

SUMMARY

BETWEEN TRADITION AND SUBVERSION

Kaj magazine and Kajkavian postmodernism

After the Middle Ages, during which Croatian authors had mostly been writing in Latin, a language of public and church administration, and in Old Church Slavic, a language of liturgy and the original significant Croatian literacy, in 16th century there is an increase of writing in regionally widespread Croatian languages, Kajkavian in northwest of Croatia, Čakavian in coastal part of Croatia (Istria and Dalmatia), and Štokavian in Slavonia, Dubrovnik and certain areas on the coast. This language trinity was briefly interrupted in the middle of the 19th century when members of the Illyrian movement (1836-1848) chose Štokavian language as the base for the common language of the emerging modern Croatian nation, aiming for a national integration of former Croatian regions. This newly created national language, called standard Croatian language, has ever since represented the official language in the Republic of Croatia, and Čakavian, Kajkavian and Štokavian languages haven't been used in public communication, as well as literature, having thus created narratives that those languages are less valuable than the standard language. However, they have never completely disappeared from Croatian public scene. Except for the certain forms of folklore (folk songs and dances), it is literature that is the most creditable for it. Revival of literature written in nonstandard Croatian languages, especially Kajkavian and Čakavian, happened in the first half of the 20th century (Fran Galović, Dragutin Domjanić, Miroslav

Krleža and Ivan Goran Kovačić). Kajkavian literature almost vanishes with their departure from literary scene. Its new revival happened in the late 1960's when Kaj magazine was first published, and later many other activities were also started with the goal of (re)affirmation of Kajkavian literature and culture. That is the reason why this magazine and period get the most of attention in this work.

Magazine Kaj was launched at the initiative of Stjepan Dragačić in 1968 in Zagreb and it represents the first magazine which specialises in the Kajkavian literature, as well as Kajkavian culture and science in general. In other words, with its appearance the Kajkavian literature and its researchers have for the first time gained continuous media space. Ever since 1968, many Kajkavian writers, mostly poets, have published their works in Kaj, but Kajkavian prose, drama, as well as children's literature and literary translation, which were up until then non-existent or very rare, can be found in it. Except for revival of Kajkavian literature, magazine Kaj is responsible for modernisation of it, because a portion of writers who were active in it managed to bring the Kajkavian literature closer to the contemporary (postmodern) streams not only in Croatian, but also European literature (Ivo Kalinski, Zvonko Kovač, Ernest Fišer, Božica Brkan, Denis Peričić). The magazine is also responsible for critical, scientific and anthological verification of Kajkavian literature (Joža Skok, Mladen Kuzmanović, Olga Šojat, Alojz Jembrih, Ivo Kalinski, Božica Pažur). Considering the fact that the magazine published and (critically, scientifically and anthological) evaluated the Kajkavian literature at the same time, it can be claimed that it was not only its passive transferor, but also its active co-creator. Except for the Kajkavian literature and its researchers, ever since its beginnings the magazine has also been open to researchers of other areas of the Kajkavian culture (linguists, art historians, ethnologists, historians, musicologists, etc.).

In that sense, we can say that Kaj magazine, with its already half-a-century-old continuity of (re)affirming the Kajkavian literature and culture, has contributed not only to the beginning of institutionalisation of this often marginalised scion of Croatian culture, but also of the cultural decentralisation of Croatia. Moreover, considering the width of disciplinary framework and the lack of institutions which would deal with the Kajkavian past and present, we could say that Kaj magazine in a way represents a sort of institution of the Kajkavian culture. Because of this attempted institutionalisation of the Kajkavian culture, which at the very least was not welcome at the time of its launch, as well as most recently, the magazine was in principle subversive. However, as opposed to this subversive goal which was contrary to official and common attitude, the strategies and mechanisms of reaching it were not subversive. None of the content published in Kaj has loudly and directly, let alone ardently, spoken about the need of repositioning of the Kajkavian culture in the national context, but these desires can rather be read as subtext of certain submissions, just as they represent the unobtrusive, almost hidden goal of the very existence of the magazine. Instead of clamorous and polemic tones, the magazine tried (and still does) to achieve its goal by means of calm and reasoned indication of indisputable value of the Kajkavian (cultural) past and present. It can be said that ever since its launch, the magazine is characterised both by its explicit focus on tradition and implicit subversive vocation, a duality chosen as the best method of trying to reaffirm and reposition the Kajkavian culture in the national context. While the method could be debated upon, the concrete contribution of Kaj to the achievement of the goal is undoubtedly major.