

Janja Žitnik & Helga Glušič, eds. *Slovenska izseljenska književnost 1, 2, 3*. Ljubljana: ZRC SAZU, Založba ZRC Rokus, 1999. 400 + 484 + 407 pp., 12,960 SIT [= \$53] (cloth). ISBN: 9616182692, 9616182749, 9616182765.

Janja Žitnik & Helga Glušič, eds. *Slovenska izseljenska književnost I. Evropa, Azija, Australija*. Ljubljana: ZRC SAZU, Založba ZRC Rokus, 1999. 400 pp. (cloth). ISBN: 9616182692.

Slovenska izseljenska književnost embraces the cultural and literary creation of Slovene emigrants in Europe, Asia, and Australia. The book is divided into three main sections, supplemented by three chapters of introduction in which Janja Žitnik, the main editor of *Slovenska izseljenska književnost* explains the principal starting-points of the research, course, and purpose of the work, and presents eleven literary historians and four coworkers from other humanities fields, all of whom were involved in a project of the Inštitut za slovensko izseljenstvo ZRC SAZU called *The Literature of Slovene Emigrants*. Janja Žitnik outlines the circumstances in which the Slovene literature of the Diaspora is being created, defines its significance for a general cultural, artistic, and historical picture of the nation, and defines crucial problems of the evaluation of Slovene emigration literature in its homeland. In a condensed informative survey, she evaluates previous studies of Slovene emigrant literature.

Marjan Drnovšek, Avgušтина Budja, Janja Žitnik, and Lev Detela have researched Slovene emigration literature in Europe. Marjan Drnovšek writes about the beginnings of Slovene emigration to more developed European countries from the fifteenth century to 1940. He translates the words *emigration*, *immigration*, *integration*, and *assimilation* into Slovene, and defines them. For example, the word *emigration* is defined as a much broader notion than in the *Slovar slovenskega knjižnega jezika*¹ he views it as a cluster of processes and phenomena: leaving home (*izselitev*), arriving abroad (*priselitev*), adjusting to a new environment (*integracija*), and disappearing (*asimilacija*). He lists the reasons for leaving the homeland and also discusses the influence of World War I on emigration: for instance, the lack of a male work force, the expansion of the economy, etc. He focuses

¹ Anton Bajec et al., eds., *Slovar slovenskega knjižnega jezika* (Ljubljana: Mladinska knjiga, 2000).

especially on the establishment of the first Slovene emigration societies, attributing to them a distinctive role at the beginning, but pointing out that these societies later transformed into Slovene cultural, educational, and social centers. He emphasizes the special role of Slovene emigrant priests and teachers in the preservation of the Slovene language and emigration libraries. In addition to publications from the homeland, he also takes into consideration publications abroad, with the special remark, that not only the dispersion of the readers, but also the great mobility of Slovene emigrants had a big influence on their existence.

In her contribution, Avgušтина Budja addresses the post-1945 Slovene emigrants to Sweden from a broader humanistic perspective, while Janja Žitnik's chapter deals with the literary response of Slovene emigrants to the end of World War II. In a short survey, she lists Slovene writers and intellectuals in Vienna and evaluates the role of Vienna in shaping Slovene humanist culture and its importance for the successful development of an independent Slovene national literature. Her research indicates that Slovene belletristic contributions do not have any special artistic value in emigration newspapers, but are nonetheless interesting, especially as a historical material. She ranks Janko Lavrin's collection of short stories *Med osem in osemdeset*² among prominent Slovene achievements, and emphasizes his research into Russian literature, literary theory, and literary criticism, and his contributions to English cultural consciousness, with his comparative studies of European literature, and a special literary critical method, which helped him to create deep physiological portraits of writers. She also praises the works of Vojeslav Mole, who spent most of his life—both interwar and post-World War II—in Kraków.

Lev Detela analyzed the Slovene migrant literature after the 2nd World War. He puts among the main literary documents of Slovene migrant literature of the first period, for example, Tine Debeljak's poem *Velika črna maža za pobite Slovence*³ and Karel Mauser's short story "Rotija,"⁴ his novel *Kaplan Klemen*⁵ and his most extensive work of

² Janko Lavrin, *Med osem in osemdeset: Iz zapisnice kozmopiliti* (Ljubljana: Slovenska matica, 1987).

³ Tine Debeljak, *Velika črna maža za pobite Slovence* (Buenos Aires: Založba Svobodne Slovenije, 1949).

⁴ Karel Mauser, *Rotija: Povesť* (Celovec: Samozaložba, 1947).

prose, *Ljudje pod bičem*⁶ He defines three “migrant circles” and their representatives. First, in the migrant circle of the Trieste-Gorizia region he places Vinko Beličič, Stanko Janežič, Franc Jeza, the editing and critical work of Jože Peterlin, Martin Jevnikar, and the writers of the migrant circle of Primorsko: Avguštin Šele and Štefan Tonkli. Second, to the migrant circle of Koroško belong Metod Turnšek, Janez Polanc, and the refugee period of Jože Urbanija-Limbarski. Finally, the migrant circle of Rome includes (Karel) Vladimir Truhlar, Rafko Vodeb, and the essays and criticisms of France Dolinar. Lev Detela also mentions the representatives of Slovene migrant literature in Belgium, Great Britain, France, Germany, Spain, Austria (especially Vienna), Switzerland, and Sweden in his research. He reports on translators of Slovene migrant literature, listing among others Ferdinand Kolednik, Gerold Schmidt, and Hilda Bergner. A special chapter is dedicated to Slovene writers that are actively connected with Slovenia: Evgen Bavčar and Brina Švigelj Merat are mentioned.

The second section represents Slovene emigrant literature in Australia and Asia. Igor Maver informs us about the Slovenes in Australia and the literary creations of Australian Slovenes in English, while Barbara Suša talks about their writing in Slovene. In her conclusion she also lists the literary achievements of Australian Slovenes from the first half of the 1950s (when we can talk about their literary beginnings in Slovene) to 1988 (when the book and movie *The Sound of One Hand Clapping* came out). Among Australian Slovenes that write in Slovene, she points out Pavel Gruden, Bert Pribac, Cilka Žagar, Peter Košak, Jože Žohar, and Danijela Hliš. Igor Maver also speaks highly of Danijela Hliš among those that write in English (including also Michelle Leber, Irena Birsa, Ivan Kobal, Janko Majnik, Victoria Zabukovec).

Lev Detela presents two Slovene writers from Asia: Jože Cukale and Vladimir Kos. Wider Slovene communities or colonies in Asia or Africa do not exist. Individuals, especially missionaries, often extend their informative journalistic articles into intensive personal stories, but

⁵ Karel Mauser, *Kaplan Klemen* (Celovec: Družba sv. Mohorja, 1965).

⁶ Karel Mauser, *Ljudje pod bičem: Povest v treh delih* (Buenos Aires: Slovenska kulturna akcija, 1963).

⁷ Richard Flanagan, *The Sound of One Hand Clapping* (Sydney: Macmillan, 1997).

without special literary value—e.g., Pepi Labreht from Benin, Lojze Letonja and others from Madagascar, Zvonka Mikec from Angola, and Bogdan Kavčič from Rwanda. Jože Cukale wrote more qualitative poems and short stories in Calcutta (India), and also in Dacca (Bangladesh). Vladimir Kos, who comes from Murska Sobota, is a professor at Sophia University (Tokyo) and a missionary to a poor suburb of Tokyo. According to Lev Detela, he is one of the most original, qualitative, and productive writers of Slovene migration. We can claim that his diction in poetry is individualistically sharpened: he transforms some forms, and his language is modern. Vladimir Kos is also known as a writer of short stories and a publicist. In Slovenia he has published a book of essays, *Eseji z japonskih otoko*,⁸ and a selection of poems, *Cvet, ki je rekel Nagasaki*.⁹

The third and last section of *Slovenska izseljenska književnost I* includes biographies and bibliographies, written by Avgušтина Budja, Lev Detela, Igor Maver, Barbara Suša, and Janja Žitnik. The informative value of this monograph is enriched by the list of contents, periods, and authors—the later two lists compiled by Zvezdana Bizjak-Pitamic and Jure Žitnik, respectively.

Slovenska izseljenska književnost is an exceptional contribution to Slovene literary history. The book provides a survey of different kinds of activities of Slovene emigrants from three different geographic areas: Europe, Australia, and Asia, as well as their cultural and literary work. It also brings us biographies and bibliographies of more than forty writers. In addition to a systematic and multifaceted survey of the activities of Slovene emigrants, reflecting respect for their creations and scientific and research impulses, the monograph attempts to evaluate the material researched and to reveal the pearls of Slovene emigrant literary work. The coeditor of the monograph, Helga Glušič, stresses the special importance among European writers of Lev Detela and Milena Merlak Detela (Vienna), Janko Lavrin (Great Britain), Vinko Beličič (Trieste), Vladimir Truhlar (Rome), and the novels by Igor Šentjunc written in German. Some top Slovene emigrant literary works have been written in Australia, where one can in particular speak of well-developed poetry. Bert Pribac, Jože Žohar, and Pavle Gruden in

⁸ Vladimir Kos, *Eseji z japonskih otoko* (Maribor: Obzorja, 1997).

⁹ Vladimir Kos, *Cvet, ki je rekel Nagasaki: Izbrane pesmi* (Maribor: Obzorja, 1998).

Australia, and Vladimir Kos in Asia are representative examples.

This volume is in general a useful monographic synthesis and analysis for anyone that would like to learn about Slovene emigrant cultural and literal activities in a systematic and popular way. The book's graphic design—it has a rich collection of pictures—and exceptionally systematic informative value show that it could also be useful as a textbook and as a basis for a more precise research. Nonetheless, it is also an accessible survey for the more casual reader.

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