noćima i teškome duševnom stanju – stao je uštrcavati morfij što mu je vraćalo divni osjećaj sklada u svojem rasklimanom organizmu." (V. NOVAK, 1964, 291)

²⁴ "S pićem je bilo u savezu njegovo do brutalnosti surovo utažavanje niskih pohota. Ponašao se kao da i ne sluti da ima u žene finih i nježnih osjećaja u koje se ne smije lakoumno dirnuti. Nije štedio njezin stid. Ponizivao ju je, a to ponizivanje bilo je tako iznenadno, tako brutalno, da ga u prvi mah nije shvaćala." (V. NOVAK, 1964, 282)

Tito Dorčić was a public prosecutor when he misinterpreted evidence and issued the indictment against Jovan Dulapić. The tribunal meted out the death sentence, after which new evidence showed the sentenced man had not been guilty – or at least the text of the novel claimed he was not guilty. Tito Dorčić was terrified by the events, and he eventually became mentally ill. He was forced to leave his position in the town P*, but the situation quickly worsened. "Zagreb physicians tried in vain to rid him of the alcohol and morphine, and then they sent him to a sanatorium for mental illnesses in Vienna."²⁵

The narrator introduces religious motifs at this step, obviously trying to criticize the faith itself: "From this event on, the main and the only clear feeling of Tito's spiritual life was – fear, fear amplified by the faith in the mystical parts of religion, mixed with prejudices. And the prejudices revived all the fairytales of folk fantasies as if they were bare facts. In this religiosity of the semi-cultured, he saw in that official delusion only an act due to which he was bound to be persecuted by the spirit of a man who, through his complicity, had ended up, innocent, to a shameful end on the gallows. Whenever he happened to be alone, by day or night, he felt the presence of the deceased Dulapic everywhere. He believed the dead man's revenge began with his mute presence. The deceased's appearance really became more obvious later on."²⁶

The next passage clearly shows Tito's bondage to the sick madness and his images of guilt: "He would calm himself down with ever-increasing doses of morphine. But, the moment the morphine ceased bringing relief, the image of the legs dressed in the coarse grey prisoner's clothing and heavy shoes, hanging beneath the gallows, would start to torment him. The image was indelible. It would appear in the front of his closed eyes as well as in the front of his open eyes and it emerged wherever he turned his glance. No thought could push it out; it would come and grip him like an octopus and seek Tito to summon up his courage and raise his eyes to the face of the man hanging on the gallows."²⁷

²⁵ "Zagrebački liječnici, nakon uzaludna pokušaja da ga otmu alkoholu i morfiju, poslaše ga u sanatorij za živčane bolesti u Beč." (V. NOVAK, 1964, 305)

²⁶ "Od toga događaja bio je jedini i glavni jasni osjećaj Titova duševnoga života – strah, strah uvećan vjerovanjem u mistične strane religije pomiješane s predrasudama što oživljuju do zgoljnih činjenica sve bajke pučke fantazije. U toj religioznosti polukulturnoga čovjeka vidio je u onoj službenoj zabludi tek čin radi kojega mora da ga progoni duh čovjeka koji je njegovom sukrovnjom pravedan završio sramotnom smrću na vješalima. Gdje god se našao sâm, danju ili noću, svuda je osjećao prisutnost pokojnoga Dulapića. Vjerovao je da je osveta njegova počela njegovim nijemim prisućem. I doista, poslije je sve očitiija bivala pojava pokojnikova." (V. NOVAK, 1964, 306)

²⁷ "Smirivao bi se uzimanjem sve jačih doza morfija. Ali netom bi prestao djelovati morfij, stala bi ga opet progoniti slika nogu što su u grubom, sivom kažnjeničkom odijelu i teškim cipelama

Tito might have seen the innocent and hanged Christ in the innocent and hung Dulapić. The hanged man or God could be a part of collective subconsciousness – or collective consciousness – and the guilt for his death lies upon all sinners.

Slave to mimetic desire

The mimetic or triangular desire is a theory that proposes a triangular structure of desire: the self, the other or a model as a mediator and the object of desire. The self or subject desires an object because he or she knows, imagines or suspects that the mediator also desires it.²⁸ According to the theory, desire never acts through a single line connecting desiring subject and the object of desire but is always mediated by the first model. A person desires a certain object or another person, or he or she wishes to become someone, only because he or she has seen the same desire in a model. So, Amadis of Gaul yearned a battlefield glory, Don Quixote read about it and began to wish the same. Amadis is the model or a mediator of the desire that inflamed Don Quixote's desire. Furthermore, Quixote hopes for some reward after his heroic exploits, which makes him the model for Sancho Panza's hopes for an island that he could govern after serving his master. Numerous relations may occur in the process of desire mediation, and rivalry, resentment, envy and vanity are amongst them. Internal mediation happens when the subject's and the model's objects of desire overlap and become a cause for rivalry. In external mediation, the model or mediator is removed from the individual, whether historically or ontologically, and so there is no competition for an object of desire.²⁹ Amadis does not want the woman whom Quixote desires to possess, so there is no rivalry. The problem of the subject's identity is related to triangular desire, because the subject, or the second desirer, builds its character on the basis of the similarity between the first desirer or the mediator, or the model: Don Quixote has something of Amadis's. Literature offers many examples, so Girard refers to the situation when Monsieur de Rênal from *The Red and The Black* considers employing a private teacher when he realised the same service might have been asked by his rival, the also rich Valenod.³⁰ Later on, the novel's hero will succeed in seducing Mathilde de

visile pod vješalima. Neotklonjiva je bila ta slika. Dolazila je pred zatvorene kao što pred otvorene oči i pomaljalo se svuda kud je svrnuo pogled. Nijedna misao nije ju mogla istisnuti, dolazila je, hvatala ga se poput polipa i tražila od njega da se usmjeli i digne oči više do lica čovjeku što je visio na vješalima." (V. NOVAK, 1964, 307)

²⁸ Cf. R. GIRARD, 2000, 31.

²⁹ Cf. R. GIRARD, 2000, 29.

³⁰ Cf. R. GIRARD, 2000, 36.

la Mole after seemingly wooing Madame de Fervaques – whose desire instigates Mathilda's desire. Girard indeed considers a child's desire for his or her parents as a type of triangular desire. We cannot discuss the complete idea now, but an interested reader can find more information from the sources listed at the end of the present paper.

The father, Andrija Dorčić, desires the good life of a civil servant or state employee, and discusses the matter as early as at his son's christening: "An officer obtains a good salary each morning straight underneath his pillow; he wields his light writing pen in a warm room in winter, and people pay due respect to him everywhere."³¹ Because of that, he will send his son to school, so that young Tito can enjoy this comfort. Before long, Tito wants the better life enjoyed by civil servants, repeating his father's wish: "They force him, relentlessly they force him, and he does obey with the fear that is greater than the fear instigated by Tumančić's flogging. Because, Tito knows that the unavoidable shiny definition of his future life, depicted by his father, depends on his obedient attitude... He himself does not care much to really understand the definition. He is only convinced that the torments will be followed by freedom, power, fortune and a brilliant outlook..."³² The desire described really needs no sexual involvement; although Eros is not always excluded, it would not significantly change the basic relationships among the characters. It seems to me that the substantial fact, in this case, is the depiction of the father's and the son's desire for material pleasures, wellbeing, fortune and respect in society. They do not wish to help others or really contribute to society. If they were real followers of Christ, they would be willing to sacrifice themselves for their loved ones.

Significant ending

Tito is ill when he finally returns to his parents in Senj. His pains from the guilt of the unjust execution of Dulapić, who changes his shape and even becomes an eel, will continue. The only medicine for his illness is death. The picture and scheme of Tito's death is a good image of the overall bondage that is the hero's life, of his lack of power, inadequate intelligence and general

³¹ "Činovniku osvane dobra plaća svakog jutra pod uzglavljem, barata laganim perom zimi u toploj sobi, a čast mu se iskazuje svuda." (V. NOVAK, 1964, 161)

³² "Tjeraju, nemilosrdno ga tjeraju, a on im se pokorava s većim strahom nego što bijahu Tumančićeve šibe, jer o toj pokornosti ovisi ono o čem njegov otac govori kao o nužnom sjajnom određenju njegova života... On sâm ne mari da to određenje pravo shvati. Tek je uvjeren iz očevih riječi da iza tih muka slijedi sloboda, gospodstvo, bogatstvo, sjaj..." (V. NOVAK, 1964, 181)

helplessness in the face of forces stronger than he is. The forces lined up in Tito's life from the father who forced the way of life upon him, and the mother who tacitly approved of it, through his own compliant nature, to a society that allowed the advancement by nepotism and bribery. For the time being, I would just mention that the narrator even hates his own being; and it seems even the critics have paid much more attention to the theories they have liked, or they have disliked, than to the unhappy Tito.

The final scene from the novel is presented as follows: "One morning shortly after that they found Tito drowned beneath the road. The upper part of his body along with his hands was immersed in the sea. His left leg was stuck fast in a crevice between two rocks, while his right leg, with its torn shoe and trouser leg, was injured, leaving large bloody traces on the rocks of the shoreline. It was obvious he had desperately fought for his life. People, therefore, concluded that the strong sun must have confused him and that he had wanted, in this stupefaction, to jump into the sea to catch some fish."³³

Several motifs from the scene might be compared to elements from Tito's previous life. The fixation on legs shows a similarity to the hanged Dulapić; the fish refers to Tito's real passion. Being trapped in the crevice among the rocks is a sign of his bondage to the false ambitions in his life, to his lack of intellect and enslavement to his addictions. His craving for the sea connotes his missed career of being an excellent fisherman – and an unfulfilled sexual desire is not to be excluded. I would not claim that this is about suicide: the fight for life is mentioned directly, and I think Tito was incapable of making any decisions about life and death. Such power belongs to a different kind of a hero.

Spatial scheme of the novel and the hero's bondage

The events from the novel are rendered in a linear way, yet the spatial structure of the events is more in tune with the key concept of the hero's entrapment. After finishing highschool in Senj, Tito left for Vienna where he completed his law studies. Then he returned to Senj, establishing a pattern of departure and return that would be repeated. He was not up to the tasks during

³³ "Malo zatim jednoga jutra našli su Tita pod cestom utopljena. Gornja polovica tijela s rukama bila je uronjena u more, lijeva noga nepomično je zapala u procijep dvaju grebena, a desna s poderanom cipelom i nogavicom do koljena bila je izranjena i ostavila jake krvave tragove po grebenu obale. Bilo je očito da se očajno borio proti smrti. Zato su zaključivali da ga je smelo ljetno sunce pa je u toj omamljenosti htio da skoči u more za nekom ribom." (V. NOVAK, 1964, 323)

his service in Senj municipality, however, his father used his bribing capabilities and managed to get him a job in V., in the capacity of a clerk at the county court. Tito proved successful in the role of a criminal prosecutor thanks only to the help of one Duić, who was a poor but shrewd and experienced clerk. Tito would go to Vienna once again to help his future father-in-law. The city was again the place of Tito's success because he gained the sympathies of the old man who persuaded his daughter to enter into marriage with him. Tito moved to P*, moved to the position of deputy public attorney, and married Regina. The marriage soon collapsed because Regina realised Tito was not her match: Tito was not well-read, he was an alcoholic and his sexuality seemed to be excessive, inappropriate, clumsy and brutal. Tito's final social breakdown happened when he mistakenly charged Dulapić with murder, and the man was hanged after the trial. When the truth came out, and the real killer was revealed, Dorčić had a mental breakdown. The treatment in Zagreb proved unsuccessful, and he was once again sent to Vienna. Without being cured, and with no job, he returned to Senj where he would die.

The beginning and the end are marked by Senj, which closes the circle, providing, in this particular case, in the interpreted novel, some similarity to the closed nature and bondage of the hero. The repetition of returning to Senj could be in line with the maniacal movements of the mentally ill– and so the ill Tito Dorčić is persistently seeking Dulapić.

Other characters and their bondage to circumstances

Regina is depicted as a refined, intelligent, well-read and agreeable girl who, however, has no dowry and, in the then conditions, could not marry in the way she would otherwise deserve. Yet, she shows a trace of weakness and bondage from the beginning of her relationship with Tito: "And then she felt those fine, strong threads slowly tying her life to Dorčić multiplying...and an unpleasant feeling appeared immediately, a feeling caused by the fact she had no power in herself to break the threads, and as time went by, the threads would grow stronger, and her power of resistance would be increasingly weaker."³⁴ The feeling would not pass until the period right before her marriage: "Who knows, maybe the event might not even take place – she thought with some hope as the only thing that could

³⁴ "A nato je osjetila da se množe one fine, čvrste niti što su polako privezivale njezin život o Dorčića... i odmah se javljalo neprijatno čuvstvo od toga što je uviđala da nema snage u sebi da trga te niti, i da će, što dalje, bivati te niti sve čvršće i brojnije a njezina otporna snaga sve slabija." (V. NOVAK, 1964, 262)

restore her complete freedom and disentangle the invisible, strong threads that in some mysterious way tied her destiny to Dorčić..."³⁵ The narrator would set Regina free only after the marriage when she realised Tito is illiterate as well as violent, or maybe just clumsy with his sexuality. The old Puhovec is also depicted as an enslaved person, being addicted to gambling, which lost him his money and in turn jeopardised his daughter's future.³⁶ Later on, his illness and care for his daughter would lead him to a false estimation of his future son-in-law Dorčić.

The context of the writer's opus: Tito Dorčić and Lucija Stipančić

It would seem that Lucija and Tito are suffering from very different and even opposing conditions. The former character lacks a formal education and career, while the latter has his life ruined by the unwanted studies and undeserved career. Lucija felt imprisoned at the end of her life, and so she writes to her Alfred, who had made her pregnant and then coldly induced her to have an abortion, sending her his instructions and medicaments. The girl begs her seducer "to free her from the terrible prison where she has been dying for so many months, but still cannot die"³⁷. The mendacious information from her mother is even worse than the pure physical imprisonment in a small house to which she and her mother moved due to their poverty. Her mother forced Martin Tintor, who really loved Lucija, to answer her letters to Alfred, to whom she was utterly irrelevant. The parents in both Lucija's and Tito's case bear a huge part of the responsibility for their children's unhappiness, although in a different manner. Lucija still managed to discover her mother's plotting and lies, she exposed the fallacy, and Martin Tintor came to her bedroom before her death because she called him. The knowledge of the person she was supposed to love, came to her too late and her would-be partner: "Lucija asked several times with great interest whether the young Tintor actually wrote to her gladly?" Only an uncertain last meeting, hinting at the happiness their possible love might have given them, was granted to Lucija and Tintor. A trace of sentimentality is present in their hand and eye contact, and in the beam of light falling into the dark chamber, yet a sense of futility gives artistic value to the scene. Tito Dorčić was not given anything similar, he lived a wrong life all the time, which would be only reinforced in his

³⁵ "Tko zna, možda do toga neće ni doći – pomislila je s nekom nadom koja kao da joj je jedina mogla vratiti potpunu slobodu i odmotati nevidljive, čvrste niti što su nekim tajanstvenim putem vezivale njezinu sudbinu uz Dorčića..." (V. NOVAK, 1964, 277)

³⁶ V. NOVAK, 1964, 228.

³⁷ V. NOVAK, 2009, 201.

madness at the end. The one and only real moment of happiness was afforded him by a fish that he held in his hands close to a pond in a Vienna garden, and he gathered the courage, honesty and intelligence to let it live.

The narrator and his character

The theist and the atheist worldviews have something in common and are clearly similar in their depictions of the human position in the known universe. We have to see, in the relation of the God of monotheism to the created human, the huge inferiority of the second element in the system. Considering the relation between the little human being and the complete set of material, spiritual or psychic powers, in the current understanding of them, we have to admit the painful subordination of man. Each worldview could certainly produce counterarguments: God is a merciful being, and even a sinful and not too important human being, has some chances; the very relationship with to God provides a sort of dignity. A scientist would claim the laws of nature are knowable, and a little piece of dust called a man, lost in the endless space of the universe could still do something in the face of the fear of mechanics, or chemistry or biology. However, as much as we emphasise the power of God or the material universe, the subordinate human position in the world is incomparably better than the position of a literary character with respect to his or her creator, or narrator, or the central intelligence of a literary work. The narrator of the well-known and also repugnant *Lolita* indirectly told his character, Humbert, he could do with him whatever he wanted to do. One could object that there are limits posed by the rules of aesthetics or logic, so a character with a certain amount of freedom is more convincing than one that is a mere slave in the hands of their creator, the writer. Yet it is not always like that: Budak's antagonist Blažić is burdened by an incredible list of evil deeds, ranging from the beating of his own wife, the preparations to murder his son, the attempted murder of a rival, to the actual murder of a coveted woman; not to mention stealing. He is still the best villain of Croatian literature.

Booth realises a novel does not have to contain a narrator directly present in a form of a character, whom he called a dramatized narrator. Still, a novel could build an indirect picture of an author present behind the scene, as a sort of stage manager or disinterested god.³⁸ The narrator often reveals himself by his commentaries and his attitude towards his heroes, although this kind of narrator

³⁸ Cf. W. BOOTH, 1961, 151

could not be dramatized. Genette named this the heterodiegetic narrator, whom Durić correctly observed in Novak's novel.³⁹

It would be pertinent to show examples of the relationships between a narrator and his characters in the true classics. The narrator of *Anna Karenina* shows compassion towards his heroine, which does not mean he panders to the lady, or that he is naïve, but it is obvious that the refined relationship, filled with both closeness and distance, builds one of the many values of the great work. It would suffice to compare the narrator of this novel to the narrator of *Madame Bovary*, who is completely and consistently distanced and cold towards his heroine. What is more, he is constantly mocking her and other persons in the novel, which might irritate a reader with the experience of different procedures.

The narrator from *Tito Dorčić* unmercifully attacks his leading "hero" with his comments – he beats him persistently, relentlessly, without, however, the perfidious refinement of Flaubert. It has already been mentioned that Tito's wife and his father-in-law have spoken of his reduced intellect, and there is no afterthought to show any disagreement on the part of the narrator. The narrator, the central intelligence of the work, removes every sign of compassion for the protagonist, who is depicted as undoubtedly immoral, who had to crib at school, when it was not enough for him to learn something by heart when he had no real understanding: "Apart from a very well developed memory, there was another property of his soul helping Tito at school: his cunningness... This characteristic is a very common phenomenon with the pupils of lesser mental capabilities."⁴⁰ The motif of "lesser mental capabilities" deserves a bit more of our attention. It is a typical authorial commentary, because there are no characters from the novel here, if we do not accept the narrator himself, who, although not physically present, could be a sort of a character relating the thought. Furthermore, Tito Dorčić does not take part in the Croatian students' demonstrations, so he is indirectly accused of an unpatriotic stance. He is a bad Croat, which would, however, afford him an advantageous position in some circles in Croatia today. Minor characters accuse Dorčić, and it is pertinent to observe how the narrator uses their mouths and their minds. The narrator is in the novel very close to the central intelligence. One of the main accusations, delivered by Tito's wife, is that he is not a well-read person:

"She did not comprehend his disgust at books at the beginning. During the first days after the wedding, he slavishly obeyed her every wish and every

³⁹ Cf. D. DURIĆ, 2011a, 104.

⁴⁰ "Izim vrlo razvitoga pamćenja još je jedno svojstvo duše pomagalo u školi Titu: lukavost... To je svojstvo vrlo obična pojava u đaka slabih duševnih sposobnosti." (V. NOVAK, 1964, 180)

evening sat with a book in his hand and by her side. She would sneak a glance at him and she could not help by notice that these moments were torture for him. - How could she comprehend this? He used to talk enthusiastically in front of her about literary works and writers, and now he does not even mention the matter, just as an actor does not play his role after the show is over. Could he have changed so much? – she would ask herself, but the answer was always the same. – No. In order to make herself certain of her judgement, she used to force some topic regarding any of the world's great works of literature into the conversation. He would try cunningly to avoid such a conversation – but now she would not relent. It was obvious to her he is at pains to avoid this kind of test until she would cry:

– Man, you haven't even read it!

– So what if I haven't! – Tito wriggled and tried stupidly to get out of it – I'm still alive!"⁴¹

The situation raises several questions. First of all, how did such an intelligent and sensitive woman, who believed literary understanding to be an important issue in choosing a life partner, not examine more in detail the reading habits of her future husband in more detail before the wedding even took place. How is it possible that she, such a well-read and shrewd person, did not understand she was dealing with a man who does not like literature? Furthermore, it is useful to pay attention to the word "stupidly". Is it about Regina's mind being displayed, or is it about the narrator, destroying any trace of respect for his creation with his hidden interruptions? A malicious commentator would say that Tito failed as a literary character because he had not read his *Crime and Punishment* carefully, or because he was not aware of the modern Croatian literature of his time, especially of the popular works of literature wheedling their way into the so-called "kurikulum". The narrator sometimes praises Tito

⁴¹ "Njegovu odvratnost od knjige nije isprva shvaćala. Prvih se dana iza vjenčanja pokoravao ropski svakoj njezinoj želji i sjedio je večerima s njome s knjigom u ruci kod stola. Motrila bi ga ispod oka i nije mogla a da ne opazi kako su ti časovi za nj muka. – Kako da to shvati? Kako je on oduševljeno pred njom znao govoriti o književnosti i književnicima, a sad toga ne spominje, kao što ni glumac ne govori svoju ulogu iza svršene predstave. Zar se mogao tako naglo promijeniti? – pitala se, a odgovor je bio vazda isti:– Nije. – Da se osvjedoči o svojem sudu, silom je htjela da započne s Titom razgovor o bilo kojem poznatom svjetskom literarnom djelu. On je s istom lukavošću kao prije nastojao da se ugne takovu razgovoru, ali ona sada nije popuštala. Bilo joj je očito kako se muči pred njom da okolišanjem izbjegne tomu neke vrste ispitu, dok nije morala kliknuti:

– Ta ti, čovječe, nijesi ni toga čitao!

– No, pa ako i nijesam – koprcao bi se i glupo izvlačio Tito – pak sam evo ostao živ." (V. NOVAK, 1964, 281)

against his own will. The character seems to be incorrigibly funny when he catches a carp in the city pond in a large Viennese park. After a short struggle, he manages to pull the fish out of the water and then he holds it in his hand. "He was excited and somehow electrified by its powerful jerks; with an expression as if he had completely forgotten himself, he gazed at its heavy, desperate breathing, the glimpse of its small eyes, the flapping of its fins and iridescence of the shiny surfaces of its scaly body. For a moment it was as if he was back home on the shore in front of the house where he was born."⁴² The Lacanian interpretation here would see it is a moment when *jouissance*, a special kind of desire, might have been satisfied. It might be something similar to Marx's surplus value, a pure profit, for Marxists. It may also be something that only true admirers of the two great Philosophers could comprehend in a mystical way. Maybe even mere mortals could understand it is about something related to an orgasmic feeling that Tito somehow managed to achieve. The narrator expressed it with motifs of the jerking, electrified status and home.

A critic concerned with animal rights, in the style of Peter Singer and the late Derrida, would not forget to praise the unhappy Dorčić who put the carp back in the water at the end of the scene. So, the terrible man displayed himself as being a person who respected animals. If he would have taken the fish, although he did not, then he must be given some credit. The central intelligence of the novel did not let Tito Dorčić swim. His return to the sea will end tragically. More serious questions regarding the work's verisimilitude rise around the fact of the steady foregrounding of the protagonist's poor intellect. Could such a stupid, violent and untalented person be capable of learning German so well as to enrol in the law school in Vienna? The vocabulary could indeed be managed, but what about the secrets of German mixed adjective declination, the traps of syntax and the verbs that do not come until the end of a sentence? And, would a person with such small intellectual judgement be able to complete the law study at such a distinguished place? Would the professors in Vienna really let him perform solicitor and barrister duties, to be called to the bar, to file lawsuits and undertake other serious procedures – would they realise he knows everything but understands nothing? Or did Tito's father bribe them too?

⁴² "Bio je sam zanesen i kao elektriziran njezinim jakim trzajima; s izražajem potpune zaboravnosti motrio je njezino teško, očajno disanje, sjaj malenih očiju, drhtanje peraja i prelijevanje svjetla u sjajnim plohamo po njezinom ljuskavom tijelu. Bilo mu je načas kao da se stvorio na žalost pred rodnom kućom." (V. NOVAK, 1964, 204)

Why is the central intelligence of the work, and here it is so close to the narrator, so unfavourable towards its character? It is hard to answer the question, but in the scope of the intentional fallacy theory, it might also be unnecessary. It seems that the aim of the central intelligence was to show some people were not made to be a part of the intellectual class, and Tito Dorčić was supposed to provide the proof of this.

The protagonist in the role of a scapegoat

Basic settings and examples

René Girard explained that some myths and sacred stories are witnesses to a collective crime against the scapegoat. He listed four stereotypes, in fact, parts of the structure accompanying the named activity. It is about the discovery of aliterary genre, building the structure as follows: a) the description of a social and cultural crisis with a generalised loss of differences; b) the crimes that eliminate differences; c) the marks that suggest a victim; d) the violence itself. The author claims the juxtaposition of more than one stereotype within a single document indicates persecution.⁴³

Girard's reading of the Oedipus myth, which I consider to be a first-class interpretation, would explain the situation. The plague destroys Thebes, which is the first stereotype, and the disease does not spare anyone. There are no differences among the dying people regarding class, gender or age. Oedipus is blamed for the plague because he married his own mother – by which he committed the crime of being oblivious to differences, putting all women on the same level regarding marital possibilities. So, the second stereotype or the second part of the structure is also reached. Oedipus limps, he is a stranger and also a king, which means he is marked, the third stereotype in the scheme. Finally, the oracle demands expulsion, however, the hero punishes himself, gouging his own eyes out, a symbolic castration. Oedipus believed what the mob believed of him.⁴⁴

The French theorist discovered a new genre in literature and the scheme of events in human civilization. Or, to put it in another way, beneath the slender veil of many old and new stories and events he discovered a deeper and more important structure – the scapegoat mechanism. His reading of the Oedipus myth is more complete and more important to western civilization than Freud's

⁴³ R. GIRARD, 1986, 24.

⁴⁴ R. GIRARD, 1986, 24–25.

reading. I do not consider Freud posed his whole system completely wrongly, but the ubiquitous presence of the sexual interpretation and its application to almost everything relevant is a gross exaggeration by which many have been duped.

It is useful to recall yet another of Girard's cognitions: the Christian or Gospel sacred story puts forward the above-mentioned structure, narrated from the point of view of persons knowing that the scapegoat, here Jesus Christ, was innocent, which was a first in human history. Or, to render it more precisely, the awareness of the fact the persecuted person was innocent was for the first time narrated in a story that later spread amongst almost all of the nations and across all of the classes. The narrator of the novel *Tito Dorčić* is fully on the side of the people persecuting the protagonist, he is completely convinced in his guilt and tries to render it to the readers, who believe him with almost no exception. The above-displayed structure has occurred in many literary works of art and has been applied, usually unconsciously, by writers of various ideological backgrounds. I would like to recall Mile Budak's *The Hearth* from 1938 – a novel belonging among the masterpieces of literature on a global scale. The novel's antagonist Blažić is a scapegoat, although not a typical one, because being cunning he knows how to play the part of the scapegoat, even pretending he is similar to Jesus Christ. A totally different work also belongs to the scapegoat mechanism group: the feminist comedy *The Smell of the Kill* (1999) by Michele Lowe presents three wives who kill their husbands. The men had been previously accused of a series of immoral acts, and the public usually applauds, laughs and approves of the crime. The mob regularly acts in a similar way when the scapegoats are killed.

Tito Dorčić in the role of the scapegoat

The social crisis is not in the novel's foreground, however, the corruption that governs the distribution of jobs and the promotion of civil servants is obvious, and is present well after Tito's time. The two situations showing Tito obtaining career positions in a dishonest way are typical. His father bribed a bishop with a valuable and rare fish in the first case. Later on, his father-in-law helped him to find a job in the city of P*. In both circumstances, the father, or the father-like character, helped the son, which is certainly a challenge for critics believing in Freud and his apostles. However, anyone will find in the text what they want to find, and with a bit of goodwill and intellectual acrobatics, even the situations described could be interpreted in such a way as to declare that the god of psychoanalysis is right.

The crisis is also partly manifested in the tensions, and also in the conflicts among the different nations in the state that the novel depicts: "The news of police dealing with Croatian students who clashed with German students because of politics, or who vented their dissatisfaction by demonstrations, filled almost every letter written to his father."⁴⁵

The dissatisfaction and unrest in society would soon break out in the novel. The public became aware that Jovan Dulapić was innocent of the murder with which he had been charged by Dorčić and then sentenced to death by the court. The society is now limited to a smaller community but it is nevertheless important to Tito: "The State's attorney office and the court were publicly attacked, while the severe and exceptional impact of the injustice committed towards the hanged man, Jovan Dulapić, and his family moved the masses and threatened to burst out in a violent act of retribution. The citizens collected voluntary contributions for the family of the deceased Jovan, and several peasants had already been incarcerated because of illegal and violent words against the court and authorities."⁴⁶ The public opinion in the city of P* sought retribution. One judge was moved to another position, another one was sent to retirement, while Tito was given the hint to ask for prolonged leave and leave P* immediately. Tito condemned himself in the harshest way, because he had to undergo treatment for his addiction, and his nerves were permanently damaged. He condemned himself by his illness, just as Oedipus chastised himself, and the medieval "witches" confessed that they had consorted with the devil, while 20th-century political prisoners admitted they were public enemies. Girard discovered, as quoted above, a single man is accused of a crime eliminating differences. Dorčić's false charge against Dulapić, and the ensuing sentence of the judges, eliminated the sensitive differences society is based upon the differences between the guilty and the innocent.

The text demonstrates Dorčić's guilt beyond doubt, and his punishment is followed by further scrutiny, the narrator following and attacking him from point to point remorselessly. It is true that according to the data provided by the text, Dorčić could have withdrawn the charge. Yet, it was up to the court judges

⁴⁵ "Gotovo u svakom pismu što bi ga pisao ocu bila je vijest o tom kako je opet imala policija posla s hrvatskim đacima koji su se poradi politike sukobili s njemačkim đacima ili dali oduška svome nezadovoljstvu kakom demonstracijom." (V. NOVAK, 1964, 202)

⁴⁶ "Javno se napadalo na državno odvjetništvo i sud, težak jedinstven dojam nepravde počinjene obješenomu Jovanu Dulapiću i njegovoj obitelji uzgibao je masom i prijeto provalom nasilne zadovoljštine. Među građanstvom sabirali su se dobrovoljni prinosi za obitelj pok. Jovana, a nekoliko seljaka bilo je već u uzama Sudbenog stola poradi nedozvoljenih i buntovnih izraza protiv suda i oblasti." (V. NOVAK, 1964, 306)

involved to assess the court prosecutor's and the defence counsel's arguments. Dorčić stated just the same idea in his thoughts: " – I did not judge him – he spoke in a cold voice to himself – but the court did ..." ⁴⁷ However, the narrator presents Dorčić's thoughts as the empty excuse of an incompetent man, so they provoke aversion to the protagonist in an unskilled reader, who gives credence to the narrator's tone, or to the central intelligence of the novel. There is still something more important than the attack due to the false indictment and unjust verdict. The text implicitly blames Dorčić alone for the substandard situation in society. It is far easier to accuse a single man than to change the complete system that allows fine administrative positions to be obtained by bribery and dubious social relations – i.e. via one's mother and father, a sexual liaison or a political party. The Marxist, Freudian and democratic viewpoints that have come to the fore since Tito Dorčić's time have not changed these problems very much. If we return to the 19th century and Tito's social environment, we should mention other shortcomings that abetted the protagonist's fall. Some of them are related to forensics, criminal investigation and the whole state administrative apparatus and scientific research of the time.

Tito Dorčić does not bear any visible sign, but at the moment when he is blamed for the Dulapić affair he was already, for a certain time, bearing the stigma of a man who has, very reasonably, been deserted by his spouse. He tried to persuade her to come back to him but he failed: "After Regina left him, Tito felt humiliated and rejected by the respectable circles where she was celebrated as a woman of intellect, the inheritor of her father's talents and a lady of refined feelings pertaining to the noblest members of the human race." ⁴⁸ Society had blamed Dorčić even before he committed his errors in the Dulapić case, and they excluded him from their noble circles. Just as Oedipus punished himself by gouging out his eyes, so Tito punishes himself by madness. He punishes himself by withdrawing from the healthy part of the society and by his sickness, but the utmost punishment will be death. We could say that the very text of the novel chastised him, but it would be more precise to say that the narrator, who has held a negative attitude towards him from the beginning, executed him. The readers and the critics duly followed him.

⁴⁷ " – Ja mu nijesam sudio – govorio je hladnim mirom sebi – nego sud..." (V. NOVAK, 1964, 304)

⁴⁸ "Pošto ga je ostavila Regina, osjećao se Tito poniženim i izbačenim iz onih uglednih krugova u kojima je ona bila slavljena umnicom, nasljednicom talenta svojega oca i damom finih osjećaja najplemenitije ljudske rase. Nije mu bila tajna da je javnost uzimala nju u zaštitu i odobravalala njezin korak, a njega osuđivala." (V. NOVAK, 1964, 296)

The possibility of a New Historicism approach?

The novel's hero was given his name, Tito, in the year of 1906. The name itself was to become the nickname of the communist dictator Josip Broz Tito, although only decades later. It is not easy to prove that the name was responsible for the rather cold reception of the novel, after the communist state, that later became the Socialist Federative Republic of Yugoslavia, was established. The correct answer would demand a wide-ranging investigation and it is uncertain whether it would yield satisfactory results. Still, younger readers should be reminded of several people sentenced to perennial incarceration because of jokes made at the expense of the above-named follower of Marx's philosophy. Thus Anto Kovačević had used the expression "Jozo mafijozo", Mafia Jozoin a private conversation. He was sentenced to eight years and six months of prison, by the judgment of the district court of Doboj, labelled K. 30/82, of 24 July 1982.⁴⁹ It is pertinent in the present context to recall the short film directed by Nikola Babić called *Bino, the Eye of a Seagull* (*Bino, oko galebovo*).⁵⁰ This work of art mocked the dictator Tito, showing, among other things, Bino dressed in a fake white parade uniform being driven in an open-top limousine. The fake ride took place right in the town of Senj. The film was of course prohibited, and it is difficult for today's and I hope future readers to comprehend the stress that regime supporters must have experienced when they saw the funny and serious scenes from the work.

Novak's literary character bearing the name Tito was low-born and did not succeed in his life. Josip Broz Tito's social background was also low, and he was praised, and still is praised by his followers as the greatest son of all Yugoslav peoples. Novak's Tito was depicted as an unintelligent, poorly-read and violent person, responsible for the death of an innocent man, therefore incompetent at his work, mentally ill, unsuccessful in family life, and eventually punished by illness and death. Such qualifications joined with the prominent name of Tito did not allow much of a literary life during communism in the former socialist Yugoslavia – although the character had been constructed long before the appearance of the communist leader. This does not mean it is the one and only reason for the novel's low ranking in the series of important texts.

⁴⁸ Cf. A. KOVAČEVIĆ, 2012, 81–84.

⁵⁰ I saw the film on HRT (Croatian Radio and Television) years ago, but I had forgotten the director's name and the title. Nikica Gilić, of Zagreb University, supplied me with the information, and I would like here to express my sincere gratitude to him.

Conclusion

The novel *Tito Dorčić* presents several persons who are in bondage due to their low intellectual capabilities, other people's false desires and passions, subconscious drives, and generally due to wrong judgments and assessments. The social background as depicted by the text is also very prone to corruption and also full of the wrong people occupying high places, plus the desires for material values and honorific issues are also strong. The protagonist could be enslaved by his own origin or subconscious; yet, by the low level of his scope of activity, he is a forerunner of similar characters of the ironic mode in 20th-century literature. The narrator relentlessly attacks Tito Dorčić, and eventually, he puts him, subconsciously, in the position of the scapegoat.

The novel would have enjoyed much better success if its central intelligence, or narrator, had depicted Tito as a morally correct yet weak person destroyed by society. Another unused possibility was to show his rise on the social scale and his permanent occupation of a high position despite his incompetence and immorality. The situation that is present in the novel does not allow the reader to feel much sympathy for the protagonist. On the other hand, there is no real knowledge claiming the stupid and the cunning are steadily advancing. The reader feels disgusted, an unpleasantness and even hostility – which are still typical reactions to the characters of 20th-century fiction who achieve great success. Only a view of the genres will reveal Tito Dorčić as the victim of the narrator, who observes in him the very reason for all the evil in society in general.

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TITO DORČIĆ KAO PRETHODNIK IRONIJSKOGA MODUSA

Sažetak

Prema Northropu Fryeu, književnost XX. stoljeća obilježuju likovi koji imaju manje inteligencije i time slabiju moć te suženiji opseg djelovanja od prosječnoga čovjeka. Tipični su protagonisti Kafkinih i Beckettovih djela kojima manjkaju osnovne informacije o vlastitu položaju – stoga svjedočimo prizorima zarobljenosti i nemoći.

Ovakvim likovima prethodi i dobrim dijelom pripada Novakov Tito Dorčić iz istoimenoga romana, koji je zarobljen svojim predispozicijama i sredinom te je nesretan u "boljem životu" koji mu obrazovanjem nameću roditelji. Potpun neuspjeh pokazuje u braku i u karijeri. Interpretatori nalaze uzroke u darvinističkim teorijama pripovjedača i samoga autora Novaka te psihoanalitičkim tumačenjima zbilje koje ističe novija kritika; obje teorije nesvjesno svjedoče o smanjenoj moći protagonista. Završni prizor u kojem je Tito Dorčić mrtav ukliješten između stijena i napola u moru sinegdoha je njegove ukupne životne situacije.

Ustroj žrtvenoga jarca (*scapegoat mechanism*), kako ga tumači René Girard, također dobro tumači događaje u životu Tita Dorčića: društvena kriza tek naizgled nije jače naglašena, no Tito je prikazan kao osoba koja zauzima položaj što mu ne pripada zbog smanjene inteligencije, nemorala i nekulture; griješi na poslu, a za smrt nevinoga čovjeka on najviše strada; već je prije toga bio obilježen krivnjom za raspad svojega braka. Konačno gubi posao, zapada u ludilo, čime se i sâm kažnjava i napokon umire. Tekst ili pripovjedač ubijaju ga, što je samo posljednji korak u dugu postupku ocrnjivanja glavnoga lika.

Ključne riječi: Tito Dorčić, ironijski modus, ustroj žrtvenoga jarca