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BORDER FASCISM IN THE VENEZIA GIULIA: THE ISSUE OF “PROXIMATE COLONY” IN SLOVENIAN LITERATURE

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ABSTRACT

Slovenian literary texts which refer to the border Fascism, recognize its fascist discourse as colonial. They “quote” it and refer to it, they put it under the question and they deny it. A Slovenian literary character, constructed as the colonial subaltern in the fascist-Italian view, rejects this image in the name of Slovenian auto-stereotype of a revolver: the literary character rejects the very possibility of being treated as a colonized subject and thus actually confirms the border Fascism as a set of colonization strategies characteristic of the concept of proximate colony. The article is an introduction to postcolonial reading of selected Slovenian literary texts and also an introduction to the concept of proximate colony (R. Donia, S. Vervaet). Slovenian literary representations, i.e. the literary “contact zone” of two border cultures of Venezia Giulia offer a chance to reflect the border Fascism policy from the perspective of colonial relations between the imperial centre and the periphery, inhabited mostly by the disloyal non-Italian population.

Keywords: Venezia Giulia, border Fascism, proximate colony, postcolonialism, Slovenian literature, Boris Pahor, Alojz Rebula, Nedeljka Pirjevec

FASCISMO DI FRONTIERA NELLA VENEZIA GIULIA: LA QUESTIONE DELLA “COLONIA IN VICINANZA” DAL PUNTO DI VISTA DELLA LETTERATURA SLOVENA

SINTESI

I testi letterari sloveni riconoscono nel fascismo di frontiera il discorso del colonizzatore, lo “citano” oppure si riferiscono ad esso, lo mettono in discussione e lo rifiutano. Il personaggio letterario sloveno, che lo sguardo fascista-italiano vorrebbe plasmare come personaggio colonizzato e sottoposto, rifiuta tale identità sostituendola con l'autostereotipo sloveno di resistente: che si oppone all'imposizione dello status di colonizzato e con ciò conferma il fascismo di frontiera come strategia del regime colonizzatore, basata sul modello di colonia in vicinanza. Con una lettura postcoloniale di alcuni testi letterari sloveni selezionati e con la presentazione del modello di colonia in vicinanza (R. Donia,

S. Vervaeet) l'articolo cerca di aprire la possibilità di percepire il fascismo di frontiera nella Venezia Giulia, attraverso le rappresentazioni letterarie slovene come zona di contatto di due culture di confine, alla luce di questo specifico rapporto coloniale tra centro imperiale e periferia, abitata da una popolazione non italiana e ostile al fascismo come colonizzatore.

Parole chiave: Venezia Giulia, fascismo di confine, colonia in vicinanza, postcolonialismo, letteratura slovena, Boris Pahor, Alojz Rebula, Nedeljka Pirjevec

Literature, as the postcolonial theoretician M. L. Pratt suggested, is a significant “contact zone”. “Literature written on both sides of the colonial divide often absorbs, appropriates and inscribes aspects of the ‘other’ culture [...] literature is also an important means of appropriating, inverting or challenging dominant means of representation and colonial ideologies.” (Loomba, 2000, 70–71).

LITERATURE AS THE “CONTACT ZONE”: THE POSSIBILITY OF THE POSTCOLONIAL VIEW ON THE BORDER FASCISM

Literature, therefore, (among others) represents social- and political-historical relationships between different societies, as well as the ideologies which generate these relationships. In the well-known political-historical colonial relations between the state of the colonizer and “its” colonies (for example in the British empire), the literature which is taking shape “on both sides of the colonial divide” allows us more detailed insights into these relations: it represents contaminations of one culture with another and, by constructing and distributing images of “the other”, co-creates discourses of power as well as subversive reactions to them.¹ This article will tackle the subject matter from a reverse perspective: although it might seem surprising, the article will discuss the Slovenian literary representations of historical events in the border area of Venezia Giulia, i.e. the representations of the border Fascism as the subject of postcolonial reading. In addition, the article will contemplate whether Slovenian texts in fact reveal colonial relationship between the (1922–1941) fascist centre of Italian state and Venezia Giulia as its periphery. Can Venezia Giulia be considered a version of a colony, particularly a colonized periphery at least in the state’s relation to “the Slavic minority”, which inhabits Venezia Giulia?

1 (Slovenian) Triestine literature can be perceived from this aspect as well: the culturally-crossing character of the city of Trieste has motivated its intensive creation of “images” and “counter-images”, auto- and hetero-stereotypes of the border cultures. M. Pirjevec (2011, 354) discusses Slovenian Triestine literature “as an expression of particular social conditions, national collisions [...] as well as identity seeking [...], which are very typical for a life in a border area.” Otherwise, Slovenian Triestine literature covers a more extensive textual corpus than the works selected for our discussion. However, the above quotation from M. Pirjevec’s essay is actually also the starting point of our, postcolonial reading of Slovenian texts on border Fascism.

This second question is also rather uncharacteristic of the historiographical discussions of this area (with some contemporary exceptions which will be mentioned later).² On the basis of those fascist strategies governed by the regime’s centre in Rome which specifically referred to “re-Italianization” of the annexed territory and thus functioned as institutions and practices in Venezia Giulia, contemporary Italian historiography invented the term “border fascism” (*fascismo di frontiera, fascismo di confine*).³ Its historical references allow us to point out some associations to the colonial glossary. A border-fascist official, the then acting fascist secretary for the province of Trieste, Livio Ragusin Righi, suggests in his brochure *Politica di confine* (1929) that the appropriate model of the denationalization policy against (Slovenian and Croatian) “heterogeneous” ones is, in his opinion, “colonization following the example of the ancient Rome” (Kacin-Wohinz and Verginella, 2008, 37). In addition to Righi’s suggestion, the selected Slovenian literary works about the border fascism refer to the colonial discourse, especially the contemporary postcolonial theories, which reject a “universal” model of colonialism(s) (see Loomba, 2000). These theories have also started renewing the insights into the inter-continental European history of the 19th and 20th centuries, for example into the relations between the centre and peripheries in the multi-ethnic Austro-Hungarian Empire, and, after the decay of the Socialist Soviet Empire (USSR), into its relations to the “Eastern Block” “satellite” states and especially to its former republics: the latter, which had been constituted as independent (national) states in 1990/91, acknowledge their common experience of their past under the Soviet parent and thus accommodate postcolonial theory(ies), through which the national histories are re-questioned as well as the supra-national cultural histories have started to be created, such as the Baltic⁴ one. In the light of this, the term of *internal colonisation* increasingly gains popularity. And, finally, in 2011 Italian scientific journal *Aut aut*, subtitled *Il postcoloniale in Italy*, published essays which clearly thematise the option to “read” the Italian history of different periods from the postcolonial perspective: G. Gabrielli discusses the question of “races and colonies in Italian schools” (2011), M. Verginella (2011) discusses “antislavism” in the context of “racism” and B. Wagner (2011) discusses the Sardinian history in the context of the “alterity” and “semi-colonial status” on the political, economic and cultural levels. Moreover, Wagner takes into account the aspects of identity and colonialism in the contemporary Sardinian literature. All of these postcolonial contributions to the contemporary European (cultural and political) historiography provide a more expanded context of our question: Is it possible to “read” the specifics of the border

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- 2 Milza’s comprehensive *History of Italy* (*L’Histoire d’Italie*, 2005), for example, unambiguously mentions Italian colonial politics in Libya or Ethiopia, or in Mediterranean (Milza, 2012, 665–6). On the other hand, its historiographical discourse on Venetia Giulia does not include the term “colonialism”. Appearance of Venetia Giulia on Italian political map is explained with the term “annexation”, for example: “inhabitants of provinces of Trentino and Trieste were not enthusiastic about the annexation to the Kingdom of Italy at all”. (Milza, 2012, 697). In Slovenian historiography, either this term or sometimes another one, i.e. “Italian occupation” is used by M. Kacin-Wohinz (for example, in: 1990, 7, 13, 19); sometimes it appears as “Italian military occupation” (Verginella, 2008, 9; Kacin-Wohinz, 2008, 17), etc.
 - 3 Kacin-Wohinz’s and Verginella’s Slovene monograph on Slovene-Littoral resistance against Fascism (2008) frequently refers to works of Anna Maria Vinci and Marina Cattaruzza.
 - 4 For postcolonial Baltic history see Kalnačs (2015, 48).

fascism's strategies directed at the ethnically non-Italian population on Eastern border of Italian state between 1922–1941 as a version of colonialism; especially those which were suggested by R. Donia (2007) as the *proximate colony*, and were culturally-historically supplemented by S. Vervaeet (2013),⁵ who also mentions the “(semi)colonial/peripheral position”. (ibid., 17). As mentioned above, the starting point of our view are those Slovenian literary texts and con-texts which represent border Fascism in terms of the (anti- and post-) colonial discourse. They, mostly written by B. Pahor, A. Rebula and N. Pirjevec, refer to the authorial direct or inherited experience with border Fascism in Venezia Giulia and, in this sense, establish “border” literature as the postcolonial “contact zone”. Its discussion will be methodologically reduced here, as it is focused just on the Slovenian literature; but, despite this reduction, it clearly reveals the “contact”: some of its terms, situations and protagonists represent/construct Slovenian auto-images and hetero-stereotypes of either Italian or fascist “the other”, and this image is necessarily contaminated by (the border-) Italian image in the period of Fascism. The selected Slovenian literary texts thus recognize the border-fascism discourse as the discourse which constructs the colonial subaltern. “So!’ Struna yelled: ‘and now the revolt! [...] Against me, as I sweat blood to change you, bandits and children of bandits, into cultivated human beings and deserving members of *‘del valoroso popolo fascista italiano!’*” (Pirjevec, 2003, 80) The following chapter will present some arguments for this opinion.

TEXTS AND CONTEXTS: IRREDENTISM AND/OR COLONISATION: DISCURSIVE REPRESENTATIONS

Historiography records that after Italian annexation “approximately 350,000 Slovenian men and women remained inside the Italian Kingdom’s borders [...; this situation raised the] issue of the minority inside the borders of the state, which after the Great War gained most of the territory for which the most enthusiastic Italian patriots had strived since the 1880s”. (Verginella, 2008, 9). From the aspect of the nationalistic-unitaristic tradition⁶ of Italian irredentism, the annexation is seen as the “redemption” of Eastern

5 Donia’s and, later, Vervaeet’s concrete descriptions of this colony model both refer to the case of Bosnia and Hercegovina after its *annexation* to Austro-Hungarian Empire. Already in 1977, Robert A. Kann suggested that Austro-Hungarian occupation of Bosnia can be explained as Habsburg imperialistic motifs. However, in 1977, colonialism was still inevitably associated with the traditional concept of racism: “We must first ask whether the concept of colonialism, commonly understood as the rule of European powers over native coloured people on the other continents can be transferred to a mastersubject relation within Europe, pointing to a system of colonial administration and exploitation of whites by whites.” (Kann, 1977, 164; see also Hárs et al., 2006, 262; Vervaeet, 2013, 59)

6 In Leerssen’s typology of European nationalisms, the Italian one is characterized as the separatist type, as it was practiced by *Risorgimento*. But “what begins as separatist or unification nationalism may, after an initial independent territory has been established, try to expand that territory to include ‘out-lying’ fellow-nationals.” (Leerssen, 2006, 136) Irredentismo was founded on the historical tradition and culture. In Venetia Giulia, its rival was the Slovenian separatist nationalism, which, for the lack of a long-lasting historical tradition, founded its arguments in the natural law in 1848 (Pirjevec, 2015, 378), also accommodating the German and later transnational model of *Kulturnation*. (compare Juvan, 2012; see also Verginella, 2011, 37)

periphery, to which the Italian national-cultural identity⁷ was ascribed by the *Irredenta* movement; and consequently its "Slavic" population was perceived as the "heterogeneous" one. Italian patriots' "feeling of being cheated" by the incomplete realization of the London memorandum (1915), caused by some diplomatic compromises made by the Italian foreign affairs' policy on the new Kingdom of Serbs, Croats and Slovenes (constituted on 1 December 1918), was resumed by militant poet Gabriele D'Annunzio, who, speaking of the 'crippled victory', faithfully interpreted the opinion of numerous propagandistic circles and in so doing decisively contributed to the establishment of the political myth which [... in G. Salvemini's opinion] became one of the foundations of the forming Fascism." (Pirjevec, 2015, 380). "Foundation myths served to re-model the national past" and affirmed the continuity of the nation from the ancient times onwards (Verginella, 2011, 40). The future politics to "Slaves" was announced by Mussolini as the leader of the rising fascist movement in his speech in Pula (Pola) on 20 September 1920: "What is the history of Fascism? [...] We burned Croatian National Halls in Trieste and Pula [...; in Trieste: Slovenian National Hall. It was burned on 13 July 1920]. *When dealing with such a race as Slavic – inferior and barbarian – we must not pursue the carrot, but the stick policy.*"⁸ [...] *Our imperialism* must reach the rightful borders, drawn by God and nature, which we want to extend to Mediterranean" (Pirjevec, 2015, 381; trans. and stressed by V. M.) This speech serves as a reference also to A. M. Vinci, when she explains the "birth of *border Fascism*" (compare Kacin-Wohinz and Verginella, 2008, 35) This juxtaposition of terms, such as "inferior" and "barbarian", "race" and "imperialism" unambiguously signalizes colonial discourse which is obviously (with reference to the mentioned "Trieste" and "Pula") associated with the border Fascism. In Mussolini's speech, these terms refer to the "Slavic" East and thus (also) to Venezia Giulia.

When Radko Suban, the protagonist of B. Pahor's novel *Zatemnitev* (The Darkening, 1975), arrives in city centre of Trieste after the capitulation of the fascist Italy, he describes it with the spatial metonymy for the Italian-nationalistic view of Slovenian population: "what can these old [Triestine] buildings say now at the crowd of mandrieres, milk-women, builders and labourers they looked down on *as though* they were a *colonized* tribe." (Pahor, 1987, 176) (Stressed by V. M.)

"As though"? Or the "tribe" was in fact colonized? This ambiguity is revealed by the Slovenian representation of the fascist discourse (as, therefore, seen by the Slovenian view), especially in A. Rebula's novel *Kačja roža* (Snake Flower, 1994). Its protagonist Amos, a half-Jew, fascist official,⁹ comes to the Carst to implement Italianization, i.e. assimilation of

7 "If in the period of 'Risorgimento', when they struggled for the political unification of the Apennine Peninsula, Italian intellectuals asked themselves where are the borders of their homeland in the North-East, they thought of the Italy they knew from the time of emperor Augustus. [...] The 'Carbonari', the first organized Italian patriots were conscious of this geographical image [...] already in 1818." (Pirjevec, 2015, 378–9).

8 English translation of this sentence in: Pirjevec, 2008, 27. In original: »Di fronte ad una razza inferiore e barbara come la slava non si deve seguire la politica che dà lo zucchero, ma quella del bastone.« (Verginella, 2011, 31).

9 Amos as a half-Jew belongs to "the exceptionally well-integrated" Italian Jewish community. (Paxton, 2004, 166) Amos is a newcomer in the border Fascism area: he is an advocate for the Italian culture, yet

the “heterogeneous” ones. “To familiarize myself with Trieste a little I visited a number of bookshops. Kandler’s *Storia del Consiglio dei patrizi*, Slataper’s *Lettere triestine*, Caprin’s *Paesaggio e spirito di confine*, [...], Vivante’s *Irredentismo adriatico* [...]. I had less luck with Slovenian things. [...] ‘Slovenian is not a language, sir,’ a black-haired man said [...]. ‘Slovenian doesn’t exist!’ ‘What do you mean, I can hear it on the streets?’ ‘It shouldn’t be heard! Trieste is an Italian city!’” (Rebula, 1994, 31) This fragment is a clear discursive representation of the ambiguity, which characterizes (even) a border fascist (the librarian) in relation to the non-Italian, Slovenian ethnical community in Venezia Giulia. First, he denies its central performative presence, i.e. Slovenian language in this area as well as its material evidence, i.e. the books written in this language. This is the sign that the ethnical “other” does not exist in this space, at least not as a cultivated and thus an equal nation. The gesture of denying everything not Italian in this area signalizes *accomplishment* of Italian irredentism in this area. The belief in this *accomplishment* is confirmed in some documents of the border Fascism from 1929: “the problem of national minority in Venezia Giulia does not exist”, “there is no problem with the heterogeneous ones”, writes fascist secretary of Triestine province G. Cobol; but on the other hand: “it is [... at least] not allowed anymore to speak about the problem of the heterogeneous ones, not because the problem would not exist, but because by discussing it a meaning could be ascribed to [...this] population, a meaning which [...this population] certainly does not deserve”, writes G. Bombig in the same number of the fascist journal *Gerarchia*, which tackles Venezia Giulia. (Kacin-Wohinz and Verginella, 2008, 35; see also Verginella, 2011, 41) The image of Venezia Giulia as an area of the accomplished (*irredenta*) thus denies the possibility of a colonial relation to “Slaves” since it denies the existence of the colonized “other”. However, secondly, the librarian’s fascist discourse in the Slovenian novel also acknowledges the existence of it on another level of denial: that the language the Slovenian “other” “is not a language”. It is, therefore, heard, but it is not considered a (linguistically) cultivated means of communication. The very need for denial, i.e. prohibition (*Qui si parla soltanto italiano*) of any cultural representation of the ethnical other signalizes the acknowledgement of the “other” – as the subaltern one. More precisely, the subaltern in the sense of a non-civilized one: “the vast majority of Slaves [...] respect the state, consequently they will be without any doubt quickly attracted by the high Italian civilization and ‘they will be proud that they are a component of the Italian nation’,” is the fascist secretary’s reflection quoted by Kacin-Wohinz and Verginella (2008, 36). The civilizing mission belongs to the typical imagery of the colonial domination, at least from the 19th century onwards. The allusion to the Italian colonial view is found in Rebula’s Slovenian counter-view with the topos *Hic sunt leones*,¹⁰ which suggests the imagined “similarity” of this area with the African colonies.

According to the border-fascism discourse, represented by the Slovenian novel and fascist documents as the con-text, we can see the ambiguity of the fascist imagining

from a humanistic distance to the fascist militant nationalism. His half-Jewish origin is in no way problematic before the appearance (1938) of Manifesto of Race and the enactment of the Racial Laws.

10 Rebula uses this topos in his essay, written for the public presentation (24 May 1983) of the monograph *Trieste provincia imperiale* (F. Fölkel and C. L. Cergoly).

of the Venezia Giulia border area and consequently also the border-Fascism strategies: Venezia Giulia is a "redeemed land" where Slavic "other" does not exist; and as far as it nevertheless exists it is subjected to the civilizing mission,¹¹ which, as was seen, will follow the "colonizing" practices of the "ancient-Roman imperialism". In Gentile's words: "A foreign policy [was] inspired by the myth of national power and greatness, with the goal of imperialist expansion." (Payne, 1995, 6)

SLOVENIAN RECOGNITION OF THE COLONIAL RELATION: THE "HETEROGENEOUS" ONE AND THE DISCOURSE OF RESISTANCE

The Slovenian view, represented in written texts and thus mostly created by the intellectual elite,¹² discursively recognizes/represents this ambiguity and rejects both of its dimensions, described in the lines above, especially the second one, i.e. the implied ascription of the status of the (colonized) subaltern one to the Slovenian (national) cultural community. In A. Budal's novella *Dve materi* (Two Mothers, 1949), imperial opposition between the "civilized" fascist colonialist and "Slavic" subaltern ones is represented in the discourse of Italian, Triestine mother, who assumes the view of her son – a soldier: "Now they will see, schiavi," he promised, 'why they walked with general Radetzky across Italy. Now they will pay for this and everything else.' [...] You know, Fascism filled their heads with dreams of new victories, in Caesar's footsteps. [...] *But he wished to march against Slaves. He wanted to bring them our culture, our glory, our greatness.*" (Budal, 2001, 257–8. Stressed by V. M.) However, Carlo, the son, becomes an explicit opponent to the imperial colonisation politics after his war experience with "Slavic" subaltern.

With regard to potentially colonial relationships, the term of "heterogeneous" one (*allogeno*) seems to be of a particular importance: in the fascist militant-nationalistic discourse it functions as the *cultural sign* (R. Barthes) of sub-alterity; even in the case, when it refers to a (theoretically) equal citizen, as seen in Amos's reflection on the First Trieste trial (1–5 September 1930).¹³ This term is highlighted by Vinci as well: "calling Slaves on

11 The same ambiguity appears in Rebula's novel *Kačja roža* in the thoughts of the fascist allegorical figure, i.e. the (Sicilian) teacher who comes to the border zone. First, she suggests that the land is already "redeemed": "'Carst, isn't it? [...] 'The redeemed land!' [...] Where on those stones fell her uncle, a bersagliere, one of the six hundred thousand who were sacrificed to the Triple Entente, which later cheated Italy out of Dalmatia and the colonies?'" Later she indicates the domination over the subaltern, who need to be cultivated and assimilated by the civilizing mission: "The place to which she is supposed to bring redemption as a teacher. It didn't arouse any enthusiasm in her: completely foreign country! 'But if you will obey and diligently learn Italian, *Italia Redenta* will give you books, notebooks and pencils for free...". (Rebula, 1994, 26–28)

12 Verginella (2008, 11) points out the "question of forms and degree of support to the regime by particular social strata of the population as well as the question of social and economic influence of the material benefits delivered by Mussolini's government to the poorest in Littoral too". "These questions, which have not been investigated yet, do not allow an unambiguous [...] survey of Littoral history, which could only function in the 'ideal' national narrative."

13 When Amos contemplates the bomb set in the editorial board of an Italian newspaper by Slovenian rebels (the fictional names clearly allude to the real historical event, the newspaper *Il popolo di Trieste*, Slovenian organisation TIGR and the fascist court which sentenced the four members of organisation to death penalty), Amos

Italian territory with the term heterogeneous ones – *allogeni* – means to disdain them and to marginalize the whole community. [...] But when the resistance spread unimaginably [...], the fear of the Slavic danger appeared again.” (Kacin-Wohinz and Verginella, 2008, 37). This context of the term, also associated with the First Trieste trial, represents F. Bevk’s record¹⁴ of the fascist-media discourse: “[...]the sheets of paper brought long reports of the process in capital letters, permeated with the hard-to-understand hatred against the heterogenous ones.” (Bevk, 2001, 180) The Slovenian rejection of the term “heterogeneous one” can be explained as a sign of resistance against the fascist discursive ascription of this status: in his written sermon (31 May 1931) catholic priest J. Ukmar¹⁵ uses the terms, such as “citizens of another language”, “another nation”, etc. (Ukmar, 2001, 189, 191), but takes the possible colonizing connotation of the “otherness” away: “In Christ’s Kingdom, there are no citizens of the first and the second category”. (Ukmar, 2001, 189) Ukmar associates this religious universalistic equality with the civil right of the mother tongue and nationality.

Rebula’s literary priest, which is the Slovenian allegorical figure of revolt against the border fascism, i.e. the priest Jamar rejects the fascist civilizing mission by referring to the *cultural nation* model (thousands of Slovenian books have been sold out in Littoral before Italian annexation, he argues), which suggests cultural equality between the Italian and Slovenian nation and similarities between Italian irredentism of the 19th century and Slovenian nationalistic movement: “the logic of the Dante Alighieri you carry in your pocket,” says the priest to Amos. “Didn’t this man wrote a *De vulgari eloquentia*?” (Rebula, 1994, 43)

On the contrary, in his political speech in the Roman parliament (13 May 1926),¹⁶ E. Besednjak uses the term of the “heterogeneous citizens” partly ironically and partly seriously when mentioning the “Slavic minority in Venezia Giulia” (Besednjak, 2001, 167): to name the indigenous African populations of the empire, whose rights he demands also for the “Slavic” population, and thus ironically represents it as actually a colonial subaltern one.

“MINISTER FEDELE: It is our duty to educate the Italian citizens in the Italian way [...]. BESEDNJAK: [...] When I read the king’s ordinance – act as of 31 January 1924, no. 472, I noticed in the Article 1 that the government *provides and allows Arabic schools for the heterogeneous citizens of the Muslim belief in Cirenaika and Tripolitania*. DUDAN: *But they are not Italian citizens, they are subjects!* VOICE: *This is not Italy but*

defends the rule of law: “From the perspective of the heterogeneous ones, [...] *Trieste Littoria* [...] probably deserved the bomb after all the relentless verbal attacks on them. [...] In any case, I wonder, how our justice could have sat on its hands. We would be flooded with terrorism” (Rebula, 1994, 115), while the irrational, emotional reaction of the border-fascized Italian-Triestine community is represented in the autobiographical narration (*Tigrova sled*; *Tiger’s trace*) of one of the accused ones (Sardoč, 2001, 201–2).

14 Memoir-writing *Mrak za rešetkami* (*Twilight behind grids*, 1958).

15 Ukmar’s sermon refers to the regime’s prohibition to use the Slovenian language (also) in church, the prohibition against which Littoral Slovenian and Croatian priests rebelled. These priests were united in the Secret Christian Social Organization (compare Pelikan, 2002).

16 The speech which refers to the effects of Gentile’s educational reform (1923) is titled: *Sleherna slovenska družina se bo spremenila v šolo / Ogni famiglia si transformerá in una scuola*. (Pelikan, 1996, 242–243)

a colony [...]. BESEDNJAK: As you can see our demands are rather small. [...] *Due to tribal differences in Africa our government acknowledges the need for an Arabic school as well as an Italian one. I suggest that these principles of the educational system in Libia extend to the Slavic minority of Venetia Giulia.* (Noise.) And I assure you that I haven't proposed this ironically [...] but in order to defend our nation. VOICE: What nation? (For Italians the nationality and citizenship are one and the same thing. Editorial board.)" (Besednjak, 2001, 156, 170. Stressed by V. M.)

The record of this session also renews the ambiguity of the fascist discourse in the border zone: is the border Fascism either a sign of the accomplished *Italia Redenta* or is it a sign of potentially colonizing relations, including the civilizing mission? The interjections of Italian politicians deny colonialism in Venezia Giulia, referring to the accomplished *Italia Redenta*, i.e. Italianization of the land (paradoxically, since Besednjak, as one of them, *officially represents the national minority*). On the other hand, Besednjak's discursive pre-categorization of his own national-minority community into the colonial subaltern in order to defend it against the assimilation into the fascized-Italian "homogeneousness" represents the Slovenian intellectual view on the fascist relation to the (non-assimilated) Slovenian community, which reveals itself as an actual colonial relationship in the light of Besednjak's irony.¹⁷ The subversive irony serves as a sign of resistance against ascribing the status of the colonized one to the Slovenian community.

The most explicit connection between the terms the "heterogeneous" one and "colonization" is represented as the border-Fascist discourse in the fictional document in Rebula's *Kačja roža* which is read and commented (in italics) by the regime's official Amos. "The Plan" assumes the assimilating and/or repressive strategies of the border Fascism as a clear colonization plan for Venezia Giulia. The cultivated official (as seen in the Slovenian view), re-questions the colonizing civilizing mission, but at the same time supports the Italianization of Slovenes, not capable to recognize it as a version of the colonial construction of the subaltern.

"The Plan for the final solution of the issue of Slaves in Venezia Giulia' [...] 1. When solving the Slavic problem in Venezia Giulia we must keep in mind the totalitarian form of Italianization. [...] 2. By destroying the Slavic structures in this area – schools, associations, press – and banishing the Slovenian language from the public life merely the starting point for an in-depth transformation of the heterogeneous ones is created [...] (My [Amos's] note: *the fact that schools, associations and press of the heterogeneous ones were destroyed proves that we are not dealing with a barbarian tribe.* [...]). 3. Political offensiveness will not be successful if it is not accompanied by the economical one, which shall cut off the material basis of the Slovenian. Therefore I suggest that a) Slovenian property shall be sapped [...] c) these land shall be taken over and left to

17 A similar situation, i.e. granting privileges to the African colonized by giving them more cultural rights than a Slovenian "other" could get during the border Fascism, is represented in short also in Pahor's novel *Zatemnitev*: "The Triestine bishop Bartolomasi himself [...] wrote to the pre-fascist prime minister Giolitti [...], asking him that Italy would allow the Slovenian population the same freedom of worship of God as it allows it to the Eritreans and Libyans." (Pahor, 1987, 66. Stressed by V. M.)

Venetian, Friulian, and particularly Histrian families, which are the most resistant against Slaves [...] (*My note: irrespectively of the civilizational aspect of this proposal, I wonder how an Italian colonist can get accustomed to the Carst land [...].*) 4) Italianization shall be actively accelerated by sending the best Italian elements (fascist secretaries, teachers, priests, nuns as kindergarten teachers) into Slovenian society [...] (*My note: the Holy See won't be able to accept such a colonizing role. [...]*)” (Rebula, 1994, 34–35).

Perhaps the documentary historical reference of this fictional “Plan” is the second part of Righi’s (already mentioned) *Politica di confine* (1929), which suggests the “colonization, following the example of the ancient Rome”. Its programme includes three phases: “1) cleaning the ambient of all foreign influences so that the heterogeneous inhabitants could return to the former state; 2) settling (colonizing) the selected Italian officials and soldiers in bigger centres; and 3) ethnical transformation of the land or the total assimilation. The latter will be achieved when the number of Italians of all professions around the core of officials and soldiers will increase, and the heterogeneous inhabitants will be moved to Italian hinterland. Internal migration current in both directions should be supported by concessions, agrarian loans...” (Kacin-Wohinz and Veringella, 2008, 37).

COLONY AND “PROXIMATE COLONY”: THEORY AND PRACTICE

Already before the fascist period, between 1884 and 1890, Italy “turned to the politics of the overseas expansion [...]. The characteristics common to all European advocates of the colonial idea are accompanied by specifics with Italian followers. First, geographical specifics: Italy is a bridge between Europe and Africa. Then, historical: Italy takes over the heritage of the ancient Rome and should maintain the Risorgimento’s ideals with its colonial conquests. The demographic ones: emigrating abroad means losing the substance of life; it should be re-directed to unsettled lands, where the Italianity can be preserved. And, finally, the social specifics: colonization will enable the reduction of social tensions and solving the problems of overpopulated South.” (Milza, 2012, 665–6).

The historical specifics seem to be particularly important for the fascist view on colonization. Mussolini’s speech upon conquering Ethiopia (9 May 1936) introduces the colonizer’s modern nationalism to the imperialistic discourse: “The Italian people has created the empire with its blood. It will fertilize it with its labour and defend it with its arms...”. (Paxton, 2004, 165) Since the forging of the *modern* national identities started only at the beginning of the 19th century (as “newer nationalisms” (between 1820–1920); see Anderson, 1991, 67), the former content of the binary opposition “colonial ruler” – “colonial subaltern” did not include this factor. However, they certainly appear in the relations between the communities, which recognized themselves as the national parts of the multi-ethnic states during the 19th and 20th century. Such “innovation” often strains the relations between centres and peripheries.

“Centres and peripheries function as asymmetrical points in a common space on different axes: they denote an unequal relation of exchange and (reciprocal) dependence on the economic axis; the difference in status, chances for employment [...] on the social

one; inequality in the case of participation and presentation on the political one; and symbolical hierarchy of particular groups in their representation on the cultural axis." The axes are mutually dependant. Power, influence, and meaning are not in balance, as Vervaet (2013, 20) summarizes Hárs et al. (2006). Centre strives to represent this state as a natural and normal. (Vervaet, 2013, 21). "The gradual establishment of an empire depended upon a stable hierarchical relationship in which the colonized existed as the other of the colonizing culture. [...] The colonial mission, to bring the margin into the sphere of influence of the enlightened centre, became the principal justification for the economic and political exploitation of colonialism, especially after the middle of the nineteenth century." (Ashcroft et al., 2002, 36–37). This can be applied also to the inter-European, "(semi-) colonial/peripheral position". (Vervaet, 2013, 17).

Italian imperialism of the 1920s turned economically and politically towards the Balkans and Africa, thus realizing its former orientation to achieve "hegemony upon Mediterranean (*Mare nostrum*)."¹⁸ Colonies should be "re-organized" and included into the "imperial community", to which also some inferior European nations hierarchically subjected to the Italian nation should belong. (Gentile, 2010, 39–40). Inferior European nations are, therefore, subjected to the civilizing mission, led by a guiding nation which inherited the invented tradition of a modern nation and used it for its transposition to the avant-garde¹⁸ version of the modern nation. "Fascism was a manifestation of a new kind of modernism, that I have called 'modernist nationalism', which wanted to promote these processes, subordinating them to the goal of strengthening the nation in order to have it participate, as the protagonist, to world politics." (Gentile, 2008, no pagination).

The fascist-Italian stereotype of the civilizing mission promoted by the imperial centre in practice, as the border Fascism, encourages the Italian population on Eastern periphery, which is directly faced by the "Slavic" proximate "other": the latter evokes ambivalent discomfort due to a paradoxically familiar strangeness. It is an (annexed) territory representing the "limit [... of a colonizer's] direct economic and political influence and is at the same time represented as a border culturological zone, where, at least from [... the colonizer's] point of view, Orient begins and civilization has to be firmed up." (Vervaet, 2013, 22). A similar view is offered in N. Pirjevec's novel *Saga o kovčku* (*Saga about the Suitcase*, 2003): "the commander of the II. army of the Italian empire, general Ambrosio, started showing off the armed forces on the North-Littoral territory, [...] rattled the consecrated weapons and scared the Eastern, uncivilized tribes by bringing them the culture." (Pirjevec, 2003, 69). From the fascist perspective, Venezia Giulia is a periphery, paradoxically already/not yet redeemed, inhabited by the population, which the imperial centre, generating the border-Fascism strategies, constructs as the colonized (ethnic) subaltern: the one which "does not exist", for it is, in the fascist view, not a nation; it does not produce (a national) culture and can be thus just a receiver. "The population at our Eastern border doesn't have its own history and civilization, as it doesn't have neither its own national sense nor national culture [...] being without any national conscious-

18 "Fascism assumes the idea of revolution as a process of continuous construction of a new political and economical system, a new system of values and life style, a new civilization." (Gentile, 2008, no pagination).

ness, (the heterogeneous ones) were always guided either by force and terrorisation or by promises and illusions,” writes the above mentioned Triestine fascist secretary Righi (Kacin-Wohinz and Verginella, 2008, 37).

R. Donia (2007) points out four colonizer’s strategies recognized in the concrete (Bosnian) case of a proximate colony (as “a kind” of colony). These strategies are “modernizing”, psychologizing”, historicizing and economizing the colonized land (Donia, 2007, 1, 3, 5, 6). In our case, i.e. in the case of Venezia Giulia, it is necessary to point out two particular characteristics (juxtaposed into a paradox): first, the border Fascism’s regime plays the role of the proximate-colonizer more or less only towards the non-Italian, i.e. “Slavic” population of Venezia Giulia, and not towards the whole population; and secondly (and associated with Gentile’ “modernist nation”), the fascist strategies directed towards the entire land are adjusted to the modern idea of a total social-political “renewal”, common for the modern totalitarian regimes of the 20th century, and, more precisely, for “a mission of national regeneration” (Gentile, 2008, no pagination)¹⁹ of the entire Italian/Italianized nation, i.e. of all the citizens educated in dogma, i.e. slogan “Believe, obey, fight!” (Gentile, 2010, 36). This unification is thus the politization of everyday life of different generations and social ranks of the whole population, amalgamating the strategies of modernizing and economizing the country into the “total” project. From the perspective of colonial strategies directed towards the “Slavic” population, which is, at least in principle, less susceptible²⁰ to the Fascist regime due to its denationalisation practices, the (non- or less-loyal) Slovenian (and Croatian) population is not admitted to the co-creation of (the fascist) modernisation of the society and land: political rights promised to the national minorities of the occupied/annexed/“redeemed” land by Victor Emmanuel III. were ignored in practice. Through its colonial strategy of economizing the periphery, the regime also deprives the “Slavic” population of the chance to have its land and the natural resources at its own disposal (compare Donia, 2007, 6–7) as well as of the chance to keep its economic infrastructure, such as credit cooperatives, savings banks, undertakings, etc. The destruction of the “heterogeneous” ones’ economy in the peripheral land as represented in “the father’s” story in N. Pirjevec’s novel *Saga o kovčku*²¹ as well as systematical immigration of the Italian colonists to Venezia Giulia, made the “heterogeneous” population “increasingly dependent upon the colonial parent” (Donia, 2007, 7), particularly in order to either eliminate or assimilate the (national) minorities – this goal was, of course, not anticipated in the traditional Western New Age

19 Also: “the myth of national regeneration”. (Gentile, 2010, 235). As “an anti-ideological and pragmatic ideology [...], expressed more esthetically than theoretically through a new political style and through myths, rites and symbols of a lay religion, established to favor the process of acculturation, socialization and fideistic integration of the masses in order to create a ‘new man’.” Gentile, 2008, no pagination).

20 The problem of the “heterogeneous” ones in Venezia Giulia doesn’t exist; however, “there is [...] the need for the total affirmation of the state, which is shown particularly in the differentiation between the loyal and the disloyal,” writes Triestine fascist Cobol. (Kacin-Wohinz and Verginella, 2008, 34, 35).

21 “The illegal link with Ljubljana where the Gorizia cooperative association had secretly moved a sizable fund with caution” as soon as they “realized the intentions of the Italian government to destroy the Slovenian institution” [...] has been unfortunately cut [...] and] an official Italian liquidator of the cooperative was appointed.” (Pirjevec, 2003, 43, 51).

goals of colonialism/imperialism. However, the question of the dis-loyal *allogeni* still constructs the colonized “other”.

The policy of modernizing/economizing the annexed/ “redeemed” land as a periphery can, on the other hand, directly refer to the typical colonial opposition of “the civilized” and “the wild” where the latter means the countryside inhabited mostly by the Slovenian population. This opposition is represented in the discourse of the fascist official Bombig: the problem of the heterogeneous ones “will solve itself if the authorities will deal with them in the ‘missionary spirit’, and, above all, by improving the economy of the land, which is still immaculate and ‘waits to be valued by the means of Italian capital and Italian hands’.” (Kacin-Wohinz and Verginella, 2008, 36) Similarly, Rebula’s fictional fascist official Amos imagines the Carst as “a landscape as if from a wild pre-history, [...]. A land which waits to be raised from its retardation by Italy, which shall introduce this people to the European norms and promote them to the consciousness and language of the Latinity.” (Rebula, 1994, 45–46). The urban area, in contrast to this “wild” pole of the colonial opposition, attracts negative connotations in the Slovenian (literary) view: “bitterly she thinks about how they screamed ‘*Vogliamo la guerra!*’ when war in Abyssinia was announced [...], and how *maestre* in school scold children every opportunity they can get because their parents are supposed to have barbarian manners [...] and these *schiavi* are nothing more than uncivilized shit”. (Pirjevec, 2003, 43).

The strategy of historicizing Venezia Giulia reconstructs its history in such a way that the “Slavic” element is excluded from it, trying to distance (compare Donia, 2007, 5) its Slovenian (and Croatian) cultural communities from their neighbouring national centres across the border, which are, from the fascist point of view, the rivals (compare Vervae, 2013). In our case, this rival Unitarian-nationalistic centre is Yugoslavian capital Belgrade.²² However, due to the national conflicts (compare Pirjevec, 1995), which characterized the Kingdom of Serbs, Croats and Slovenes and later the Kingdom of Yugoslavia, since the middle of the 19th century the rival (national) centres were also Ljubljana and Zagreb. – Part of the strategy of historicizing Venezia Giulia was also the fascization/“Italianization” of architecture, etc., performed as the nationalization of this border/peripheral area, in the sense of the rhetoric of space (see Matajc, 2014). On the other hand, fascist historicizing of Venezia Giulia, again, refers to the whole population.²³

A number of field reports discuss the population’s dispositions. One of them (from 12 November 1930, Sežana) suggests the strategy of “rewarding and encouraging the good ones, and punishing the bad ones”, i.e. the (mostly) disloyal Slovenians in province of Trieste. (Kacin-Wohinz and Verginella, 2008, 72). In this respect, the psychologizing strategy represents a rather important aspect of the border fascism. In the case of the Austro-Hungarian colonizer of Bosnia, Donia points out a paternalistic relation, as-

22 After all, rather high financial support for Slovenian and Croatian national-defensive or, depending on the point of view, separatist subversive activities flows from “the secret fund” organized by the Yugoslav Ministry of foreign affairs. (compare Pelikan, 2002, 176).

23 A sign of the tendency to unify the centre and peripheries is the introduction of “the only state reader in the primary schools”. (Gentile, 2010, 36) From the aspect of the non-assimilated “Slavic” population, this is the border-Fascism colonial strategy.

sociated with the feeling of a distant civilization superiority, paradoxically established despite close geographical proximity of the “inferior” colonized one. (compare Donia, 2007, 3) Of course, the colonial politics “generates protests in the [peripheral] country.” (Vervaeet, 2013, 60) Paternalism, which was later also accommodated to the Duce’s cult,²⁴ is promoted to the “heterogeneous” ones, expecting (similarly as in the border-Fascism conditions) “loyalty, obedience, and gratitude” (Donia, 2007, 4); and, as suggested, the officials shall also “appoint at the local level ‘personalities who will exercise influence on their co-religionists because of their integrity, education, irreproachable conduct, and social status’”. ((Donia, 2007, 4). Vervaeet (2013, 481) adds that the colonizer “manipulates with the already existing [...] ethnical and social asymmetry”. The colonizer’s values are represented by the Italian society, including the Italian irredentism heritage. A number of B. Pahor’s and A. Rebula’s fictional Italian anti-fascists characters defend this heritage, which, in the implied (Slovenian) author’s view, leads into discussion.²⁵ Again, the fascist appropriation of the Italian irredentism to its colonial discourse represents Rebula’s Kačja roža in a polemical discussion between a fascist and an anti-fascist (referring to the First Trieste trial): “‘What these Slovenians actually want that they reach for bombs?’ [...] ‘What our Maroncelli, Toti, Pisacane, Pellico, Oberdank once demanded of Austria.’” The fascist’s answer clearly expresses the colonial standpoint: “It is one thing if a great, self-conscious nation wants something; and another if the same demand is made by an ethnical raked-up with a lower civilization.” (Rebula, 1994, 109) If we consider the border Fascism as a set of colonial strategies directed towards Slovenians and Croats, it, as the proximate colonizer, supplements “the missing element of racial discrimination”²⁶ (Vervaeet, 2013, 59) with the nationalistic one.

SCHIZOPHRENIC IDENTITIES AND ANTI-COLONIAL RESISTANCE

The paradox inherent in the border-Fascism (probably) proximate-colonial relations to “Slaves” as the population of Venezia Giulia is that, in the complete accordance with the (nihilistic) logics of Modernity, it approaches its own auto-destruction as the colonizer: since it strives to unify the centre with Venezia Giulia as “the redeemed” periphery it constructs the colonial (ethnical) subaltern in order to assimilate it and thus, theoretically, to “abolish” its subalternity. – Just theoretically, of course. Another Rebula’s novel,

24 Gentile (2010, 135) quotes a young fascist’s answer to the question *Why I love Duce*: because he is “our father”, etc. Similar indoctrination is declared by (a fictional) Italian girl, educated in the fascist school, as depicted in B. Pahor’s novel *Vila ob jezeru* (*La Villa sur le lac; La villa sul lago; Villa am See*, 1955).

25 In Pahor’s novel *Zatemnitev*, an Italian anti-fascist proclaims: “‘if Trieste belonged to the democratic Italy, I’m sure Slovenians would feel good. In times of Risorgimento, Mazzini was fond of Slaves.’” A Slovenian anti-fascist answers: “‘Only until the integration of the Italian state; afterwards he also wanted Postojna!’” (Pahor, 1987, 274). “When Italy was actually constituted at the beginning of 1860s, [...] in his famous essay *On the Duties of Man* [*Doveri dell’uomo*] from 1860, Mazzini still expressed the opinion that Italy extends no further than to the wellsprings of Soča [...]. But his adherents [...] did not share his assertion.” (Pirjevec, 2015, 379).

26 Verginella (2011) discusses fascist “Antislavism” in the context of Racism.

Cesta s cipreso in zvezdo (*A Road with a Cypress and a Star*, 1998) presents voluntarily assimilated Slovenian family Andreici. Pater familias, Manlio, descendant of an already (and voluntarily) Italianized shoemaker from Carst, "was, of course, in Fascio to earn our crust; if not, he would be refused by the Engineers society, but in his heart he was still a mazzinian. [...] Indeed, we, the children, never heard Slovenian at home." (Rebula, 1998, 7, 8) With some resistant exceptions, including protagonist Sergij, the son, the family, which is extremely loyal to their Italian neighbours as well as to the regime's assimilation politics, suppresses its ethnical "otherness" and its "origins" in the lower social class from the countryside. However, their exceeding of the otherness, which is, in fact, almost unperceivable, remains just a mask: to maintain their position in the urban bourgeois class, i.e. on the imagined "positive" pole of the binary opposition (and in accordance with Donia's "psychologizing" of the proximate-colonized one), the father and mother continuously adjust their everyday life to their Italian social milieu. Although the father and mother are comfortable with preserving their gained identity, they both, with precisely their continuous gestures of conformation, confirm their subaltern status. To resist to this status, Sergij regains his ethnical identity. But at this point, a significant difference between him and Pahor's protagonist Suban is revealed: Rebula's Sergij, who grew up in an assimilated family, did not go through the traumatic experience of the colonial subaltern (already) *as a child*.²⁷

The experience of the colonial subaltern opens up an unhealable gap into Suban's childhood: not by physical violence but by the violent destruction of his "primeval" symbolic order, manifested in language. "If a child is educated on what is allowed and what is not, a child will slowly accept the rules of the adults and will be guilty if breaking them. But we were handicapped with guilt before we even became fully acquainted with syllabizing [words... and had to] swallow the words brought with us from home so they stuck in our throats." (Pahor, 1987, 59–60). The symbolic order, into which a child grows up at home, establishes (lingual) Slovenian. On the streets and later in school, i.e. in all public areas, a child was forced into a different symbolic order, established by (lingual) Italian, and which prohibits the first one. "It was as though their tongues were pulled out then attempted to substitute them with artificial ones. Who could, therefore, wonder why a good deal of Slovenian inhabitants is so timid?" (Pahor, 1987, 232) As mentioned before, in the (European) internal colonization, the "racial element" can be substituted with the modern-national "otherness" and its lingual identity. The demand to enter into the language, i.e. the symbolic order of the colonial master, forced a child, metaphorically speaking, to put on a mask of the "heterogeneous" one. However, the mask cannot be identified with the skin. F. Fanon's essay *Black Skin, White Masks* (1952), i.e. the fundamental work of anti-colonialism, ascribes "a basic importance to the phenomenon of language", from which "two dimensions" of "the black man" are derived: "the black" one and the colonially imparted "white" one, i.e. "one with his fellows, the other with the white man. That this self-division is a direct result of colonialist subjugation is beyond

27 Both Pahor and Rebula "suffered the lingual trauma in their youth, experienced through an extreme humiliation and prohibition of the mother tongue already in their childhood." (Pirjevec, 2011, 358).

question". "Every colonized people – in other words, every people in whose soul an inferiority complex has been created by the death and burial of its local cultural originality – finds itself face to face with the language of the civilizing nation; that is, with the culture of the mother country." The subaltern "becomes whiter as he renounces his blackness, his jungle" (Fanon, 1952, 17, 18), i.e. by getting accustomed to the language and culture of the "white" other. "The black person attempts to cope by adopting white masks that will somehow make the fact of his blackness vanish. [...] Thus black skin/white masks reflects the miserable schizophrenia of the colonised identity" (Loomba, 2000, 145). On the other hand, the colonial subalternity, which is becoming conscious of its self-division and, in this aspect, differentiates itself from the non-self-conscious schizophrenic self or from the subaltern self of the assimilated one, answers to the colonizer – and to itself – with resistance. Radko Suban's (Slovenian) reflection about himself as a colonized subject in the border Fascism is thus no coincidence.

"In a way, it is easier for a black man than for us, as the black man knows that he irritates a white man with his skin. [...] But for a Triestine Slovenian, the situation was different, since his skin was white. [...] It was enough [...] for him] to assume the neighbour's language [...]. However, this is no privilege, for the black man who could secretly become white would feel as a traitor. The same is true for those who hide behind the assumed language, because they are ashamed or scared. He is dishonourable." (Pahor, 1987, 90).

The selected Slovenian literary (as well as semi- and non-literary) texts, which refer to the border Fascism, represent similar views (manifested mostly by the literary protagonists). These views reject (the fascist-Italian construction of the) hetero-stereotype of a Slovenian as the colonial subaltern. The Slovenian auto-stereotype (which returns the view back to the fascist one; in the sense of Konstantinović's (1988) "image" and "counter-image", i.e. *Bild* and *Gegenbild*) is thus the resistant view: it rejects the very possibility of being treated as a colonized subject, which is imposed to him/her by the proximate-colonial strategies of the border Fascism. This rejection, represented by the discourse of resistance, could be considered a variant of Fanon's *anti-colonial* attitude, including its advocacy of revolt. On the other hand, the traumatic memory, i.e. the child's experience of the colonial subaltern, persistently re-appears in Pahor's work: in different versions, it is mentioned at least shortly in several of his texts (explained particularly in his novel *Vila ob jezeru*); and, similarly, the characteristic terms of the colonial discourse re-appear at least in those of Rebula's texts, which refer to the border Fascism. Precisely this returning of the rejection, i.e. the returning of the anti-colonial attitude representation, allowed us to propose the risky hypothesis or the possibility of reading Pahor's and Rebula's works in the postcolonial view. And, on the other hand, these Slovenian literary texts about the border Fascism in the peripheral Venezia Giulia allow us to read Slovenian literary views on the border Fascism as the representations of its proximate-colonial "character", exercised by its strategies to "Slaves" – of course, in the context of the 20th century Modernity and its transpositions of colonial "traditions".

OBMEJNI FAŠIZEM V JULIJSKI KRAJINI: VPRAŠANJE O »KOLONIJI V BLIŽINI« Z VIDIKA SLOVENSKE KNJIŽEVNOSTI

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POVZETEK

Po metodološki predstavitvi sodobnih sprememb v postkolonialni teoriji in zgodovino-pisni praksi, ki utemljuje postkolonialno-teoretsko naravnost pričujočega članka, sledi obravnava tistih slovenskih literarnih besedil (predvsem besedil B. Pahorja, A. Rebule in N. Pirjevec) v kontekstu pol- in neliterarnih besedil, ki se nanašajo na slovenske izkušnje z obmejnimi fašizmom. Članek v njih odkriva pogosto uporabo pojmov, kot so kolonija, kolonizirani, drugorodec, barbari, civilizacijska misija, kultiviranje itn., obenem pa utemljuje, da navzočnost teh pojmov, ki so značilni za (post)kolonialni diskurz, v besedilih vseh treh pisateljev, ki si delijo avtorsko osebno in/ali podedovano izkušnjo z obmejnimi fašizmom, ne more biti naključje. Ta pojav članek povezuje s strategijami obmejnega fašizma v Julijski krajini (1922–1941) do "slovanskega" prebivalstva in jih primerja s tistimi, ki so značilne za koncept kolonije v bližini: tega je ob primeru avstroogrske aneksije Bosne in Hercegovine (1878) razvil R. Donia (2007) in kulturnozgodovinsko dopolnil S. Vervaet (2013). Z vidika te primerjave članek razbira slovenske literarne reprezentacije obmejnega fašizma v Julijski krajini kot soočanje slovenskega in (v slovenskem pogledu imaginiranega) fašistično-italijanskega pogleda, pri čemer se slovenskemu pogledu razkriva negotovost, ki je vpisana v fašistični diskurz o Julijski krajini: dežela je sočasno predstavljena kot že "odrešena" in še ne dokončno "odrešena", saj jo poseljujejo še neitalianizirani "drugorodci": ti so, skupaj z deželo, torej tudi objekt civilizacijske misije oz. kultiviranja z italijansko kulturo, civilizacijska misija pa je (vsaj) od 19. stoletja naprej značilen argument kolonizacije. Slednja se v tem primeru torej nanaša na (nasilno) asimilacijo "slovanskega" prebivalstva v fašizirano-italijansko narodno skupnost. Dovršitev asimilacije bi seveda pomenila ukinitev kolonialnega razmerja, dokler pa jo obmejni fašizem izvaja, se njegove strategije v slovenskem literarnem pogledu razkrivajo kot strategije kolonizatorja. Če slednji torej vidi "slovansko" skupnost kot kolonizirani objekt, mu slovenske literarne reprezentacije "vračajo" pogled (v smislu konstrukcije podobe in protipodobe, avto- in heterostereotipov oz. "značilnih" slovenskih, italijanskih in fašističnih likov). Pri tem slovenski avtostereotipni liki zavračajo samo možnost, da bi bili obravnavani kot kolonizirani subalterni (včasih tudi s subverzivno-ironičnim začasnim sprejetjem tega statusa, npr. pri E. Besednjaku). Članek poveže to zavračanje z anti-kolonialnim uporom (F. Fanon), posebej z ozirom na Pahorjeve reprezentacije otroške izkušnje obmejnega fašizma. Vztrajno vračanje teme obmejnega fašizma in prepraševanje kolonizatorskega diskurza v omenjenih avtorskih opusih pa torej vzpostavlja jasno možnost, da slovensko književnost o obmejnem fašizmu beremo v luči postkolonialne teorije.

Ključne besede: Julijska krajina, Venezia Giulia, obmejni fašizem, kolonija v bližini, postkolonializem, slovenska književnost, Boris Pahor, Alojz Rebula, Nedeljka Pirjevec

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