

Minority writing: The case of Friuli-Venezia Giulia (Italy), Goriška and Coastal-Karst regions (Slovenia)

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Prispevek¹ obravnava literaturo narodnih in jezikovnih manjšin na slovensko-italijanskem mejnem območju (literatura Slovencev v Italiji, furlanska literatura ter literatura italijanske skupnosti v slovenski Istri), in sicer v deželi Furlaniji Julijski krajini (Italija) ter Goriški regiji in Obalno-kraški regiji (Slovenija), pri čemer ponuja razmislek o možnih nadgradnjah obstoječih metodoloških pristopov pri njeni obravnavi (preučevanje regionalne specifikke literature, ki izhaja iz skupnega bivanjskega prostora avtorjev, ne glede na njihovo jezikovno in narodno pripadnost ter podobe tuje kulture v manjšinski literaturi) v smeri regionalno zasnovane primerjalne književnosti, katere izsledki bi lahko bili uporabni pri pouku književnosti na danem območju.

The paper discusses the literature of national and linguistic minorities along the Slovene-Italian border area (Slovene and Friulian literature in Italy, Italian literature in Slovene Istria), comprised of the Friuli-Venezia Giulia region in Italy, and the Goriška and Coastal-Karst regions in neighbouring Slovenia. The paper claims that a new methodological approach is needed to study these literatures, namely one that will upgrade previous research (studying the literature's regional specifics which stem from the authors' common living environment, regardless of their linguistic and national identity, and the depiction of foreign culture in minority literature) and move towards regional comparative literature. Results of such studies would be useful to bolster the teaching materials in literature classes in the area concerned.

Ključne besede: manjšinska literatura, regionalna komparativistika, književna didaktika

Key words: minority literature, regional comparative literature, literature didactic

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I. Literary historical research conducted on (national and linguistic) minorities² in the Friuli-Venezia Giulia region (Italy) and the Goriška and Coastal-Karst regions (Slovenia) was commonly based on the model of national literary histories, not on regional comparative literature models.³ For example, this means that literary history of Slovenes in Italy was created by comparing it to Slovene literature in Slovenia. This includes studies that aim to compare typological characteristics in Slovene literature from Italy with domestic Slovene literature. Alternatively, Italian literature from Slovenia is studied within the framework of Istrian or Istrian-Kvarnerian literature, which is the Italian literature from Slovenia and Croatia today, and is situated within the context of Italian literary history.⁴

The aforementioned research models result in three separate literary historical overviews of minority literatures: Slovene literature in Italy (for example, the recently published anthology of Slovene poetry in Italy; Bandelj 2009), Italian literature in Slovenia, and Friulian literature in Italy. These three literary historical systems are considered closed systems, so there is no research done on possible literary interactions among the authors from different minority communities.⁵

This method overlooks the comparative literature approach, which would upgrade the existing literary systems in the region by comparing works from

² The terminology is sourced from Z. Vidau (2015). – For the purpose of this discussion, minority literature is defined as the literature of a linguistic or ethnic community, which does not have political sovereignty and whose language and culture differ from the national language and culture of the majority population or rather the state. These minorities rely on their literature to reinforce their identity and culture (Deluze 1995, Pirjevec 1984). – It should be taken into consideration that there is a German minority in Friuli Venezia Giulia, and it would be reasonable to study their literature within the regional comparative literature framework as well.

³ The term is from J. Strutz (Strutz 2006).

⁴ During the 20th century, the status of Italian literature in these regions changed from that of a minority literature to that of a majority literature. Under the Austro-Hungarian Empire, the production of Italian literature from the Trieste and Gorizia regions was considered minority literature. After the second World War, it was the production of Italian literature in Istria (Slovenia and Croatia) that was deemed minority literature. For more on the history of Istria and Friuli Venezia Giulia, see: Darovec 2009, Kacin Wohinz 2000. The Triestine Italian literature is considered a special chapter in Italian literary history, as it was under the influence of Germanic and Slavic literature while part of the Austro-Hungarian Empire, and so connected to the so-called Habsburg myth. See also: Fiatti 2014. A specific term is used to refer to it – *letteratura triestina*, the literature written by Triestine authors in Italian. Some researchers (Bosetti 2000) are convinced that even after the second World War the Triestine literature had distinctive characteristics that differ from Italian literature. He uses the term *triestinità letteraria* to refer to its unique distinction. For more on this see: Toroš 2014.

⁵ For more on literary systems, see: Dović 2004. – Only with certain more contemporary literary historians do we see a shift in their attention towards this direction. They identified select regionally specific literary characteristics, not tied to the author's linguistic (national) belonging (Dapit 2003, 2008; Toroš 2011).

different literary systems. This approach would shed light upon the characteristics of this region's literature, in particular the commonalities linking literary production in this area regardless of the language they were written in. Simultaneously, this would establish a comprehensive view of the region's literature, or rather the image of a multilingual regional literature.

Such a comparison would also need to include Italian literature from the Friuli-Venezia Giulia region (as the literature of the majority) and Slovene literature from the Slovene Istria region (as the literature of the majority), accompanying the literature of the three minority literatures referred to previously.

Until now, most comparative studies on literature conducted in this region were done by Slovene literary historians from Trieste who had the appropriate linguistic competencies to study this literature (speaking Slovene and Italian).⁶ These kinds of Slovene studies on Slovene-Italian connections were not always regionally minded: they offered an overview of several hundred years of history between Slovenes and Italians, and were not limited to authors living in the border region. In this case, the emphasis was on researching Slovene authors, as Slovene researchers wanted to bring to attention the presence of Slovene literature in Italy, which has developed and is developing alongside the literature of the majority – Italian literature. They critically evaluated the reception of Slovene literature by the majority Italian population (uninterested) in the 20th century (Košuta 1996, Jan 2001) and endeavoured to present Slovene literature to a non-Slovene speaking, mainly Italian public. (Pirjevec 2009, Bratuž 1997).

Existing studies of Slovene-Italian connections discovered a distinct division and reticence of the Slovene minority's literature system in Italy throughout the 20th century. It is only in the last few decades that it has become part of literary processes in Italy: cooperation between literary critics, publishing houses, translators, etc. The other research base uncovered differing literary depictions of the Triestine space, wherein the depictions of Slovenes in Italian Triestine literature are seen as the most problematic.

The aforementioned studies were not focused on comparative research of the region's minority literatures: Slovene literature in Italy, Friulian literature in Italy and Italian literature in the Slovene Istria. The recommended study could be paralleled with the regional comparative literature model, which Janez Strutz (Strutz 2006) developed for the Alpe-Adria region, except that the research focus would be restricted to the region of Friuli Venezia Giulia and the Gorizia and Coastal-Karst regions where minority literatures (Slovene, Italian and Friulian) are produced. The recommended research model departs from Strutz's model⁷ in the following two aspects:

⁶ Katia Pizzi is one of the few non-Slovene literary historians who, in addition to Italian Triestine literature, took an interest in Slovene literature as well (2005).

⁷ Strutz's model is aimed at literature written in the last few decades, wherein the phenomenon of "composite identity" (Pertot 2014) or rather "cultural hybridity" (Jurić-Pahor 2012) can be found. From this perspective, the most relevant subjects for his study were authors who belong to two cultures from this area, producing literature in two languages

- Specifics of regional literature, which stem from the authors' common living environment, regardless of their linguistic and ethnic belonging;
- Models for the literary depiction of the Other (majority population) in the region, which are built into the minority community's traumatic collective memory.⁸

II. In order to additionally clarify the aforementioned observations, the following chapters shed light on existing literary histories of the three minority literatures in the geographical area concerned.

Slovenia's literature can be categorised as that of a small nation.⁹ Despite this fact, it boasts its own set of minority literatures. Slovene literature from Italy is considered especially important and internationally recognised in this regard.

In Italy, the Slovene minority is present in three of the four provinces in the Friuli-Venezia Giulia region: the Gorizia, Trieste and Udine provinces. Despite the small area of their settlement, the minorities' literatures differ in all three provinces. The reason lies in the geographical and historical separation

(e. g. P. P. Pasolini). Special attention is paid to authors who use two or more languages within one literary work. Strutz is studying how the choice of language for certain content helps shape the text's communicative side.

⁸ A special branch of literary science focuses on studying the depiction of native and foreign culture in national literature: literary imagology (Pageaux 2005, Beller 2007). Imagological analysis targets the different levels of a story (e. g.: text analysis, setting and time), as depictions of the foreign culture can be integrated into the literary text via the process of metaphorisation. Literary imagology also takes into account the literary processes (Dovič 2004) within which the literary work was conceived. In this case, the imagological analysis is adapted to the subject at hand, as we are researching the depiction of foreign culture at the juncture of native and foreign culture, therefore it could be defined as regional literary imagology. The difference is in the study's starting point: it does not compare the depictions of the "foreign" in two separate national literatures ("view from afar"), but it does so at the juncture of two cultures ("view from up close"), which developed from first-hand, often traumatic memories. Based on a multitude of analysed works of minority literature we can deduce the expected (programmed) story (model, narrative) in which the foreign (neighbouring) culture appears in a certain minority's literature. The latter is part of the aforementioned culture's imaginary or certain ideological tradition. In relation to this we pay special attention to the collective memory (Halbwachs 2001) of a minority community as a selective database existing in the community's consciousness, which serves as the basis of its identity and has an integrative and cohesive function. We will also take into account further development of the concept, which differentiates between communicative memory and cultural memory (Assmann 2011). Communicative memory is mostly passed on orally and can last up to 100 years or three to four generations, wherein all of the community members are carriers of the communicative memory. Cultural memory entails events the community assigns worth to, even from further back in history. These events are passed on through textual coherence, symbolic coding (monuments, depiction) and the elite (cultural intellectuals, authors) (Juvan 2005).

⁹ At the *Translating the Literatures of Small European Nations* conference (University of Bristol, September 2015) there was talk of Slovene literature as that of a small nation.

stemming from country borders. Historically, the region was divided between the Germanic and Romance worlds, more specifically between the Venetians and Habsburgs:¹⁰ Slovenes living in today's Udine province were living under the Republic of Venice until its dissolution in 1797 and were annexed to the Kingdom of Italy in 1866. During the interim period, they were part of the Austro-Hungarian Empire, living under one roof with Slovenes in Gorizia and Trieste.

The Triestine and Slovene Istria regions were similarly divided by administrative borders: Trieste was under the Habsburg rule for centuries and thus in direct contact with Germanic culture. The towns of Koper, Izola and Piran (Slovene Istria) were contrastingly under Venetian rule, and so under predominant Romance influence. It was only in the 19th century that they came under the Habsburg rule, which lasted until the end of the First World War.¹¹

The literature of Slovenes from Trieste encompasses all three major types of literature – poetry, prose and drama – and is mostly written in Slovene. Novelists like Boris Pahor are especially well known in international circles. The situation is different in the Gorizia and Udine provinces, where poetry is the most popular literary form.

If we study the Udine province more closely, we can see that in this area there are three separate Slovene literary systems, whose differences can be seen in terms of language (Slovene dialect) and content. The Slovene population in the Udine province lives in the hilly area surrounding three valleys that are not well connected. The three valleys are named after the rivers running through them: Ter/Torre, Nadiža/Natisone and Rezija/Resia, and therefore we have the Torre valley, the Nadiža valley and the Resia valley, or simply Resia. In accordance with this, communities living in the valleys were named the Torre Slovenes, the Nadiža Slovenes and the Resians (Cencič 2008).¹²

A strong regional identity has formed through the centuries due to the geographical remoteness of these valleys and their administrative separation from the main body of the Slovene territory. The Udine province has less of a connection to the Slovene literary tradition, most probably due to there being no schools that teach in Slovene, barring the one bilingual Slovene-Italian school in Špeter, Nadiža valley, which teaches children from the age of 6 to 14. This means that the local Slovenes have very little knowledge of Slovene literature. They are also less proficient in the standard Slovene language, one of the reasons that most of the literature produced in this area is written in dialect, which is slowly taking over the role of the standard regional language (Dapit 2003).

¹⁰ For more on the history of the region, see: Cencič 2008, Kacin Wohinz 2000, Marušič 2005.

¹¹ For more on the history of these regions, see: Darovec 2009, Kacin Wohinz 2000, Ara 1982.

¹² Further north, at the tripoint between Slovenia, Italy and Austria, we find the Kanal valley, which is a quadrilingual area (Slovene, Italian, Friulian and German). We have not found any evidence of contemporary literary production in Slovene from this area.

In the Italian province of Friuli-Venezia Giulia, the Friulian minority's literature is taking form. The community is a historical linguistic minority.¹³ In the last few decades, the Friulians have been increasingly striving to fortify their linguistic and cultural identity, being very attentive to their literary tradition (Kersevan 2003; Zuljan Komar 2013). During the process, they came up against cultural differences, just like the Slovenes in Italy, as the Friulian lands were also once divided between the Venetians and the Habsburgs. This presented numerous problems when attempting to codify a standard language due to the reasonably high dialectal fragmentation. The cultural division can also be seen in connection with different cultural traditions and, consequently, different literary programmes or different views on how to develop Friulian literature (emulate the developed Romance literature or follow their own literary tradition).¹⁴

Despite the small area of settlement, there is a varied production of Friulian literature, comparable to that of Slovenes in Italy, which is generated in "literary centres" (Dolgan 2012) throughout Friuli (Pordenone, Udine, Cormons). To this day, published anthological collections are no rarity, e. g. the anthology *Tiara di cunfin* (Vit 2011) was published in 2011. A decade before that came the *Fiorita periferia: itinerario nella nuova poesia in friulano* collection, which anthologises authors between 1980 and 2000 (Vit 2002). The eighties saw the publication of two more collections; the first was *Nuova antologia della letteratura friulana* (D'Aronco 1982), followed by the lengthy poetry anthology *La poesia friulana del Novecento* (Belardi 1987), prefaced by a literary historical foreword.

The Slovene and Friulian minority literatures, presented here in short, are produced in Friuli-Venezia Giulia, Italy, whereas the Italian minority's literature can be found across the border, in Slovene Istria. This literature is often studied together with the Italian community's literature produced in Croatian Istria. A textbook was recently published, entitled *Zgodovina in antologija italijanske književnosti Koper, Isole in Pirana* (Zudič Antonič 2014) (*The History and Anthology of the Italian literature from Koper, Izola and Piran*), which focuses on the Italian literature produced in Slovene Istria.¹⁵

¹³ The terminology is sourced from Vidau (2015).

¹⁴ Pietro Zorutti is considered one of the most important Friulian authors of the 19th century. In the 20th century, Pier Paolo Pasolini's involvement in cultural activities gave Friulian literature renewed momentum. He gathered a group of young Friulian authors in his hometown of Casarsa and formed the so-called Friulian academy *L'Academiuta di lenga furlana*. Another cultural group was formed in 1949 in Udine, called the *Risultive* group. They promoted the spreading of Friulian literature and cooperated with young Friulian authors. In the last few decades there have been many cultural initiatives and literary competitions aimed at encouraging the universal development of the Friulian language and Friulian literary production. For more, see: Pellegrini 1981, Faggin 1987, Kersevan 2003.

¹⁵ The cited literary historical overview was published by the Italian Community Members Association – Italian Union from Koper. The textbook was created as part of a project co-funded by the Slovenia-Italy Cross-border Cooperation Programme 2007–2013. – See also Deghenghi Olujic 2006, Strutz 1996 and Scott Valentino 2001.

The aforementioned textbook is especially important due to the records of all the authors of Italian descent from Koper, Izola and Piran from the 1960s until the present day. This timeframe began in the post-war period when Italian literature from Slovene Istria became a minority literature and thus comparable, from a minority literature research standpoint, to the minority Slovene literature from Trieste, an Italian town just a few kilometres across the border.

III. In the following chapter, we present some of the frequently overlooked literary commonalities between the Slovene, Friulian and Italian minority literatures, stemming from two research approaches

- Studying the specifics of regional literature;
- Studying the model for the literary depiction of the Others.

Under the first approach, we will focus on the similarities and differences directly related to the minority issue. Under the second approach, we will focus on how the area of settlement influenced the region's literature (e.g. littoral motifs, rural traditions).

Whilst conducting a comparative study on two minority literatures, it will be useful to understand literature as a collective statement (Deleuze 1995) and to look at minority literature as the collective narrative dealing with questions of cultural identity and cohabitation with the majority population. Depictions of domestic and foreign culture in the region will be of great interest, especially from the point of view of regional literary imagology.¹⁶ The goal is to identify auto- and hetero-stereotypes, more specifically the stereotypical depictions of domestic and foreign culture. Parallel to this, we will highlight literary models and 'automatisms' within both minority literatures through which national stereotypes are incorporated into the literary text on different levels (the negative characterisation of the Other; the use of the foreign language – the language of the Other to express the Other's negative attitude towards the domestic culture). Another point of interest is how the community's collective memory (Halbwachs 2001) and transgenerational trauma (Jurić Pahor 2004) are mirrored in their literary language (metaphors, symbols etc.).¹⁷

Based on this research method, we can already pinpoint some similarities and differences in motifs, themes and ideas; both in Slovene literature from Trieste and Italian literature from Koper, the issues of national and cultural identities are topical. Aljoša Paris Curavić, an Italian author in 21st century Slovenia,

¹⁶ This method was already used to analyse Slovene and Italian poetry from Trieste from the early 20th century. The study confirmed the hypothesis that the Other (representatives of the other, neighbouring community in the region) is the forefront of Triestine poetry's interest (Toroš 2012). It therefore makes perfect sense to extend the study to Slovene Istria.

¹⁷ From this perspective, the fascist era is especially relevant to the Slovene community (see: Kacin Wohinz 2000), while the period of exodus from Istria after the Second World War is relevant to the Italian community. See: Darovec 2009 and Pupo 2005, Gombač 2005.

wrote in his work *Obmejni sindrom: spomini neznanca* (*Border Syndrome: Memories of a Stranger*) that Italians from Koper are different from Italians from Florence (Curavić 2003).¹⁸ We can safely assume that due to them living in a nationally mixed region, they have a ‘composite identity’ (Pertot 2014). A literary reflection similar to the one in Curavić’s novel can be found in Evelina Umek’s novel *Zlata poroka ali Tržaški blues* (2010) (*Golden Anniversary or The Triestine Blues*). In this instance, the reflection is upon the Slovene community in Trieste the author belongs to.

While on the subject of composite identities, we should mention other topical issues often debated in both minorities’ literatures, like selecting children’s first names (Slovene or Italian), raising children in ethnically mixed families and the dilemma of choosing either the Slovene or Italian school system that goes with it.¹⁹

Slovene literary works that were written in the first few years after the First World War and the works that cover subject matters of a more historical nature often focus on the events that were most traumatising for the Slovene community in Trieste. One of these events was the Slovene cultural centre in Trieste (Trieste National Hall) destroyed by arson in 1920 and the shooting of four Slovene anti-fascist activists in Bazovica (a village near Trieste) in 1930.²⁰ Within this context, we should mention the propensity of Slovene literature to build up the “I – The Other” binary (Pageaux 2005), wherein the native Slovene community (I) is depicted as the victim of the Other – the immoral, fascist community.

Italian literature from Slovene Istria has a common starting point in the collective memory and transgenerational trauma, in this case bound to the Italian post-war exodus from Istria. These historical events are often woven into literary works as painful reminiscences and they create an overall melancholic atmosphere in the tale, despite the main theme not being connected to the exodus.

Through their works, authors from both minorities show their strong emotional connection to their motherland, often choosing it as the locale in their literary works. Almost without exception, Slovene Triestine authors write about Trieste and its neighbouring villages, while Italian Slovene authors often choose as their setting Koper and its surrounding area. Authors from both minorities frequently use personification as a literary device, which enables them to establish an intimate relationship or a dialogue with their homeland. A strong attachment to an ethnic enclave is often the consequence of a minority’s threatened identity, resulting in the wish to connect it to its native land as organically as

¹⁸ His thoughts are linked to Triestine author Scipio Slataper’s work *Il mio Carso* (*My Karst*) (1912). In the piece, the literary hero realises that he is a special type of Italian, as he lives at the juncture of Germanic, Romance and Slavic cultures.

¹⁹ See: Novels *Zlata poroka ali Tržaški blues* (Umek 2010) and *Ritorno a Las Hurdes: guerre, amori, cicogne nere e istriani lontani* (Juri 2008).

²⁰ For more, see: Kacin Wohinz 2000.

possible. This usually culminates in the literary character who represents the minority community becoming completely intertwined with the native land.

Besides the socio-political issues, which directly affect the lives of the minority, we can also find certain similarities in the region's minority literature that are the result of a common geographical living space and a common cultural history. In both literatures, we therefore find descriptions of the region's typical vocations. On the pages of Italian literature from Koper we find depictions of bone-weary Istrian women, farmwives who travelled to Koper daily to sell their wares (seen in the works of Italian Istrian poet Adelia Biasol, 1950–2000; Zudič Antonič 2014: 276). On the other hand, Slovene Triestine literature describes the tireless women from the surrounding villages, who travelled to Trieste daily to sell milk, bread, flowers and other handicrafts.²¹

These kinds of parallels can even be found when comparing Slovene and Friulian literature from the Udine and Gorizia provinces. Many surprising similarities are uncovered in their descriptions and experiences of their native region, especially the native soil and its existential meaning to the rural population, which is intertwined with the native land and surrounding nature. The two main proponents of this theme in Slovene and Friulian poetry were Alojz Gradnik (1882–1967) and Pier Paolo Pasolini (1922–1975), who are connected by their fascination with the Eros-Thanatos binary. Researching these literary parallels between Slovene and Friulian literature opens up a completely new chapter in regional comparative literature, which will materially contribute to a more comprehensive understanding of the regional literary history and a comprehensive view of the region's literature.

Moreover, the results of studies conducted in the light of regional comparative literature could be used to upgrade the teaching contents in the field of literature on all levels of education in this region.²²

IV. Based on my experience teaching Slovenian minority literature in Italy to Slovene students across all three Bologna cycles, I concluded that students have only a partial notion of the region's literature. Most of them are familiar with Slovene literature in Italy, but have no knowledge of Friulian literature, nor do they know of Italian literature from Slovene Istria. This does not mean,

²¹ For more, see: Toroš 2014.

²² In the last few years, certain European projects, like Project EDUKA, whose leading partner was the Slovene Research Institute SLORI in Trieste, have been spreading the word on the Friulian and Slovene community in Italy, and the Italian community in Slovenia and Croatia. The project took place across all levels of education in Friuli Venezia Giulia, Slovenia and Croatia (Istria), based on preliminary studies that showed insufficient knowledge of the region's minority communities. In this context, some researchers observed the need for new approaches in teaching literature in Slovenian schools that will take into consideration the real situation in schools hosting multicultural groups of students (Žitnik Serafin 2014: 213–225). See also Dapit 2013 and Mikolič 2006.

however, that they are not interested in literature, as they expressed interest in delving further into the subjects.²³

Due to this lack of prior knowledge, we initially had to spend many hours during our university lectures clarifying the historical, geographical, political and cultural contexts within which Slovene literature in Italy was created. This allowed the students to acquire basic knowledge needed to understand minority literature, which is inseparably connected to the area where it is produced, and the issues concerning the minority itself. Fieldwork was of great help to the students, as they had the opportunity to engage in dialogue with representatives (theatricals, authors, journalists, publishers, etc.) of the Slovene cultural community in Italy.²⁴

This incomplete knowledge of the region's literature can be linked to the content of existing lesson plans for literature classes in primary and secondary education, which generally do not include the region's minority literatures. Presently, the material on the region's minority literatures is mostly taught in secondary schools, but the classes are optional and taught within the framework of national literary histories. Slovene secondary schools in Italy dedicate a few lessons to Slovene literature in Italy, while Italian schools in Slovenia dedicate a few lessons to Italian literature in Slovenia. As far as we know, Friulian

²³ Despite the interest, university students do not have the option to attend courses on literature in the aforementioned area under a course on regional comparative literature. It is only possible to attend courses that deal with (national) literary history.

²⁴ My experience and observations mostly coincide with the conclusions of my colleagues came to in the last decades after they turned their attention to studying the Italian minority in Slovenia at Italian high schools in Istria, which have obligatory Italian language and literature classes. The study was originally focused on uncovering the role of literature while learning a language and developing intercultural competencies. We can already draw some relevant conclusions from it that benefit our research. The first conclusion we made is that students and professors alike would favour studying the region's minority literatures. This could be due to the fact that this type of literature offers an opportunity for reflection upon their own intercultural position. It must be said that students themselves notice that their lack of prior knowledge (knowledge of other cultures in the region, the region's history) prevents them from understanding the literature from the given area in a comprehensive manner. They also understand that a lot of work must be put into explaining the context within which the literature is produced before it can be discussed. Alternatively, the professors realise that they do not possess the competencies to teach this literature and would need additional training in this field. It is not just that they lack the appropriate methodological knowledge from the field of literature, but also a lack of knowledge concerning the region's literary history. In the last few decades, most professors who retired were from the generation that was active during WWII and after, a period which greatly influenced their lives and the literature of Istria. Consequently, their knowledge of the Italian community's cultural and political situation in Slovenia came from personal experience. They had the knowledge to speak about all of this with their high school students, even using literary works. The younger generation no longer possesses this knowledge (Zudič Antonič 2012).

literature is not taught in secondary schools. Only primary schools in Friuli offer an optional class on Friulian language and literature.²⁵

V. The students' partial knowledge of the region's literature not only prevents a comprehensive understanding of the rich cultural heritage surrounding them, but also has other drawbacks, which will be presented on the example of a Slovene literature class at a Slovene high school in Italy (14–19 age group):

In 1978, with an updated edition in 1990, the school reader *Od antike do danes (From Antiquity to Today)* was published for the purpose of teaching Slovene literature in Slovene high schools in Italy. It includes select excerpts from Slovene authors and a few foreign ones. Compared to readers used in Slovene schools, the aforementioned reader includes more authors living and working in today's Friuli-Venezia Giulia (Italy) and the Goriška and Coastal-Karst regions (Slovenia), who are less known in Slovenia. Including the works of these authors in the reader fortifies the notion of the Slovene minority in the wider border region between Slovenia and Italy. Besides the aforementioned, certain differences in reception can be noticed when compared to the central Slovene space. The Slovene community in Italy evaluates the authors based on their endeavours to preserve their cultural heritage, which is reflected in their literary work as well as their cultural involvement. It must not be overlooked that the authors' select works encourage reflection upon life in an ethnically mixed area.

In the reader, each excerpt is accompanied by a short explanation, which tries to present the authors and their text within the context of the Slovene community in Italy. This is seen as a good way to bring students closer to the authors. The reader also includes the work of Svetlana Makarovič, a famous Slovene author born near the Slovene-Austrian border. A footnote explains that her opera piece was set to music by the Slovene Triestine composer Pavle Merkù and premiered in Trieste.

Aside from the otherwise good practises used, the selection of authors and their works have also brought about some awkwardness. Nowadays, an increasing number of students enrolling in Slovene high schools in Italy come from ethnically mixed or even non-Slovene families. Student demographics at Slovene high schools in Italy have drastically changed in the last few decades due to political changes, like the independence of Slovenia (1991), its entry into the EU (2004) and the opening of borders between Slovenia and Italy (2007). An increasing number of students identifies with both the Slovene minority and the Italian majority to varying degrees.

The emergence of so-called composite identities (Pertot 2014) in Friuli-Venezia Giulia is not yet discussed in the existing reader. The main reason for this is the obsolescence of the reader, which was published in the second half of the 20th century (1978, 1990) and therefore does not include the latest contemporary 21st century authors. Students currently attending Slovene high

²⁵ Through the Bovec Summer School, the Alpe-Adria University in Klagenfurt (Austria) offers students a summer course of Friulian language and culture.

schools in Italy would find it easier to identify with the heroes in some of the contemporary authors' works that already reflect the new circumstances. One of these authors is the aforementioned Evelina Umek, whose works already feature the heterogeneously identified Slovene community in Italy, especially in the Triestine province, like in the novel *Zlata poroka ali Tržaški blues*.

The *Od antike do danes* reader therefore only contains works wherein the characters are given 'pure' national identities, which was characteristic of 20th century Slovene literature in Italy and a consequence of fascist repression. Literary characters with a Slovene cultural identity were usually depicted in a positive light, while characters with an Italian cultural identity were often shown as the antagonists and negative characters.²⁶ To analyse the text, a high school professor would have to adequately explain the ideological structure and its stereotypes. As some students identify with Italian culture, an inadequate teaching approach could have negative consequences for the students' self-esteem. It would be difficult to remove these texts from the reader for Slovene students in Italy, as many works have been accepted as literary classics by the Slovene minority.

Perhaps works produced within the Italian minority in Slovenia would be of great help in better understanding works of the Slovene minority from 20th century Italy, as they would encourage the students to look at minorities in a broader sense. A comparative analysis would allow some insight into the literary depictions of the minority and majority population from two separate points of view. In a literary confrontation between the two minorities, it would be easier to become aware of, understand and move past the stereotypical depictions of Slovenes and Italians that crop up in both minority literatures.

In this context, we must touch upon another issue concerning the choice of Slovene authors and works from Italy. Even here, we encounter a division that could be classified as a division between the centre and the outskirts. Most of the authors discussed hail from the Triestine region – the 'centre', while students have almost no knowledge of authors from the Udine province – the 'outskirts'. Discussing the comprehensive literary history of Slovenes in Italy, which would include authors from the 'outskirts' as well, would be logical as Slovene pupils from the Udine province also enrol in schools in the Triestine and Gorizia provinces. Even in this context, it would be appropriate to introduce a regional comparative literature teaching approach, enabling the students to receive comprehensive information on the region's literary production. This includes all three minorities' literatures (Slovene, Italian and Friulian) and their subdivisions (e. g. Slovene literature in the Triestine province, Gorizia province and the Udine province).

The presented comprehensive approach to the region's literature would of course also demand linguistic competency of schoolchildren, students and their professors in all three languages (Slovene, Italian and Friulian) or appropriate

²⁶ For more on negative Italian stereotypes in Slovene Triestine literature from the interwar period, see: Toroš 2011.

school readers and other teaching accessories with translations of representative works from all three minorities. All this depends on allocated funding and education policies.

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MANJŠINSKE PISAVE: PRIMER FURLANIJE JULIJSKE KRAJINE (ITALIJA)
TER GORIŠKE IN OBALNO-KRAŠKE REGIJE (SLOVENIJA)

Prispevek izhaja iz spoznanja, da so raziskave manjšinske literature (literature narodnih in jezikovnih manjšin) na slovensko-italijanskem mejnem območju, v deželi Furlaniji Julijski krajini (Italija) ter Goriški regiji in Obalno-kraški regiji (Slovenija) doslej večinoma bazirale na modelu nacionalnih literarnih zgodovin in ne na modelu regionalne komparativistike (slovenska literatura v Italiji je denimo obravnavana predvsem v odnosu do osrednjeslovenske literature ali v odnosu do italijanske literature). Takšna raziskovalna usmeritev ima za rezultat tri ločene literarnozgodovinske preglede in antologijske izbore literature manjšinskih skupnosti, ki so v prispevku na kratko predstavljeni: slovenska literatura v Italiji, italijanska literatura v Sloveniji ter furlanska literatura. Navedeni literarnozgodovinski sistemi so večinoma obravnavani kot trije zaprti sistemi, tako da niso raziskane morebitne interakcije med literarnimi ustvarjalci, ki pripadajo različnim manjšinskim skupnostim, pa tudi ne skupna motivno-tematska in idejna izhodišča, ki so posledica bivanja v skupnem prostoru: denimo obravnava književnih del slovenskih in furlanskih avtorjev v Videmski pokrajini. V prispevku sta tako predstavljena dva možna komparativna pristopa k obravnavi literature na danem območju: preučevanje regionalne specifikke literature, ki izhaja iz skupnega bivanjskega prostora avtorjev, ne glede na njihovo jezikovno in narodno pripadnost, ter preučevanje podobe tuje kulture v manjšinski literaturi, ki izhaja iz (travmatičnega) kolektivnega spomina posamezne manjšinske skupnosti na danem območju. Prispevek obenem ponuja razmislek o sedanji vlogi manjšinske literature v teku izobraževanja ter ugotavlja možnosti uporabe izsledkov predlaganih raziskav pri pouku književnosti na danem območju. Težavo pri komparativnem raziskovanju manjšinskih literatur v regiji in njihovi obravnavi v osnovni in srednji šoli ter na univerzitetni ravni predstavlja pomanjkljiva jezikovna kompetenca (znanje slovenskega, italijanskega in furlanskega jezika).
