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Destroying Men, Destroying Masculinity: Queer Death in Brane Mozetič's *Passion**

1. Passion, Destruction, and the Politics of Queer Death

The intertwining of queer masculinities with death is an element deeply embedded in Western cultural imaginaries, where gay men are symbolically connected to the underworld. They are perceived as unable to conform to heteronormative productivity and are therefore placed at the margins of life, as liminal or deathly. As Harry M. Benshoff observes in his study of homosexuality and horror, modern Western culture has persistently imagined homosexuality through figures of monstrosity, contagion, and destruction: homosexuals appear as vampires, mad scientists, or creatures lurking in shadowy closets, whose emergence into public visibility provokes panic and social collapse. Within this cultural grammar, "monster is to 'normality' as homosexual is to heterosexual" (Benshoff: 1–2). This cultural configuration acquires further depth in psychoanalytic discourse. Ernest Jones, psychoanalyst and Freud's friend, for instance, linked the vampire's imagined foul odor to an "anal-erotic origin of necrophilia" (Jones 122), framing anal sex as a thanatophilic and abject act. In this reading, queer desire acts to erase distinctions between life and death, which in turn intertwines queer masculinities with taboo and morbidity. Ellis Hanson has shown how depictions of gay

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men as vampiric mark them as compulsive, violent, and soulless, and as threats to family, home, and normative masculinity (Hanson 325). Such portrayals reinforce perceptions of gay men as suicidal and homicidal (Dollimore x). This has its echoes in the popular culture as films like *Cruising* (1980) created a cultural imaginary of the destructive gay masculinity, and equalization of anal penetration with stabbing, while the specter of Jeffrey Dahmer reinforced violence as a cultural lens through which male homosexuality is perceived (Espinosa 24).

The AIDS epidemic intensified this mythic link between queerness and death, as homosexuality was cast as "death-driven, death-desiring, and thereby death-dealing" (Dollimore xi). Out of this climate emerged antisocial queer theory, which aims to embrace rather than reject such associations. Guy Hocquenghem's 1972 book *Le Désir Homosexuel* (*Homosexual Desire*) cast homosexual desire as antithetical to Oedipal reproduction and as a threat to the civilization itself (Hocquenghem 106). For Lorenzo Bernini, this idea shows that homosexuality is marked as futureless, bound to death rather than futurity (Bernini 2017: 63). Leo Bersani radicalized this logic during the AIDS crisis with *Is the Rectum a Grave?* (1987), arguing that the rectum should be celebrated as the site where masculine subjectivity is "buried" (Bersani 222). Although Bersani's position has been subject to substantial criticism, particularly for implicitly centering the white gay male subject, for approaching Freud's theories ahistorically and without engaging the already well-established feminist and postcolonial critiques of Freud (Knadler), and for advancing an anticommunitarian ideal that is ultimately interwoven with practices uncomfortably close to right-wing politics and that, in effect, benefit no one except class-, gender-, and race-privileged men (Phelan), his intervention nevertheless remains analytically productive and therefore warrants a careful consideration. Bersani refused assimilationist politics and affirmed homosexuality as fundamentally disruptive, positioning it against projects of normalization, respectability, and social integration that were gaining prominence in the context of late twentieth-century gay politics. This theoretical stance is inseparable from his reliance on psychoanalysis, through which he persistently interprets sexuality and subjectivity. Such a framework, however, exposes his work to the risk of essentialism and places it at a certain distance from the dominant epistemological commitments of queer theory, particularly its anti-essentialist stance (Martínez et al. 3). Yet this very attachment to psychoanalysis simultaneously enables Bersani, and, with even greater conceptual force, Lee Edelman, to (re)appropriate and privilege one of its most provocative concepts: the death drive. Lee Edelman later extended on this idea in his book *No Future* (2004), where he positioned queerness in opposition to "reproductive futurism" and the fetish of the Child. For Edelman, queers

should embrace their role as "future-killing" figures (Edelman 50), prophets of the end of civilization (Bernini 2020: 139). Building on these currents, Queer Death Studies (QDS) broaden the scope of the aforementioned notions and aim to imagine an approach to death, dying, and mourning that goes beyond hetero- and chrononormative (Freeman) frameworks, situating queer death within necropolitical, ecological, and interspecies contexts (Radomska, Mehrabi, and Lykke 88). Following Judith Butler, QDS recognize many queer deaths as ungrievable, as deaths of entities that were excluded from normative humanity, since the queer subject is "never really counted as life-worthy" (MacCormack 2021: 574). Queer death thus occupies a liminal epistemological space, neither fully human in life nor in death. By queering death, QDS dismantles the Western binary of life versus death, and in its place proposes a continuum that embraces mortality as part of existence. Death becomes not only an end but also a site of resistance, transformation, and even activism (MacCormack 2025).

Although this analysis focuses primarily on Brane Mozetič's first prose collection, he is more broadly recognized in Slovenian and international contexts as a poet, translator, and editor. His poetic oeuvre, comprising sixteen collections, has established him as a central figure of contemporary Slovenian literature. From *Modrina dotika* (The Blueness of Touch 1986) onward, his poetry is marked by a sustained engagement with homoerotic and queer themes, which not only permeate his poetic works but also resonate across his prose, as many motifs transcend the boundaries of genre and individual literary works, reappearing in different contexts throughout his oeuvre. This interplay between genres underscores Mozetič's sustained engagement with the interconnectedness of sex, queer masculinities, and death, a thematic triad particularly prominent in his poetry from 1986 to 2007. However, Mozetič's influence extends well beyond his own writing. In 1990, he founded the Lambda book series, a key platform for queer literature and theory in Slovenia, and served as editor of influential queer periodicals such as *Gayzine* and *Revolver*, which were crucial for the visibility and cultural self-articulation of queer men. His anthology *Modra svetloba: homoerotična ljubezen v slovenski literaturi* (Blue Light: Homoerotic Love in Slovene Literature 1990) remains a foundational work in the formation of Slovenian queer literary history. As a translator, Mozetič further shaped the field by introducing major queer authors, including Rimbaud, Genet, Foucault, Guibert, Dustan, and Lindon, into Slovenian culture, effectively enabling a dialogue between Slovenian and global queer traditions.

Because of its principal position in the emerging Slovene post-socialist queer literary scene, and his role as the cultural mediator of queer culture, Brane Mozetič's work deserves analytical attention in this context. This reading suggests

that the beginnings of Slovene queer literature cannot be understood outside the nexus of destruction, death, and queer antisociality. Far from peripheral, these elements shaped its aesthetics and politics from the outset, making Mozetič's first short story collection a foundational text of queer death in the Slovene context. That is why I have chosen to analyze his early short stories from his 1993 collection *Pasijon* (*Passion*), which center around bearers of masculinity and their – physical and sexual, as well as symbolic – violence towards each other, in order to clearly see the role of destruction and death in the literary configurations of queer masculinities. The thirty-five short pieces that make up *Pasijon* are brief, fragmentary stories. Critics have read them as forming a fragmented lyrical novel that unfolds from tentative beginnings through explicit sexuality and finally into the tormented relationship of a couple undone by absence and betrayal (Bogataj 124). They are also, however, intimate "small stories" of queer life, snapshots of desire unfolding in streets, discos, libraries, bathrooms, and fleeting encounters. Their lyricism is consistently pierced by betrayal, anguish, or abandonment, producing a mosaic of queer affect that unsettles the distinction between private and political life. In this article, I read *Pasijon* through this lens to show how Mozetič's text articulates queer masculinities within a broader cultural moment where sex, death, and violence are constitutive of queer aesthetics.

Before turning to a possible reading of Mozetič's short story collection, it is useful to situate it within a comparative frame. In the foreword to *Pasijon*, Andrej Blatnik situates his work alongside that of Dennis Cooper, Bret Easton Ellis, and Martin Amis, associating it with transgressive fiction (Blatnik 102–103). This tradition, characterized by explicit representations of violence, sexual extremity, and antisocial behavior, employs transgressive aesthetics to articulate contemporary anxieties and social contradictions through the languages of sex, crime, and violence (Briedik). Igor Bratož, in his review of the book, draws attention to the dual meaning of its title: passion as religious suffering and passion as erotic desire, which he terms "profane passion" (Bratož 13). The book's title thus encodes an ambivalence. It recalls the Christian *passio*, the torment of Christ, while simultaneously reclaiming passion as sensual intensity. Mozetič queers this ambiguous view by parodying and reworking Christian notions of suffering, by creating an artistic connection between wounds, scars on one hand, and bodily fluids with erotic jouissance on the other. This interplay is reinforced by the design chosen for the book cover, which depicts a male torso marked by a razor wound and semen stains. Such imagery, if interpreted as paratext, directly invokes the conflation of eros and death and reflects the antisocial queer perspective that rejects futurity in favour of the immediacy of sex, pain, violence, and mortality.

2. Unmaking Men: Reading Queer Death in *Pasijon*

Some short stories centered on male figures carry significant symbolic weight in this attempt to analyze competing modes of masculinity, which is reinforced by having a masculine social figure in their title. Matej Bogataj interprets the heightened violence towards the masculine figures in those stories as an act of vengeance against societal hypocrisy, against the supposed righteousness directed at the pillars of society such as intellectuals or politicians, or at those who refuse to acknowledge their own sexual orientation (Bogataj 125). Each of these figures embodies a different model of masculinity. In the story "Egghead," men who hold symbolic capital and authority through their control of knowledge, and, therefore, represent the intellectual elites, are framed as potential agents of social change in relation to homosexuality. However, the narrative underscores their refusal to act: rather than destabilizing heteronormative structures by openly acknowledging their sexuality, they prioritize the preservation of their social privilege. In doing so, the text exposes the complicity of knowledge elites in sustaining dominant power relations. In "Hairdresser", on the other hand, the narrator seeks to obliterate the very possibility of rejecting a homosexual identity. He coerces a man, whom he perceives as a closeted homosexual, into sexual acts, which is motivated by the hairdresser's ostentatious performance of masculinity alongside his friend, as well as the rejection of the possibility that he might be gay. The hairdresser and his friend are presented as performatively hypermasculine to a point that their performance turns into camp: "They were real men, the very picture of male friendship, barely restraining themselves from putting on a show of wrestling and kneading their naked muscular bodies" (Mozetič 2005: 91). This story can be interpreted as the protagonist's active act of revolt against the normative heterosexual perception of masculinity, and opting therefore for an approach similar to Kosowsky Sedgwick's notion of homosociality as being on the queer spectrum, and forcing that queerness to be radically visible.

However, in "The Mayor," the narrative takes on a carnivalesque inversion. The target is the mayor, and "his blabber about good upbringing (he had seven children), about increasing corruption in our country, and about the virtues of our forefathers" (Mozetič 2005: 98). This story problematizes the constructions of gender, in the context of its performativity, both as masculine in the sense of mayor, and feminine, with regards to the narrator's position. The cross-dressing narrator deliberately deceives the mayor, which is an act that can be interpreted as exposing the constructed and superficial nature of the patriarchal symbolic order that the mayor represents. During the moment of cross-dressing, which takes place in a graveyard, the narrative voice of the protagonist shifts, and he

adopts feminine grammatical forms. This linguistic shift persists as the narrator seduces the mayor and engages in sexual intercourse with him, until the moment where the scene culminates in a revelation, when the narrator exposes his penis, urinates on the mayor, and retreats into the graveyard (Mozetič 2005: 100). This carnivalesque event appears to serve a dual function: first, as an act of symbolic subversion, where the grotesque and transgressive elements dismantle the mayor's authority and the ideological structures he represents; and second, it is a successful attempt of asserting queer agency through an inversion of power dynamics. The desecration of the mayor's body that culminates in urination, renders the scene a radical deconstruction and emasculation of the figure that embodies hegemonic masculinity.

Similarly, "Rape" challenges the dialectics of victim and perpetrator, giving special attention to the discourse on masculine violence. The story explores the real dangers faced by queer and marginalized individuals, and therefore highlights their vulnerability to violence and the ever-present threat of death. The narrator becomes the target of a homophobic attack when a group of young men suddenly surrounds him:

> Out of nowhere, a group of boys suddenly materializes before me, young and handsome in a rustic fashion, too close for me to dodge them. Oh, look at the pansy, was the first thing I heard. One of them grabbed hold of me, the others swarmed around. I felt a knife blade on my throat. "If you try anything, I'll stick it in you, you fucking fag," hissed one holding the knife. (Mozetič 2005: 75).

The assault that follows is an assertion of dominance, an attempt to enforce and affirm the heteronormative masculinity through violence. However, the conclusion of the story introduces complex symbolic layers that problematize this seemingly simple process. After the first attack, the perpetrators promise to come again the next day. This gives the narrator the opportunity to prepare and he wounds himself by inserting a cucumber into his anus, and by doing that, he transforms the scene into a self-inflicted ritual, in order to release his own blood. He then observes the perpetrators as they "dip their slimy pricks in my blood, flaunt their stuff, call me awful names" (Mozetič 2005: 77). At this moment, the narrative perspective shifts, which could indicate a rupture in the power dynamics. The narrator's self-inflicted wounds can be read as an attempt to desensitize himself in expectation of an even greater pain that is inevitable when they come back, but it can also be read as his way of making sure that his blood comes in direct contact with them, in order to leave a symbolic and

possibly a material trace on them. Even though the narrator is a victim, he manages to reclaim agency, while the attackers are stripped of their control, which is visible in the language too: "I supposed I wouldn't feel much of anything anymore, just my own warmth covering them, surging around them, wetting them…" (Mozetič 2005: 77).[1] Their masculinity is reduced to mere physical force, and the scene takes on religious undertones:

> I sort of hung there, and emptied their penises, dunking them in me like bread in wine, moaning, roaring. They were the force and the power, enthusiastically spearing me, impaling me, drawing my blood, and so on and on. I was very glad, and I hardly felt a thing (Mozetič 2005: 78).

This grotesque inversion of power can be read as a perverse ritual of transformation, which is a direct connection to the Christian religious layers of meaning laid in with the title of the collection. The eucharistic metaphor "dunking them in me like bread in wine" evokes the metaphorical meanings of Christ's sacrificial death, which positions the narrator within a genealogy of martyrdom and ritual slaughter. The assault, rather than simply reenacting victimhood, becomes a moment of transfiguration, as the perpetrators are reduced to brute force, as well as stripped of their masculinity, because they are represented as inflicting not pain but pleasure to the marginalized man. This scene subverts the hierarchical relationships that tie different bearers of masculinity with each other. Furthermore, the Eucharist functions as a means of uniting individuals into a collective body creating a "pluralised and pluralising body that overspills defined places, opening up another space" (Ward 167). The narrator's act of hurting himself might even be read as an act of revenge, for making sure that the queerness of the abject gay man spills onto the rapists. In this reading, the forced merging of male bodies, enacted through violence, paradoxically opens a space for queer meaning within Christian symbolic structures. The story dismantles the rigid binaries of victim and perpetrator, drawing connections to other narratives of revenge, such as those involving the intellectual and the mayor, where violence itself becomes the defining trait of masculinity.

1 This semantic nuance is even more pronounced in the Slovene original: "Verjetno ne bom ničesar več čutil, verjetno bom čutil samo svojo toploto, kako jih odevam vanjo, kako jih oblivam, zalivam, kako…" (Mozetič 1993: 62), which translates to: "Probably I won't feel anything anymore, probably I will feel only my warmth, how I enfold them in it, how I pour it over them, soak them, how…", where the agency of the narrative „I" is even more visible it the actions that he is taking over his perpetrators.

A similar dynamic of transgressive power relations emerges in "Bathroom," which unfolds during a stag night, an environment where masculinity is performed through detachment and ritualized camaraderie. After he encounters his former lover, the narrator violently forces him into a bathroom, threatens to kill him, and sexually assaults him. His justification is to make his ex-lover "understand" and feel (Mozetič 2005: 51–52), in other words, to force him into a relational mode of being founded on empathy, and developing a queer subjectivity. However, this act of coercion raises a fundamental question: can this be considered a queer subjectivity if it is built on force? While the story presents a critique of the state of relations men have with each other, and denotes a possibility of a different mode of male relationality, it does so by using the same language of dominance that characterizes traditional masculinity.

The story titled "Nino" introduces a different perspective on marginalized queer existence, centering on Nino, a young man that lives on the fringes of society and spends his time engaging in dangerous and violent encounters. The narrator's depiction of Nino's world suggests that, for those living on the margins, the boundary between life and death is alarmingly fluid, since reckless behaviors, dangerous games, and cycles of violence often lead to fatal consequences. The narrative then changes from this broader social commentary and puts focus on an intensely graphic sexual episode. The narrator is intrigued by Nino's world and arranges a sexual encounter by bringing an older acquaintance to meet him. However, the situation takes an unexpected turn, the older man assumes a dominant and violent role. In response, the narrator and Nino unite in an effort to reverse the power dynamic and they manage to place the older man as the submissive partner. The narrator describes the moment of role reversal in explicitly militaristic terms: "'Take his clothes off. Let's screw him,' he called out to me, as though we were on a battlefield" (Mozetič 2005: 22). The battlefield metaphor emphasizes the fact that masculinity is constructed through aggression, conquest, and control, even within the context of queer desire.

As the story is coming to its end, we notice that the power dynamics shift once again. After the narrator finishes with Nino, he makes a remark that: "Nino hadn't cried out, not before, not now, he was as quiet as if he were sleeping" (Mozetič 2005: 23). In that moment, Nino is rendered wordless, and his silence evokes a sense of lifelessness. His body is portrayed as passive and unresponsive and appears suspended between sleep and death, which in turn reinforces the story's central theme: the porous boundary between life and death for queer men, particularly those who inhabit precarious social and sexual spaces. This proximity of queer masculinities to death is especially evident in the portrayal of radical sexual practices such as BDSM. In this story,

BDSM does not function merely as a consensual power-play dynamic, but also as a literary motif that aims to symbolically intensify the inherent violence within masculinity itself.

This critique of militarized masculinity is particularly evident in the short story "The Soldiers," in which the protagonist visits a friend – who is identified only as S. – in the town where he is serving in the army. Upon his arrival, the protagonist enters what can be described as a necropolitical space, a hypermasculine place governed by war and death:

> The streets were crowded with men in uniform, some of them maimed, with stumps, with bandages, others armed. They hung around, whistling, their dicks no longer knew peace... They hardly spoke. They ran their hands over their chests. They touched their dicks. They rubbed themselves between their legs... I watched them, men who beat off to the sound of missiles, who would burst into a house and throw women, men on the floor and screw them, butcher them in the middle of ecstasy, knife sliding closer to the throat as the soldiers came (Mozetič 2005: 84).

In this passage, soldiers are represented as an extreme manifestation of destructive masculinity, where sex and violence are inseparable elements, whose aim is to assert power. Soldiers' bodies are both hypersexualized and dehumanized, as they are operating in a world where desire and destruction cannot de distinguished. The recurring scenes of self-touching, arousal, and orgasm conflated with acts of brutality underscore how militarized masculinity is structured through a fusion of sexual domination and physical annihilation. In other words, the situation where soldiers are able to achieve orgasm while committing acts of violence reveals that in the heteronormative and patriarchal order, masculinity is fundamentally tied to destruction. The narrator does not perceive this world of hypermasculinity as one of virile vitality, but as a world of the living dead, which is embedded in an order that sustains itself through death and the obliteration of the Other. This story notably inverts the hierarchy of masculinity, since the space of war[2] is not depicted as a space of heroism but of spectral existence, where life is reduced to a meaningless cycle of violence.

2 Brane Mozetič's preoccupation with war, particularly the Yugoslav wars of the 1990s, is further evident in his later works, most notably his poetry collection *Metulji* (Butterflies, 2000). His anti-military and pacifist stance is noticeable in his children's picture book *Dežela bomb, dežela trav* (Land of Bombs, Land of Grass, 2013), which critiques the normalization of war from an early age.

In "Soldiers," the protagonist is represented as a man experiencing his own body as devoid of meaning:

> "I saw my body, and S. jumping all over it, a worthless body, a senseless body. S. could cut it into pieces, burn it, gas it, blow it up, grind it. I saw my life, my thoughts, emotions, memories, connections, my work – all of it was nothing, blowing up in a split second, poof, and where one had stood not even an empty space remained" (Mozetič 2005: 85).

In this scene, the protagonist realizes that within the hypermasculine order of war, his body, and by extension, his life, holds no intrinsic value. The list of violent possibilities ("cut it into pieces, burn it, gas it, blow it up, grind it") can be read as a symbol of the systematic erasure of those deemed expendable under necropolitical regimes. The protagonist's existence is ultimately reducible to nothingness, his body being an almost-presence that can be erased without leaving a trace. This devaluation of queer existence aligns with Butler's concept of ungrievable bodies, bodies that, within the patriarchal and militarized order, were never recognized as fully alive to begin with. In this sexual and hypermasculine politics of war, both women and queer men are presented as objects upon which power is exerted. That means that their deaths reinforce the heteronormative hierarchy, and are not able to disrupt it.

If militarized masculinity is represented as violent towards the bodies of others in its mission to sustain its dominance, then the story "Boy" internalizes this destruction and turns it inward toward the queer self. In "Boy", the narrator is depicted as being in the process of regression, both physically, which he achieves by shaving his body hair to return to a prepubescent state, and psychologically, by adopting the narrative perspective of a boy. Through this doubled gaze, the narrator experiences victimhood at the hands of a pedophile while simultaneously assuming the position of a predator who lures and ultimately murders a young boy (Mozetič 2005: 39–41). This duality creates a rupture in the queer subject, emphasizing the impossibility of a livable present or future. This narrative situation can be read in the terms that the queer man is unable to exist in the temporal structures of heteronormativity, seeks to undo himself through a violent return to the past, which is denoted as an attempt to "correct" the mistake of queerness by destroying himself. This self-destruction resonates with Lee Edelman's proclamation of killing the Child, however, while Edelman's argument targets the Child as a regulatory figure of reproductive ideology, Mozetič's killing of the child operates differently. Here, the murdered child is not the abstract emblem of heteronormative futurity, but rather the queer self,

embodying both the victory of homophobic discourse that demands the death of queerness and the queer subject's own ultimate rejection of a future that does not and cannot exist.

3. Conclusion

Reading *Pasijon* through the lenses of antisocial queer theory, Queer Death Studies, and masculinity studies reveals how Mozetič situates queer desire at the intersection of sex, violence, desire, and death. Across the collection, masculinity is continually unmade: intellectuals, politicians, soldiers, and boys are all caught in scenarios where their authority, virility, vitality, or very existence is dismantled. The stories do not merely depict queer men as victims of violence, but repeatedly stage the ways in which queerness destabilizes the very foundations of masculinity. Death and destruction in these stories are constitutive, since they emerge as the very language through which queer existence becomes legible. This dynamic situates *Pasijon* as a foundational moment in Slovene queer literature, one that refuses the assimilationist paradigm and rejects reproductive futurism. Instead, it embraces the negativity, self-destruction, and abjection that antisocial queer theory has highlighted as central to queer cultural production. Mozetič's characters oscillate between victimhood and agency, between erotic jouissance and annihilation, producing a queer poetics that undermines heteropatriarchal authority while also acknowledging the fragility of queer life under necropolitical regimes in the context of the AIDS crisis. However, the historical moment in which *Pasijon* was written and published invites an additional layer of interpretation. The early 1990s in Slovenia were marked by profound political and social transformation following the dissolution of Yugoslavia, accompanied by the wars in Croatia and Bosnia and the broader reconfiguration of political life in the region. This period produced what can be understood as a new necropolitical regime, in which death was no longer only an abstract or symbolic horizon but an everyday political reality. Mozetič's collection registers this shift most explicitly in the story "Soldiers," which can be read as a literary engagement with the violence of the time and with the normalization of death brought about by the wars on the southern borders of the newly established Slovenian state. This embrace does not simply reflect the violence of that cultural moment, but actively reconfigures it, parodying Christian passion narratives, queering rituals of sacrifice, and rewriting the very scripts of masculinity. At the same time, the antisocial queer politics articulated in *Pasijon* are not without ambivalence. By staging destruction primarily through cycles of male-on-male violence, the texts reproduce the very patterns of domination and brutality they seek to dismantle. This tension

recalls Eve Kosofsky Sedgwick's seminal question: "Is men's desire for other men the great preservative of the masculinist hierarchies of Western culture, or is it among the most potent of the threats against them?" (Sedgwick 93). Mozetič's prose inhabits this unresolved space. The refusal of futurity and affirmation remains radical, yet the recurrence of violence between men also shows the difficulty of imagining alternatives to these structures. This mirrors a broader pattern in Slovene queer literary production, where negative affect – whether shame, as in earlier queer autofiction (Ilin), or violent death, as in *Pasijon* – repeatedly resists straightforward reclamation even as it becomes central to queer self-articulation. The shift is therefore striking but not absolute: Mozetič unsettles the foundations of masculinity and heterosexual reproduction, yet he also reveals how deeply queer life can remain entangled with the same logics of violence it seeks to escape.

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| Abstract

DARKO ILIN
Destroying Men, Destroying Masculinity: Queer Death in Brane Mozetič's *Passion*

The article examines Brane Mozetič's *Pasijon* (*Passion*), a seminal work of Slovene queer literature, through antisocial queer theory and queer death studies. It shows how the stories from the collection construct masculinity as violent and destructive while reworking death into a queer site of both subversion and repetition. Stories such as "The Mayor," "Rape," and "Soldiers" deploy a poetics of inversion, where victims become perpetrators, Eucharistic sacrifice is rewritten through queer martyrdom, and militarized masculinities collapse under erotic desire. Situated in the early post-socialist Slovene context, *Pasijon* appears as a radical disruption of heteronormativity, collapsing boundaries between life and death, desire and violence. Yet this antisocial queer politics also risks reproducing the very structures of male violence it resists, exposing the ambivalence of queer literary beginnings in Slovenia. Ultimately, the article argues that Mozetič's text negotiates resistance and complicity, rupture and continuity, in the politics of masculinity and death.

Keywords: antisocial queer theory; masculinity; Queer Death Studies; queer literature; Slovene literature; violence and desire

| Bio

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