

# Autofiction and open form in Emil Filipčič's prose

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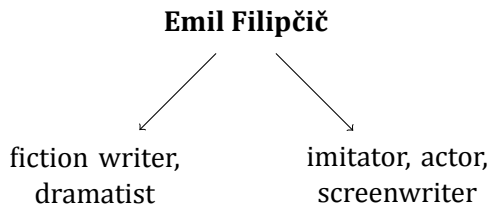
# Outline

- 1 Introduction
- 2 Autofictional writing
- 3 Open form

## Emil Filipčič (1951)

- 1979: *Kerubini*
- 1979: *Grein Vaun*
- 1985: *Kuku*
- 1986: *Ervin Kralj*
- 1988: *X-100 roman*
- 1992: *Orangutan*
- 1993: *Dobri robotek*
- 1993: *Urugvaj 1930*
- 1995: *Jesen je*
- 1997: *Izlet v naravo*
- 2005: *Keopsova piramida*
- 2009: *Problemi*
- 2012: *Mojstrovka*

# Emil Filipčič (1951)



# New Slovene prose

## Authors

Boris Jukić (1947)

Marko Švabič (1949–1993)

Branko Gradišnik (1951)

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## First books

1972: *Sonce sonce sonce*

1977: *Čas, Tvoji obrazi*

1979: *Mehika, Kerubini, Grein  
Vaun*

1980: *Ukleta graščina*

1981: *Pot v nestalnost*

1985: *Briljantina*

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1 Introduction

**2 Autofictional writing**

3 Open form

# Characteristics of Filipčič's prose

- parody, absurd, fantastic
- mingling of reality, fantasy, and meta-reality
- intertextual and cultural references
- ludism, playing with genres and language
- narrator as omnipotent creator
- radical openness



## Examples

- 1 “What do you think, Merson, ah, I'll just call you Filipčič, you think you're genius, right? Is it true that your writing is equivalent to life?” (Filipčič *Grein* 97)
- 2 “Yes, this is methodical terror. You see, we play the personal drama of some man, concretely this File. And now I'm bloodily asking myself if I ended up here voluntarily or not ... There's some kind of magic in this ... What kind of revelation is this? What is he using us for?” (Filipčič *Ervin* 46)
- 3 “I'm writing a novel, you have also made your appearance, your name is Samuel Beckett and Milena is Ingrid Bergman, I am just writing about us eating and drinking at that Etno café” (Filipčič *Problemi* 153).

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## Examples

- 4 "There was a poet Matjaž Kocbek, who worked at Crete for half of the year and this is why his new collection is named Crete. He couldn't help but wonder that genius Albert Camus (co-author of famous *Butnskala*) hasn't been drinking alcohol for years" (Filipčič *Problemi* 17).
- Alexander of Macedon to Socrates: "I had a slave, I think her name was Cassandra, she was such a hot chick that your bucephalus tunic went torn" (Filipčič *Jesen* 150).
- "Mur ofo logis, that he should, while you are reading this, listen to his 96-years-dear mother. Doctor Kunst has bun, bun, bun, but, of course di, di, dun, dun, you see, this is poetry, yes" (Filipčič *Keopsova* 118).

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## Fluidity of characters

**director and professor Mario Lokaves (1<sup>st</sup> appearance)** → student Bruno Kelih (1<sup>st</sup> appearance) → director and professor Lokaves (2<sup>nd</sup>) → playwright Ivan (1<sup>st</sup>) → director and professor Lokaves (3<sup>rd</sup>) [meanwhile briefly Etbin Kvas] → writer Kunst (1<sup>st</sup>) → Franc Kislih → Bagdad Tombola

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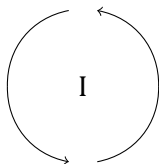
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# Forming and identity of the central I



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- 2 Autofictional writing
- 3 Open form**

## Volker Klotz, *Geschlossene und offene Form im Drama*

|                   | <b>Closed form</b>                                       | <b>Open form</b>  |
|-------------------|--|---|
| structure         | linear   | cyclic  |
| act               | unified, logical,<br>motivated; causal nexus             | disrupted, scattered;<br>relatively autonomous<br>episodes                        |
| time and<br>space | unified  | ubiquitous,<br>episodic   |
| characters        | a few, the inner and the<br>outer world are<br>separated | many, no borders,<br>complex interlacement<br>of the inner and the<br>outer world |
| language          | clear, controlled, lofty                                 | internal monologue,<br>mingling of various<br>language layers                     |

## Recurring references

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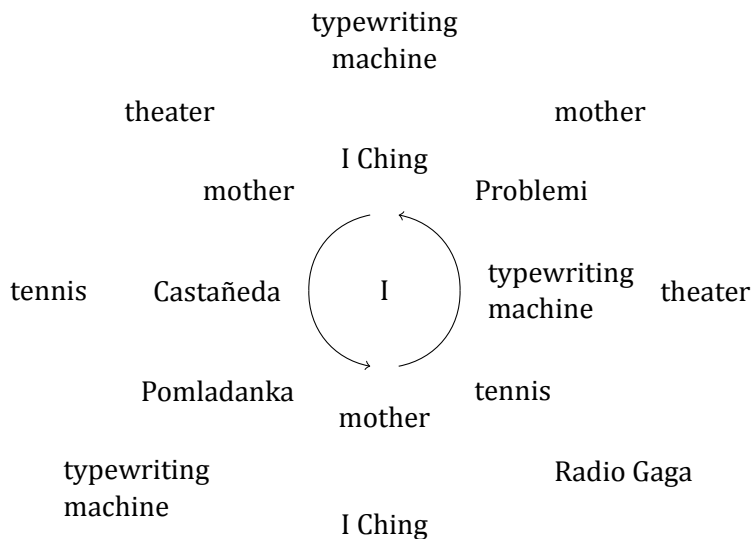
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- “As Jack Nicholson said in the interview: for me, this is a habit like every else, somebody holds the teaspoon and I ... roll” (Filipčič *Ervin* 35).
- “And you see, my body itself has just sent me the message: it aches you under your small spade again due to too frequent use of the teaspoon! It turned out that the teaspoon is much more dangerous than I used to think! [underlined by N. B.]” (Filipčič *Ervin* 171).

## Types and sources of recurrences

- metanarrative comments: *writer's teaspoon, his writing machine, his pen, his mother ...*
- empty recurrences: *Fönjvösy, Nakito-Mi-Čiči, Dear John, Ožbolt, the scorpion, the ring ...*
- Filipčič's biography and bibliography: *Emil Čevapčič, Kerubini, Radio Gaga, tennis, Hribar ...*
- actual references to known people and their works: *Marie Curie, pope John Paul, I Ching, Psyche, Don Quixote ...*

## Function of recurrences

- “Das central Ich ist die Integrationspunkt, das die Handlungsbewegung als ein zielloses Kreisen sich als dem Mittelpunkt organisiert [und] der Fluchtpunkt, in dem die vielerlei Perspektiven des Dramas sich koordinieren” (Klotz 114, 160-61).
- Recurrences build “eine belebte Folie des Helden, sie graben durch Kontrast oder Analogie seine Eigenart heraus” (Klotz 155).
- “Überhaupt ist Wiederholung und Variation ein beliebtes Kompositionsmittel des offenen Dramas” (Klotz 161).
- “[D]ie Textur übernimmt Aufgaben der Struktur” (Klotz 108).



# Theme and motif recurrences

motif 1, theme 0

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motif 1, theme 0



motif 2, theme 1



# Theme and motif recurrences

motif 1, theme 0

motif 2, theme 1

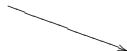
motif 3, theme 2

# Theme and motif recurrences

motif 1, theme 0



motif 2, theme 1



motif 3, theme 2



motif 4, theme 3, etc.

# Conclusion

- Filipčič autofictional writing is based on the open form of the text.
- Reciprocity between the process of narration and the process of building the identity is crucial.
- The central I is the main point of the text: it is the source and the result of the narration.
- The coherence is sustained by recurring references, motifs, and themes.

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Thank you!