

TEMATSKI BLOK / *THEMATIC SECTION*

Dob i starenje / *Age and Ageing*

Editorial to the Age and Ageing Section

This issue of *Anafora* contains a section with contributions that have emerged from the CAAS Workshop titled “Representations of Age and Ageing in American Culture” held at the University of Zadar in June 2018. Until recently, Ageing Studies drew little scholarly attention; however, with the proliferation of ageing narratives, the research connected to age and ageing has gained a growing appreciation within the humanities. The selected four papers approach the topic from several angles allowing for a more comprehensive representation of issues connected with age and ageing in American literature and culture. The first paper, “Uniformity and Difference of Ageing,” is authored by Stipe Grgas and deals with the fact that the perception of old age varies across cultures and time. Although a universal process, the American context views ageing as a taboo since the self-image of the United States as a country of youth and strength opposes the consequences connected to old age. Through the work of R.W.B. Lewis and his idea of the American Adam, Grgas contends that ageing is incompatible with the dynamics of American social, economic, and political organizations. Next, Jelena Šesnić refers to the genre of pastoral to show a transition in the representations of age in American literature and culture. Her paper “The Past and Present of Age and Ageing in *The Country of the Pointed Firs* and *Olive Kitteridge*” illustrates the drastic change in literary depictions of age and ageing in connection to pastoralism and emotions. Whereas Jewett’s late nineteenth-century novel views ageing as a natural process, Strout’s early twenty-first century novel highlights the traumatic impact of old age. The two texts embody the opposition between the pre-scientific phase and the current medicalized and scientific view of age and its consequences. “Masculinity Beyond Repair: Aging, Pathology, and the Male Body in Jonathan Franzen’s *The Corrections*” by Stela Dujakovic focuses on male aging, which it views through the lens of theories of aging, pathology, and hegemonic masculinity. The author maintains that the hegemonic concepts of masculinity establish the male as a dominant collective but simultaneously constitute the inevitable failure of the individual. This is mirrored in the novel in the ageing protagonist who is represented as torn between his self-image of the dominant patriarch and his deteriorating body and mind. The final paper deals with Don DeLillo’s novel *Zero K*. From the point of view of the transhumanist movement, Lovro Furjanić evaluates the appeal of cryonic technology and its rendering of ageing and death as represented in the novel. *Zero K*

emphasizes the importance of the economic status as a prerequisite for enjoying the benefits of life- (and youth-) prolonging technology. DeLillo's attention is on wealth as the demarcation line between those who can choose to enjoy the benefits of technology and those who remain excluded regardless of their choice. Though covertly or overly undesirable, old age has the power to shed light on broader cultural processes. The papers selected here encapsulate our society's attitudes to age, ageing, bodily and mental changes pertaining to different ages, and to cultural assumptions and misconceptions attending to different ages. In light of the changing demographics of the Western societies, this area of studies emerges as both timely and relevant and contributes to a more comprehensive understanding of contemporary culture and, in particular, of the global impact of American cultural attitudes toward age and ageing.

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