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## The Chronotope of Exile in the Post-Yugoslav Novel and the Boundaries of Imaginary Homelands

### Abstract

Although the chronotopic approach to the novels of exile is almost self-explanatory, specific features in post-Yugoslav exile narrations evoke a separate chronotope interpretation. First of all, post-Yugoslav literature is additionally loaded with an identity burden because the abandoned areas of the 1990s for the exiled writer do not disappear at a metaphorical level, by turning into a mnemotope, but in the actual breakup of the political entity. Instead, the imaginary supranational heritage transforms into a kind of counterculture, mostly affirmed by exile writers. Therefore, returning to the abandoned area often becomes possible only as a return to the past. This paper will follow the literary theme of exile comparatively. It will start from the reflective nostalgia in the prose of Dubravka Ugrešić (*The Ministry of Pain*), through global exile which mirrors the history of the relationship between European persecutions and America as an unfair homeland which destroys all identity countenance in the novels of Aleksandar Hemon (*Nowhere Man; The Lazarus Project*). This theme will then proceed to the intra-Yugoslav “inherited” exile in the novels of Goran Vojnović (*Chefurs Raus!; Jugoslavija, moja dežela*)

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[Yugoslavia, My Homeland]), which, like a curse of the genus, fathers left to their sons. In the texts mentioned above, the chronotope of exile is dealt with at the level of genre, as the major, supreme chronotope that includes or opens space to a series of specific local chronotopes, which are fundamental to exile narration. We also encounter these motifs in other genres, but in exile narration they are a pillar of the genre. They are, by nature, chronotopic because they are realised through the binary spatial-temporal categories of presence and absence, affiliation and non-affiliation, anchoring and nomadism. In this paper, I will look at three such chronotope motifs: 1) the motif of a home as a non-place or a place of absence; 2) the motif of the other/mirror country and the other/“mirror” history; 3) the motif of return and travel (by train), which regularly invokes the stereotypical representation of a place and the past.

**Keywords:** chronotope, exile narration, post-Yugoslav novel, reflective nostalgia, imaginary homeland, non-place.

## Introduction to the Chronotope Approach to Exile Narration

Exile literature deals with time and memory in a special way, and along with homelessness and displacement as the general places of exile narration, it includes a specific view of the abandoned place and cultural heritage. This view is distanced from the centre, where the layers of collective memory are shaped under the influence of active practices of remaking, retaining or rejecting information and in accordance with the fact that “collective memory is always a political process” (Brkljačić & Prlenda, 2006, p. 12). In that sense, memory in exile is free from pressures and the imposed content of constructed, official history. However, by moving away from the centre where there is a kind of control or a common effort to reach a consensus about the key places of collective memory, the constructions of individual memory maps that Rushdie calls “imaginary homelands” are created. Rushdie also reminds us that in exile narrative, the abandoned homeland is not reconstructed in relation to concrete space, but as an invisible, non-existent, mental projection or, in his case, the “India of the mind” (Rushdie, 1991, p. 10). In this connection, realising that “the past is precisely the country from which we all emigrated”<sup>1</sup>, Rushdie chronotopically limits the position of exile; it is a state which petrifies the abandoned space and the past time in a fossil of the “old homeland” which,

<sup>1</sup> “It may be argued that the past is a country from which we have all emigrated, that its loss is part of our common humanity” (Rushdie, 1991, p. 12).

enclosed in memory, loses its equivalents in the contemporary reality. In this sense, exile narration, even when seemingly talking about the present state, is, in fact, a statement of the absence of the past and a constant return to what has been lost forever. Therefore, this quotation would not be complete without Edward Said's statement that exile is a "condition of terminal loss" (Said, 2000).

When it comes to the chronotopic interpretation, I would only like to point out that Bakhtin, although on occasion he uses the terms chronotope and motif as synonyms, in his concluding remarks to the discussion about the forms of chronotope in a novel, also includes the distinction of "major" and "minor", "dominant" and "local" chronotopes, placing them in a hierarchical relationship according to which the "local" chronotope would correspond to the motif level, and the "dominant" one to the level of genre (Bakhtin, 1989, p. 382)<sup>2</sup>. In this sense, we speak of the chronotope of exile at the level of genre as the major, supreme chronotope, which includes or opens space to a series of specific local chronotopes or motifs, which are fundamental to exile narration. We also meet these motifs in other genres but in exile narration they are a pillar of the genre. They are, by nature, chronotopic because they are realised through the binary spatial-temporal categories of presence and absence, affiliation and non-affiliation, anchoring and nomadism. In this paper, I will look at three such chronotopic motifs: 1) the motif of a home as a non-place or a place of absence; 2) the motif of the other / "mirror" country and the other / "mirror" history; 3) the motif of return and travel (by train), which regularly invokes the stereotypical representation of a place and the past.

## The Chronotope of Home in Reflective and Restorative Nostalgia

The post-Yugoslav exile narration in this paper is approached through examples from the novel *The Ministry of Pain* (2004) by Dubravka Ugrešić, the novels *Nowhere Man* (2002) and *The Lazarus Project* (2008) by Aleksandar Hemon and the novels *Chefurs Raus!* (2009) and *Yugoslavia, My Fatherland* (2014) by Goran Vojnović, which were chosen because, in a certain way, they form separate paradigms within the genealogy of post-Yugoslav exile writers. Goran Vojnović, the youngest in this group, realised himself as a writer of the second generation of the intra-Yugoslav exile. He lives and writes in Slovenia, but, actually, in the regional space of the former state he became

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<sup>2</sup> Thus for example, he writes about the "motif of meeting" interchangeably, without the need to define the differences, and concludes the discussion with the following words: "So much for the chronotopic motif of meeting" (Bakhtin, 1989, p. 210).

known for introducing the “Chefurraus theme”<sup>3</sup> into contemporary post-transitional literature. Aleksandar Hemon is a writer whose exile starting point is his departure from Bosnia to America, but in his literary texts he develops the themes of global, omnipresent exile and nomadism, with a starting point in Bosnia and a range which spreads from Eastern Europe to America, most often to Chicago. Finally, this selection includes Dubravka Ugrešić, who, as Renata Jambrešić pointed out, is a “‘counter-voice’ and a ‘counter-plot’ of a typical male exile hagiography that emphasised the double stigma of the ‘dissident’ Croatian intellectual in the foreign world – his (post) war trauma of a political loser and his desperate struggle to maintain ‘cultural visibility’ in the foreign world” (Jambrešić Kirin, 2001, p. 183). In general, exile post-Yugoslav prose after the 1990s was marked by this “counter-voice” in relation to previous narratives about a “poet in the foreign world”. For the purpose of distinguishing some kinds of constructive and destructive, regressive exile (nostalgic) narratives, an opposition that appeared after the breakup of Yugoslavia, Aleksandar Hemon will in his text “The Future of Exile” paraphrase the title of the book *The Future of Nostalgia* by Svetlana Boym and draw upon her distinction between “restorative” and “reflective” nostalgia<sup>4</sup>. Like Svetlana Boym, Hemon also attributes a constructive and creative advantage to reflective nostalgia because this kind of nostalgic narrative is “ironic, fragmented and unfinished” and does not renew the “mythical place called the home”. Restorative nostalgia, on the other hand, is unproductive since it consolidates “collective fantasies about the past, until they are petrified in national myths and monuments without which it is impossible to reproduce a nationalist ideology” (Hemon, 2014, p. 14). Namely, Hemon points out that in the 1990s there was some kind of generational shift of exile narrations; until the 1990s narration cherished restorative, and since the 1990s it has fostered reflective nostalgia. In the footsteps of Hemon’s observations, Dubravka Ugrešić’s novel *The Ministry*

<sup>3</sup> “Chefur” is a derogatory Slovenian name for all immigrants who came to Slovenia from the former Yugoslav republics, that is, all southern immigrants. In his first novel “Chefurs Raus!”, named after graffiti which can occasionally be found in the streets of Ljubljana and which evokes the sinister Nazi call “Judens raus”, Vojnović pointed to the problems of the second generation of immigrants to Slovenia from the southern Yugoslav republics, who settled in Ljubljana’s district of Fužine.

<sup>4</sup> “Restorative nostalgia evokes national past and future, reflective nostalgia is more about individual and cultural memory ... Nostalgia of the first type gravitates toward collective pictorial symbols and oral culture. Nostalgia of the second type is more oriented toward an individual narrative that savours details and memorial signs, perpetually differing homecoming itself. If restorative nostalgia ends up reconstructing emblems and rituals of home and homeland in an attempt to conquer and spatialize time, reflective nostalgia cherishes shattered fragments of memory and temporizes space. Restorative nostalgia takes itself dead seriously. Reflective nostalgia, on the other hand, can be ironic and humorous”. (Boym, 2001, p. 49).

of *Pain* explicitly emphasises the need to distinguish exiles who left the country after the 1990s from those who had left after the Second World War or in 1971 and returned in the '90s looking “as if they had fallen out from a provincial historical museum”.<sup>5</sup>

Exile, namely, changes the perception of time because an exile remains in a way stuck in the time of departure. Departure changes not only the space but also the way of existence in time. The interlocutor on the plane explains to Professor Lucić that, at the moment of their conversation, time in Zagreb is moving much faster than her “inner time” because the war is still going on.

Tell me, have you ever met any of the émigrés who left after World War Two? Or even the ones who left after the crackdown on the nationalists in '71? Well, I have. I've got an uncle in America, and he introduced me to them. It was like meeting ghosts. They'd go on and on about things that hadn't the slightest relevance to our lives. It was their perception of time that did it. You change more than your space when you leave; you change your time, your inner time. Time in Zagreb is moving much faster now than your inner time. You're stuck back in your own time frame. I bet you think the war took place yesterday (Ugrešić, 2004a, p. 129).

Numerous works have been written on the theme of nostalgia in the exile narrative of Dubravka Ugrešić, from various theoretical points of view (Biti, 2005; Hawkesworth, 2006; Ladány, 2008; Luketić, 2014; Lukić, 2006; Mijatović, 2014). However, arguing with the frequent claims about the “Yugonostalgia” of Dubravka Ugrešić, Igor Mandić cites an example from her collection of essays *The Culture of Lies*, which says that “Yugoslav cultural space was common” and was made up of “different cultural and linguistic traditions which mutually intermingled and communicated”. Mandić, however, argues that nostalgia in this case is impossible because, in her texts, Ugrešić herself does not have “an object which should make it the way it looks”. He believes that the object of this nostalgia, that is “the common spiritual Yugoslav space”, had never really existed except as a “geographic and commercial fact” (Mandić, 1998, p. 268). In this sense, Dubravka Ugrešić describes an imaginary Yugoslav mental map that is comparable to Rushdie's “Indias of the mind”, non-existent homelands, virtual projections which never became a reality in the past. Remembering the past, Dubravka

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<sup>5</sup> Returning from Amsterdam, Professor Lucić is talking to a plane companion who assures her that her time in exile has come to an end and reminds her about emigrants who returned to Croatia in the '90s, after the declaration of independence – “Remember the émigrés who rushed back from Canada, Australia, Western Europe, and South America after Croatia declared independence? Croats tried and true. The crooks and legionnaires and hitmen and losers who responded to Tudjman's clarion call”. Then she adds a claim that they looked like exhibits from a provincial museum.

Ugrešić in fact reconstructs the memory of this excellent project of unity that had never been realized. The time of (Yugo)nostalgia is the time of the future; she evokes the memory of the ruling idealistic narratives in the former Yugoslavia which, oriented to the future, also ignored reality, and the object of her nostalgia is nostalgia itself.

Although the contradiction that in emigration you quickly grow old and remain young for a long time applies to all migrants, Hemon notes that there is a difference in the nostalgic approaches to the home: while the restorative approach is linked to national myths and monuments, reflective nostalgia does not approach “home” as a mythical place. Moreover, the home becomes a non-place, a place of disappearance and a place of absence, a place where emotional bonds of the past cannot be reconstructed. In his novel *The Lazarus Project* this negative identification of home appears in the narrator’s impressions on Chisinau (Moldova) – “Home is where someone might notice your absence” (Hemon, 2008, p. 204); and it is confirmed when the main protagonist realizes on returning to Sarajevo that no one remembers him any more – “Home is where somebody notices your absence” (Hemon, 2008, p. 278). Using similar words, the heroine of *The Ministry of Pain* talks about her impressions when landing at Zagreb airport – “A foreign country is a country where nobody meets you at the airport” (Ugrešić, 2004a, p. 106). Almost the same thought is repeated somewhere at the end of Vojnović’s novel *Yugoslavia, My Homeland* – “Ljubljana for me has always been and remained a city of seemingly familiar strangers, so that there, where the home should be, I was not missed by anyone” (Vojnović, 2014, p. 271).

In *Nowhere Man* the trigger of reflective nostalgia for Josef Pronek is a rain puddle in Chicago, which leads him to the conclusion that “... wherever there is a home, you have a puddle where you see when it rains ... I had one in Sarajevo, in front of my home” (Hemon, 2002, p. 163). But, if a puddle is a sign for a home, then home can be wherever there is rain and holes in the road.

### Grammar of Exile Language: Plural Identity, Pluperfect Evil and Substantive for History

As a logical consequence of absence from the place which used to be home, an identity dilemma arises in places which are not but should be home. Thus, for example, when a Greenpeace activist visits Chicago suburbs in search of donations, depending on the interlocutor, Hemon’s Pronek will introduce himself as Mirza from Bosnia, Sergei Katastrofenko from Ukraine, Jukka Smrdiprdiuskas from Estonia, John from Liverpool, Phillip from Luxembourg, Joseph from Snitzlland, “the homeland of the *snitzl*”, until he

eventually discovers himself in the remark of a housekeeper who, opening the door says – “I thought you were someone else” (Hemon, 2002, p. 180). So, he was Someone Else. Similarly, exile as the new life of Lazarus Averbuch in the novel *The Lazarus Project*, is metaphorically connected to the myth of Lazarus’ resurrection, i.e. the assumption that Lazarus did not remember himself when he was among the dead nor an immigrant of his past life.

In addition to this, in Hemon’s novels *The Lazarus Project* and *Nowhere Man*, the exile position is doubled at different times and value plans. In these novels, through the “substitute” of the former homelands and comparable layers of the problematic past, a narrative about a global and timeless exile is gradually developed. First it happens by placing the protagonist, a Bosnian immigrant, in Chicago where the narrator polarises various exile positions evaluating the “badly assimilated” new immigrants from the aspect of the “well assimilated” immigrants of the second generation. Thus, for example, although Mary, the wife of the main protagonist in *The Lazarus Project*, coming from a family of Irish immigrants, says “We’re a nation of immigrants”, her husband notices that she uses the collective “we” as “a real American”. Similarly, in *Nowhere Man*, detective Owen, a descendant of Polish immigrants says to Pronek: “Listen, son, I like you. I admire people like you, that’s what this country is all about: the wretched refuse coming and becoming American” (Hemon, 2002, p. 144). In addition to the value plan, in *The Lazarus Project* Hemon also doubles the exile position in terms of time: the past of Lazarus Averbuch, a refugee from Kishinev, is immersed in the contemporary present of the main hero. After surviving the imperial pogrom in Moldova in 1903, Lazarus Averbuch is shot in America in a paranoid persecution which takes the form of anti-Semitic hysteria, from which he escaped and which above all mirrors the recognizable contemporary anti-terrorist rhetoric.

In *Nowhere Man*, Hemon moves the past and the former homeland to Ukraine, where we follow Josef Pronek in the Kiev of the 1990s through the eyes of Victor Plavchuk, an American student of Ukrainian origin. What links Moldova from *The Lazarus Project* and Ukraine from *Nowhere Man* is the pogrom – the tragic Jewish destiny in both novels is, on the one hand, a paradigm of European violence against the Other, and on the other, from the American point of view, a paradigm of migration which becomes nomadism and undesirable immigration. Besides, Ukraine and Moldova are surrogates of the former homeland, Bosnia, whose identity is multiplied like Josef Pronek’s. The toponyms that Hemon mentions at the beginning of the novel *Nowhere Man* refer to Bosnia, but as the narrator in Chicago is reading the headline “DEFENSES COLLAPSE IN GORAZDE”, the storytelling which relates to the expected and announced content does

not follow, and the narrator instead moves the subject of pogrom, massacre and violence to another place. Namely, next to this headline there is the headline “MASSACRES RAGE ON. BODIES PILE UP IN RUANDA”, and then also “U.S. SEIZES BOAT CARRYING 111 IMMIGRANTS” (Hemon, 2002, pp. 13–14). History is no longer linear or cyclical but it is like a ball of string in which war massacres are intertwined with undesirable migrants without beginnings and ends.

However, this simultaneousness of tragic events is always anchored in the pluperfect, the past perfect tense, in which events of lasting relevance occurred. The pluperfect is the time of pogroms and the Holocaust. Therefore, the episode from the beginning of the novel *Nowhere Man*, when immigrants are learning the Past Perfect tense in an English class, has a symbolic level where the meaning of the whole story can be interpreted in the past perfect. The ongoing conversation is about Siamese twins, monsters and Nazis when one course attendee says: “There had been one scientist who had gathered human heads, and he had written one book for Himmler and his soldiers must have read it to think Jews had been monsters” (Hemon, 2002, p. 25) – this incorrect, i.e. excessive use of the Past Perfect is not altogether accidental. The Holocaust is the past perfect of the contemporary massacres mentioned at the beginning of the novel and again are related to undesirable immigrants. This is a topic which also appears in the same novel when Rachel’s grandfather, who comes to America after Auschwitz, is said to be “skinny and rugged and exuded the scent of European death and sickness, the fetid refugee smell” (Hemon, 2002, p. 184). This episode re-actualises in the central part of the novel *Nowhere Man*, when George W. Bush giving a speech at Babi Yar in 1991 concludes “We vow this sort of murder will never happen again” (Hemon, 2002, p. 104). Of course, the repetition of “this sort of murder” in the novel has already happened, immediately at the beginning, announced by the newspaper headline “DEFENSES COLLAPSE IN GORAZDE” (Hemon, 2002, p. 13). But, when at Babi Yar, after a fictitious meeting between George Bush and Josef Pronek, Bush stressed that his country was “holy ground”, Pronek said to Bush: “It is not my country, I am from Bosnia”. Bush insisted: “Yes, it is ... It’s all one big family, your country is. If there are misunderstandings, you ought to work them out” (Hemon, 2002, p. 106). However meaningless this statement of the fictitious Bush may sound, it suggests a reading of the Ukrainian historical episode through the modern Bosnian war reality, but also the theme of genocide and mass graves, from which one cannot escape even in exile.

National history, as well as the homeland, also has a mirror projection or a substantive story, one of which is the story of the American student of

Ukrainian origin, Victor Plavchuk, in the version of his father, a Bandera follower, who emigrates to America after the war:

I was raised with my father's version of Ukrainian history in which frequent and regular defeats were in fact triumphs of martyrdom; in which feeble intellectuals and hesitant politicians misled the common man and betrayed the hero; in which pogroms were merely self-defense; in which Ukrainians preserved Orthodox Christianity from Poles and Communists (Hemon, 2002, p. 98).

The Banderist twisting of history is given as an indirect parallel to the interpretations of history we can find in the territory of the former Yugoslavia, which in its revisionist versions was particularly present in the nationalistic narratives of the 1990s. The novel's protagonist Josef Pronek will experience this in Chicago, when in the capacity of an interpreter he submits a subpoena to an unknown Serb for not paying alimony. However, the door is answered by the stereotype of a bearded *chetnik*, smelling of garlic, brandy and wearing a belt gun. In the room which stinks of "coffee and smoke, stale sweat and Vegeta" there is a newspaper on the table with a headline saying "THOUSANDS KILLED IN SREBRENICA" (Hemon, 2002, p. 155). When Pronek, full of fear, introduces himself as a Ukrainian, the *chetnik* recognizes an "orthodox brother" in him and explains that the newspaper headline is just "Muslim propaganda" – here again we have mirror stories from prehistoric time, in the way that Victor Plavchuk's father projects himself as a *Brđanin* ("Highlander") while the pogrom from Babi Yar continues in Srebrenica.

### Train Travel and the Chronotope of the Orient Express

Vesna Goldsworthy (1998, p. 101), and following her Katarina Luketić (2013, p. 66), point out train travel as a commonplace of Balkan narrative, both that of travel writing (Arthur Evans, Rebecca West, Robert Kaplan) and that of fiction (Bram Stoker, Graham Greene, Agatha Christie). Train travel is a chronotope motif represented in all novels of the authors mentioned above; it is connected with the nostalgic chronotope of Dubravka Ugrešić, and in the novels by Hemon and Vojnović it is linked with Balkanistic representations, which are something like a quoting heritage of the "Orient Express" novels.

Dubravka Ugrešić often returns to the train as a greatly quoted topic and as a nostalgic chronotope. In the novel *The Ministry of Pain*, one of Professor Lucić's students in the Amsterdam Department of Slavic Studies is writing an essay in which he follows Yugoslav history as a history of trains. There are fiction trains such as Lovrak's *Train in the Snow*, then Bulajić's film

*Train without a Timetable* and the claim that the “breakup of Yugoslavia, including the war, started with the railway when logs blocked the railroad Zagreb-Split and stopped the trains for several years” (Ugrešić, 2004a, p. 80). Interestingly, the essay on trains, which is part of the novel, is also included in the collection of essays *Nikog nema doma (Nobody’s Home)*, under the title “Europe, Europe” (Ugrešić, 2004b, p. 110). Travelling here is described as a “retro-utopia”. In the paragraph “A coloniser is squatting in every passenger” there is an interesting explanation about why a train is a general place of oriental representations: “This journey pulls in all of us a hidden trigger of colonising arrogance ... I was disgusted at myself when I noticed the ease with which I judged cities and people, the ease with which I usurped or wrote them off. If I had another month I would turn into an Alexander the Great!” (Ugrešić, 2004b, p. 115).

Although the trains in Hemon’s novel *Nowhere Man* are Ukrainian-Polish, their atmosphere is entirely in line with the discourse of the American journalist and travel writer Robert Kaplan, who in the 1990s experienced the Balkans as a primitive and dangerous place on a train precisely, where “heating in the compartment does not work, people drink alcohol, argue and look at pornographic magazines” (Luketić, 2013, p. 322). Hemon’s novel *Nowhere Man* contains two train journeys. The first is on a train to Kiev, somewhere through Poland, when an anonymous fellow traveller greedily opens a magazine “with a chesty damsel in sexy distress on the cover”, every now and then takes a sip from a dirty bottle into which he later spits, and in the morning, in the “the dining car” where the tablecloths look “like a canvas of the local Jackson Pollockovich”, two Russians quarrel while knocking back glasses of vodka for breakfast (Hemon, 2002, pp. 75–76). The situation on the train from Kiev to Lviv is no better either; Plavchuk notices “the Soviet masses everywhere”, and the unpleasant smells and images blend into a grotesque observation on the crucial role of trains in the world revolution.

The train was too salty: the Soviet masses everywhere, wearing the expression of routine despair: women with bulky bundles huddled on the floor; stertorous men prostrate up on the luggage racks; the sweat, the yeast, the ubiquitous onionness ... I thought that if another revolution were ever to break out in the USSR, it would start on a train or some other public transportation vehicle – the spark would come from two sweaty asses rubbing (Hemon, 2002, p. 85).

The journey of Vojnović’s hero in the novel *Yugoslavia, My Homeland*, although not by train, is fraught with general places which belong to the Balkan discourse. For the main hero Vladan Borojević, the Balkans begin after the Slovenian-Croatian border. Namely, the moment Vladan Borojević

crosses the Slovenian-Croatian border in search of his father, he enters the space of symbolic Balkan geography. It is only nominally represented as the space of the former Yugoslavia and in reality it is not a concrete but a symbolic dreary place, located somewhere “in the middle of a lousy nothingness between Zagreb and Belgrade” (Vojnović, 2014, p. 35). In the collective Slovenian imagination, the Balkans begin here with all their side effects: mud, grumpy, bearded characters in uniforms, gipsy children and a filthy coffee room<sup>6</sup>. The insistence on the bizarre experience of the trivial begins when, lacking the geographic data, the main character finds himself somewhere in the middle of that “lousy nowhere” in an untidy restaurant at a wobbly table with a “plastic sponsor ashtray” and a “vase with plastic flowers from Yugoslav prehistory” on it. Then, on a white tablecloth with “age-old coffee stains”, for the first time in his life Vladan Borojević gains the experience of stirring coffee with a “thin plastic teaspoon”. Immediately after the coffee, at a petrol station “in the middle of a desolate plain between Zagreb and Brčko”, he fills up and pays a “moustached guy in uniform” who “hated himself in the morning and the rest of the world in the afternoon” (Vojnović, 2014, p. 34). Bosnia is not any better either. The receptionist at the Behar Hotel in Goražde is a “failed thug” with a complex of being “terminally scrawny”, a first-rate example of a “Balkan creep”, who is torn apart by nostalgia as he recalls Anja Rupel. Therefore the narrator concludes it is obvious that “he would right away swap the beginning of the

<sup>6</sup> Studying the patterns of representation which all ethnic groups in the former Yugoslavia used to define the Other, always looking eastwards from their position, Milica Bakić-Hayden notices that in the view to the east there is a “nesting orientalism”. This is how the process of the “reproduction of orientalism” begins or rather the gradation of the Orient that represents a kind of “subjective practice” by which a particular group defines themselves as the superior West, and Others as the primitive East and, in the process, they do not only orientalise others but also “occidentalise” themselves. Although this gradation looking, for example, from Eastern Europe towards the most eastern position still includes the Balkans, within the Balkans proper, a hierarchy is conceived according to the same pattern of “nesting” (Bakić-Hayden, 2006, p. 54). Even though he does not draw upon Milica Bakić-Hayden, Slavoj Žižek describes the process defined in this way from the position of Slovenia. As he says, for most Slovenians the Balkans begin in Croatia, and Slovenia is *Mittleuropa*. However, for many Italians and Austrians, the Balkans begin on the border with Slovenia, for Croatians the peninsula begins in Bosnia. Therefore, the Balkan border is always located near, but in the south-east direction – “So Balkan is always the Other: it lies somewhere else, always a little bit more to the south-east, with the paradox that, when we reach the very bottom of the Balkan peninsula, we again magically escape Balkan. Greece is no longer Balkan proper, but the cradle of our Western civilisation” (Žižek, 1999). Similar observations about the Slovenian view to the east were made by Aleš Debeljak: “... among Slovenians when they look across the river Kupa, towards the south, everyone that speaks Serbian or Croatian is simply *Bosnian*. All the particular cultural identities are immersed in the general line of mystification, no matter whether they may be called by this or that derogatory name, from *čapac* and *dizelaš* to *boskur* and *chefur*” (Debeljak, 2009, p. 97).

twenty-first century in Gorazde for the second half of the twentieth century in Dežela” (Vojnović, 2014, p. 80).

In Vojnović’s novel *Chefurs raus!* the train is an important part of “chefur folklore”, about which the main character of the younger generation learns indirectly, through the railroad anecdotes of his father. However, on his disastrous and punitive return to Bosnia, he experiences the train chronotopically, as a journey to the past and coming back to the homeland where he no longer belongs because he is a “Chefur” in Ljubljana, and does not want to be a “Janez” in Bosnia. Moreover, the absurdity of the return is corroborated by the bitter recognition that Bosnia is a “state in which people remember the war time with nostalgia – as they then could still hope that one day it would be better” (Vojnović, 2009, p. 144).

Instead of a conclusion, I would finally like to point out an interesting contradiction of the post-Yugoslav exile narration which arises from this short chronotope interpretation: although the chronotope of the home and former homeland is a place lost in the past, a place of negative identification and a place of absence, it is represented as a homogenous place, most often as a unique space of the Balkans, in both Vojnović’s novels and the prose of Dubravka Ugrešić. Hemon’s novels multiply “the former homelands” and look for mirror projections of problematic past areas, but there are occasional inputs of a recognisable essentialising discourse developed in imagological representations of the Balkans. In this way, subversive non-engagement concerning national identification (which is most often developed in the post-Yugoslav exile novels) is transformed into a reproduction of (supra) national stereotypes. Regardless of the different narrative strategies in the construction of exile, these texts show certain stylistic, ideological and receptive coincidences: they advocate subversive non-engagement (double non-affiliation as the only form of declaring one’s identity); they develop receptive escapism (through addressing a new audience and escaping to another language); they reach for hybrid forms combining autobiographical, essayistic and fictional narrative with an obsessive insistence on the topic of losing the past as an equivalent of losing the home.

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## Kronotop egzila u postjugoslavenskom romanu i granice imaginarnih domovina

Premda je kronotopski pristup romanima egzila gotovo samorazumljiv, određene specifičnosti koje iskazuje postjugoslavenske egzilne naracije prizivaju zasebnu kronotopsku interpretaciju. Prije svega, postjugoslavenska književnost opterećena je dodatnim identitetskim bremenom jer napušteni prostori devedesetih godina za pisca u egzilu ne nestaju na nekoj metaforičkoj razini seleći se u mnemotope, nego se stvarnim raspadom političke cjeline, imaginarna supranacionalna baština transformira u svojevrsnu kontrakulturu, najčešće afirmiranu upravo posredstvom egzilnih pisaca. Stoga i povratak na napušteno mjesto često postaje moguć samo kao povratak u prošlost. U ovom će se radu književna tema egzila pratiti komparativno, počevši od refleksivne nostalgije u prozi Dubravke Ugrešić (*Ministarstvo boli*), preko globalnog egzila u kojemu se zrcali povijest odnosa europskih progona i Amerike kao maćehinske domovine koja rastače sve identitetske oslonce u romanima Aleksandra Hemona (*Čovjek bez prošlosti; Projekat Lazarus*), do unutarjugoslavenskog, „naslijeđenog“ egzila u romanima Gorana Vojnovića (*Čefuri raus!; Jugoslavija, moja domovina*), koje, poput prokletstva roda, očevi ostavljaju sinovima. U navedenim tekstovima o kronotopu egzila govorimo na razini žanra, kao glavnom, nadređenom kronotopu koji uključuje ili otvara prostor nizu specifičnih lokalnih kronotopa ili motiva, ključnih za egzilnu naraciju. Te se motivske jedinice susreću i u drugim žanrovima, no u egzilnoj su naraciji nosivi stupovi žanra. Po svojoj su naravi kronotopični jer se realiziraju kroz binarne prostorno-vremenske kategorije prisutnosti i odsutnosti, pripadanja i nepripadanja, usidrenosti i skitalaštva. U ovom radu osvrnut ću se na tri takva kronotopska motiva: 1. motiv doma kao ne-mjesta ili mjesta odsustva; 2. motiv druge/zrcalne domovine i druge/

zrcalne povijesti; 3. motiv povratka i putovanja (vlakom), koje redovito priziva stereotipnu reprezentaciju mjesta i prošlosti.

**Ključne riječi:** kronotop, egzilna naracija, postjugoslavenski roman, refleksivna nostalgija, imaginarne domovine, ne-mjesto.

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## Chronotop wygnania w powieści postjugosłowiańskiej i granice ojczyzn wyobrażonych

Chociaż chronotopiczne podejście do analizy powieści problematyzujących wygnanie wydaje się oczywiste, to specyficzne cechy postjugosłowiańskich powieści tego rodzaju wymagają szczególnej interpretacji koncepcji chronotopu, ponieważ literatura postjugosłowiańska jest dodatkowo obciążona kwestią tożsamości. Dla wygnanego pisarza opuszczone przestrzenie lat dziewięćdziesiątych nie znikają jedynie na poziomie metaforycznym, zamieniając się w przestrzeń pamięci (mnemotop), ale faktycznie przestają istnieć jako rzeczywisty byt polityczny. Tym samym, wyobrażone dziedzictwo ponadnarodowe przekształca się w swoistą kontrkulturę, w większości afirmowaną przez pisarzy na wygnaniu. Dlatego też powrót do opuszczonej przestrzeni często jest możliwy jedynie jako powrót do przeszłości.

Artykuł omawia literacki motyw wygnania w perspektywie komparatystycznej. Rozpoczyna się od refleksyjnej nostalgii w prozie Dubravki Ugrešić (*Ministerstwo bólu*). Następnie wiedzie poprzez globalne wygnanie, które odzwierciedla historię związków między europejskimi prześladowaniami a Ameryką jako niesprawiedliwą ojczyznę łamiącą wszelkie tożsamości, w powieściach Aleksandra Hemona (*Nowhere Man*, *The Lazarus Project*). Wreszcie, dochodzi do wewnątrzjugosłowiańskiego wygnania „dziedzicznego” w powieściach Gorana Vojnovicia (*Chefurs Raus!*, *Yugoslavia*, *My Homeland*) – wygnania, które ojcowie pozostawili swoim synom niczym przekleństwo rodzaju.

W wyżej wymienionych tekstach chronotop wygnania jest rozpatrywany na poziomie gatunku jako główny, nadrzędny chronotop, który zawiera w sobie, lub otwiera przestrzeń dla szeregu specyficznych chronotopów lokalnych, fundamentalnych dla narracji wygnańczych. Chociaż podobne motywy występują także w innych gatunkach, to są one filarami w przypadku narracji wygnańczych, z natury chronotopicznych, gdyż realizowanych za pomocą binarnych kategorii czasoprzestrzennych: obecności i nieobec-

ności, przynależności i braku przynależności, zakotwiczenia i nomadyzmu. W tym artykule przyjrzą się trzem takim motywom chronotopu: 1) motywowi domu jako nie-miejsca lub miejsca nieobecności; 2) motywowi innych/lustrzanych krajów i innych/lustrzanych historii; 3) motywowi powrotu i podróży (pociągiem), który regularnie przywołuje stereotypowe przedstawienie miejsca i przeszłości.

**Słowa kluczowe:** chronotop, narracje wygnańcze, literatura postjugosłowiańska, nostalgia refleksyjna, wyimaginowana ojczyzna, nie-miejsce.

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