

Between the Individual and the Collective:

The Poetics of Romantic Croatian Travel Literature Using Antun Nemčić Gostovinski and Stanko Vraz as Case Studies

Krystyna Pieniążek-Marković

As was the case elsewhere in Europe, Croatian travel literature began to flourish in the Romantic period.¹ This being said, if we compare the situation in Croatia to its counterparts in Western Europe or even Poland and Slovakia, where “Dark Romanticism”² and the uncanny³

¹ This is not to suggest that the first examples of Croatian travel writing appear in the romantic period. Bracketing medieval travel accounts of this world and the world beyond (and various reworkings of these same texts throughout the Christian world), we might include two renaissance texts in the category of travel writing (understood here as a genre): Petar Hektorović’s *Ribanje i ribarsko prigovaranje* (Fishing and Fishermen’s Talk, 1568), which tells the tale of a three-day voyage at sea, and the first Croatian novel, *Planine* (Mountains, 1569) by Petar Zoranić, which describes an expedition over a mountain range. Travel also appears in Jaketa Palmotić’s baroque epic *Dubrovnik ponovljen* (Dubrovnik Recalled), which describes the diplomatic mission of several envoys to the Sultan carried out after an earthquake in Dubrovnik in 1667, and the Franciscan priest Jakov Pletikos’ report of his visit to the Holy Land *Putovanje k Jeruzolimu god. 1752* (Journey to Jerusalem, 1752). Croatians also claim Marco Polo as their countryman, arguing that a particular Croatian island was the more probable of his two rumored birthplaces (Korčula and Venice). In this case, the accounts of his journey to China could also be included in this genealogy of Croatian travel writing (although the provenance of these stories has been questioned). If we leave the Croatian identity of Marco Polo to legends, we should also note certain diplomatic journeys and their literary accounts (often written in Latin) of Antun and Faust Vrančić (from the sixteenth century) and Bartol Kašić (seventeenth century).

² For background on the Slovak case, see: *Czarny romantyzm – przypadek słowacki. Rekonesans*, ed. J. Goszczyńska, A. Kobylińska, Warsaw 2011.

³ See: M. Janion, *Niesamowita Słowiańszczyzna*, Krakow 2006.

were the dominating motifs, then the Croatian case is somewhat distinct. Early nineteenth-century Croatia was home to the Illyrian movement⁴ and a national revival. In this climate, literature was reorganized around patriotic and didactic priorities and Enlightenment ideals. Literature served to create idyllic, arcadia-like images of a unified people peacefully coexisting in a beautiful and fertile land.⁵

New Nation, New Literature

The complex situation of the various state, regional, cultural and social bodies within the divided Kingdoms of Croatia, Slavonia and Dalmatia, became even more convoluted in the 1830s (much to the dismay of the ideologues and writers of the “new,” “reborn,” “awoken” Croatia-Ilyria). Proponents for the national revival aimed to disrupt regional and linguistic divisions between the three languages (dialects)⁶ used in early literature. Until this moment, all three languages had enjoyed equal status. National revival adherents chose the Shtokavian variation as the foundation for Croatian literary language. They intended for this choice to be a first step towards Serbo-Croatian unity, but the gesture condemned the rich heritages of Chakavian and Kajkavian to be forgotten. In the end, a gesture intended to unite turned out to be one of elimination. Paradoxically, if we honestly assess the revivalist climate of the period, we might say that the “proper” or ethnically-oriented name “Croatia” and the Croatian language were ceded in favor of a Utopian Slavic Ilyria, the Illyrians, and the Illyrian language.

Literature of the period was used as a tool by those engineering a new, united nation. The revivalists intended for this process to play out on the cultural level before taking the form of political activity. Literature preceding the period had multiple centers of gravity, mainly

⁴ “The Illyrian movement was a controversial cultural and political movement that dominated the Croatian national revival in the 1830s and 1840s. It is rooted in the history of modern culture in Croatia and reflects the complexity of its former model while prefiguring contradictions and paradoxes that would emerge later.” J. Rapacka, *Leksykon tradycji chorwackich*, Warsaw 1997, p. 74. Croats evoked the myth of the Slavic people’s common descentance from the ancient Illyrians. This served a number of purposes: 1. The neutral name did not suggest the dominance of any particular region and therefore supported the integration of all areas within Croatia, linking Dalmatia, Croatia and Slavonia in its most modest iteration; 2. In its most extreme iteration, the paradigm united all Southern Slavs. They attributed huge importance to the Illyrians in the eternal conflict with Hungary, while promoting the concept of a nation that transcends ethnic categories and includes Croats, Slovenians, Bosnians, Serbs, and even Bulgarians, although officially, we confine Croatian issues to the context of the Hapsburg Monarchy; 3. The paradigm established the population’s roots in the territories they inhabit (not conceding to the narrative that these populations migrated from beyond the Carpathian mountain range!) and their right to a heritage that reached back to antiquity.

⁵ The most popular example of these “bucolic tales” would be the Croatian anthem (*Lijepa naša domovino*, *Our Beautiful Homeland*), published in 1835 as *Hrvatska domovina* (*Croatian Homeland*), a reveille by Antun Mihanović, who was an early instigator of the national revival. Ljudevit Gaj, a forerunner of the Illyrian movement, also lauds peace and unity as the Croats’ signature attributes in his popular reveille *Horvatov sloga i zjedinjenje* (Unity and Peace among the Croats, from 1832–33. This hymn is also known by a title that references the Polish anthem: *Još Hrvatska nij’ propala*, *Croatia is Not Yet Lost*). See: B. Zieliński, *Obraz ojczyzny i narodu w hymnografii słowiańskiej XIX wieku*, *Wielkie tematy kultury w literaturach słowiańskich*. “Slavica Wratislaviensia” CXV, Wrocław 2001, pp. 83–94.

⁶ It is also crucial to remember that Croatian literature appeared not only in the three Croatian literary languages (Chakavian everywhere in Dalmatia but Dubrovnik, Kajkavian in Croatia, and Shtokavian in Slavonia and Bosnia and Herzegovina, Serbia and Montenegro) and in the three major alphabets (Latin, Cyrillic, and Glagolitic), but in Latin, Croatian variations on Old Church Slavonic, as well as Italian, German and Hungarian.

emerging out of the various urban hubs throughout Dalmatia (Dubrovnik, Split, Šibenik, Zadar, Korčula, Hvar) as well as throughout the Mediterranean sphere and from the eighteenth century onwards in the Central European North, Croatia proper and Slavonia (Varaždin, Križevci, Požega, Osijek, Zagreb). This dispersed landscape was laid down on the altar of an imagined, consolidated new literature⁷ with Zagreb situated as the exclusive center. This re-oriented literature within a Germanic/Germanic-Slavic and Central European cultural milieu. During these years, Zagreb provided fertile ground for Illyrian, romantic and revivalist ideologies,⁸ while growing into a new economic and political hub.

These emerging ideas were disseminated through new press outlets, facilitated by the advent of the periodical as a medium. In fact, it was in periodicals that the first travel accounts were generally published. These reports narrated individuals' experiences alongside current ideas linked to social and cultural revival, and were thus politically motivated. In the first Croatian-language cultural insert ("Danica horvatska, slavonska i dalmatinska" — "The Dawn of Croatia, Slavonia and Dalmatinska") in the daily newspaper (*Novine horvatske or Croatian News*), travel (*putovanje*) was defined as a form of knowledge acquisition, and its textual product (*putopis*) as a means for disseminating knowledge.

Out of Love for the Homeland

Travel and travel writing have always been closely bound to patriotic ideals. The Croatian clergyman, philologist and writer Adolfo Veber Tkalčević, one of the most prolific travel writers of the nineteenth century, starts his account of his travels to Plitvice (*Put na Plitvice / Journey to Plitvice*), with a didactic piece of advice. Tkalčević demonstrates how we might realize the modernist objectives of the Enlightenment through an encounter with the Other by seeing our home comparatively and potentially implementing strategies picked up abroad at home:

Fascinated by love for your homeland, you blindly praise all its aspects, while the world has a laugh at your excessive allegiance. Pass through a few foreign lands and you will quickly see

⁷ The process of forming an old canon and creating a new literature came hand in hand with the process of distinguishing the new Croatian nation as a unique entity, which played out in the programmatic texts of the Croatian revival. "They [programmatic texts] contain internal notes on the optimal language for literature and optimal literary models and functions of literature that are undeniably at the service of establishing the so-called 'new Croatian literature, and retroactively, its venerable tradition.' This would simultaneously allow us to form a national body of scholarship on literature. At the same time, in many cases the primary (if not exclusive) objective of these texts was to construct and develop a sense of national identity." S. Coša, *Od Velike Ilirije do «Lijepa naše» h(o)rvatske domovine. Oblikovanje nacionalnoga identiteta u programskim tekstovima preporodnoga razdoblja (From Great Illyria to "Our Beautiful" Croatian Homeland. The Formation of National Identity in Programmatic Texts from the Revivalist Canon)*, "Umjetnost riječi" LI (2007), issues 3–4, p. 268. All translations from the Croatian are Eliza Rose's on the basis of Polish translations by Krystya Pieniążek Marković

⁸ The debate over the domination of one component of this triumverate, which coincided with the debate on how to adequately name and characterize the period, remains somewhat unresolved, and perhaps cannot be resolved. All literary histories on Croatia propose their own periodizations depending on the predominance of Illyrian, romantic and revivalist beliefs. Perina Meić offers a comparative overview of the matter in the article *Romantyzm w historii literatury chorwackiej*, "Poznańskie Studia Slawistyczne" issue 1/2011, pp. 171–188.

that not everything your *native tongue* calls gold is indeed gold. Not only will you come across the advantages of other ways of life, but you will rush back to what's yours with intensified love. With all the strength you have you will hasten to plant these prettier flowers next to your own gardens overgrown with weeds; and in so doing, you will serve the glory and progress of your homeland⁹.

In nineteenth-century Croatian travel writing,¹⁰ the framing of the text played a critical role. In introductions, forewords, and opening sections, authors articulated the motives that led them to first take the road, and then to share their personal experiences with the world. In these metatextual asides, they articulate their concern for the utilitarian value of travel writing, and particularly its cognitive role and function as a vehicle for information.¹¹ In this sense, the authors are addressing themes concerning the poetics and function of the text (and the genre as a whole).¹² Nearly every travel account includes an aside about the writer's "unseasoned pen," structural incompetence, humility, or inability to describe "indescribable" sights. At the same time, they often counter these with assurances that the reader is holding a faithful report in her hands. These asides reflect a particular attitude towards the readers they are addressing, which could be the nation as a whole or, in the case of Stanko Vraz, a close relative.

While justifying the journey and the writing that follows it, authors tend to mention personal motives and to express their own sense of duty to serve the homeland. This seems to be the case regardless of the given text's political and ideological portent and regardless of the traveler's itinerary. Croatian Romantics explored their own lands (corresponding to today's Croatia and Slovenia, framed in the collective memory as an unrealized Napoleonic Illyria — the Illyrian Provinces), westward (primarily to Italy and throughout the Hapsburg Empire), southward (usually to Bosnia), eastward (to the near East, represented by Serbia and occasionally Constantinople) and northward (to the Russian Empire). There is also one instance of a journey around the world by Tomo Skalica, a political émigré from Slavonski Brod.

⁹ A. Veber Tkalčević, *Put na Plitvice*, in: *Odabrana proza* (Selected Prose), ed. I. Pranjković, Vinkovci 1998, p. 55.

¹⁰ The best known authors of travel writing from the period include Ivan Trnski (who wrote the first published travel account), Matija Mažuranić (who wrote the first book of travel writing, which describes his journey to Bosnia under Ottoman rule, *Pogled u Bosnu ili kratak put u onu krajinu, učinjen 1839.-40. po Jednom Domorodcu*, A Glance at Bosnia, or: A Certain Patriot's Brief Journey to the Region in 1839-40, 1842), Stanko Vraz, Antun Nemčić Gostovinski, Ivan Kukuljević Sakcinski, Adolfo Veber Tkalčević, Mihovil Pavlinović, the Bosnian Franciscans Grgo Martić and Ivan Frano Jukić (which belong in both literary contexts – Bosnian and Croatian).

¹¹ Matija Mažuranić draws the reader's attention to discomforts of internalizing new knowledge, the sacrifices and risks one takes to obtain it, and the comfort of the readers back home who then access this knowledge through the book in their hands: "sitting at home, free of all labors, torments and risks, they find out at least as much as I did by putting my life on the line." M. Mažuranić, *Pogled u Bosnu ili kratak put u onu krajinu, učinjen 1839-1840. po Jednom Domorodcu*, Zagreb 1842, p. XIV.

¹² Dean Duda discusses this issue in more depth in the chapter *Obrazloženje (okvir)*, in: *Priča i putovanje. Hrvatski romantičarski putopis kao pripovjedni žanr*, Zagreb 1998, pp. 93–100. (chapter title: *Exposition of Motives (Frame)*, book title: *Travel and Narrative. Croatian Romantic Travel Journals as a Narrative Genre*).

Surveying the vast body of authors and texts, I have chosen to focus my analysis on Stanko Vraz's *Put u gornje strane* (Journey into the Mountains, 1843) and Antun Nemčić Gostovinski's *Putositnice* (literally: Details from a Journey,¹³ 1845). Stanko Vraz (also known as Jakob Fras or Frass) was a Slovene fully devoted to Illyrian ideology. He moved to Zagreb and wrote in the Croatian language, earning a place among the canonical authors of the Croatian Revival. Antun Gostovinski was also a fervent advocate of the national revival. He was fully committed to public activism, although he lived and wrote in the Croatian provinces (Križevci). Both authors explored the western regions of the Hapsburg Empire and for both, their travels and accounts serve social and political ideals.¹⁴ When we read Croatian travel texts from the romantic period, we can easily draw some conclusions about the subordination of the genre and its poetics to ideological agendas.

The Western Region of the Austrian Empire

The impetus for national revival was at the heart of Antun Nemčić Gostovinski's decision to publish *Putositnice* (1845), as the author states in the foreword. *Putositnice* tells the tales of Gostovinski's travels through Northern Italy. The writer's itinerary brought him through Trieste, Venice, Verona and Padua. On his way home, he visited Slovenia, Graz and Vienna. The trip was therefore more or less a domestic one between cities that belonged to Austria at the time, just like the regions of northern Croatia he hailed from (Ludbreg and Koprivnica). Alluding to the opening of Petar Zoranić's *Planine*, which is hailed as the first Croatian novel (and is also a travel journal), Nemčić also justifies his decision to share his text with a wide range of readers by pointing out the scant body of Croatian literature available for developing literacy and counteracting the nation's cultural underdevelopment. In light of these concerns, the travel journal provides an excellent genre for spreading scholarship through a (refined) form of play: "If our literature had already blossomed, say, as German literature has done, then I would either cast this work away to eternal darkness or perhaps only share it [...] with a close circle of friends."¹⁵

Many public figures took up the impetus to generate and publish texts in a campaign to stimulate the Croatian national and cultural revival by raising readers' consciousness. In extreme cases, they resorted to paraphrasing and transcribing oral literature or classic works into colloquial language and making the material available in more enticing formats (such as travel

¹³ 'Putositnice' is a neologism coined by Nemčić that only applies to the title of this work. It poses an analogy to 'putopis:' with 'put' meaning road/journey and 'sitnice' meaning details/trifles/miscellanies.

¹⁴ I discuss the issue of catering personal letters on travel to social ideals in the instance of travel to the south and east of Croatia in the forthcoming text *Pomiędzy jednostkowym doświadczeniem a kolektywnymi programami ideologicznymi – chorwackie dziewiętnastowieczne relacje podróżnicze*, which will appear in the published proceedings of the Slavists' Congress in Belgrade, 2018.

¹⁵ A. Nemčić, *Putositnice*, ed. G. Pavošević, Vinkovci 1998, p. 15; see: D. Duda, *Priča i putovanje...*, pp. 234–236. In this work, Zoranić presents Croatian literature as a reservoir consisting of scarce and unripe, bitter apples (in contrast to the rich and sumptuous fruits of literature available in Latin). He blames the Croats for this shortcoming and accuses them of shying away from their own language and opting instead for foreign tongues.

writing and novellas).¹⁶ According to the declaration he makes to the reader (although his direct communication with the reader was surely also a “playing field” of sorts for the author), then it was precisely these priorities that informed Nemčić’s decision to publish his personal journal. The game he plays with the reader on a number of textual levels not only applies to the (non)fictional status of the work. The neologism he invents for the title, *Putositnice*, clearly marks the book as a collection of “trifles from a journey,” but in the passage titled *The Fate of a Certain Journal* (accompanied by the motto *Fata libelli*) the traveler informs us that although he brought 100 sheets of blank paper for keeping a journal, only once did he manage to jot down some notes. At the same time, Nemčić informs us that he based the book on notes written during his wanderings and on various ephemera and “bits of paper,” only a third of which proved useful, as another third was lost and the last third turned out to be entirely illegible.¹⁷ Still elsewhere in the text, he suggests otherwise: “while my travel companions dozed, I went back to writing my journal.”¹⁸ We might also consider Duda’s thesis about simulating the act of journal writing:

He simulates the circumstance behind his journal, and perhaps the same applies to his notes. Perhaps he only did this to establish a narrative frame, within which he could invent as he pleased. At first, he states explicitly that he did not keep a journal. He then admits that he lost two-thirds of his notes, and in doing so, he rhetorically opens up a space for the traveling subject who dominates the title, which by implication leaves the author himself as the sole guarantor of the text.¹⁹

Against the backdrop of travel writing produced by Croatian romantics as a whole, Nemčić’s book stands out as a work of singular artistic and aesthetic value. It calls for a much more refined reader than, say, Matija Mažuranić’s colloquial adventure story/novel *Pogled u Bosnu*. Duda points out the text’s semantic and compositional complexity, despite the fact that it conforms to the genre’s conventional poetics. He also points out the abundance of tropes, rhetorical figures, references, digressions and foreign-language passages.²⁰ All these stylistic devices are meant to guide us away from a straight-forward reporting style and towards a literary portrait of travel.

The self-portrait of the narrator and author sketched in the introduction depicts a romantic who cannot help but indulge in effusions of his restless heart.²¹ Our hero sets off on a journey

¹⁶After the first wave of folk songs meant to awaken national consciousness and galvanizing people for battle (*budnice* and *davorije*), journal editors encouraged authors to write prose. To this end, they announced competitions and proposed that authors base new work on oral literature: “There were far-reaching proposals to realize the fundamental objective of a modern national literature and produce new prose. Mijat Stojanović, for instance, suggested making up for the lack of source novels by basing prose on fodder from folk songs. He himself even wrote something based on Gundulić’s *Osman!*”. V. Brešić *Hrvatska književnost 19. stoljeća* (Nineteenth Century Croatian Literature), Zagreb 2015, p. 114.

¹⁷A. Nemčić, *Putositnice...*, pp. 26–27.

¹⁸Ibid, p. 47.

¹⁹D. Duda, *Priča i putovanje...*, pp. 231–232.

²⁰Ibid, pp. 219–220.

²¹The narrative begins with an apostrophe: “My restless heart — if only your wishes were granted, your endless desire, your wanton, mercurial longing, that has just a bit of virtue yet”...), A. Nemčić, *Putositnice...*, p. 17.

even though it would perhaps suffice to simply let his imagination wander, sweeping over the beauties of his immediate environs (literally: “under his nose”) that are entirely comparable to the faraway vistas whose beauty is lauded by famous travel writers. This kind of wanderer – Nemčić tells us – is unknown to Stern’s typology and is a pragmatic “thrifty traveler” (*putnik iz štedljivosti*). At the same time, swayed by his feelings, the narrator has been forced to sell off most of his “stamp collection.” Yet our rash and romantic narrator also betrays a sense of social sensitivity and a real concern for his people, acknowledging Croatia’s need to modernize and reform its economic and agricultural systems. In tune with the spirit of the times, his judgments all come from a “patriotic place,” and as a patriot, he assures us he would never leave behind his homeland for good, although he would gladly continue to travel. His travel is bolstered by patriotic ideals, and he even journeys in “Illyrian” garments.

Putositnice has much to say about the timely issue of how to standardize a national language and official attire. The impetus to restore the Croatian language might seem intuitive and in fact unanimously appealing for proponents of the Revival. Nemčić, however, also saw a need for developing a cohesive Croatian clothing style as an external symbol of one’s avowed values. He himself donned a “surka” jacket and cap in the “Illyrian” style. He proposed unifying national attire as a direct pathway towards unifying the people’s ideals:

[so I] slipped into a surka jacket [...]. I’ll admit that it would have been wiser to first emancipate the national language, and only then focus on the attire – for to go around in a surka still speaking German is much more of a contradiction (contrast) than, say, speaking Croatian in a tailcoat or attila. The tailcoat, after all, is European, just like our language. And the attila was not brought to our lands by the Asiatic werewolf who bears that same name. After all, the garment’s signature braids are a Slavic invention, even if the coat is classified as Hungarian. [...] – It would be rather appropriate if Croats were finally able to see this and could choose a congruent costume (in whatever style) for ceremonial occasions. Our great variety of clothing is a significant roadblock in our efforts to unify our ideals.²²

One of the narrator’s many patriotic concerns is precisely this sense of urgency to reach a consensus (*sloge*) on fundamental issues. He is particularly sensitive to issues of language and seems afflicted by the undeniable domination of the German language, both in everyday conversation and in text he encounters throughout Zagreb, the very capital of of Illyrian ideology (in advertisements, street notices, signs and awnings). Nemčić argues that for a newcomer, Zagreb presents itself as a German city, rather than the capital of Croatia. His descriptions of mythic places and references to historical moments embedded in collective memory (or perhaps the collective imaginary) also reinforce the spirit of the Illyrian Revival. He describes sites such as Grobničko polje (Grobničko Field), a symbol of the Croats’ victory over occupiers from the East. The site had been commemorated earlier in a romantic revivalist epic poem by Dimitrija Demeter.

The ideological tenor of this travel account from Italy becomes acute in Nemčić’s occasionally hyperbolic critique of the cities he visits (take, for instance, his opinion on contemporary

²²A. Nemčić, *Putositnice...*, p. 37.

living conditions in Venice). This surely drives his need to affirm his own national values.²³ The same need surfaces in his hunt for traces of Slavic presence in foreign cities. These findings allow him to assert the Slavic origins of these places (as he does with Venice²⁴ and Graz), which were unfortunately (for Nemčić) appropriated by the Germans and Romans.²⁵ This insistence on the “eternal” persistence of a Slavic presence in territories associated with the classic canon serves to validate the discourse on the “Slavic Illyrians” and their roots in antiquity. These journeys “to the West” illustrate ideologies of belonging to Western Europe, sharing the heritage of European antiquity, and continuing the tradition of European civilization. All these narratives are reflected vividly in the Croatian imaginary. By exploring the territories where the people of Dalmatia, Croatia and Slavonia have divided up national administrative jurisdictions for centuries, there was no need to cross tangible state borders, which sustained the impression that they too belonged to this “better world.” As a rule, these trips were paired with a glance back at “Slavic Illyria.” Romantics utilized this comparative gaze to express their love for the homeland together with a patriotic concern for its future. It also gave them the opportunity to convey didactic information about their nation’s dramatic history.

Slavic Illyria

“Slavic Illyria” figures as the main focus point of Stanek Vraz’s visit to the territories of Slovenia, Austria and Italy. Despite the fact that his trip took him somewhat abroad, he conveys the impression that the whole trip fell within the scope of what is today Croatia and Slovenia (Carniola, Carinthia, Styria), a claim that depends on the specifics of the historical moment and reflects the author’s interests in that which belongs to the folk, the nation, and the Slavs. In his notes from a journey made in 1841, he exemplifies these Illyrian concepts by painting pictures of an idealized and even sacred Slavic essence, particularly in its folk iteration. The urban counterpart of this paradigm is more elusive due to the intelligentsia’s denationalization and the Germanization of major cities: “Kind people [...], how pure, good-hearted and divine you are in your nature.”²⁶ The author opens his personal account by informing us that he is stifling his nostalgic reminiscences (longing, grief over abandoning Zagreb and his loved ones) and his anxiousness over travel conditions (inclement weather, gloomy and sterile accommodations). He obeys his patriotic imperative and subordinates his personal impressions to the needs of the homeland:

²³D. Duda, *Priča i putovanje...*, pp. 115–116.

²⁴Venice was a particular point of fascination for nineteenth-century Croats due to its “romantic” atmosphere and historical background: “A Croat of the nineteenth century was free to inscribe himself into Venice’s European context. There, among the people of so many European nations, the Croat was one of the few who could discern traces of their countrymen in the urban landscape (literally: on the face of the city),” *ibid*, pp. 106–107. In Nemčić’s case, this comment pertains to Croatian painters who worked in Venice, although when passing through other Italian cities, he points out (as Kukuljević Sakcinski did) the Croats’ contributions to the cultural and political heritage of Italy.

²⁵Kukuljević Sakcinski reaches the same conclusions in his travels through Venice and Padua, claiming that these places were first settled by the Venetians (who he identifies as Illyrians), which is to say “our forefathers.” See: A. Franić, *Hrvatski putopisi romantizma* (Chorwackie podróże romantyzmu), Zadar 1983, pp. 35–36.

²⁶S. Vraz, *Put u gornje strane*, in: *idem, Izbor iz djela*, ed. M. Šicel, Vinkovci 2000, p. 195.

I started to contemplate that I am no woman, but in fact a man, a patriot, who ought to be ready to part with all pleasantries, with all he holds dear in the world, if that is what the nation's welfare calls for. In this way, I was able to collect myself and reach a state of total calm.²⁷

Vraz ultimately publishes his travel writing as *Put u gornje strane*. The text consists of nineteen letters (*dopisi*) written on the road to personal acquaintances or directly to the press. The letters therefore address a wide range of readers. Five “open” letters²⁸ were published for Croatian readers while the author was still on the road. Of Vraz's fourteen “personal” letters, twelve were addressed to his relative Dragolja Štauduar, and individual letters were addressed to Vjekoslav Babukić and Jožef Muršec. These letters catered to their addressees' expectations and often referred back to earlier disputes: “So again we find ourselves in conversation, dear cousin! I'll catch you up on everything I saw and sensed that is of note, and anything that might (as I see it) be of some value to you.”²⁹ Intertextual signals are embedded in the text, referencing material both parties have read. The author's intentions remain somewhat opaque, although despite the devices he uses to mark the letters' “intimate” tone, he explicitly mentions that he plans to publish the letters for a broader readership. By addressing a specific loved one, he generates a more compelling dynamic for the reader who, after all, constantly hungers for insights into the private lives of public figures, especially when the author-addressee relationship is between a man and a woman.

Drawing in the reader, Vraz “indoctrinates” them with the ideals of the Illyrian Revival. In keeping with this value system, he emphasizes a sense of harmony between all peoples. Just like Ljudevit Gaj's well-known hymn, one of the first Croatian “reveilles” (in Croatian, *budnica*), *Horvatov sloga i zjedinjenje*, Vraz's letters project the image of an (multinational) friendly band of travelers setting off on the road together and an agreeable (multiethnic) existence (in this case, between the Uskok and Kraina people).³⁰

In the spirit of the Revival campaign, Vraz focuses his text on any and all symptoms of the native, authentic, original or folk-oriented, even if these traces hail back to the pre-Christian era. The poet discerns surprising values in the sense of uniqueness he strove to cultivate, glorify and use as the basis for a new social order. This uniqueness was to be a bastion of physical and ethical strength, but it was also to validate aesthetic judgments (as in the case of a statement on literature he heard from Dragolja Jarnević, a Croatian intellectual and writer from the period). This enchantment with the native came hand in hand with a sense

²⁷Ibid, pp. 187–188.

²⁸The last of these letters, titled *Bijeli Kranjci (Dopis iz Kranjske)* – The White People of Kraina (Letters from Kraina) – stands out. Despite its subtitle, which suggests some affiliation with epistolography genre, the letter lacks the formal resolutions characteristic of the genre, but also lacks a sense of movement through space that would identify the letter as travel writing. The text is a study of sorts for an ethnological/ethnographic or definitive lexicon (D. Duda, *Priča i putovanje*, p. 186). M. Mažuranić's work *Pogled u Bosnu* included a lexicon of knowledge about the territory explored here, and Vraz was the first to critique and defend this lexicon.

²⁹S. Vraz, *Put u gornje strane...*, p. 187.

³⁰Ibid, p. 198. “Vraz made a concerted attempt to demonstrate that there is no material difference between the Croats, Slovenes (the people of Kraina, as the Illyrians then called Slovenes) and Serbs (or the Uskoks living in Slovenia and Croatia as ‘politics call them’ – to use Vraz's words – or the Vlachs, as the few Croatian and Slovene Serbs called themselves, who are also called the ‘white and black people of Kraina’). A. Franić, *Hrvatski putopisi romantizma*, Zadar 1983, p. 33).

of wonder for all that is Slavic. The Illyrian iteration of Slavophilia is reflected in redundant background information: Vraz often feels the need to point out the Slavic character or a particular place, people, or custom. Impressed with the health, posture and aesthetic appearance of the peasants he encounters on the road from Karlovac to Metlika, he provides detailed information about the healthy “Slavic” faces, the genuine “Slavic” hospitality, the “Slavic” appearance of the village, “Slavic” heart and soul, and finally, the “Slavic” table in the impoverished household, which he equates with an altar to the noble Old Slavonic God who continues to rule over these lands. As spectator and participant of this “sacrificial rite,” taking food from the altar to the Orthodox God, he has a privileged perspective, since he possesses his own key to access the heart and soul of the Slavs. In keeping with the romantic notion of language as the fundamental criterion for forming a nation, this key, of course, is linguistic kinship: “it opened up its soul for us and for him, for we possessed the golden key, the only key that opens the heart and soul of the Slavs, for we were able to speak with him in his national tongue.”³¹ As in Antun Mihanović’s hymn *Horvatska domovina*, the territory Vraz portrays is fertile and beautiful, just like its inhabitants: “these are good people — in heart and in soul.”³²

Illyrian ideology is also reinforced with language like “the land of antiquity”³³ or information regarding classic works encountered throughout the area and the courageous Iapydes (an ethnic group from the northwestern regions of the Illyrian map), who once rose up against the Roman Empire. The people who would come to inhabit these lands would naturally inherit (according to the Illyrian narrative) the valor of the ancient Illyrians, as they proved in their heroic battles with the Ottoman “Empire.”³⁴ This diachronic kinship was reinforced by an equally if not more important sense of synchronic kinship. Vraz rationalized the minor differences (mostly linguistic) between the Slavs he met in his travels (Croats, Serbian Uskoks, the people of Kraina) by emphasizing the trajectory of the national border and its tendency to “divide brothers.”³⁵ In keeping with the Illyrian narrative, Vraz tried to reconcile his faith in the Southern Slavs’ roots among the ancient Illyrians and postulates on the need to cultivate the “classically” Slavic with his assertion of language as the most crucial form of communication between peoples and states. He mentions the Shtokavian language once (“The Uskoks speak in a pure Shtokavian language, the Bosnian way”³⁶) and the Illyrian dialect once (the White Kraina people sing in a “purely Illyrian dialect”³⁷).

³¹ S. Vraz, *Put u gornje strane...*, pp. 193–194.

³² *Ibid.*, p. 193.

³³ *Ibid.*

³⁴ In annexed Croatia, only one (Turkish) enemy was officially recognized. This enemy provided an impetus to unite, and the Croats proved their valor in these battles. At the suggestion of Ljudevit Gaj, the movement’s leader, the Illyrian instigators entered into official negotiations with the Austrian Empire, while illicitly plotting with representatives of the Russian Tsar to ultimately dismantle the Turkish and Austrian world powers.

³⁵ S. Vraz, *Put u gornje strane...*, p. 190.

³⁶ *Ibid.*, p. 198.

³⁷ *Ibid.*, p. 201.

Pausing occasionally from the Revival cause, Vraz also compiled notes on cultural heritage and worked as a scribe for the poetry and tales of the folk,³⁸ becoming one of the very first theorists of folklore. He saw his efforts to compile and disseminate oral literature as a platform for integrating his “Illyrian brothers:”

Artistic merit aside, folk literature and the act of compiling it offered Vraz a pathway towards mutual cultural understanding. [...] Recording and collecting folk heritage had profound cultural relevance, for it was a way to locate common ground that might bind together the often divided “Illyrian brothers.” In this sense, Vraz used folk poetry as a means for cultural consolidation.³⁹

He often imbued these folk songs with mystical connotations for their enigmatic and wondrous beauty, particularly when transcribing the so-called *ladarica*.⁴⁰ He equated the songs’ powerful sway for the “Slavic heart” with the power of monks’ prayers in primeval monasteries. For Vraz, both forms of song are vehicles for the voice of the past, and he called on contemporary generations to revive this voice and capture the knowledge inherent in it (“na promišljanje i spoznavanje”).⁴¹ These positive religious connotations (tied to Orthodox observance) run counter to the clergy’s public prohibition against performing any *ladarica* that exhibit traces of pre-Christian beliefs. Violation of the law was punishable by excommunication. Yet for the romantic poet and scholar of Slavic heritage, these pre-Christian folk customs formed a crucial component of Christian piety and ethics. Observing the everyday life of the people of “Slavic Illyria,” a community that included both the noble *domoradaca* (patriots) and the folk, Vraz described and evaluated all these features according to the priorities of Illyrian ideals and a revivalist agenda.

Conclusion

The journeys of Stanko Vraz and Antun Nemčić Gostovinski aptly illustrate mechanisms for engaging literary forms, including personal confession and the narration of individual experience, in the project of constructing the nation. Drawing from personal and biographical ar-

³⁸The fruits of these labors were published in 1839 as a collection of 115 Slovene folk songs *Narodne pësni ilirske, koje se pëvaju po Štajerskoj* (Illyrian folk songs sung in Styria). In the third volume of the “Kolo” journal (1843), he published *Narodne pesme Harvatah* –Folk songs of the Croats (with the songs *Iz Primorja, Iz Istrie* and *Iz Austrie i Ugarske*). “As one of the first in the Croatian community attempting to learn about and link native Croatian society with Croats living in the South of Austria and Western Hungary, he published their folk songs as examples of the heritage of Croatian folk poetry. Alongside Croatian and Slovene poetry, he also praised Bulgarian folk heritage, seeing it as particularly valuable and rather neglected. In the article *Narodne pësme bugarske* (Bulgarian Folk Songs, “Kolo”, 1847) Vraz attempts to expose Croats to the cultural heritage of this fraternal Slavic nation, and in the fourth and fifth volumes of “Kolo” he begins to include Bulgarian folk songs.” A. Sapunar Knežević & Marijana Togonal, *Stanko Vraz kao folklorist. Vrazov prinos poznavanju hrvatske i slovenske usmene književnosti* (Stanko Vraz as a Folklorist. Vraz’s Contributions to Knowledge on Croatian and Slovene Oral Literature), “Croatica et Slavica Iadertina” 2011, issue VII/I, p. 193.

³⁹Ibid, p. 197.

⁴⁰A folk custom popular in Central Croatia that often accompanied celebrations of St. John’s Day (June 24) and Saint George’s Day. A group of children would visit various homes throughout the village, singing their traditional songs, dancing the *kolo*, and expressing their wishes that the house spirits will shower the inhabitants with gifts.

⁴¹S. Vraz, *Put u gornje strane...*, p. 191.

chives (letters, casual notes) as well as travel literature read widely at the time, these authors broadcast the ideals of the Illyrian National Revival. Strong adherents of ideologies of unification peek out from behind the romantic and self-stylized avatars of hypersensitive narrator-hero-authors. The Croatian romantic “tourist” either caters his journey to the priorities of the Revival (Vraz exemplifies this position) or, more vulnerable to the effusions of the heart, he does not neglect his duties to the homeland and becomes an “Illyrian tourist” through and through (this is the case with Nemčić).

KEYWORDS

personal archives

Slavic Illyria

ABSTRACT:

Using the travel accounts of specific figures of Croatian romanticism, this article analyzes the relationship between travel writing and personal writing (travel journals, correspondence) and the ideologies of unification and revival that were widespread in Croatia at the time. This article demonstrates the formal and ideological subordination of the actual journeys (travel) and their published accounts (travel writing) to the overarching objective of creating a new Croatian nation, language, and literature. Nineteenth-century Slavophilia shaped the perspectives authors brought to the lands they traveled, compelling them to take on the role of ethnographer and advocate for all aspects that seem Slavic, Croatian, or at all related to folk heritage. Metatextual passages in these texts speak directly to the given text's function and poetics, demonstrating the notion that this genre was understood in cognitive and utilitarian terms.

ideologies of unification

n a t i o n a l r e v i v a l

THE ROMANTIC "TOURIST"

NOTE ON THE AUTHOR:

Krystyna Pieniążek-Marković is a Senior Professor at the Institute of Slavic Philology at Adam Mickiewicz University in Poznan. She has written the following books: *Twórczość poetycka Antuna Branka Šimicia (Ze studiów nad poezją chorwackiego ekspresjonizmu)*, Poznan 2000; Croatian edition: *Pjesničko stvaralaštvo Antuna Branka Šimicia*, Zagreb 2000), *"Ja"-człowiek i świat w najnowszej poezji chorwackiej (1990–2010)*, Poznan 2011. She is the Chief Editor of "Poznańskie Studia Slawistyczne." Her research interests include Croatian literature and culture from the romantic period to the present day, with a special focus on the turn of the century, Croatian discourses on memory and identity in travel literature, and culinary writing. |