

Patriotic and Religious Perspectives in the Literature of Boro Pavlović — Echoes of Tradition in Modernity

On the 100th Anniversary of his Birth

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Summary

Croatian poetry of the 20th century is characterized by a great diversity of worldviews and ideas regardless of whether one examines it from a synchronic or a diachronic standpoint. The spiritual stratification process of Croatian poetry began at the turn of 20th century with a discussion between traditionalists and modernists on the principles of literary creation, and it developed partially among modernists toward an acceptance of contesting notions regarding Christianity. A step further in this respect was taken during the first two decades, when literary creation in the Yugoslav state of that time was under strong communist ideological pressure which resulted in a departure from the spiritual, but also from national–patriotic content, either by rejecting/neglecting it or through a negativistic attitude toward it. Among those who successfully resisted this pressure and thus preserved the spirit of tradition in modernity is the writer Boro Pavlović (1922–2022). The aim of this article is to determine the relationship between modernity and tradition in his literary work by taking into account the aforementioned elements. As a paradigmatic field for research and interpretation, examples were taken from the author's patriotic and religious poetry, as well as some of his essays and studies on Croatian writers and literary themes which point to the fact that Pavlović's literary work is a model of the inclusive interweaving of modernity with tradition in regard to worldviews and ideas, content and themes, but also, though only partially so, in regard to linguistic expression.

Keywords: *Boro Pavlović; Croatian literature; modernity; tradition; patriotism; religiosity*

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Introduction

Poetry is the oldest and most propulsive genre in Croatian literature. One could say that poetry is a literary *genius locus* which is reflected in patriotic and religious poetry in particular (with due respect to the usual division within the genre into love, landscape and intellectual poetry, social themes, etc.). The physics and metaphysics of life, the world and of history are most strongly and profoundly connected. In this respect and in the broadest sense of the word, the Croatian art of words demonstrates continuity, such that an unbroken thread can be pulled from the Bašćan tablet and the Pariški zbornik poetry collection, from Marko Marulić and Ivan Gundulić, to Petar Preradović, Ivan Mažuranić and Silvije Strahimir Kranjčević. Despite the fact that, from Kranjčević onward, Croatian literature — poetry included — was subjected to a diversification of worldviews, metaphysics remained its life-giving growth spark. To what extent and in what way is perhaps best seen in the most poetically diverse period of Croatian poetry during the first half of the 20th century. Although the initial years following World War II, marked by the imposition of the communist doctrine of socialist realism and Yugoslav ideology, would suppress its vitality, it would not be euthanised. However, unlike Croatian authors in exile, who created freely but, for the above reasons, without immediate normal relations with their homeland, restoration, though arduous and lengthy, would become evident and thriving. The poet Boro Pavlović was one among those who contributed vastly to this process.

Of course, the extensive topic of the relationship between tradition and modernity cannot easily be covered in one article, even if it were a much longer one. Much has been written, in many ways and from many perspectives. One must bring to mind also the first synthetic article on this topic, namely, an extensive discussion by encyclopaedist and lexicographer Mate Ujević titled *Contributions to the History of the Croatian Youth Movement in the Late 19th and Early 20th Centuries: A special reference to the struggle between the old and the young*, which was written as a diploma essay for his professorship exam in 1933, though it was not published until 2015. The aforementioned »struggle between the old and the young« persisted from 1898 until the end of the first decade of the 20th century, mainly on the level of literary theory, worldview and organization. Over time, somewhere around the end of the World War I, a generation of Catholic writers, among others as well, entered the literary scene seeking to reconcile the traditional and the modern, the result of which was the Catholic Modern Period. The concept of tradition, including the terms derived therefrom, remained connected to the notions of God, Christianity, religiosity, spirituality and the Croatian people, while the concept of modernity in their works corresponded above all to the endeavour to accept contemporary stylistic, formal and lexical features. In this respect, the poets Branko Storov, Ivo Lendić, Nikola Šop, Đuro Sudeta, Sida Košutić, Lucijan Kordić or Janko Bubalo can be considered Pavlović's predecessors as regards literary modernity inspired by Christianity. They often wrote in free verse and used the vocabulary of their time.

In this sense, the recent 100th anniversary of Pavlović's birth is a welcome opportunity to evoke the phenomenon of the interweaving and exchange between tradition and modernity. In this article we must, of course, limit ourselves — in extracting from his very rich oeuvres of prose and poetry — to the two poetic genres mentioned: patriotic and religious, since it is precisely that *in and through* them Pavlović exists as a paradigm of the continuity of the metaphysical and patriotic emotion contained in Croatian poetry. Accordingly, this article also focuses on some of his works of prose (mainly essayistic) which demonstrate a positive and inclusive attitude towards Croatian literary tradition.

1. A short biography

Boro Pavlović was born in Požega on April 27, 1922. Having moved to Zagreb, he graduated from Classical High School 1940, after which he graduated from the Faculty of Law in 1944. In 1943, he was mobilized into the Croatian Home Guard which was part of the armed forces of the Independent State of Croatia of that time. In 1949, he graduated with a degree in Yugoslav languages and literature. Pavlović also studied engineering, architecture and medicine. He worked — mostly as a propagandist — for the *Architektura* magazine, the Association of Croatian Architects, the Ministry of Construction, *Likum* and at the Zagreb Fair. Because of the request voiced by him to the famous poet Salvatore Quasimodo (to stand up for the poet Joža Rikova, who had been sentenced to hard labour on the island of St. Grgur), Pavlović was interrogated in 1960 by the Yugoslav secret police and eventually was expelled from the Croatian Society of Writers,¹ which resulted in his literary, but also his social segregation. His membership was eventually reinstated after sixteen years following his removal.

A versatile writer who, among his other activities, edited the first anthology of post-war Croatian poetry entitled *Postwar Young Croatian Lyric Poetry, 1953* — he appeared in magazines from 1940, first in *Savremenik* and *Plava revija*, only to publish his first collections in 1943. During his lifetime, he published an estimated forty books, most of which were poetry books. Fortunately, despite repeated political accusations, he was incorporated into the series *Five Centuries of Croatian Literature*, which also included Kruno Quien, Radovan Ivšić and Irena Vrkljan. Interestingly, he composed the veterinary anthem in Latin *Hymnus veterinarium*. Pavlović died in Duga Resa on September 7, 2001.

All in all, Pavlović was a man highly educated in a broad field of study, a polyglot, a prolific writer of poetry, prose and drama, but also a children's author. Of course, the question remains why, despite all — at least according to opinions voiced so far, and even more so those not voiced — he still does not belong to the group of authors we call the “national classics” of Croatian poetry. There can be many reasons for this, aside from the fierce competition among his

1 Now called Društvo hrvatskih književnika.

contemporaries for the title, but also for the reason that the author Damir Radić explains vividly in Pavlović's obituary, published in the *Vijenac* magazine in 2001: »On September 11th, a terrorist attack took place on the United States. Croatian poet Boro Pavlović died on the same day. Under the sensational and shocking impression of the first event, almost no one noticed the second. The fact that the poet's death passed unnoticed is not only a consequence of the terrorism of Islamic fanatics, nor the terror of politics over culture, it is also the consequence of a kind of 'terrorization' of poetry on the part of men of letters themselves, in which the practitioners and supporters of the new Croatian prose play a significant role, some of whom treat poetry almost as an uncommendable literary genre.«

2. Modernist loss of God and Heaven

It can be said that Pavlović had two literary beginnings, one during the war — between 1943 and 1945 when he published collections of poems titled *Good Morning, On the Blessed Wind, Poems, Small Poems, Grotesque* — and the second, his post-war beginning, in the fall of 1945 with his collection *Poetry*, continuing in 1951 with the collection *Tišina*. Pavlović emerges, therefore, in a period called the "Second Modern Period" (Stamać, 1996, 5), which would obtain its program and structure after the war through the appearance on the literary scene of the generation of *Circlers*² ("krugovaši"), who would be joined by the generation of *Reasoners*³ ("razlogovci") at the beginning of the sixties.. They are all connected by an openness to poetic experimentation (Stamać, 1996, 6; Jelčić, 1988, 23). The term "Second Modern Period" highlights its ties with the "First" at the turn of the 20th century, and so it inherits the main feature thereof — aesthetic individualism. One must not forget that the decades-long polemic between "the old" and "the young" revolved around the relationship between individualism and tradition and the relationship between aesthetics, on the one hand, and ethics and metaphysics, on the other. This resulted in a severance by a group of Croatian writers from aesthetics which regards ethics and metaphysics as components of literary creation, even though this would initially not mean a severance from tradition, at least not a complete severance (Lončarević, 2005).

Nurtured both by the legacy of the First Modern Period and under the immediate pressure of the new communist–Yugoslav political reality, Croatian poetry after World War II, as part of the aforementioned Second Modern Period, more or less distanced itself from tradition. This was manifested by a weakening of interest in the metaphysical, religious and numinous and also by the impossibility to poetically express national patriotism, which affected not only the content of the poetic word but also its significance *per se*. Since existence was fragmented, that is, detracted from the national cultural identity and, even more deva-

2 The name of the journal was *Krugovi*.

3 The name of the journal was *Razlog*.

statingly, from its Essence, poetry would consequently be maimed with respect to motif, theme, and even linguistically so. The loss of Heaven or the “empty sky”, as Antun Branko Šimić labeled this phenomenon, or rather the conclusion that “there is no God”, as asserted by Miroslav Krleža — both of whom were prominent expressionists between 1915 and 1925 — necessarily progressed to an indifference to meaning in Pavlović’s generation. With theological emptiness breeding teleological emptiness, thus obstructing not only essential but also existential queries, the seventies brought poetry to the edge of the precipice of indolence, into which some descended. Namely, so-called concretism expanded “the writing of poetry” into its “component parts” of unrelated words (Petrač, 1982, 36). In the better case scenario poets reached out for Luddite creation, thus preserving semantic clarity to an extent (Mrkonjić, 2002, 5).

These are the circumstances in which the poetic expression of Pavlović was shaped. It should be said first and foremost, that Pavlović, as he relied on a heritage of futurism and surrealism, did not evade modernistic expression and creation, not even “inventive language” (usp. Pavlović, 1997) as it was called by the Russian poet Khlebnikov. Hence, he undoubtedly enriched poetic modernity with “luddism”, “verbal alchemy” and “vitalism (usp. Donat, 1997), but »even when he experimented, he successfully exploited the gift of spirit, which was nurtured by a cheerful and benevolent, deeply humane philosophy of life« (Rem, 1954), while at the same time preserving metaphysics, or, as Pavlović would himself say, »aesthetics clearly adorns itself with a metaphysical diadem«, with »Res Divinae, Res Sacrae, Res Sanctae obviously becoming more and more Res Humanae« (Pavlović, 2003, 12). In other words, aesthetics cannot do without metaphysics — the divine and the holy do not disappear but are transposed into the human. In this, Pavlović remains a upholder of tradition, which is evident in his study *Aesthetics* wherein he integrates his knowledge of Croatian traditional aesthetics and poetics from the 16th to the 20th centuries, starting with Franjo Petrić, Nikola Gučetić and Miha Monaldi, through Ljudevit Vukotinović, Franjo Marković to Albert Bazala, Albert Haler and Pavao Vuk–Pavlović, to undoubtedly conclude: »‘The Beautiful’ is to be regarded in relation to essence, being, existence... It is both reflection and expression, a message from spirit to spirit... It is one of the very beginnings of life and therefore inexhaustible... ‘the Beautiful’ is the breathing of our being« (Pavlović, 2003, 64–65).

3. *A pro-modern traditionalist*

However, let us go back to the period in which Pavlović (after his collections from the time of WWII) appears for a second time, now with the generation of Circlers. Thus, in 1952, the year when *Circles* first appeared, he published as many as four collections, *Roe Deer*, *The Colour Gray and the Line of Polyvinyl*, *The Tractor and the Earth*; in 1953 the collection *Hustle–Bustle and Love*, and in 1954 *Horses and Carts*, *Plitvice*, and through them updated, in his signature style, the vitality of the generations assembled around *Circles*, namely, poets such as Antun

Šoljan, Radovan Ivšić, Josip Pupačić, Vlado Gotovac, Ivan Slamnig, Vesna Parun and Nikola Milićević. Pavlović not only participated in their program of the Second Modern Period, but also independently outlined a project of his own titled, *An Encyclopedia of Poetry*, whereby he aimed to depict different social spheres in a poetic style in thirty collections. His plan did not come to fruition, but rather resulted in his publishing the first synthesis of post-war Croatian poetry in *Krugovi* in 1953 in which he called out for poetry to burst into flames, spread and flourish (usp. Pavlović, 2003, 213–240) and therewith demonstrated his need to be one of the synthesizers and integrators of Croatian literature, something he would later manifest also through his studies. One should keep in mind that he was influenced by the “First Modernist” generation (1892–1914) led by Matoš, whom he considered the “crossroads” and a name synonymous with Croatia. In this spirit, he also belonged to the new, post-war “Matoš Pleiades”, which began »a new revival of poetry in ‘the Croatia of the heart’« (Pavlović, 2005, 162), as he wrote in an essay about Olinko Delorko, calling his poetry *poesia perennis* and Delorko a poet of harmony. Likewise, he absorbed Croatian expressionists with Tin Ujević⁴ at the forefront and would dedicate the ballad *Mercuries Behind the Wheel* to him, calling him “Emperor Tin, the Republican”. »I am their son«, he will say »of both poets — Matoš and Ujević«. Here also are Miroslav Krleža and Dragutin Tadijanović about whom he wrote his first university seminar paper.

These four poets had the greatest influence on Pavlović’s style and his commitment to poetry. In this sense, when viewed typologically and topologically, he is poetically close to what can be denoted by the three-fold concept “life–poet–work” as he fervently seeks »the knowledge of life, reality« (Milanija, 2001, 20–21). In other words, unlike most of the poetry of the “Circlers” and “Reasoners”, at least from the outset, philosophy and abstraction are not dominant features of Pavlović’s poetry, but rather he actualizes or rather lends a concreteness to nature, love and history.

To the extent that one may conclude that Pavlović, both as poet and writer on the topic of poetry, was a pro-modern traditionalist, he therefore may to a degree fall under the category of interhistoricism, a contemporary concept in literary theory which in a way erases the boundaries between literary and artistic epochs. This simultaneous devotion to both tradition and modernity was already evident in the mere fact that, in 1954, Pavlović was involved in the book *Last Autumn and Today: A Joint Poetry Collection by Eight Poets*, in which the older poets Tin Ujević, Frano Alfirević and Salih Alić preserved their ties to tradition, and the slightly younger, Dragutin Vunak, Vladimir Rem, Joja Ricov and Kazimir Urem, were the spokesmen of poetic modernity. In short, Pavlović succeeded where many did not: to be an aesthetic modernist throughout his fifty years of

4 It was Tin Ujević who raised his awareness of the religious and numinous. In writing about his poetry, Pavlović says: »Therefore, when we read, an act of faith, hope and love unfolds before us. Liturgy — a Pontifical Mass is performed in this poetry in which everything is subordinated to the cult of Thought. At times, only Light breaks through the stanzas, and they become Stained Glass Windows, illuminating the vastness of the space contained in the poetry« (Pavlović, 2003, 112).

creativity, while simultaneously immersed in a personally traditional worldview which, as we will see in the examples below, is particularly evident in his patriotic and religious poetry and in his essays and studies on Croatian writers and literature.

4. *The patriotic and religious component in Pavlović's poetry*

4.1. *Patriotic poetry*

The patriotic aspect of his poetry has already been theoretically touched upon in the preceding paragraph. It is important to emphasize that he is among the first to reappear with this theme after World War II, when — as previously mentioned — under the pressure of communist ideology and the idea of the Yugoslav state, the national–patriotic feeling in Croatian poetry was rarely expressed in clear concepts, images and symbols, always with the risk of its being politically condemned and even prosecuted as nationalism. However, in this respect, Pavlović's poetry is open and, moreover, engaged. This is evident, for example, in the poem *Zadarska tema*, dedicated to Krleža, in which he cries out for Croatian freedom in his verses, precisely in the style of Krleža: »I kad će jednom nad grobom koji se zove Krocija, / prestati jednom da leti crnovrana avijacija? / O, kada će zauvijek doći smirenje i regulacija / iznad umornih legionarskih štacija, / pobuna, pacifikacija, ratova bomba šrapnela, / i kada će svjetlo smisla na blagoj palmi mira / sinuti vrh kapitela / iznad foruma, terasa i hotela?« In a more Matoš–like style, he will express the same thought in the poem *Zemlja*, dedicated to the Croatian polymath and writer Pavao Ritter Vitezović: »Pokojna naša zemlja, dakle, iz pepela svoga usta. / Otvara oči. / Usta. / I krila diže. / Eto se naša zemlja uspravlja iz svog podzemlja / i svome je cilju bliže...« In the title poem of the *Velesajam* collection from the year 1955, he again expresses patriotic emotion: »Doista, kog sunce grije, da ne voli Lijepu našu?« It is he that loves Croatia, and he will personify this completely in the poem *Anchor* in the verse »Ja bdijem nad mojom zemljom.« We will come across this mood also in other patriotic poetry, for example *In Vienna's New Town*, dedicated to Petar Zrinski and Fran Krsto Frankopan who were executed in 1671: »Po tamnom, mrkom taracu / — kroz tajac — / koračaju buntovnici. // (...) I poje za njima vjetar / svoj žalopoj starinski... / (...) Još čas, još samo čas / i past će te lavlje glave / krvave, pune strave, / — med nas. — U zadnjoj bici. // Otužno zvona zvone. / Iz Bečkog Novog Mjesta / idu dva skromna lijesa, / cestom, na čelu crne kolone.«

4.2. *Religious poetry*

Pavlović's attitude towards God and therewith to religiosity is colourfully displayed by the fact that he begins his discussion *Poetry of the Spirit* with a quote from Antun Branko Šimić's poem *Nadeni Bog* ("The God Who was Found"). In this "foundness" or, as he says "with this banner", he invites the reader to »a silent journey along the paths of Croatian spiritual lyric poetry. May it be a solemn

celebration and a feast day« (Pavlović, 2003, 69). He will also make a concrete poetic contribution to such lyric poetry, both through poems in his collections, but also through his collaboration with the Catholic Yearly *Danica* and *Marulić*, a magazine he co-founded in 1968, under the auspices of the Croatian Literary Society of Sts. Cyril and Methodius⁵ of that time, which gathered together Croatian writers true to the metaphysical–transcendent and patriotic components of literature. In these circumstances Pavlović accepted and, with his original modernity, added to the previous attributes thereof, which were established between the two World Wars through the poetry of Đuro Sudeta (about whom he wrote a monograph),⁶ Nikola Šop, Ivo Lendić, Sida Košutić, Rajmund Kupareo, Branko Klarić, Janko Bubalo and others, and after the war continued with Lucijan Kordić, Stanislav Adamić, Ivo Balentović, Josip Berka, Stanko Dominić, Mira Preisler and others.⁷ In the aforementioned magazine, we can see these features, for example, in the poem *Bethlehem*: »Izjest će se repatice, pobjeći ptice, samo će volovi / oko Djevice mukati kao braća, / a kad dođu pastiri, reći će im se: / — evo vina, i masline / sjedite, pa jedite, / a sveti Josip kao portir čudi se, / svet bez svečane dolame i dosadne aureole, / izgleda da je sasma gluha od radosti / kad čuje / kako djeca dijele darove... // Božićni kolači skaču kao majmunčad po granama.« Through such a religiously intonated poem, he becomes a playful participant in the poetics evoked by Ivan Slamnig in the famous *Evangelists* or later, Luko Paljetak in *The Last Supper*. An example of such Luddism is provided by the poem *Kalendar*: »Svaki je svetac / Imao svoju draž, / Jedan je sijao ječam, / Drugi je kosio raž. / Grlo je liječio Blaž, / A Florijan čuvao krov, / A majka Božja / Pazila na lada plov. (...) Jedan je čuvao stoku, / Drugi je držao / Čitavu kuću na oku, / Treći bdio po poljima / Svatko se srodio bio / Sa svojim patronom, / S kaminom i zvonom (...) Sveci sa svojim svijetom / Tiho i razgovijetno, / Ko znanci familijarni, / Ti sveci toliko prisni, / Ti sveci tako stvarni / Kućni i gospodarni, / Pa smo im eto i sada / Za svaku pomoć harni.«

On the other hand, he was able to convey a genuine tenderness, the like of which can be found in the verse of older poets such as Đuro Arnold, Milan Pavelić, Aleksa Kokić, August Đarmati or Ante Jakšić, for example in the poem *Stare crkvice* (“Little Old Churches”): »Na brežuljku i humku / one čuvaju stražu u našem pejzažu / S čempresima druguju, / s tužnim vrbama tuguju, s jablanima se slažu. // Na groblju i obali stoje: / niti se osama plaše, / niti se bura straše, / niti se smrti boje. // Već tisuću ljeta mirno / svoje brojanice broje, / te crkve naše stare, / bake i majke moje. // U našem krajobrazu / nalik su putokazu. // Po njima se znaju vidici, / vinogradi, šljivici. / Po njima se svojem kraju / vraćaju putnici, povratnici, prognanici. / Njihov se lik utkao u naš krajolik...« *Starinske crkvice u polju* (“Little Vintage Churches in the Field”) are similarly intonated: »Njihove

5 In 1990 the Croatian Literary Society of St. Jerome had its rightful name returned. It was originally founded in Zagreb in 1868.

6 Printed as part of the book *Album of Serenity* under the title *The Lonely Paths of Đuro Sudeta*.

7 Between 1969 and 1994 he published approximately fifteen articles on poetry and Croatian poets in *Marulić*, including articles on M. Preisler and S. Dominić.

apside / jedva se jedvice vide: / one su tako malene, / tako skromne / kao da se sebe stide...« and *Zagorske crkvice* (“The Little Churches of Zagorje”): »Njihovi se obrisi / tek naziru u daljini: // bijele u bijeloj bjelini, / tihe u tihoj tišini, // one su krotke i čedne / kao lepoglavske čipke, / ko bijeli fratri Pavlini. // Cinktor i trošna vrata. // Ali kad zaškripe dveri, progovore sve freske / od sunca, neba i zlata. // Kao u zlatnoj kaseti / u plavom polumraku / andeo s krilima leti. (...) Sviraju rajski koncerti. // Poslušni, bar načas / te rajske frule glas, / riječ darovatelja / koji su darujući / bili sretni / bar čas / vjerujući u spas...« We will also find verses similar in the poems *Stara crkva* and *Crkvica u oblaku*. In some of them, the religious atmosphere is only indicated, for example in *Funeral at Miroševac*: »Sve što su imali odložili su u grob // Kiša na povratku; / s neba silazi Bog...«

Religious sentiment is marked also by Christian ethics expressed, for example, in one of his first poems titled *Pomirenje* (“Reconciliation”): »tko se od nas može pomiriti sa životom / i proživjeti tako neopazice i lako / prepušten toku vremena zanesen dobrotom / što ga plavi plaho, plaho i polako // taj bi bio sretan nenadano jako / i mogo bi ići bez brige sokakom / niti odveć škrt, niti odveć lakom / na radosti mnoge dane siromakom // no kad svaki gleda kao mrka avet / s mržnjom na dnu srca na svaki tud znamen / i zavišću teškom da je tako malen, / zato mu se neće dati tamjan niti amen blagoslova, / na njegovu molitvu plaćuću / i nikad neće biti prepušten ganuću / da se divi velik tomu što je malen.«

5. *Essays, studies and presentations*

Pavlović is less known as a writer of prose, although he contributed valuable essays and studies on poetry, aesthetics, spiritual poetry, futurism and surrealism, on image and sound, the Stećci, the sea and the Mediterranean, and also on the flora and fauna in Croatian poetry and literature. Together with Nenad Trinajstić, an academic and chemist by profession, he wrote a unique study titled *On Symmetry and Asymmetry in Literature* (usp. Pavlović i Trinajstić, 2006), in which modern poetry is explained through geometry, diagrams and mathematical formulae. He also devoted noteworthy essays and presentations to Antun Gustav Matoš, Tin Ujević, Dragutin Tadijanović, Ivan Goran Kovačić, Vesna Parun, Nikola Šop, Jure Kaštelan, Josip Pupačić, Slavko Mihalić, Olinko Delorko, Drago Gervais and other pillars of modern Croatian poetry, with appraisals that are largely still valid today. In this way, similar to Ivo Balentović — another of Marulić’s self-effacing and capable writers and collaborators — he authored the Croatian literary topography in a unique way, namely, he incorporated into it Bosnian–Herzegovinian Croatian literature, as he considered Bosnia–Herzegovina a geographical, historical and spiritual link between the continental and Mediterranean elements of Croatian literature, which came to be divided due to the Ottoman invasion and occupation, but remained unique due to the fact that, as Pavlović believes, it is written entirely in the Croatian spirit.

In his texts his arguments are based on diversified knowledge, and this speaks of his erudition which he presents without vanity and with full respect for the

subject at hand. For example, his critical text on Vesna Parun is a paradigmatic example of how to anticipate the poetic future of the young and soon to be respected and acclaimed writer. It is also important to mention the essay, *Ten Years Ago*, dedicated to the poet Anka Petričević who was to become a nun, namely, Maria of the Sacred Heart, a Poor Clare. This is one of his most beautiful essays, which begins with the unique apotheosis »Bila je lijepa kao Hrvatska« (“She was as beautiful as Croatia”).

Not to be neglected, of course, is his treatise *Poetry of the Spirit* (Pavlović, 2003) in which he guides the reader through the history of Croatian spiritual poetry starting with Marko Marulić, Mavro Vetranović, Ivan Gundulić and Fran Krsto Frankopan through Ivan Mažuranić, Petar Preradović and Silvije Strahimir Kranjčević to Vladimir Nazor, Ljubo Wiesner, Antun Gustav Matoš, Đuro Sudeta, Tin Ujević and Nikola Šop. It points to, not only the key milestones in the development of Croatian spiritual verse, but also to the spiritual components contained in Croatian literature in its entirety. The excerpts he chooses, such as Mažuranić’s quote from the supplement to Gundulić’s *Osman*: »The Heavens are the books of the ages, upon which with His finger the Most High writes«, clearly indicate what he strives for as a man of the spirit.

Conclusion

He was, says Branimir Donat, »as in the Renaissance, obsessed with fertility and great diversity, and instinctively sensed that poetry is a form of existence« (Donat, 1997, 92). Both as a poet and an author of prose, he wrote with a manneristic luxuriousness. Through poetry, he transported man to his home, the home to the homeland, the homeland to man, and man to Heaven. His metaphysics emanated from the physics of the immediate reality provided by nature and history. He introduced, or rather, restored the metaphysical and patriotic distinction as the genius loci of Croatian literary and European traditions. He did not impose his poetic world upon anyone, but defended it by means of a synthesis of knowledge and through the artistic grandeur of the poetic word, not only as a promoter of the new, but as a promoter of all — as he himself said — that had been written in the Croatian spirit. In this respect, his proper modernity did not discard tradition, but rather affirmed it. Therefore, Damir Radić rightly concludes: »He occupies one of the most prominent positions in the history of Croatian poetry, especially in that of the previous century, both in terms of its poetic value and in terms of the reverberations that his poetry still produces today« (Radić, 2001).

In conclusion, Pavlović’s literary work is a case study on the fruitful natural interlacing of the modern and the traditional, of worldviews and ideas, content, theme, even expression. He developed and matured amidst many challenges that had to be faced during the years of World War II and its aftermath, but nevertheless managed successfully to resist all the ideological trends that contested tradition. At the same time, especially as a poet, he always remained open to the

dynamics of modern stylistic and formal trends, thus achieving and maintaining literary originality. Therefore, his literary work remains to serve as an example of the eternal pro–modernity of tradition, because, as he himself wrote, »the most valuable is that which was never modern, Š...Ć which was always young. Or old. What is young does not need to be rejuvenated. And what is old has yet another advantage: it can never ever become obsolete« (Pavlović, 2003, 110). To what extent this remains in the spirit of tradition may be established on the basis of the affinity of his thought to that written a hundred years ago — in the context of the “old” and “young” polemic — by Croatian journalist, writer and publicist Dinko Politeo, an advocate of traditional aesthetics: »what is modern is that which is ideal; what is modern is... that which is old, or if you wish, to be more precise, a return to the old« (Politeo, 1900, 156). In this respect, Boro Pavlović’s literary work will certainly never be obsolete.

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Domoljubni i religiozni vidici u književnosti Bore Pavlovića — odjeci tradicije u modernitetu

Uz 100. obljetnicu rođenja

*Vladimir Lončarević**

Sažetak

Hrvatsko pjesništvo 20. stoljeća karakterizira velika svjetonazorska i idejna raznolikost, kako promatrano u sinkroniji, tako u dijakroniji. Proces duhovnoga raslojavanja započeo je na prijelazu 19. u 20. stoljeće raspravom tradicionalista i modernista o načelima književnoga stvaranja, da bi se djelomice kod modernista razvio u smjeru prihvaćanja kontestatorskih ideja s obzirom na kršćanstvo. Daljnji korak u tom pogledu dogodio se tijekom prvih dvaju desetljeća, kada je književno stvaranje u tadašnjoj jugoslavenskoj državi pod snažnim komunističkim ideološkim pritiskom, što rezultira otklonom od duhovnih, a sada i nacionalno–domoljubnih sadržaja, bilo njihovim odbacivanjem i zanemarivanjem, bilo negativnim odnosom. Među onima koji su se uspješno oduprli tomu pritisku i sačuvali duh tradicije u modernitetu istaknuo se književnik Boro Pavlović (1922.–2022.). Tema je ovoga članka, uvažavajući spomenute elemente, utvrditi odnos između moderniteta i tradicije u njegovu književnom stvaralaštvu. Kao paradigmatičko polje istraživanja i interpretacije odabrani su primjeri iz autorove domoljubne i religiozne poezije te dio njegovih eseja i studija o hrvatskim piscima i književnim temama, koji upućuju na to da je Pavlovićevo književno djelo ogledni primjer uspješnoga uključujućega (inkluzivnoga) prožimanja moderniteta s tradicijom, kako svjetonazorsko–idejnoga, tako sadržajno–tematskoga te djelomice jezičnoizražajnoga.

Ključne riječi: Boro Pavlović; hrvatska književnost; modernitet; tradicija; domoljublje; religioznost

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