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REPRESENTATIONS OF SLOVENIAN IDENTITY AND ANALYSIS OF THE NATIONAL(ISTIC) DISCOURSE IN THE SLOVENIAN MAGAZINE KAPLJE

ABSTRACT

The article deals with the position held by the Slovenian magazine Kaplje [Drops] in the Slovenian collective memory. Published in the town of Idrija between 1966 and 1972, i.e. in the period of party liberalism in former Yugoslavia, Kaplje was a publication from the periphery that 'swam against the current', although its role was almost entirely ignored. The article's aim is therefore to determine how the magazine's contributors represented and (re)produced Slovenian identity and its constitutive elements, and which forms and strategies of national(istic) discourse were used. The methodology is based on a critical discursive analysis of selected articles that touch on the above-mentioned themes from all 26 issues of the magazine, including a special issue released upon the twentieth anniversary of the date the magazine voluntarily came to an end.

KEY WORDS: Slovenian identity, nationalism, discourse, Kaplje magazine, Idrija

Identiteta in nacional(istič)ni diskurz v slovenski reviji Kaplje

IZVLEČEK

Članek se ukvarja z revijo Kaplje in njeno vlogo v slovenskem kolektivnem spominu. Kaplje, ki so izhajale v Idriji v letih 1972–1966, torej v obdobju t. i. partijskega liberalizma v nekdanji Jugoslaviji, so bile publikacija, ki je sicer z obrobja »plavala proti toku«, vendar pa je bila njena zgodovinska vloga praktično prezrta. Namen članka je ugotoviti, kako so avtorji revije predstavljali in (re)producirali slovensko

identiteto in njene konstitutivne elemente ter katere so uporabljene oblike in strategije nacional(istič)nega diskurza. Metodološko članek temelji na kritični diskurzivni analizi izbranih prispevkov, ki se dotikajo obravnavanih tem, pri čemer so bile analizirane vse številke (26) revije in tudi posebna izdaja revije ob 20-letnici samoukinitve revije.

KLJUČNE BESEDE: slovenska identiteta, nacionalizem, diskurz, revija *Kaplje*, *Idrija*

1 Introduction

Kaplje – revija za kulturo in obča vprašanja, [Drops – A Magazine of Cultural and General Issues],¹ published in *Idrija*, Slovenia from 1966 to 1972, does not occupy an important place in the collective memory of *Idrija*'s local community, still less in Slovenia as a whole.² Indeed the magazine was rescued from oblivion by a scholarly symposium organized by the *Idrija* city library and reading room in 2016 to celebrate the fiftieth anniversary of the founding of the publication. During the 1960s and 1970s, *Kaplje* was one of many similar publications in Slovenia that “swam against the stream”. Among these publications, much greater attention was enjoyed – both critically and politically – by magazines from the center, above all from the capital of Slovenia, *Ljubljana* (for example, *Beseda*, *Revija 57*, *Perspektive*, *Problemi*), than by those from the periphery (*Goriška srečanja*, *Obala*, *Dialogi*, etc.). *Kaplje*, which certainly belongs in the second category, emerged in the more “relaxed” political era of the 1960s, a

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1. Emil Miklavčič, an important *Kapljevec* or *Kapljaš* (magazine contributor) provided the name for the publication, which began to be published in *Idrija* on the initiative of Tomaž Pavšič. All of those who founded the publication believed that its name should be modest, but also fierce and propulsive. As Pavšič said (in Prelovec 2012: 24), drops “can erode a stone, not with power, but with how persistently they fall.” The publication had no financial support for its first issue, and later obtained symbolic annual donations from the municipality and income from subscriptions.
 2. The research on identity and national(istic) discourse in the Slovenian magazine *Kaplje* was conducted on the occasion of the 50th anniversary of the first issues of the *Kaplje* magazine and presented by the author at a symposium organized by the *Idrija* Public Library on 12 April 2016 in *Idrija*.

period characterized by party liberalism³ in both Slovenia and Yugoslavia, a relaxation that was evident in the new cultural currents and debates circulating among intellectuals and journalists and in the wider atmosphere. Together with this geographic division, the 50s and early 60s saw two magazine currents being established based on their attitude towards the communist authority. Magazines of the first group represented an extension of the political and cultural authorities (*Novi svet*, *Mladinska revija*, *Naša sodobnost*), while the other group was composed of magazines that were swimming against the tide (*Beseda*, *Revija 57*, *Perspektive*) (Štuhec, 2001). *Kaplje* belong to this latter current.

The purpose of this article, which deals with the positioning of the Slovenian magazine *Kaplje* [Drops] in the Slovenian collective memory, will be above all on how contributors to *Kaplje* represented and (re)produced Slovenian identity, including its constitutive elements, the ways in which the analyzed articles focused on these elements, and what (if any) forms and strategies of national(istic) discourses were used. We will, of course, respect the ideological-political and cultural context of the time in which the magazine was published, especially the starting point and directions defined by the editors when the magazine was established. The theoretical part of the paper will place the debate within three main conceptual frameworks: the nation as an imagined community, identity as a predominantly discursive category, and national(istic) discourses and strategies with the help of which the identity of the nation, along with so-called everyday nationalism, was perpetuated and maintained. In the use of the term national(istic), we proceed from the assumption by George Schöpflin, who sees the distinction between the civic and ethnic dimensions of nationhood as an extremely valuable one, but at the same time warns that this division into "good" (civic, national, i.e.

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3. The period of party liberalism was marked with the appearance of newer, liberal views on the role of the party and its internal organization. The more "radical" form of socialism was beginning to vanish, yet the party still had its monopole. In 1963, in spite of the after-war censorship, the Public Prosecutor's Office of the Socialist Republic of Slovenia started monitoring and recording the prohibitions of spreading printed word. Although the pressure on publishing and printing houses was still present, the suspensive censorship prevailed more and more, which meant the prohibition of already printed works – that usually found their way to the readers, nevertheless. After 1964, the new legislation reduced the role of the state and enabled various associations to be established more easily (an inscription in the register of associations sufficed, whereas before, a special permission by a state office of internal affair was needed) and to function in a more relaxed manner. This contributed also to the appearance of new art forms, to a richer journal production (other literary journals appeared alongside *Kaplje*, such as *Goriška srečanja*, *Obala*, 2000, *Dialogi*, and *Prostor in čas*) and to a more open polemicizing and expressing different views on social questions (Gabrič 2005).

based on the nation state as a political community of various ethnic, cultural, religious and other identities) and “bad” (ethnic, nationalistic, i.e. based on the nation as a politically conscious and mobilized community of predominantly one homogeneous ethnic identity) identity politics in the West has become the norm, although civic identities can hide quite significant non-civic agendas and identities.

In the contemporary world, however, there is a certain subsurface moralising about ethnicity in the West. By and large there is a tacit, sometimes explicit, assumption that democratic nation treats all its citizens equally, regardless of ethnicity, religion, creed, race, etc. [...] Even when a civic identity presents itself as civic and denies its ethnic content, this is no more than a self-legitimizing discourse, probably a reference to a foundation myth, like the French Revolution or the constitution. In reality, whatever the original impulse, these politics have found that a degree of ethnicisation of the civic identity is essential to provide the cohesiveness without which the modern state finds it very hard to survive. [...] Hence the real political community that constitutes the state inevitably has ethnic as well as civic quality (Schöpflin, 2002: 298–301).

Therefore, it is evidently better to perceive the civic-ethnic dichotomy as a spectrum, as a matter of emphasis, where civic systems are open ethnicisation.

The theoretical section will be followed by the main body of the article in which we will analyze the discursive practices connected with representations of Slovenian identity and nation, and nationalism used in *Kaplje*. The methodology will be based on a critical discursive analysis of selected articles that touch on the above-mentioned themes. In this context, we reviewed all of the 26 issues of the magazine published during the entire period of publication, including the special issue that came out on the twentieth anniversary of the date when the magazine was “voluntarily” folded. On the basis of the reviewed articles, we selected all those that were related to the (1) representations of Slovenian identity and nation, and (2) national(istic) discourse, excluding literary (prose and poetry) contributions. The analysis and interpretation include those articles whose authors most representatively address exposed topics from the theoretical section. And why even choose exactly this magazine?

Kaplje ceased to emerge in 1972, which due to the marked political reversal means the end of the period of party liberalism from the 1960s. This was a time of severe political aggravation and political purges, including in culture and science, due to sharper sentences, the possibility of (public) critical polemizations was curtailed, the repressive measures of the authorities against newspapers

and the removal of magazines from the list of recipients of subsidies and the abolition of magazines: in 1974 *Prostor in čas*, then *Obzorja...* (Gabrič 2005). The greater pressures of the Communist Party and the financial situation also contributed to the cessation of the *Kaplje* magazine, which was chosen for our analysis, because it is interesting that the broader public role of *Kaplje* "in terms of official publications was almost entirely ignored, probably because it was officially defined as a private publication" (Bratina in Prelovec 2012: 25). In the collection "Literary modernism in the leaden years" (2008), Meta Kušar described *Kaplje* as "an unusual independent project about which no study has been made" (Kušar in Prelovec 2012: 10). Jerica Prelovec's bachelor's thesis entitled "The place of *Kaplje* in Slovenian postwar magazine production" (2012) helped to fill this academic lacuna at least to the anniversary of the magazine in 2017. Although it was published on the Slovenian periphery, *Kaplje* was sold in Idrija, Nova Gorica, Koper, Trieste, Ljubljana, Celje, and Kranj, while the Slovenian diaspora arranged for it to be distributed to locations in Argentina. Even before it was published, the magazine received accusations claiming that its authors, who had been called to be interviewed by the municipal committee of the League of Communists of Slovenia a year before the first edition was out, wish to revive *Perspektive*, a magazine discontinued in 1964. *Kaplje* received an even more intense debate in the highest municipal political forums after its first year when it became clear that the authors were often critical and sharp commentators in their articles. "At the same time, *Kaplje* were therefore a political problem and an instigator of new things," writes Aleš Gabrič (2017: 27–28). In 1967, the magazine was labeled as problematic yet received no harsher sanctions. Due to its substantive connection and connective role in the wider Slovenian cultural space reaching also the Slovenians in Italy and Austria, the *Kaplje* editors received multiple warnings "against an uncontrolled collaboration of the magazine contributors and the people across the border".

2 Imagined communities, identities, and discourses

In the indisputably classic work *Imagined Communities: Reflections on the Origin and Spread of Nationalism* from 1983, Benedict Anderson explains the term "imagined community" as a particular signifier of the concept of the nation and an analytical method to understand the phenomenon of nationalism, and claims that language plays an important role in the definition of the nation as an "imagined community". Language in this context is as a symbolic means of identification that includes the concepts, values, and behavioral norms that comprise the cultural system of a certain community. Namely, language exists on

(at least) three conceptual levels: philological, cultural, and political (Schöpflin 2003). We could state that morning prayers were metaphorically exchanged for the reading of the morning papers, and that the collective language (and faith) contributed significantly to the self-awareness of people regarding their affiliation to a nation. From this standpoint, nationalism performs the important social function of integrating people and creating the idea of (at least) apparent kinship and (at least) apparent cohesion. However, like race, a characteristic not written in the genes but in discourses, the nation also exists and is significantly reproduced in discursive practices. Nothing proves the latter more explicitly than Robert William Seton-Watson's conclusion that the nineteenth century in Europe was the golden age of the vernacularization of lexicographers, grammarians, linguists, philologists, folklorists, journalists, and writers. Their "energetic activities" were the main generator of the formation of European nineteenth century nationalisms (Anderson 2006: 71).

The building of nations, or nation states, took place on at least two levels, or according to two ideological principles: popular and official nationalism. To paraphrase Jan Blommaert, the first gradually began to appear as sincere enthusiasm on the part of the people, and the second as a Machiavellian inoculation of nationalistic ideologies through mass media, the educational system, and the government. On both levels, it was characteristic that the nation as an example of an imagined homogenous society was defined with unspecific and mostly imagined concepts that connected history, ancestry ethnicity, religion, language, territory, origin, etc., and functioned as the standard and condition of social harmony, the nation as a self-evident natural community (Blommaert in Praprotnik 1999: 153). The existence of nations "is not a truth that human beings have discovered but a conceptualization of the world that we have created" (Jackson in Praprotnik 1999: 153). An additional element that complicates the discourse about nations and nationalities as an ideological framework is the emotional charge of the concepts listed above. This is particularly evident in the idea of love for "one's" nation, which is predicated on the difference between "us" and "them". Without "outsiders", it would not be possible to love one's nations, because there is nothing about it that is absolute, transcendent, self-generating, essential, or, as Eric Hobsbawm would say, objective. There are no objective criteria that define a nation, because the criteria (language, culture, religion, history, territory, origin, etc.) are as ambiguous as the concept of the nation itself. Moreover, there are always exceptions that do not express national tendencies, or a "real" nation that does not suit the criteria (Hobsbawm in Anderson 1998: 15).

"Not only the 'content' but also the discursive practices, which play a significant role in the expression, legitimation, and inclusion of nationalism in society,

are important for the reproduction of nationalism and the constitution of national identity" (Praprotnik 1999: 152). These discursive practices can take on "harder" (more extreme) or "softer" forms. The latter, especially in the media and political discourse, are relatively tolerant, but they are never "neutral" (in the sense that they are realized through communication and the use of language), and in this way dictate, that is socially teach, the formation of social cognition, opinions, approaches, prejudices, and stereotypes, and "canalize social perception", exerting an important influence on the ideological process of (re)production of nationalism. Nationalism therefore "lives" in the language or the discourse, which is a form of social action and practice because it "gives meaning" to society, as well as to socio-cultural, political, and ideological practices, thus determining the social system and its structures. To summarize, nationalism is socially learned, and discourse is essential in the process of its ideological (re)production.

Nationalism certainly hinges on the concept of national or more precisely ethnic identity. Both seem to function imperceptibly and unconsciously as a kind of "second nature" that people acquire and internalize so that they can move through the routines of everyday life as unobserved as possible (Bourdieu in Billig 1995: 42). In this kind of banal nationalism, as Michael Billig terms it, what is important are everyday experiences and events, ideological habits and approaches that latently, but continuously, express and maintain the identity of a nation. But this everyday nationalism that is "ours" is frequently forgotten or acquires a different form (for example, patriotism), while nationalism that is dangerous, emotional, and irrational is projected onto "others" (Billig 1995: 8-9). Everyday encounters and practices, common sense assumptions, cultural idioms, cognitive schema, interactive symbols, discursive frameworks, organizational routines, social networks, and institutional forms are what Rogers Brubaker calls everyday ethnicity (Brubaker 2006). But despite its "normalized" ubiquity that displays no violent intentions, it is still not innocent. As Hanna Arendt wrote, banality is not a synonym for innocuousness, since the emotions of people can be quickly mobilized on the basis of banal nationalism, even to the point of taking up arms, which has been demonstrated during numerous historical events. At the same time, banal nationalism also responds to the question of why people in the contemporary era of supranational, globalized, integrated practices do not simply forget their national affiliation, but rather more intensely identify with it. Banal nationalism is not only recognizable in the use of national symbols, but also operates in the language on so many levels that individuals thinking each day about their national place in the world of nations, can no longer recognize it in a conscious or non-routine way.

Nationalism as an individual's awareness of affiliation that the members of a nation have, is in a close and interactive relationship with identity. They are both

socially constructed and relational. Identity is uncertain, inexplicable, "difficult", indeterminate, inessential, not a given, dynamic, fluid, also mystical, all of which does not mean that it doesn't exist. This uncertainty and fluidity, and the fact that identity is not inborn but acquired, demands well-functioning ideological machinery that constantly establishes the awareness of identity within each individual. However, nationalism as an inessential phenomenon can also be characterized by its dynamic vitality, contextual variability and flexibility according to changing socio-historical and political circumstances and, therefore, constantly maintained. Tadej Praprotnik (1999: 172) wrote: "Precisely because identity is not 'inborn', self-generating, or in any way essential, it cannot be established without some 'effort'", which is also demonstrated by the verbs that are usually connected to it: formation, construction, etc.

In this article, we proceed from the assumption that in the mutual relationship between nationalism and national identity, as an acquired social construct, it is necessary to include ethnic identity as well. On this identity, nationalism justifies its ideological mission, while national identity is in continuous negotiations with it. Based on Schopflin's reasoning mentioned in the introduction, the relationship between national (political, civic) and ethnic identity (usually majority or dominant) is not understood as a dichotomous exclusion, but in the perspective of their continuous reciprocity. But how does this social construction – or if we repeat the previous diction, this well-functioning ideological machinery – actually take place? Since the purpose of this article is to focus on a discursive aspect, our following question is: how are nationalism and national identity discursively (re)produced?

There are many characteristics or strategies of national(istic) discourse (and functioning). One of them is "ideology of consensus". Speakers in certain situations often behave "as if the entire population knows the stated 'facts'" (Praprotnik 1999: 154). Another strategy, i.e. the discourse of sameness, which constitutes a national "we-group" and emphasizes national uniqueness and inward sameness, ignoring differences within (Wodak 2017: 9–10), is the reproduction of "us" as the sole valid and legitimate collective. The discourse of difference, by contrast, emphasizes the strongest differences to other nations and "the Other" as those that threaten "us". Furthermore, strategies of perpetuation and justification maintain, support and reproduce a national identity perceived to be under threat. According to Ruth Wodak (2017: 9),⁴ they frequently refer to events of the past through individual or collective, public or private, national narratives. The establishment and reproduction of borders between "us" and "them" creates, on the

4. Wodak (2017) also mentions strategies of transformation, destructive strategies, etc.

one hand, the appearance of a nation as a logical and natural phenomenon by which the distinction or separation from "the Other" is established as logical and "natural" and, on the other hand, mystical bonds that exist between the people and territory in a specific space. This "dependence" on national (and also other) identities distinct from "the Other" is a paradox in itself, as identity can only be preserved while "the Other" and the border between "us" and "them" exists. "With the expansion of territory, national identity destroys its own existence, which means it must always manufacture new borders and prohibitions, which are the condition for its 'content'. [...] And, of course, it must never achieve the goal, because if it does, its own mysticism will collapse" (Praprotnik 1999: 158). In addition, the nation is assimilated with already given "self-evident elements", such as the time and place of our birth, which we cannot choose, and because of this, these elements appear to function impartially, objectively, and without interest. At the same time, the nation and belonging to it is often expressed by mythologization, including representations about its long and uninterrupted existence. The efficiency of myths as the next and one of the very common strategies of national(istic) discourse, which will be pursued in the analysis of the *Kaplje* magazine, is how they become naturalized and eventually are read as a system of facts, or as Roland Barthes expressed it, the fundamental principle of myth is the transformation of history into nature, or the loss of the historical quality of a thing. In myths "things lose the memory that they once were made" (Barthes 1991: 142). The myth functions economically as it annuls the complexity of human action and simplifies all dialectic, organizing a world wherein there are no contradictions, no depth, only shallowness and "the satisfaction of clarity". As Barthes writes, the purpose of each myth is "to immobilize the world": it must suggest and mimic "a universal order which has fixated once and for all the hierarchy of possessions' and it must constantly demand from people that they recognize themselves in this image for all time" (Barthes 1991: 156).

The consequence of naturalization is the relativization of inner differentiations and the heterogeneity of the nation as a community, while what is emphasized above all is the differentiation between "us" and "other" (nations). Otherwise extraordinarily varied members of a specific nation must present themselves as *homo nationalis*, as the ideology of nationalism is achieved on the level of discursive and non-discursive practices, for example, in institutions, habits, customs all of which socialize the individuals in the nation and define the feelings of love and hatred (Praprotnik 1999: 160). But the process of creating *homo nationalis* was not concluded over night as there was a time when this concept was foreign, incomprehensible, and not "natural" to the majority of people. When a group of farmers in western Galicia were asked at the turn of the twentieth century if they

were Poles, they responded: "We are peaceful people." Then when they were asked if they were Germans, they responded: "We are decent people." During the time when national identity was not yet formed in a specific place and had not been implanted in the people, most people identified with their region, valley, or landscape rather with the abstract idea of nation (Fishman in Billig 1995: 62).

The discourses of national mythologies do not describe the specificities of a given country precisely or in great detail, but rather very broadly and openly, for example with phrases such as "English culture, Slovenian language, Croatian landscape" and with stereotypical characteristics. A "true Slovenian" should be "diligent, hardworking, honest". The factual imprecision of these characteristics in no way impedes national mythologies. Equating the typical Slovenian with diligence, industriousness, honesty thus becomes a direct premise according to which a lazy Slovenian could be disciplined for the characteristic that makes him not a "true" Slovenian. According to Slavoj Žižek (1987), such fetishistic reversals maintain the ideological Subject that is no longer identified directly with positive characteristics, but with the transcendent, empty placeholders that characterize "Slovenianness". There is no longer continuity between "Slovenianness" and its positive characteristics (diligence, industriousness, honesty), but instead rupture, because the characteristics of "Slovenianness" do not operate on the same level as the positive characteristics. "Slovenian" or "Slovenianness" do not mean anything in and of themselves; they are empty signifiers, voids that present themselves as being filled with content, but in fact signify nothing. The term can belong to anyone or to no one. The positive characteristics have a specific meaning, while "Slovenianness" and "Slovenian" are self-referential descriptions that mean nothing or are only meaningful to those who recognize them. To paraphrase Žižek: if a Frenchman is diligent, he is simply diligent; if a Slovenian is diligent, this quality becomes proof of his Slovenianness; he is not Slovenian in the true sense because he possesses these qualities, which are attributed to Slovenians, because he is Slovenian (Žižek in Praprotnik 1999: 161).

In the next chapter, we will present certain contributions to the literary and socio-critical magazine *Kaplje* published in Idrija, Slovenia from 1966 to 1972, and analyze how the authors of these contributions represent and (re)produce Slovenian nation and identity, and what (if any) forms and strategies of national(istic) discourse are used.

3 Identity and national(istic) discourse in the *Kaplje* magazine

Although the *Kaplje* magazine played an important role in the Slovenian post-war production of magazines, it is rarely mentioned in academic literary and literary-historical overviews of Slovenian literary magazines. According to Miran Štuhec, *Kaplje* was known for its editorial concept of emphasizing national being and the pluralism of ideas. Contributors to the magazine responded to current events with lively essayistic commentary “that the editorial board ran just on the margin of the permissible”, and, in this sense, the publication outgrew the limits of *Idrija* (Štuhec in Prelovec 2012: 10).

In the opinion of Jože Felc, for many years the chief editor of *Kaplje*, there were several reasons for its emergence: “the condescending relationship of the so-called cultural center to everything that happened outside the center”; the desire to break the established Slovenian phenomenon that a certain publication could “express only one criteria or paradigm in culture or in any sphere of life”; the breaking-down of “false political borders” among Slovenians, and, in particular, the problem of expatriated Slovenians and all forms of genocide against them, which, in Felc’s words, should be more emphasized in “the political, economic, and cultural policies in the Slovenian homeland”, etc. The fundamental idea behind the foundation of the magazine was that the contributors would “be united by difference”. Humanism as an integral relationship to life (Felc 1972: 5) was the principle element of their decisions throughout.

During the seven years of its existence, the editorship of the magazine was carried out by ten chief editors.⁵ Approximately, 95 authors, of whom 14 were women, contributed work to the 26 issues (Prelovec 2012: 27).

3.1 Representations of Slovenian identity and nation

Kaplje was a magazine of literary and general culture, and thus representations of Slovenian identity were expressed, on the one hand, in literary and visual contributions and reviews, and, on the other hand, in journalistic and essayistic articles, which are of the most interest in this discussion. In the first category, more than 50 prominent Slovenian poets contributed poems to *Kaplje* throughout the time of its existence⁶ and more than 20 distinguished prose writer contributed

5. Jože Felc, Tomaž Pavšič, Vinko Cuderman, Janez Bizjak, Milan Božič, Silvij Božič, Jože Čar, Darko Komac, Rafko Terpin, and Igor Uršič.

6. Dane Zajc, Gregor Strniša, Marko Kravos, Edvard Kocbek, Jolka Milič, Ifigenija Zagoričnik, Franci Zagoričnik, Franci Černigoj, Pavel Zgaga, Denis Poniž, Darko Komac, Majda Kne, and others.

literary work and excerpts during the same period.⁷

A study of the discourses in essayistic and journalistic contributions to *Kaplje* reveals at least three important themes dealing with Slovenian identity. The first touches on the problem of the smallness and the closed quality of the Slovenian nation and could be placed on the one hand in the context of the ideology of consensus, where the entire Slovenian population knows the stated "facts" about its smallness and closedness, and on the other hand, in the discourse of sameness, which constitutes a national "we-group" and emphasizes national uniqueness and inward homogeneity, ignoring the differences within. The most interesting and still current, although not the most representative text, is a critical reflection by Lev Detela entitled "The openness and closedness of contemporary Slovenian culture in the border regions and diaspora" from the year 1970, in which the author goes beyond the mere tendency toward closedness in Slovenia and the border regions (areas outside Slovenia's borders in Italy and Austria where ethnic Slovenians live), and problematizes the perspective that Slovenianness, which we have marked as a transcendent, empty signifier that can belong to anyone or to no one – is threatened by the outside world, or by "the Other". He thus directly criticizes both the frequent national-mythological and stereotypical discourse about the "chosen" quality or uniqueness of one's own nationality, which we described in the theoretical part of this article:

Today it is already apparent that Slovenians are not here merely to exist at some high level of protection for ourselves, so that within our borders, so to speak, we are diligent, self-sacrificing, meticulous, compliant, pure, and so on, a sort of Switzerland in miniature. But rather the purpose of our existence is precisely to TRANSCEND the narrow-mindedness of this existence, through bold but also risky leaps into the new, into confrontation and compassion with the world that surrounds us. But even expressing that something surrounds us is dangerous. Because this means that we are encircled, entrapped, alone in the middle of a cruel foreign world. Instead of existing, actively living right in the world that is actually all of ours, a world in which we can function much more globally, and if we try this, it is ultimately not as baneful to our existence as we claim. Usually, we say that Slovenians are here on this earth only because of our own tenacity, resistance, and endurance. But in order for our tenacity to not be underestimated, we must concede that the matter is not so simple. That we are here is also thanks to what surrounds us, and what has politically commanded

7. Edvard Kocbek, Boris Pahor, Marjan Rožanc, Lojze Kovačič, France Bevk, Drago Jančar, Evald Flisar, Gregor Strniša, Dominik Smole, Pavle Zidar, and others.

and tormented us is that which may sound paradoxical, the special political and European constellation, our subordinated lack of history under the protection of the Habsburg monarchy [...] (Detela 1970: 83).

Detela explicitly addresses the necessity of the openness of the Slovenian nation, despite, or rather precisely because of its numerical smallness and otherness and its purported "lack of history", which feeds many myths from the past, myths of powerlessness and "the ongoing cruelty of others to this smallness", and, which at the same time "only restricts and closes, prevents and makes suspicious the active flow of all-Slovenian cultural forces in multiple directions, and also hinders what might be called Slovenian-European affirmation" (Detela 1970: 84).

Today we must create a critical perspective of the future, and we cannot create it on the basis of some sort of folkloric conception of Slovenian identity. Slovenian identity is mostly the preservation of our old traditions, rituals, and habits as they are conceived of at home and in the borderlands. Slovenian identity is not something static nor is our Slovenian culture frozen (Detela 1970: 84–85).

In this very contemporary, pluralistic, and intercultural discourse, Detela notes the importance and preciousness of differences between cultures which can only enrich, and never threaten. From this perspective, the author problematizes the discourse of difference, which emphasizes the strongest differences to other nations and "the Other" as those that threaten "us", as well as the strategies of perpetuation and justification, which maintain, support and reproduce a national identity perceived to be under threat:

We are all too closed and anxious towards those whom we call foreigners. [...] But we must not forget that our rigidity finds its source precisely in our own closedness that is not inclined toward other groups in Slovenian culture, the way in which we regard with fear, resistance, and envy every success of someone not in his own group, or indeed not himself. Instead of realizing that culture is something diverse, and only tolerance and an effort at elasticity toward this diversity can create a pluralistic cultural country. So it often appears we are broken into groups, fragments, and individuals who fear each other and cannot comprehend the different paradigms of other actors who grew up in a different background, understanding, experience, and life style. [...] We must sincerely ask: how much do we Slovenians permit difference? (Detela 1970: 85).

Vinko Cuderman, similarly critical, though from a different, and for Kaplje, more representative viewpoint, wrote an article entitled "Notes" responding to the opinion of Taras Kermanuer in *Novi razgledi* that Slovenians are "a small,

relatively backward people”, who up until now have probably not offered the world even one invention, even one big idea, even one new literary genre, even one new artistic movement, not a single thing that would belong to the history of the greater world – with the possible exception of the hayrack. Cuderman focuses as much on the theme as the author itself but in an affirmative way: “[...] he tries in a small way with real negative passion and cynicism (the hayrack!) to makes us smaller than we are in truth. Only by miniaturizing the miniature can the author find a place for himself” (Cuderman 1969: 141). Similarly, both authors remain in a predominantly broad, general and sometimes stereotyped discourse on Slovenian identity, its history and culture as three important imagined and emotionally charged concepts of a nation. Cuderman does not agree with Kermauner’s nihilistic stance regarding the Slovenian nation, although he maintains – in numerous of his other writings – a critical relationship toward the conditions in the city, Slovenia, and then Yugoslavia.

Another frequent theme in connection with the Slovenian identity is the question of the Slovenian language in the Slovenian-Yugoslav context as one of the most important constitutive and cohesive elements in the definition of the nation as an “imagined community” due to its significant contribution to the self-awareness of people regarding their affiliation to a nation. This is a notable factor in understanding the discourse in the contribution of Božidar Borko entitled “A word about Slovenian language consciousness”, which despite everything else, arises from an essentially national and language-defensive position, where the language acts as a seemingly objective criteria that defines a nation. Additionally, the author emphasizes the emotional attachment to the mother tongue, which, in contrast to imaginative economic and technical integration, is essentially humanly significant and culturally qualitative for the integration of the Slovenian community:

Nobody who loves their mother tongue, the language of their people and their literature, can conceive that this language would fall into disuse or be pushed out of its equal place because of some utilitarian reason, or an economic or technical concept of integration that would consider only the imaginary power of numbers, not the human significance and the cultural quality of the nation. [...] There is no brotherhood that would exercise the right to in one way or another take from us [...] that which is our essence, that which provides the greatest cohesion of the Slovenian community, and our measure of our civic equality – our language (Borko 1966: 39–41).

The last and third theme in connection with Slovenian identity reflected in the pluralistic and autonomous discourse in *Kaplje* (which, despite the changed

social context, seems appropriate to mention here) deals in a wider sense with the still relevant Slovenian cultural syndrome or debate about the relationship between Marxists and Christians, and the role of the *Struggle for National Liberation* (NOB) in the formation of Slovenian history and identity at the end of the 1960s. Jože Felc's article "Our dialogue" discusses the public debate between Marxists and Christians entitled "Is God dead?"⁸ and was organized at Idrija's youth club on 22 November 1968. Felc wrote that, although it took place in "the so-called Slovenian provinces", it was the first debate of its kind in Slovenia. An open conversation a priori excludes any kind of secretive "hunting of souls" from either side, which was still "a tendency for authorities of both antipodal worldviews". Felc (1968: 135–137) emphasizes the one-sided, tendentious, and intolerant behavior on both sides,⁹ but the author, despite ideological differences, uses the discourse of sameness and at least implicitly suggests the self-evident elements of the nation and belonging to it, such as the place of our birth, which we cannot choose:

Thus the Idrija dialogue between Christians and Marxists proves that [...] we replenish ourselves only in the realm of unfettered freedom, which should be available to all. [...] We spoke a lot about what united us, and were cautiously silent about what could divide us. [...] However you interpret it, the encounter was in Idrija, and in the broader Slovenian cultural space, a brave and well-intended action [...] We conclude that the first dialogue was more yeast than bread... And that is not bad! (Felc 1968: 135–138).

An article by Silvij Božič is also worth mentioning in the context of this theme. It opens an interesting and bold critical discussion on the then prevailing ideological and confessional reflections of students about the role of NOB and recent history in the construction of Slovenian (and Yugoslav) identity and its reproduction in the educational system. In addition, the text also points to some generational discrepancies within the so-called *homo nationalis* and to some extent deconstructs the myth of a uniform national body:

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8. Participants included Dr. Janez Janžekovič from the Faculty of Theology, Dr. Vekoslav Grmič, the suffragan bishop in Maribor, Marko Kerševan and Zdenko Roter, professors at the then Advanced School of Political Science in Ljubljana.
 9. For instance, "the annunciation of the redemptive role of Christianity" in the Christian press "was most often one-sided and tendentiously exposed", while on the other side, an excess of force employed by government authorities against people's religious beliefs, sometimes in bizarre forms of violence toward religious manifestations, such as bell ringing and other Christian habits (for example, the screening of films about Saint Nicholas on his saint's day, *hora legalis* on Christmas Eve).

We heard narratives about great feats of heroism that we could hardly comprehend because they had been performed by sort of supermen, insensitive to human fear and other emotions. Disbelief emerged. [...] In this way, the taught truth of the liberation struggle was repeated so many times and in such a way that it became intrusive, like something already known and therefore uninteresting. [...] Because we had to place it at the beginning so many times, it became a sort of divine force because of which everything existed. Our work and ourselves became a mere projection of it in the present, but without particular value. Everything important had happened in the past. The past was all, the present nothing, we did not matter (Božič 1969: 145).

The selected texts show that the editors of *Kaplje* in collaboration with the invited writers from diverse, often opposed, backgrounds in terms of ideology, worldview, age, and experience, created an open space of critical (semi)literary and journalistic expression and reflection. Slovenian identity was certainly an important agenda of the magazine, although in many (but not all) cases it was represented as "second nature" or an "already given" independent and essential value in and of itself, which, despite its imagined quality, was not always problematized. Ideology of consensus, discourses of sameness and difference, and imagined and emotionally charged concepts (language in particular) were used. According to Felc, *Kaplje* was engaged in "the free assertion of the independence of the Slovenian people, language, and culture" (Felc in Prelovec 2012: 32), according to which this assertion, as we saw in the chosen examples, could be connected both to the "domestic" Slovenian or the wider Yugoslav (and sometimes also the European) space. Contact with the Slovenian minority populations especially in Italy and Austria, and other Slovenian emigrants, played an important role in "awakening an awareness of segregated elements of the Slovenian people" (Felc in Prelovec 2012: 32).

In the next section, we address the use of national(istic) discourses in *Kaplje*, which is also closely connected to the question of identity discussed in previous chapters. We will deal with the question of how nationalism "lived" in certain contributions and in the language of the *Kaplje* contributors.

3.2 National(istic) discourse

In the theoretical overview to this article, we stated that the constitution and re(production) of national identity and, with it, nationalism belong between non-discursive and discursive practices, both of which are expressed, legitimized, and included in society. These discursive practices can be "harder" (that is more extreme) or "softer" in form. We are mostly interested by the softer forms that function in a

more tolerant manner, especially if they are used in an academic or professional context (and also media and political), but they are never “neutral” since they also lead to the formation of social cognition, opinions, prejudices, stereotypes, and thus have a significant influence on the processes of the ideological (re)production of nationalism. This chapter is divided into three thematic categories.

The first represents the concept of the already-mentioned Slovenianness as an essentially comprehended category of seemingly positive characteristics, which according to Žižek (1987) act as self-referential descriptions that are meaningful only to those who recognize them, otherwise they are empty placeholders. We share Hobsbawm’s view that there are no objective criteria that would define the nation or people, because their most constitutive elements (language, culture, religion, history, territory, origins, etc.) in no way clarify the concept of nation and thus often take on an emphatically mythological representation. There are many examples of this ambiguous, open, broad and mythological discourse about Slovenianness and Slovenian identity in *Kaplje*. In the article “Words, words”, Tomaž Pavšič cites Josip Vidmar, agreeing with the conclusion that:

the eminently important thing of our life... the thing of ‘Slovenianness’. A person grows happy at the word ‘Slovenianness’, which with Vidmar means a certain historical value and expresses what is best that the Slovenian people have preserved through time. Members of this numerously small nation have greater obligations to preserve their essence (Pavšič 1966: 84–85).

Jože Felc in a piece about his study days entitled “In Draga year 1970” relies on a similar mythological discourse when reflecting on Slovenianness as an “element of free personality regardless of given political or worldviews”, which is not rationally questioned or problematized because as an imagined concept of a nation and nationalism it operates on a different, emotional level. Furthermore, a strategy of perpetuation and justification is used, representing a national identity perceived to be under threat:

[...] are we or are we not an autochthonous national mass? [...] In other words, it is necessary to move toward the end goal, which is a time when questions about Slovenianness no longer need to be raised because we all feel it. This is the condition I desire, although I do not wholly believe in it, because I see, even when I close my eyes, dangers from all sides (Felc 1970: 78–80).

The next strategy of the national(istic) discourse (and functioning), which is connected to the previous one, is the strategy of sameness and with it closely related strategy of difference. They both contribute to maintenance and binary reproduction of “us” (“autochthonous”) as the (only) ones who are important,

valid, and legitimate ones, and "others" as those that threaten "us". The ceaseless reproduction of borders between "us" and "them" creates the appearance of the nation as a logical, objective, factual, and natural phenomenon, just as it naturalizes (or biologizes) the border itself and the differentiation from "others". At the same time, it forcefully homogenizes or at least relativizes members of one (Slovenian) nation in opposition to another (Serbian, Croatian etc.), a condition that is often achieved with mythologized or stereotyped representations about the long and uninterrupted existence of the nation in differentiation to "others from the south". This kind of discourse can, in its otherwise protective manner vis-à-vis one's own nation, which is perceived as permanently endangered (culturally and biologically, i.e. for "intermingling and mixing"), also take on explicit forms of xenophobia and ethnocentric expression towards ("underdeveloped") people from other parts of former Yugoslavia and their own aspirations for cultural reproduction and preservation of their language in particular. In the first part of his "Reflections on Slovenianness", Felc wrote the following:

I would simply like to mention a problem that, given our future, is worthy of wider, if not expert debate. That is the large settlements of people speaking foreign languages on territory that is the inheritance of the Slovenian people. I mentioned before that it is not necessary to enumerate the specifics of the biological and spiritual existence of a small nation. But to close our eyes before the certain fact of extinction and dilution would be dishonorable and unintelligent. These facts are not pleasant or encouraging. Each day, Slovenia, as the most economically developed republic [in Yugoslavia], receives more people from the south. [...] Considering the smallness of our nation, an enormous number of people who do not speak Slovenian have moved to Slovenian territory. They settle here, marry, and begin to work. In accordance with the constitution, they demand education for their children in the Serbo-Croatian language, in other words all the rights that flow to members of the majority population; so this is more, in fact, than the simple concept of intermingling and mixing. These truths now seem normal, but their consequences are not unimportant when taking account our small population. [...] We do not need to waste words on the tenacity of our biological and spiritual individualism. Culture is important; despite everything, it is a so-called social superstructure. [...] What is essential is our biological existence and, as regards the existence of the Slovenian people, it is only honest and right that we think deeply about these issues, that we analyze them. [...] In all of this, the truth asserts itself that Slovenia is more and more becoming a sort of territorial unit, in which the Slovenian people are coincidentally a majority (Felc 1966: 165).

The following excerpt might also be understood in the same context of the cultural and biological threat "from outside", or from "the Other":

We know that in Goriška there are two social venues (in Bukovica and Miren) where marriages are made between Slovenian women and Italian men, but there are no marriages between Slovenian men and Italian women. And we also know that all Slovenian women who marry in Italy are lost to our ethnic community (Felc 1970: 80).

The second thematic category in this section presents the use of explicitly nationalistic (racist) discourse about development that emerges from scientifically flawed and, from the socio-evolutionary standpoint, problematic assumptions about different phases of development that individual cultures or nations have or have not yet accomplished. The ideology of a hierarchical concept of culture in accordance to which there exists ("other") "less" and ("our") "more developed" cultures or nations, and the belief that a linear or only a single path of development should be the same for all cultures regardless of their specific contexts, patterns, and norms, provides the background of these assumptions. From an ethnocentric point of view, we usually place our own culture or nation at the top of this hierarchical pyramid. This development discourse was explicitly used in one *Kaplje* contribution, which surprisingly describes the different "development" of the Slovenian nation at home and those in the so-called wider Slovenian cultural space beyond the national borders. In his article, "The specificity of development of Slovenians in different social-political systems", Aleš Lokar first writes about Triestine and Gorizia Slovenians who have been separated from other Primorska Slovenians since the end of World War Two. On the basis of this sample, the author states that the Triestine and Gorizia Slovenians did not "experience the last phase of Slovenian development, namely the phase of Slovenian politicians, entrepreneurs and managers." Carinthian Slovenians were "separated from the national body since World War One" and "their development and consciousness did not even experience the phase of the struggle for national liberation. They stopped somewhere around Cankar and the cultural program" because of which "their point of view is located somewhere in the era when the Slovenian people were divided into two classes: peasants and a handful of intellectuals or *Kačurji*." (Lokar 1970: 106). He continues with Veneto Slovenians who:

*...have been cut off from their homeland for more than a hundred years. [...] their development curve stopped right at that point, which is to say during the pre-history of the Slovenian people. [...] It is not possible to skip developmental phases. [...] Veneto Slovenians must first break through to the *Kačur* phase and nation-awakening education, while the Carinthian*

Slovenians must enter the radical phase, that is the more politicized period of their existence. If we want these minorities to be preserved, we must help them to achieve a level of development that continues along the same paths that have been taken by the part of the Slovenian nation and people in the homeland (Lokar 1970: 107).

We should note here that two years after this article, *Kaplj*e published a contribution by Viktor Blažič entitled "The power of weakness", in which, contrary to the above-quoted author, he implicitly departs from this hierarchical concept of culture, and advocates different "paths" of development, not "one single condensed and unchanging track" (Blažič 1972: 30). This is a clear indication of the pluralistic editorial policy of *Kaplj*e, which persisted through the entire period of the magazine's publication.

The third and last thematic category we will analyze is embodied in an exceptionally interesting polemic that *Kaplj*e led in which avant-garde writers and critics of the period participated. Most participants belonged to the critical generation of the 1950s and 1960s, worked in Ljubljana, and had been brought up in an atmosphere of emphatic negation of the particularities of the national, Slovenian, and traditional. They often addressed the issues of Slovenianness, Slovenian culture, nation, and identity, and also, of course, nationalism. The most active *Kaplj*e contributors in this polemic were Jože Felc, Jolka Milič, and Vinko Cuderman. In his contribution, Felc reflects upon the new avant-garde publication *Katalog*, the initiators of which wrote that the magazine "is not interested in Slovenian culture with an emphasis on Slovenian. We do not believe in the Slovenian original as an integrative core of any particular activity". In this respect, Felc sharply opposes "the emerging literary underworld" and insists on emphasizing the role of the most constitutive (although imagined) concepts of the Slovenian nation, its identity and culture as the integrative core of Slovenian originality:

The project of a magazine that is not interested in Slovenian culture - with an emphasis on Slovenian (or even without emphasis) - is a complete negation of everything that we call Slovenian originality [...]. And what's more, if the founders of the new magazine do not believe in the original Slovenian being as 'the integrative core of any particular activity', then in what original being do they believe? In their own? [...] Without doubt, the Slovenian core is for the Slovenian writer or artist only a part of their general integrity. But it exists and because it exists it cannot be denied. Axiom! (Felc 1967: 144-145).

Particularly polemic and prolonged was the discussion between Taras Kermauner and Vinko Cuderman about Slovenian culture, Slovenian people, and

nationalism. In the publication *Problemi* (No. 100–101), Kermauner contributed an article entitled “De bello Cudermanico”, in which he reflects on Cuderman’s text “Culture in Slovenia today” (Cuderman 1970: 111–115) and characterizes Cuderman as “resolute, conservative, embodying everything that is negative in Slovenia”, and above all “nationalistic” because of his attitude toward the national question. In his article “Kermauner, Slovenian culture, and I”, Cuderman responds with the statement that he has always been repelled by provincial or bourgeois nationalism and its manifested passions (flags, seals or stamps, hymns, etc.), what we called banal or everyday nationalism. The author was also repelled by theories according to which Slovenians, as a small nation, should give up their ethnic identity. In Cuderman’s opinion, it is necessary to be critical to both politics and culture, especially that which “has increasingly lost touch with the people”, whether the cultural production is “traditionalist” or “avant-garde”. On the basis of Cuderman’s assessment of the philosophy of the Slovenian avant-garde as amoral, and its proponents as “smug provincials, spoiled and egocentric, removed from real life”, Kermauner characterizes Cuderman as a Slovenian traditionalist “who believes in the Christian way that it should be possible to create such a world in which morals, not power, prevail”. Cuderman responds that his attitude toward contemporary Slovenian cultural creation and production has nothing with “popular traditionalism or nihilistic anti-traditionalism”, but could be expressed with the following statement: “So-called traditional culture is more or less fossilized, as tradition does not advance but rather exists within culture; anti-traditionalists radically reject not only fossilized culture, but also tradition entirely, because they are apparently incapable of surpassing it” (Cuderman 1971: 29–37).

In his article “A test stroll through Avgi’s stable”, Cuderman discusses a piece written by Marijan Kramberger entitled “An attempt at a different love for Slovenians”, and criticizes Kramberger’s thesis that “existence is all we have”, and is thus greater than Slovenianness, a concept, which we have already problematized several times, and that Slovenians should be raised so that they might “with no difficulty decide to ‘betray’ their nation, and transfer their allegiance to another national community, one that would offer the best possibilities in life”. Slovenians embracing polynationalism would “with mass national disobedience” exert “sufficiently necessary pressure on the Slovenian elite or rather on the content and style of their actual Sloveniophilia” and “indirectly albeit successfully change the conditions of their homeland to their advantage”. Thus, this disobedience would have a “nationally-formative effect” and would provide “extraordinary impetus” for the vital regeneration of Slovenianness, claims Kramberger. To the contrary, Cuderman believes that a multicultural upbringing would mean “that

those who belong to this small nation would dig their own national grave and vitally regenerate some other nation" (Cuderman 1972: 46-47).

Cuderman thus maintains his critical, often provocative stance both to avant-gardists and also toward the traditional position regarding Slovenianness, Slovenian nation, and identity. It should be noted, however, that his positions vis-à-vis the first or vis-à-vis the second are significantly determined by the author with whom he is engaged in a polemic.

Even though we have analyzed some (from a contemporary perspective) problematic perspectives, strategies and discourses (ideology of consensus, discourse of sameness, discourse of difference, development discourse, strategies of perpetuation and justification, mythologization, stereotyping) in representing and (re)producing Slovenian identity, including anachronistic, academically unfounded, and sometimes harmful discursive practices, especially those that debate and represent national identity and ethnicity as objective, self-evident, and non-problematic categories and values in and of themselves, without realizing that these signifiers ("Slovenianness" in particular) are empty categories, that both their authors and their recipients (readers) contextually, situationally, and conditionally fill them, we are able to find in almost every issue of *Kaplje* authors who engage with this sort of polemic, problematizing assumptions and examined them, and offers other alternative viewpoints and reflections. Therefore, we conclude that the creation and tolerance of an open, pluralistic space of critical reflection, regardless of the subjective ideological positions and worldview of members of the editorial board and contributors, is probably the greatest and most precious achievement in *Kaplje's* short but creative period of publication during a time of otherwise relaxed party monism.

4 Conclusion

The last issue of *Kaplje* was published in September 1972, after the magazine lost the symbolic financial subsidy provided by Idrija's social-political community, which the editors interpreted as "a loss of confidence" (Felc 1972: 5-6). In addition to its content, functionaries of the republic and the municipality found the publication "problematic" because of the identity of its publisher. Namely, the publication was often reproached for being private. The editorial board, which was in fact also the publisher, voted to name a more official publisher in order to reopen the question of financing, because this would have had the effect of making the magazine appear more professional. But resources for the publication which had "survived" up until that point only on "the enthusiasm of contributors and employees who during all the years of publication never received a single

dinar in payment" (Felc 1972: 6), were not to be found either at the level of the Slovenian republic or the municipality, and the editorial board decided on the voluntary closing of the magazine along with a proposal to found a joint publication in Slovenian Primorska which would include the participants and editors of the then three regional magazines (*Odmev* in Koper, *Srečanja* from the Gorica region, and *Kaplje* from Idrija)¹⁰ and thus attain a higher level of professionalism. This never occurred: doubtless the integration of *Kaplje* within the Primorska region of Slovenia, which did not pay heed to on national borders, endlessly transcending and problematizing them, had a significantly impact on the identity of the publication, its creators, and also the city of Idrija. Additionally, Idrija had been, until the construction of Nova Gorica and the inclusion of Koper in Slovenia, the largest city in Primorska. One of the main reasons for the foundation of *Kaplje* was precisely to connect the literate public from both sides of the border "running from Planica to Ankaran", which demanded that the "official homeland" be more politically, economically, and culturally sensitive to "the problems of expatriated Slovenians and all forms of genocide against them", and uniformly comprehend the Slovenian cultural space beyond the existing political borders (Felc 1972: 4–8). This also meant allowing the unhindered circulation of Slovenian printed material throughout the entire Slovenian space.

The article is based on the assumption that the collective language contributed significantly to the self-awareness of people regarding their affiliation to a nation. From this standpoint, the nation exists and is significantly reproduced in discursive practices as represented in the media and, in our case, in the magazine *Kaplje*. The nation as an example of an imagined homogenous society is defined with unspecific, inessential, ambiguous, non-objective, and mostly imagined concepts that connect history, ancestry, ethnicity, religion, language, territory, origin, etc. and operate within an ideological framework characterized by pronounced emotional charge. If these concepts represent the content of the (re)production of nationalism and national identity as two interrelated phenomena, then discursive practices and strategies also play a significant role in the expression, legitimation, and inclusion of nationalism in society. When we say nationalism, we have in mind Billig's concept of everyday or banal nationalism, i.e. everyday experiences, ethnic prejudices and stereotypes, myths, national symbols and events that latently but continuously express (most often through the

10. Annual meetings were organized for the editors of the *Primorska magazines* from both sides of the Slovenian (Yugoslav)-Italian border (*Goriška srečanja* from Nova Gorica, *Obala* from Koper, *Idrijski razgledi* and *Kaplje* from Idrija, and *Mladika*, *Most*, and *Zaliv* from Trieste), the content of which was the features of magazines in *Kaplje*. They took place in Tupelče in 1968, Trieste in 1969, and Idrija in 1970.

language) and maintain the identity of a nation and each of its members, who in this way themselves undertake and co-create the role of *homo nationalis*.

Trying now to answer the first part of the research question regarding the ways of the representation and (re)production of Slovenian identity in the *Kaplje* magazine, three themes can be summarized: (1) Smallness and closedness as the stated facts about the Slovenian identity as a "second nature" or an "already given" independent and essential value in and of itself, and the use of a transcendent, empty signifier of Slovenianness, which appears in some (but not all) cases as endangered from "the other" or the outside; (2) The Slovenian language appears as one of the most important constitutive, cohesive, emotionally charged and seemingly objective criteria that defines the Slovenian nation; (3) Ideological and age differences are exposed within the so-called *homo nationalis* although, due to common imagined (national) concepts, such as the place of birth, they can in some cases be exceeded.

Concerning practices and strategies of national(istic) discourse in the *Kaplje* magazine, we can sort the findings into three sets: (1) The concept of the already mentioned Slovenianness as a category essentially comprehended as comprised of seemingly positive characteristics, which act as self-referential descriptions that are meaningful only to those who recognize them; closely linked to the latter is an ambiguous, open, broad and mythological discourse about the Slovenian identity with a strategy of perpetuation and justification representing a national identity perceived to be under threat, and with a strategy of sameness and strategy of difference, which both contribute to the maintenance and binary reproduction of "us" ("autochthonous", Slovenians) and "others" (Croats, Serbs); (2) the use of explicitly nationalistic development discourse in one *Kaplje* contribution, which surprisingly describes the different "development" of the Slovenian nation in Slovenia and those in the so-called wider Slovenian cultural space (Austria and Italy); however, two years after this article, *Kaplje* published a critical text, which implicitly departs from this hierarchical, development discourse; (3) a polemic set of articles between the "avant-gardists" and the "traditionalists" that question the issues of Slovenianness, Slovenian culture, nation, and identity, and also, of course, nationalism. While the first emphatically insist on negating the particularities of the national (Slovenian) and traditional, the others insist on emphasizing the role of the most constitutive concepts of the Slovenian nation, its identity and culture as the integrative core of Slovenian originality.

From a contemporary perspective, we might say that the creative collaboration of the *Kaplje* contributors was important for the city, both within and outside, in the sense of transcending the limited local creative culture in Idrija. This was achieved by the *Kaplje* contributors during the period of the magazine's publi-

cation with their critical, opinionated and pluralistic reflections, deconstructing the myth of Idrija as the (cultural) provinces. At the same time, they set for future generations of creative citizens a high standard in the ethical, pluralistic, and, perhaps above all, humanistic sense, that the city, the region and also the country must continue, also from the perspective of the important work of retaining collective memory, to question, sometimes problematize, and at least utopically maintain, if not transcend.

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