

THE SOCIETY
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PRESIDENT'S MESSAGE: FLYING INTO THE RADAR

On its face, the title of one of the features in this issue of our newsletter, "Promoting Slovenia's Interests in the World," would appear to be uncontroversial – until, of course, one begins to probe a bit and ask just who or what decides what Slovenia's interests are. There are conceivably as many variations on answers to that as there are citizens of Slovenia, Slovene émigrés and their descendants, and friends of Slovenia like myself.

To be known, to be respected, to exercise influence, to have a positive impact – that could well constitute an ascending Maslovian hierarchy of any community's needs: Here we are. Don't tread on us. Here's what we want. And here's something we can offer that may make your life better, as well as ours. Since 1991 Slovenia has secured the first and second, most basic, existential needs. But as our colleague Charles Bukowski muses in his remarks in our feature, how much impact can a small country hope to have on a regional or global scale? Still, each of us can think of any number of trademark Slovene products and practices that stand up to all comers, no matter how big:

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PRESIDENT'S MESSAGE (CONTINUED)

Pipistrel's innovative design and production of light aircraft, Slovene precision engineering, innovations in sustainable forestry, ecotourism, downhill skiing, basketball, mountaineering, choral music composition and performance, painting, poetry, and the novel. Slovenia's universities are powerhouses of competence, most of it underexposed to the world. Who, even among us, knows that twice in the past five years (2015 and 2019) student teams from the University of Ljubljana's Department of Aeronautical Engineering have won the annual international Design/Build/Fly Competition out of a field of more than 100 competing teams? It's a little-known but impressive fact, and the only reason I happen to know is because the Slovenian teams' faculty advisor, Prof. Tadej Kosel, periodically visits Seattle to do collaborative research with his colleagues at UW and Boeing.

Maybe it's not a bad thing to be quietly but fundamentally competent. Then again, I suspect it's better to be competent and well known. Slovenia has so much to offer the world – far more than any one of us on our own can possibly be aware of. I myself am bowled over, again and again, by the wealth of creativity, subtle humor, profound insight and stunning beauty that I continually discover in Slovenia's literature as written by its most gifted practitioners.

This and so much else that Slovenia produces is work that the world needs to know, that can make its life better. Our Society's mission is to help bring students, scholars and the general public in North America and elsewhere outside of Slovenia into contact with the country's unique brands of creativity, particularly in the social sciences, arts and humanities. It's an endless but rewarding task. Our multi-disciplinary journal, our conferences and initiatives, our support for young scholars exploring Slovene topics – and your participation in this enterprise as a member of the Society – all contribute tangibly and visibly to this unquestionably worthy cause. Let's keep spreading the word.

MICHAEL BIGGINS
PRESIDENT, SOCIETY FOR SLOVENE STUDIES (2017-2020)

FROM THE TREASURER

In addition to keeping up with annual dues, the following members made charitable contributions to the Society's special funds variously designed to incentivize student research on Slovene topics, strengthen the Society's reserves, and advance the formation of thriving academic programs for Slovene studies in North America. We extend a special thanks to these members for their support of these funds:

Printing Fund

Darko Kajfez and Raymond Miller

Center Fund

Anthony Ravnik and Carole Rogel

Endowment Fund

John Cox, Anthony Ravnik, and Stephan Wallace

Rado Lenček Graduate Student Prize Fund

Anthony Ravnik

Joseph Velikonja Undergraduate Student Prize Fund

Michael Antolin and Anthony Ravnik

NEW MEMBERS

The Society for Slovene Studies extends a warm welcome to all of this year's new members. We look forward to future submissions from many of you to our journal *Slovene Studies*, and we encourage you to recommend membership in the Society to your colleagues, friends, and interested students!

Zoran Božič
Igor Cesarec
Alenka Chapron
Lindsey Dawn
Robert Farkas
W.F. Just
Hannah Standley

Amendment to the SSS Constitution:

In a vote of the membership conducted in February 2019, an amendment to the wording of the Society's constitution required to achieve compliance with new U.S. Internal Revenue Service requirements for non-profit organizations was approved. A copy of our amended constitution is available on our homepage, www.slovenestudies.com.

Nominations of Candidates for Election of President and Executive Council Members:

At our annual business meeting on November 23 in San Francisco we will call for nominations of candidates to run for the position of President and two elected positions on the Executive Council. Nominees must be members active in the Society with a record of scholarly publications and committed to participate in all Society meetings and business for the time of their service, one for two years and the other for three years (March 2020-2022 and March 2020-2023, respectively).

TIMOTHY POGAČAR, SSS TREASURER

THE SOCIETY AT THE ASEEES CONVENTION

San Francisco, CA
Marriott Marquis Hotel
23-26 November, 2019

This year our Society's annual conference and business meeting will take place over four days in late November, the weekend before Thanksgiving, in balmy San Francisco, at the Marriott Marquis Hotel downtown. Come join us there! This year's program is going to be exceptional, with a record number of conference sessions (no less than 14) featuring presentations on Slovene-related topics by leading scholars in history, language and linguistics, literature and culture from the U.S., Canada and Europe. Look for the complete listing of Slovene studies conference events in our upcoming fall newsletter.

As if an excellent program and the allure of Bay Area weather at a time of year when the rest of the country is mostly under a gray, chilly pall weren't enough, there's still more incentive to attend. That weekend (Nov 23-24, exact date and time to be announced) we will also be joining with members of the Bay Area Slovene-American community for a program, reception and social hour at San Francisco's historic Slovenian Hall, located in the Potrero District, about one mile from the conference hotel. All members of the Society are welcome – invited, indeed, urged to attend. We would love to meet and visit with you there and in the meantime extend our sincere thanks to colleagues in San Francisco for their hospitality and the invitation to join them.

For more information about the ASEEES conference, including the complete program of over 1,000 sessions, visit <https://www.aseees.org/convention>. To reserve a room at the conference hotel, visit <https://www.aseees.org/convention/hotel>

If you're a Society member and think you can make it, e-mail your RSVP for the reception to mbiggins@uw.edu. We hope to see you in San Francisco.



Marc L. Greenberg inducted into Slovene Academy of Arts and Sciences

It is a rare distinction for any scientist, scholar or artist to be invited to join the Slovene Academy of Sciences and Arts, which in Slovenia plays a role comparable to that of the Royal Society in England or the Académie Française in France and is most commonly referred to by its Slovene acronym SAZU. In the 45-year history of the Society for Slovene Studies, four of our members have been thus honored.

Dr. Marc L. Greenberg, Professor of Slavic languages and literatures and Director of the School of Languages, Literatures and Cultures at the University of Kansas, where he has taught since 1990, is the second member of our Society to be inducted as a corresponding member of the Slovene Academy, specifically its Division of Philological and Literary Sciences (SAZU's other divisions include Historical and Social Sciences; Mathematical, Physical, Chemical and Technical Sciences; Natural Sciences; Arts; and Medical Sciences). The title of corresponding member is awarded to scholars whose primary place of work and residence is outside the Republic of Slovenia, but whose record of research and fruitful collaboration with Slovene colleagues have had a major impact on the state of their field in Slovenia.

At his inaugural lecture, held this past June 26 at SAZU in Ljubljana, Prof. Greenberg remarked, "In Slovenia and the former Yugoslavia I have had the opportunity to become familiar with the intimate connection between these countries' languages and their inhabitants' way of life, their way of thinking and their sense of belonging... I have come to embrace the anthropological maxim that says a profound knowledge of two cultures allows you to see the world in three dimensions."

Also in his address, Prof. Greenberg described his work since 2015 planning and editing a new *Encyclopedia of Slavic Languages and Linguistics*, which with hundreds of detailed articles contributed by scores of leading Slavic linguists from around the world will clock in at around 1.2 million words, or over 3,000 pages, and will be the most comprehensive reference work of its kind.



Other SSS members inducted into the Slovenian Academy of Sciences and Arts include:

Dr. Henry Cooper (corresponding member, Division of Philological and Literary Sciences)

Dr. Rado Lenček (corresponding member, Division of Philological and Literary Sciences)

Dr. Janez Bernik (member, Division of Philological and Literary Sciences)

Dr. Peter Vodopivec (associate member, Division of Historical and Social Sciences)

SLOVENE STUDIES

PROGRAM REPORTS

The latest on Slovene Studies programs throughout North America. Don't see your program? Send us a note - we'd love to include info for Fall 2019.

Ohio State University Slovene Research Initiative (OSU SRI)

OSU Center for Slavic and East European Studies

OSU's Slovene Research Initiative, which was launched in 2014 by OSU's Center for Slavic and East European Studies with the strong support of our Society, has reached a new highpoint in its support for collaborative research between scholars at OSU and the Slovene Academy's Scientific-Research Institute (ZRC-SAZU). In 2019 four OSU faculty members - two from its School of Architecture, one from the School of Earth Sciences, and one representing both Ethnomusicology and OSU Libraries, will collaborate with their Slovene counterparts in pursuing original research on the history and unique impacts of the University of Ljubljana's School of Architecture over the

past century, in measuring samples of ice cores from caves near the Triglav glacier (expanding on work begun in 2017 by another OSU geologist), and documenting rare Slovene folk dance notations held uniquely by the OSU Libraries and the National and University Library in Ljubljana. Also in the course of 2019, two ZRC-SAZU scholars - an ethnomusicologist and a historian of Slovene emigration, will visit OSU. Read more about the backgrounds and research agendas of this year's six OSU Slovene Research Initiative scholars at <https://slaviccenter.osu.edu/news/sri-announces-2019-faculty-exchange-recipients>



THE OHIO STATE UNIVERSITY

Slovene Studies at The University of Washington, Seattle

Department of Slavic Languages & Literatures

Now in its fourth decade, the annual UW-University of Ljubljana Scholars Exchange is sending two UW scholars to Ljubljana and hosting two scholars from Ljubljana in Seattle in 2019. In addition to visits to UW by Prof. Valter Suban (UL School of Maritime Studies) and Dr. Dunja Fabjan (UL Astronomy), UW Prof. José Alaniz and doctoral student Veronica Muskheli (both of the Department of Slavic Languages and Literatures) will each pursue their respective research projects – Veronica through field work collecting Slovene oral folk tales of the Resian dialect area in northeastern Italy, and José through archival work and consultations with UL colleagues and staff of the legendary graphic novel and comics publisher Stripburger (Ljubljana), which has been instrumental in East Central Europe's comic arts renaissance since 1992.

Currently in the works at UW is an agreement with the University of Ljubljana that will support an exchange of up to twelve undergraduate and graduate students per year from each university majoring in virtually any field. We hope to report on details of the new student exchange in the fall 2019 SSS newsletter.

New Slovene Studies Lectureship at Stanford University

Stanford is the most recent North American institution to join the ranks of universities around the world supporting Slovene language lectureships in collaboration with the University of Ljubljana's Center for Slovene as a Second/Foreign Language. Longtime Los Altos resident Maria Rode, who brings years of experience teaching Slovene language to groups of Slovene Americans in the San Francisco Bay Area, served as the program's first lecturer, completing this past June the first full academic year of Slovene language instruction at "the Farm."

North America now has a total of four Slovene lectureships, including Stanford's. Cleveland State University, the University of Kansas, and the University of Washington in Seattle also regularly offer courses in introductory, intermediate and advanced Slovene language and support study and research on Slovene-related topics.

Slovene Studies at the University of Kansas

School of Languages, Literatures & Cultures

In January 2019, the University of Kansas and the University of Ljubljana finalized and executed a comprehensive agreement on cultural, educational, and scientific cooperation. The comprehensive agreement provides opportunities for more in-depth partnership projects between the two universities, expanding beyond the 2017 agreement between KU and the University of Ljubljana on reciprocal student exchange. In addition to the agreements with the University of Ljubljana, KU also has a comprehensive agreement on cultural, educational, and scientific cooperation with the University of Primorska (Koper), finalized in 2018.

The largest group of KU business and engineering students (33 plus three professors) visited Slovenia in May 2019 on the KU Business & Engineering in Slovenia study abroad program, which is now in its fourth year and has almost tripled in size since it began. Ms. Marta Pirnat-Greenberg, KU Slovene lecturer, provided the language and cultural introduction as part of the students' pre-departure orientation. In response to students' interest in a more structured introduction to Slovene language and culture, she recently created a one-credit course, Introduction to Slovene, which should be available in spring 2020 for the next KU group visiting Slovenia.

A KU Slovene language student and graduate student in History, whose research focuses on the Habsburg Empire, spent most of July in Ljubljana where she participated in the 55th Seminar of Slovene Language, Literature and Culture, met with Slovene scholars, and started archival research. In March, Marta and her students of Slovene were featured in an article in the Maribor daily *Večer*.



Meet our young scholars: Thomas McDonald (Stanford) and Hannah Standley (U. of Washington)



Thomas in Idrija, June 2019

Thomas McDonald is a PhD student of comparative literature at Stanford University, specializing in modern German and Japanese literature and exploring Slovene language and literature along the way.



Hannah at Bled, July 2019

Hannah Standley is an M.A. student in the Ellison Center for Russian, East European and Central Asian Studies at the University of Washington in Seattle, writing her thesis on secularization in Slovenia and other post-communist European societies.

In addition to their study of Slovene and their membership in the Society for Slovene Studies, one other thing they have in common is that they both attended the 52nd annual Seminar of Slovene Language, Literature and Culture (or SSJKL, for short), held July 1-13 this year in Ljubljana. On the next page, you can read some highlights of that experience in their own words.

"Meet our young scholars," continued

Thomas McDonald:

Thanks to a scholarship through ASEF and the support of Maria Rode, Zvonko Fazarinc, and the Center for Slovene in Ljubljana, I am here in Slovenia for nearly ten weeks improving my Slovene language skills and researching the Slovene reception of Austrian novelist Peter Handke. This scholarship is funding my stay at the Dijaški Dom Ivana Cankarja (DDIC) and my participation in the two-week Seminar of Slovene Language, Literature, and Culture at the University of Ljubljana, where I took intermediate language courses each morning. The seminar also offered a selection of afternoon excursions as well as Slovene-language lectures on history and literature.

In addition, I am based at the Research Center of the Slovene Academy of Arts and Sciences (ZRC SAZU) under the mentorship of a literary historian, Igor Grdina. It has been an honor to spend time learning from Prof. Grdina; he is an amazing scholar with a wealth of knowledge about the history and literature of Slovenia, Central Europe, and many other topics, and he has been an incredibly kind host, showing me around the country and introducing me to many other scholars, including Mira Miladonović-Zalaznik at University of Ljubljana. With ASEF I spent a weekend in Idrija, meeting the Youth Center Idrija (Mladinski Center) and visiting the Anthony's Mineshaft (Antonijev rov) mercury mine. Otherwise, most days I spend meeting with local scholars, working out of ZRC SAZU, and sometimes the Velika čitalnica at the National Library, and most mornings or evenings at the Kavarna Rog (near the DDIC) to read the news in *Delo* and *Dnevnik*.

Hannah Standley:

The theme of this year's seminar was Slovenia in 1919, when the University of Ljubljana was founded, when the Prekmurje region returned to its motherland, Slovenia, and a period when constructivism and expressionism reigned in Slovenian literature and art (e.g., poet Srečko Kosovel, artist Avgust Černigoj). As a student of the language, I found lectures given by Hotimir Tivadar and Suzana Panker on the Prekmurje Slovene dialect to be especially fascinating—the lectures involved analyzing Prekmurje Slovene in songs and poetry written by songwriter Vlado Kreslin and novelist Feri Lainšček. For one who has been studying Slovene for less than a full calendar year, I was most grateful for the intensive language course that was taught during the seminar. Our classes focused heavily on written and spoken grammar, and our skills were applied in conversation lessons where we spoke about relevant modern day topics (such as politics, religion, health and wellness, etc.) and themes related to the seminar itself. At the seminar I was able to practice daily with native speakers and find confidence to speak Slovene that I had not had before.

I became interested in Slovenia through my previous interest in Slavic languages and culture and my life-long interest in the dialectic between religious belief and secularism. Slovenia is a very unique nation in which classical Western and traditional Slavic cultures meet and meld, and this melding is very obvious in the physical and emotional elements of Slovenian culture. As modern-day Slovenia is the only post-Yugoslav nation to exhibit a significant population of self-reported secular individuals, I am interested in supplementing the already existing state-centric analysis of secularism in Slovenia with an anthropological examination that focuses on how *god* (name-day celebrations) are celebrated today by both religious and secular individuals and the frequency of use of Christian names in Slovenian society in relation to secularization trends.

The highlight of my visit was meeting with the University of Ljubljana's leading scholar on secularism in Slovenia to discuss my research and share ideas—it was a true privilege for me as a budding academic to speak in earnest on my research interests with one of the leading experts and to receive such valuable feedback on my ideas.

PROMOTING SLOVENIA'S INTERESTS IN THE WORLD

Thoughts from the 2018 ASEEEES Conference

The following remarks were presented by members of the Society at a roundtable titled “Promoting Slovenia’s Interests in the World: Communication, Commerce, Culture and Diplomacy,” held at the 2018 annual national conference of the Association for Slavic, East European and Eurasian Studies.

Participants:

Charles Bukowski is Professor and Director of the Institute of International Studies at Bradley University, Illinois.

Olivia Hellewell recently earned her PhD in Russian and Slavonic Studies at the University of Nottingham.

James Gow is Professor of International Peace and Security at King’s College, London.

Charles Bukowski:

I would like to focus on the image Slovenia seeks to present to the world, but will do it from the rather conventional perspective of political diplomacy. My intent is to look at Slovenia’s recent diplomacy—as in the past 12 months—and place it in the context of Slovenia’s diplomacy over the last decade.

Regarding the context, I am reminded of a conversation I had perhaps a dozen years ago with a friend at the Bureau of Intelligence and Research in the U.S. Department of State who covered southeastern Europe. She told me that Slovenia had become a “boring” country. From the perspective of someone who spent her time watching for fires, being viewed as a boring country was a compliment. It meant that Slovenia was doing a consistently good job, and so it seldom generated concern among State Department analysts.

The image of being boring spoke well of Slovenia and reflected the image that Slovenia was trying to present to the world then—and now. It is the image of a country that is competent, or at least competently run, both in terms of its domestic and foreign policy. A second dimension of that image is one of reliability: that Slovenia has been and continues to be a good team player when it comes to its foreign policy commitments and what its allies ask of it. I’m thinking here mainly of Slovenia’s membership in the EU and NATO, but we could also add the Council of Europe and the OSCE. A major element of building that image was Slovenia’s successful turn at holding the EU presidency in 2008. Of course, this effort emerged from Slovenia’s initial image campaign from the 1990s in which it sought to present itself as “not the Balkans”—guarding against being stereotyped as a poorly run and unreliable partner and therefore not a serious candidate for NATO or the EU. These two efforts were enormously successful, but they were jeopardized by the 2008 recession. Slovenia was hit particularly hard by the banking crisis that accompanied the 2008 recession, and it came very close to requiring an EU bailout. Being sent to the same figurative corner as Greece would have undone a lot of Slovenia’s image building. Although Slovenia managed to weather this economic storm, it was not without cost to its foreign policy capabilities. One consequence was the closure of four embassies and a near freeze on hiring in the Foreign Ministry.

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"Promoting Slovenia's Interests in the World"

Charles Bukowski, continued:

As Slovenia emerged from the recession, it actively pursued what came to be called "economic diplomacy." Then Prime Minister—now President—Pahor spoke of the need for Slovenia to "subordinate" its foreign policy needs to economic needs. Responsibility for foreign economic policy was transferred to the Foreign Ministry. Since then, presenting the image of Slovenia as a serious business partner has been a consistent element in Slovenian foreign policy regardless of the make-up of the government. 2018 was no exception. In January, at the annual meeting of Slovene diplomats, then-Prime Minister Cerar highlighted the work done on economic diplomacy. He stated that success in this endeavor was an important reason for Slovenia's positive economic outlook. Indeed, the economic analyses I read contend that exports represent the main reason for the relatively strong economic growth Slovenia has experienced over the last few years.

Another dimension of conveying an image of competence and reliability is to demonstrate that domestic politics has a minimal impact on foreign policy. A change in government does not mean that foreign policy partnerships will have to change in character. Slovenia has been quite successful in this endeavor—even as its domestic politics have become more turbulent. This was most on display in the previous decade when virtually all of Slovenia's major political parties supported seeking the EU presidency. In 2004, Slovenia's parliament voted 71-0 in support of this effort, even though it was well known that the cost would be between 60 and 80 million euros.

Domestic politics in Slovenia have become increasingly fractious, and they likely will continue to be fractious for at least the near future. But in terms of Slovenia's image abroad, this may not be the hindrance one might expect. My exchanges with colleagues in Ljubljana over the years have rather consistently given me the impression that, even in good times, the major political parties do not consider foreign policy to be a priority. So, even under these circumstances, Slovenia does not display the external appearance of being unreliable. This may be just good fortune. And certainly, it is good fortune, for appearances' sake, that Slovenia's previous prime minister is now its foreign minister. Nevertheless, the new government can be viewed as distracted and at risk of missing out on foreign policy opportunities.

There is one other point worth mentioning regarding Slovenia's image; it relates to membership in the European Union. I have raised this issue [on previous occasions] and still have not arrived at a conclusive

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answer. As an EU member, Slovenia is expected to conduct its foreign policy within the limits of EU initiatives and the organization's common foreign and security policy. At the very least, it should not conflict with what the EU is pursuing. On the other hand, as an EU member, it has the opportunity to influence the organization's agenda. And yet, Slovenia is a small state, and it is not clear how much influence Slovenia has within the EU. Perhaps it is especially difficult for a small state in the EU to pursue an inconsistent foreign policy despite its domestic political circumstances.

Given this, I wonder if my colleagues speaking of other, nontraditional, ways that Slovenia promotes its interests in the world might have more refreshing perspectives to show us. For example, perhaps Slovenia is not as constricted when it uses cultural means to pursue its interests.

Olivia Hellewell:

One of the ways that Slovenia seeks to present itself to the wider world is through literary translation. Of course, not all acts of translation are conscious attempts at exerting a presence in the world, but if we look in particular at the institutional network of cultural organisations in Slovenia, we do see evidence of how literary translation constitutes a coordinated effort to make Slovene literature, and Slovenia, visible beyond its own national borders.

In my research, I talk about 'supply-driven' translation, i.e. translation activity that is instigated by the source culture. Examining translation processes from the point of initiation sheds light not only on fascinating stories of chance encounters, but also on the nuanced power relationship between literary systems of varying levels of cultural visibility and influence. And in the case of Slovenia, a country with a long tradition of upholding and celebrating its language and literature in narratives of nationhood, we can observe an industrious network of individuals and organisations who work to counteract the imbalance of cultural power by investing in the promotion of Slovene literature in English.

If we take the body of novels translated from Slovene into English since Slovenia declared independence in 1991, we can conceive of three types of motivation that led to the translation of these works: academic, personal and institutional types of supply. It is these institutional drives to supply that are most relevant to our discussion here, as they constitute a coordinated response to the perceived invisibility of Slovene literature on what we might call the world literary stage. Efforts to drive the

"Promoting Slovenia's Interests in the World"

Olivia Hellewell (continued):

promotion of Slovene literature can be observed throughout the literary sphere; at the government level (within the Ministry of Culture), in separate government organisations (such as the Slovene Book Agency), in literary organisations (such as The Slovene Writers' Association and Slovenian PEN) and independently run centres such as the Centre for Slovenian Literature.

During my research, I interviewed many people from the literary sphere who are in some way connected to the promotion of Slovene literature in translation. There's an example that I'd like to share here which shows not only how literary translation is seen as a means of exerting an international presence by those in positions of influence, but which also tells us something about the self-image of Slovenia's literary sphere. Anton Peršak, who at the time of interview was State Secretary for Culture, and later went on to become the Minister of Culture, displayed an acute awareness of the need for Slovenia to take care of its own literary promotion, saying:

[Č]e hočemo pravzaprav dokazat, da obstajamo, ne?, moramo sami skrbeti za to. In skrb Ministrstva za kulturo je poleg drugega [...] tudi to, da sami skrbimo za to, da se slovenska literatura prevaja.

Of course, this perceived responsibility for the translation of Slovene literature at the government level raises lots of interesting questions about who gets translated, and who decides; who, for instance, is considered to be a worthy representative? And worthy according to whom? I asked Peršak about whether, in either his position at the Ministry, or in his other positions within literary organisations such as the Writers Association or the Trubar Foundation, he had been involved in deciding who gets to be translated. I was interested in what considerations were made when deciding which books receive funding, and his response further reinforces the idea that literature is a means of outwardly representing Slovenia to the world:

[M]i se ukvarjamo predvsem s tem, ali so to knjige, ki si to zaslužijo, se pravi, ali gre res za dobrega avtorja ali gre za knjigo, ki ne bo... zdaj bom rekel... ne bo anti-promocija za Slovenijo, ne, za slovensko kulturo...

Peršak's responses, though just a small excerpt of my interview data, show that there is a clear, conscious recognition of Slovenia's need to present itself to the world through its literature. Furthermore, we can note a sense of insecurity about this process, with a clear concern that a book – if not considered of sufficient literary merit, or if it is not received well – might have a negative impact upon Slovenia's literary reputation.

James Gow:

Slovakia or Slovenia? The first question for Slovenian diplomats and others engaging outsiders about the country is to be clearly and properly identified as Slovenia, not mislabeled as, or assumed to be, Slovakia. Often, to have achieved this much is the measure of success. Small states often have a hard time establishing a profile – and that is harder, obviously, when there is a lexically similar fairly small state on the scene, as well. It is also harder to establish an international profile of any kind, if the country does not play a one-note samba and become known for one area of activity – often financial and with favourable tax conditions and protection of assets, as with Luxembourg, or Liechtenstein. Of course, there would be a good case for being relatively anonymous – the one phase in which Slovenia actually became known was the difficult time of war and independence in the early 1990s, after which it returned to a relative peace and obscurity. That peaceful, quiet character is one of the elements that Slovenia, as a country, values and seeks to use to attract outside interest. However, it is not clear that this works as well as could be desired.

In late 2017, by chance, I discovered that there was an official 'artist in residence', hosted by the Slovenian Embassy in London. I was intrigued to find out more about this novelty. I searched and found that the Embassy website contained further information, which gave me some pause for thought. First, the program had been in place for many years and many artists had held residencies. Secondly, it was a program only open to Slovene nationals. Each of these points evoked a nest of surprise and questions in me. How come I had not been aware of the artist in residence previously? As part of that tiny non-group in London of non-Slovene nationals (or relatives) with an interest in the country, and receiving email notifications from Ljubljana's Embassy in London, it was mystifying not to have heard of something running for almost a decade. It struck me that this 'hidden' artist in residency was symptomatic of the country's self-conscious timidity, hiding its light under a bushel. Surely, one point of a scheme such as this should be to promote Slovenia's image in the artistic and cultural domain, or as a wellspring of creativity? And yet, Slovenia's modesty about its image kept those a little bit interested, in the dark.

Ambiguities – and reasons for failure to promote the country more successfully – can be found in the Ljubljana government's own presentation of itself on the official website, which betrays further examples of uncertainty and inhibition. This begins by recognising

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"Promoting Slovenia's Interests in the World"

James Gow (continued):

that the country is one of which many people 'have never heard.' The curious follow-up to this ruminates on how, in the globalised world, an image of a country might be formed from diverse elements and experiences, and, almost apologetically, that there seems little that can be done actively to promote a single image: 'So this world, for everyone, is full of impressions that enter our horizon and consciousness often quite accidentally.' In response to this curious reflection, a curious selection of bits and pieces are offered, in case any one of them might be picked up: 'When you try somehow to link the particles of the 'figurative images' which are spread before you, you might see that Slovenia is a country with a lively, contemporary and penetrating pulse, which is worth getting to know a little better, getting acquainted with.' This convolution can perhaps be reduced to a sense that Slovenia has no real sense of how to present itself, but hopes that one of the morsels – or another – might have some appeal and catch the reader's attention. Stronger and more up-to-date presentation of the country in its own official sources might boost Slovenia and its profile.

In terms of international diplomacy and security, Slovenia has worked hard to present itself as responsible and competent. To a good extent, this was achieved by establishing good working relationships with others and, in particular, by shadowing the UK – rightly judging that London usually had the best assessment of how to approach questions and what could actually be achieved in practice. It has done so through its engagement in NATO, making a small contribution to operations in Afghanistan, through its relatively successful – certainly, survived-without-disaster – presidencies of the EU Council and the UN Security Council, as well as its year as Chair-in-Office of the OSCE. In each of these roles, with some degree of success, Ljubljana promoted itself as having a 'special role' in relation both to Russia and to Serbia and the Western Balkans. It was in those roles that a US-Russia summit was possible, for example. Yet, having settled into a relatively effective position for a small state, largely presenting itself and being seen as sensible and reliable, the country's image and self-image needed attention as the UK star that had been followed for fifteen years largely imploded with the Brexit crisis and, from 2016 onwards, the prospect of Brexit. A corollary of that was the prospect of EU policies and approaches, certainly, without the leavening influence of the UK, meaning that Slovenia would have to re-orient itself and either find the next-best star with which to align, or alter the image and self-image, and adjust its policies and approaches more broadly.

In terms of tourism - an important image to establish for economic benefit - the once simple beauty of the affective and effective 'On the Sunny Side of the Alps' might be glimpsed occasionally, perhaps in an ironic, 'retro' way. That brilliant marketing identifier, which captured almost everything – the mountains and the lakes, the sun and the sea, the comfortable Central European with a tinge of

Southern European spice – had given way to a new, awkward slogan, 'I Feel Slovenia.' This lacked any real grip for native English speakers and was mainly a product of the graphic design world that could use emphasis and highlighting to bring out 'love' as a word within 'Slovenia' and so enabling the overlapping impressions of feeling Slovenia, loving Slovenia and feeling love. This was more a crossword puzzle than an effective slogan, and, on any level, seemed clunky and held little attraction.

Another way in which tourism was undermined concerned the blend of past and present politics. The River Kolpa, on the border with Croatia, had notable problems, for example. Slovenia had erected a fence on the Slovenian side of the river to enforce the border between Slovenia, as part of the EU Schengen Zone of free movement, and Croatia, outside that zone. This was against the background of the earthquake of unregulated migration that shook Europe, especially South Eastern Europe, affecting Slovenia acutely, as it did some other countries. The erection of a hard border between two EU Member States, where there had been none historically between the predecessor Yugoslav states was not without irony. More significantly, this physical barrier at the border impacted sharply on local tourism, that thrived on the river as a focus for water sports, such as kayaking and fishing. Hotels and restaurants with land running down to the river were no longer in a position to sell access. Without access, tourism was damaged and the local economy turned down.

The River Kolpa is at the edge of the Kočevje region, a place of great historic importance and also potential. But, while the 'wellness' and 'outdoors' themes are suited to it, and there has been some development in relation to them, as with the disrupted tourism around the river, greater potential lies fairly dormant. That potential rests not only in the environment, but in its somewhat dark history. Not only was this once highly restricted zone the place where secret planning for Slovenia's independence campaign and its fallback government was undertaken, it was also the location of Second World War military bases and, the reason for its being a closed area for so long, the site of mass graves, where those on the wrong side of the Second World War and Revolution, from all of the Yugoslav lands, were killed. This is a point of history that is neither as openly, nor as widely discussed or understood as it could be. So far as it is 'in the open,' which clearly it is, this is only as a historicised symbol in contemporary politics. As with other issues, such as the country's relatively poor handling of minorities and its relationship with its southern neighbour across the Kolpa, there is a tendency to 'hide' issues – and not maturely to consider them. That is a combination of elements that clearly constitute part of Slovenia's identity and image. But, in terms of the interest across Europe and the US in 'war' tourism, if ideological combat could be set aside, Slovenia might find ways to add to its tourist repertoire and also convey an image of maturity and sense that would parallel what it has managed successfully to cultivate in the diplomatic and security spheres.

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