

## Editors' Preface

For some time now the humanities or, to be more precise, those who are their practitioners have tended to overstep the fields of their specialist knowledge and inquiry. Scholars in the humanities have ventured and are continuously venturing outside of what would seem their habitual scholarly pursuits and are tackling issues of politics, culture understood in the broadest sense, questions of identity and other similar matters. Some are of the opinion that we are witnessing a movement from institutionally compartmentalized and parceled-out scientific / scholarly enterprises into a postdisciplinary that seems to have shifted its focus of interest onto, at first glance, non-academic, mundane agendas and happenings. . . .

Following up on the disciplinary turn, which seeks to address the urgency of the present and the necessity to foreground the role of the economic, enforces us to address the issue of postmodernism or of postmodernity in a manner which shows it to have been a rather evanescent affair. . . . The reality— capital and its dynamics—on which it has found itself grounded can be said to have been the radical other of postmodernism especially if the latter is defined as an artistic style, a philosophical outlook or a break with an earlier historical formation.

(Stipe Grgas, "Postmodernity Grounded," 2011)

It was precisely my sense that a vacancy, a nothingness, yawns at the very basis of Melville's narrative that prompted me to go back to Melville. But to cull from Melville's novel evidence of how he sees the ocean and how he brings it into utterance is only a preparatory step for a thinking of the sea in *Moby Dick* and for asking how that thinking has contemporary pertinence.

(Stipe Grgas, "What Does Melville See on the Ocean," 2016)

This fundamental lack of substance of the very thing which functions as the ultimate determinant of the present world is disconcerting, to say the least. Therefore, it is only logical that different power regimes hide that nothingness from view. Different institutions and the mechanism of the market are complicit in this strategy. Literary works and the experience and knowledge they provide are not part of that strategy. This is why these domains are not solicited by economic concerns. Literature cautions us that man's economic life is much too serious an affair to be left to economists or suchlike specialists. To expect them to give us an explanation of its complexity, particularly after they let pass under their disciplinary screen its slippery ontology, if not its nonbeing, is wishful thinking.

(Stipe Grgas, "What Does Melville See")

The spatial turn, which to a certain extent I read as responding to a rampant etherization attending theory, has itself been taken over and evacuated of exactly that anchorage which it sought to bring into prominence. This is a consequence of the prevailing social constructionism and the modes of enquiry it has spawned, in which reality is always the product of human interpretation.

(Stipe Grgas, "Notes on the Spatial Turn," 2012)

In preparing this *Festschrift*, we had in mind a specific inflection of the concept of errancy, one that comes from the rich and layered work of the American scholar and philosopher William V. Spanos, who conceived it as a way of rendering the logos and telos of the American project subject to thorough rethinking and redefinition, both in history and at present. By calling attention to the complementarity of the work of the two scholars, Grgas and Spanos, who both hone their critical skills on the theme of the logic of the American project, we do not so much intend to claim a direct influence but rather wish to highlight the confluence, commingling, and inspiration that working in the humanities may engender. This commonality is featured in the work of Spanos and in the work of Grgas as a dedicated and passionate engagement with the practices and possibilities inscribed in the discipline, which also requires the scholar to move beyond the given and inhabit what Spanos calls a meta-level of thinking. Grgas's work, located at the intersection of several disciplines within the humanities and social sciences (which is reflected in the principal themes of this *Festschrift*), reveals precisely such a commitment that has in the course of his long, fruitful and versatile career charted out a scholarly position always in the process of becoming, and never quite stabilized and domesticated.

Grgas's academic career has been as diverse as the humanistic disciplinary habitus allows: a provocative and popular lecturer, a researcher of tireless intellectual curiosity, a scholar testing the boundaries of disciplines, an enthusiastic and motivating mentor, a thoughtful and sensitive translator, or, as one of the contribution shows, an unobtrusive poet, Grgas has always displayed a remarkable intellectual energy in every aspect of his engagement with the varied and nowadays often embattled debates in the humanities.

However, Grgas's work as an Americanist, cultural theorist, translator, writer, mentor, and teacher doesn't merely reflect the exciting, if uncontainable, shifts marking the discipline in the last couple of decades; rather, his intellectual labor has been committed to offering a new way of comprehending this change, its scope, direction, and consequences, so as to create an intense web of connections and interrelations where different disciplines talk to one another, without hastening to provide answers so much as to provoke the right kind of questions. The questioning and questing nature of Grgas's work has marked his writing from the start, but it has intensified in his later writing as the humanities find themselves facing a whole new set of questions for the new millennium. His sustained effort to bring a new awareness of economic issues

to discussions of culture and literature in the recent period has been both timely and critically engaged in its reflection on why this issue is particularly significant at this point in history.

The layout of the Festschrift may be said to loosely reflect and acknowledge Grgas's scholarly interests that have charted out his career in the field of the humanities. We are glad to note that Grgas's international stature shows in the contributions of our colleagues from Austria, Denmark, and the United States. The latter two countries—each in their own right and at different points of Grgas's life—have both been hubs of his academic activity. We would therefore like to extend our appreciation to our international colleagues whose collaboration testifies to the borderless dimension of Grgas's work and career.

The Croatian contributors, and the topics pursued in their articles, provide a collegial testament to the ties, debts, and influences located closer to home, in Croatian academic circles, where Grgas has made central contributions over his long scholarly career to the development of American Studies, Irish Studies, cultural geography, the study of spatiality in culture, and the economic study of literature, as well as to the criticism of poetry and fiction. While American Studies, for instance, was already established in Croatia by efforts of an earlier generation of Croatian scholars, Stipe Grgas's work in the field helped strengthen its institutional position in Croatia and expanded its scholarly archive, but also provided an important vantage point from which to discuss local as well as global trends in the discipline. In each of the other above-mentioned areas, Grgas has also left an indelible mark in the local context and has very often carried the work in the Croatian humanities toward a more international and interdisciplinary reflection.

The opening section, entitled "Geographies of Imagination," is inaugurated by Svend Erik Larsen's article, concerned with the contemporary development of "global literary theory," which he claims can achieve relevance only if it takes into consideration two key phenomena, migration and translation. Larsen advocates a move away from the narrow aesthetic focus of literary theory or comparative literature, as well as a move away from the national literary canon, calling attention to the phenomenon of world literature, which should be examined through an interdisciplinary lens. Larsen illustrates this approach through a detailed linguistic and narratological reading of one of the key novels of migrant, international American literature, *Call It Sleep* (1934) by Henry Roth. He proposes that the novel's handling of language varieties as well as experimentation with points of view make it interesting as a possible example of a developing paradigm of world literature.

Vladimir Biti's essay "The Dis/location of Solitude: The Disaggregation of Empire in Joseph Roth's *The Radetzky March*" offers a close reading of Roth's novel with a special focus on the theme of loneliness. Biti's examination of the novel is primarily concerned with identifying the patterns which connect the location of loneliness and the dislocation of loneliness in the narrative, especially those patterns by which parallelisms between different characters are established. The recognition of those narrative patterns enables him to read the novel as a text about the "disaggregation" of

the Austro-Hungarian Empire and to suggest, through an analysis of the relations between the narrator and the characters, that the narrative strategies of dislocation in the novel reproduce the politics of dislocation related to the novel's main characters, and simultaneously the politics coinciding with the Empire's "disaggregation." In this regard, Biti's article unfolds as an attempt to connect the novel's narrative strategies with the wider historical context in which the novel is lodged.

In her article, Vanja Polić proposes to read Guy Vanderhaeghe's historical novel *The Last Crossing* by invoking the concept of "blindness" so as to help explain the invisibility of excess historical material from ideological historical narratives that are constituted against this excess. Polić sees the complex structure of Vanderhaeghe's novel as a strategy of questioning the boundaries of such ideological narratives and as a mechanism of reintegration of the excluded excess into a literary rewriting of Canadian national history. Through this strategy, and through focusing on the complex problematic of identity construction and cultural exchange, the polyphonic structure of the text deconstructs the binaries of colonial ideology and writes an alternative, polyphonic history of the Canadian Wild West.

Leo Zonn and Josip Lah read Sean Penn's 2007 film *Into the Wild* (based on the 1996 novel by Jon Krakauer) as a generic hybrid, which relies both on the literary tradition of the *Bildungsroman* and the genre of the road movie. Although challenging middle-class conformism—an integral part of U.S. national ideology in the authors' view—the film ultimately ends up presenting subversive interventions in the socially integrative genre of the *Bildungsroman*. The reason for this might be the narrative's insistence on radical individualism, surely another crucial element of the American character, as a response to conformism.

Beginning with the assumption that the representation of space in the Gothic genre is fluid and lends itself to a multitude of interpretations, Marko Lukić's text "Displacing the Dead: Remapping of Post-apocalyptic Geographies" examines "the transformative processes that spaces / places undergo" in the comic and TV series *The Walking Dead*. Those processes, according to the author, develop progressively through three spatial paradigms. Lukić's analytical procedure reflects this progression and conceptualizes it by identifying the three main spatial paradigms as the space of home (where the main theoretical references are Yi Fu Tuan and Gaston Bachelard), the non-space (Marc Augé), and the neoliberal space (David Harvey). This, in Lukić's words, "non-uniform theoretical approach," is then applied in a close reading of *The Walking Dead*.

Nikola Petković's contribution stands apart in this collection of essays, not only in that it discusses Grgas's foray into poetry, an unpublished manuscript of verse, but also because it consciously sets itself against the presumption of the hierarchy of discourses in which poetry always comes up short against theory and scholarship. Petković discusses a seemingly supplementary status of Grgas's poetry (in relation to his scholarly output) and unpacks a rich array of meanings presented in his verse, which is in turn beholden to his theoretical and philosophical orientations. The "I" that speaks in the poems places itself between languages (English and Croatian), as

it puts together lyrics composed from various inflections (of Zabláče, Croatia, and America). Grgas, in his understated verses (the description of his verses as poem he refuses as too presumptuous), recreates local history, the homeplace, his family history as already fractured and destabilized by the infusion of grand narratives to which his poetics (of modesty, microhistory, and bestiality) is incipiently suspicious.

The section titled “Croatia, America, History” delves into subterranean and overt links and exchanges between America and Croatia. In her article, Maša Kolanović juxtaposes the literary traces of America’s utopian potential with the reality of its capitalist development. Kolanović’s interest is in the place of America within the Croatian literary canon, as well as in socialist Yugoslav popular culture. Starting from the first echoes of the “discovery” of the New World in the works of sixteenth-century writers Mavro Vetranović and Marin Držić, Kolanović mainly focuses on the play *Kristofor Kolumbo* by Miroslav Krleža in its 1918 and 1933 versions. For Krleža’s Columbus, “America” represents an abstract idea of utopian newness opposed to the Old World. At the same time, this idea is underscored by America’s anti-utopian, capitalist logic. Kolanović concludes that the representation of the twentieth century as the “American century” in Croatian literature is characterized by a progressive de-mystification of the meaning of America, and a disintegration of the older utopian representations of the New World.

In “Notes on ‘Command of Money’ and the End of Socialism,” Sven Cvek offers a reflection on the end of Yugoslav socialism by way of a reading of Stipe Grgas’s more recent work. Relying on Grgas’s claim that the U.S. presence in former Yugoslavia reflects the mutations of American capitalism, the author comments on the ways in which the experience of socialism’s demise was registered in the Yugoslav culture of the nineteen-eighties up to 1991. Arguing that the existing approaches to this period generally favor the experience of the elites, Cvek stresses the need for more expansive archival work and consideration, in future analyses, of the class aspect of the end of socialism.

In “The Institutional Framework of Post-Socialist Literary Production: Literature as Creative Writing,” Hrvoje Tutek looks at the post-socialist transformation of the Croatian literary field. During its “transition,” Croatia witnessed the first attempts at the institutionalization of creative writing, an organizational model imported from the U.S., where it has had a long institutional history as well as its own literary tradition. Tutek discusses creative writing not merely as a cultural practice, but also as a social-organizational paradigm with its own institutional infrastructure, ideology, and socially determined aesthetics. In a historical outline of the shifts in the understanding of literary autonomy, the author shows how the literary field transformed in line with the exigencies of the capitalist restoration in the European periphery.

The next section, “Rethinking America,” opens appropriately with Grant Farred’s essay engaging in a dialogue with Grgas’s articulation of American exceptionalism as a logic of exclusion and often violent elisions. Farred conjoins Grgas’s historical-materialist analysis with recent critiques of democracy in late capitalist society, such as the one proposed by Wendy Brown. Focusing on Frederick Douglass, Farred evokes

the long-term pull of exceptionalism that requires the process of exclusion as its operating principle. In the context of the recently proposed negative theory of democracy, Farred casts Douglass as a prescient philosopher of a negative theory of democracy and an even more clear-sighted critic of exceptionalism as applied to the status of African Americans in the American polity. Farred demonstrates how particularly Douglass's text "The Nation's Problem" lends itself to a vigorous critique of the relentless machine for creating and sustaining the state of exception for the nation's black population. Douglass's response to this exigency, however, is surprisingly innovative and ought to be heeded even today.

Tatjana Jukić proposes a highly original and packed reading of Henry James's gem of a novel, *Washington Square*. By mobilizing the apparatus of Freudian and post-Freudian inquiry, Jukić contends that Oedipal structures permeate the novel but cannot be read adequately without engaging the notion of metonymic displacement of death drive onto a whole set of relations—individual (female) identity, paternalistic family, American national identity, and the state—all of which therefore become invested in managing melancholic structures. This configuration, articulated in the novel, interestingly enough, in the private and feminine sphere, allows Jukić to activate another layer in the novel's texture, the possibility to read the heroine's, Catherine Sloper's fate as an American Antigone. Jukić further argues that the melancholic processes of preemption, abjection, and mourning ought to be considered not only insofar as they organize Jamesian discourse, or even that of his philosophical contemporaries (William James, Emerson), but also as they become formative in different stages and at different levels of the discourses of American emancipation and its separate, exclusive identity. Seeing Sloper as potentially the American Antigone, and latching this insight onto a later melodramatic cinematic rendering of the novel (by way of Stanley Cavell), Jukić seeks to explicate the novel's view that an American fate and the fate of America, perhaps, hinge on the genealogies of the tragic, melancholic, and, finally, melodramatic.

Jelena Šesnić echoes in her contribution Grgas's interests and ongoing work pre-eminently as an American Studies scholar while launching a discussion of the early stages of the discipline, when it was deeply immersed in and subsistent on Cold War imaginary. By focusing on two scholars, one the designated founder of American Studies, F.O. Matthiessen, and the other its "secret sharer," C.L.R. James, whose contribution has only recently begun to be acknowledged, the essay contrasts their differing but seminal contributions and draws a more expansive and complex image of the discipline's constitution. On such a view, it shows that Matthiessen's legacy is much more contestatory than customarily allowed by its canonical appropriation, as attested especially by his marginal and hybrid memoirs-cum-travelogue in Europe, published in the immediate aftermath of the Second World War. On the other hand, James's underappreciated contribution in the early stage of the discipline comes forth in his misunderstood study of Melville's *Moby-Dick*, which took a long time to get out of the shadow of the Cold War and could only be appropriately gauged within a new transnational orientation in recent American Studies.

The section entitled “Capital in Contexts” presents essays that deal with representations of the economic realm. In his essay, Ozren Žunec analyzes what he terms Karl Marx’s “meontology,” a conceptual position that he delineates by referring to a wide range of Marx’s writings. Discussing Marx’s critique of philosophy, Žunec seeks to demonstrate that Marx’s position is a meontological one, and that it is a departure from the entire philosophical tradition that preceded him. Žunec states that in his critique of the discourses of both philosophy and economics, Marx presented a meontology in a clear albeit unsystematic fashion. The essay also focuses on Marx’s analysis of the functioning of capital and its pervasive social effects, and concludes with a discussion of Marx’s conception of “communism”; Žunec suggests that Marx’s notion of “communism” could actually be said to describe capitalism as it is today. He also adds that in this regard Marx’s analysis is similar to some accounts of the contemporary moment, such as Zygmunt Bauman’s analysis of “liquid modernity.”

The essay by Borislav Knežević, “Contours of Capital in the Novel,” deals with the question of representation of the economic sphere in the genre of the novel. Knežević opens the essay by stating that novels present specific forms of social knowledge, and discusses the claim by the economist Thomas Piketty that nineteenth-century novels (such as those by Honoré de Balzac and Jane Austen) may provide a valuable source of knowledge on economic and social history. In the rest of the essay Knežević discusses two novels, Jane Austen’s *Mansfield Park* and Elizabeth Gaskell’s *North and South*, and their different narrative strategies of dealing with the economic. He also examines Mary Poovey’s reading of Austen’s “gestural aesthetic,” by which Poovey means a form of indirectness in the narrative representation of the historical setting. In this regard, Knežević brings into focus other aspects of Austen’s narrative representation of economic (and social) matters, which evidence different, more direct ways in which Austen engaged with social realities. His analysis of Gaskell’s novel focuses on its directness in the treatment of economic matters, and he points out that the novel regards economic issues as a matter that belongs to everyday conversation.

The case studies in the final section also engage some of Grgas’s cherished interests and pursuits. Martina Domines Veliki, in an essay entitled “Romantic Constructions of Nature,” examines texts by Rousseau and Wordsworth for their treatment of the concept of “nature” as a central ideogeme of the Romantic period. In particular, she points to a tension between the concept of nature and the democratic views elaborated by the two writers which have often been emphasised in traditional critical approaches. Both Rousseau and Wordsworth posit humankind and nature in a relationship of parallelism, which is a conventional Romantic topos; in contrast, Domines Veliki emphasizes the distance constructed in Wordsworth’s poetry vis-à-vis the massive changes effected by industrialization on both people and nature; a similar enthusiasm for isolated rural communities that she finds in Rousseau she describes as a conservative ideological illusion. In this way, the essay calls for a more careful appreciation of Romantic discourse in the historical context of the rise of capitalist social forms.

Lovorka Gruić Grmuša's essay visits one of Grgas's longstanding and passionate preoccupations—the oeuvre of Thomas Pynchon that figures prominently for Grgas both as an inspiration for his scholarly work on the United States and as a superb illustration and indication of the emerging global problems that await proper articulation. Gruić Grmuša discusses Pynchon's canonical but elusive novel *Gravity's Rainbow* (1973), analyzing how the novel creates a space-time complex analogous to the world of natural sciences, in particular modern physics and chaos theory. Pynchon's encyclopedic reach knots together global and local knowledge systems and joins science, literature, and culture into recursive and interconnected loops. Pynchon's borrowings from physics in particular, as Gruić Grmuša shows, are substantial and reflect on the author's appropriation of discontinuity, non-linearity, self-organization, and even backward causation as structuring and interpretative principles for the novel. The protagonists, their trajectories in the novel, but also the reader's processing of data, proceed in a looping, disconnected fashion, as shown by Gruić Grmuša's reading, as plotlines behave in a manner analogous to the discontinuous movement of subatomic particles.

An endeavour of this scope could not have come to light without the expert and dedicated work of many contributors, colleagues, and friends, only some of which can be acknowledged here. A first round of thanks goes to all the contributors, who have graciously and enthusiastically responded to the call for papers. The editors express their gratitude to the reviewers for their assiduous engagement. Special thanks to Hrvoje Tutek, who lent a hand in the key phases of the manuscript preparation. We would also like to extend our appreciation to the Department of English at the Faculty of the Humanities and Social Sciences in Zagreb and its Head, Irena Zovko Dinković, for recognizing and supporting the project from its inception. In addition, we are grateful for the support by the Ministry of Culture of the Republic of Croatia in the publication of the collection. Several articles were written as part of projects supported by the Croatian Science Foundation. Finally, we appreciate the invaluable assistance of Alex Hoyt, the language editor, and Boris Bui of FF press, the publisher in the preparation of the manuscript.

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