Between poetry and politics

Katarina Luketić
27 January 2020

Danilo Kiš famously observed that the western bracketing of Balkan literature as narrowly ‘political’ rested on a set of mutually reinforcing stereotypes. Today, following Kiš, Balkan novelists are challenging received wisdom and integrating the political and the poetic in surprising new ways, writes Katarina Luketić.

We are exotica, we are political scandal, we are at best fond memories from the First World War and the conscience of the old poilus d’ Orient [1] and members of the Resistance. We are also beautiful sunsets on the Adriatic, balmy memories of beautiful, peaceful sunsets on the Adriatic, memories dripping with sljivovica. And that’s it. We are barely a part of European culture. Politics? Fine! Sightseeing? Terrific! Slibowitz (as the Germans have it)? Naturally! But who in God’s name would expect to find literature there? Who could be expected to make sense of their nationalist nonsense, of all those languages and dialects so close to one another yet (or so they claim) so different, of all those religions and regions?’

With these words, Danilo Kiš began his famous essay ‘Homo poeticus, regardless’, published in 1980 in NIN (Belgrade) and Le nouvel observateur (France). [2] Kiš wrote it after a controversy around his novel A Grave for Boris Davidović and after the publication of The Anatomy Lesson, a controversy he dubbed a ‘Walpurgis night’, a ‘Witches’ Sabbath’ and a ‘literary Bedlam’. By then he was living in Paris and would visit Yugoslavia every few months. He lived in Joyce’s ‘voluntary exile’, not as dissident, as a permanent refugee from eastern Europe of the type of whom the West was so keen on at that time, but as someone who ‘merely’ felt themselves to be persona non grata. Despite having been barred from the domain of ‘proper’ national literature, he was still published, read and even awarded prizes in Yugoslavia. At that time, he was living in between cultures, which meant not only that he sometimes didn’t know where he was waking up in the morning, [3] but also that he acquired a very clear understanding of what was expected by both sides from an eastern European, Balkan, Yugoslav author.

This endless peregrination, in which the influence of the national and the geopolitical is felt more powerfully than usual, is why ‘Homo poeticus, regardless’ is written from a shifting perspective. At one moment Kiš is from Europe, the next from the Balkans, commenting ironically on the stereotypes and received wisdom of both. Beginning by invoking a collective European ‘we’, he shifts to the Balkans as a whole, then back and
forth, in a constant dialectic between ‘them’ and ‘us’, the categories that differentiate Europe and the Balkans. Through its dialogic form and content, the essay identifies a strict binary of long-term imaginaries and geographical and cultural preconceptions, nurtured for centuries in literature and other cultural texts.

Through the language of his ‘troubling strangeness’, [4] Kiš broached important questions about contemporary identities in a highly effective literary fashion: the meaning of the European and the Balkan, and the manner in which ‘we’ invent our identities and present them to others. Do ‘we’ present ourselves as others expect us to? How far do we adapt our own identities to other peoples’ readings of ‘our’ authenticity? Why should belonging to one place (the Balkans) preclude belonging to another (Europe)? Where does the idea come from that living in a particular place preordains one to a particular type of mentality or artistic tendency, and why does it predominate? Do we have to present ourselves to the outside world as a ‘we’, or can we also approach it as individuals: me, him, her?

And conversely: how do ‘we’ express that fatalism towards others? Do ‘we’ expect others to present themselves as ‘we’ imagine them? How much latitude are we prepared to grant others’ identities? Finally, what do such identities have to do with art and literature, where – ever since Cervantes’ Don Quixote – we have averred that collectives hold no sway, by they nations or ideologies, but one thing alone: the individual. Powerful and vulnerable at one and the same time.

**Homo politicus and homo poeticus**

By shifting the perspective from that of ‘us’ to another, Kiš places European ideas of Balkan culture (most often monolithic) as an exotic tapestry of violence, folklore, natural beauty, cruelty and heat alongside those that ‘we’ ourselves create about our identities and national differences. These ideas are impervious to actual historical conditions; the passage of time is unable to erode them. On the contrary, they intermingle and multiply with time; one prejudice attracts another, so that everything congeals into a thick, ahistorical broth of the imagination. Many of these ideas and stereotypes were formed by literature, or else literature has taken them from other areas and immortalised them. Literatures mythicise them and award them the status of general truths. [5] Consider, for example, ideas of ‘Europe’s Siberia’, ‘noble savages’, a ‘powder keg’, ‘Ruritanian rulers’, ‘the homeland of the vampires’, ‘communist devils’, ‘a Balkan tavern where knives flash when the lights go out’, ‘Europe’s unconscious’, a ‘clash of civilisations’, ‘blood and honey’, the doorstep of Europe, PIIGS (Portugal, Italy, Ireland, Greece and Spain), ‘a two or three speed Europe’, and so on. [6]

Furthermore, as Kiš says, in literature ‘we Yugoslavs’ are fated to be *Homo politicus*, while ‘they have the rest, that is, every other facet of that wonderful, multifaceted crystal, the crystal known as *Homo poeticus*, the poetic animal that suffers from love as well as mortality, from metaphysics as well as politics.’ But Kiš does not stop with critiquing the other, and he refuses to accept the role of victim. ‘Have we deserved our fate?’, he asks; and answers immediately: ‘We have’. Because ‘we have failed to resist the temptation of exporting our minor (or major – what’s the difference?) problems of nationalism and chauvinism’. We have dramatised our differences to the point of no return, we have created our nationalist boltholes in which we are happily incarcerated,
side-lined and drugged, as we dream our dark identitarian dreams. In sum, we have agreed to a dangerous game in which certain subjects and certain types of discourse are reserved for certain people from certain areas. ‘We men of the Balkans’ (maleness is inherent, since patriarchy is part of the stereotype) may write about our ‘politicocomunistski problems’, but tales of romance, death, everyday life, desire, consolation, choices and differences - not to mention poetic experiments or modernist forms - are reserved for writers from elsewhere: for European and western writers, writing High Literature in Important Languages. We feel that they own every subject and every discourse, that they alone can write about complexity, change, ambiguity, and heterogeneity; in short, that only they possess individual choice and literary freedom.

**Peoples, territories, essences**

When critiquing the stereotypes and imaginaries that ‘others’ hold about about ‘us’, it is just as vital to avoid forming essentialist and rigid stereotypes and imaginaries about ‘them’. When defending our right to our own difference, we should not assume that everyone else is all the same. Not all European or western writers of High Literature and Important Languages are completely free. Assumptions about literary fields, subjects, genres, and discourses as being natural to certain areas, nations and languages revolve in their minds too. Scandinavians are predisposed to crime mysteries with Gothic elements; Russians to socio-historical romans-fleuve with huge casts and themes; the French to introspective prose mixing eroticism and pathological fantasy. Nevertheless, writers from cultures and places ranked higher in the geographical imagination are freer than us, while we ourselves are freer than writers from other places, because even now, in the Balkans, in the former Yugoslavia, on the southern and eastern borderlands of Europe, we cherish our stereotypes of others. For example, we expect a Syrian writer to talk about his or her experience of persecution and exile in such a way that will confirm our own preconceptions about Syrian expression and poetics.

Put in the language of contemporary theory: as early as 1980, Kiš was making a critique of colonial and colonised subjectivities, of Eurocentrism and the discourse of cultural power that accompanied politically hegemonic discourse. Of course, this is not a matter of actual conquest of territory or policies of subduing other cultures, but of forms of imperialist thought which assume there are ‘superior’ and ‘inferior’ cultures with their own themes, discourses, understandings, and so forth. As Kiš observed, the stereotyping of the Balkans by Europeans and westerners, whether positive or negative, was also accepted by Balkan people themselves. Exoticisation becomes self-exoticisation, the stereotype a self-stereotype. At the same time, the projection of other, ‘inferior’ cultures shifts to even more remote places. The colonised have adopted the colonisers’ practice.

**A dam against barbarism**

Thus, according to Kiš, ‘let’s not be taken in by the time-worn myth that we ... should give up literature and stick to entertaining the whole world with politico-exotico-communistski themes, give up trying to be anything but *Hominem politici*, everywhere and always, and get it through our heads that poetry, play and playfulness, metaphysical obsessions (who am I? where do I come from? where am I going?), and the transports of love are not for the likes of us’. Indeed, quite the opposite. ‘No, literature and poetry ... are equally for us and you, our barbaric dreams and yours, our myths and yours, our
loves and yours, our memories and yours, our day-to-day existence and yours, our unhappy childhood and yours (which may just have been unhappy, too), our obsession with death and yours (identical, I hope).’ Therefore, neither one nor the other, but both; both Homo poeticus and Homo politicus, a political and a poetic animal at the same time, in the same place, the same creature, artist, writer, in one and the same text.

This dialectic between Homo politicus and Homo poeticus is central to the whole of Kiš’s slim oeuvre, which is artistically outstanding and of vital importance in understanding contemporary subjectivities. His collection of essays Homo Poeticus, in which ‘Homo poeticus, regardless’ is published, is prefaced by two quotations. The first is from Orwell: ‘looking back through my work, I see that it is invariable where I lacked a political purpose that I wrote lifeless books’. The second is from Nabokov: ‘I will contend until I am shot that art as soon as it is brought into contact with politics inevitably sinks to the level of any ideological trash’. These two quotations illustrate two paradigmatic approaches to literature: writing that stems from the political (though not day-to-day activism), and writing that loathes and rejects the political. Kiš believed that his own writing ‘oscillated between these two poles’. [7]

Kiš’s work thus emerged from a tension between aesthetic understandings and in resistance to conventions about ‘us’ and ‘them’. He saw literature as a ‘dam against barbarism’, defined as utilitarianism, essentialism and collectivism, as the limits on the right to difference and free expression. This approach to literature is crucial. For only in the fault-lines, the oscillations, the resistance to conventions, the uncertainty with which we are faced as readers, can good literature emerge. To mistrust received ideas, to confront readers with something new, something that reveals the world in all its astonishing and wonderful mystery, to shock the reader and bind them to the text as to an uncovered treasure, while at the same time communicating and being comprehensible – that is the proper task of literature.

Literature (and art as a whole) always privileges the individual above the group, complexity and individuality above banality and collectivity. Writers always struggle to uncover something different, a new possibility, a different choice, an unfamiliar desire. They are always seeking an alter against which to forge their own identities. When writing about themselves, that alter is displaced to their own interiority (unknown, repressed, unconscious, ambiguous). But if literature always focuses on the freedom of the individual, on the unit and on minorities, individualities, personalities, the details (of form, plot, language, style, perspective), why is it poisoned by ideas about places, mentalities, geopolitical predilections? Why are readers so inclined to stereotypical interpretations? How can we decontaminate literature and ourselves? How can we stop drawing borders between Homo politicus and Homo poeticus? How are we to extend the bounds of artistic freedom?

The new sentimentality

There are a number of contemporary writers in this territory, with a shared language and a shared history, who like Kiš are searching for a way of integrating the political and the poetic, challenging received wisdom about the type of literature that is endemic to a particular area. They include the novelists Olja Savičević Ivančević and Robert Perišić. Both resist (self-)stereotyping and (self-)exoticisation, and ideas about what topics,
approaches and semantic potentials are proper to the Balkans. Both dispense with the literary trinkets that supposedly represent identity in this part of the world. Both rediscover artistic freedom and broaden horizons of expectation, while also treating the text as a place of transparency, comprehensibility and willingness to communicate with the reader.

Olja Savičević Ivančević’s *Singer in the Night* (2016, English translation 2019) is written according to the conventions of the romantic novel (it is subtitled ‘a romance’) and has fun with many of the genre’s tropes and clichés, and with contemporary erotic discourse in general. [8] Unlike many writers, she does not foreground irony, nor does she resort to simple inversion, parody and cancellation in her game with the hazardous load of literary love. Rather, she creates a new sentimentality from familiar, cliched elements, and through combining and poeticising them undermines expectations.

*Singer in the Night* begins with a ‘Welcoming letter’ written by Nightingale, [9] an artist, performer, concept artist, tagger and deserter somewhere between real person and strip-cartoon fantasy. The letter is addressed to lovers who are so loud at night that the whole of a street in Split resounds with their sighs. Then he writes more letters to those unknown GLASNIM lovers, continually shifting authorial perspective (‘Letter from a wistful dog’, ‘Letter from an indifferent god’, ‘Letter from a war veteran’, ‘Letter from a little girl who does not want to fall in love’, etc.), posting them in letterboxes all along the street. These epistles alternate with a first-person narrative by his former wife Clementine, a writer of bodice-rippers and screenplays for soap operas. She is a unique literary creation, also constructed from a distinct literary tissue. About herself, she says, ‘On the outside, I’m a blonde orange. I have silicon[e] lips, I have a Brazilian [wax], I drive a two-seater Mazda MX-5 convertible, but inside I’m a black orange. Full of black juice’. Clementine leaves for the hill country behind Split in pursuit of Nightingale (as if in a chase or road novel), and her narrative unfolds as a mixture of events on the road and memories of earlier times: of first love and the joy of Mediterranean streets, meeting Nightingale, subsequent personal decisions, the war, migration, a career. In the background one can clearly glimpses the social atmosphere of different historical periods: socialism and the age of innocence, wartime reality, transition and the loss of faith that a better society can be built.

This street of loud lovers is the real Ulice Dinko Šimunović in Split, one of the most beautiful streets in the Split 3 district, an impressive architectural and town-planning project built in the socialist period for those who had moved to the city from nearby towns and villages. This project not only bears witness to the fascinating architecture of high modernism in Yugoslavia, and to the development of awareness of urban life and the social elements of housing and living in Yugoslavia, but also to the sensitivity of its creators to the spatiality of the Mediterranean, and their attention to its particular way of life, intimacy and communion. [10] The novel states that the architect ‘had wanted to make a real street, urban, with flats that would be homes, a street in which people would have to bump into each other’. *Singer in the Night* is in part dedicated to a single urban microcosm and a period in which – despite the firm stamp of the socialist order – things were built and created with thoughtfulness, moderation, humanism, a sense of space, of people and their quality of life.

Vladimir Mušić / Marjan Bežan Housing estate in Split 3. Photo via Heinz Wittenbrink
The novel deconstructs stereotypes about our past by including ‘brief histories’ of day-to-day and private life, as counterpoints to tendentious interpretations of ideological and political materials. The exclusively negative view of Yugoslavia and the demonisation of socialism that have been predominant in nationalist politics since the 1990s, as well as the ‘imperial gaze’ of the West, are replaced by a complex portrayal of a single country and a single period of history. The great strength of the novel, along with its complexity, lies in its courage to present a period of time and its ‘structures of feeling’ (Raymond Williams) in full colour, in an atmosphere of ideological passions, and in opposition to nationalist and neoliberal dogma.

It is not easy to write about love at a time of overwhelming cynicism and cheap emotion, of simultaneous openness to intimacy and fear of becoming intimate, at a time when everything, even love, has been commodified. It is even more difficult for a contemporary author – condemned to permanently play the role of Homo politicus – and almost impossible for a female author who additionally has to cope with the deep-rooted patriarchal conventions that exist even in the field of literature. War, history, dictatorship, peoples, nations, political folklore – the only things that literature in the Balkans is supposed to deal with – are generally thought of as the territory of men.

The freshness of Olja Savičević Ivančević’s voice lies in her sureness that she is writing about what is her own, regardless of fashion and expectation. She writes about conventional female subjects by playing with feminine expression in a way that creates an authentic work of art free of stereotypes. In the words of one of Nightingale’s alter egos, ‘the Ghost of Dinko Šimunović’: ‘What could I write about now, at a time of greater freedom, at least for some? I see that our writers are still weighted down by shortages and moral humiliations, and it is hard for such people to write, hardest of all novellas that must be imbued with fresh poetry, beauty, love and youthful smiles. That smile may be mocking or impish, sometimes bitter or mixed with tears, but it should always come from a tender soul. It is good to write from an outpouring of love, rather than of vengeance and hatred even about the last ugly things. I have read new books and in them I have found a great deal of contemporary people’s justified fury. I postulate that if love disappears as a literary obsession, all we will be left with, as topics, will be injustice and death. If books are a reflection of the world, is it really the case that in the entire world only injustice has remained important and serious?’

The right to Utopia

In terms of genre, content and style, Robert Perišić’s No-Signal Area (2015, English translation forthcoming) is at first glance a completely different novel. [11] But on closer examination it bears a certain similarity to Singer in the Night. Perišić weaves a complex narrative with psychologically nuanced characters and voices of different tonalities, most of which unroll in an unnamed Balkan town, and to a lesser extent in abroad: in the Maghreb, London, and in Asiatic Balkan Russia. The town in the provincial Balkans has been left in a state of utter physical and mental devastation after the war. The local factory that beat out the rhythm of life under socialism has closed down. The remaining townspeople (those that have not moved away) are sunk in a post-socialist apathy. Indications of
wartime trauma and political changes are everywhere; everywhere stagnation, passivity and blighted hopes. This ‘no-signal area’ is only of interest as a space for illicit transactions, dirty business by criminal groups left over from the war, or for anthropological research into the customs of the ‘last remnants of savage Europe’.

Two ‘investors’ arrive in this isolation with a plan to revive the factory and construct a huge turbine, which would be smuggled, for a vast sum of money, to The Colonel, the president of a dictatorial regime under sanctions from the West. They hunt out the factory’s former engineers and labourers, who by some miracle have preserved the old machinery from the war and the free-for-all of privatisation. Production restarts along the lines of the old system. This means, among other things, the system of workers’ self-management. Some kind of life returns. Solidarity is revived, and a specific system is established founded upon socialist ideas, a just distribution of ownership, and management of the common good, but stripped of socialist demagogy and fake social relations. Unlike the ‘real existing socialism’ of the past, with its class inequalities, privileged managers and a labour force without rights, the workers attempt to create in miniature – in the microcosm of a single factory – something that is more truthful and closer to the ideal of a just society.

The novel develops in unexpected directions, ending in a London gallery, where the massive turbine is exhibited as a piece of art. This illuminates the jaded character of the contemporary art scene, the commodification of art and the West’s *colonial* thirst for the artistic exoticism of the Oriental, the Balkans, the Third World. The author points out the stereotypical practice representing this part of the world and the perversion of the creative act under the imperative to consume. The art market is constantly searching for ever more novel materials, and through the search it even dictates geopolitics. The sufferings of wartime and the horrors of the contemporary age have a marketing potential in the sale of artworks. Because ‘today, art is a story, not an artistic skill’. [12]

At the London exhibition the turbine is dubbed ‘the last artefact of socialism’ and ‘the Last Socialist Realist Artefact’, even though socialist realism was a short-lived post-war episode in Yugoslavia. In fact, high modernism (especially in the visual arts and architecture) characterised the art of the socialist period. Like Kiš, the narrator of this novel observes the limitations of a stereotyped and monolithic representation of the Balkan countries in the West. ‘Right, they care about the metaphor, not the details. For them it’s all the same: socialist realism, failed attempts at socialism, the East, communist regimes, all those newly capitalist countries … They struggle with remembering their locations and names, let alone which ones were part of the Eastern Bloc and which ones weren’t.’

Yet the narrator also sees that the origin of this social malaise lies elsewhere, and that it is not a phenomenon endemic only to the Balkans. The problems of labour and industry, production and ideology have spread beyond its frontiers. Indeed, ‘the moment Malcolm [the influential London galley owner] took that on I thought they couldn’t possibly care about us that much. There had to be something else in this, in placing industry in a museum, in this story of ruin. Because that’s what’s talked about here as well: their industry is now half of what it used to be … It’s not the industry that’s gone, but the workers’ power. The same story stands for the West, although they will present it as exclusively ours.’ Perišić’s social engagement is obvious in his treatment of the subject of
labour and industrialisation at a global level, and in his interest in the unsustainability of the neoliberal system, which leads to new inequalities, injustices, alienation and the concentration of capital.

Nevertheless, a novel is not a political manifesto. Fiction does not provide sociological insights. If we expect literature to furnish us with any kind of ultimate solutions, political agendas and final truth, we have lost our way. The value of Perišić’s novel lies elsewhere. First, in its translation of the fundamental problems of western societies today into literary language and the relationship between characters. Second, in its creation of a complex literary world in which the collective and the individual, the political and the poetic, social context and individual experience are woven together in a perfectly natural way.

Orwell’s guiding principle – ‘political purpose in literature’ – is thus extended by including the private and the individual, history from below and individual choice, within the framework of social history. While the novel is a story of backwaters, the chaos of economic transition, socialism, workers’ hopes and social justice, its basic theme is love of different sorts: between man and woman, parent and child, friends. In other words, (mis)understanding, intimacy and solidarity. Although Perišičić’s novel is more melancholic than Ivančević’s, both are fundamentally about the same thing – the search for moments of personal happiness and some kind of private and public Utopia.

Write differently!

To sum up: both No-Signal Area and Singer in the Night have a certain potential for subversiveness; both authors distrust the way in which certain motifs in contemporary literature (love or war) tend to be treated; both reject stereotypical interpretations of social relations (socialism); and, like Kiš, both oscillate between the political and the poetic. Using literary resources essentially poetically, they bring to the surface vital post-socialist, post-Yugoslav and post-conflict questions, such as that of personal happiness in a devastated society. Although both novels touch on allegedly ‘Balkan’ subjects such as war, history, personal dramas in the storms of time, both reject western, European stereotypes about Balkan literature. Rather than bowing to literary conventions and accepted social truths, they attempt to extend literary freedom and resist the ideology of the suitable subject, a tale that literature itself often tells.

To finish with a message from Danilo Kiš’s essay ‘We are Singing in the Desert’, which is of vital importance to contemporary literature in this part of the world: ‘As long as a single view of the world and of art is sanctified as canon, as the only valid and the only rational one, then no culture will be able to gain its fundamental freedoms. So, writing differently, by which I mean writing outside and against the canon and the standards of the day imposed by the ruling bodies, means fighting for the moral and political freedom of a culture.’ [13]

Authors mentioned:

Olja Savičević Ivančević (b.1974) Author of the novels Farewell, Cowboy and Singer in
the Night; the poetry collections Bit će strašno kada ja porastem, Vječna djeca, Žensko pismo, Puzzlerojc, Kućna pravila and Mamasafari; and the short story collection Nasmijati psa. She has received a number of important Croatian awards, and her books have been translated into a dozen languages. Singer in the Night has so far been published in Croatia and Serbia, and in Italian, German and English translation.

Robert Perišić (b.1969) Author of the novels Our Man in Iraq and No-Signal Area; the short story collections Užas i veliki troškovi and Možeš pljunuti onoga tko bude pitao za nas; the autobiographical essay Uvod u smiješni ples; the poetry collections: Dvorac Amerika and Jednom kasnije; plays and screenplays. His books have received numerous awards, been translated into a dozen languages. No-Signal Area has been published in Croatia, Slovenia, Serbia and Macedonia, and in France (Les turbines du Titanic). It will be published in the United Kingdom and the US in 2020.

Footnotes

1. French soldiers who fought at the Salonica Front in World War I – trans.


3. Kiš’s 1983 essay ‘Birth Certificate: A Short Autobiography’ concludes: ‘For the last few years I have been living in Paris, in the tenth arrondissement, and am not at all homesick. At times I wake up not knowing where I am; I hear my compatriots calling to one another and an accordion blaring from a cassette player in a car parked under my window.’ Danilo Kiš, ‘Birth Certificate (A Short Autobiography)’, translated by Michael Henry Heim, in Homo Poeticus, ibid.

4. Kiš uses this term in ‘Birth certificate’. ‘The “troubling strangeness” that Freud calls Unheimlichkeit would be my basic literary and metaphorical stimulus’. This strangeness proceeds from Kiš’s heterogeneous identity, common to many people in the Balkans. Kiš’s father was a Hungarian Jew, his mother a Montenegrin Orthodox Christian, and he lived in a number of places: from Subotica, Novi Sad, the Hungarian village of Kerkabarabás and Cetinje to Belgrade, Dubrovnik, Strasbourg and Paris.


6. These represent various ideas that have arisen over more than two centuries of intense speculation about the area by travel writers, essayists, in various media, in politics and popular culture (from Alberto Fortis, Bram Stoker or Anthony Hope via Miroslav Krleža to Samuel Huntington, Angelina Jolie or Emmanuel Macron). See Katerina Luketić, Balkan: od geografije do fantazije, Algoritam, Zagreb, 2013.


9. The novel is prefaced by a quotation from Oscar Wilde's *The Nightingale and the Rose* and engages with many literary works, poetry in particular.

10. Yugoslav modernist architecture was featured in a recent exhibition at the Museum of Modern Art (MoMA) in New York; *Towards a Concrete Utopia: Architecture in Yugoslavia, 1948–1980*. On the particular nature of socialist architecture and the approaches to housing provision of the period, see the excellent documentary series *Betonski spavači* (Concrete Sleepers), directed by Saša Ban, screenplay by Maroje Mrduljaš and Nevenka Sablić, produced by Hulahop i HRT.


12. After the wars of the 1990s, collective exhibitions of artists from the Balkans were organised in galleries and museums all over the world. See Katerina Luketić: *Balkan: od geografije do fantazije*.


**Published 27 January 2020**

Original in **Croatian**
Translation by **Kim Burton**
First published in **Eurozine**
Downloaded from eurozine.com (https://www.eurozine.com/between-poetry-and-politics/)
© Katarina Luketić; Eurozine