Autofiction and open form in Emil Filipčič’s prose

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Outline

1. Introduction
2. Autofictional writing
3. Open form

Nina Beguš
Autofiction and open form in Emil Filipčič’s prose
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)

Emil Filipčič

- fiction writer, dramatist
- imitator, actor, screenwriter
New Slovene prose

Authors

Boris Jukić (1947)
Marko Švabič (1949–1993)
Branko Gradišnik (1951)
Uroš Kalčič (1951)
Emil Filipčič (1951)
Vladimir Kovačič (1953)
Tone Perčič (1954)
Milan Kleč (1954)
# New Slovene prose

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Authors</th>
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<tr>
<td>Boris Jukić (1947)</td>
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<td>1985: <em>Briljantina</em></td>
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Outline

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2. Autofictional writing
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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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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).

5 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).

6 “Mur ofo logis, that he should, while you are reading this, listen to his 96-years-dear mother. Doctor Kunst has bun, bun, bun, bun, but, of course di, di, dun, dun, you see, this is poetry, yes” (Filipčič Keopsova 118).
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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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Forming and identity of the central I
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3  Open form

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<td>cyclic</td>
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<tr>
<td>act</td>
<td>unified, logical, motivated; causal nexus</td>
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<td>time and space</td>
<td>unified</td>
<td>ubiquitus, episodic</td>
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<tr>
<td>characters</td>
<td>a few, the inner and the outer world are separated</td>
<td>many, no borders, complex interlacement of the inner and the outer world</td>
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<tr>
<td>language</td>
<td>clear, controlled, lofty</td>
<td>internal monologue, mingling of various language layers</td>
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Recurring references

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- “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).
- Recurrrences 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).
Autofictional writing

Open form

Introduction

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Autofiction and open form in Emil Filipčič’s prose
Theme and motif recurrences

motif 1, theme 0
Theme and motif recurrences

motif 1, theme 0

motif 2, theme 1

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Theme and motif recurrences

motif 1, theme 0

motif 2, theme 1

motif 3, theme 2
Theme and motif recurrences

motif 1, theme 0

\[ \rightarrow \]

motif 2, theme 1

\[ \rightarrow \]

motif 3, theme 2

\[ \rightarrow \]

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.
Bibliography - novels and short stories


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Thank you!