

INTRODUCING ACCIDENT TO THE SPHERE OF THE AESTHETIC (REFLECTING UPON MIROLJUB TODOROVIC'S STOCHASTIC POETRY)

Summary

This paper deals with the introduction of a case in the field of the aesthetic on examples of stochastic poetry – one of many types of verbal creativity within the Serbian neo-avant-garde movement signalism, the founder of which is Miroljub Todorovic. The stochastic poetry is characterized by unpredictability, case, indecision, and creative improvisation, all taking place beyond legitimacy and common poetic norms, lexical and grammatical rules. Instead of the category of order and sense, which characterize standard poetic creativity, in stochastic poetry, random lexical configurations are introduced into the space of spirituality as a result of unpredictable confrontation and mutual interaction of a number of important and irrelevant circumstances. The new connections and relations of poetic elements change specific conceptual and linguistic-symbolic properties, but the ontological character remains unchanged; in the process of artistic playability a new series of unexpected spiritual and cognitive associations begins. Weaving a poetic text on the basis of incidence, the poet seeks deeper linguistic logic and “higher” order in the world and its hidden conditionality. The results of the stochastic experiment carried out by M. Todorovic and the group gathered around him led to the destruction of the basic principles of traditional poetry in both the linguistic and the semantic levels, having released new scopes of verbal communication and the illumination of the dark, dreary blade of the language.

Key words: Miroljub Todorović, stochastic poetry, signalism.

Stochastic poetry as a variety of signalist verbal creation represents stepping deeply into the spheres of life poetic spirituality and courageously overcoming unilateral metaphysical materialism imposed by reality, nature and creativity. Poetical, philosophical and poetological notion of incident, in the world of determinism, brings the new and helps understanding more complex dimensions of the existing state of circumstance. Breaking up with the logic of common, even general reasoning, and standardized expression and form, as well as annihilating the usual notion of sensibility, in this sort of poetry are accomplished in radical form. Instead of categories of order and sense, that characterize standard poetical creativity, in stochastic poetry the incident and unpredictability are introduced to the sphere of spirituality. The link between sensible entireties in constructing stochastic poetry is deliberately fluid, loose or completely abolished, in order to enable appearance of bonds and inner connections that would fail to appear if

there was not for such playful heat of unique and inimitable incident. It is about an act that clearly divides art from science which inevitably directs and rationally controls however inspired variations.

In the approach to stochastic poetry it is important to have in mind multi-directional processes marked with axiological elements taken by means of intuitive distinction of coincidence variables set, the value of which is changed according to certain pattern. And the adjective stochastic, considering this signalist variety, is linked to processes forming incidental and uncontrolled combination of poetic visions, frequency of their appearance by certain concealed principles of the theory of probability, in compliance with indicated or newly developed syntagmatic, pictorial, phonic, rhythmical and other models.

In stochastic poetry the act is upon unpredictability, incidence, indeterminability and creative improvisation that happen outside regularities and usual poetical norms, lexical and grammatical rules. Coincidental lexical coupling are the result of unpredictable facing and mutual action of several important and unimportant circumstances. They may occur also by means of coincidence between semantic, symbolic, melodic and other phenomena which are not mutually closely related. However, even then, despite apparent exclusivities, there is no large gap between them, but internal communication and some sort of mutual intertwining. Accidental syntactic variations, conciliated with harmonic and rhythmic effects, open new spaces for variations of different type, thus overcoming rigidity, routine, monotony and excessive normativeness. Those relations change specific notional and lingual-symbolic features, but do not change ontological character; in the process of artistic playfulness the “accidental” triggers a new sequence of unexpected spiritual and cognitive relations.

In signalist stochastic experiments the coincidence is not only subjective speculative category, but it also comprises manifestation, conditioned by other and what Hegel named “pure possibility”. Only then the incident has function of spiritual animation for unexpected facing of random manifestations and those necessary. Denying possible effective result would challenge creative expression of freedom, especially avant-garde and neo avant-garde search for new expressive possibilities.

Founding poetic text on a coincidence the author is in search for deeper linguistic logic and “higher” order in the world and its hidden conditionality. Anthropological insight saying that “coincidence in its elevated, divine significance is the name for unrevealed, unknown pattern of occurrence”¹ implies the share of accident, probability, game and “gamble” in shaping of the reality. Certain “accident creativity”, lying in the basis of this insight, motivates authors of stochastic poetry to step out of rigid conventions and liberate themselves from uniformity. Original solutions may be conceived on the level of improvisation and spontaneous play, but turning to coincidence does not always lead to creation; if relations obtained are not enriched creatively, unexpected twists may lead to aesthetic miss or elimination of minimal authoring individuality.

¹ Of coincidence that explains “what defies our rational deliberation of the world and what happens within” interesting insights are given by Bojan Jovanovic in the text *God's Casino (Božja kockarnica)*, Politika, 26th May 2001.

The incident in stochastic poetry is given the role of key factor in creating a work of art. Researchers of neo avant-garde emphasize that in stochastic poetry the coincidence is primarily expressed “on the level of semantic relations” (Kornhauser, 1998: 114). Introducing the incident to the space of poetic text accomplishes neutralization of rational elements as limiting factors of artistic creation. In the sense of art, linguistic and semantic “spontaneity” appearing in stochastic poem is one of the basic factors of its aestheticization. Coincidence and suspense are not only in the world order, but also in the “nature of self-revealing being of a poem” (T. Kragujevic), as a permanent process of transferring from indented disharmony of the world into the infinity of poematic arch.

The name of this sort of poetry developed from the word stochastic, the root of which originates in Greek language and in its widest sense denotes the skill of guessing and studying the probable. Stochastic, as a method, appears in exact sciences such as physics and mathematics, where stochastic variables are studied, but also in the art, primarily musical, when mathematical coincidence is used in composing and also visual arts (using computers as generators of random numbers and graphic signs).

Coincidence, finding the reasons of its being and endurance not in its inner self, but in something else, along with spontaneity and expression of free will, establishes open communicative and spiritually motivational channel with objective reality linked to organized and poetically historized “matter”, as well as to lyrical nature creatively transformed by the author. Stochastic poetry is based, otherwise, on a point of view of pure coincidence and dualistic notion of inevitability and such coincidence. It shows entire depth of communicativeness between most different words containing totality of knowledge, notions and concepts, and not only statements deprived of any sense in terms of grammar.

Stochastic in terms of poetic determination is what is possible and open to the world for its contradictory coincidence. This is exactly what enables the fertile explosion of a language in stochastic poetry, storming from the very heart of creative being. In that sense we are talking about explosive and dynamic energy summarized in stochastic poems.

Insisting on coincidence in artistic creation is linked to early (historical) avant-garde movements – Dadaism and surrealism. Members of these avant-garde trends thus weakened the effect of conscious and rational in their creativeness and cleared the space for spontaneity of artistic act. Avant-gardists, mostly under the influence of Freud’s philosophy, strived to set the artistic creation free from censoring rigidity of conscience as repressive instance, by means of which the entire structure of society is efficiently controlled. At the same time, the belief on incorruptible subconscience which activated brings the author to the truth in its elemental, unenhanced form is strongly upheld. In the basis of such approach laid the negation attitude towards existing art proclaimed as bourgeoisie and fake.

As a counterbalance to “consciousness” of traditionalist art, in surreal poetry the concept of psychological automatism is promoted where crucial creative significance is given to elements of subconscious and oneiric. Developed without rational participation of author’s “self”, the work obtains

emphasized elements of impersonality, and completely loses the impact of author's individuality. It is not, as in classical creating, a document of author's internal life whose dynamics originate from a conflict between conscious and unconscious processes, but a record of uncontrolled, automated, accidental psychical flows using the author as a mere medium.

Critics of Dadaistic and surrealist concept of artistic creation indicated that modes of psychical automatism introduce the reign of coincidence to creative process thus giving the work of art a form of entire arbitrariness and electiveness. According to some, instead of spontaneity, uniformity prevails in this sort of creation, whereas emancipation of creativity from thought control turned into predominance of senselessness. Rejecting creative individuality the work became not only impersonal, but also deprived of emotional and existential dimension. Regardless the mentioned remarks, nowadays it is undisputable that Dadaism and surrealism brought vast results in liberating the poetic speech from cannons and traditional art discipline, thus making main way to new, modern tendencies in 20th-century art.

Meaning of coincidence in stochastic poetry is essentially different in nature from the one in Dadaistic and surrealist creation. In time of historical avant-garde the coincidence expressed protest, and in neo avant-garde context it is more about certain doubt in the power of language because of common fragmentation of speech and meaning. In order to understand that distinction most relevant is certainly Miroljub Todorovic's poetic instruction. This poetry takes the language "from everyday, turbulent, existential cosmogony", as opposed to "sentential soliloquy in surrealist automatic text", characterized by "tense symbolicity and metaphorical satiety" (Todorovic, 1984: 63). In one poetic fragment the founder of signalism points out that "the world and language are fundamental (...) cause of syntactic and logic destruction so evident in poetry". According to Todorovic's opinion, it is obvious that this poetry draws its own language from the reality thus representing pure civilization reflex and its genuine metalanguage. The stochastic-aleatoric syntax – fragmentation of statement, cuts in a sentence, tearing syntagmas, shattering words randomly and not sensibly, discrepancy in semantic – originates from the reality because "the deeper we pervade the courses of contemporary civilization, the more deformed and fragmented the world image becomes and language stammering and torn merely touches us with its inarticulate residuals" (Ibidem: 64).

The fact that stochastic method is taken from the sphere of scientific indicates its link to scientific creativity. Similarly, the elements of stochastic creativity are announced in certain segments of *Journey to Stararea (Putovanje u Zvezdaliju)*, one of Miroljub Todorovic's crucial scientific poems. Introducing this mode of poetic practice in signalist production, Todorovic determined stochastic poetry in his programmatic and poetic texts in terms of terminology, notion and methodology. Within the catalog of signalist categories, in the third manifest of signalism (1970) under the ordinal number three – after visual and computer poetry – aleatoric and stochastic poetry is listed as one category. In later development differentiation is established between aleatoric and stochastic poetry, and they are

treated separately. However, prevailing standpoint is that aleatoric poetry is subspecies of stochastic poetry, because both of them are basically leant on identical creative method, and differences appear on the level of linguistic material.² For aleatoric, as well as for stochastic poetry, the category of coincidence is characteristic (“alea” means “dice” in Latin), as well as certain “incompleteness” and emphasized openness of poetic text. The thing somewhat distinguishing aleatoric poetry from stochastic is wider variety of the language used. Aleatoric poetry is not limited to standard language, but includes nonstandard discourse in poetic expression – colloquial and slang, language of commercials, press, technology etc.

In creative enterprises by the founders of signalism the stochastic poetry appeared relatively early. Recognizable prototype forms of poems that would later be designated as stochastic are found in the cycle *Nursery (Ožiliste)*, written in 1967 and published a decade later in corpus *An Insect on the Temple (Insekt na slepoočnici)*. For the first time the synthesis of seemingly incompatible units of syntax and “world image” mosaic appears, deriving from applied stochastic practice. Significant effects in this game of conscience and imagination Todorovic achieved using cuts resembling cubistic applied in cycle *Pig is an Excellent Swimmer (Svinja je odličan plivač)* from the similar corpus (1971). Interesting harmony of meaning and melody, as a consequence of movement in the plain of natural and the plain of poetic language, the veteran of historic avant-garde Ljubisa Jovic achieved in the book *Moonlight in Carton (Mesečina u tetrapaku)* (1975) and cycle of verses *Discussion on Taste (Rasprava o ukusu)*, published in *Steps (Koraci)* in Kragujevac, 1976. As for younger and newest authors under the tutorship of signalist movement, the new breakthrough came with Ilija Bakic and Zvonko Saric at the end of ninth decade. Their literary works significantly enriched signalist poetry and contributed in terms of genre to an easier distinction of stochastic poetry and related species, as well as profiling aleatoric poetry as a subtype of stochastic.

Observed from a wider poetic standpoint, a conclusion imposes that the stochastic poetry gave remarkable stimulus to other classes of signalist poetry where, using various innovative and experimental endeavors, breaking accustomed logic of poetic discourse represented one of basic creative principles. Hence certain authors are prone to announce stochastic poetry as one of crucial signalist genres, encompassing such subtypes as technological and ready-made poetry, and, in wider terms, phenomenological, jargoned, statistical, variational and computer poetry, that is entire signalist verbal poetry (Kornhauser, 1984: 75).

On the other hand, traditionalistic literary criticism, in its simplified and insufficiently projected reading in theoretical terms of signalist poetic creativity, “mixes” stochastic poetry with computer poetry.³ Although in

² About cited distinctions in more detail Miroljub Todorovic wrote in polemic book *Singers from Bajlon-Square (Pevci sa Bajlon-skvera)* (1986: 58).

³ Certain lack of sense for signalist poetry in our literary criticism traditionally oriented, reducing entire signalist poetry to computer poetry, was pointed out with many arguments Zivan Zivkovic in polemically tuned review of *Copperhead Drinks Rainwater (Belouška popije kišnicu)* (Zivkovic, 1991: 80).

certain corpuses Todorovic based stochastic text on material processed on computer, the poem itself develops as pure author's creative act without use of computers. The fact implying certain closeness of these two poetic types is that stochastic text is generated by random word linking with application of some mathematic method elements. Hence the conclusion that in stochastic creation "computer logic" is present, but merely as one of the components of creative process.

ACTIVATING ASSOCIATIVE ARRAYS

In order to understand the essence of stochastic creation the key element is implying to a certain sort of "demiurgic strive for illogical synthesis of incompatible, completely opposed elements of the real world" (Todorovic, 1984: 31–32) in this poetry. Important features in stochastic poem the founder of signalism additionally specified in polemic book *Singers from Bajlon-square (Pevci sa Bajlon-skvera)* – where the following elements of stochastic poetic method are especially emphasized: breaking the sentence with sharp cuts, using the technique of verbal collage, incompleteness and disjointness of sentence chains being "disrupted in its linguistically energetic tension and each 'subsequent verse is independent entity of the discourse'" (Todorovic, 1986: 58).

Whether the source in studying basic features of stochastic poetry is found in poetic determinants of its author Miroljub Todorovic, whether in relevant theoretical and critical reviews of this signalist poetic genus researchers, or by aiming to the artifact itself, the stochastic poem – being by all means the most competent approach – it is proven that breaking the logic of standard language and usual poetic discourse is fundamental opposing characteristic severely detaching this creativity from traditional poetry. Instead of making a sequence of verses (sentences) in logical plain, in stochastic poem the associative plan of discourse is activated. Constructing associative circles author leans to a certain extent on selected modes of mathematical methods of probability and game of numbers. Syntactic compaction of discourse is subjected to this process, featured by sudden cuts and interrupted sentences as grammatical image of agitated and incoherent thoughts and associations. Instead of linear structure with clearly indicated beginning and the end, poetic text is here constituted by collage technique, where terms "beginning" and "the end" are completely irrelevant, because they may be situated in any part of poetic text. The only thing in stochastic poem that stays in common with traditional poetry is lexis taken over from standard language, or enriched with copious coinages as a kind of "newspeech", that is, specific linguistic phenomena such as slang, technical, archaic speech and so on.

The zest of stochastic process appears in Todorovic's poems from the cycle *Nursery (Ožiliste)* (1967), where sharp cuts in linguistic tissue of a poem are apparent as well as various modes of linguistic play, replacing logical relations with associative ones, mosaic structure of poetic expression. Already in poems from this cycle some of important features of

stochastic process come into view – accidental linking of semantic group, non-syntactic series and neologistic process:

*Falling of evil lightening in wave of fragile
Water herbal flowers witchery
With sunnyssea and dawn dawnny winging
Of the nursery
(Padanje munje zlosne u talas krhke
Vode čaranje biljnih cvetova
Suncomorjem i zorom zorno krilanje
Ožilista) (Todorovic, 1978).*

Todorovic's poem *Dragonfly-Ljeljen (Konjic-Ljeljen)* (1969) signifies complete genre and poetic profiling of stochastic poetry as a special kind in signalist creativity. The poem illustrates the two critical characteristics of stochastic poem – intertwining of free associations as the principle of statement structuring and emphasized subjectivity: “this is my language irrational sentence/ through the northern fog I return at dawn/ death hungry and anxiously a woman in puddle/ of blood breaths I heard these words and was on my way...” (“ovo je moj jezik nerazumna rečenica/ kroz severnu maglu vraćam se zorom/ smrt gladno i nervozno žena u lokvi/ krvi diše čuo sam ove reči i krenuo...”) (Todorovic, 1969). Followed by cycle of poems *Moonmeter II (Lunomer II)* (1969/70), published in the book *Algol* (1980), and after that, one of the crucial works of stochastic poetry, *Pig is an Excellent Swimmer (Svinja je odličan plivač)* (1971). In this book Todorovic demonstrated some of the key characteristics of stochastic method – sudden change in the sentence flow of poetic expression and abundance of associative combinations giving the poem its polyphonic structure.

This book mixes several types of discourse that have in common one thing, that is, they express the entire scantiness of preoccupations one suffers in modern society. Sudden introduction of obscene (sexological) expression, one baring such title (“and do not masturbate”), suggests that using sarcastic form it is possible to convey the “message” that every-day preoccupations of an individual are merely a kind of masturbation (Todorovic, 1971: 23). In randomly organized order, where fractions of a verse barely preserve their properties of logical syntagmas, Todorovic's expression seeks implication in disproving conventions that do not contain true human values and contents.

Stochastic poetry also includes the cycle *Prescription for Liver Inflammation (Recept za zapaljenje jetre)* (published for the first time in the corpus *Kyberno*, 1970), which lent the title to the representative selection of Todorovic's verses published in Zrenjanin, 1999. The author of epilogue Drasko Redjep⁴ classifies the poems written “in disbanded freedom of expression as such” as the most open works of our recent literature. “It is not anymore the question of promiscuous surrealist collage, it is more about

⁴ Drasko Redjep in the epilogue of M. Todorovic's book *Prescription for Liver Inflammation (Recept za zapaljenje jetre)* (1999: 207).

the multicast play of insignia that equally take care of intestines and humanity which were so paid attention to, in pathetic rhyme, by our poets of soft and mild atmosphere in the fifties”, says Redjep. Stochastic “game of accidental reading” is revealed in comprehensive disharmony of the modern world, including its material, consumer and informatics achievements before which the lyrical subject retreats or becomes the object. Crumpled, crushed and twisted words, just as smashed car shells in a severe car crash, to a critic of younger generation Ilija Bakic (2001) seem like miraculous sculptures, fascinating in its detachment from the world that produced them in the first place; they do not belong to that world anymore, but they determine it brutally clear.

The cycle *I Am Mounting Rosinante Again* (*Ponovo uzjahujem Rosinanta*) (published in *Telegazer for Taping /Telezur za trakanje/*, 1977) depicts also one of the very summits in Todorovic’s stochastic creation. Unlike extremely ironic coloration of stochastic expression in poems from the book *Pig is an Excellent Swimmer* (*Svinja je odličan plivač*); in this cycle the expression is given lyricized, pathetic designation. In the title poem *I Am Mounting Rosinante Again* (Todorovic, 1987: 598) one civilization landmark, such as Che Guevara’s death, is related to semantics of Cervantes’s hero and thus, owing to metaliterary connection, allocated into the mythical Pantheon. Changed vocabulary, its lyricizing and different semantic code are seen as well in other sections of this cycle, for instance in the poem *I Am Watching you Coxswains and Skippers* (*Posmatram vas krmanoši i kapetani*) (Ibidem: 591):

*Mountain not invoking God
Musical carrot under the swan’s foot
I am watching you coxswains and skippers
Winter pastures of possible dialogue
Bony arms of starving skill
Probable defeats of impetuous border...
(Planina koja se ne poziva na boga
Muzikalna mrkva pod nogom labuda
Posmatram vas krmanoši i kapetani
Zimski pašnjaci mogućnosti dijaloga
Koščate ruke veštine u gladovanju
Verovatni porazi nepromišljene granice...)*

It is obvious that Todorovic remained creatively loyal to this genus of poetic creativity during his dealing with signalism over the years. That implies the importance of this poetic method as, in certain sense, fundamental in his poetic project.⁵

The collection of poems *Copperhead Drinks Rainwater* (*Belouška popije kišnicu*), published in Belgrade, 1988, represents Todorovic’s homecoming to stochastic poetry, but in significantly altered form. Com-

⁵ This fact was pointed at in critical reviews especially by leading signalism analysts Julian Kornhauser (1984: 78) and Zivan Zivkovic (1991: 89).

paring to the first phase of stochastic creation the attitude towards language is significantly revised, that is its logical and syntactic requirements are mostly respected. But, basis of stochastic process – destruction of classical poematic form, submitting the phrasal expression to unexpected cuts and leaning on the technique of “verbal collage” – are kept in stochastic poems from later Todorovic’s creative stage as well. In this collection it is apparent that the poem strives to be structured as an entirety, leading to stricter “disciplining” of syntactic and thematic plan of poetic expression. A new experience of stochastic poem in this book is contributed by introduction of punctuation into the poetic text, as opposed to orthographically unordered expression in the earlier phase.

Changes in stochastic process may be followed especially in the cycle of poems *Stalin Eats Strawberry* (Staljin jede Jagodu) from this collection, firstly in more highlighted personalization of poetic expression. The poem basically presents a dialogue between poetic subject and world in time. Poems from this stage, more than those from the previous one, carry a note of pronounced poetic engagement.

In aesthetic plain in poems of this cycle, along with neologisms, extremely productive is the process of archaizing poetic language (we point out archaic words – gajnjača (sort of agricultural land), gorobilje (type of soil), kalužina (mud), kopitnjak (wild ginger), položajnik (the first person who enters home on Christmas in Orthodox religion), crljen (red) and so on), introduced by Todorovic as one rarely spoken language up to that moment. Sphere of significance in Todorovic’s poem is significantly broadened since parallel use of neologisms and archaisms is accomplished as a kind of intertwined historical and futuristic dimension of reality.

This method is also used in writing poems where Todorovic takes excursions – for signalist poetry completely atypical – to the national past. Hence the stochastic expressions featuring symbols from national and world mythology – from limping wolf to Gilgamesh. In these poems Todorovic is the closest to symbolic repertoire of traditional poetry, but in stochastic method it gets a new, modernized semantic view. Todorovic shall fit the mythological concepts into the discourse used, in compliance with signalist poetics of denial, for questioning sense and power of poetic expression. It is obvious on the example of the poem *Everything is Opaque* (Sve je neprozirno) which is dominantly labeled with intellectual bitterness and negation: cessation of dreams, transcendentality of things, opaqueness and silence (Todorovic, 1991: 17). It seems to bring the news on apocalypse – deadly rain and fantastic, devastating flora and fauna, which the author dresses in extraordinarily hintfull neologisms – bezlisnice (leafless) and kukcožderi (insectivore). Carrying pathetic tone and pessimistic semantics, these poems stand on the opposite side of the dominant line of Todorovic’s literary opus labeled with optimistic and lunatic sign.

BORDERS OF APPARENT NON-SYSTEMATICITY

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Stochastic method is visible in poetry of other neo avant-garde authors, especially Ljubisa Jocić. Accentuated presence of stochastic and aleatory elements is notable in Jocić's poem *Discussion on Taste (Rasp-rava o ukusu)* (Jocić, 1976: 47), but also in several poems in his crucial signalist collection *Moonlight in Carton (Mesečina u tetrapaku)*. Stochastic elements, for instance, are present in facture of the poem *Collage of TV Information (Kolaž tv informacija)* (Jocić, 1975: 82), which, as already suggested by the title, is characterized by collage form, associative principle of expression structuring and sudden syntactic cuts. Similar method is applied in the poem *Ironic Spring (Ironično proleće)* (Ibidem: 56), in the sense of witty and derisive, being the exact opposite of what is stated in certain verses. The poem as a whole implies that the author, impassioned by the intensity of spring awakening, himself seeks lyrical vision of continuous renewal, telling more than he thinks using slightly twisted verses. This impression is contributed by mentioning poplar, the symbol personifying power of nature and duality of being; Jocić advanced from usual concept of poplar and love symbolic, and from facts that in folk poetry there is a bed for the newlyweds under the poplar, and ended with relation to pain and sacrifice, since poplar is a gravely tree in traditional symbolology, a sign of regressive forces: "blind shepherd of poplar symbols of pain and spring/ prone swaths of roofs stiff in sooty icons/ sobbing times of coupling stares at black copper of lightning in clusters/ of fury in braids of poison and flesh do not hide as delusion/ tittery spring on petrol station..." ("slepi pastir jablana simbole i nicanja/ prostrti otkosi krovova ukipljenih u čađave ikone/ grcavo vreme parenja bulji u crni bakar munja u bokore/ besa u spletove otrova i mesa ne krij se kao obmana/ proleće kikutavo na benzinskoj pumpi...")

In Jocić's poem it is not about calendar change of seasons but rather about short spring of our lifetime, elaborated as well by Njegos in *The Ray of the Microcosm (Luča mikrokozma)*, awakening, renewal and flourishing of inexhaustible energy of the language. Although this signalist tittery spring is registered in unrustic ambiance, associative link with shrilling titter from Rastko Petrović's early verses is recognizable,⁶ even with Branko Radicević's premature sorrows – resuscitating joy – in the very crack of dawn of our lyrics, when everything was young, new and playful.⁷ Each of these poets invokes everlasting force of giving birth, growing and flourish-

⁶ *Mermaids tittered screaming beyond us (Sirene su se zakikotale piskavo izvan nas)* – so begins Petrović's poem *Yesterday and Today (Juče i danas)* from the cycle of so called students' poems, which were drawn attention to by Djordje J. Janić with selection and comments in *Contemporary (Savremenik)*, 1-2, 1980. Along with other poems from the earlier period, that were not included in previous selections of Rastko's poetry, this work is in prospect edited by Nikola Grdinic (Petrović, 1997: 26).

⁷ In prologue to *Trusses (Rukoveti)* by B. Radicević (1971: 21) Milan Dedinac writes inspired about "loud and clear, bold and smiling" echoes of Branko's lyrics in Rastko Petrović's verses: "it seemed as if Branko's poem itself, after so many decades, came to life again, seen the light of day once again... It looked now and again as if both poets recited Rastko's verses as one".

ing, that spirit inducing hot gush of young sun into notions and things, the sun everything bows to and greets with intergrowth and seed burst⁸; that is the seed defending and feeding life.

The subtext distinguishes dynamic rhythm of life implied, with hints of development cycle; seems that it predominantly goes for human beings and cosmic happenings in nature, thus to a certain point for social-historical, artistic and cultural-civilizational processes and tendencies as well which cannot be foreseen like movement and happening in astral spheres. In Jocić's poetry about spring there is an idea of myth about eternal return and continuous renewal.

Amongst younger authors dealing with stochastic poetry and its aleatoric variety it is easy to discern Zvonko Saric and Ilija Bakic. Creative invention especially characterizes Saric's most recent collection *Frock-coat Until Dawn (Šinjel do svanuća)*, said to be "accomplished in utmost tradition of aleatoric poetry of signalism".⁹ His poetry moves the borders in perception and experience of the world, saturated with all kinds of games and enriched with visual details. In mistuned playfulness Saric begins the adventure in form of prosaic epilogue, marked with "minus" sign and continues with prologue marked with "plus". In the epilogue author uses conferential vocabulary in addressing poets, pointing out that administration sees "active force" in them; afterwards in ironic spirit indicates that the conference "represents complete renewal of rich tradition". Further highlighting the role of conference associatively directs to Mayakovski's verses about conference members. By means of colloquial language, mentioning even payments in cash, members and paragraphs, and even vast administration of literal production, from time to time verses screen with ironic-sarcastic question:

*Poetry,
Are you my burden
Or are you burdened
With me?
(Poezijo,
Jesi li ti breme moje
Ili si ti
Bremenita
Mnome?) (Saric, 2001: 5).*

Playing with the word burden and its derivative burdened, the poet gives them figurative meaning that imply fertility, and at the same time plenitude, crowdedness, overload, also exuberance, great force and tension. That is how this poetic expression gains deeper poetic sense, sporadically ascending to philosophy.

⁸ With early Rastko's, but also Branko's verses, Dragomir Brajković's poem *Spring in Teheran (Proleće u Teheranu)* is invoked, dedicated to R. Petrović (1972). Insignia of permanent in Brajković's work utters invoking eastern springs, new leafing and bursting of energy.

⁹ From Mirosljub Todorović's review published in Saric's book *Frock-coat Until Dawn (Šinjel do svanuća)* (2001).

Choosing predominantly short verse, Saric additionally “powders” poetic text reducing it to elementary syntactic particles acting as a kind of cascades forming poetic expression. In the poem *Binder (Vezivo)* (Ibidem: 48). Saric attempts to link the unlinkable. After the ghosts of homeland, ambushing him while fishing, he mentions a dove’s leg, completely

*Besieged with delicacy
Of glaze
Covering epilated shin
(Opijen finoćom
glazure
depilirane cevanice)*

From cited verses appears confused image of chaotic sites of urban ambience, irradiated by layered symbolic and cacophony that plunges into hearing. However, there is no “pure” chaos nor there is complete harmony, but only “reality of Chaos-towards-Harmony and Harmony-towards-Chaos” (R. Konstantinovic). Rich associativity reveals diversity of the world and its inner controversy. “Behind one symbol the whole specter of experimental codes is implied, that boils with unimaginable semantic abundance, revealing many depths and paradoxes of life” (Djurovic, 2001).

Through Saric’s poetry certain balladic tone is wriggled along with skillful intertwining of lyrical, epically narrated and dramatic elements, united by confessing tone. Critic Zarko Djurovic in the review of Saric’s book *Frock-coat Until Dawn (Šinjel do svanuća)* especially points to the poem *Birthday (Rodjendan)*, where he sees one of the main factors in “cheating fear”. Pieces fitting into kaleidoscope of life in the city, are indeed shown with poetic skill, simultaneously a kind of psycho-labyrinth and vegetative exuberance. From city dynamics, where R. Konstantinovic – prompted by Vinaver – sees “separating affinity”, inevitably emerges “guarantee of non-movement and loneliness in it” (Konstantinovic, 1983: 318). Saric’s work is dominated by the subject of modern megalopolis, that is, simultaneously the subject of omnipotence of rationality and irrationality, thus the subject of modern scholastics. For that reason the question imposes how to defend the internal peace in that all-embracing lostness “amidst invasion of commercials, ideas, money, instincts, and television entertainment” (Z. Djurovic). Saric seems to lack intention to deal with internal collisions and disagreements, poetically naming them in the webbing of most different images, sounds, associations and cultural needs.

The poet refers to audio structuring of verses, tempo, soprano and solo, exclaiming:

*Spill
Letters on the table
30 treats
For the superstar
Of literary gathering*

*With others
(prospite se
slova na trpezu,
30 đakonija
za superstara
književnih susreta
sa drugima)* (Saric, 2001: 47).

Letters here as well are symbol of the secret in being and seem to be in immediate relation with divine word and its infinite diversity. Those letters on the table have hedonistic sign of inconceivable desserts deriving from countless and almost unimaginable combinations of thirty graphemes of alphabet.

Saric's poem reflects remarkable linguistic variety, "since the neuralgia of the world calls for the neuralgia of the language"; along with standard discourse he uses slang, word play, expressive and perplexing expressions, original coinages, and in some poems anagram methods. After deconstructing standard language system, a delicate process is conceived, constituting queues of fresh linguistic information. The poet severely attacks the speech used only as a manipulative model and simultaneously implies big potentials of liberated language, more appropriate to the new planetary civilization.

For Ilija Bakic's explicit poetics very important is the reference to M. Todorovic's poetic creativity where he communicates his attitude towards the basics of signalist poetics (Bakic, 2001). Emphasizing the avant-garde personality of this author Bakic mentions signalist "worldidea" open to jugular veins of new times and critically determines himself against traditionalism he sees as "copying forefathers". He perceives the original power of signalism to jump over the close millennium stair and turn its entire being to the future. Bakic's autopoietic opinions are in conspiracy with predominant views of majority of signalist movement members; here also we find excessive lack of critical reference towards these neo avant-garde strives, and especially towards great ambition to overestimate the entirety of artistic and literary inheritance. For younger generations of signalist movement members (so called third wave) it is fairly understandable, for circumstantial difficulties to work out the distance in the direction of dynamic artistic orientation that is alive still.

It is obvious that Bakic, unlike other younger signalists, has diversified conscience of genre aspects in signalist production, starting from early manifest expressions to their later full conformation. In reference to the selection from Todorovic's poetry *Prescription for Liver Inflammation (Recept za zapaljenje jetre)* (1999) Bakic show the sense of comprehensive connection between cultural-civilizational tendencies of the new epoch and achievements of material-informatics, consumer, "global(ist)-village, spiritual culture", that is according to him stereophonic, quadraphonic, cacophonic and surround-phonetic. After having an insight to theoretic considerations of Negrisorac, Kornhauser, Zivkovic and others, he himself

stresses the suppression of lyrical subject, testifying with his applied poetics. In his poetry, as in Todorovic and Jovic's works, unfermented everyday language, commercials, press, information, TV and radio jingles are in function of shaping poetic images.

In the book of poems *Root of the Key, Equinox Obverse* (*Koren ključa, naličje ravnodnevice*), Bakic applies pure stochastic method, leaning predominantly on thick associative weft rather than word play: "(...) voices rust/ edges crumbled/ by grains of darkness/ diving into heath waves/ clash hauls of shivering / skin/ wormholes advance/ hallways multiply/ entangle/ holes in new schedule/ build/ eye waters/ different illusion..." (glasovi rdaju/ ivice krune/ zrna mraka/ rone u talase toplote/ sudaraju se jata uzdrhtalih/ koža/ crvotočina napreduje/ množe hodnici/ zapliću/ šupljine u novom rasporedu/ grade/ vode očne/ drugačiju opsenu...) (Bakic, 1999: 8).

In cited verses dominant is coincidence in linking semantic sets, offering in subtext layers of symbolic and rich associativeness. Variables of coincidence in these verses neutralize rational elements and imply new relations between alienation experience, soul labyrinths and illusionism. Unusual spontaneous relations are established between phenomena, concrete material world and logical categories which, owing to stochastic method application, are linked in certain meaningful entirety, however loose.

It is interesting that Bakic introduces to this mode of stochastic poem the practice of quotations, establishing closer relationship with postmodern experience. He skillfully uses and manipulates with existing and imaginary fragments, that imperceptibly fit into the being of his poems, widening the playground to unlimited territory of other authors' texts. This poet is prone to concealed quoting because in poetic tissue borrowed observations are not different from the author's; moreover the position of "accidental finder" or editor is skillfully embedded into the author's discourse.

Aesthetic experience is achieved in previous "prohibition of absolute apoeticity" (Redjep); in the webbing of patternized phrases ripped out from the context, in frontal collisions of notions and meanings, arises "imaginative vertical of the new meaning and sense".

Wide variety of stochastic methods and participation of accident in poetic creativity of key representatives of signalism shows that stochastic poetry is one of representative categories of neo avant-garde expression. This creativity is especially significant because its radiation reaches other verbal poetic categories (phenomenological, computing, slang, even scientologist poetry). Liberating poetic limitation of logical thinking and requirements of standard discourse, especially in the domain of syntax, signalists completely demolish linguistic and logical shell put before the authors by traditional poetry. Although in some aspects it implies Dadaist and surrealist experiment of automatic writing, stochastic poetry does not repeat the experience of these movements, since it bases on different premises. While surrealism finds its creative method on psychical automatism and metaphoric spontaneity, stochastic creation leans on mathematical logic and principle of associativeness in the method of introducing accident to the poetic play. According to the definition of one signalist author, it is about "apparent (non-) systematization" that leads to the "boundaries of primordially inarticulate".

Results of stochastic experiment brought destruction of basic principles of traditional poetry both in linguistic and in semantic plain, by liberating new spheres of verbal communication and illuminating the dark, puzzling blade of the language. The time behind us showed that this revolution had epochal importance and that innovative energy in stochastic poem – liberated by play, surprise, accidental bonding and the same reading of the outcome expressions – sloped into traditional poetry that in the meantime accepted many of linguistic and structural features of signalist stochastic method.

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Milivoje Pavlović

UVOĐENJE AKCIDENTA U SFERU ESTETIKE (OSVRT NA STOHAŠTIČKU POEZIJU MIROLJUBA TODOROVIĆA)

Rezime

Ovaj rad bavi se uvođenjem slučaja u polje estetskog na prime-rima stohastičke poezije – jedne od brojnih vrsta verbalnog stvaralaštva u okviru srpskog neoavangardnog pokreta signalizam, čiji je rodonačelnik Miroljub Todorović. U stohastičkoj poeziji na delu su nepredvidljivost, slučaj, neodredljivost i kreativna improvizacija, koji se događaju izvan zakonitosti i uobičajenih poetičkih normi, leksičkih i gramatičkih pravila. Umesto kategorija reda i smisla, koje karakterišu standardno pesničko stvaralaštvo, u stohastičkoj poeziji se u prostor duhovnosti uvode slučajni leksički spregovi kao rezultat nepredvidivog sučeljavanja i uzajamnog dejstva niza bitnih i nebitnih okolnosti. Novim vezama i odnosima pesničkih elemenata menjaju se specifična pojmovna i jezičko – simbolička svojstva, ali se ne menja ontološki karakter; u procesu umetničke igrivosti započinje novi niz neočekivanih duhovno – sazajnih relacija. Zasnivanjem pesničkog teksta na igri slučaja pesnik traga za dubljom jezičkom logikom i „višim“ redom u svetu i njegovim skrivenim uslovnostima. Rezultati stohastičkog eksperimenta M.Todorovića i grupe okupljene oko njega doveli su do destrukcije osnovnih zakonitosti tradicionalnog pevanja kako u lingvističkoj tako i u semantičkoj ravni, oslobađanjem novih polja verbalne komunikacije i osvetljavanjem tamne, zaumne oštrice jezika.

Ključne reči: Miroljub Todorović, stohastička poezija, signalizam.