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KOSOR ON OTHERS AND OTHERS ON KOSOR

SUMMARY: Because of known historical reasons (state bond with the Habsburgs), Croatian culture (but not only culture) was tied with the German speaking area for almost half the millennium. That bond becomes especially pronounced in the time of Croatian modernism and expressionism.

One of the most prolific authors of Croatian expressionism Josip Kosor (Trbounj, 1879 – Dubrovnik, 1961) spent a great part of his life travelling and living for longer or shorter periods in metropolises of European culture of which, for the need of this paper, we especially discern two: Vienna and Munich. Kosor's most noted work *Passion's Furnace* (*Požar strasti*) was created in the atmosphere of Vienna's Secession in 1910 under the mentorship of Hermann Bahr and Steffan Zweig.

Munich remained until World War I a constant destination of Kosor's numerous journeys and permanent artistic inspiration, but also the place where he returned joyfully because of his friendship with Stanislaw Przybyszewski.

The most fundamental task of this paper is to show, by reading Kosor's works, autobiographies and letters, how Kosor, as a member of one of Europe's marginal cultures, experienced Others and how Others experienced Kosor in the atmosphere of New Art and New Man. Whilst reading and analysing said opus, we will use theory and glossary of imagology.

KEYWORDS: Josip Kosor, Others, Imagology, Identity, Croatian literature, Stefan Zweig, Hermann Bahr, Stanislaw Przybyszewski

Before we dedicate ourselves to the basic goal of this paper, which is deliberation about the Other, first and foremost through autobiographies and correspondence of the Croatian author Josip Kosor, we will deal with terms which we will use during the analysis and also present theoretical deliberation which will be the basis for the examination of relevant topics.

The term Other represents one of the basic categories of contemporary literary theories of various orientations (psychoanalytical, gender, cultural etc.), which this category, each from its own angle, perceives and in turn interprets differently.

Paraphrasing a lexicon entry which refers to Marin Držić and the question of the Other and applying the same parameters of observation on the subject of this paper, we can state, just as in Držić's case, that the term the Other "doesn't denote a phenomenon of separation of Kosor's opus from our time and space, but the Other is understood as analytical construct for the description of a conceptually thematical world". For the purposes of this paper, as we have already stated, we will research said issues by reading writer's autobiographies and correspondence. The category of the Other requires existence of collective identities which an author accepts as his own, which means that objective components of his identity as a citizen must be taken as a starting point (male, Slav, rural background, Dalmatian, Slavonian, a citizen of the Austro-Hungarian Monarchy) and question their position in the opus.¹

We will observe the question of the Other from two sides: from the perspective of the Croatian author, emphasizing some essential points of his biography which greatly influenced the reception of him as a writer, but also of his literary works. Along with above the mentioned components of Otherness, we will also include views from the position of the author's provenance, level of education and even his physical appearance, but also from the perspective of those to whom the Croatian author and his work represented the Other (expert foreign public: S. Zweig, H. Bahr, S. Przybyszewski).

Furthermore, we will deal with the terms of identity and identification. Stewart Hall in his influential article "Kome treba 'identitet'?" ("Who Needs 'Identity'?"), while trying to rethink identity, its genesis, construction and deconstruction, among other things, concludes that because of fact that:

Identities are constructed inside a discourse, and not outside of it, we need to understand identities as products of different strategies of expression in the specific historical and institutional places in which specific discursive formations and practices are used.²

Summing up reflections of different authors (J. Culler, D. Oraić-Tolić, S. Hall and others) about this popular term when it comes to contemporary analyses and interpretations, we can state that the identity is that which originates from the clash with the Other: Identity cannot be

¹ See more on webpage: <http://leksikon.muzej-marindrpic.eu/drugi/>. Marin Držić Lexicon (Leksikon Marina Držića), Accessed: January 10th 2017.

² Hall, "Kome treba 'identitet'?", 361.

constructed without its distinction and it cannot be final. D. Oraić Tolić adds that "other's shadow follows closely one's own and vice versa: our own is mirrored in other's".³ Culler, reflecting on literature and identities, claims that literary works usually represent individuals, so the struggle for identity, struggle in the individual or the struggle between the individual and the group is manifested as submission or opposition to ruling social norms and expectations.⁴

S. Hall also mentioned in the aforementioned article, among other things, the term identification for which he stated:

[...] identification is constructed in the background of recognition of some common origin or common trait with the other person or group or ideal, and in accordance with solidarity and devotion which are based on natural foundations.⁵

Culler also talks about identification in the context of the reader's identity, claiming that literary works deny identification with the characters, showing the world from their point of view. The recipient enters into communication with literary works which speak to him requiring identification, and identification creates identity. In the end, concludes Culler, "we become what we are, identifying with the persons we read about".⁶

Certainly we must also mention the term stereotype for which Dubravka Oraić Tolić says that it doesn't express the essence of its object, that it cannot be characterized neither as true nor false: stereotypes are, claims Oraić Tolić, social constructs, petrified points in the formation of identity, ideas or images about our own (auto-stereotypes) or other's (hetero-stereotypes). Stereotypes were rejected by modern literary science because they were based on paradigms of immanence, autonomy and originality.⁷

In his text "Imagologija: povijest i metoda" ("Imagology: History and Method") Joep Leerssen stated that tendency to attribute certain characteristics or even characters to different societies, races or "nations" is very old and widespread, concluding that the starting value of encounters with the other cultures was obviously ethnocentrism because every "deviation from usual domestic patterns of 'Otherness' is on the trail of unusualness, a sort of anomaly,

³ Oraić Tolić, "Predgovor" ("Foreword"), 7.

⁴ Culler, "Književnost i identitet", 130.

⁵ Hall, "Kome treba 'identitet'?", 361.

⁶ Culler, "Književnost i identitet", 132.

⁷ Oraić Tolić, "Predgovor", 7.

Although it is not relevant for our reflections because of time in which the texts we refer to were created, we will wrap up our thoughts about stereotypes in the present: namely, D. Oraić Tolić says that the postmodernism has "revealed stereotypes as a cultural capital and exposed them to deconstruction in anthropology and culturology [...]". Oraić Tolić, "Predgovor", 8.

something special", which resulted in the fact that these ethnocentric attitudes about cultural differences led to the view that every nation, as well as person, has its specific properties and character – although it is about, from the historic point of view, significantly simplified thinking about an extremely complex phenomenon. Imagology is, based on what we said, interdisciplinary directed branch of comparative literature which deals with study of literary ideas both abroad – people and countries, and those which are our own.

Not delving on a more detailed historical development of imagology on this occasion, we will limit ourselves on, we could say, one of its phases of development which peaks in the mid 19th century, and it is about the fact that science of literature under the influence of achievements of comparative linguistics, explains literary traditions with ethnic temperaments, which are represented in non-contradictory, a priori forms, as "accepted knowledge" and general consensus. To all of this we also need to add a lucky circumstance that in those times literary historiography came to rise and gave rich illustrative material: literature is primarily thought as expression of a specific nationality thanks to its own language. Historic significance of literature lies in its way of expression and documentation of identity of a nation and its moral and aesthetic worldview. Literary history is a form of studying a true character of a nation expressed in its cultural history. It is not necessary to remark that the idea of essence or character of a nation is completely determined by deeply rooted and widely accepted stereotypes and ethnic notions, and that model peaked in the positivistic determinism which was presented by Hypolyte Taine. Taine's renowned cultural geometry, in which a concrete cultural artefact may be placed, characterized and grasped in relation to the three defining parameters: race, ambience and moment.⁸

We will find this very model often exemplified not only in Kosor's literary works, but also in autobiographical correspondence, where race in particular is often that crucial, determining element when it comes to strategies which refer to creation of a character (his inner composition) and also ideo-philosophical layer of the work.

It didn't take a lot, it seems, to start with moving from his birth place (Trbounje near Drniš, southern Croatia) to rich Slavonian village Otok (eastern Croatia, Pannonian plains) because of his father's bad business decisions and his debts to loan sharks, and end up with acquaintances and friendships with the greatest authorities in art at the beginning of the century and the fact that he was twice nominated for the Nobel's Prize in literature. Kosor's

⁸ Leerssen, "Imagologija: povijest i metoda", 171–172.

success is even greater because he is the first generation of literates in his family, and the crucial one, because he, when it comes to formal education, finished only six grades of primary school. Kosor is, without a doubt, one of the most interesting autodidacts in the Croatian literature.⁹

Lack of formal education was not a barrier for him to start writing, and it even less it affected his self-confidence in relation to his trips around the world, meeting and associating with well established names in art.

Since he was thirteen till he was twenty three he moved around Slavonia, Srijem and Bosnia, surviving usually by working as a scribe, profession which determined his life in many ways. Even as a thirteen year old Josip Kosor got the chance to work as a community scribe in Otok, which not only was a great business opportunity but also a great honour for him and his family. But since he was a lively spirit, he could not settle anywhere, and that restlessness of his which he could not explain with rational terms, he described as follows: "Some painful feeling boiled unwillingly deep inside me: that I should travel the entire Earth and experience all races, all continents and seas and attain synthesis and the essence of all life..."¹⁰

He enters literature in 1901 under the pseudonym Boleslav Nikolin, publishing his first works (poems and prose) in Zagreb's magazine *Our Harmony* (*Naša sloga*).

When he was twenty three he finally managed to come to Zagreb, where his career truly began. In those "four Zagreb years" Josip Kosor published two collections of tales (*Accusation*, *Black Voices*, *Optužba*, *Crni glasovi*) and the novel *Disintegration* (*Rasap*), he established himself in highest literary circles completely, he became a member of the Society of Croatian Authors and a writer who, usually without much hassle, if we ignore the chronic lack of money when it comes to author's royalties, published his works in every Croatian magazine which meant something back then.

And so swimming in Zagreb's life and literary glory, which was represented, in comparison with the fate of the less fortunate people, by Eden and Canaan – many others would feel happy and too happy, and after horrific career as a scribe, which held my soul as in fifteen years of captivity in Lepoglava or Zenica, felt contended with achieved palms and laurels – still, the devil himself who is the spirit of eternal unrest did not give me peace so one day I openly said to Lovrić¹¹ and other friends that my

⁹ In his *Great Autobiography* he pointed out that literature always attracted him, but that he started to study it seriously since he was fourteen, firstly Croatian classics such are Šenoa, Kumičić, Novak, Kozarac, after them Tolstoy, Dostoyevsky. Kosor, *Great Autobiography*, 16.

¹⁰ Kosor, *Great Autobiography*, 203.

¹¹ Božo Lovrić, Croatian literate (Split, 1881 – Prague, 1953). Studied law in Vienna, Innsbruck, Graz and Zagreb. He journeyed with Kosor around Europe and after four years of wandering he settled permanently in Prague in 1913. He wrote mostly love poems with floreal symbolics in the spirit of then secessionist aesthetics. In his most important collection *Holy Spring* (1915) there is noticeable turn around to different versions of neoprimitivism and naturalism, and strict poetic form is replaced by a blank verse in the final part of the collection. Certain postulates of naturalism are also noticeable in the drama *Debts* (1912). Although he lived in

decision to continue my journeys is ripe, and the direction of travel is Vienna and Munich... Lovrić answered to me that he too would gladly spend some years in a foreign metropolis, and because he too holds Vienna and Munich to be the most important cities of European culture, he will gladly join me on my apostolic, cultural and romantic trip.¹²

Although, as we have already stated, Kosor was by his very nature a very restless character who couldn't settle in one place, we consider that the first impulse to very numerous, we could call them artistic pilgrimages of Croatian writers, was given to him by A. G. Matoš¹³ an unavoidable figure in the Croatian literature, literary critics and culture as a whole, his influence was especially strong in the first decade and the first half of the second decade of the twentieth century. Because Matoš considered travels as some sort of life studies and obligation of every person who wanted to become a serious participant in the Croatian culture, he strongly influenced one whole generation of, not only of Croatian authors, but also artists and cultural workers in general.

In 1906. he goes on his first trip abroad to Vienna. His and his companion's (Božo Lovrić) host on numerous journeys was a great Croatian and world renown artist Ivan Meštrović,¹⁴ Kosor was enthralled by the Austro-Hungarian capital, Vienna's art, women and inspiring atmosphere:

Prague till his death, Lovrić regularly published in Croatia. In domestic magazines he reported about European artistic events, and his ripe creative period he dedicaed to prose. Although it is about very prolific writer who was respected in his time, today his works are completetly forgotten and they are only a historical fact. Taken from the website: <http://www.enciklopedija.hr/natuknica.aspx?id=37282>. Accessed: January 5th 2017.

¹² Kosor, *Great Autobiography*, 179.

¹³ Poet, narrator, critic, essayist, excellent cellist Antun Gustav Matoš (Tovarnik, 1873 – Zagreb, 1914), he is the most important and influential person of the Croatian modern, and, along Miroslav Krleža, he is thought to be the most important Croatian literate. His work *Power of Conscience*, printed in 1892, marked the beginning of modernistic currents in the Croatian literature. Most significant representative of the Croatian modern, in his work there is a merge between tradition and modernity. In early 1898. he shortly resided in Munich, Vienna and Geneva, and then he went to Paris, where he stayed for five years. Period in the Paris was crucial in forming of his aesthetic principles. He thoroughly got to know the newest artistic trends, and especially important were the experiences with the poetry of Ch. Baudelairea, French Parnassian and symbolists, and with prose opus' of E. A. Poe, P. Merimee and G. de Maupassant. In these five years he has written a large part of his fictional prose. (*Iverje*, 1899, *New Iverje*, 1900). Taken from the website: <http://proleksis.lzmk.hr/36678/>. Accessed: January 5th 2017

¹⁴ Ivan Meštrović (Vrpolje, 1883 – South Bend, USA, 1962), Croatian sculptor, author and architect. The foremost sculptor of Croatian modern sculpture. He was twelve when he learned how to read and write (he was self taught). In 1901 he goes to the Artist Academy in Vienna. Because he didn't speak German and he never attended school he had to take a pause for a year, but he succesfully mastered the language and adapted to new surroundings and came into contact with secessionists with whom he exhibits from 1903 till 1910. In Vienna he met Rodin for the first time who immediately recognized his talent realizing that he is a great artist. A British professor of art Sadler also recognized Meštrović's greatness by calling him "the greatest sculptor since the Renaissance" and that for his works "the entire world is indebted to him". In 1924 Meštrović goes to the USA for the first time, where he met Nikola Tesla. In *Brooklyn Museum* in New York solo exhibition was prepared for

The entire Vienna was one grandiose, endless chaotic piece of art with Burgtheater. Hofoper and Vienna's music at the top and in great lively atmosphere... [...] I remember how I was in that moments in some inconceivable ecstasy, losing myself in charm and beauty of Vienna's women and their lavish, beautiful gowns, I cheered quietly in my mind [...] Vienna is inexpressible... The heart feels it and beats more turbulently and tries to beat in the rhythmic beats of Vienna! Vienna feels free, cheerful and absentminded nature as no other metropolis in the world... [...] If I saw Vienna, I had a reason to be born.¹⁵

Although one could deduce, from the above sentences, that Kosor's entire experience of Vienna is overemphasized and because of that we can conclude that it does not express any criticism, that it is about a somewhat inferior relationship of a subject from a province in relation to the international atmosphere of a metropolis, but reading impressions of Vienna written by great people such as Silvije Strahimir Kranjčević¹⁶ and Ivan Meštrović, we must conclude that Vienna was, in the first decade of 20th century, absolutely inspiring environment, especially when it comes to artists.

him where he exhibited 132 works and it was one of his most known exhibitions. Among prominent dignitaries which "Maestro" created were Pope Pius XII, President Herbert Hoover, Cardinal Alojzije Stepinac (Croatia Place, Lackwanna, New York), Czechoslovakian president Tomáš Masaryk, Nikola Tesla and many others. His works are exhibited in the Vatican, the National Cathedral in Washington, the UN building in New York, the Smithsonian Museum, Florence (Uffizi), in London (Tate Gallery), Mayo clinic, and numerous works in bronze, stone and wood are placed in museums, galleries and private collections around the world: Croatia, Italy, USA, France, Hungary, Russia, Germany, Argentina, Spain, Belgium, Chile and so on. All reliefs and statues in the St. Mark's Church in Zagreb were made by Ivan Meštrović. In Croatia, there are four museums dedicated to him (Kaštelet – Crikvine and Gallery Meštrović in Split, family mausoleum in Otavice and Atelier Meštrović in Zagreb) and also remembrance gallery in Vrpolje, and in USA there are two museums (Notre Dame University and in scientific and artistic center Baton Rouge, State of Louisiana) with plans to build one more. It is interesting that he was invited by Hitler to hold an exhibition in Berlin in mid-1930's, which Meštrović declined. "The last master of the human form" to whom President Eisenhower personally granted American citizenship died on January 17th 1962 in Indiana, USA. Taken from the website: <http://adria.fesb.hr/~anmarin/web/mestrovic.html>. Accessed: January 6th 2017.

¹⁵ Kosor, *The Great Autobiography*, 196–197. After that captivating speech, as we can read in *The Great Autobiography*, Meštrović added: "Oh yes! You are an old Turk, highwayman, we can see that! Ha, ha, ha!" With these words (with no malice) Meštrović alluded to Kosor's background.

¹⁶ Silvije Strahimir Kranjčević, one of the greatest Croatian poets of the 19th century, editor of one of the most influential literary magazines *Hope (Nada)*, critic, translator and a great role model in poetry for Josip Kosor. Although Kosor submitted his works to *Hope*, Kranjčević never published any of his works. It is interesting that, during his first stay in Vienna which lasted only four days, Kosor met Kranjčević who was at that time in Vienna because of a medical treatment. In his *Great Autobiography* Kosor describes the meeting next to Kranjčević's sick bed. Kosor complained about heat and dust, but Kranjčević, although sick and feeble, said that no matter what, he could always live in Vienna, he is so attracted to Vienna which cannot be expressed or put into poems because it is above human and natural laws. See more in Kosor, *The Great Autobiography*, 198.

Already in 1907, he was again in Munich. As he was getting better in German, he started to translate his narratives into German, and poems, as we can read in his *Great Autobiography*, he had already written directly in German.¹⁷

Crucial moment of Kosor's stay in Vienna happened, and since 1906 he was regularly staying a few months in the Austro-Hungarian metropolis, when the destiny again reminded him of to him obnoxious profession of a scribe for which he was certain that it is the thing of the past after his literary successes. But he ran out of money so he got the job in the Ministry of Public Works. It was his good fortune (and Kosor always had luck in his life) that the chief of his department was a famous Austrian poet Richard Schaukal¹⁸ to whom he sent few of his poems which were translated in German. The very next day Schaukal invited him and was thrilled with his poems ("they are very powerful, original and attractive, you can joyfully read them more than once, they remind me of Baudelaire"), he suggested to him that Kosor should concentrate on literary work, and that he can go to work in the afternoon or whenever it would suit him considering his literary inspirations. But that was not the end to the benefits regarding his duties on the job because one of his colleagues, after learning that he is a Croat and an author, "greatly rejoiced" and offered Kosor to write his "literary things" while in office and he will take upon himself some of Kosor's job duties.¹⁹

But the crucial thing happened, when it comes to Kosor's literary career, when he dared and sent few of his texts to Stefan Zweig²⁰ in Kochgasse 8, but that Zweig will speak with such enthusiasm about his texts – even Kosor didn't dare hope that. Firstly he commented the poem *Cosmic Feel (Osjećaj vaseljenja)* which impressed him the most ("wildly elementary, and for wonder cosmic")²¹ specifically referring to the fact that the "sense for the cosmic is

¹⁷ He specifies that it is about poem *Drink of Storm (Trank des Sturmes, Piće oluje)*. Kosor, *The Great Autobiography*, 284. It is about a poem which he translated to Serbian and published in his only collection of poems *White Flames (Beli plamenovi)*.

¹⁸ Richard von Schaukal (Brno, 1874 – Vienna, 1942) writer, translator, literary critic, studied law. From 1903 on the executive committee of the ministerial council in Vienna, then head of a division and head of the executive committee in the Ministry of Labour, opted for early retirement in 1918 and worked as a freelance writer. His poetic works were influenced by French symbolism, the neo-Romantic period and by Heinrich Heine and show tradition. Taken from the website: <https://www.poemhunter.com/richard-von-schaukal/biography/>. Accessed: January 6th 2017.

¹⁹ Kosor, *The Great Autobiography*, 225–227.

Whilst the fact that Kosor was a literate was of crucial importance for Schaukal and thus the ambivalence when it comes to his job obligations, his colleague, who took some of Kosor's duties, was greatly excited by Kosor's nationality. Although nowhere is stated of what nationality the *official Brakel* is, He refers to Kosor using the word "pane" so we can assume he was Czech.

²⁰ Stefan Zweig (Vienna, 1881 – Rio de Janeiro, 1942) was an Austrian writer and novelist. During the 1920s and '30s, Zweig was one of the world's most widely known authors. His works include *Beware of Pity*, *Letter from an Unknown Woman* and *Mary, Queen of Scotland and the Isles*. Depressed and hopeless about the rise of Hitler and the fate of Europe, Zweig and his second wife committed suicide in 1942. Taken from the website: <http://www.biography.com/people/stefan-zweig-9541946#synopsis>. Accessed: January 6th 2017.

²¹ Kosor, *Great Autobiography*, 227–228.

especially developed in Slavs",²² adding that poets of "other races, among them Germans as well, with all of the genius" bring only a notion of local character or atmosphere of the Earth. Also, Zweig immediately noticed something which entire Croatian professional public didn't in ten years of Kosor's publications of literary works and that is a strong dramatic expression he notices in Kosor's novellas, persuasive dialogs and interesting characters, inciting him that he should try writing dramas,²³ pointing out that European drama needs "strong and shocking elementary drama, great dramatic sense about what shocks the man's processes and wakes in him the spirit of eternal catharsis". Not only that *Passion's Furnace*, the most famous drama by Kosor under the mentorship of S. Zweig and wholehearted help in publishing and staging of H. Bahr, will be written in the atmosphere of the secessionist Vienna, Stefan Zweig will also introduce Kosor to Vienna's artistic society, not failing to note:

They will interest you immensely, especially beautiful actresses, and you will also interest them, they like fresh, if you will forgive me, raw nature, which still is not spoiled by the world and that still carries the scent of village in its temperament even during deeper musings, of the jungle...²⁴

As Kosor reacted to these words, considering them somewhat offensive, Zweig explained to him that he can be proud of that fact:

If I had that oxen neck of yours, be certain that I would, from the practical point of view, feel much more primary, fresh and experienced than I feel with my thin and long neck. My friend, you can endure two or three serious or contagious illnesses and strongly remain standing in life, while I leave after the first cold breeze of the northern wind.²⁵

Notwithstanding that language is not our primary object of contemplation, we consider the fact that Kosor is not a native speaker of German to be very important, nay, that in the moment when he submits his works to S. Zweig for evaluation he is still only a diligent student. But S. Zweig in this deficient work from that linguistic perspective still finds values pointing out that Kosor is in it (the language) with his "intuition and vision" and that if one wishes to write in any language he must feel it, something he already finds in Kosor's works, adding in the end: "In all and considering your past, you are making an impression of one

²² On this occasion Zweig considers Otokar Brezina as a poet who reached cosmic spheres because his works are "endless symphonies of cosmic spheres". This Czech poet, according to Zweig's opinion is "the last expression in modern world poetry". Kosor, *The Great Autobiography*, 228.

As we already said in the part of this paper where we spoke about theories with which we will examine defined tasks, some observations, when it comes to collective identity applicable not only to nations but also, concretely, to a great group of Indo-European peoples (the Slavs). In this case we refer to the idea which explains literary traditions by ethnic temperaments.

²³ Modern Croatian literary criticism considers Josip Kosor foremostly as excellent playwright. See more in: Liović, *Od euforije do depresije (From Euphoria to Depression)*.

²⁴ Kosor, *Great Autobiography*, 229.

²⁵ Kosor, *Great Autobiography*, 229.

literary beggar, but standing on apostolic feet so firm, that one could almost envy you. Romance of our past is distressing to no end." ²⁶

Zweig continued to monitor his protege and his dramatic works carefully, so after reading the drama *Reconciliation (Pomirenje)*, claimed²⁷ that it is about a great and important work which is totally different in relation to the works which are written and put on stage. He especially turned to the character of a saint who was a novelty in the European drama. Zweig was in particular fascinated by the fact that Kosor didn't need "any kind of historical drapery" but he, "from a confined Slavonian village", created a real tragedy which "strives to the highest moral heights". Furthermore, Zweig points out timelessness as extraordinary quality of this text and "absolute liberation from theatrical coincidence" which represents, by the Austrian's opinion, "a curse of our drama".

The letter ends, fearing a little for the fate of the drama on the German stage:

Maybe that Slavic, that beautiful search for God will to Germans, at least to me, seem strange, and the third act which strives to become legend, will not really reach our rotten audience [...] And as far as I am concerned, be certain that I will stand up for it at anytime: both publicly and privately.²⁸

From thusly set parameters it can be concluded that Zweig really, under the influence of some new artistic winds, expresses enthusiasm when it comes to universal values, abolishment of space-time determination of drama respectively, which is one of the fundamental designations of avant-garde work. Besides that, from the letter we can implicitly read the idea to which we have already referred to, and it is about the return of a man to its primordial self. It is interesting that here the Otherness is felt explicitly in relation to space, but from anti-traditional point of view. The metropolis and the centre of the Monarchy is not an advantage when it comes to human spirituality. Namely, "the rotten public" is the one from the big city, the one which detached itself from its essence and with clouded vision oriented itself exclusively on the shine and misery of the materialistic things. The question of the territory of the Empire is marginal, that which is usually oriented on concrete life problems, and where man meets God in his original natural form.

Just as he came in contact with Schaukal and Zweig (by sending them his works) so he came to, perhaps most influential literary critic of that age, Hermann Bahr.²⁹ In Kosor's literary legacy, among other things, there is a telegraph and two letters by H. Bahr.³⁰

²⁶ Kosor, *Great Autobiography*, 231.

²⁷ This letter was dated May 30th 1911. Kosor, *From Correspondence*, 16–17.

²⁸ Kosor, *From Correspondence*, 16–17.

²⁹ Hermann Bahr (Linz, 1863 – München, 1934) literary and art critic, author and playwright. After studying at Austrian and German universities, he settled in Vienna, where he worked on a number of newspapers. His early critical works *On Criticism of Modernity* (1890) and *Overcoming Naturalism* (1891) illustrate the first phase of his career, in which he attempted to reconcile naturalism with romanticism. In 1907 he published *Wien*, a remarkable essay on the soul of Vienna, which, however, was banned. In 1903 Bahr was appointed director of the Deutsches Theater, Berlin, and in 1918 he was for a short time director of the Vienna Burgtheater. During World War I, under the influence of Catholicism, his novel *The Ascension*, (1916) represented the staunchly

In the letter dated December 30th 1910 Bahr reiterates his impressions of Kosor's drama (although he doesn't mention it by title), dedicating most of the letter to advice suggesting whom he should submit the text of the drama to so the drama could be staged as quickly as possible and be of the best possible quality.

In that sense the first and the second suggestions are interesting: the first is Stanislavsky³¹ (Moscow's Artistic Theater) and the second is Jaroslav Kvapil³² (Czech National Theater in Prague), for which he states with fair certainty that they will immediately start reading the drama if Kosor mentions his (Bahr's) recommendation, and these suggestions are interesting from the position of the opinion which was expounded by Stefan Zweig a few years back (attitude that "the sense for the cosmic is particularly well developed in Slavs").

And the second letter (sent on April 29th 1911) was in some ways marked with the Slavic element. This time Bahr refers to (again not explicitly) to the second Kosor's drama *Reconciliation* and again in superlatives ("Entirely extraordinary, possesses the same dramatic strength, the same fist which rudely grabs and unmercifully holds [...])"³³ and then follows Bahr's very interesting observation:

I have only a few technical dilemmas in the third act which, I believe, could be even more tense. One thing I would advise to you, in any case at least for the German stage, that you do not call upon the connection with Tolstoy explicitly. We feel it everywhere, and if you explicitly point to it, stupid part of our critics, which means a larger part, will say that it is an allegory, and allegory causes deadly fear in Germans.³⁴

Consistently applying theoretical postulates as we brought them up in the first part of this paper, one of the greatest artistic authorities in the first decades of the 20th century advises to the novice playwright to hide his ideally-philosophical fascination with Tolstoy (a Slav),

Catholic school of thought in his country. His later critical works, which show his interest in the social effect of creative art, include *Dialogue on Marsyas* (1904) and *Expressionismus* (1914). Taken from the website: <https://www.britannica.com/biography/Hermann-Bahr>. Accessed: January 6th 2017.

³⁰ Contents of the telegraph: "Your drama left on me a strong, deep and pure impression. Heartiest congratulations. Hermann Bahr." Telegraph sent on December 24th 1910 and we surely know that the contents of the telegraph refers to Kosor's first drama *Passions's Furnace*. Kosor, *From Correspondence*, 5.

³¹ Konstantin Sergeyevich Stanislavsky (Moscow, 1863 – Moscow, 1938), original name Konstantin Sergeyevich Alekseyev. Russian actor, director, and producer, founder of the Moscow Art Theatre (opened 1898). He is best known for developing the system or theory of acting called the Stanislavsky system, or Stanislavsky method. Taken from the website: <https://www.britannica.com/biography/Konstantin-Sergeyevich-Stanislavsky>. Accessed: January 6th 2017.

³² Jaroslav Kvapil (Chiudenice, 1868 – Prague, 1950). Czech director, playwright, and poet, the librettist for Dvořák's opera *Rusalka*. As a dramaturgist and director. From 1900 he was a director and dramaturgist at the National Theatre in Prague, where he introduced plays by Anton Chekhov, Henrik Ibsen and Maxim Gorky into the repertory. Taken from the website: <http://www.oxfordreference.com/view/10.1093/acref/9780198601746.001.0001/acref-9780198601746-e-2170>. Accessed: January 9th 2017.

He is also important because of the fact that he put one of the best Kosor's dramas *The Woman* (*Žena*) on the stage of the Czech national theatre in Prague. Premiere November 7th 1913.

³³ Kosor, *From Correspondence*, 12.

³⁴ Kosor, *From Correspondence*, 12.

indirectly stating that there are relevant differences in the worldview of a Germanic and a Slavic man, experiencing author's thought as potentially dangerous and as possible source of conflicts.³⁵

Along with Zweig, with whom he remained connected till the late thirties of the 20th century and Bahr, certainly we must also mention Kosor's friendship with the great Polish author Stanislaw Przybyszewski whom he met in an art colony in Munich and from that moment they remained friends for life because Przybyszewski was like Kosor himself, he *lived* art.³⁶

Only one letter of S. and H. Przybyszewski is kept in the literary legacy of Josip Kosor,³⁷ one of completely private nature.³⁸ Along with the said letter, in Kosor's archives there also an autograph of the text which the Croatian author submitted to the magazine *Democracy (Demokratija)* and in which he translated one of Przybyszewski's letters which talks about the perception of Kosor's art.³⁹ With undivided enthusiasm towards Kosor's works (he speaks about dramas *Passion's Furnace* and *Reconciliation*), Przybyszewski states the following:

I gave up long ago on applying philosophical or so called aesthetic measure to the piece, the only criteria whether some piece of art is great for me is the moment when my soul trembles. – And for that spiritual shudder which I felt while reading your dramas after a long time, I thank you. You brought two new values to literature [...]: the land and the fight of the land-born for God [...] not the Biblical God, but the one for whom this

³⁵ Concretely it is actually about Biblical idea (today we would say Gandhi's doctrine) about non-violent opposition to violence. In Kosor's entire literary opus that idea is very frequently exemplified, especially when it comes to the act of Nietzschean *Übermensch*.

³⁶ Numerous pages of autobiographical character were devoted to his friendship with Przybyszewski: among other things, Kosor states how Przybyszewski always wondered how he, self-taught and of rural origin, could succeed on the European cultural scene. Przybyszewski particularly loved Kosor's poem *Eternities Rest Upon the Laurels of the Stars (Odmaraju se vječnosti na lovoru zvijezda)* and which Kosor almost regularly recited at the receptions at Przybyszewski's home.

³⁷ Kosor's literary legacy is kept in the Institute for History of the Croatian Literature, Theater and Music of Croatian Academy of Science and Art in Zagreb, Opatička Street, no. 18.

³⁸ The letter is written in German and completely published in the twelfth tome of *Works of Josip Kosor*, under title *From Correspondence*. Stanislaw and Jadwiga ask Kosor that he meets Jadwiga's daughter Hanka who will come arrive at Vienna's train station somewhere around Christmas, on her journey from Krakow to Salzburg. Przybyszewski asks Kosor that he takes the girl on breakfast and walks her to a train for Munich. From these sentences it is clear that they are in very close relationship which overcame the boundary of being in professional relations or just acquaintances long ago. At the end of the letter Stanislaw added that they wholeheartedly rejoiced to his success in Prague (referring to Kvapil's staging of the drama *The Women*). Kosor, *From Correspondence*, 39.

³⁹ Letter by S. Przybyszewski which Kosor cited in the text for *Democracy (Demokratija)* was not found in his literary legacy.

moment was just created: the spirit of the land, that is the value which ensures you a place in the world of literature [...].⁴⁰

adding that his, Kosor's, worth is particularly obvious in the fact that he deals with the values which others, concretely Germans (link between the nature and an individual) lost a long time ago. In the end, completely in ecstasy, he concludes:

You lucky man! – You do not need to shout and longingly curl arms: 'Back to nature!' You are nature personified! And in me, a Slav, it wakes the highest words: You have in your works, in front of the whole world and all people, a deeply internal piety that trembles in awe. You are neither a Christian nor a pagan. You are pious.⁴¹

In the end, systematizing examples which we read from autobiographical correspondence and elaborated theoretical postulates, we conclude as follows:

Josip Kosor spent the most fruitful years of his life in Meccas of the European culture, as he would say himself – "sipping the culture" on the source. Direct, sincere and, as we saw from certain parts of his biography, with physical appearance with which he distinguished himself in relation to his environment in Vienna and Munich. He made acquaintances easily and having a warm heart and a being a jolly fellow he was, certainly, along with the fact that he was also a creative and innovative author, enabled him to not only get patrons and mentors such as H. Bahr and S. Zweig, but also friends, and here we primarily think of S. Przybyszewski and M. Blanchard.⁴²

Not only based on Kosor's example, but also on the example of many other authors, for instance Alexander Roda Roda,⁴³ we know that the periphery of the Monarchy was extremely interesting to the centre and that the centre saw the periphery as some kind of exoticism, no matter whether it referred to people, acts or customs.

⁴⁰ Taken from: Jelčić, *Strast avanture (Passion of Adventure)*, 419.

⁴¹ Taken from: Jelčić, *Strast avanture*, 419.

⁴² Maurice Blanchard (Montdidier, 1890 – Montdidier, 1960) French poet and critic, thrilled firstly by Kosor's collection of poems *White Flames*, he strongly interceded for Kosor Nobel Prize nomination by writing to laureates (Romain Rolland and Anatole France) asking them for help. More on that in the text: Mirko Mirković, "Unknown Letters of Romain Rolland" ("Nepoznata pisma Romaina Rollanda"). See more in: Jelčić, *Strast avanture*, 44.

⁴³ Alexander Roda Roda (Drnowitz, 1872 – New York, 1945) was a Croatian and Austrian author who wrote exclusively in German. The most common theme of his contemplation was Slavonia, peripheral Croatian province, the easternmost part of the Empire. As Roda Roda pointed out a fair number of times how Slavonia should thank him because Slavonia and Osijek are known in the Austro-Hungarian capital thanks to him, literary critic Zofka Kveder responded to him that as much as Slavonia owes him, he also owes the same to Slavonia because thanks to exploitation of the so called "slavonian themes" which were obviously well received in Vienna and Munich and because of it he created a name for himself. See more in: Obad, "Slavonski bećar s Dunava" ("Slavonian Reveler From Danube").

And in relation to Bahr and Zweig Kosor represents a fresh man who is close to nature and his human essence, almost a barbarian⁴⁴ who is not deformed by civilization, by unavoidable venomous by-products of development. That type of attitude and thrill of these two artists and critics is understandable (and not only their attitude), particularly if we keep in mind the fact that already in that time avant-garde⁴⁵ already started its destructive-constructive march on the German speaking area.

Josip Kosor, considering his lack of formal education, his being self-taught and his constant pointing out of feeling the universe, pristine elements and universal brotherhood which he so consistently conducted in his works, he undoubtedly, with his differentness, first of all through his trueness, sincerity and we might say advantages when it comes to empty academicism, drew attention to himself and his art.

On the other hand his relationship, as we have seen, with Stanislaw Przybyszewski cannot be regarded from the same points of view based on which we tried to analyze Kosor's relationship with Hermann Bahr and Stefan Zweig, respectively. In these relationships, although they share the fact that they are all from the same state, (so we could, in that sense, speak in Hall's words about identification on a certain level), there is inequality when we talk about the Other regarding the citizens (in that time) of one of most important and influential metropolis in the world in relation to citizens of rural and peripheral parts of the Empire. The whole situation is determined by the moment in which "coming from Eastern borders of the Monarchy" represents some sort of an advantage or at least an artistic challenge.

But completely different is the relationship of Kosor and S. Przybyszewski with whom Kosor shares his Slavic roots, the experience of being a member of unfree and dissatisfied peoples on the borders of the Monarchy and pursuant to stated theoretical postulates, in a certain way, he identifies himself with him, finding similarities not only in concrete life facts, but also in intuitive feeling, in Kosor's words – universal brotherhood.

Although both of them are Catholics by birth, in one moment (Kosor under the influence of Nietzsche) they replaced their faith in the Biblical God with the faith in the New Man and in art and they did not live this new faith of theirs only on a declamatory level, but they testified about it and exemplified it in all spheres of life.

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⁴⁴ In one letter from Munich Kosor wrote to A. G. Matoš: "It is beautiful here, but they do not know that us Croats even exist. In one of his paintings this new pinacotheca they represent us as barbarians." Taken from: Jelčić, *Strast avanture*, 44.

⁴⁵ It is known that avant-garde insisted on anti-traditionalism in all life particularities. As we read in one of the first (paradoxically) academic contemplations on expressionism, the only tradition which has sense in regard to poetic construction of expressionism is tradition, or rather primitive art among the people with whom academicism had not clouded nor destroyed primordial connection of human with nature and his human essence. See more in: PhD thesis by Wilhelm Worringer, *Abstraktion und Einfühlung (Abstraction and Empathy)* and Žmegač, *Od depresije do euforije (From Depression to Euphoria)*.

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