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# HATE-SPEECH IN SLOVENIA

*Slovenian Racism, Sexism and Chauvinism*



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*Slovenian Racism, Sexism and Chauvinism*<sup>1</sup>

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*Shall I tell you what kind of man my fellow countryman is?  
Malicious, quick-tempered, cowardly, untruthful, an ignorant  
know-all, stingy, envious, jaundice-eyed, lazy, slanderous,  
whining, aggressive when drunk, small-minded, full of bad  
humor, but quite useful and successful under a good conqueror.*

VITOMIL ZUPAN, *Apokalipsa vsakdanjosti*<sup>2</sup>

<sup>2</sup> *Apokalipsa vsakdanjosti* (The Apocalypse of the Everyday) is the last, unfinished work by Vitomil Zupan, the best Slovenian writer of the second part of the 20th century.



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## SUMMARY

This paper is an analytical study and presentation of the Nightwatch column (*Nočna kronika*) that has been published weekly in the Slovenian Sunday paper *Nedelo* since the end of summer 1995. The author in the first place endeavors to present this phenomenon in the light of its chauvinist, macho and racist nature, and (possible as well as actual) the anti-political and extremist impact of the discourse communicated through this column. The 'products' of the Nightwatch column presented here are: foreigners, those from the south, Yugoslavia, Balkan creatures, beings with a half-roof over their heads, citizenship granted to foreigners, Bosnians, Muslims, Islam, refugees, sevdah, pedophiles, transvestites, girls, chicks, and women. Through the analysis of this rich material and particularly the characteristic 'bar flies discourse', the author exposes the inner workings of unprecedented dehumanization of those seen as "other" and different in Slovenia. He also proves that dreams about a racism-free Slovenia are the dreams of people who believe they are "innocent" and hence can indulge in comfortable pretense and 'unknowingness'. The analysis of Nightwatch reveals numerous criminal dimensions of chauvinism, sexism, racism and radical intolerance in general. The author's main interpretative point is directed towards antipolitical and criminal impacts of the Nightwatch discourse which should be taken extremely seriously as a direct incitement to more or less violent action against those who are seen as other and different. Last but not least, the author shows that the issue of violence and even killing cannot be ascribed only to those who kill, but also to those who sow seeds of hatred into the heads or, if you like, hearts of potential murderers, thus causing and directing the very possibility of slaughter.



## FOREWORD

Dear reader,

As the author of the paper you are holding in your hands, let me immediately disclose my predicament. I have been working on this paper for more than two years, so it would be only natural that I commend it highly to you. On the other hand, it is my duty, almost a sacred one, to warn you at this early stage that what you are about to read is hardly digestible, high-adrenaline passages carrying hatred of foreigners, women and “those who are different” in general. Therefore I actually advise you against reading it! I know quite well from my own research experience how much energy, self-control, concentration and composure one needs to put together such a text, therefore I cannot wish on anyone this tiresome and occasionally spiritually dulling adventure.

We are operating here within a context in which the state and citizenship, no less than politics, equality and functioning in general, are perceived through the categories of blood, land, grandfathers, inheritance and heritage. In the light of these categories there is being produced an infinite chain of differentness, foreignness and the foreign, which enables both “deculturalization” and dehumanization of anything that is non-ours. You are a foreigner solely because you have the wrong surname, or your grandfathers came from the south, or you eat *čevapčiči*<sup>3</sup> or lobsters, or listen to *sevdalinke*<sup>4</sup> or Azra<sup>5</sup>. At times it suffices that your accent of some Slovenian word is not correct, that you do not like grilled sausages with sauerkraut, or your nose is somewhat protruding, or you are too tall, or the color of your eyes, hair and skin is a tint darker. In every one of these cases you do not have any rights simply because you are not “one of us”, your grandmothers and grandfathers, your mother and father, unfortunately did not enjoy the right food, or the sun’s rays fell on them at the wrong angle, they did not suck the right breasts from which flows that certified domesticity and vigor, “ourness” in short. Here the state is seen as an extended domesticity, the home of a native, a type of vast economy/household which secures the only correct breeding/tradition based primarily on a

3 A traditional oriental dish of grilled meat widespread in Serbia, Bosnia, and Turkey.

4 Traditional Bosnian folk music.

5 A very popular Yugoslav rock band in the eighties that was based mainly in Zagreb (Croatia).

cozy feeling aroused by the homely smell of cow dung. This smell is infinitely familiar and it alone, together with domestic milk/bread, can yield that genuine domestic blood and shape those unmistakable genes of the Slovenian bar flies' "ourness" that is threatened by as little as a pinch of curry or an alien glance of a darker-skinned girl. The latter is indeed considered a useful "piece of flesh", but in fact deep inside she is seen as a potential witch who could threaten the warm crib of the golden, domestic calf of Slovenianness in its very essence. Technology and development did not introduce any essential changes into this area. The stable, even though in reality it no longer exists, still bears significance in the midst of post-modernist design. Moreover, its effect is even greater within the "genetically inherent" manner of "our grandfathers' reasoning" which is based on the mythology of the stable, blood and land.

Therefore, you should embark upon the following pages only if you cannot resist some compelling internal urge, or you are ready for a dive into the dark realm of (self)destructive, post-socialist Slovenian anger and the elementary primitivism of bar flies, the kingdom of macho brutality and racist spite. If the case is in fact opposite or different, I beg you, as your most humble servant, to leave this paper to those who will have to deal with it *ex professo*, or simply let it be devoured by the dusty criticism of a bookshelf.

In any case, as far as I know, the kind of language of hate presented and analyzed here belongs to that class of most original ones - at least in central and eastern Europe if not further afield. This is a supreme cultural product of the Slovenian post-socialist environment, which is otherwise quite advanced in terms of discourse as well as in other respects. It had started to materialize and take shape even before the guns on the Bosnian battlefields were hushed, and even before the blood dried on the butchers' knives of the murderers from the largest slaughterhouse in Europe after WWII. These are the coordinates of space and time that have born this extremely sexist, chauvinistic, xenophobic and racist discourse which should be understood as a continuation of the genocide in Bosnia using different means, or even as a parallel process accompanying events of this kind, as was Srebrenica<sup>6</sup> for example. Accordingly, it could be taken as an authentically domestic, cultured or

6 The town in eastern Bosnia which suffered a vast massacre committed by Serbs during the war (app. 6000 to 8000 male Bosnians were killed).

“civil sub-class of war” that was fought in Croatia and Bosnia-Herzegovina. Slovenia had been - as had Bosnia - a part of the former SFR Yugoslavia. The language of fervent and stalwart hate presented here mainly refers to “Bosnia and the Bosnians”, the “Yugos” and the “Balkan folk” who are objects of a radical linguistic dehumanization and deculturalization. From the haughty, racist posture maintained by this culture, they are seen as “the pack” or “the rabble”, even as an utterly dehumanized “stock” that needs to be completely devalued and which calls for a final solution. The murderous material published in this paper could also be understood as a specific literary form of mental derangement.

The invention of the language of the bar fly brotherhood that is exploited as an elusive position from which to voice extremist opinions, is undoubtedly something new and specifically Slovenian in the post-socialist period. It certainly belongs among the most revolutionary, extremist inventions and enjoys the support - believe it or not - of a good part of the Slovenian public, including the actual editorial board of the main (center, liberally oriented!) Slovenian daily *Delo*. As proof I can offer the empirical fact that this extreme practice par excellence pursued by the author and the newspaper board, which you are going to learn about through this paper, is still underway at the time this text is going to print.

The key purpose of this paper is to document and inform. It is my objective to present the concrete, Slovenian discourse at the end of the century in the full depth, extent and wealth of its pitiful wretchedness. To this objective I sacrificed wider interpretative and formative passages that could be easily inserted. The extensive presentation of the type and nature of the extreme language itself, as well as the exposition of all the dimensions and interrelations of its stinking viscera, in short the tackling of its unique (and partly untranslatable) concreteness, seem to me to be much more important than any “contextualization” or “shift of location” of this concreteness towards an abstract theoretical framework. The essence and the power of evil emanating from this extreme language lies in its brutal and banal directness that aims at an immediate response/effect, while, on the other hand, theorization often does it a favor (unjustly); by “sterilizing” and “putting into order” this language it gives it a “higher” and above all an external “sense” and “meaning”. In short, it lends it some “theoretical sanctifi-

cation” which often obscures the explicit bestiality and destructiveness of that which should come to the surface as a theoretical result. I am in fact convinced that the destructiveness in the logic of this extreme discourse is so unambiguously self-destructive that it would not only be incorrect, but also partly wrong if I imbued it with constructive elements. My constructiveness would in fact cancel out the very essence of my effort - to present the destructiveness and banality of the concrete, extreme post-socialist evil as such.

If you are therefore still resolved to read the following pages, I wish you good sound and a clear picture.

Ljubljana, September 30th, 1998

## 1. THE CONTEXTUALIZATION OF THE PHENOMENON, THE METHOD & REASONS FOR THIS TEXT

This text is an attempt to analyze the Nightwatch column published in the *Nedelo* paper on Sundays, which is occasionally carried by *Delo*<sup>7</sup> during the week where it is especially marked (italicized) for the occasion. The **Nightwatch** column has been appearing in *Nedelo* every Sunday since autumn 1995. It is my objective to give an integral presentation of this phenomenon, apparently a peculiarly Slovenian one, and to do this through the texts which are the products of corresponding chauvinist, macho and racist characteristics as well as of (possible) anti-political and extremist effects of the discourse which was gradually taking shape through this column and shining upon Slovenia for the past two years from a prominent position. As far as I know, if we leave aside *Slovenske novice*<sup>8</sup> for the moment, it is exactly *Nedelo*'s Nightwatch column that is one of the most systematic and constant sources of "intolerance towards foreigners" and the different in general (including women) expressed through the media (and therefore) publicly. Unfortunately, this phenomenon is not addressed either by wider journalistic, professional or legal circles, let alone scientific social or humanist circles<sup>9</sup>. My research, analysis and documentation is aimed at a detailed presentation and description of the inner workings of this discourse. In addition, I would also like to present the author and his work in the light of the anti-discriminatory article of the Constitution of the Republic of Slovenia, first in the light of Chapter 2 dealing with human rights and fundamental freedoms where Article 14 (equality before the law) reads as follows: "In Slovenia each individual shall be guaranteed equal human rights and fundamental freedoms irrespective of national origin, race, sex, language, religion, political or other beliefs, financial sta-

7 My survey shows that somewhat more than three quarters of the material was published in *Nedelo* on Sundays, and somewhat less than one quarter in *Delo*, that is, during the week. For this reason and especially because of abbreviations, I will use a common reference i.e. *Nedelo*, which will cover both *Delo* and *Nedelo*. The list of cited sources can be found at the end of this book. For easier understanding let me mention that *Delo* is the name of both the publishing house and the major Slovenian daily, published in Ljubljana, the Slovenian capital. Its daily circulation exceeds 100,000. This figure is quite high for the population of two million people.

8 *Slovenske novice* is a tabloid published by *Delo* publishing house. The proportion of the language of hate in *Slovenske novice* is considerably higher and deeper than in *Delo*.

9 The only exception is Jalušič (1996).

tus, birth, education, social status or whatever other personal circumstance. All persons shall be equal before the law.” Secondly, in the light of Article 63, which is completely unambiguous: “All incitement to ethnic, racial, religious or other discrimination, as well as the inflaming of ethnic, racial, religious or other hatred or intolerance, shall be unconstitutional. All incitement to violence or to war shall be unconstitutional.” After all, the Constitution is the supreme legal document to which we are entitled to refer directly when it comes to human rights, and it is exactly what I do in this essay. Article 15 of the Constitution states: “The direct exercise of human rights and fundamental freedoms shall be guaranteed by this Constitution.”

Usually, newspaper columns such as *Nightwatch* deal with the dark, more or less “criminal” side of our everyday life. For example, how somebody robbed, murdered, blackmailed, ran over, attempted or succeeded in raping somebody and so on. After all, we have got used to this type of writing in the past ten years in Slovenia. The novelty that we are going to encounter in *m. s.*’s texts<sup>10</sup>, which represent a genuine Slovenian phenomenon as I have already mentioned, is the invention of a discourse that is a truly revolutionary product in the field of post-socialist hate creation. In creating his seemingly ordinary *Nightwatch* column, *m. s.* has been drawing on two complementary elements. Firstly, he has extended the subject topics of the *Nightwatch* column literally to all walks of public life (social, economic, political, cultural) and secondly, he made a characteristic symbolic turnaround. The *Nightwatch* column in fact does not open “as is usual”, say with murders, accidents, robberies and rapes, but with all-embracing comments on outstanding political, cultural, social and other events and phenomena, which are - this is probably a relic of the traditional understanding of the *Nightwatch* type of columns (continuity) - artificially supplemented with the telegraphic presentation of police crime reports. A more thorough analysis has shown the following trend: the more the topics in the narrow sense of the word (i.e. crime) of the *Nightwatch* column have been shrinking and retreating into the background, the more (in the

<sup>10</sup> Leaving aside previous creations of *m. s.* for the moment, his opus published in the *Nightwatch* column in *Nedelo* amounts to approximately 400 pages of text with high dosages of adrenaline. Hence it is possible to imagine his writings as a fat book that has been serialized by *Nedelo* once a week for several years now in the form of a singular “literary contribution”.

past two years) the Nightwatch-style portrayal of life in general has thrived, that is to say, its portrayal in terms of Nightwatch categories and tones which are primarily criminal. In other words: the disappearing Nightwatch column in the traditional sense of the word is increasingly replaced with the criminalization of the entire post-socialist daily life in Slovenia. Of course, criminalization of politics and the whole of public life inevitably has consequences, including criminal ones.

The Nightwatch column, as found in *Nedelo* week by week, consists of two obviously separate parts differing in structure and purpose. The first has a general, symbolic and above all ideological significance. It acquires shape and voice through comments about different (the most notorious or important political and media-spectacular) events that occurred during the week. In television parlance, this is the “pulse” of the city, a singular weekly inventory of events that are suitably processed - dramatized and criminalized. The second part of the Nightwatch includes various police reports that are most often equally heavily processed and deal with individual excesses (instances of crime) in the narrower sense of the word. This part of the Nightwatch lists names (most often only first names), streets, houses, cars, wounds and brawls, but above all it concentrates on alcohol and rampaging. The first, abstract part specializes in “male issues” in the wider sense of the word (“serious pub themes” such as (anti)politics, the Nation, Foreigners, Balkan folk), while the second part is a concentrate of male issues in the “narrow sense of the word”: violence (especially violence against women vividly described with obvious enjoyment and expressed in garish terms /“tearful rape victims”/...) with an inevitable emphasis on alcohol and drinking bouts. In this paper our interest in the second part will be limited to the extent to which it is used as the function of the first part that is symbolically, ideologically and demagogically more powerful and, accordingly, has been expanding uncontrollably<sup>11</sup> ever since the first issue of *Nedelo*. An overall principle underlying the writing of *Nedelo*’s column is: if during the week the stage abounds in events and incidents that are interesting to the media, then M. S.’s column functions like Utrip (Pulse) on Slovenian national television, i.e. a weekly re-

11 By the end of 1998 when this text was ready to be published in a book, these creations occupied approximately 1/4 of a big format newspaper page.

view of outstanding political and other events (a fine example is in 59)<sup>12</sup>. The more events during the week, the less direct production of sexism, chauvinism, racism and so forth just for the sake of it. In such circumstances, “those from the south”, “the Balkan folk”, “the Yugos” appear along with their names (often with an added comment on nationality) as brawlers, drunkards, rioters. But, if luck is less agreeable and empirical events are running short (a shortage of “stuff”, to use a journalistic term), then these criminal and drunken southerners are turned into a suitable, *a priori* (substitute) material to support a general “theory” that we shall try to trace through this text<sup>13</sup>.

As to the author of *Nightwatch*, we know that this is somebody who signs the column with the initials *m. s.* This man is also the author of the drawings that appear in the same column and he signs them **Marjan Skumavc**. From the *Nightwatch* columns published to date it is possible to discern that the author is not a completely uneducated person, but somebody who has been acquainted, at least from afar, with certain forms of sociological culture or has engaged, occasionally and (un)methodically, in reading this type of literature, but he certainly did this unsystematically, i.e. superficially. As to the formal side of *Nightwatch*, let me just mention that the titles - as well as the major part of the other material in the first section - are exceedingly cynical and occasionally entirely misleading, which leads us to conclude that these are (occasional) editorial interventions and not purely the author’s creations<sup>14</sup>. For ex-

12 I have been tracing this chronicle ever since its beginnings, but the analysis in this paper is only one fragment that covers the period between November 5th 1995 and August 1997. It is supported by 99 published columns, here referred to as documents, cited at the end of the book and sorted by numbers. The reference numbers given in the text will lead the reader to the title and the date when the text has been published either in *Delo* or *Nedelo*.

13 In the course of my research I became convinced that *m. s.*’s *Nightwatch* column was one of the richest mines of extreme language in Slovenia which hinges on chauvinism, sexism and racism and should receive more research interest in the future. I would especially like to recommend these works to women researchers who might find this column a particularly fertile and “convenient” macho material which any developed or more numerous nation across the world would be proud of.

14 Unfortunately, I am not in a position to provide an analysis of the titles (provided by the editorial board?) or graphic elements of the column. Let me list just several randomly selected elements that will be addressed more extensively in other contexts: “A bomb in the parliament would do much good” (67), “During a slightly rotten winter when it stinks of the Balkans” (64), “How ugly do we behave towards the Balkan folk” (58), “Our ‘Bosnians’ are a good deal worse at football than Bosnian Bosnians” (53), “No entry to dogs, non-smokers and some others!” (46), “First import politicians (from the south, τ. κ.), then come sportsmen and ruffians..”(43), “Are we to allow a congress of Belgian pedophiles?” (42), “If the parliament has problems, importa foreigner !” (15), “Bosnia, Macedonia, Russia - Slovenia loves you...”(13)

ample, the article entitled “The must is superb, but there is not much wine” extensively elaborates on how it would be necessary to collect signatures for referendum on revoking “citizenship in accordance with article 40.”<sup>15</sup>(1) This column dated November 5th 1995 is not about wine as suggested by the title, but is in the first place a direct, public invitation to *Nedelo*’s readers to participate in the collection of these signatures.<sup>16</sup>

In any case, the reasons that have led me to the decision to make a systematic review and presentation of these creations published in *Nedelo*’s Nightwatch, are manifold: apart from immanent researcher’s curiosity, the decisive factors were the (extreme)<sup>17</sup> methodology and the infinite lightness with which *m. s.* dispenses this highly delicate material weekly. On the other hand, there was the fact that Delo, the most prominent media house in Slovenia, delivers to its readership of hundreds of thousands such big quantities of macho, xenophobic and racist content carelessly and on a regular basis.<sup>18</sup>

At the same time, *m. s.*’s creations reveal a solid amount of narcissism and impertinence needed for the study of extremist and xenophobic discourse that has become comfortably anchored in certain circles of the domestic public (including political circles). After all, what we have here is an extreme creation, which, just like any similar type of “Evil”, as H. Arendt would put it, is sufficiently “banal”<sup>19</sup>. This paradigmatic banality is exactly what *m. s.*’s discourse is about: it resorts to that form of extreme language that communicates the most readily accessible “truth” in com-

15 All quotations are taken from *m. s.*’s texts. The numbers in parenthesis show the number of the document containing a specific “conclusion” or a statement. In this case, the writer probably refers to the so-called law on foreigners, but in any case it is related to the valid, post-socialist legislation in Slovenia.

16 “... counter No 13 at Mačkova street (the office in Ljubljana which was organized for the collection of signatures for a petition on expelling foreigners from Slovenia, т. κ.), where the signatures for Article 40 are being endorsed, is rather empty and there is nothing like a real crowd there. If people only get angry and are not willing to do anything either for the good of themselves, their posterity, or their state, that is, nation, then it is too bad, then we would do best to sell ourselves, but at least to somebody a little bit farther from here, to the real Turkey...”(1)

17 The author uses all available extreme tools and approaches that range from cynicism, irony, challenge, through truly mass creations for people with good stomachs, that would throw off even the most balanced individuals (for example, the note about “grilling the neighbor’s baby”! or similar (3)), to open chauvinism and racism, to which we shall return later.

18 *Delo* strives for consistent respect of human rights in all areas and all forms of public life. *Delo* defies all forms of violation of civil, national, racial, religious, sexual and other rights and liberties, and opposes provocation, fomenting and instigation of the said types of injustice.

19 Arendt (1963)

parison with other similar products in this part of Europe, especially those that have been circulating on the Slovenian scene in the past ten years. My study hence attempts to present possible ways of understanding the logic and inner workings of the discourse of the “banality of evil”, of exclusion, offense and suggested lynching. Of course, in doing this I also hope to succeed in presenting certain fragments of the micro-physics of cognate, “intellectual”<sup>20</sup> (razumniški) discourses that have been supplied wholesale in Slovenia in recent years. The research of this phenomenon that is voiced through the *Nedelo*-invented bar flies was only in part made easier by the fact that the bar flies’ discourse is *in nuce* so “free” that it more often than not indicates the immodesty, self-praise and narcissism of its author.

Moreover, in order to avoid potential misunderstandings I would like to stress that I do not see the “voice of the bar flies”, used weekly by M. S. in the *Nightwatch* column, as simply the viewpoint of those called “the underworld” by Dostoevsky and hence regarded as “less important” or “unimportant”. By the same token, I harbor serious doubts about constructions such as “the collective unconscious” and “the suppressed” or assertions that all of this is “marginal in fact”, “unknowing” and therefore “unworthy” and “not dangerous”. I embarked upon this project starting from the hypothesis, which in the course of research only gained validity and was empirically confirmed, that these are the most explicit, collectively aware and above all public creations, which - even if taken as a symptom only - testify in infinite precision, and with all the intensity of their primitivism and arrogance, to a sorry and pitiable image of the “spirit of the Nation” in the post-socialist and post-war era of Slovenian history.

20 With “intellectual discourse” we mean a specific form of extreme chauvinist language about the “threat to the Slovenian nation” that had been formulated by a group of male intellectuals of the middle and older generation (philosophers, sociologists, lawyers, journalists, priests, writers, poets, doctors, architects...) gathered around the Ljubljana published *Nova Revija*, especially after 1992.

## 2. THE LOCATION OF THE PHENOMENON: BAR FLIES

The third, revolutionary and innovative element found in the Nightwatch column, which is of crucial significance for this analysis (in terms of form and contents), is usually encountered already in the opening few sentences of each column. It is the introduction of the “subject of statement”, or the introduction of a collective entity which the author calls the **bar flies (pivci)**.

The first part of *Nedelo*'s Nightwatch belongs to a journalistic genre that, in contrast to the “reports” in the second part, could be defined as a commentary, a column or rather as a kind of bar flies' chronicle. Yet despite the fact that the commentary is written by the author of the column (Marjan Skumavc), it is actually a special type of non-commentary or some sort of non-report allegedly recapitulated by the author, but not based on any known sources (usually there are no sources referred to). Occasionally he does cite sources, or uses the technique of quotation (for example > 2,4). This approach lends to the Nightwatch column the status of a quasi-documentary, even where it is quite obvious that the comment is written by the author, that is to say, where it is clear that the comment represents the author's more or less elaborate viewpoint taken to the limits of brutality. A surprising and decisive element of the first part of Nightwatch is the fact that it ostensibly reports (informs) on what the “true” subject of statement has said, but the latter is not the same person as the author (M. S.). The author (M. S.) calls this subject “the bar flies”. In short, whoever embarks upon an analytical study of the Nightwatch column, must from the very start make a distinction between the author of the column (M. S.) and those who state opinions (the bar flies), i.e. whose statements are recapitulated by the author. It is exactly this dual (self-distancing) form, invented either by the author or the institution i.e. *Nedelo*, that contains one of the keys to understanding the Nightwatch column.

“Bar flies”? In an attempt to establish their identity, I resorted to asking myself several questions:

- a Who are the bar flies?
- b What are the circumstances in which they live?
- c What do they do?
- d What are their topics?
- e How do they deal with these topics?

The basic definition of the bar flies is twofold. Firstly, we have to take into account their explicit and even proverbial “honesty” (to talk about a bar fly i.e. a drinker or an “honest drinker” (53) is one and the same thing), and secondly, we have to know that they are “men” (29). In his columns, *m. s.* also refers to them as “drinking brothers” (65) (a brotherhood), or “bar laborers”<sup>21</sup>, or “men with glasses in their hands” (33), who are in fact extremely “sensitive souls”(33). The collective name “bar flies” thus denotes some (male) brotherhood of the honest, if I may paraphrase old Babeuf. This brotherhood definitely does not admit women or dishonesty, notions which are, as we will see later, quite beyond the bar flies!. Given this context, it becomes almost pointless to stress that the circle of bar flies does not admit foreigners, those from the south or “similar characters”: **bar flies, men, honest folk and Slovenians are in M.S.’s classification synonyms for one and the same thing.**

Circumstances? There is no doubt that the bar flies come from the capital, Ljubljana, and that they are **on a boring cruise**. The problem encountered by the bar flies, in *m. s.*’s words, is the “boredom in Ljubljana” (20); moreover, this is the “boredom that obviously kills” (66). In this boring environment of the honest, Slovenian brotherhood of bar flies, many things “happen that eat the nerves” (49) or “pester” (18) the bar flies, causing them “more than a few difficulties” (18)<sup>22</sup>. The schematic delineation of the bar flies’ general circumstances enables the author to employ the type of comment that almost invariably begins with: these days this or that is “making the bar flies gloomy”, or this or that is “getting on their nerves”(43). The threatened “nerves” of the bar flies indicate that they are by no means indifferent to what is happening around them, which is quite natural since it is exactly the events in their environment that “get on their nerves”. The bar flies are a collective entity who seriously “worry, gathered around the bar”(29)! The very connection between their worrying and what gets on their nerves sets them off onto the path of a specific discourse that generally defines its environment as a “mass of lies and pretence”(33).

21 At some point we even encounter an explicit definition of the bar flies as workers: “by the end of the month even we, the workers, are running out of money for a drink, say the bar flies angrily” (67)

22 A number of things “gets on the bar flies’ nerves” (72). And when something goes wrong, which is quite often, the bar flies “promptly reach for another glass to drain down all of their worries”.

What do m. s.'s bar flies actually do? We learn first that drinking is not their primary activity. Then we find out that the list of verbs and verbal forms used by the bar flies' creator is quite long, but can nevertheless be summarized as follows: the bar flies as genuine (and, as we shall see later, even philosophical) thinking subjects first "wonder"(49), then establish, and finally "extensively (boredom!) debate". They "muse, leaning on the bar" and actually hold "very lively bar debates"(17). As a rule, during these debates they get "strongly upset"(58), quite often they are "irritated", they are "worried" (94), "angry", occasionally they even become "frenzied" or fly into a rage(95). To put it simply, the bar flies "chew over topical issues and understandably have their own standpoints" (57), or if we are more specific and refer to the object of their worry: the bar flies "**chew over the difficulties that pester the Slovenian nation**" (91). More precisely: "the bar flies laboriously chew over current topics. A moment for a wise thought can always be spared between sips" (88).

Thanks to this and to the almost inherent *vita contemplativa* of the bar flies, m. s.'s sentences that follow are most often considerably more engaged and active. For example "the bar flies once again have much to say and criticize" (55). Therefore, what we have here is not simply a subject of statement as such, **but a critical subject of a special type**. What does his singularity consist in? Three features are outstanding: first of all, the bar flies "are afraid" or they "fear" (30). This fear is twofold: on the one hand, it arises from the fact that the world in which they live is actually full of dangers<sup>23</sup>, so "men who maintain that bars are the safest place are right" (60)! On the other hand, this fear is peculiarly related to the responsibility for the future and towards future generations. "**What will our successors say? Where were the conscious Slovenians of the nineties?**" (46). In addition to the traditional *Weltschmerz* that we have observed in wider cultural/literary/intellectual circles here, the bar flies display one surplus feeling as well. They are a special kind of sensor: "the delicate bar flies' souls painfully perceive each, even the least, anomaly or social blunder" (33). Therefore, not only are the bar flies social beings, but they are social beings of a special kind, such who are capable of a critical attitude that literally

<sup>23</sup> In one of its most explicit texts m. s. says that the bar flies are "afraid of those happy chaps that were dragged up here from the south and those mujaheddins or warriors..." (30)

enables them to assess and measure society throughout the length and breadth of it. To put it differently, they are a kind of socio-gauge. The practice of socio-gauging as an **activity of exceptional social and national significance** (a Karl Manheim type notion from the pre-Nazi period) is anything but simple. Being a drinker is “seriously hard”, it is difficult to “grasp everything around you, weigh and comment on everything... **But, this is the mission...**” (21). And just as this mission is infinite (it refers to the subject of “everything around you”), so are the events that occur again and again. “The bar flies are angry because of incessant surprises” (84).

Whatever the case, it is only with the third element of this “open mission” (a blank check for the bar flies’ discourse), which rests on the foundation of “criticism” and *Weltschmerz*, that we can comprehend the manifold personality of a bar fly capable of pursuing the general bar flies’ methodology: this third element is the opening of Slovenian blisters (67). An a priori hypothesis of the author therefore is that by definition the bar flies “have something to say about this too” (“this” could be anything, τ. κ.) (91). Their concern and ability to gauge precisely the state of the entire social fabric that is defined as “a mass of lies and pretence” (33) readily lead them to conclusions that are based on some type of “indignation of the bar flies” (58). And this is precisely the general position of the bar flies’ discourse that we will discuss on the following pages.

What are the bar flies’ topics, or rather the “Slovenian blisters” that worry the bar flies and bring them to open those blisters so arduously? At first glance, the list of topics is infinite. In essence, the list is timeless and hence depends on media events that are - judging by the rate of their processing - primarily dictated by electronic media. In reality, however, it revolves around an iron logic: **threatened Slovenianness (Slovenian nation), (too low) birth rate, “those from the south”, those “from down there”, the Balkan folk, “Balkanophilia”, “Yugobums”, “beings with a half-roof over their heads<sup>24</sup>”, (local) politicians, “Yugos”, “Yugoviches”, reds, Serbs, Croats, Bosnians,**

24 A “being with a half-roof” denotes a non-Slovenian from the south whose surname typically ends in ‘iç’ in contrast to the Slovenian variant that ends in ‘ič’. The diacritic mark appearing in the final letter is in Slovenian called “strešica” (roof), half-roof denoting the variant ‘ç’ that does not exist in the Slovenian alphabet, but is found in other alphabets used in Yugoslavia. Therefore, the roof could also be understood as the roof over one’s head, so in turn, these could be beings without a roof over their head (e.g. a refugee, homeless...).

“jungle bunnies”, mafia, Chinese, gays, politics and, of course, when they run out of everything, women are always close at hand (no matter whether they are local or “imported girls”). If M. S. wanted to give a very precise answer to the question of what the bar flies’ topics are, than he would say that the bar flies have a “dark repertory of debatable issues” (24) and the favorites among them are “debates about Balkanization and similar trends” (84)!

Last but not least, in addition to all that has been mentioned above, the bar flies are also a **moral authority par excellence**, or in some way the “nation’s consciousness”, except they are “beside themselves because they do not know which difficulty pestering our nation should be given priority” (25). In short, we could round off this introductory description of the bar flies with the conclusion that it is pleasing but also difficult to be a bar fly, a member of the brotherhood of fear and worries, because one must “grasp, weigh and comment on everything around you... What can one do, it is the mission...” (21)! This is actually the essence of M. S.’s bar flies: **the mission they have**, and we will see what mission it is in reality. That is to say, we will see what substance it is made of, what its destination is and who it is intended for. In order to be able to do this, we must set off on a tour of their foggy workrooms infused with alcoholic vapors, to the very place of origin of the authentically domestic and stalwart bar flies’ discourse. Unfortunately, in doing this we will occasionally have to be mistrustful of the bar flies’ *primus inter pares*. In the following paragraphs we will first gain a panoramic view of the most important targets of the bar flies’ creativity, and then proceed with an attempt to analyze M. S.’s opus.

### 3. IDENTITY THREATENED: SLOVENIANNES

For the Slovenian bar flies, **the most worrying and festering wound is Slovenianness**: Slovenianness with a capital S, as the Idea and the Future (project), but also Slovenianness in various other prosaic forms of appearance that in much the same way draw vital energy from the concept of threatened identity.

Yet it would be wrong to assume prematurely and superficially that the bar flies' attitude is traditionally militaristic or that they think the solution to their fears and worries lies with, say, a "powerful military force". It would be equally wrong to suppose that Slovenianness is (still) threatened from the outside. The Slovenian love of peace disappeared with the old-fashioned civil society of the eighties (as soon as "we" formed "our country" and "our army"), but this "old fashioned sentiment" is still at work here in quite an original form. The threat i.e. the military one that is brandished most in new civil society circles, deserves derision at best. For the bar flies, the issue of the military threat to Slovenia and Slovenianness is something that can be dismissed with ordinary cynicism. The bar flies can indeed get "thrilled over our defense", but they promptly add that they are "a bit disturbed because money is being collected somewhat too eagerly". What for? "Who will attack us? The West more or less does not care about us, and as to the Balkan folk - we will give them our citizenship, we will adopt them, stifle them, and that's it!" (37). In short, "if the salaries and privileges of MPs and state officials have to be revised, then the military must also get several tons of toys so that the top brass can rejoice at the parades". (61)<sup>25</sup>

The point of departure for the bar flies' critical prattling about the threat to Slovenia and Slovenianness is thus situated elsewhere. The singular original sin upon which m. s. as a rule draws when voicing thoughts of his brotherhood of bar flies, is related through the assertion that "Igor, the former Minister of Internal Affairs (Bavčar, the first Slovenian Minister of Internal Affairs, т. κ.) has dragged up here so many Balkan folk and handed out citizenship for a few coins far and wide, even without basic checking, that **we are downright scattered indeed, without identity, national consciousness or pride**, in short, cruelly decentralized" (66)<sup>26</sup>. Moreo-

<sup>25</sup> The title in *Nedelo* of April 4th, 1996 asks: "Who are mad cows here and who needs F-16 fighter planes?"

ver, say the bar flies, “it won’t be long before Slovenians will stop being mentioned at all, at least in those parts around Jesenice and Velenje” (50)<sup>27</sup>. The statement about **threatened birth rate** comes from the same, “civil” platform. In the characteristically mischievous way they establish that (we are) “worried about the identity of the Kosovars and the aggression of the Serbs, while at the same time we ourselves “drag” to our own house every kind of stock, so in Tivoli<sup>28</sup> there are more dogs than people” (72). Put into a question this is expressed as “have we Slovenians really **degenerated** so much, or are we frightened and desperate?” (47). And finally, why all of this? Now, when we have sovereignty and one would least expect it, the situation is so critical, think the bar flies (and m. s. through them), that “**successful Yugobums on television, in theatres and in the elite city circles... yes, also in the economy and, in turn in politics, demonstrate how they are permeating every pore of our lives, changing our identity, taking over Slovenia, the things they attempted centuries ago when warning bonfires were lit because of this**” (76)<sup>29</sup>.

Related to such a wide basis of threat is the popularization of the topic of suicide, which is, asserts the author, “the final image of society” (43). According to the suicide diagnosis<sup>30</sup> “suicide in Slovenia is not the same as, say, suicide in Iraq, that is to say, not at all something “**outwardly aggressive**” but something “**introverted**”<sup>31</sup>. In the bar flies’ diction, answers to the question why these suicides occur in Slovenia are formulated quite unambiguously: the cause is **feelings of pressure, being occupied, absence of national-**

26 The contextual use of the word “decentralization” provides a schematic yet plastic indication of the characteristic mechanism of the high degree of creativity that the author uses when he wants to imbue “old” words with new meanings, and he invariably does this in accordance with current contextual needs.

27 Jesenice and Velenje were the centers of heavy industry in the socialist era. The major part of the labor force there was imported from southern parts of former Yugoslavia, mainly Bosnia.

28 Tivoli is the biggest park in Ljubljana.

29 “Bonfires set on fire” is intended to evoke memories of the nations in this part of the world who struggled against invading Turks. The fires were lit as a warning that “the Turks were approaching”. At the same time, it alludes to witches that were burnt at the stake.

30 The medical discourse is one of the most frequently used tools in m. s.’s creations. He uses it either to make a diagnosis or to prescribe a shock-therapy or surgery.

31 Despite the difficulties that the Balkan folk and Yugos cause to the bar flies, there are some positive traits can be extracted from them, at least in relation to suicide: “the bar flies hope that with so many new Slovenians the nature of the Slovenians will improve at least in the way that they will stop committing so many suicides and will rather switch to a more extrovert approach, and of course, that they will find suitable targets” (22). If we generously choose to ignore the implied invitation to lynch (“suitable targets”), “the Slovenians could really go for a bit of Balkanization”, say the bar flies (meaning that they could become a bit more extrovert which is the characteristic generally associated with other Yugoslav nations in contrast to the Slovenians).

**ity, ethnic disorientedness and absence of pride**, so we waste time over trifles and mutual conflicts that are displayed above all as grudging others, being envious, quarreling, all of which makes life virtually unbearable so people “leave” because they simply cannot bear it any more, their departure is a protest, a desperate act, and a punishment! (43). The bar flies therefore protest, since it is inappropriate to “raise hell over 50 suicidal whales but not say a word about 700 Slovenians” (41), as runs the title in *Nedelo’s* Nightwatch column. To put it shortly, suicide as the “final image of society” (43) is something that the bar flies are entitled to discuss by virtue of their self-determination, because they are, as we have already suggested, **national socio-gauges of a special, ethnic type**. If the core of the critical social issues in Slovenia of today can be explained by the suicide diagnosis (“the final image of society”), and this diagnosis lists “the feelings of pressure, occupation, absence of nationality, ethnic disorientedness and absence of pride” as the cause, then it is also clear that it is necessary to immediately work out a way to a suitable cure, that is to say, to arrive at the opposite of these assertions, or rather this state of things. In short, it is necessary to get rid of the feeling of suppression, achieve liberation, **achieve an appropriate state of nationality, highly concentrated ethnicity, “become oriented”, and it is especially necessary to establish a system of pride or national pride as something systemic!**

Thanks to this, it is also possible to say that “now when there are so many reasons for rejoicing, when we joined Europe, not one of the bar flies can understand why we then hang on to the Balkan folk and the East. If we are capable and cultured enough, our road leads towards the West and Europe, and we should go there with all that we have - economy and culture included” (35). At the point where one would least expect to find culture, a conceptual exit suddenly appears in the bar flies’ discourse as a synthetic answer to the question of threat! The counter-pole of Culture, i.e. Slovenian Culture (this is one and the same thing in our context), is of course Non-culture, only that in concrete circumstances it usually has concrete names: **the Balkans, Balkan folk, the Balkan language, Yugobums, Non-culture in one word!** During one of the more explicit moments in his creative process, m. s. says that “our education minister plucks bundles of ideas from the Balkans, but they belong in the Balkans, not in Slovenia. Moreover, this is the source of so many troubles

and, of course, of the negation of culture” (74) in Slovenia.<sup>32</sup> In addition to “honesty”<sup>33</sup>, “a characteristic Slovenian modesty” (28) and proverbial industriousness that we have mentioned initially, two more things are needed to fulfill the bar flies’ concept of the Slovenians as the cultured nation who should invent their identity and get rid of the threat: these are non-aggressiveness and, of course, (national) consciousness<sup>34</sup>. One of the Nightwatch discussions says that “somewhere in Germany the Turks and Kosovars battered each other to death, but there was no report on how many Slovenians were among them” (28)!

As to the potential exit from “Slovenia’s predicament” arising from the threatened identity as the bar flies see it, we should add that access to this exit necessitates certain hypotheses i.e. preventive internal distinctions. The bar flies actually make a clear-cut distinction between those who have clear access to the way out of this predicament, and those who do not. Perhaps it is not accidental that this distinction coincides with the one that the Croatian neo-Ustashi discourse would describe as “the difference between petty and great Croats”, or the one that the Serbian turbo-nationalism in the eighties named “honest Albanians”.<sup>35</sup> Coupled with “unprovable dirty tricks” provoked by “beings with a half-roof<sup>36</sup>”, as the author labels them, the end product looks like this: “curiously, nobody seems to learn from either practice or documented events, **‘petty Slovenians’ continue to cling onto the south, the Balkans and everything that even faintly smells like it**”. In short, the distinction between the Slovenians (those great and proper Slovenians) and “petty Slovenians” is one of the essential critical tools not only in the Balkans (Croatia, Serbia), but also in the hands of m. s.’s brotherhood of Slovenian bar flies. One could say: the more the

32 Similar to culture that is seen as the antithesis of the Balkans, distinctions are made between the West (culture) and the East (non-culture) as well as some others that we shall come back to later.

33 For more on the “Slovenian honesty” and/or “the honesty of the Slovenians” see the extraordinary conceptual text by the topmost Slovenian expert in this field, the late Dr. A. Trstenjak

34 The profound bar flies’ contribution to the “Slovenian consciousness” is provided by document No 46 bearing a significant title: “No entry to dogs, non-smokers and some others”! (46) That this title reveals a strategically significant bar fly viewpoint is corroborated by the fact that this is the only title that had been used twice i.e. in document 88 for the second time (“No entry to dogs and non-smokers”).

35 Compare Jalušič&Kuzmanič, Rape the Albanian way (1989). Otherwise, the Albanians in m. s.’s creations appear in three variants: as Albanians, Shiptars and even - maybe in order to avoid misunderstanding - in the combined form: “Albanians (Shiptars)” as in document 94

36 See footnote 24.

bar flies are compelled to distance themselves from the “Balkans”, “dirty tricks” and “beings with a half-roof”, the greater the distinction they have to make between “petty Slovenians” and “Slovenians”. Of course, this also applies to figures from the Slovenian cultural scene, since the actions of some of them are often entirely incorrect with respect to the Nation and Slovenian identity. On some such occasion some of “our culturalists who are in love with the Balkans and do not lack a membership from over there, attempted to put on a promotion in Thessaloniki, but reportedly the Greeks persuaded them, not without difficulties, that our country, despite its long-standing acquaintance and encounters with the Turks and the Balkans, does not belong there and that we should rather turn to Europe, that neither the janissaries nor the East that conspired throughout the Byzantine Empire can help us”(68).

On the other hand, the group of great and proper Slovenians occasionally incorporates, even sooner than others, the “young lads”: “the temperature (of the bar flies) now and then hits the ceiling when the talk turns to the young lad from Moravče”(63). The bar flies see Primož Peterka<sup>37</sup> as one of the rare “bright points”. In him they find “pride” and “boldness” and, consequentially, also the way out of the predicament. Actually, “as Slovenians we can still look to him” (Primož Peterka, т. к.) and “say that we are capable of achieving something, that this is us! Clever and courageous, independent, if others allow us to be like that”(75). The Slovenian bar flies are therefore once in a blue moon positively “beyond themselves over the success of Slovenian sportsmen”, they are overjoyed at every such success, and their comments reflect this state of exhilaration. “...Sports euphoria is present everywhere”, says m. s. on some occasion. It is through sports achievements that **the Slovenians are becoming “increasingly aware of themselves and they also stress this, we are only few but we are the devils... goes the word around the bars, and the song Kranjski Janez<sup>38</sup> is again working its way towards the top of the hit parade”(79).**

37 Primož Peterka is the successful Slovenian ski-jumper of the younger generation, who won the World Cup championship in 1998.

38 Janez Kranjski Janez is a song that glorifies the national hero (in this case the Slovenian) called Janez, but is known to other Yugoslav nations as well, of course in appropriately adapted versions of the text. It is interesting that Janez Kranjski Janez and the Slovenian anthem (Zdravljica) became widely popular only with the appearance of their rock-punk versions. Only the rock-punk form of this national exaltation has managed to appeal to the masses. We shall not elaborate in this paper how this affected the “alternative pride” of the (orthodox)rock&roll fans and punks in Slovenia.

#### 4. “CRETINISM”, “IDIOCY” & “RIDICOLOUS INSTITUTIONS”

The Slovenian identity is threatened above all by those who “attack”, “hold in contempt” or threaten the bar flies’ creative work in any way. How does m. s. deal with this, let us call it ‘basic enemy’? His approach is methodological, and in the first place reveals the desire to prove as plastically as possible that “the thoughts and the debates of the bar flies are not simply grumbling or slander”(97) but they belong to a serious and professionally formulated public (journalistic-political) discourse, the assertion being also sustained by the place of its publication - *Delo*, the major newspaper on the Slovenian media stage; perhaps this is the author’s defense of his professional standing, pride and honor or - why not - of his job with the *Delo* publishing house.

On the operational level, m. s.’s defense of his own product i.e. the bar flies’ discourse itself, is based on a distinction, in the sense that he calls to attention a major difference between the Slovenian past and present. I praise the “past awakers of Slovenianness”, states m. s., and we especially praised them after gaining independence. But, continues m. s. in a critical and rhetoric tone, “how is it today?”(2). Today, all of us **who are concerned about Slovenianness** are in anything but an envious position. Moreover, “**every Slovenian that is slightly more nationally fervent is labeled xenophobe, nationalist or even a Nazi**”(2). While “the nationally preoccupied Slovenians” of the pre-war era had at least a symbolic satisfaction, “**the nationally preoccupied Slovenians of today**” are condemned as “nationalists and chauvinists” or as “anything similar to this, rotten and ripe for jail”(46). On the horizon of the Hamletesque dilemma of “to be or not to be Slovenian” one also finds the entirely legitimate question: “**What will our successors say? Where were the (nationally) conscious Slovenians of the nineties?**”(46).

As the next logical step in the discourse of the bar fly author we could take his discovery that those who “talk so much about racism, chauvinism and other social threats” are usually closely related to, or they simply attempt to conceal their relatedness to “some movement for ‘the equality of those different’, or they are advocates of some similar phrases”(88). In the bar fly language, all of those who are in any way related to some “movement for ‘the equality of those different’ or are the supporters of some similar

phrases” are labeled with “cretinism and idiocy”(88) and their activities are treated in line with this qualification. The extremely upsetting circumstances of the Slovenian nation, so professionally stressed by the bar flies’ creator, are in fact recurring and it seems that “we are some unlucky fellows” or that “others are screwing us again and again”. Is that “really our image on those sheep posters(50)?”<sup>39</sup> How at all is it possible, wonders M. S., that we have forgotten the war against the YNA<sup>40</sup>, our “fighters for the southern borders”, and adds: “has all of this been forgotten or was all of that about getting even closer to each other and sticking those posters all over the place and getting ready to say welcome to the wolves?”(81). “And some ridiculous institutions tick us off for intolerance, yes, but it’s exactly the opposite” say M. S.’s bar flies, “our extremities obviously shake with impatience to embrace our brothers again while nobody explains why indeed we drained so many cups to celebrate the plebiscite and liberation”(33). In connection with “equality and justice” the bar flies are occasionally “infuriated by the lady from Helsinki<sup>41</sup> who explained how dirty and detestable is our attitude towards the Balkan folk, how we oppress them and do not let them live”(58). From time to time, certain kinds of writings that pose a threat to Slovenianness literally “flatten” the bar flies, especially “the scribblings that criticize our column”(76). The bar flies bear a grudge especially against people from the world of the arts, some of whom occasionally tell them off for their alleged inappropriate behavior. The bar flies’ answers are highly original: when “on the wall in Bavarski dvor (part of Ljubljana, τ. κ.) that was cleansed and white-washed not long ago some youngster wrote his sweet-sounding name that reminds of summer holidays in the south”, which was soon removed, “the bar flies hired a graffiti writer, a citizen<sup>42</sup>, to write “I love you”

39 The word is about posters featuring the slogan “all different, all equal” that were promoted by the Liberal Democratic Party in Slovenia. These posters were part of a wider campaign that was initiated and financially supported by the EU.

40 Yugoslav People’s Army, the army of former SFR Yugoslavia.

41 The critical finger of the author is aimed at a woman activist in the field of human rights.

42 This is only one among many possible denunciations of the concept of “citizen” and “citizenship”. In the bar flies’ discourse, a citizen is in the first place a “being with a half-roof, who got hold of citizenship for a “too low price” (“a few coins” or “a few tolar”). The statement that “the Internal Minister himself mentioned that we Slovenians are a cultured nation so he is not afraid of us, Slovenian citizens...” (30) shows the distinction: on the one side are Slovenians, who are cultured (“cultured nation”), on the other are citizens who are not cultured and must be feared, or expelled, or done away with using force, as we shall see later on. A “being with a half-roof” denotes a non-Slovenian from the south whose surname typically ends in ‘ič’.

(in ‘Balkan’ language, τ. κ.), so that our culturalists can see that we are not intolerant”.(87)

When in the same tone and context the author comments on the outcome of the Slovenian parliamentary elections in November 1996, he establishes with resignation “that the people (of Slovenia, τ. κ.) in fact removed from the stage all of the anti-Balkan people, everybody that behaved like a ‘Slovenian’ if only in part, or at least talked so”(53). And why is this so? asks the author. “Some say that people did away with nationalism, that we indeed became united with the ‘Slovenians’ ”<sup>43</sup>, but others who are much closer to the author’s creative standpoint, as we shall see later, think “that the latter took the reins in their hands while our men gave in”(53).

43 ‘Slovenians’ in inverted commas usually mean southerners i.e. non-Slovenians who acquired Slovenian citizenship legally.

## 5. FOREIGNERS, THOSE FROM THE SOUTH & YUGOSLAVIA

What are the topics that the bar flies most often brood over and talk about? Of course, these topics pertain either to the things that most seriously threaten the identity of the Slovenians or to those that cause the bar flies most worry once they move away from the highly “safe bars”. **The most frequent topics are foreigners**<sup>44</sup> (foreigners both at home and abroad), foreign countries (here the determination varies), the Slovenians and Slovenia. In this the “difference” or the differentiation in presenting two pairs of entities (foreign-domestic, foreigners-locals) serves as an inner drive and fuel for the discourse of the bar fly brotherhood in general.

Who are these foreigners “personally”? They are those people, answers m. s. on behalf of the brotherhood of Slovenian bar flies, who wear “**black leather jackets**” and “**speak in their own language**” (8) which is not Slovenian<sup>45</sup>. And these foreigners are dangerous. This is furthermore supported by the fact that they have secret and extremely dangerous plans. “What will happen”, runs m. s.’s report on one of the bar flies’ sessions “once their numbers seriously swell, they count their ranks and come up with parties, minorities and finally regions”(4, 6). “Some days ago somewhere under Fruška Gora<sup>46</sup> the Serbs organized a congress on the Serbs from Slovenia and, say the bar flies, they did not talk about tempting them to come back, to their homeland, but were reportedly more concerned about what to do with those Slovenians who “disturb” them in Slovenia”(35). Actually, now and then you can even hear talk about the “setting up of a Serbian community in Slovenia”(6)!

The bar flies also speculate which foreigners present a greater (or the greatest) threat. They determine this by assessing (socio-gauges!) whether in Slovenia there are more Serbs, Albanians, Croats or, say, Muslims (6), that is

44 The use of the term foreigner in the sense implied in the bar flies’ discourse has emerged with the Slovenian sovereignty when into this category were dumped in the first place all undesired citizens from former Yugoslavia. Otherwise, the term foreigner used in connection with e.g. Germans, Austrians, English etc. has only country connotations, and not social, cultural or ethnic as in this context.

45 It would be wrong of anybody to think that the “foreign” language here is German or English, or Serbian or Croatian for that matter. In this context this denotes a synthetic linguistic product of the bar flies that denotes the “language of the Balkans” (36) For more on possible reasons for this, see pages.

46 A mountain in Serbia.

to say, their assessment is **quantitative and based on the number of “foreign elements”**.<sup>47</sup> The bar flies’ definition of the threat is therefore based on numerousness. In other words, since **the threat arises from the very material and physical presence of foreigners**, the bigger their number is, the more dangerous they are and in turn, the worse is the threat to the bar flies and the Slovenians i.e. the Slovenian identity. On top of that, one should know that (in Slovenia) “there is nothing left that can be sold, since the happy chaps from the south, our fresh citizens, have already bought all the bars and better locations, and now they rent them to Slovenians”(93)<sup>48</sup>. However, the threat may also strike from other directions. For example, during the summer the bar flies ran into a huge problem when the Croats organized a “tourist promotion at Prešeren,<sup>49</sup> flying a balloon with the checkerboard”, or when some foreigners “sing Dalmatian songs”(92). The reason is very likely that “lovely Igor (Bavčar, the first Slovenian interior minister, now the Minister for European Affairs, τ. κ.) probably moved the border crossing to Kongresni trg”(92)<sup>50</sup>.

When the bar flies talk about those from the south, as a rule they have in mind “Yugobums”(76), therefore “guys”, while no girls are to be seen.<sup>51</sup> And how can you recognize those from the south? (32) **“Every one eagerly carries on him some piece of iron, if not exactly a gun then at least knuckle-dusters or a knife. This too is said to be part of their differentness or ethnic peculiarity”**. The bar flies, just like any other Slovenian, are of course “afraid of those happy chaps that were dragged up here from the south” (30). This is understandable since these individuals, in addition to carrying weapons, emit **“strange sounds and roaring from the gardens along Zaloška street”!** (one of

47 Although in the bar flies’ discourse the term “foreigners” is mostly used for Bosnians, the label also encompasses many other things. Outside Slovenia this includes, in addition to Bosnians, for example “embittered fiddlers” (9), “half-mad Islamic terrorists” (11) ... In any case, everything that is located east or south of Slovenia according to geo-cultural criteria.

48 Document No 93 bears the title: “There is nothing left in Slovenia for sale anyway”.

49 Prešeren is held to be the greatest (Romantic and otherwise) Slovenian poet and after him has been named one of the most beautiful squares in Ljubljana. Prešern’s poem Zdravljica (“A Toast”) dating from the first half of the 19th century is the Slovenian national anthem.

50 This reproach refers to politicians in general, accusing them of being incapable in comparison with the aggressive policy of Tudjman’s pro-Fascist regime in Croatia that will soon lead to the extension of the borders to the center of Ljubljana, that is, Croatia will occupy and annihilate Slovenia. Kongresni square is the central Ljubljana square and the site of great historical, political and ideological demonstrations in the 20th century.

51 They appear rarely but invariably as “whores” or “artistes” or “Ukrainians”.

Ljubljana's streets, т. κ.) (31). This equally applies to those from the south, "mujaheddins", "Muslims", "warriors", Croats, "Shiptars", Serbs, Bosnians or Yugos, the "**dogs of the Balkan breed**" (4), "**wiseheads from the south**", "those from down there"(3), "rabble" (4), or in short, to all the entirely depersonalized and dehumanized "**stock from the south**"<sup>52</sup>. As a rule, those from the south<sup>53</sup> are also those who "bring disgrace". For example, "not far from the stairs of the Franciscan church four men lurched about, **displayed their ethnic characteristics and their dicks**, shouted and roared with laughter while they pulled on them, all in all having great time"(25). In addition to these general problems related to threatened Slovenians, the troubles with those from "down there" are also manifested at pettier levels. For example, crosswords too are turning into a problem "in which you find **more and more southern poets**, writers, rivers, scientists and so on. Is there something behind this, does this indicate some Balkan orientation, ask the bar flies?" (25).

In fact, the bar flies would be most happy if they could entirely get rid (**they are looking for a final solution**) of everything that is in any way related to the former Yugoslavia and the Yugoslavs ("Yugos", "Yugoviches"... ) since they still remember that terrible torture when "they had, as adolescents, to take part in work brigades mostly in order to make little Yugoslavs"(33). And now, with the independence of the Republic of Slovenia, "they are intensely bothered by the brotherhood and unity with former Yugoslavs" (31)<sup>54</sup>. To judge from media coverage, it seems that nothing has changed. "The cover page of the main newspaper has been recently packed with news from Bosnia-Herzegovina, FRY, Israel, from everywhere, so that there was almost no space left even to squeeze in our railways" (34)<sup>55</sup>. The bar flies would be most happy to see **no news from these parts of the world**. What indeed has Slovenia

52 In the bar flies' language "those from down there" are also referred to as "all-powerful stock" that some "drag to their homes" (72)

53 The above definitions mostly apply to the Gypsies whom the author mostly evades save for the shorter, preventive discussion in document No 82.

54 "The bar flies ask what is happening with the demands of the EU to re-establish brotherly ties with former Yugoslav republics and what type of condition this is, to which both Macedonians and our neighbor Franjo responded quite sharply" (Franjo Tudjman, т. κ.).

55 Despite the fact that all the world's media are brimming with news from the Balkans (the war in Bosnia...) and that the Slovenian media have simply recapitulated events from foreign sources, M. S.'s incessant refrain is the sentence: "What have we done to the media so that they pour on us information galore on Albania, Serbia and Bosnia-Herzegovina?" (73).

still to do with them?<sup>56</sup> Even if it does have something, the following is clear: “according to some, we should be proud to help the Croats and Bosnians with weapons in a crisis situation”(28). But what advantage do we have from that, ask the bar flies, who “conclude that they are thankful indeed - the former (Croats) try to tailor our borders and snip our territory<sup>57</sup>, while the latter (Bosnians) left their people here so that we won’t have problems with a shortage of workers given our low birth rate...”(28). On the other hand, what should be done with such characters as the Serbs: “They had their rallies of truth, now they demonstrate and shout that Belgrade is the world, they were calm and happy only while they were slaughtering, raping and plundering across Bosnia-Herzegovina. Strange, say the bar flies, in those times they did not protest against anybody. What a jolly nation.” (68). Similar is true of **other jolly fellows that were “dragged up here from the south, mujaheddins or warriors...”** (30). The bar flies seriously wonder why we “want to be brothers with all of them, even the most blood-stained Balkan folk and all the Yugo-ideas”?

On the paradigmatically opposite, western side of “foreignness” are “the Germans”. Seen through the eyes of the bar flies they appear as follows: “Despite a hundred years of slavery under the Germans, we easily got rid of them at the time of liberation, forgot them and, with new generations, we even started to hate them while growing fond of our southern brothers to whom we became so attached through the past decades that nothing can detach us, not even the plebiscite...” (18). The Germans and their language are often mentioned in the bar flies’ chronicles, but never in such a concrete relationship to Slovenia, unemployment and of course those from the south, that is those who take away jobs from the Slovenians. M. S.’s bar flies speculate thus: “Some (bar flies, T. K.) have remembered the **anniversary of Adi’s (Adolf Hitler, T. K.) birth and death and concluded that he was good at solving unemployment problems**, others re-heated an old joke saying that we could again organize a competition for the best foreign ruler, in choosing whom we are either too stupid or really unfortunate, but either way we never have luck, they say.”(86).

56 “They miss by a mile in the south.. they cannot jump out of their skins”, while the bar flies “snigger with malice at the news of the robbery of our businessmen somewhere in Bosnia”. (17).

57 “Croats do not give a shit about us and given our ‘sharp’ responses they are obviously right to behave this way.” We must be content if they do not shift their border to Vič (part of Ljubljana) given our behavior”. (57).

Whatever the case, the situation now is co critical that “successful Yugobums on television, in theaters and in the elite city circles.... yes, also in the economy and, in turn in politics, only demonstrate how they **are permeating every pore of our lives, changing our identity, taking over Slovenia, which they also attempted to do centuries ago when warning bonfires were lit because of this**” (76).

The final analysis shows that those from the south come nearest to the **“southern thieves”** label, so such creatures should not be handled politely. Being openly radical, the bar flies advise that in an arrangement that would be projected and implemented by themselves, such “thieves would not be in ‘hotels’ but in real prisons and doing forced labor”. Moreover, the bar flies’ diagnosis and therapy are unambiguous and reminiscent of the John Wayne style from American westerns: **“They are not beaten enough, especially not the youngsters...”** (all in 39). Therefore they should be **“beaten”, processed/culturalized, not refraining from force if needed. A characteristic title to this effect runs: “Forced labor should go with imprisonment”** (96).<sup>58</sup>

As a dessert after the feast on foreignness, let me offer this culinary peculiarity - the one related to the Chinese: “Chinese soldiers marched into Hong-Kong, say the bar flies, and into Ljubljana marched the Chinese with their restaurants and their cuisine (95)”. Moreover: “There is quite a lot of them and their number is increasing, but what can we say, **if we are a cultural and intellectual dump, why not be a racial one too.** National consciousness and patriotism have already been turned into some kind of shame and are a sort of disturbance in communication. They say that the last obstacle was overcome with the adoption of the jungle bunny hockey player...” (75)<sup>58</sup>.

<sup>58</sup> Hockey is a traditionally popular sport in Slovenia currently in expansion. The Slovenian racists could not imagine a Negro with Slovenian citizenship although he is a top sportsman.

6. “LITTLE CREATURES FROM THE BALKANS”, “BEGINS WITH A HALF-ROOF OVER THEIR HEADS” & “REVOCATION OF CITIZENSHIP”

It clearly arises from the bar flies’ creations in Nedelo’s Nightwatch column that the terms “the Balkans” and “Balkan folk” in m. s.’s chronicles appear not only as counterpoles of culture but also have entirely non-human connotations (dehumanization). Quite often both words are crucial components of things filthy or dirty. **“If there is some dirty trick ... especially one that cannot be proved, say the bar flies, you scratch a bit and soon you come across a being with a half-roof, some festering relict of a party or whatever, in most cases some creature from the Balkans”** (45). If anyone, even a non-Balkan for that matter, does something “wrong” or does something “filthy”, the act is **related to the Balkans** *per definitionem*, regardless of the circumstances. For example, as we have already seen, if “our minister of education” does something naughty, he is sure to be ticked off by the bar flies, who say that “the minister plucks bundles of ideas from the Balkans, but they in fact belong in the Balkans and not in Slovenia” (74). In addition to “filthy and dirty” tricks and “Balkan caricatures” (95), m. s.’s definitions of the Balkans stick doggedly to the proverbial and characteristic **hygienic feature**<sup>59</sup>: **“a stench” or “stink”**. In a highly attractive column the bar flies’ spokesman thus talks about “a slightly rotten winter when it stinks of the Balkans” (67). In fact, it **“increasingly stinks of the Balkans both here and there”** (64), that is to say, in the Balkans and in Slovenia which, of course, by definition is by no means part of the Balkans. And surely the escape from this stench and stink to the pleasing smells of cultural Europe, i.e. “European culture” is a necessity, and the following bar flies’ question proceeds directly from this: “Who wants to lump us together with or rather sell us back to the Balkans?” (57). This is not the end of images related to the Balkans: there are also **“action”, “knife”, and “swearing”**, since “these men are twitchy and nervous, ready for ‘action’, their mouths full of Balkan curses” (85).

59 I say “proverbial” even though in our time, which abounds in various types of rehabilitation of Fascism and Nazism, it is no longer self-evident that a modern reader knows that the Nazis, before the final burning of Jews in concentration camps, were preparing the terrain for a “painless” and “final solution to the Jewish issue” using explanations that the Jews “stink”, that they are “filthy”.

The issues related to “the Balkans and Balkanophilia” are actually becoming increasingly intolerable. Everything is full of the “Balkan language”, while media “reports on Belgrade are even written in *Balkan* (language, т. к.) and are packed with emotion as if we were still, or again, the same family” (55). Moreover, “Balkan wizards greet us and teach us from all media and public events - from the entertainment industry and pop events to theaters and television and newspapers columns” (53). In this, the Balkan folk are either “authors or subjects dealt with”. And, more importantly, the Balkan folk “are of course the subjects dealt with also in reports on criminality” (53). The major issue over which “the bar flies rack their brains is whether the **Yugo-brains already have so much authority over Slovenia**, or is it that many of them we voted for sold themselves, so in a very short time we will again be the Balkans, locked in their brotherly embrace tighter than ever, will we not even manage to remain the ante-room of the Balkans or of Europe, will our children again start practicing the Cyrillic alphabet and will mosques and Orthodox churches start springing up across our cities and villages?” (85).

The insinuated Balkan model is at the same time so flexible that, in addition to the media, it can be extended to politics, or, for example, street culture. This gives rise to two further bar fly creations. One says that “these days one of the political parties has been appearing with the motto “United” and the bar flies have concluded in horror that this means a new union with the Balkans” (48)! - while the other states that “on the Tromostovje bridge people delighted in the music and the singer who sang about Slovenia, the promised land, with a ‘soft L’<sup>60</sup>” (53). Furthermore, it is exactly the Balkanophiles “who drag up here from the south various fortune-tellers and magicians”. “They cherish the **Balkan tunes** and invite to our (cultural) halls **everybody who reasons or feels the Balkan way**, so our singers just stare and have no audience to play to”. And, understandably, these actions are “enthusiastically applauded by the whole company of the **Balkan intellectual trust**” (23)<sup>61</sup>. In short, “**Balkanophilia and Yugoviches rule**” not only the Slovenian intellectual, me-

60 The “l” sound is a kind of shibboleth in Slovenia, as non-native speakers usually pronounce the ‘l’ sound slightly ‘softer’ than Slovenians.

61 “Fortune-telling and healing is broadcast on television and radio .... also in Serbian or who knows which of those Balkan languages” reports m. s. The Slovenians were “screwed” so many times that they fell into despair and started to turn to magicians, swindlers, southern screwers and eastern scientists” (19).

dia, and culinary stage<sup>62</sup>, warn the bar flies, but also the political one, in fact so strongly that the bar flies decided in protest to propose their own candidate at presidential elections and they "already started to look for a candidate who would be the father (probably of the nation, τ. κ.), some searching Fužine and Štepanjec<sup>63</sup>, while others, more radical, set off to the zoo" (43). The situation is not much better at the local level either ("a narrower" homeland of the bar flies), that is in Ljubljana. "The mayor of Ljubljana enthusiastically welcomed the idea of constructing some Arabian house and thus suggested that the treasures of the Balkan brotherhood<sup>64</sup> that are increasingly evident, could be stretched also to the Orient" (33).

The bar flies often shudder at the thought that we admit into Slovenia every type of "stock" from anywhere. In connection with this *m. s.* remembers, with obvious regret, an example from the Štajerska region<sup>65</sup> when a pub owner put up a sign above the door in which "Balkan folk were mentioned instead of smokers and he almost went to prison for this" (88). Now something similar has happened again only that "some Slovenian pub owner had the same sign referring to Serbs" (88). Comment? It is proverbially simple: all members of "this or other movement for 'the equality of the different', like supporters of other similar phrases",

62 The Balkan folk threaten the Slovenian cuisine and gastronomy, as nobody cares for Slovenian "culinary tradition". So they "blasted" everything, and turned them (authentic restaurants, τ. κ.) into some international or rather Balkan caricatures" (95).

63 Residential area of lower standing in Ljubljana inhabited mainly by people from former Yugoslavia.

64 Every definition of this kind has two ends that can be seen in different Nightwatch columns in which the second part is much more interesting and more telling. The typical dual definitions are "embittered fiddlers", "shitty peace", "tearful rape victims" (9) etc. The tension between the two parts of the sentence or between two words is such that the second word inverses the meaning of the first word which is apparently the defining one. The author achieves the failure of the realization of the anticipated meaning by means of the method known from the logic of jokes where the culmination turn (the unexpected, therefore funny) occurs at the end. This type of witticism is plentiful in *m. s.*'s Nightwatch columns. To the group of more outstanding indicators belong the words "Wisehead" and "south". Of course, this yields a "wisehead from the south" (12) and pertains to those who "always screw the Slovenians". It is quite clear from this example that the wisehead from the south by (the bar flies') definition acquires the opposite meaning, since even the minimal dosage of "southernness" (which is of course invariably determined by the "northerners") turns every wisehead into its opposite, no matter how wise he is. What we have here therefore is not wisdom, but cheating at best. By the same token, a wisehead from the south is nothing better than some poetical translation of a swindler. That a swindler is by definition someone who comes from the south hence becomes an "objective fact", an ingredient of the word itself that has nothing to do with the bar fly, or *m. s.* not to mention *Nedelo*. Yet the use of the word wisehead goes even further. Its negative characteristics, as we shall see, will be applied to politicians and even "Slovenian intellectuals".

65 The region in the northern part of Slovenia.

are invariably associated with "cretinism and idiocy" (88).

For this reason the fateful question of the bar flies adheres to the well-known saying - it repeatedly returns to the same position: "Who wants to lump us together with or rather sell us back to the Balkans?" (57). A rather simple answer to this question has materialized in the background of some excess. The bar flies, says M. S., wonder "**Why dual citizenship is allowed** and why must a thief be treated in accordance with Slovenian laws if we could send him back to his 'primary' country where he can do whatever he wants or can?" (48). The issue of foreigners/foreignness is therefore closely related to the popularized topic of "citizenship" - in M. S.'s language this equals "**revocation of citizenship**". From the bar flies' perspective, we have a situation "**in which anybody could purchase or simply steal the other half of the roof**" (76). The basic problem related to this lies in the fact that "these disagreeable guys were the ones who invented the legislation on citizenship..." (56) and that too many citizenships were "handed out", "for a few coins". In the characteristically tolerant bar flies' discourse this amounts to: "These days Zaire will follow the Slovenian example and start to hand out citizenship to the Tutsis and Hutus for eight pennies, and from now on there will be peace and brotherhood there" (55)! Their explicit attitude is: "**Let them go home with all their baggage and stay there, what are they still looking for here. Actually, why do we care at all, nobody cares about us either**". (39) Or, given as a direct piece of advice to the authorities this reads: the Slovenian authorities "**should drive out the violent and thieves, the rowdy ones and pains-in-the-neck that roam Ljubljana and hang around temporary centers for ages, although everybody in Yugoslavia brags that the peace process is progressing nicely and the natives can go back to their homes: talking about organized crime, we need to comb these dangerous spheres more thoroughly and need to employ the safety measure - removal - more often**" (20).

## 7. BOSNIANS, MUSLIMS &amp; ISLAM

The “brotherly colleagues in Bosnia” (11) or Bosnians make an equally old and perhaps one of the bar flies’ most smarting wounds. The most synthetic form of the bar flies’ discourse - this is one of the climaxes of creativity as regards “the Bosnian issue” - takes into account an **explicitly racist element** in the manner of (their own) traditional understanding. This form is manifest in one of m. s.’s collective pictures (the event took place in Tuzla) in which “whores, natives and blacks” (7) appear as a characteristic cultural and artistic group. It is good that “finally they have done away with that volatile dump site of the Balkans by introducing visas for the citizens of Bosnia-Herzegovina” (39) says m. s. Yes, adds he, “they should go down there with all their baggage and stay there, what are they still looking for here” (39). What else can they do indeed, being such **insects, pests, swarms and packs**, as the bar flies would put it. When on some occasion m. s. relates how “Mehmedalija, Nuris and Brusli” attacked Jože and Marija<sup>66</sup>, the story ends with “Jože finding an electric saw, turning it on and chasing away the pack from the house” (33)!

Neither do the bar flies understand “Školč’s<sup>67</sup> delegation, who ran to Bosnia-Herzegovina to negotiate a better permeability of the border”. The only thing that this can achieve is fresh “swarms of jobless and half-starved workers..., who have become Slovenians not long ago. Their unemployed are going to come here, or what...” (33). As to the genocide and war in Bosnia, the bar flies exercise sarcasm, so they “snigger rather maliciously over the peace process in Sarajevo”...(22). How at all, per definitionem, can uncultured Bosnians and other “Balkan folk” get along given their general lack of culture and the Balkan character?

Finally, if things are such as m. s. presents them, how are we to comprehend why some Slovenian politicians often go to Bosnia. Is it that the Slovenian road to Europe runs across the Orient” (33)? What can be done with the nation and its representatives, who “expelled Santa Claus from Bosnia-Herzegovina, eliminated turkeys and piglets, and offered only echt Muslim lamb’s meat” (60)? Despite everything, even the mayor of Ljubljana enthusiastically welcomed the unheard-of idea about the construction of

66 Mehmedalija, Nuris and Brusli are typical Muslim names, while Jože and Marija are Slovenian (i.e. Christian, Catholic) names.

67 The current Slovenian Minister of Culture.

some Arabian house (who knows what will go on inside it?) therefore suggesting that he would like to extend the treasures of the Balkan brotherhood, which are increasingly evident, to the Orient as well” (33). The bar flies’ attitude towards Bosnia, Bosnians, Muslims and Islam is determined by the “Islamic god”. The following quotation illustrates this somewhat slipshod connection: “As long as the Islamists slaughter so fiercely across Algeria in the name of their god, while we still sit in peace, one should not worry too much...” (82)<sup>68</sup>.

But it is not always that peaceful. From time to time the classic topic - a mosque - emerges to the surface and promptly turns the bar flies’ faces red with anger. It is only a question of the momentary state of the author’s metabolism, since these shades of discourse by definition follow the rules of diction in the Belgrade paper *Politika Express* from the end of the eighties.<sup>69</sup> Transplanted to Slovenia, the issue reads like this: “Once again the topical news is the construction of a mosque. People gathering in bars say that **the rattling of our grandfathers’ bones is heard sky-high while they turn in their graves and grit their teeth** as their skulls are pierced with questions like why had they lit bonfires, why had they struggled as far as Sisak, why had they died on stakes and slaughtered their fathers serving as janissaries, look at the doings of Islam across the world and we still import and domesticate it. In whose honor, rage the bar flies, will they construct also a training ground for mujaheddins and another one next to it for fundamentalists...” (81)

68 The affectionate attitude towards Islam can be inferred from the bar flies’ extraordinarily cultured definitions among which one can find also “half-mad Islamic terrorists” (ii).

69 A Belgrade daily known for its satanisation of the Albanians.

## 8. REFUGEES, SEVDAH &amp; ROOTS

In the lively language of *m. s.* spoken by the bar flies, refugees most often appear on their own or in a typical connection with the Balkan folk and Bosnians. According to reliable and confirmed bar statistics, “more than 5% of the population in Slovenia are refugees, while the numbers of those who have been Slovenianized is not known at all” (33). In short, there are 100,000 refugees who “by no means want to go home”<sup>70</sup>. And why do these refugees not want to go home? “Among the bar flies there is a deeply rooted conviction that they simply do not want to go home, that they have a fairly good time here, and that **they lament out of habit since lamenting is in their genes**. Many buy this readily, so charity here, charity there, although we have neither money nor understanding for our own social cases. Huh, by the end of the month even we, the workers, are running out of money for a drink, say the bar flies angrily”(67). It is not just that the refugees do not want to go home, but on top of that the bar flies “have been observing with interest how some organizers lump together and bundle up kids in schools and local kindergartens with refugee children and their kindergartens”, as if recreating the practice from old Yugoslavia when the Slovenians taking part in work brigades had to “make little Yugoslavs” (33). The refugee issue is so far-reaching that it even gives rise to reasoning of this type: “the celebrated Kreslin<sup>71</sup> has reportedly published a new record with the much-liked Bosnian *sevdah* in cooperation with refugees, but it is not known whether these are old recordings with real refugees or if he is singing accompanied by a pack of yugobums. However, what is important is that we have a new, artistic, state-formative, yugo-brotherly gesture, and the singer will certainly get some award for this...” (73) Upon the outbreak of the crisis in Albania, *m. s.* comments: “Everybody is convinced that the palms of our officials are again getting itchy in the expectation that our refugee centers will again fill up with newcomers from Albania, **so citizenship will be sold and the Slovenian blood will be ennobled,**

<sup>70</sup> According to the most pessimistic official estimates (i.e. without counting!) there were 70,000 Bosnian refugees in Slovenia during the climax of the war. However, when the authorities tried to “sell” this estimate to the Europeans (the figure was the basis for the allocation of financial support to Slovenia), it turned out that the count could not exceed 35,000 (this data had been released after the first official count that took place as late as in September 1993!)

<sup>71</sup> Popular Slovenian singer of ethno-rock.

even money for a new ministerial Mercedes will flow.” (75)

In principle, there are two variants of the “final solution” of the refugee issue: one is more convincing and “humane” and the other is radical. The more “humane”<sup>72</sup> solution appears somewhat later than the radical one (in August 1997), and it amounts to this: “As to the refugees who ought to return home, the bar flies think that it is peaceful enough down there, or at least everybody reports so, and even if this is not true, it is still easier to talk about things once they are all back and tell their own stories (97)”. If, however, this cannot be resolved “by fair means”, that is by convincing, argumentation, and in a “humane” way, there is the radical method (this one dates from June 1996) which, once again, offers a typical bar-fly-style solution: “It is quite o.k. that the volatile Balkan dump site has been eliminated by introducing visas for the Bosnians, there should be some sifting and selection, think the bar flies. Yet they are astonished that the Bosnians worry about their voters in Slovenia who won’t go down there, because they are afraid that they won’t be able to return. Well, say (the bar flies, т. к.) **let them go down there with all their baggage and let them stay there, what are they still looking for here, do they want to begin the third millennium as refugees? Anyway, why should we care, nobody cares about us either** (39)”. Moreover, the bar flies are getting angrier and angrier, while occasionally - when it comes to refugees - they even “rage” and become “infuriated”(95): **“To hell with it, everybody should go back to their roots, what do we have to do with it. Why do we rush into brotherly ties infinitely .... rage the bar flies.** “ (95)

72 While “cretinism” is one of the favorite bar fly expressions (“electoral cretinism”...), the terms “humanity” and “humanism” belong to the class of the most detested.

## 9. PEDOPHILES, TRANSVESTITES & “SIMILAR FELLOWS”

The bar flies' anger now and then turns also to homosexuals, pedophiles, drug addicts and “similar fellows”. Even though this is presented in various contexts and the emphasis differs, as a rule it is closely related to those from the south and the Balkan folk. In most general terms, this target also falls within the category of a peculiar grudge against the media. According to m. s., the bar flies think that there is absolutely too much “news” in printed media that treats homosexuals and transvestites with sympathy, so the bar flies seriously ask if our Slovenian broadness that pushes us into brotherly ties with everybody, even the most blood-stained Balkan folk and all Yugo-ideas and demands, will also bring us to allow a congress of, say, Belgian pedophiles, who would perhaps discuss, right here in Ljubljana, adoptions, differentness, love and brotherhood! (42). The bar flies have also reckoned that we might do best if we could get Eurosongs from the Irish “by bartering the traditional Ljubljana festival of gays and lesbians” (84).

Similar positions in the bar flies' discourse are occupied by “various spiritual and exotic representations of Allah, Buddha and similar, **what we still lack are Satanists, then some cannibal sects and terrorist training for our separatists**” (42). Drug addicts are not in for anything better. On the law about smoking prohibition, m. s. says: “Three years of brain work yielded the results - condemnation of smokers, while, on the other hand, everyone feels sorry for drug addicts and want to build homes and houses for them in villages...” (47). In short, the universally developed brotherhood of bar flies would be most happy if it could **get rid finally of every “differentness”** and “brotherhood” (categories that the bar flies like to treat with irony), and establish a **social system of pride that respects two things only: Slovenian ethnicity and, above all, drinking.**

## 10. WHEN THREATS RUN SHORT: “GIRLS”, “CHICKS” & WOMEN

Girls, chicks and women are especially popular objects, or should I say targets of the men hanging around bars. In the upright bar flies' discourse they most often materialize as **“our girls” and/or “whores”**. But we are more accurate if we say that women in m. s.'s chronicles are most often represented as somewhat more concrete images. Generally, women are presented - like politics and parliamentarism - as **“speechifiers”** (7). As individuals they appear mostly when, for example, they “have taken leave of their senses” (8), or as “stripped girls” (9) or some sort of **“tearful rape victims”** (9)<sup>73</sup>. Through m. s.'s words the bar flies advise that a woman should not get angry if somebody says to her “Joži, you have a nice ass” (10). On the contrary, the woman addressed in this way should be (most) happy, is the bar flies' big-hearted opinion. In any case, **while those from the south are ugly creatures, women are “little creatures” pleasant to the eye**. “The sun is frolicking, young girls have put on short skirts and scuttle jauntily along the sidewalks, black stockings are again in fashion, everything is o.k., under control and in its proper place (73)”. As soon as the sun comes out, the scene is filled with “short skirts and other beauties of this season” (69). So in summertime the bar flies' “debates mostly revolve around wine and, of course, the way women dress...” (13).

On the other, somewhat less “innocent” hand, if innocence can be used in this connection, it is quite clear that women have no business being involved in politics. This is why the bar flies were amazed and horrified at the “author of the fabulous tobacco law”<sup>74</sup> who “again brought to light an extraordinary idea about some women's body or rather corpse in the parliament, which should see that more (female) brains get hold of leading positions wherever appropriate, that equality is observed and that injustice done to the Slovenian female world is eliminated (70)”. The rejection of every kind of women's role in politics or decision-making in general is also evident in connection with ministerial posts (this is related to the proposal of Polonca Dobrajc for Minister of Internal Affairs, т. к.). “Yet it is

73 The topmost product of Slovenian alcoholic wisdom, “tearful rape victims” pertains to tv images from the time of mass rapes in Bosnia.

74 Mateja Kožuh Novak, a renowned Slovenian gynecologist and activist of the United List of Social Democrats.

not necessary that we are always the best and the first, and so far there has been no case, not in the civilized west at least, of a woman holding the post of police minister" (69)<sup>75</sup>. If, despite this, some woman still decides to talk politics, even if she restricts herself to the frail humanitarian level of human rights only, the bar flies are either intensely agitated or even get mad. On several occasions they "were strongly roused" when, for example, "the representative of Amnesty stated, admittedly in a creative way ...while everybody got enraged by the lady from Helsinki ... who explained how ugly and detestable is the attitude of the Slovenians towards the Balkan folk, how we suppress them and do not let them live, how indeed there are quite a lot of them here, but they only suffer, as to those several tens of thousands who still wait either on the border or queue for citizenship, we do not even notice them, but we should - we should notice them and enable them to have better lives among us. The indignant bar flies were unanimous **that the woman must feel bad or something, so she simply teases and stirs up the masses**" (58).

To the bar flies' understanding of a woman as a girl and a non-political subject almost by definition, there should also be added "chicks", that is to say "whores". They stand in contrast to those women who push their way into politics or human rights, but they "do not at all present a danger to the state or the people such that we need to keep an eye on them constantly. Anyhow, the trade (prostitution, т. κ.) should be legalized and girls given licenses, and they could go chase thugs and thieves, hotheads and pests" (20). **"If prostitutes really get work permits.... that will be the first good and sensible move from our wiseheads**, that is, sensible both for girls and customers" (15). Hand in hand with this well-meaning standpoint about women goes **pornography, which is most decisively advocated by the author**, as is evident from the piece in which he turns up his nose at "the purists, who managed to ban porno flicks on A kanal" (42). In line with "radicalism" regarding prostitution, pornography, gays, women... is their **sturdy advocacy of the death penalty**: "The bar flies ask in wonder how far does the papal goodness extend if he recently wasted time praying for some American murderer and rapist who was, finally and in spite of everything, given a deadly shot. **Fortunately at least now and then somebody is radi-**

75 On this occasion the bar flies invented the name for the undesired future policeman, who would be called something like "polonoicemen" (69).

cally removed with a ball, say the bar flies, and they support the idea that we too should re-introduce the death penalty or forced labor at the least to accompany long-term imprisonment." (96)

The explicit place of a woman in m. s.'s drinking circle is perhaps best illustrated with the following sentence: **when they run out of serious topics** (politics, those from down there, "men with a half-roofs" ...) "some (bar flies, τ. κ.) change bar, while others opt for a new round. And slowly, **"they switch to domestic troubles with wives, children, and health"** (23).

The list of the bar flies' targets (if we limit ourselves to those found in m. s.'s texts published in *Nedelo*, they are: scribblers criticizing Nightwatch, petty Slovenians, those from down there, foreigners, Yugoslavia, Balkan creatures, beings with a half-roof over their heads, citizenship granted to foreigners, Bosnians, Muslims, Islam, refugees, *sevdah*, Kreslin, pedophiles, transvestites, girls, chicks, women) is far from exhausted at this point. There is another special, paradigmatic, perhaps even decisive target that will be presented in the following paragraphs. Of course, this is a special enemy that is, naturally, called politics and politicians, not "our" politicians, of course.

## 11. POLITICAL BABBLE, “ELECTORAL CRETINISM” & “THE RIDICOLOUS STATE”

m. s.'s delineation of politics in *Nedelo's* Nightwatch column is negative on the whole, that is, anti-political. Perhaps one of the most outstanding bar fly designations of politics is “political babble” (9). All politicians and everything that is political or at least smells of politics from a distance, is generally defined by the bar flies as “treason/ treacherous” or “enemy/hostile”. **On the bar flies’ scale of values, politicians and politics rank as low as “whores”, “those from down there”, “the Balkan folk”, and “beings with a half-roof”; apparently the bar flies’ creator sticks to a traditional saying according to which “politics is a whore”.** His relating of politics to “those from the south”, ruffians, whores and filthiness has many shades of appearance. Out of them I have chosen a slightly more peppered variant that also appears in the title of the column: “We must first import (from the south, τ. κ.) politicians, and only after that sportsmen and ruffians...” (43). The connection of (domestic) politics with the south and Yugoslavia is very explicit and constantly present. The bar flies see Slovenian politicians as dealing primarily with the question of “how many of them (from the south, τ. κ.) should we drag to Slovenia and to how many should we give citizenship” (5). Roughly speaking, the Slovenian state impatiently waits “to go to the south” (7) and to begin participating in “investments in the renovation of the southern countries” (7). This, of course, is something that men gathering in bars see as bad, because “as the older people will surely remember, they (those from the south, τ. κ.) duped us as much they could” (7). Generalization<sup>76</sup> of this feature goes so far that the day of the plebiscite has been proclaimed the day when we were “screwed by Yugoslavia” (8), since those from the south - as we have seen - are a synonym for “southern screwers”.

Our interest in the bar flies’ viewpoint on politics will be focused on some symptomatic details, namely **the polyvalent capacity of anti-politics** that often enables numer-

<sup>76</sup> Generalization ad infinitum is, of course, one of the major tools in the hands of the bar flies. In connection with the parliament and elections let me mention just the meaningful title of the *Nedelo's* Nightwatch column which runs something like “A circus in Ljubljana, the Flintstones in cinemas, and elections in Slovenia (48), only that the title of the cartoon Flintstones in Slovenian has been modified in such a way that it alludes to cretinism.

ous and unexpected reversals. For example, whenever an anti-political pointer is aimed at somebody - metaphorically speaking this could also be “a proper Slovenian by nature” (meaning “ethnically our” in the bar flies’ discourse) - that person is automatically turned into an enemy.

Looking through these anti-political lenses, the distinction between “ours” and “theirs” or, to be more precise, between the constantly implied “us” and “them”, which invariably suggests something “basic” and original, actually appears as a derivation of secondary importance compared to politics and anti-politics as primary notions. Since in the bar flies’ parlance **politics is called a “babble”** (9), it is exactly “the shooting off of mouths” that renders it “ineffective”<sup>77</sup>. This could also be termed “prattling”, “blabbing”, “chattering”. However, since the radical bar flies’ discourse is above all “efficiency” driven - this should be understood in terms of the well-known motto from the self-management era “from words to actions” - the switch from “ours” to “non-ours” i.e. from “friends” to “enemies” cannot be imagined, let alone realized without the help of anti-politics. On the other hand, it is exactly this delicate and slightly whimsical moment of anti-politics that must be taken with extreme cautiousness. It would be a cheap and wrong conclusion to say simply that m. s.’s bar flies tend to see politicians as some “domestic equivalents of those from the south” or some substitute “Bosnian brothers” (12). In such a case, the anti-political element as an extremist determining factor (the act and activism arises exactly from here)<sup>78</sup> would dissolve into social interpretation and become subordinated, let’s say, to “nationalist”, sexist, racist or some other similar understanding.

It should be stressed here that the common denominator of all extremist elements of “reasoning” is the notion that everything seems to be “lacking”, inadequate, **they** cannot start functioning without an additional “excess” element, that is to say, without taking up anti-political activism which, by definition, **radically rejects the space and the very existence of the political**. Politics and political “babble” that

77 From the bar flies’ viewpoint the issue is undoubtedly moral i.e. immoral when related to the parliament. The column dated 13. 10. 1996 bears the title “Infinite duplicity of m. p.’s morality”

78 The sense of m. s.’s talk arises from a healthy and simple bar-fly world, while the logic, which is actually of a neo-Marxist nature, runs something like this: there is no point in philosophizing about what is actually going on or how - we all know that things are wrong, therefore they must be changed. In other words, we must switch from words to actions, as states the popular translation of the 11th thesis on Feuerbach.

are at work here are therefore infinitely more important and more substantial than an inattentive reader might think. This is in fact a position that precludes every (including political) equality/justice, not to mention - and this is crucial - the discourse or the very legitimacy of discussion.<sup>79</sup> **It disqualifies it in advance, destructs and de-culturalizes it by branding it “babble”, that is to say, a non-discourse and an unarticulated, less important and uncultured mumbling.** The introduction of a “babble” instead of even the possibility of political (talk) should therefore be **understood most seriously, as a symbolic introduction of the characteristic “meta-language”; to put it differently, this is a specific introduction of the “language” of force and aggression that substitutes the skill of language which makes the core of the articulated political (talk).**

Consistent with this and understandable is the bar flies’ similarly disqualifying attitude towards the state. Of course, this implies the state in general as well as any specific state. This **anti-state sentiment** whose intensity increases in proportion with the expansion of the radical, popularized racist idea of “national community” (*Gemeinschaft*), naturally becomes most apparent through the attitude towards one’s “own country”. Only the un-informed will be surprised to find, instead of the anticipated and overall profound state-formative sentiment, which by definition should be the stance of every “bar fly worried about Slovenianness”, the cynical statement that Slovenia is either some kind of “our little country” (68) or downright **“tragicomic state”** (65). And why is this so? The answer is clear: because “if it’s o.k. for it (the state), then that’s how it is, but where the people have a say, it is as the state or the government says, or some constitutional court.” (65) That something which in the bar flies’ world super-determines the appropriateness of a state (Slovenia in this case), is a live matter - people, not an immaterial notion - an institution, or legislation or law<sup>80</sup>. An express example of this type of reasoning is the article in which the author states that various Slovenian politicians “crawl around the Balkan capital”. “And, they do this without their nation’s approval, there was no referendum, but who says that we

79 A good example of discrediting in advance is allusions to the elections such as “pre-election shit” (47) (in addition to the one mentioned earlier which pertains to all criticism of the Nightwatch column)

80 A characteristic example is the law that prohibits smoking in public places and advertising of tobacco products. In the bar flies language this is called “the tobacco cretinism” (74).

Slovenians like Yugoslavia so much, that we haven't broken off from it seriously with the plebiscite (...) nobody asks us" (85)<sup>81</sup>.

Is it not self-evident from this option that the very legal order and equality of citizens are one of the main targets of the bar flies discourse? Wouldn't it be perfectly normal and consistent with the bar flies' discourse if we described the current Slovenian state and politics as a **type of terrorism**? As usual, m. s.'s interpretation is clear: like his designation of the pre-election circumstances as "pre-election shit" (47), he further asserts that "**a bomb in the parliament would do much good**" (67)<sup>82</sup>!

If we now switch from this general and utterly constructive bar fly, i.e. m. s., attitude towards politics and the state to their attitude towards individuals, we shall easily notice that the bar flies only rarely refer to Slovenian politicians by their names<sup>83</sup>. If this, however, occurs the tone is clearly and explicitly negative. On the other hand, positive assessments of individual politicians are rare and they apply to the opposition leaders of smaller, mainly extremist parties or associations<sup>84</sup>. However, in line with the general anti-political stance, neither are these assessments entirely linear, that is, purely positive. The bar-style posture clings to a "sturdy" rejection of the existing extremism, and it does this in the manner that we have seen many times before. This coincides with the historical development of (anti)political parties in Slovenia. m. s.'s bar-style logic found in *Nedelo* is enduring, so it generally turns down existing extremism and extremists as **not being sufficiently extreme**! What we have here therefore is a radical standpoint that obviously cannot be gratified by simple nationalism and chauvinism as we know them from the Slovenian post-socialist era. The radical scheme that finds nationalism lacking (disappointment over nationalists) is expressed as follows: The bar flies "wonder what else

81 The bar flies refer to the "Nation" on several occasions. Generally, they rely on but do not mention "article 40" according to which the "Nation" has a right to "decide"(2) in which they equate the nation with the state ("the Nation i.e. the state") (1).

82 This sentence is the title of the column dated 9.2.1997.

83 One should not waste too many words on the bar flies' attitude towards foreign politicians, especially Alija Izetbegović (the president of Bosnia-Herzegovina) and Franjo Tuđman (the president of Croatia). In contrast to expressing a liking of Milošević, their attitude towards Izetbegović and Tuđman reveals irony and cynicism at best, if not offensiveness and lack of decency, which is not the subject of my study in this paper.

84 Janez Janša is one of the rare prominent Slovenian politicians who has not been mentioned in the bar flies' chronicles.

the nationalists have to say, having wasted all of their trump cards, having failed to fulfill promises and now having no other “excuse” for existence save the forests and the Church. The right wing, on the other hand, has some high caliber members who let out one wisecrack, but then they continue to spiel so much crap that one can hardly believe that this really happens” (49). For the time being this brings us to the end of the presentation, if only provisional, of the most outstanding targets of the bar flies’ criticism. But there is an exception and let us now have a look at it.

## 12. EXCEPTION TO THE THREAT: SLOBODAN MILOŠEVIĆ AS A MASTER

One of the more paradoxical elements of m. s.'s discourse which, as an exception, sheds a different light on all of the bar flies' viewpoints discussed here, is the ingredient which adds spice to all the items on a menu that includes threats to Slovenia, foreigners and hate. In the position of the Enemy of all enemies there unexpectedly (?) appears his highness - "the master" or the "divinity".

In the place where any expert on the events of the past ten years in this part of the world would most normally expect to find the "arch enemy", we find - if not a good friend then at least an amiable "old acquaintance". Who else could this be but His Highness, Slobodan Milošević! **Why is Slobodan Milošević the "exception" and why does he figure as the divinity in the bar flies' discourse?** Simply because he is the best, because he is the man of mettle, he is "cunning" and "understands", and knows how to handle the most significant things (he is efficient, consistent, decisive, does not "falter"....), because **he knows how to "screw" properly**, as the bar flies who often christen all those from the south "screwers from the south", would put it. Therefore, Milošević is depicted more or less discreetly and with sympathy, and in some peculiar way he even **functions as "one of us", as some "drinking brother" par excellence**<sup>85</sup>. For this reason it would not be appropriate to put down to him too seriously several hundreds of thousands of slaughtered Bosnians, whom he directly or indirectly pushed into death or allowed to die. In short, with Milošević we hit upon the syrupy but important element of the charming bar flies' language, which (directly) testifies that the war in Bosnia, Croatia and, after all, also in Slovenia, did not succeed in changing the discourse of the Slovenian bar flies<sup>86</sup>. Despite inconceivable horrors that were suffered by the Bosnians, Croats, Serbs, and also Slovenians during those years, which we witnessed time and again, **the discourse of the bar flies, at least as regards the Bosnians, does not show any developments in the light of these events in comparison with**

85 As *primus inter pares*, as far as bar flies are concerned.

86 Let me comment here that this standpoint is anything but original. Something similar could have been observed in Western public opinion which in principle should not be inclined to Milošević. Nevertheless, the national-craic adversity should be distinguished from the fascination with Milošević present among the public. This fascination with the "man of mettle" was known in the time of Mussolini and Hitler. In our time it continues to be one of the supporting platforms for neo-Fascist and neo-Nazi movements in Europe.

**that from the eighties.** The inconceivable events of the last five years that more or less threw everybody off to a larger or smaller degree, or at least brought us to seriously consider the time and the forces that presently reign on our stage, remained entirely marginal in this column, almost irrelevant. Perhaps we could conclude from this - if only indirectly - that in studying the discourse of the “men gathering in bars”, whose spiritual representative is M. S., **we must account for infinitely deep roots that extend virtually to the very core of the so-called (ethnic?) identity, if not the identity itself**<sup>87</sup>.

It is clear that both this discourse and the upright (bar flies’) **identity are inseparably connected with stereotypes that reach so far back and so deeply that they cannot be distinguished from “cultural racism” that is at work here and now**<sup>88</sup>. In this language, the Bosnians continue to be seen as they had been seen for centuries, that is to say, as the Turks<sup>89</sup> who are continually and always in stock and literary knocking on our doors<sup>90</sup>. Maybe this in the first place arises from the fact that they are not Christians (Catholics)<sup>91</sup>, that they have different habits and that they believe in the “wrong God”. The anti-Muslim emotional charge in the bar flies can therefore be understood as something deep, elementary, **that could not be uprooted even by such a strong earthquake as was the genocide in Bosnia and the war in the former common country.** In medical terms, not even the strongest medicine or the strongest injection of understanding and pity for the people who suffered genocide could change the structural elements of the extreme language of M. S.’s bar flies communicating the sense of threat.

87 Perhaps this is the point at which we encounter one of the possible indicators that show how the threatened Slovenian identity gets transposed into Slovenianness as the identity of threat.

88 “Garbo nationalism”, the term coined by former American diplomat in Belgrade Zimmerman in the time of the disintegration of SFR Yugoslavia to denote the “happenings in Slovenia”, is not a notion that should be considered solely within the framework of “fine” Slovenian nationalism/chauvinism that is directed towards the external. Probably, this definition could be applied also to “internal circumstances” within Slovenia itself. For easier understanding let me quote this old distinction offered by some researchers in the field of Fascism (Griffin, 1995). They distinguish between military/aggressive racism that was especially explicit in the period of Fascism (including countries such as Slovakia, Croatia etc.) and some kind of “cultured racism” that was more at home in Italy and countries that followed its example. By stating this I do not want to diminish the racist and genocidal atrocities of Italian Fascism that greatly affected the Slovenian nation as well. I just want to draw your attention to two typical European variants, where the Italian (“cultured”) variant is somewhat more applicable to the present day “Slovenian post-socialist mentality”, if I may use this somewhat less precise term. In terms of this distinction, the present day recurrence of the German variant of Nazism and racism can be found in the relations between the Serbs and the Croats, especially in the territory of Bosnia-Herzegovina.

89 A real gem of writing about mosques, Islam and implicitly also about the Turks (“janisaries”, “slaughtering as far as Sisak...”) can be found in document No 81.

90 “Knocking on our doors” should be understood in two ways: they are the enemy endlessly lurking along the borders of “Our Nation” and our country, but also a handy friend for that matter. In other words, the Turks represent the material that is convenient and always at hand when there is a need to activate the feeling of a generally threatened identity. In addition, they are the pillar supporting the construction of the feeling of threat.

91 See also Mastnak, 1996.

### 13. AN ATTEMPT AT UNDERSTANDING: THE IDENTITY OF THE THREAT

#### A THE SLIPPERY BAR FLY FORMULA

This brings us to the point of recapitulation - let us begin with the bar flies: the bar flies are a kind of community, or a collectivity, “men gathering in bars”, even “bar laborers”. As to their internal relationships one could say that they observe a certain **code of camaraderie**, brotherhood, and solidarity, and display a relatively high degree of mutual understanding. But in the first place they are local and domestic people, i.e. domestic in Slovenia, and successful originators of the genuine, domestic social discourse, or the language of the homelike community of Slovenia. Non-Slovenians, foreign born bar flies, “those from outside” can by no means be part of this circle. The third important element that serves as the designator of the bar flies’ discourse is an **“understanding”** possessed by the bar flies which is associated with their “worries” (most often they are concerned with Slovenianness and Slovenia). The bar flies therefore **“chew over the difficulties that pester the Slovenian nation”**, or to put it a bit more philosophically (since the bar flies are closely related to wisdom<sup>92</sup> or love wisdom) “it is important that the debates ... go on and that discussions are weighty, that they **really pertain to the core of our essence**”(91)! From the marriage of the bar flies’ understanding and their **incapacity** (lack of power has been unjustly imposed on the bar flies and is the fourth supporting element) is born the next, fifth element of the discourse mentioned earlier in this text: this is the **bar flies’ anger** that occasionally spills over and turns into rage (“they were enraged”). The bar flies are severely disturbed (“they are angry”) by anything that opposes them on any grounds, and occasionally the cause of the disturbance is mere differentness, as we could see earlier. This especially applies to every individual and political/social group that proclaims itself foreign or is determined as such by others, in short, to all who are regarded as non-domestic, non-ours. Immanent and inherent to the bar flies’ discourse is **the type of anger that is directed towards women in general or indi-**

<sup>92</sup> “The bar flies laboriously chew over current topics. A moment for a wise thought can always be spared between sips” (88), but we must make a difference between the bar flies and “wiseheads” which is the term denoting “those from the south”, “politicians”, even “intellectuals”.

vidually, foreigners in general or individually, people of a different (non-Catholic) religion, people of a different (skin) color, different sexual orientation, different surnames and names, other nations and countries, politicians (including certain local ones). In short, their anger encompasses all categories that are explicitly or implicitly listed in Article 63 of the Slovenian Constitution that forbids discrimination!

This, however, is by no means everything that needs to be said about m. s.'s bar fly formula used for the public production of the feeling of threat and ensuing hate towards others and those different. In addition to this, m. s.'s creation, i.e. the bar flies, is based on some well-settled (legal?) practice that puts in the hands of both the author and *Nedelo* a tool that enables **characteristic manipulation** at the extremely sensitive level of the constitutional and legal framework. The bar fly formula in fact enables the author to portray anyone involved in alcohol drinking - and bar flies belong to this class *per definitionem* - as someone who acts unintentionally in the least, if not "subconsciously" or "unknowingly". Apparently, m. s.'s bar flies voice some (collective, folk, cultural, Slovenian...) unknowing position, that is, they "spiel" the things that the sober suppress.<sup>93</sup>

The larger part of the analytically important matter is hidden in the very form of the bar flies' discourse, so (exactly for this reason) this form is intentionally slippery, if not entirely elusive. This is an **authentic literary invention of Slovenian post-socialist origin**, which makes possible the voicing of the whole truth (a complete truth in contrast to "partial truths") about existence here and now, or, if we use Tadjman's diction, about the specific "state of the nation". Moreover, in addition to the effective set-up of the language that enables the voicing of the whole truth, this voicing is also a public act, but to all appearances it sidesteps responsibilities that could be laid at the door of the sober and, even more so, responsibility before the law or court<sup>94</sup>.

Furthermore, this specific form could allegedly reduce

93 The notion that those who drink say aloud things that the sober would not voice is a well-known traditional formula. Taking into account only the narrower region of the southern part of central Europe, this formula has been most profitably used for political purposes by Jorg Heider, the leader of the Austrian nationalists, and Zmago Jelinčič, the leader of the Slovenian Nationalist Party, a notorious Slovenian politician known for his extremism during the early stages of his political career.

94 *Nedelo's* Nightwatch column is some kind of a weekly bulletin used for the dissemination of viewpoints on different values (guidelines) and images. Its calls for action are more explicit than not and they rest on coarse rejection of legal constitutional premises of the Republic of Slovenia.

the responsibility of a drinker before the court or even free him from every responsibility (unaccountable, he was not himself...). By the same token, the very nature of a bar fly and the drinking itself preclude any resentment on the part of anybody having any self-respect. Despite everything that the bar flies say or do, you must not, “if you are ‘normal’, **take them seriously, consider them as being serious**”. But there is a catch in this. The very discourse that one must not take offence at, because it is not serious, or “normal”... produces weekly, on a regular basis, vast quantities of “the feeling of threat” from which ensues hate. If we want to take seriously the doings of *Nedelo*’s bar flies and m. s. as their spokesman, we must implicitly and explicitly concede to “abnormality” or “madness”. Perhaps this is the area where we should seek the reasons for the decreasing number of so-called sober locals who would be willing to take seriously anything like this, either the upright posture of the Slovenian bar flies or their linguistic activities that are the subject of this paper. Or should I suppose that it is by virtue of pure chance that this psychoanalytical example par excellence, which the discourse of m. s.’s Nightwatch column actually is, has not yet met with a response in appropriate “top scientific circles” in Slovenia?<sup>95</sup>

That the practice of the bar flies is anything but innocent can be proved rather simply, that is, by way of “large numbers”. The actual number of true alcoholics is extraordinarily high in Slovenia (the official figures corroborate this assertion).<sup>96</sup> Consequently, the number of individuals who draw conclusions, talk and act in the manner of the bar flies discussed here can therefore be verified, and it is extremely high. One could say that m. s.’s bar tirades published in high-circulation print media such as *Nedelo* and *Delo*, are a kind of self-confession, or public message of **the extremely powerful bar “lobby” in Slovenia which - this**

95 According to an anecdote, when Hanna Arendt was asked to explain how come some “great” authors, say, Heidegger, Benjamin and others, never seriously dealt with Nazism and Fascism, she answered something to this effect: for them, Nazism was a boring subject, something of inferior value and uninteresting, on which one should not waste time or words. They preferred to be fascinated with Italian futurism, aesthetics and design of the time.

96 Alcoholism is widespread in our society. 15% of male adults are alcoholics, another 15% are on their way to becoming alcoholics. Looking from another perspective, 2-3% of the Slovenian population are alcoholics or approximately 60,000-80,000 people (Razboršek and Krištof, 1998, page 3). This optimistic assessment is 10 years old (!) so it surely contains some of the proverbial protective coloration from the self-management era. What has happened in this field in the meanwhile and what has been brought in by post-socialism remains a wild guess for the time being.

is one of my hypotheses - functions as one of **the largest yet invisible anti-political movements in the country on the sunny side of the Alps**. Perhaps we should add to this the silent support that is provided by industrial and trade institutions that with utmost care cater for the powerful and influential alcoholic class on which they cling as parasites and on whose account they reap, understandably, not insignificant profits.

B THE GENUINENESS OF BAR FLIES  
AS AN EXCEPTIONAL TRAIT

At any rate, in M. S.'s creations the bar flies are genuine subjects of comment and they perform the role of protagonists of the discourse in *Nedelo's* Nightwatch column (hence even the occasional "citations" of statements uttered by a specific bar fly). The definition of the bar flies provided by the author himself is twofold: first of all, they are "genuine drinkers" (8), then "men gathering in bars" (9). The "genuine drinkers" definition undoubtedly suggests that there is a difference between "genuine drinkers" and other drinkers, that is ones who do not know how to drink. Let us accept this suggestion and develop it further in the direction that might make it easier for some to understand the political and legal significance i.e. relevance of M. S.'s writings. In accordance with M. S.'s own definition, we must take as the starting point the fact that **the bar flies are not "alcoholics", much less "bums"**<sup>97</sup>. According to M. S.'s elaborate matrix, there are two kinds of people: working people, "workaholics are in the minority ... the opposite type are more numerous". This "opposite type" are alcoholics and/or "bums who wander around aimlessly in constant fear of work, sweat and blisters, they are molesters, they live by cadging off people, sleep in parks, basements, abandoned houses or anywhere like that, and most of them are anyway constantly soaked so they do not know what is going on in reality, even less what is going to happen tomorrow" (99). Bar flies, on the other hand, are "genuine drinkers" (8), this being the notion connected with the earlier mentioned "honesty", while alcoholics are quite different and they do not belong here (in the first part of *Nedelo's* Nightwatch column). Alcoholics and bums are the subjects of the second part of Nightwatch. However,

<sup>97</sup> The "bum" category is in document No 76 related to the term "čifur" (a derivative name for a non-Slovenian from the south) thus yielding "čifur bum".

since bar flies do engage in drinking, although they are not alcoholics, they must be some intermediate, connecting link between the “sober” on the one hand and the “drunkards” on the other. In contrast to alcoholics and “bums”, **bar flies “know what is actually going on” and also “what is going to happen tomorrow” (far-sightedness!).** The decisive question posed here is how to define the rightfulness and the genuineness of “genuine drinkers”? What is it that makes “genuine drinkers” genuine in fact? A rough answer has been supplied earlier. They are genuine in that they know how to “drink properly” and **they are not drunkards despite the fact that they drink.** If we additionally generalize the definition of genuine drinkers, we could say that genuine drinkers are those who know (how to drink)! They are, therefore, the **genuine possessors of some specific expertise and learning (or knowledge, they are the “knowledgeable”).** Bar flies are knowing subjects because they know how to drink. A step forward, from the “techniques of drinking” towards more general knowledge, is still to come. If one knows how to drink, that is, if one has mastered the technique in this most slippery and one of the most difficult areas of modern life concentrated around thirst, then he knows (and has under control) everything else”. The drink is in fact the salt of life: *In vino veritas!*

In other words, the bar flies who are the subject of our analysis successfully occupy a **strategically decisive position in the area of knowledge-techniques**, i.e. technique as the bare bones of knowledge, or proficiency: theirs is the role of the **“discourse center of the world”** that is, the technical world of knowledge. As inaugurated possessors of knowledge they can infinitely turn to all sides of the world and everything that happens around them actually happens within their grasp. Everything is within reach, therefore accessible, while the remote control which they manipulate as skillfully as glasses is only an accidental materialization. For this reason, they can (infinitely) supply “comments” on “everything”, they can “conclude”, be “critical” of everything... and can have their own, specific viewpoint and specialized “viewpoint-knowledge”. In short, **they know everything and this is simply because they are specialized in entirety (truth)<sup>98</sup>**, they are some kind of

<sup>98</sup> Indisputably this truth is at the same time beautiful, since it is not by chance that in the light of real beauty or beautiful truth women appear as a beauty accessory par excellence; this is evident from the bar flies' attitude towards women that we discussed earlier.

general practitioners. The truth is the only thing they are concerned with. "The contemplation and debates of the bar flies are not simply grumbling or slander!"(97) justifiably concludes m. s., *primus inter pares* of the bar flies. A descriptive and at the same time supplementary element of the definition of "genuine drinkers" is the assertion that "these are men gathered around bars" (not "lying under bars" which would probably apply to "alcoholics" or "bums"). Last but not least, when talking about the subject of *Nedelo*, i.e. bar flies, there is no doubt that they are also (real) "men" and that the discourse they practice is put forward as **male discourse *par excellence***. It is also obvious that this is the discourse of potency and "great balls", of some grand language and appropriately adapted male organ which behaves in accordance with the "art of drinking" and is therefore used in the first place as an outlet for getting rid of the byproducts of drinking. That these are proper men, males, and also Slovenians, is anyway self-evident.

C THE CLOSED CIRCLE OF THE  
SLOVENIAN BAR FLIES

It must be especially stressed that we should not look for the most outstanding element of the Nightwatch among what "the bar flies debate"; we have discussed this extensively in the analysis on the previous pages. That this is true is most obvious in the moments when the author, despite the fact that he is running out of the "stuff" which - thanks to the event-deficient public life here is not so rare - shapes the column by appropriately embedding the elements of threat into its form. In his column, **the decisive factor is how and especially where/when something has been stated**. The first part of the Nightwatch column contains a discourse which has the status of a monologue. As if there existed some (political) party of genuine drinkers or the drinkers' union/lobby which "weekly releases its public statements" in *Nedelo*, through its spokesman m. s. Therefore, these statements are not served only to the drinkers but also, and in first place, to the sober; if I understand things correctly, the drinkers usually do not waste their valuable and precisely apportioned spare time on newspaper reading. This opens another, additional dimension of *Nedelo's* Nightwatch column: **the implicit, "non-public" drinkers' opinion (a conglomerate of the "view-points" of a partial subject stretched to the limits of stere-**

otypes and racism) thus becomes, through the distribution of Nedelo, a center for the dissemination of the extremist form of hate that importantly influences public opinion here.

The doings of m. s. and his bar flies, that is, their bar activities (we have already seen that the bar flies regard themselves as “bar laborers”!), are defined variously by m. s. In most cases m. s. says that the bar flies “conclude”(1), “state”, “worry” (“they are worried”), “regard the events as...” (5), “reckon” (9), “are critical towards” (11), are “gloomy” (because of somebody/something) (3) and of course, they are “angry” (3). The logic that propels the implicated inner workings of the bar flies is external to them. This is suggested by the style of writing used by m. s. In most cases the writing proceeds from events that have happened somewhere out there, in a foreign and threatening world which the bar flies “discuss” at their safe bars (“men gathering in bars”). This might be taken as the basis from which to derive the description of the bar flies “situation” which is in m. s.’s creations more implicit than not. From the secondary statements it is possible to make out that the element which, in addition to the aforementioned “knowledge”/“knowing”, determines this epitome of sociability par excellence, is in fact **their incapacity**. This is not a temporary state but an almost “**immanent**” definition of the drinkers’ world. Moreover, the argument provided by m. s. could be seen as circular: precisely because the bar flies “cannot do anything”, they “hang around bars”; and since while they are in bars they cannot do anything else, they drink a “glass or two” - “or three if needed” (3). The implications of the situation are more or less clear and again circular (this time in the reverse direction): if they could do something about things that are not right - and they know how and why the things that are not right are not right (!) - then they would not drink! However, since they cannot do anything and in addition they drink, it is the “debates” that they hold while drinking that “relieve” them (4). The circle is hence logically closed in the “reflexive” point at which they step out of this circle (clutching their hair like Baron Mnnchhausen): since they know (a decisive “surplus” element of awareness) that they cannot (are not able to) do anything, **they engage in sober (!!!) drinking**. They are therefore some kind of “sober drunkards”, or bar flies, as m. s. persists week in week out.

A somewhat more detailed description of the circle of

Slovenian bar flies than presented by m. s. could be as follows: the starting point of the circle or its first element is naturally the drinking habit itself, since the drinking is the basis of their existence. Without it, this subject would not exist, not even as a designation. The second element of the (closed?) circle is their incapacity. Not incapacity just like that, but their awareness of this incapacity, which is the *spiritus movens* that propels the matrix. As the third element we must therefore take their (self)awareness (consciousness) that compels them to wonder, conclude, criticize, look for targets (“open blisters”) and culprits that are responsible for the current situation. These culprits are the enemies who prevent solutions in this or that way, and they are the fourth and supreme element of the bar flies’ loop. The fifth element is incapacity again, yet this time it is incapacity in the form of an impossibility of doing anything although “I-know-what-this-is-all-about”, that is, an original incapacity to act.<sup>99</sup> Given this state of things, there is also the sixth element that overlaps with the first one, and it is their “constant return to drinking or the road to drinking”. But the loop of the Slovenian drinking fellows **is not complete at this point**: the proof is the existence of *Nedelo’s* Nightwatch column serving as the bar flies’ bulletin. As a “concluding” or a **fairy-tale seventh element**, we could take the discourse activity of the bar flies, their public engagement and participation in the Slovenian (anti)political arena. The very moment **the bar flies “privacy”** or, better said, the subculture of the Slovenian (more precisely, Ljubljana based) bar flies had been turned into a public subject, the bar flies and above all their creator m. s. **crossed the Rubicon of the bars and set off on a journey without return. From that point on their activity has become open to “other types of criticism” and criticism by others, as well as subject to legal sanctions should it be proved that their activities are not in accordance with the positive laws of the Republic of Slovenia.**

Therefore, the existence of the two types of incapacity disclosed in the bar flies’ discourse should be taken very seriously. This twofold incapacity could be broken into a) incapacity that is the cause of their drinking and b) incapacity caused by their drinking. Distinguishing between these two types of incapacity could be an interesting exer-

99 This is the type of incapacity that has been mentioned in the beginning i.e. “Incapacity in the face of the vast mass of lies and pretense” (33) that characterizes society as a whole.

cise in reasoning, but in this paper I would especially like to **draw your attention to the potential practical consequences**, because the bar flies appear in the par excellence media of (political and legal) *praxis*. The problem lies in the solution that has been indicated through our analysis, but primarily arises from the bar flies' discourse activities. I am talking about the fact emphasized by the bar flies that simply publishing their bulletins in *Nedelo* no longer suffices. They **demand more**, something that they would realize in a somewhat obsolete manner, but still: **power to the drinkers**. Why is this assertion possible? Because the state of things, as the bar flies infinitely repeat, has long since "become unbearable". Moreover, we all know and see this (so there is no need to philosophize), everything is clear<sup>100</sup>! So? The solution is simple: as we have stressed more than once, it is **necessary to switch from words to action!** How and where to direct these actions? The answer is simple once again: the bar flies are the sensors (the possessors of knowledge and objectivity, "socio-gauges") because they are the consciousness of the nation, because they are knowing, because they know the problems and - this is the most important thing - **they see the solution: the exclusion of all enemies**. The exit from the (drinker's) loop is the exclusion of its fourth, supreme element: the enemies. Let us not be misinterpreted: we are not saying that the "bar flies will come into power" either as individuals or a union/lobby/party, let alone that they are "demanding power for themselves" although some arguments to this effect would be possible. This is something infinitely more important and, unfortunately, also more plausible: **the possibility that the bar-fly style of discourse will prevail and the possibility that the state apparatus, which is among other things the single legal and legitimate protagonist and executioner of the use of violence, takes over their style of perceiving, arranging, concluding, reasoning and action**. In the symbolic language of the bar flies this could be depicted through the symbolic figure of Martin Krpan<sup>101</sup>, who is, in m. s.'s words, "a real image of the unmasked smuggler and nationalist, who even at that time did not like the Turks and even engaged in physical fights with them" (68). A Turk, as we had an opportunity

100 The definition of the bar flies' capabilities (this is also the origins of their legitimacy) is: "the delicate bar flies' souls painfully perceive each, even the least anomaly or social blunder" (33).

101 A mythological hero in Slovenian literature.

to see, is an unambiguously defined and elaborate figure in all of his infinite forms of appearance. This definition has been elaborated by the authors who write against the chronicle as well as foreigners, “those from down there”, homosexuals and women.

That the bar flies’ discourse **should be taken extremely seriously** is indicated also by the following fact, which is not at all innocent: the author of the bar flies’ creations is not an amateur. He is a professional employed by a major newspaper company who, as his frequently published writings and graphics suggest, sweats blood to earn his bread. Therefore, this person searches for racial, chauvinist, sexist materials *ex professo* and has to submit his work by the agreed deadline. One of his central “tasks and assignments” is to produce writings once a week (or even more frequently). In other words, (could this be seen differently given the fact that this is a professional job?) what we have here is a **planned and systematic production of more or less free style writings (and drawings) dealing with precisely defined subjects, that is, texts (and images) that became distinctive in this public sphere**. We have attempted to present his work, admittedly without succeeding in encompassing all the richness of his opus. Similar to other journalists/commentators, he is probably rewarded for his work, of course on the basis of internal rules adopted by the central newspaper house *Delo*.

One of the more concrete bar fly calls to action is the following: “... counter No 13 at Mačkova street, where the signatures for Article 40 are being endorsed, is rather empty, there is nothing like a real crowd there. If people only get angry, but they are not willing to do anything either for the good of themselves, their posterity, the state or the nation, then it is too bad, then we would do best to sell ourselves, but at least to somebody a little bit farther from here, to the real Turkey...”(1).

This is also the origin of one of the central reasons that led to this analysis, since **the logic of the bar flies is the explicit logic of action in Nietzsche’s variant of the term**. I say action and not activity as a *praxis* of political discourse (we have seen that this possibility has been turned down in the manner of anti-politics). This means that **the use of all means, both legal and legitimate as well as aggressive**, is implied. One of the not-so-rare and conceptually very important points at which M. S. (and his bar flies) distances himself from the “wiseheads” (this should prob-

ably be understood as “intellectuals”) reads as follows: “The simple bar flies slightly drifted away from the wiseheads during their previous actions, who would want to poke into this hermetic intellectual mass that is an aim in itself, that grumbles and writes ads for newspapers, but they run out of strength when it comes to real action and real work!” (94). If we turn this lethargic conclusion the other way round, we end up with an activist and optimistic statement: “Otherwise the bar flies are of the opinion that there are surely enough real “intellectuals” among the Slovenians, but they seem to lack ambition or they are afraid of the pack that currently rules the scene. We must find them and **chase them with sticks to join the people**” (94).

As to the threat in the narrow sense of the word, perhaps it is not superfluous to recall recent history. The state of threat implies a quite well known matrix of defense/defensiveness whose structure is precisely the same as the one of the phenomena that we have observed during two historical moments at the least. If we jog our memories we will remember that we first witnessed this type of discourse right here in Slovenia during what were called the “attacks on the YNA” towards the end of the eighties. At that time the top brass was primarily worried that the army could be attacked by civilians, right in their barracks! The image that the media magicians at that time tried to conjure was that of the fully armed two-million strong Slovenian population seriously threatening the disarmed, poor army living in barracks. The second and also more tragic example is of a more recent date, but closely related to the previous one - it was a time when “the defenseless Serb population” felt threatened by the genocidal Slovenians, Croats, Muslims, Albanians...! The impact of these types of threat are well known.

#### 14. "ADI", "GENES" AND "SLOVENIAN BLOOD"

One of the central objections to the bar flies' chronicling activities, against which m. s. eagerly defends himself, is racism. Admittedly, the author is quick to dismiss these "arguments" (the word argument is most frequently devalued by putting it in inverted commas) by labeling them either "cretinism" or "idiocy". The same label is also applied to all organizations or individuals who engage in activities that may be called "humane" or "humanitarian" in general, which the bar flies utterly despise, and to all previously listed enemies that threaten Slovenianness. The bar flies' name for the institutions in Slovenia (few though they might be) which are involved in humanitarian activities, is simply "some ridiculous institutions" (33).

In any case, in the following paragraphs we will try to show - on the basis of everything that has been said so far - that apparently m. s.'s creations contain elements that are anything but innocent in the light of the allegations about racism. Let us take this step by step. Starting from any available definition of racism, either ones found in text books, or those listed in more scientific dictionaries or encyclopedias, even those that some scientists employ as their working tool, we inevitably find a set of factors that are characteristic of racist talk, creations or - most often - of racist activities. In the core of racism is embedded the singular argument about the difference between us and them, the latter most frequently being referred to as "those" who are by virtue of this or that not only different but also "worse", so they should be - in the name of some principle - got rid of, in this or other way but preferably "for good". One of the most important ways of "getting rid" of them is the feature that allows the use of all means available in a specific time and space to fulfill the racist mission which is always seen as "holy" and "unquestionable". This includes both legal and legitimate as well as illegal means, usually including references, practices and argumentation of the use of violent means in order to achieve the "holy objectives". In line with the well-known saying, the racist logic is inseparable from the situation in which, by definition, all means are allowed to achieve "our holy objectives".

In any case, the said "worseness" and "inferiority" of others is justified in various ways. If we take a quick glance back at the history of this phenomenon, we will see that

the ancient Greeks regarded their attitude towards the Barbarians, Persians (at times also towards their neighbors from Athens or Sparta) as something arising from “nature”. The others were like they were by nature, say, inferior, slaves etc. Later on this differentiation became modified in accordance with changing circumstances. When the ancient Romans began to support Christianity, those others were defined on the basis of religion, and this principle persisted throughout the entire “dark” Middle Ages; those that believed in the “wrong God” were inferior and suitable for the dump site of history. With the onset of modern times, which coincide with great discoveries in the field of natural sciences, the difference that is today known as racism was shifted to the field of biology, that is to say, the very material from which ‘others’ are “made” (skin color, the shape of the nose, ears, the size/shape of the skull...). The beginning of modern times also saw the introduction of another modern product called nation-state, so the greater part of the previous racist “corpus” either settled directly into this newly created shell or invented new, most often more or less explicit racist images<sup>102</sup>. Today we know a series of creations of this type, for the time being still lingering on the margins of public life. Among these creations the most outstanding are events related to WWII i.e. Aryans vs. all other nations (Jews, Slavs, communists, Gypsies and so on). Leaving aside for the moment various brilliant inventions of sociobiologists (especially ones of more recent date originating from Slovenia), the latest creatures of this kind that continue to sustain the authentic racist heritage are various products of culture that create cultural prejudices on the basis of “cultural differentiation” i.e. our “cultural superiority”<sup>103</sup>. As the latest studies have shown<sup>104</sup>, modern racism is not a “monolithic product”. It appears mainly as an assortment of all “previous types of racism” that vary depending on the specific circumstances (place, time, tradition, culture, religious and political circum-

102 Quite often it is not possible to draw a clear-cut demarcation line between racism on the one hand and nationalism, chauvinism and xenophobia on the other. Researchers have concluded that these phenomena are closely interrelated and should be taken as a singular “ideological group”.

103 When on some occasion M. S. refers to some Nikolaj S. he says that “his temperament spilled over” (29). This of course is a trait found only in someone incapable of self-control, who does not have self-control embedded in his consciousness and is therefore under-developed, uncultured; this is a typical example of a general colonial argument and dehumanization of an individual.

104 Griffin (1995), Harris (1994), Hazekamp and Popple (1997), Ignazi (1994), Malik (1996), Terkessidis (1996), Wiewiorka (1996), Werz (1995).

stances, various personal troubles of the author, the metabolism of a specific author). In short, it is a kind of **synthetic omnibus concept** that draws on every period, tradition, direction and style at its disposal, and puts to use every available argument to prove... To prove what? Mostly not to prove the “lesser value” of others, but - this concept dominated the territory of former Yugoslavia towards the end of the eighties - to prove the (self)threat to some “entity”, “identity”, or some social or political group (nation, culture, state, religion or tradition). In more concrete terms: seen from the perspective of a racist, the point at issue is a “threat to us” irrespective of how, why and what means are used to justify this. There are at least two other characteristic features of (modern) racism. Firstly, the racist’s argumentation is generally presented as elementary, original, and superior to one that arises from the state or legislation. In short, it is radically anti-political. Secondly, the racism from the colonial times that we have come to know as “color differentiation”, is returning to its roots: it is “stepping out” of the system of colors, ignoring color and is now increasingly found among those “of the same color”. After all, this was its original state, in ancient Greece, as well as its “final stage” in Hitler’s ideologists: neither of the two equated the racial enemy or problems with “blacks”, “yellows” “reds” or “greens”. On the contrary, the whiter the skin color of the Jews, communists, Slavs and so on, the more eager were Aryans to burn them in their furnaces.

Let us now have a look at the concrete racist elements in the narrow sense of the word that we have observed in the first man of the Slovenian bar fly circles, and at the methods of their functioning.

We could begin with explicit references to biological i.e. genetic characteristics of others. When, for example, bar flies “together with m. s.” ask why refugees do not want to go home, their answer is unambiguous: “Among the bar flies there is a deeply rooted conviction that they simply do not want to go home, that they have a fairly good time here, that they lament out of habit since lamentation is **in their genes**. Many buy this readily, so charity here, charity there, although we have neither money nor understanding for our own social cases. Huh, by the end of the month even we, the workers, are running out of money for a drink, say the bar flies angrily” (67). Moreover, references to blood, race or color are used also in relation to the Slovenians. m. s.’s comment on the outbreak of crisis in Albania runs like

this: “Everybody is convinced that the palms of our officials are again getting itchy in the expectation that our refugee centers will again fill up with newcomers from Albania, so **citizenship will be sold and the Slovenian blood will be ennobled**, even money for a new ministerial Mercedes will flow.” (75). In this context our author has been anxiously observing the influx of the “**foreign born**”, among them “Asiatics”. “There are also quite a lot of Chinese and their number is increasing, but what can we do, if we are a cultural and intellectual dump, let us also be a racial one. National consciousness and patriotism have already been turned into some kind of shame and are a sort of disturbance in communication. They say that the last obstacle was overcome with the **adoption of the jungle bunny hockey player...**” (75). Blacks are also plentiful in M. S.’s opus. Let me mention here only two examples. When he expresses anger over “citizenship”, which is the classic bar flies’ topic, he says that “these days Zaire will follow the Slovenian example and start to hand out citizenship to the Tutsis and Hutus for eight dimes and from now on there will be peace and brotherhood there” (55). Furthermore, on the occasion of some commemoration he concludes that “most of the bar flies of middle generation sadly dropped their heads when they found out that our former great friend, the emperor and cannibal Bokassa, had died” (51).

Irrespective of who the others are, i.e. those who in this text were referred to as “those from the south”, “Balkan folk”, “those from down there”... the bar flies call **them** “**stock**”, “**swarms**”, “**pack**” or “**breed**”. At some point the author states that we “worry about the identity of the Kosovars and the aggression of the Serbs, while at the same time we ourselves “drag” to our own house every type of stock, so in Tivoli there are more dogs than people” (72). When talking about peace in Sarajevo, he says that the bar flies “snigger” because “those ones” cannot arrive at an agreement and achieve peace. “Such are those breeds” say the bar flies and add their typical comment: “... it’s not to say that ours (breed) is any better, at least not the ruling one” (22). If there is “**some dirty trick ... especially one that cannot be proved, say the bar flies, you scratch a bit and soon you come across a being with a half-roof, some festering relic of a party or whatever, in most cases some creature from the Balkans**”. In much the same way as ‘others’ are stuffed into “packs”, “swarms”, and “breeds” or turned into “Balkan creatures” or “beings with a half-roof”,

domestic politicians are dehumanized or “turned into animals”. The following example shows what has befallen the head of state. In the context of the candidature for presidential elections, the primus inter pares of the Slovenian bar flies says that his fellow-sufferers “already started to look for a candidate who would be the father (of the nation, т. к.), some searching Fužine and Štepanjec, while others, more radical, set off to the zoo” (43).

This is not the end of it: the racist “hit parade” is enriched with references to various yet always distinctive **segregational phrases and sayings**: the bar “optimists reckon that we shall see bars with signs such as “No entry for dogs, non-smokers and some others” (46). This shocking saying whose roots are undoubtedly entrenched in the extraordinarily fruitful racist history, is repeated when the bar flies, with obvious regret, remember the example from Štajerska region, when “some pub owner put up a sign in which the Balkan folk were mentioned instead of smokers, and he almost went to prison for this” (88). The inventory of racist statements furthermore includes a **specific humor i.e. cynicism about every type of anti-racism or activism for (political and other kinds of) equality**. On some occasion he says that “the next year will be dedicated to the fight against racism and differentness, for the equality of all. Slightly tipsy Janez was quick to say that he has already made the first step in this direction, by mating his Pekinese with a German shepherd and now he is waiting for something that should illustrate the result of such ideas” (29).

Let me also mention the charming and highly original internationalization and references to the like-minded from elsewhere. The following statement pertains to the demonstrations organized by French intellectuals which were - in contrast to the Slovenian situation involving intellectuals - aimed against Le Pen and the government which adopted a radical anti-immigration law; this law has received critical assessments in some Slovenian media. m. s.’s polemical comments were as follows: “We are shocked at the French instead of learning something from them, as **only radical and wise moves bear fruit**” (72). Last but not least, m. s.’s creations also feature a superior guru nicknamed Adi. “Some (bar flies, т. к.) have **remembered the anniversary of Adi’s (Adolph Hitler, т. к.) birth and death** and concluded that **he was good at solving unemployment problems.**” (86).

## 15. CONCLUSION: WE-THEY

Finally, we should call attention to another, somewhat more abstract notion here. The bar formula that has been the subject analyzed in this paper by no means makes a distinction between 'we' and 'you' as one would think at a glance, although this would be the most natural and logical step forward from the relationship me-you. The formula is different, because were it not, the reasoning and argumentation would be essentially different and would have the form of a dialog, dispute, or - in the worst circumstances - of what Karl Schmitt calls war in accordance with legal rules. The formal, that is, primarily linguistic position we-you invariably implies admittance and acknowledgement of fundamental "equality" at the least and respect of another, as a soldier, opponent, sportsman, human being, and especially as an individual that stands in opposition to you (opposes you). In this, the decisive factor is the acknowledgement of "the third party" and of the rules (sporting, international) of the game; this acknowledgement in principle formally equates two competitors.

The ideological bar fly formula and, as we could observe, its linguistic manifestation, is however, radically different. This formula uses the **we-they** pair which, in contrast to the we-you pair, **implies dehumanization and deculturalization of all others**. Only on the basis of such distinguishing is it possible to realize that which I have named "the bar flies' racism". What is it in effect? With respect to the structuralized "we" (common language, habits, culture, beliefs) in the bar flies' discourse "they" always appear as a mass, crowd, ("those from down there" (30), "beings with a half-roof", "stock", "pack", "swarms" as we have seen before). "They" as the product of a dehumanizing and deculturalizing ideological approach are not simply non-individuals, but they also cannot function as a collectivity. In ideological terms, this would be formulated as follows: from this perspective the collective rights can be exercised only by a nation or its representatives (this is the origin of the "threat to Slovenianness!"), but "those from the south", "Balkan folk", "Muslims" to mention only some of them, by definition do not fit into this concept. Therefore they occur as a **non-differentiated mass *par excellence* that is best depicted using "animal categories"**, that is, as "insects", "mob", a "pack", a "swarm", or as even more dehumanized "stock". Precisely this is the implicit

basis, the result of the deculturalization process, dehumanization and racism that supports the bar flies' definitions. The label "those from down there" is therefore not a natural characteristic, but a **carefully deliberated racist product with high adrenaline content** manufactured in the bar flies' workshops, through which we have been working our way towards this conclusion.

What in fact was I trying to say? A very simple thing: the wars fought in the territories of former Yugoslavia undoubtedly taught us that aggression and slaughtering are not connected solely to those who slaughter directly, or to their slaughtering dexterity, but also and above all to those who sow seeds of hate in the heads and, if you like, the "hearts" of the slaughterers, thus creating and directing the possibility of slaughter.

I also wanted to place the 'creative' work of the bar flies in the context of the Constitution of the Republic of Slovenia, hoping that some of the competitive individuals or institutions paid for this kind of work would turn up and dare take by the horns this bull of Slovenian chauvinism, sexism and racism.

16.M.S.'s TEXT ARRANGED  
IN CHRONOLOGICAL ORDER  
OF PUBLISHING

1. The must is superb, but there is not much wine, *Nedelo*, Nov 5th, 1995
2. Enemy attacked with club, nearby car got some too, *Nedelo*, Nov 12th 1995
3. The bar flies and realistic fairy tales, *Nedelo*, Nov 19th 1995
4. Pigs on the run but everything ends well, *Nedelo*, Nov 26th 1995
5. Cheers, queer brotherhood from Yuga, *Nedelo*, Dec 3rd 1995
6. "Nightwatch", no title, Dec 11th 1995
7. Could Slovenians be as unanimous as the French?, *Nedelo*, Dec 17th 1995
8. Children and adolescent "boisterousness", *Nedelo*, Dec 24th 1995
9. "Doggy" longed for a ride in the car, *Nedelo*, Jan 7th 1996
10. The indignation of merry Ferdinand, *Nedelo*, Jan 14th 1996
11. "Hungry" students with yogurt and eggs, *Nedelo*, Jan 21st 1996
12. Krpan and Klepec instead of Kardelj and Kidrič? Why not?, *Nedelo*, Jan 28th 1996
13. Bosnia, Macedonia and Russia - Slovenia loves you, *Nedelo*, Feb 9th 1996
14. Bar talk on pensioners, *Nedelo*, Feb 11th 1996
15. If parliament has problems, import a foreigner!, *Nedelo*, Feb 18th 1996
16. On the edge, no title, *Delo*, Feb 19th 1996
17. When cups were drained to Gros's health, *Nedelo*, Feb 25th 1996
18. Why should the Slovenian elite waltz in Vienna and not in Sarajevo?, *Nedelo*, March 3rd 1996
19. "Nightwatch", no title, *Delo*, March 4th 1996
20. Cheers to all women artists who vanished, *Nedelo*, March 10th 1996
21. Argentine Martin on Argentine square, *Nedelo*, March 17th 1996
22. Democratic encroachments and research to the last penny, *Nedelo*, March 24th 1996
23. "Nightwatch", no title, *Nedelo*, March 28th 1996
24. Who are "mad cows" here and why do we need F-16 fighter planes, *Nedelo*, Apr 4th 1996
25. Where to find a real compact player for compact disks, *Nedelo*, Apr 7th 1996
26. Doctors exhausted from strike and tragically divided, *Nedelo*, Apr 14th 1996
27. "Nightwatch", no title, *Delo*, Apr 15th 1996
28. General from Argentina waits at the airport for Slovenian citizenship, *Nedelo*, Apr 21st 1996
29. At least a fatade at Brezje should be fixed for the Pope's visit, *Nedelo*, May 12th 1996
30. Throw a handful of salt to a sheep and you will end up with a herd, *Nedelo*, May 19th 1996
31. What about the Day of Papal Veterans?, *Nedelo*, May 26th 1996

32. On the edge: Caring for a colleague, *Delo*, May 27th 1996
33. The road to Europe goes across the Orient, *Nedelo*, June 2nd 1996
34. "Nightwatch", no title, *Delo*, June 10th 1996
35. "Nightwatch", no title, *Delo*, June 13th 1996
36. Apartments disappear too, *Nedelo*, June 16th 1996
37. A story about princesses and nymphs, Sandokans and hell's angels, *Nedelo*, June 23rd 1996
38. "Nightwatch", no title, *Delo*, June 24th 1996
39. Ridiculous stories from the "statistical goulash", *Nedelo*, June 30th 1996
40. "Nightwatch", no title, *Delo*, July 1st 1996
41. Raising hell over 50 suicidal whales but not a word about 700 Slovenians, *Nedelo*, Aug 25th 1996
42. Shall we allow Belgian pedophiles to have a congress here, *Nedelo*, Sep 1st 1996
43. First import politicians, then come sportsmen and ruffians, *Nedelo*, Sep 15th 1996
44. "Nightwatch", no title, *Delo*, Sep 20th 1996
45. How to pull Litostroj out of its quandary and how to preserve Videm, *Nedelo*, Sep 22nd 1996
46. No entry to dogs, non-smokers and some others, *Nedelo*, Oct 6th 1996
47. Infinite duplicity of M.P.'s morality, *Delo*, Oct 13th 1996
48. Circus in Ljubljana, The Flintstones in cinemas, and elections in Slovenia, *Nedelo*, Oct 20th 1996
49. Fear-inspiring pre-electoral promises, *Nedelo*, Oct 27th 1996
50. Some roller skate, some maltreat animals, some stick posters over their competitors, *Nedelo*, Nov 3rd 1996
51. "Nightwatch", no title, *Delo*, Nov 8th 1996
52. Put an ox on the poster instead of a sheep, *Nedelo*, Nov 10th 1996
53. Our 'Bosnians' are a good deal worse at football than Bosnian Bosnians, *Nedelo*, Nov 17th 1996
54. As if tobacco were the only and worst evil hanging over our heads, *Nedelo*, Nov 24th 1996
55. Large rooms with cigarettes and whiskey for some, smoking areas for others, *Nedelo*, Dec 1st 1996
56. "Nightwatch", no title, *Delo*, Dec 2nd 1996
57. Forests are being returned to the Church piece by piece, *Nedelo*, Dec 8th 1996
58. How ugly do we behave towards the Balkan folk!, *Nedelo*, Dec 15th 1996
59. Dogs on leads, people on smart cards, *Nedelo*, Dec 22nd 1996
60. "Nightwatch", no title, *Delo*, Dec 24th 1996
61. Will tax dictatorship "spit out" paupers too, *Nedelo*, Dec 29th 1996
62. A present of words to the Ljubljanians, and of wine to the Istrians, *Nedelo*, Jan 5th 1997
63. Wise Janez again in the saddle, *Nedelo*, Jan 12th 1997
64. During a slightly rotten winter when it stinks of the Balkans, *Nedelo*,

Jan 19th 1997

65. Everything will change with our new government, *Nedelo*, Jan 26th 1997
66. Why don't the Olimpija football players grow vegetables in their stadium?, *Nedelo*, Feb 2nd 1997
67. A bomb in the parliament would do much good, *Nedelo*, Feb 9th 1997
68. Will the spring parties mess up this spring for us, *Nedelo*, Feb 16th 1997
69. "Nightwatch", no title, *Delo*, Feb 17th 1997
70. A new, extraordinary idea from the tobacco hater, *Nedelo*, Feb 23rd 1997
71. "Nightwatch", no title, *Delo*, Feb 24th 1997
72. Harmonized with the earth's vibrations, *Nedelo*, March 2nd 1997
73. Short skirts and Yugo-brotherly Kreslin in the same bar, *Nedelo*, March 9th 1997
74. "Nightwatch", no title, *Delo*, March 12th 1997
75. Psychiatrists on depression and schizophrenia, while bar flies rather go for a drink, *Nedelo*, March 16th 1997
76. Embittered Jakob hit the bar with an ax, *Nedelo*, March 23rd 1997
77. "Nightwatch", no title, *Delo*, March 24th 1997
78. First reduce the salaries of the state officials, then "cool them down", *Nedelo*, March 30th 1997
79. Wherever has our freedom disappeared, *Nedelo*, Apr 6th 1997
80. The parliamentarians got wrong the bar flies' proposal, *Nedelo*, Apr 13th 1997
81. Baker soaked, many still dry but in need of soaking, *Nedelo*, Apr 20th 1997
82. "Nightwatch", from the bar to the nunciature, *Delo*, Apr 21st 1997
83. Now also German "sprache" on top of the Balkan one, *Nedelo*, Apr 27th 1997
84. A success story, what is it?, *Nedelo*, May 4th 1997
85. Angry bar flies at empty bars, *Nedelo*, May 11th 1997
86. "Nightwatch", no title, *Delo*, May 12th 1997
87. The month of culture against an uncultured background, *Nedelo*, May 18th 1997
88. No entry to dogs and smokers, *Nedelo*, May 25th 1997
89. Weather and culture sprinkle the bar flies' table with optimism, *Nedelo*, June 1st 1997
90. The Wine Trade Show now only for teetotallers, *Nedelo*, June 7th 1997
91. "Nightwatch", no title, *Delo*, June 14th 1997
92. Courageous policemen, singing mobile phones and bouncers united, *Nedelo*, June 15th 1997
93. There is nothing left in Slovenia for sale anyway, *Nedelo*, June 22nd 1997
94. Fear the journalists!, *Nedelo*, July 20th 1997
95. "Nightwatch", no title, *Delo*, July 23rd 1997
96. Forced labor should go with imprisonment, *Nedelo*, July 27th 1997
97. Re-removed minister among the desperate and the disappointed, *Nedelo*, Aug 3rd 1997

98. A wild dance of policemen and taxi drivers at Prešeren Square, *Nedelo*, Aug 10th 1997
99. On the edge: The bum's profession is a hard one, *Delo*, Aug 13th 1997

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