

Velebit And The Peripatetic Trans-Genre – From Petar Zoranić To Edo Popović*

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*Birds do not care whether or not it's going to be cloudy, snow, rain: they always sing. Rain and bird song once accompanied me all the way from Gromovača to Zavižan.*¹

I do not intend to stir confusion when defining travel writing, in this case mountaineering literature in the form of fictional and expository writing, as “peripatetic literature”, after the Peripatetic School Aristotle founded at the Lyceum. The travelogue trilogy, i.e. the trilogy of mountaineering literature by Edo Popović can be defined as peripatetic literature about Velebit. It has to be emphasized that this is travelogue or mountaineering literature with an engaged attitude toward reality, as the genre was defined by Sartre or as explained by Krleža in his *Dijalektički antibarbarus* (Dialectic Antibarbarus, 1939) – “to write tendentiously, however without a tendentious phrase.” The mountaineering trilogy by Edo Popović – *Priručnik za hodače* (The Walkers’ Manual, 2009), *U Velebitu* (In Velebit, 2013) and *Čovjek i planina: Kratki uvod u sjeverni Velebit* (Man and Mountain: Short Introduction into Northern Velebit, 2018) – relates back to its prede-

¹ *Pticama je svejedno hoće li oblak, snijeg, kiša ili neće: one uvijek pjevaju. Jednom su me čitavim putem od Gromovače do Zavižana pratili kiša i pjev ptica.* All translations from Croatian are mine.

cessors in the genre, by recreating some travel writings, such as the mountaineering literature of Miroslav Hirtz, on his hiking trails, and then textually in his second book *U Velebitu* from 2013. As far as Croatian mountaineering literary theory is concerned, Željko Poljak wrote systematically about it and pointed out that based on genre characteristics it comes closest to travel writing. “We can define it as a group of literary works inspired by the mountain, its beauty and power, its influence upon the life of man and history of a people” (Poljak 1994: 13). He also notes that although “numerous Croatian writers, poets especially, found inspiration in the mountains, it is hard to understand why our professional ‘official’ literary critics and historians neglect mountaineering literature. (...) Literary criticism extremely rarely takes into account contributions to mountaineering literature, and when it does they are mostly classified as travel writing” (ibid). To simplify, for example, I would classify mountaineering literature on Velebit by Miroslav Hirtz as mountaineering literature as theoretically systematised in Croatia by Željko Poljak, the main critic of the genre,² while I would classify Edo Popović’s trilogy as peripatetic literature due to the matrix of its engagement, in addition to the matrix of travel writing literature. As opposed to Zoranić’s imaginary journey formulated as an allegorical journey of enlightenment along Velebit trails (written in 1536 in Nin and published in 1569 in Venice), Edo Popović in his trans-genre *Priručnik za hodače* (2009), 440 years after Zoranić (to introduce some symbolism), with his zen-roamings on Velebit and his life principle of “voluntary poverty,” as mirrored in Henry David Thoreau’s ecological matrix, he equally discloses sociograms of both “scattered heritage” and the global world order.

Erling Kagge in his *Walking: One Step at a Time* claims that bipedalism or walking on two feet is the basis of all we have become: “First we learned to walk, then we learned to make fire and to prepare food, and then we developed language” (Kagge 2019: 15). The language created by people, Kagge continues, reflects the contention that life is a long walk. In Sanskrit, the past tense is designated by the word *gata*, which means “that which we have walked”, the future is *anàgata* “that which we have not yet walked”, while the present tense is indicated by something as natural as “that which is directly in front of us”, the *partyutpanna* (Kagge 2019: 16).

And while literary theorists will be interested in the fact that Zoranić’s *Planine ke zdrže u sebi pisni pete o pastirih, pripovisti i pritvorit junakov i deklia i mnoge ostale stvari* (*Mountains which hold songs sung by shepherds, stories and transformations of heroes and maidens and many other things*, 1504) are a masterpiece of bucolic literature which has since “the sixteenth century been reprinted about sixty times and has had a great response Europe wide” (Nemec 1999: 35), the theory of hiking literature, which in this sense can be deemed a component of ecocriticism,³ shall be interested in the route of the journey, as was the case with Ante Rukavina or Željko Poljak.

² While Dean Duda in Croatian literary theory figures as a travel writing theorist, Ivan Pederin and Željko Poljak are known as historians of travel writing poetics.

³ Ecocriticism as a separate section of literary criticism which originated in the 1990s (in 1996 with the proceedings edited by Cheryll Glotfelty and Harold Fromm). Ecocritics have established their organisation – Association for the Study of Literature and Environment, and their professional magazine *ISLE Interdisciplinary Studies in Literature and Environment* (Tošić 2006: 43; Marjanić 2006.). The term was first used in the essay by William Rueckert *Literature and Ecology: An Experiment in Ecocriticism* (*Iowa Review* 9/1, 1978) (Egan 2006: 33-34). Equally, ecocriticism as a theory of study of cultural constructions of Nature in social and political contexts gave an important contribution to the understanding of Shakespeare’s oeuvre (Egan 2006). In a travel book *Čovjek i planina. Kratki uvod u sjeverni Velebit* (2018) Edo Popović mentions deep ecology as “a deeper and more spiritual approach to nature” and quotes its founder Arne Næs – “The smaller we come to feel ourselves compared to the mountain, the nearer we come to participating in its greatness” (Popović 2018: 16).

In this first Croatian (pastoral) novel, Zoranić passes through Velika Paklenica to arrive to the highest peaks of Velebit, meeting on the way shepherds and shepherdesses who talk to him about the sad fate of their heritage scattered during Ottoman conquests (Rukavina 1979: 121). He begins the journey in Starigrad, at the foot of Velebit, and goes through the gorge of Velika Paklenica across southern Velebit and Dinara to Šibenik and Nin (Rukavina 1979: 63). Željko Poljak, a theorist of mountaineering literature, points out that Zoranić's *Planine* are proof "that the tradition of our mountaineering literature is one of the oldest in the world" (Poljak 1994: 13), and that Zoranić wrote *Planine* nineteen years before Konrad Gessner wrote *Decscriptio montis Fractii iuxta Luzernam Tiguri* in Zürich, describing his climb on Pilatus mountain (1555), which is generally deemed the first example of mountaineering literature in the world (ibid.). Ivan Krajač⁴ (*Hrvatski planinar*, 1924, 132) describes Zoranić as the first writer of mountaineering literature in our cultural circle (Rukavina 1979: 63). The first review article on Velebit as a literary topos, titled "Velebit in our literature" ("Velebit u našoj književnosti") (*Naše planine*, 7-8, 1976; *Planinar*, 4-5, 1978), was written by the writer, veterinarian and mountain climber Ante Rukavina (1928-1994). The article was subsequently published in his book *Velebitskim stazama: putopisi i eseji* (*Along Velebit trails: travelogues and essays*) in 1979.⁵ Rukavina begins by expressing surprise over the fact that Velebit is non-existent in oral poetry because the Croatian ethno-tradition deemed it commonplace, part of the everyday. However, as opposed to oral poetry, Velebit was a theme for oral storytelling, whereby Rukavina states that the theme most often connected with Velebit are fairies – the Velebit fairies – to the extent that they were used in certain place names, for example, Vilinska vrata (The Gate of Fairies)⁶, since according to folk stories the fairies pass through the gate on their way to their assembly. Furthermore, Dušice (Souls) in mythical stories are places where the fairies feast, while Vilinski and Vilinski vrh (The Peak of Fairies) are places where they dance and celebrate (Rukavina 1979: 128). Rukavina states that mountaineers have paid respect to Zoranić and his *Planine* by naming the previously nameless 1712 m high southern-Velebit peak after Zoranić following a proposal by the Gospić mountaineering association on 20 May 1973 (Rukavina 1979: 123). The dedication was initiated by Ante Rukavina, and it is one of the rare ways of commemorating a writer (Rukavina 1979: 63). Rukavina's *Velebitskim stazama: putopisi eseji* can be considered a dedication to Petar Zoranić as well as all the writers and explorers of Velebit – all of its climbers. It also stems from a desire to define a clearer topography of Velebit, much in the same way in which Edo Popović's *U Velebitu* (2013), his second book on Velebit, can be considered a book about a recreated journey (a travel re-enactment of a kind) by Miroslav Hirz undertaken in 1926. In one of his articles, Ante Rukavina describes his journey along the trails hiked by Ilija Smiljanić (see: *Naše planine*, 11-12, 1975) (Rukavina 1979:

⁴ Ivan Krajač (Senj, 1877 - Maribor?, 1945) was the first Croatian attorney, economic and financial writer, lawyer, politician and mountain climber from Senj (Wikipedia).

⁵ Ante Pelivan states that Ante Rukavina not only described the natural beauty of Velebit, but recounted oral stories about life on the mountain, as well. His essay *Djevojčica i runolist* (A maiden and an edelweiss) (*Planinarski list*, 1, 1977) is often quoted. It depicts a relationship between a girl and an edelweiss as a plant of Velebit, a symbol of understanding between children and nature (Pelivan 1999: 188).

⁶ According to this toponym, and in collaboration with Josip Zanki and Tomo Vinščak, we have titled the conference organised by the Department of Ethnology and Cultural Anthropology of the Faculty of Humanities and Social Sciences of the University of Zagreb, and the Department of Teachers and Preschool Teachers Education in collaboration with the State Archives in Gospić and the University of Rijeka (organising committee: Robert Bacalja, Josip Zanki, Tibor Komar, Tomo Vinščak) held on 5-6 October 2012 in Lovinac and Starigrad *Vilinska vrata* (The Gate of Fairies). Radoslav Katičić titled his book *Vilinska vrata: I dalje tragovima svetih pjesama naše pretkršćanske starine* (The Gate of Fairies: Still further traces of holy poems of our pre-Christian past, 2014) after the toponym, as well.

160). At the very end of his *Priručnik za hodače* (2009), Edo Popović lists “Litearture for walkers – lighter books – for a rucksack” (Literatura za hodače – lakše knjige – za ruksak), among which he lists Ante Rukavina’s *Velebitskim stazama* (Popović 2019: 161).⁷

There are numerous hiking blogs today – thus for example blogger belibeli states that Vilinski kukovi are to him the most special part of Velebit, one to which he returns often:

“By the way, the area itself is not in any way marked, and is thus inaccessible to the great part of the hiking population. It is situated on the area of Sveto brdo toward Čelavac (or the other way around), at a height of about 800 meters to about 110 meters above sea level.”⁸

Furthermore, an anonymous female blogger noted about Tulove grede in 2005 that staying there is scary since a large area is still under land mines.

“Even though it was spring, and there were flowers all around, a certain mysterious peace reigned there, a scary peace. I did not experience war, but there, in those moments, I could clearly hear the earth roar under grenades. It was all so desolate, only the black ravens flew off the peaks of Tulove grede and circled around, like restless souls. Even now I get the chills when I remember that.”⁹

It can be noticed that bloggers prefer images over words, or as the above-mentioned blogger says – “I shall use a well-known saying, Images speak louder than words and try to evoke at least a part of the magic this space is infused with. Let us begin...”

Ethnological and eco-historical travelogue

As yet another example of a travelogue on Velebit, that is, another example of peripatetic literature, I would like to single out Šime Balen’s *Velebit se nadvio nad morem: putopisni zapisi s planine* (Velebit leans over the sea: travelogues from the mountain 1985 – first edition) as an example of a trans-genre which inspired Edo Popović to write his Velebit trilogy (see: Popović 2009: 88). Balen’s book ends with an obituary to Dan Vukušić, a Podgorje legend (1905-1995), whom Šime Balen, a journalist, publicist, travel writer and translator¹⁰ describes as one of the legendary pioneers of Podgorje, a rocky belt at the foot of the Velebit hills.

⁷ A promotion of the reprint of the said book by Ante Rukavina was held in the Gospić Cultural and information centre on Friday, 1 July 2011. Edo Popović spoke on the occasion.

⁸ See <http://belibeli.blogger.hr/post/vilinski-kukovi/307014.aspx>: “Inače, samo područje nije obilježeno niti jednom markacijom, pa je iz tog razloga nedostupno velikoj većini planinarske populacije. Nalazi se na području od Svetog brda prema Čelavcu (ili obratno), na nadmorskoj visini od nekih 800 metara do otprilike 1100 metara nadmorske visine.”

⁹ See: <http://planine.mojblog.hr/arhiva-11-2005.html>: “Iako je bilo proljeće i sve u cvijeću, tamo je vladao nekakav tajanstveni spokoj, jezoviti mir. Nisam doživjela rat, ali tamo sam u tim trenucima jasno mogla čuti kako zemlja tutnji pod granatama. Sve je bilo tako pusto, samo su crni gavranovi uzletjeli s vrhova Tulovih greda i kružili naokolo, poput nemirnih duša. I sad me prolazi jeza kad se toga sjetim.” Tulove grede are otherwise known as the filming location of the most dramatic scene – the death of Winnetou’s father and sister and the death of Winnetou himself – in *Winnetou I* (1963, producer: Horst Wendlandt).

¹⁰From his bibliography I would here like to single out his translations from English to Croatian of the following authors: William Faulkner, Ernest Hemingway, Erskine Caldwell, Frank Norris, F.S. Fitzgerald, Benjamin Franklin, etc.

It is an area, as is contextualised in the continuation of the text, differently from Vjenceslav Novak, who studied begging sociologically and eco-historically,¹¹ inhabited by Bunjevci, who migrated here from Bosnia and Herzegovina and Dalmatia running away from the Turks. Šime Balen noticed that Podgorje has kept many of its specific characteristics until the present day – “the highlander mentality, the shtokavian-ikavian dialect and some customs which differentiate them from autochthonous inhabitants of Primorje, who speak chakavian, and islanders, who derogatively called them Vlasi” (Balen 1999: 198). He lists that the inhabitants of Podgorje have kept their sense of *ljudikanje*, discussions over hearth or a campfire while the cattle grazed, where they talked “of saving Portugese sailors in the port of Jablanac and the construction of the old Church of St. Nicholas at the cemetery, or about the fight with the Dogheads and the treasure of King Bela, which he has buried somewhere near Orlovača and has been searched for tirelessly by the people of Podgorje for centuries” (Balen 1999: 199). He also states that stories from the nearer past are being told, as well, for example, about a famous squad from Podgorje named Alan. And it is precisely in these stories that an important actant of Velebit, Dane Vukušić, enters as “a fearless fighter against the Great-Serbian dictatorship, as well as against the Ustashe atrocities, and generally, against violence and injustice” (Balen 1999: 199). In the spring of 1943, upon leaving the Ustashe prison, he founded the Partisan squad Alan. This was a unique case in the National Liberation War of a member of the Croatian Peasant Party to become a political commissar of a Partisan squad (Balen 1999: 192, 202). Dane Vukušić described his wanderings about Velebit in numerous articles published in the bulletin of the Croatian Mountaineering Society – *Naše planine* (Our Mountains). He often took hikers on day trips, and scientists – zoologists, botanists and speleologists – on exploration trips. He knew Josip and Željko Poljak,¹² Ante Premužić, builder of the famous trail that Dane Vukušić worked on as well, Fran Kušlan, archaeologist Ante Glavičić and many other Velebit enthusiasts. As a token of appreciation for the assistance he extended to mountaineers in distress, he was given an award and a diploma by the Croatian Mountaineering Society – the only recognition he received in his lifetime. Šime Balen’s travelogue can be defined as an ethnological travelogue since it delivers important ethnographic information, such as orally transmitted stories in the chapter titled *Za Vilinskom vodicom na Rožanski vrh* (Looking for fairy water while tracking toward Rožanski peak) wherein he noted the story of a hunter from Podgorje who encountered three fairies who were not “in those heavy linen shirts, buttoned to the neck, neither in hard, thick corsets which tether breasts like an impervious armour,” but were dressed in white, light silk that was transparent like

¹¹In the introduction to *Podgorske lutrijašice* (The lottery sellers from Podgorje) from 1945, edited by Ferdo Pucek (as was the case with the first edition of 1889, as well), Novak states that as far as childhood is concerned, he always remembers the beggars from Podgorje, pointing out, in an anthropological context, the characteristics of their physiognomy – “Hardly a day went by without me seeing those cripples in shabby clothing, despondent, of disfigured bodies as one could only imagine.” (“Malo je koji dan minuo da nisam videvao te bogalje odrpana odiela, snuždena lica, a nakažene tielom, kako su samo mogli smišljati.”) He then describes the people of Senj gifting them with bread and a few coins, and states that in his childhood fantasy he imagined Podgorje to be some kind of a beggars’ empire living off the mercy of others, underground, just as ants do in the anthill (“nekakim prosjačkim carstvom koje živi od tuđe milosti pod zemljom onako kako živu mravi u mravinjaku.”) He further states in the Introduction that as an adult he used to stay a month or two in the municipalities of Podgorje and walk about these beggars’ *ant* empire, which is how he gained insight into their way of life. From that perspective he documents two types of beggars – those who beg out of “dire necessity” (“žive nevolje”), and those who have amassed quite a fortune through begging. However, irrespective of this other group, he points out that few left Podgorje when offered to move to fertile Slavonia – “few left the sea: they grew to love the steep coves, huge ravines, angry bora and furious sea” (“al malo se tko odvrkao od mora: zavolio je divlje prodole, grдне gudure, ljutu buru i bijesno more” Novak 1945: 6).

¹²Josip and Željko Poljak are singled out by Edo Popović in his third book on Velebit (2018).

a veil, disclosing their fairy bodies (Balén 1999: 182; see: Marjanić 2004). True, the sighting was contextualised with the possible drunken state of the above-mentioned hunter, which is a common extra-contextual signal in such mythological, demonological storytelling (see: Mencej 2017).

In the book, Balén also gives the etymology of numerous Velebit toponyms. For example, for the toponym *Rožano*,¹³ a huge grass land dotted with hills and valleys, he claims that some Velebit scholars derive from the word “rog”, meaning shepherd’s horn, because Rožano, as the largest cattle grazing ground in that part of Velebit, was always filled with shepherds and their horns. Others make the connection with folk stories about fairy protectors of clan and land (“vile rođenice”), while others connect it with a traditional instrument resembling the oboe played in Primorje called the *rožanice*. Still, older inhabitants of Podgorje believe that Rožano derives from the word “roža” a term assigned to all flowers by the people of Velebit (Balén 1999: 86). Thus Balén will, in a cultural encyclopaedia of Velebit, mention Vjenceslav Novak, who, in one of his stories in *Podgorske pripovijetke* (Stories from Podgorje), documented a Viennese society which began an intensive forest cutting operation on Velebit in the second half of the nineteenth century – “they built a saw mill in Štirovača, and a road for the export of lumber toward the sea was built across this part of Velebit” (Balén 1999: 15). However, exploitation continued and Balén gives a more recent example of a pathocentric encounter with the local population cutting down trees, and in the process mercilessly exploiting the work horses. I would like to underline those sentimental, realistic descriptions of “a poor animal desperately neighing under the strikes of a whip trying to lift its front legs, and when it finally managed, it stood for a second frozen, recalling one of the wounded horses from old war pictures” (Balén 1999:174). In the context of Velebit fauna Šime Balén reminds us of the Croatian-Slovenian biologist Narcis Mršić, who obtained his doctoral degree working on the horned viper of Velebit, adding a social component – as an excellent zoologist Mršić could not find employment in Croatia, and was thus forced to leave for Ljubljana, Slovenia (Balén 1999: 45). In the context of the above-mentioned exploitation of the Velebit forests, I would like to mention a performance by Ivana Mesek at the opening of the 2013 Venice Biennale with New York artist Zefrey Throwell. It was a post/dada performance with the aim of “returning” the wood and stone belonging to Croatia or, as elaborated by Mesek:

“I love working with Zefrey. We agree in our attitude to art of which a sense of humour is an extremely important part. Today if you are not deadly serious and are not solving the fate of the world, but are engaged in humour, you are considered ‘shallow’ or a buffoon... ridiculous. Is there a more wonderful human characteristic than a sense of humour?”

Thus the two of us went around Venice looking for and detecting pieces of wood and stone that the evil Venetians had stolen from us ages ago, leaving Velebit bare. We would put those in a bag and return to Croatia.

¹³Rožanac peak (1638 m) is the highest peak of the Rožani and dominates that part of Velebit. What Veliki Kozjak stands for on the eastern side of Velebit, Rožanac peak means for its western side (Balén 1999: 191). In the *Priručnik za hodače* Edo Popović noted that Ante Premužić, engineer and designer of the trail, stayed in Rožanski kukovi in 1929 and wrote about it in *Hrvatski planinar* (Croatian Mountaineer) in 1930 (Popović 2009: 124).

It is difficult to rattle someone's cage during the opening of the Biennale since they are used to all kinds of 'crazy artists.' We have even attempted to pull out a wooden piling to which a carabinieri boat was tied. The carabinieri were just watching us peacefully. Anyways, we were having great fun. Dressed in Croatian checkered jerseys we definitely stood out in the crowd of 'artistic and critic crème' that has occupied the town" (Mesek 2013: 40-41).

Edo Popović: The Velebit Trilogy

Edo Popović wrote his peripatetic trans-genre book *Priručnik za hodače* (2009) as a result of the experience of dual shock: a realization about his own diseased body (two chronic illnesses). The basis for the work in terms of travel literature was Henry David Thoreau's *Walden* (1854). Thoreau was among the first to suggest the concept of civil disobedience and is considered one of the pioneers of American individualistic anarchism. Popović states that Thoreau mocked grand stone buildings (for example, Thebes, the Egyptian pyramids, the Permagon Altar) left by ancient peoples; he pointed out that he preferred to see stone where it belongs – in nature: "More sensible is a rod of stone wall that bounds an honest man's field than a hundred-gated Thebes that has wandered farther from the true end of life" (Thoreau 1971: 57). At the same time, Popović made an association with the Iapydes, who once inhabited the area bounded by the rivers Una and Kupa and the mountain Velebit, a people who were above the *trivialities of construction* (Popović 2009:127). Unfortunately, they found themselves on the way of the Roman hordes during their war path to Panonia and central Europe. The Romans also noticed their mines. The Romans devastated the Iapydean capital Metulum, shutting all the women and children in the city hall and burning them alive. Popović ironically adds that the custom of treating civilians in such a way has been preserved to the present day – from Algeria, Vietnam and Srebrenica to Chechnya and Gaza. Therefore, Iapydes did not leave much behind, probably because like the ancient Chinese they also knew that there is only one thing worth living for – life itself. Popović states that thanks to the good custom of the Iapydes of leaving the stones in peace, the Slavs, subsequent inhabitants of the area, were not particularly interested in stone masonry. Thus the cliffs of Velebit have been preserved until the present day.

As he expressed in his trans-genre book, Popović found the incentive for his travel writing journey in the works of the following mountaineers and travel writers: Sergej Forenbacher, Miroslav Hirtz, Ivan Krajač, Božo Modrić, Josip Poljak, Ante Premužić, Ante Rukavina, Radivoj Simonović and Dane Vukušić. He was above all inspired by Šime Balen's book *Velebit se nadvio nad more...: putopisni zapisi s planine Šime Balena* (see: Popović 2009: 88).

Dean Duda, among other things, a theoretician of travel writing, points out that in the course of a journey, between the rituals of leaving and returning "a possible life of literature evolves" (Duda 2012: 49). Popović thus imbues his second Velebit travelogue *U Velebitu* with memories of previous travel writers – from Petrarca and his ascent to Mount Ventoux, to the current travelogue in which he attempted to "evoke a feeling you are permeated with in an encounter with the intact, or more or less intact, nature. Usually it is defined as awe, fear,

elation, rapture, admiration, adoration...” (Popović 2013: 141).¹⁴ He therefore defines his journeys across Velebit as “protean nature which prevents a man from disappearing in social roles” (Popović 2013: 141), referring to all those books he referred readers to in his literature for the rucksack at the end of the *Priručnik za hodače*. His second book on Velebit, titled *U Velebitu*, Popović devoted to Radivoje Simonović, Miroslav Hirtz, Josip Poljak and Ilija Šarinić, all explorers of Velebit. It is structured as a re-enactment of a journey undertaken by Miroslav Hirtz across the mountain. We thus follow a dual journey – that of Miroslav Hirtz, through quotations and fragments,¹⁵ and that of Edo Popović, who writes his travelogue and follows the paths of Miroslav Hirtz. These are accompanied by photographs of Radivoje Simonović developed on glass and then recreated via digital camera.¹⁶ As the author states, the relationship between man and mountain questions the direction our present society is taking. Therefore, Popović began the journey, as we learn in chapter one, titled “Harvesters, unmentionables and extreme jumpers. Korita – Duboke Jasle – Razvršje – Draga – Prosenjak” (“Žetelice, nespomenice i ekstremni skakač. Korita – Duboke Jasle – Razvršje – Draga – Prosenjak”), with a friend Željko Žarak. The two recreate the journey undertaken in 1926 by Miroslav Hirtz¹⁷ with his friends and co-walkers: a medical doctor; a photographer; Radivoje Simonović, a geologist and author of *Velebit Guide (Vodič po Velebitu)* published in 1929; Josip Poljak, a teacher; Simonović’s longtime co-traveller Ilija Šarinić; horsemen Mile Samardžija and Ilija Čanković.

In listing them, the author documents that each participant in the unfolding narrative incidents of the travelogue is specialised for certain activity, and thus their different roles and relationships create the actant structure of the story of the journey (see: Duda 1998: 74). While they tread the Velebit wilderness (intact nature), they stress that Velebit is left unclaimed, barely divided up. In this context, Popović contrapuntally describes his experience from Vollzele, Flanders, which could not be described as wandering, since the entire landscape is intersected by the fences of private estates – “I could have walked only down the narrow asphalt corridor, the only free space in that part of Belgium” (Popović 2013:16). In *Priručnik za hodače*, in the chapter titled “Partitioning of the world” (“Parceliranje svijeta”), Popović critiques the idea of civilisation based on partitioning, negating anthropocentrism, and with it, speciesism –

“The very idea of this mammal according to which he is not a part of, but the owner of the Earth and the Universe, and that he has the right to do with them whatever he desires, is fairly sick” (Popović 2009: 23).

¹⁴This refers to a key date in the history of mountaineering. See: “Planinarstvo”, <https://hr.wikipedia.org/wiki/Planinarstvo>

¹⁵This refers to Hirtz’s travelogue describing the trail from Gračac to do Prosenjak, published in 1936 in *Hrvatski planinar*.

¹⁶The mutual assistance provided by mountaineers and writer-mountaineers has been noted by all mountaineers. Thus, Željko Poljak states that Danijel Vukušić (1905-1995) and Šime Balen (1912-2004) helped him when he was writing a book on Velebit in 1958. And when he laid out *Velebit hiking trail* (Poljak 2017: 219).

¹⁷He was a mountaineer too, and was especially familiar with Gorski kotar and Velebit. In J. Poljak’s book *Planinarski vodič po Velebitu (Velebit Hiking Guide, Zagreb 1929)*, he described the fauna of the area. At the foot of Velebit, in Jablanac, he built a summer house; today the mountaineers’ hut carries his name. See: <http://hbl.lzmk.hr/clanak.aspx?id=64>

In the third part of the Velebit trilogy Edo Popović devotes individual chapters to the Velebit bear, wolf, horned viper and insects, where he, among other things writes that Ante Vukušić, who in the third part has the role of the writer's informant, told him that "he does not remember that anyone on Velebit ever fell victim to a horned viper, bear or wolf" (Popović 2018: 71), adding that a lot more people died of poisonous mushrooms picked on the mountain. In *Priručnik za hodače* a chapter is devoted to Velebit horses and black butterflies (chapter titled "Horses and Butterflies" – "Konji i leptiri"), wherein he describes the connection between a horse and meteorology as he learned about it from Ante Vukušić –

"Until early afternoon the horses grazed peacefully in the Zavižan hollow; then they left downward toward Babrovača and the sea. In the evening it started snowing. (...) Since then, whenever I find myself on Zavižan, I ask about the horses, where they are, and whether they are grazing at the Jezera or have left seaward" (Popović 2019: 115).

Thus in the book *U Velebitu* Popović states that M. Hirtz was interested in snakes and kept recording what horseman Ilija Čanković kept telling him about snakes all the way from Gračac to Prosenjak. The result was a text titled "O kultu zmija" (On the Cult of Snakes), published in 1938 in the magazine *Priroda* (Nature), wherein he recorded a series of stories and beliefs about snakes from the Velebit area (Popović 2013: 17). Popović also documents Hirtz's passion for hunting, and how he shot birds out of pure entertainment "simply because he had a rifle" (Popović 2013: 130). It is evident that Edo Popović does not introduce a pathocentric relationship toward the killed birds. Instead he wants to know which birds Hirtz shot believing that those were not nutcrackers that were killed, as Hirtz states in his travelogue. And then, in a learned, zoological manner, yet without pathos, he continues:

"In Forenbacher's *Kompendij velebitske faune* (Compendium of Velebit fauna) and other literature 'nutcracker' is a term used to denote the Eurasian nutcracker or Eurasian jay, a bird from the Corvidae genus which plants trees (by hiding seeds in the ground like jays or squirrels, Eurasian nutcrackers actually afforest mountains)" (Popović 2013: 130).

Following a detailed enumeration of a zoological description, he concludes that Hirtz obviously did not kill a Eurasian nutcracker, but a hazel grouse,¹⁸ a bird from Tetrastes genus.

In the third travelogue about Velebit, published in 2018 and titled *Čovjek i planina: kratki uvod u sjeverni Velebit*, Edo Popović included photo records by Ante Vukušić, the Velebit legend – the housekeeper at the mountain lodge in Zavižan and the manager of the Zavižan meteorological station, the highest meteorological station in Croatia, 1594 m above sea level, where in the Introduction he states that the idea for the book came to him "two or three years after he met Ante Vukušić in 2006" (Popović 2018: 7). He again frames his text with the writings

¹⁸"(*Tetrastes bonasia*), hazel grouse, a species from the family of Phasianidae, genus *Tetraonidae*" See: <https://proleksis.lzmk.hr/35383/> Miroslav Hirtz gives a number of terms for Eurasian nutcracker in Croatian (lješkarića equals lješnarka, lješnikar, lješnikara, lješnikarica, lješnjakarka, lješnjarka; Hirtz 1928: 26). For Eurasian nutcracker he also gives a synonym ljeskarska (ibid.) and gives a number of interpretations of which I shall here single out two: "Eurasian nutcracker (*leštarka*) mostly dwells in the bushes (*leštari*), which is where they most likely got the name from. M. N. Rašković. Lovac I (1896) 21. – Partridge or, as is usually called, jay, belongs to genus Phasianidae. Z. Turkalj. Lov. Rib. Vjes. XIV (1905) 17" (Hirtz 1928: 268-269).

of zoologist, poet and travel writer Miroslav Hirtz and the writings of Josip Poljak (*Planinarski vodič po Velebitu*, 1929), “thus wishing to preserve from oblivion the two great men of Velebit and their contemporaries” (Popović 2018: 9). In the final chapter of the book, titled “Babrovača,” which discusses the well-maintained shepherd’s huts owned by the family of Ante Vukušić, Popović states that Miroslav Hirtz devoted a significant part of his manuscript published in 1923 in *Hrvatski planinar* specifically to Babrovača and its huts, which is followed by a fragment from Hirtz’s travelogue (Popović 2018: 149). To summarize, the third travelogue sheds light on Hirtz’s and Poljak’s texts about Velebit through their textual fragments and the images as seen through the lens of Ante Vukušić.

Towards a conclusion: the peripatetic trans-genre

As the Velebit trilogy by Edo Popović testifies, Velebit still belongs to the space of wilderness (intact nature)¹⁹ since the doctrine of the “*partitioning of the world*,” to which increasingly testifies this pandemic world picture of 2020/2021. Therefore, Popović ends his *U Velebitu* (2013) with a comment on a book by the German philosopher Rüdiger Safranski *How much globalisation can we bear?*, where he demonstrates that from a term denoting an immense expanse globality became a term denoting a closed space of hysteria and an inability to act (cf. Popović 2013: 139, 213).²⁰ Edo Popović’s travelogue is a result of his social engagement, his fight against mental borders, with Velebit being seen as an open space, since – as he states – national flags are equivalent to an animalistic demarcation of space with urine. The text criticises the Chinese wall building, which became fashionable again in the last few decades: “(...) between certain countries high poles of reinforced concrete crop up, a hundred kilometres long, equipped with sophisticated devices recording even the migration of a butterfly to the other side” (Popović 2009: 24, 28). Velebit opens up as a space of freedom of movement, a free space to walk in – “large enough to walk for days, even weeks, without encountering a fence in the landscape or someone’s head” (Popović 2009:28). Much like Zoranić, through the topos of Velebit Edo Popović considers the world order (Zoranić in relation to the Venetian and Ottoman conquests). In his third travel book, published in 2018, he states that the 17th and 18th centuries are characterised by the mass settlement of Podgorje and Zagora, a tendency that changed in the 20th and 21st century, a time when “the population is massively leaving the areas, (...) even the settlements on the coast are ever more deserted” (Popović 2018: 133). This is a reflection of the global situation: “We are witnessing a paradox – the more people there are on the Earth, the more deserted rural areas are. Everyone wants to live in the city, everyone wants urbanism and industrialised life” (Popović 2018: 133). In the harmony of deep ecology

¹⁹In the context of the word *wild* I refer to Nodilo’s etymology which claims that the word derives from Latin *divinus*: (Even though the word *div* is foreign (Miklošić, *Christ. Termin.*, s. 35), taken from the Persians, and has with the Turks entered our country, the word *divljan* is definitely Proto-Slavic, with the Indo-European base word *div*. What is now in our language *divlji* (or older version *diviji*) *ferus, silvester*, at the beginning it was *divinus*. *Divo, divъ* to Slavs means miracle” (“I ako je riječ *div* tugja (Miklošić, *Christ. Termin.*, s. 35), te uzeta od Perzijanaca, pa preko Turaka došla u naše krajeve, svakako je praslavenska riječ *divljan*, kojoj je prva osnovna indo-europsko *div*. Što je sad u nas *divlji* (starije *diviji*) *ferus, silvester*, to, u prvine, bijaše *divinus*. *Divo, divъ* u Slavenâ znači čudo.” Nodilo 1981: 26).

²⁰See: a record on the last cattle breeders on the mountain in the 1970s (Popović 2013: 28).

Photo: Eurasian nutcracker from the book by Sergej Forenbacher, *Kompendij velebitske faune. I-II*. Zagreb: Veterinarski fakultet, 2002.



and affective ecocriticism²¹ the author understands that earthlings are currently spending the resources of the planet Earth “and that it is only a matter of time before the Earth will go bankrupt” (Popović 2018: 134).²² This travel writing trilogy, the mountaineering literature trilogy by Edo Popović, can be defined as peripatetic literature about Velebit, specifically travel writing, mountaineering literature with an engaged relationship towards reality.

translated by Tihana Klepač

²¹Affective ecocriticism studies the relationship between emotions and nature, finding emotions in spatial terms, and also identifies new emotions which could be more clearly understood through the lens of ecocritical theory (Bladow, Ladino 2018: 6).

²²Velebit as a topos of art is equally a place of land art interventions, as Zvezdana Jembrih points out, or as Josip Zanki, a multi-media artist and a university professor, reveals in his program based on Zoranić's Planine (see: Conference *Land Art...* 2019).

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KEYWORDS

Šime Balen

EDO POPOVIĆ

ECOCRITICISM

engaged literature

ABSTRACT:

The article interprets Velebit as a space of peripatetic literature beginning, naturally, with Petar Zoranić's *Planine* (written in 1536 and published in 1569) wherein, in addition to a personal psychogram on conventional lovesickness ("beteg"), the author problematizes the general situation in his "scattered heritage" ("rasuta baščina") (under Ottoman and Venetian threat). As opposed to Zoranić's imaginary voyage formulated as an allegorical voyage of enlightenment along the paths of Velebit, Edo Popović, in his trans-genre *Priručnik za hodače* (The Walkers' Manual) (2009), 440 years after Zoranić (to introduce some symbolism), with his zen-roamings in Velebit and his principle of "voluntary poverty," as mirrored in Henry David Thoreau's ecological matrix, equally discloses sociograms of not only "scattered heritage", but of the global world order, as well. The trilogy of travel writings, of this hiking literature by Edo Popović, can be defined as *peripatetic literature* about Velebit. Yet it has to be stressed that these are travel writings, namely hiking literature with an engaged attitude toward reality.

ANTE RUKAVINA

P e t a r Z o r a n i ć

peripatetic transgenre

MOUNTAINEERING LITERATURE

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