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## REVISIONISM IN POETRY: PARADIGM – GORAN BABIĆ

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*The article identifies the ways/procedures of revisionism in poetry. Not only does the exclusion of the poetry of Goran Babić from the national corpus not correspond with its poetic complexity and value, but it is also ethically inconsistent. Revisionism follows a national identity path according to which literature with clearly expressed views on socialism cannot fully exist within the history of poetry. Politics has taken the place of poetics.*

**Key words:** *Goran Babić; literary criticism; revisionism; history of literature*

In order to understand the unenviable position of Goran Babić's poetry in the national culture, we need to examine the context that will be vital to comprehend it. In short: the events of the 1991-1995 war, the transformation of the economic system from a planned to a market economy, the ideological paradigm shift, the transition from socialism to democracy, as well as from a secular to the pronouncedly religious society, and the transformation from anational to national identity policies. Due to its exhaustive and hurried character, these changes were revolutionary. The fates of individuals in collective events are more often than not subordinate to the *higher, epic* demands of the times, in other words, of politics. In such historical circumstances, people get by as best as they can, but when it comes to those who are also writers, the bearers of the symbolic values of a community, they

are under an even more rigorous public scrutiny. If there is anything that the various post-structuralist theories have taught us, then it is the practice of separating the author from their text. Therefore, only a piece of literature, a public appearance, or a polemic – in spoken, written, or recorded form, can be the subject matter of analysis, and not human existence, psychology, and the like. Still, evaluations determining different types of worldviews and interests often appear under the guise of objectivity.

In his book *The Anxiety of Influence*, Harold Bloom spoke about six techniques at the disposal of a young poet with regard to the canonical bards. One of them is the repression-revision technique that he calls *daemonization* (Bloom 1973: 99). Its aspect refers to a younger poet in opposition to his sublime precursor. The precursor is still a canonical writer, but his aura of originality is lost due to the passing of time. Analogous to this position, let us put ourselves in the shoes of a critic who evaluates poetry, and ask ourselves the following question: can we imagine a situation where a critic *demonizes* another writer (as well as another historian and theorist)? What if, given the fact that Croatian literature is the literature of small languages, the critic is also a poet? Can we at the same time imagine the different degrees of demonization of good writers by critics? Because in order to canonize, one must always supervise, regulate, or discipline. Maybe even denounce the Other to reveal Oneself. Being a critic means acting within the given habitus, which is already determined by a number of parameters – cognitive, national, class, ideological, gender, professional, etc. Now, this is a position where interest is involved, and as such it is settled on the battlefield of a symbolic struggle of valuation. One fights for the capital of social power, prestige, professional hierarchies. Nothing but qualification and classification: “the space of literary or artistic position-takings” (Bourdieu 1993: 30).

One should have, quite openly, taken the positions that a quarter of a century later would answer the question that is still present in the media today, namely, *And where were you in '91?* In order to answer the question of Goran Babić's whereabouts in that year and the years that followed, we should examine what was happening at that time in Croatia. Of course – it was the war, which lasted from 1991 to 1995.<sup>1</sup> In addition to the war, there

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<sup>1</sup> It should be noted here that the subject of the present paper is not a detailed analysis of the events of that time, but merely the narrow space dealing with the forgetting of the role of the poets, the writers of children's literature, polemicists, editors, etc., in Croatian culture.

was also the trauma that was caused by the transition from one social paradigm to another (from socialism to democracy, and from self-government to capitalism), I believe that, in order to determine the development of national cultural policy, two events are paradigmatic, and they have been documented in one collection of papers and one book, respectively.

The book written by Ante Lešaja titled *Knjigocid – uništavanje knjiga u Hrvatskoj 1990-ih* (Lešaja 2012) presents one of the key facts of the spiritual development of Croatia in the 1990s. Lešaja's book documents and analyses the destruction of several thousand monuments honouring the National Liberation War, and the purging of Croatian libraries of "unsuitable" Marxist and similar books, as well as those written in the Cyrillic script or the Ekavian dialect, which amounted to 2.8 million or 13.8 percent of the total library material. What used to be called a write-down in the library profession is nowadays referred to as *outdated* or *unnecessary books*. There is only one conclusion – the spiritual renewal of the 1990s took place, in part, under the term *culturecide*.

The second item of the agenda, which was in reality chronologically parallel, took place at a conference held from 11 to 12 June 1992. In the same year, the results of this conference on spiritual renewal were published in the form of the collection of papers titled *Duhovna obnova Hrvatske* (Baković 1992), edited by Don Ante Baković and published by the Government of the Republic of Croatia, which can be considered as one of the setters of guidelines in the cultural development of the Croatian society. It follows from the said collection that renewal must take place in the various areas of society, morality, culture, politics, economy, demography, and religion.<sup>2</sup> The central thesis in the collection of papers is the one posited by Don Ante Baković, the conference organizer and moderator, according to which both socialism and communism were built on lies and repression, and that,

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<sup>2</sup> From the opening address given by Slavko Degoricija, the Croatian Minister of Reconstruction, the intellectual and institutional framework of the scientific conference can be seen, while its programmatic character is supported by the fact that the conference was funded by the Croatian Government. The conference was attended by representatives of the Croatian Parliament and the Croatian Government, the Constitutional Court judges, representatives of the national institution *Matica hrvatska* and the Croatian Academy of Sciences and Arts, the Croatian Writers Society, members of religious communities, the media, representatives of political parties, etc.

following the errors of the anti-natural ideology, it is necessary to build Croatia on a *positive agenda, on fundamental values*, which, as far as culture is concerned, should be based on the teaching of the Glagolitic, old Croatian, oral, dialectal and Catholic literature, whose mediators should be reading rooms, teachers, and priests (Baković 1992: 16). All aspects of spiritual renewal share a common starting point, namely, national identity politics. Accordingly, the symbolic resources of spiritual renewal are recognized in national “(...) names, myths and memories, elements of culture, a sense of solidarity, religion, language, customs, communication spaces (...)” (Škiljan 2002: 154).

Even before 1991, as a poet, Goran Babić was intentionally left out and entirely marginalized from Croatian poetry.<sup>3</sup> His poetry was initially viewed from an axiological perspective. Vjeran Zuppa described Babić’s first collection as pathetic, void, absurd, deceptive (Zuppa 1970: 182–184). In his work *Razdioba*, Zvonimir Mrkonjić describes Babić’s poetry as an attempt of turning lyric poetry into the business of entertainment in the context of the epigonism of Dubravko Horvatić and his work *Zla vojna* (Mrkonjić 2009: 37), just as Zuppa remarked a year earlier. Today it could be said differently, that these statements are generalities, since literature generally never occurs *ex nihilo*. However, should we, in good faith, pursue the above-stated logic of valuation, the list would have to be expanded, for instance, unsystematically and associatively: In all their lives as poets, Slavko Mihalić and Dragutin Tadijanović barely modified their poetics by transcribing their own work. Branko Maleš almost does not exist without Tomaž Salamun, Zvonko Maković without Peter Handke; also, there is no Mrkonjić without the influence of poets gathered around the *Tel Quel* journal, etc. Is the poetry of Luko Paljetak not only entertaining but also for the great part anachronistic!? In other words, one’s poetry cannot, only, be devalued in view of the influences it absorbs into itself, especially at the time when Babić published his first texts.

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<sup>3</sup> We should also for once raise the issue of the ethics of literary criticism and the history of Croatian poetry, in which omission and silence are commonplace, and where collections of poems are “discovered” some twenty years later, so that evaluation is subsequently always in the zone of symbolic struggle. And we refer to the top, albeit for a certain period, “forgotten” Croatian poets. For instance, I refer to the poetry of Petar Gudelj, Marija Čudina, Irena Vrkljan, Radovan Ivšić, Boro Pavlović, Tonči Petrasov Marović, Petar Opačić, etc.

Many literary controversies arose on the pages of *Oko* literary journal, which was edited by Babić, and which he himself contributed to in an open letter addressed to A. Šoljan (Babić 1976: 124), by stressing that the generation of the contributors to the *Krugovi* journal was the one that was constantly *whining* and were generally *devoid of any liveliness*. Among other things, and without mincing his words, he also said how that generation controlled “(...) almost everything: the culture editorial staff in all newspapers and magazines, radio and television, University departments you were interested in, journals, publishing companies, institutes, centres for culture, film, theatre and others. Everything was coordinated by *Matica hrvatska*, the most convenient institution for such work, in your estimation.”<sup>4</sup> Of course, Igor Mandić became involved in the controversy too, saying that Babić’s controversy was actually gossip. Whatever the case may be, as a polemicist, Babić can be either right or wrong (and something in between the two), but what matters is that by introducing controversy and gossip into the public discourse, personal relationships get involved too (these are the so-called clans, or groupings on some basis like friendship, or something symbolic, aesthetic, etc.) that do not really say anything about someone’s literature. We can only assume that his open address was exemplified in his own words: “I am a communist, but I am also a writer” and “I do not recognize the collective, the collective work in the literature,”<sup>5</sup> as well as his emphatic polemic and critical attitude towards the most important pillars of the Croatian culture, which was one of the reasons for the pronounced antagonism towards his personality and his literature.

In fact, when it comes to Goran Babić’s poetry, I believe that he is one of the most important poets of the second half of the twentieth century. However, since this is not an analysis of either him or his poetry, we will only touch upon poetics when it is absolutely necessary for argumentation.

And while the events surrounding Babić’s pre-1991 poetry may still be somewhat understood as the standard literary life in the area of its sociology, things become rather radicalized afterwards. How has he been read since then?

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<sup>4</sup> <https://www.kriticnamasa.com/item.php?id=35> posjećeno 5. XII. 2020.

<sup>5</sup> <https://www.kriticnamasa.com/item.php?id=35> posjećeno 5. XII. 2020.

There are several key determinants related to Babić's poetry highlighted in the *Lexicon of Croatian Writers*. The poetological constants of his poetry were identified as an *ideological-social-class participation*, the philosophy of Marxism, and his multifaceted poeticism as directed towards the more avant-garde concepts of poetry (collage, intertextuality, auto-referentiality, the ideologization of language by the *mythemes of historical-dogmatic marking*) (*Leksikon hrvatskih pisaca 2000*: 27). Why dogmatic? Does dogma signify belonging to an idea that is not critically discussed or does it signify authoritarianism, one-sidedness, rigidity? Both potential meanings are coloured by criticism and reflect the ideological and in no way neutral, position of the *Leksikon's* editorial staff. Let us also compare Babić to Gabrijel Cvitan, who is referred to in the *Leksikon* as a poet of *patriotic inspiration* (*Leksikon hrvatskih pisaca 2000*: 141). Some of his poems are odes to Ante Pavelic / the Ustasha ("On je došao," "Večer slobode," "Mrtvom vojniku"), as well as poems from the book co-authored with Branko Klarić, *Pjevači zemlje* (1943). How does the *Leksikon* describe Klarić's poetics? Not only does it avoid identifying his "patriotic" poems ("Travanjski nagovještaj," "Geniju Hrvatske," "Ustaši koji je pao"), but his poetry also exudes "an authentic spirit of living faith and immanent optimism, which opposes the general state of existential anxiety. In his best pieces, his verses reflect light, beauty, and meditation which is reduced almost to the canon of prayer" (*Leksikon hrvatskih pisaca 2000*: 353). As evidenced in the *Leksikon*, which, given the fact that it is some kind of a textbook, should also be informative, accurate, and ideologically neutral, the legacy of socialism in literature is declared dogmatic (authoritarian, rigid), whereas the legacy of The Independent State of Croatia (NDH) is viewed as an expression of patriotism and meditation.

Other readings are also similar. In the very introduction to Babić's poetry, Cvjetko Milanja revises the thesis and points out that the positivist reading of poetry from the point of view of biography, is still contemporary practice. Milanja's political attitude has replaced and defined his poetic reading:

I believe that speaking about his poetry is a literary and historical fact, whereby we must note that he should be referred to as an ideological and national renegade in a different context, because his ideological trajectory also abounds with paradoxical twists – from the exaggerated expression of Croatian pride

during the Croatian Spring movement, to being a rigid party arbitrator in the post-1971 Šuvar era, and finally adhering to the wrong, enemy side during the 1990s, in the same way as Krstanović. (Milanja 2003: 281–286)

The rest of the description of Babić's poetry is full of negative attributes. On the other hand, for comparison's sake, Cvjetko Milanja read Mile Budak in an affirmative way, just like he did with Vinko Nikolić, who was "also an exceptional public servant, editor of the Croatian quarterly, publisher of the HR library (...)" (Milanja 2000: 301), without mentioning a single word in his text about his involvement in the Ustasha movement or his poems dedicated to its leader, Ante Pavelić. Obviously, there is a politics of literary criticism at play, which is related to the classical politics of identity, or nationalist politics, to put it mildly.

Unlike in 1977 (in *Pisanje i moć*), when he wrote affirmatively about Babić, Branimir Bošnjak repeated Milanja's words in 2010 and portrayed Babić as an amateur poet (Bošnjak 2010: 302-305). He had previously argued that the author's writing about history as *a mechanism of self-destruction* and nightmarish nonsense were part of the poet's strategies pointing to history/time as mechanisms of the repetition and destruction of individual destinies (*Lapot i druge listine iz ljetopisa*, 1969; *Ostale otvorene igre*, 1969) (Bošnjak 1977: 135–141). The nationalist, war, social, political, cultural, etc., discourses that have been dominant in the *region* for over thirty years confirm that Babić's poetry correctly identified History as being the traumatic nucleus of the region. This is where Babić assumes a classic Nietzschean stance – the past is potentially the future. The negative attitude towards Babić's poetry does not stop there. And in many spaces that exceptionally competent Croatian literary critics and historians occupy, Babić's poetry is hardly ever mentioned, or it is simply ignored. In her book *Slast kratkih spojeva – hrvatsko pjesništvo na razmeđu modernizma i postmodernizma*, Bernarda Katušić does not even mention him.

It is also by no means a coincidence that Babić's poems written in prose were not included in the book *Naša ljubavnica tlapnja – antologija hrvatskih pjesama u prozi*, compiled in 1992 by Z. Mrkonjić, A. Škunca and H. Pejaković, nor were they included in the following books: *Antologija suvremene hrvatske poezije* (1997), edited by Hrvoje Pejaković; *Međaši – hrvatsko pjesništvo dvadesetoga stoljeća* (2004), edited by Zvonimir Mrkonjić; *U nebo i u niks – Antologija hrvatskog pjesništva 1989.-2009.* (2010), edited



by Ervin Jahić; nor *Uskličnici – Antologija hrvatskog pjesništva 1971.–1995.* (1996), edited by Tonko Maroević. What is omitted in criticism and not mentioned regarding Babić in Mrkonjić's book *Razdioba* from 1971, his seminal work for understanding the dynamics of Croatian poetry, are the numerous poetic procedures for the radicalization of the text: *zaum*, advertising discourse, concretism, visual poetry, absurd/humour/nonsense in lyricism, intertextuality, metatextuality. On this basis alone, it becomes necessary to ask how it was possible not to register it.

The most direct point about Babić's poetry, which critics are toying with by disguising it in aesthetic reasons, is given in fact in a somewhat marginal text, namely in a footnote. Stijepo Mijović Kočan wrote the following note about Goran Babić in a footnote of his panorama entitled *Skupljena baština – Suvremeno hrvatsko pjesništvo 1940-1990*:

Both the writer and the publisher are aware of the fact that this author, as a person, wronged Croatia by choosing the side of the invader in the 1991 war; however, they do not wish to negate the facts of times past by omitting to mention him. (Mijović Kočan 1993: 363)

Two things are evident from the note – the first speaks of Goran Babić as a person (that is, a traitor),<sup>6</sup> and the second speaks of Goran Babić as a fact of Croatian poetry. Kočan's ethical reasoning is entirely false,<sup>7</sup> since it is influenced by ideology and therefore condemning. The extra-poetical and contextual-political reasons for leaving someone out of history were rarely stated so clearly. Let us also give voice to Goran Babić, by quoting him from an interview given to Dragan Markovina on March 8, 2014:

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<sup>6</sup> And that is also a lie – Goran Babić left Croatia at that time and went to Belgrade: however, he betrayed no one anywhere, something to which none of his public appearances can attest. After all, some other Croatian poets also left their country during the war, like Luko Paljetak and Nikola Petković, to name but a few. However, such positivist observations are no longer the subject of literary criticism or literary history.

<sup>7</sup> Let us remember the media hunt instigated by Slavic Letica (*Globus*, autumn 1991) where he gave an exhaustive list of "Croatian ghouls and demons," among whom were Lordan Zafranović, Mira Furlan, and Goran Babić. When it comes to Goran Babić, there is no reference of his adhering to the "wrong" side, but rather of the author's own choice to look for exile in fear of his own existence.

You left Belgrade in 1991, claiming in an interview conducted by Rado Dragojević that you left to never return. Do you ever intend to return to Zagreb?

I have no such intention, and I do not think it makes any sense to open old wounds. At its session in the autumn of 1990, the Croatian Parliament accepted the statement of the then HDZ MP Damir Mejovšek by acclamation, according to which I was called a “low life.” He still hasn’t apologized for that particular judgment of my character. Why would I ever let it slide just like that? If Croatia does not need me, then why would I need that kind of Croatia myself? Especially since the insult that I previously mentioned was just one of many of the most preposterous blasphemes addressed to me over the past 25 years. There is probably not one Croatian idiot who has not taken the opportunity to occasionally slander my name, from academics such as Slobodan Novak: please see *Antimbe* the sixth book, where I was named a “disgrace to the Lord,” to the lowest possible derogatory remarks made by the late Branimir Donat in *Vjesnik*, to Facebook trolls such as Gavrilović and Grakalić. No, I’m not coming back to that kind of Croatia, I’m not flying over a cuckoo’s nest. (Markovina 2019)

And yet, despite ideological disagreements, Stjepo Mijović Kočan kept the minimum of anthologist legitimacy by acknowledging the existence of Goran Babić’s poetry. Not everyone was as “considerate” and, at least seemingly, made a distinction between the author and text. From all the above, it is clear that Goran Babić does not, for the most part, fit into the defined image of Croatian poetry. However, different voices in criticism also existed, albeit in the minority,<sup>8</sup> and they recognized the problems of evaluation in the literary system:

In fact, they are Croatian literary critics: they have succumbed to ideologies all the way to dogmatism of various types, they have academized themselves to a science that many better university professors are sceptical about. Croatian literary

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<sup>8</sup> The value of Babić’s poetry was recognized by Goran Rem back in *Polet* in 1983 (Rem 2010), and of the more recent affirmative readings, the only one is that of Sanja Jukić. She analysed the author’s poetics through the prism of intermediality (Jukić 2015).

criticism seems to have little real continuity, if any, both when it comes to generations or individuals, which results in mostly pretentious and occasional reviews, whereas the effort to quickly find synthetic terminology, which is the primary task of the history of literature, that is, results in group gatherings, friendly support, closeness and exclusivity, which is also politically polarized on a case-by-case basis, where the individuality and independence of both the critic and the writer commonly get lost. (...) Goran Babić is a writer who has suffered a number of visible disastrous consequences from the said dogmatism: His literary work was surrounded more by a mix of non-literary developments and facts than by an adequate literary context. (Kovač 1988: 137–138)

We must start by pointing out/saying that a similar exclusivity has already taken place in the history of Croatian poetry. It seems that behind the disguised questions of whether there is a normative aesthetics, and how to treat certain writers who, for some reason, do not fit into the constituted anthologies and histories of poetry, more banal reasons are actually hidden, about which Zvonko Kovač wrote. In doing so, we should not forget, however, whether there are already cases confirming this principle and how their ideological conflict is to be evaluated.

Let us remind ourselves that anthologies, critical writings, and post-Second World War polemics predominantly held an ethical position suggesting that fascism was an absolute evil, and that collaborator writers should consequently be erased from literature. Those writers who supported fascism (Budak, Lendić, Cvitan, Nikolić, Klarić etc.) were almost forgotten, while the vast majority of others (the most famous of whom was Tin Ujević) participated in the cultural life of the Independent State of Croatia (NDH) without getting close to or supporting its fascist ideology. And while Marin Franičević advocated a *moralistic* ethical position in his attack on Ujević, according to which the existence of aesthetically relevant work was impossible without a moral component of the same kind, and while such an attitude led to the repression of a large number of writers, a stronger *autonomist* ethical position was gradually getting stronger (especially since 1951/1952), which started from the belief that ethical defects were not related to aesthetic defects, speaking thus of a kind of indifference in the everyday context, both moral and emotional.

What Marin Franičević wonders is how to accept the fact that some of Croatia's greatest interwar writers, while publishing during the period of NDH in the official fascist newspapers and magazines, actually legitimized it. The question asked by Stijepo Mijović Kočan is the same: how to interpret/evaluate the fact that an author who, according to their belief, has erred on the side of the moral principles of Croatia is also an indispensable Croatian poet? And while nationalism is ethically unacceptable in socialism, it is legitimized in Croatia, moreover, it has the status of a social axiom. This opens a new chapter onto the development of Croatian poetry, which was highly dependent on the political context from its earliest days, just as it was during social realism. It is clear in dramatic political-historical moments, if we think about literature, that poetics are conditioned by them.

We should be consistent, and if the political path of Mile Budak or Vinko Nikolić is not prescribed in Croatian literature, then it would be also inconsistent to apply the same kind of logic to Goran Babić. These are the ideologically entirely conflicting facts of Croatian literature which should be addressed. And the logic of ideological inclusion/exclusion is simple: as a poet lacking a sense of national identity, Babić has no place in Croatian literature. As a consistent political socialist, Babić has no place in the pantheon of poets – it is an example where ideology precedes art. The following question arises: *why* has Goran Babić been an unacceptable poet for the last twenty-eight years? For example, in Mrkonjić's *Razdioba* (1971), Goran Babić was represented with a poem, while in *Međaši*, by the same author, he was already absent. What are the reasons for not including Babić subsequently, during the time when he already had a respectable number of books and public presences behind him? Whatever psychological reasons were considered logical, they were not sustainable. We should look for reasons in the context of the term *spiritual renewal* and the ethics of literary criticism.

So, we will attempt to answer the question of *why* Goran Babić is absent with the following thesis: it is *because* in the Croatian poetical space *a spiritual renewal took place in accordance with revisionist politics*. Spiritual renewal is another name for ethnonationalism which, in order to be realized as fully as possible, must revise history. The general characteristic and a starting point of revisionism is:

The fetishism of the state and the fetishization of the Croatian nation-building idea. All that was directed towards Croatian

state independence in the past has been evaluated most positively and overstated in a non-critical way, whereas weaknesses or guilt are exculpated or at least minimized. The opposing historical tendencies are in principle evaluated negatively, whereas their weaknesses or guilt are blown out of proportion in a non-critical way. These revisionist aspirations, in both directions, do not even hesitate to omit and distort the facts, which sometimes lead as far as outright forgery and lies. (Goldstein 2005: 60)

Described in this way, due to the fetishization of the idea, revisionism completely neglects the consequences it has for both the individual and the community. It is ethically unacceptable. Consequentialism in ethics “is the view according to which the consequences of our actions primarily need to be evaluated” (Berčić 2012: 429). What are the consequences that have been caused by the actions of many critics and historians? The consequences are psychological, they are connected with the author’s personality, they are also ethical and pedagogical: the generation of the most important Croatian literary critics teaches new/future critics models of evaluation (positivism, subjectivism, ideologism, etc.) and the consequences of this are distorted/false images of the development of poetry (in the poetical and historical senses). Another consequence is the fact that the question of Difference and the Other, through the aforementioned procedures, radically takes the politicization of the entire literature and its logistic apparatus into this conflict zone. Another result is the control of an already established opinion on the development, values, and poetics of Croatian poetry and the struggle for personal symbolic hierarchies. In other words, the consequence of the instrumentalization of art in the works of literary critics and historians is a false representation of literary history. Revisionism as a part of a broader strategy of changing narratives about the past does not include only the (re) interpretation of history, politics, and analogy but it also has its own forms in art.

Given that the established narratives of the 1990s were all connected with the idea of the identity of the nation (politics, media, religion, art, economy, pedagogy), it is clear that in the process of the *colonization* of past values and the process of homogenization of the nation the question of *we* vs. *them* must be based on the viewpoint that *our* symbolic (Croatian, national) values are better than *their* (anational, socialist) values. In such a

war of values, the emphasis is not so much on the figures of memory but on forgetting (Paić 2016). It is necessary to learn to forget, to erase history, to select, to recontextualize. Whenever identity is built on difference, identity does not exist. In these processes, the relationship between transition and revision is equal, with changes in ideological paradigms being the terms of so-called *transitional justice*, which is a mechanism for settling historical accounts, and they are also changed (Milošević 2015: 171).

In Babić's case the process of forgetting is gradual. At first, he was defamed *ad hominem*, and then each of his poetic projects was described in a negative context, value-wise. Well, since we are already discussing Babić's *original sin*, his only one, as stated before, which is crucial: Babić, as a person, is a declared socialist and Marxist, which is evident in his poetical and polemical habitus. For instance, in a poem written in the Cyrillic script, "*Izgnanstvo Freda Žalopeka*" (*Vjetrenjače, trulo srce*, 1974: 30) he says the following: "So, you loved Katherine, / but your friends told you she was Orthodox, and that a Catholic mistress would be better suited for you (...)" By registering the path of religious separation/difference in the text, Babić stands directly in opposition to the identity policies of the *Croatian Spring* of 1971. These are all processes in which a person, and a writer, is exiled from the *consecrated* field of a symbolic community: "from the protective embrace of the indestructible We-group. (...) An exile from such a group is transformed into the third person. To those left in the group, in the We-group, he becomes a He, a Non-face, a Non-person!" (Paić 2016: 56).

Since we cannot speak of absolute evaluations in poetry, as they would imply that truth/falsehood "depends only on the facts relating to the evaluated subject and not on the facts of the context of the subject" (Levy 2004: 17), it remains to be seen how something else, the other, which is a set of beliefs – an ideology, affects relativistic evaluations. Theory has proved to us that the literary critic is not a neutral actor of interpretation and evaluation, but is determined by her own ideological, gender-related, aesthetic, religious, and other standpoints. By acting within a certain culture, the critic operates within a certain value system, an unwritten standard.

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## SAŽETAK

Sanjin Sorel

### REVIZIONIZAM U PJESNIŠTVU: PARADIGMA GORAN BABIĆ

U članku se detektiraju načini/procedure revizionizma u pjesništvu. Isključivanje poezije Gorana Babića iz nacionalnoga korpusa ne samo da ne korespondira s njegovom poetičkom složenošću i vrijednošću negoli je i etički nekonzistentno. Revizionizam slijedi nacionalnu identitetsku liniju po kojoj književnost s jasno iskazanim stavovima o socijalizmu ne može egzistirati u potpunosti unutar povijesti pjesništva. Politika je zauzela mjesto poetike.

**Ključne riječi:** *Goran Babić; književna kritika; revizionizam; povijest književnosti*



