

Jurij Murašov, Davor Beganović, Andrea Lešić (eds.)

CULTURES OF ECONOMY

IN SOUTH-EASTERN EUROPE

Spotlights and Perspectives



[transcript] Culture & Theory

From:

Jurij Murasov, Davor Beganovic, Andrea Lesic (eds.)
Cultures of Economy in South-Eastern Europe
Spotlights and Perspectives

January 2020, 270 p., pb., 16 b&w-ill.

39,99 € (DE), 978-3-8376-5026-6

E-Book:

PDF: 39,99 € (DE), ISBN 978-3-8394-5026-0

The ubiquitous »cultural turn« of the 1990s did not spare the thinkers of economics – however, at the same time, economic topics have gained a new importance in cultural studies. This volume focuses on cultures of economy in regions of former Yugoslavia as part of South-Eastern Europe, supported by theoretical perspectives. It examines narratives and poetics of economy in literature, film, and art, as well as in public discourse. The contributors spotlight different historical periods: the late 19th and the early 20th centuries, Socialist Yugoslavia and the transitional and neoliberal period since the 1990s.

Jurij Murasov, born in 1952, is a professor for Slavic literatures and literary theory at Universität Konstanz. He has been Principal investigator in the Cluster of Excellence »Cultural Foundations of Integration« 2007-2019. He has published articles and books about literature, media, and culture in Eastern and Southeastern Europe and Central Asia.

Davor Beganovic, born in 1959, is a lecturer for Bosnian, Croatian, and Serbian languages and literatures at Eberhard Karls Universität Tübingen. He has published books and articles about South Slavic literatures and cultures, narratology, theory of literature, and memory.

Andrea Lesic, born in 1972, is an associate professor of comparative literature and literary theory at the Philosophy Faculty, University of Sarajevo. She has published on literary theory, memory studies, South Slavic literatures, and popular genres.

For further information:

www.transcript-verlag.de/en/978-3-8376-5026-6

Contents

Cultures of Economy

Theoretical Perspectives

Jurij Murašov, Davor Beganović, Andrea Lešić 7

An Economic Survey of the Kingdom of Yugoslavia

Jelena Rafailović 35

Imagining the *zadruga*

Zadruga as a Political Inspiration to the Left and the Right in Serbia, 1870-1945

Dubravka Stojanović 57

What Were the Outcomes of the Self-Managed Economy in Socialist Yugoslavia?

Aleksandar Jakir, Anita Lunić 79

Work as a Cure

Reana Senjković 97

Economy and the Cult of Relics

The Miracle-Working Icon of the Virgin and Financing the Patriarchate of Peć Monastery

Ivana Ženarju Rajović 111

Artists and Merchants

Art "Patronage" in Carniola at the Beginning of the Twentieth Century

Renata Komić Marn 123

Architecture and its Value(s)

The National and University Library in Ljubljana

Tina Potočnik 135

Fortunes and Misfortunes of Usury

Andrić's *Woman of Sarajevo*

against Balzac's *Eugenia Grandet*

Ivana Perica 143

The Socialist Robber-Baron as a Superfluous Man

Derviš Sušić's Novel *I, Danilo*

Andrea Lešić 169

Narration as Misunderstanding

The Economy in Borislav Pekić's

The Pilgrimage of Arsenije Njegovan

Davor Beganović 193

The End of the Socialist (An-)Economy, Money, and the Beginning of Literary Narration

On Miljenko Jergović's *Buick Rivera* (2002)

Jurij Murašov 207

Beyond Economy

Social Misery and Masochism in Post-Communist

Serbian Society (Nikola Ležaić's Film *Tilva Roš*)

Tanja Zimmermann 229

Economy on Stage

Theatrodicy and Revolution

Miranda Jakiša 247

Contributors 265

Cultures of Economy

Theoretical Perspectives

Jurij Murašov, Davor Beganović, Andrea Lešić

1. Introduction

The discussion on “culture” and “economy” is a result of an essential theoretical shift observable since the mid-90s, when one economic crisis began to follow another – namely the crises in connection with the transition process in Eastern Europe and the various and permanent Euro crises, not to mention the cyclical global financial crises. This theoretical shift towards “culture” in academia as well as in the public and political discourses is a reaction to neoliberal economic theories, which on the one hand proclaim the convergence of “capitalism and freedom”, as Milton Friedman did in 1962 in his book of the same title, and on the other hand operate on the basis of concepts of rational choice and mathematics. This neoliberal concept has proven to be inadequate for an understanding of the historical contingency of real economic processes.

The irony of this “cultural turn” in economic discourses is that the very ideas that during the 19th and 20th centuries served as a theoretical basis for socialist or other anti-capitalist economies and seemed to be disqualified by the collapse of the communist systems in Eastern Europe are now celebrating a remarkable renaissance. This renaissance is obvious in various alternative and critical milieus, such as the *Occupy* movement, in which the anthropologist David Graeber features as one of the leading figures. In his books *Towards an Anthropological Theory of Value. The False Coin of Our Own Dreams* (2001) or *Debt – the First 5000 Years* (2012), Graeber presents a – more or less – explicit rereading of Marx and Engels, Marcel Mauss, Ernst Bloch and Bourdieu led by the intention to develop a new ethics-based economy. We find the same intention in Tomáš Sedláček’s *Economics of Good and Evil. The Quest for Economic Meaning from Gilgamesh to Wall Street* (2011). Within a horizon of 4,000 years of cultural history, Sedláček shows that ethics, the question of good and evil, always remains an integral part of every economic discourse. Economy and ethics cannot be separated. His historical analysis ends in a critique of the recent attempts by advanced finance theories to represent economy exclusively via mathematical models.

This renaissance of socially, politically or ethically grounded economic theories is also taking place even in the inner circles of liberalism and mathematically based theories. One famous example here might be Joseph Stiglitz, the former Chief Economist of the World Bank (1997-2000) and one of the recipients of the Nobel Memorial Prize for Economic Sciences in 2001. Along with many articles and books on the global, American, Asian and European economies, the financial market and economic policy, Stiglitz wrote *Whither Socialism* (1996), one of the most important and instructive books about the socialist economy, showing that its failure was caused by the ignorance of information asymmetries in market procedures. The surprising point in this book is that Stiglitz argues that the same ignorance can be found in neoliberal visions of the free market. In the book *The Prize of Inequality: How Today's Divided Society Endangers Our Future* (2012), Stiglitz continues his critical analysis of deregulated markets, their liberalistic ideology, and the dominant role of the financial lobbies in American and European politics. A remarkable attempt to bring together history on the one hand and econometrics and statistics on the other is Thomas Piketty's book *Le capital au XXI^e siècle* (2013). Not only its title, but also Piketty's guiding thesis obviously refers to Marx's tremendous opus *Capital. Critique of Political Economy (Das Kapital. Kritik der politischen Ökonomie, 1867, 1885, 1894)*. Analyzing an incredible wealth of statistical and economic data from Western capitalistic countries (mainly from France, Great Britain, Germany, USA) in a broad time frame from the late 19th century until the first decade of the 21st, Piketty shows how the capitalistic free market economy produces and increases inequalities on different levels of society and how the decades of the 1950s, 60s and 70s, when the neoliberal slogans about the interrelationship between the free market and social equalization and justice were proclaimed, must be understood as a brief exceptional period caused by the post-Second World War conditions. Piketty argues that beyond this period, the capitalist free market economy again started to work as an inequality-producing machine; the increasing inequalities in Western capitalistic economies after 2000 tend once again towards a situation resembling that of the last two decades of the 19th century.

This extension of the economic discourse by political, social, anthropological and historical perspectives is echoed by a new increasing interest in economics articulated by hermeneutic disciplines such as philosophy, sociology, history, and literature, art, film and media studies.¹

1 See in particular examples from film studies, such as Lizardo, Omar (2007) *Fight club*, or the cultural contradictions of late capitalism. In: *Journal for Cultural Research* 11(3): 221-243; Lynn, Ta. M. (2006) 'Hurt so good'. *Fight club*, masculine violence, and the crisis of capitalism. In: *The Journal of American Culture* 29(3): 265-277; Hamenstädt, Ulrich (2014) *Theorien der Politischen Ökonomie im Film*. Wiesbaden; for examples of economics in art, see: Sholette, Gregory/Charnley, Kim (2017) *Delirium and Resistance: Activist Art and the Crisis of Capitalism*. London; or the exhibition catalogue: Harten, Jürgen (2000) *Das fünfte Element – Geld oder Kunst. Ein fabelhaftes Lexikon zu einer verloren-*

Our book examines this hermeneutic engagement with economics in the Southeastern European region of the former Yugoslavia, which deserves special attention as a multilayered and to this day conflictual cultural space.² The complexity of this cultural space can be measured in three dimensions – the political, the religious and the linguistic.

Politically, for centuries the regions of the former Yugoslavia were hotly contested objects of various hegemonic ambitions – for the Habsburg Monarchy, Venice, Hungary, and the Ottoman Empire, until 1918, when the Kingdom of Serbs, Croats and Slovenes was established. With its foundation as the Socialist People's Republic in 1943, and in 1945, Yugoslavia entered the sphere of the political and ideological interests of the Soviet Union for several years, before stepping out on its own path to socialism in 1948, the so-called *third* way between the Western and Eastern political blocs. It followed this path until 1991, when the Federal Republic broke up into different tiny political entities. Since then, these political entities, Slovenia, Croatia, Serbia, Montenegro, Macedonia, Bosnia and Herzegovina, and Kosovo, have tried to renew their various historical relations to the spheres of the Austrian, Slavic-Russian or Islamic-Turkish cultures, but at the same time have gravitated with different intensity and success towards the European Union and/or NATO.

This turbulent political history comes along with and is embedded in different religious traditions, which have shaped the cultural space of the former Yugoslav regions to this day. Catholic Christians dominate today's Croatia and Slovenia, although the latter also had contact with the Reformation and Protestant movements of the 16th century, which essentially brought about the early codification of Slovenian language as a written language. There are Orthodox Christians in Serbia, Montenegro and also in Macedonia, where the remaining third of the population are Muslims, who also form the majority in Kosovo. Islam is also the leading religion (about 40%) in today's Bosnia and Herzegovina, besides Orthodox and Catholic Christians and around 1,000 Jews. This small remaining population of Jews, mostly Spanish Sephardi who migrated to Bosnia in the late 15th century and who

nen Enzyklopädie. Cologne; Koziol, Monika/Piekarska, Delfina/Potocka, Maria (eds., 2013) *Ekonomia w sztuce. Economics in Art. Exhibition catalogue. Museum of Contemporary Art Krakow (MOCAK)*. Krakow; Widemann, Reinold (2018) *Artists' Conceptions of Money: Money Art and Artificial Money*. Soesterberg; in literary studies, see e.g.: Marsh, Nicky (2007) *Money, Speculation and Finance in Contemporary British Fiction*. London, et al.; Vogl, Joseph (2010) *Das Gespenst des Kapitals*. Zurich.

2 An instructive overview of Yugoslavia as a conflictual cultural space is given by Zimmermann, Tanja (2014) *Der Balkan zwischen Ost und West. Mediale Bilder und kulturpolitische Prägungen*. Cologne, Weimar, Vienna. Also, in Samuel Phillips Huntington's famous and controversially discussed book *The Clash of Civilizations and the Remaking of World Order* (1996, New York), the regions of Yugoslavia are identified as one of the main zones lying on the global inter-civilizational conflict line.

at the beginning of WWI still represented 10% of the inhabitants of Sarajevo, has declined. Many of them were victims of the Holocaust, initiated by the Independent State of Croatia, which existed between 1941 and 1945, and supported by the Germans.

In the cultural space of the former Yugoslavia we find three grammatically distinct languages, Slovenian, Serbo-Croat³ and Macedonian; the last is a Bulgarian dialect, which was standardized in the 1930s and 40s and established as the official language in the region of Yugoslav Macedonia. What makes the linguistic situation so complex is the pragmatic use of the three languages and their varieties for creating political, nationalistic, ethnic and religious identities. Primarily due to religious traditions, the three grammatically distinct languages are represented using different script systems: Slovenian and Croat in the Latin alphabet and Serbian and Macedonian in Cyrillic; besides Cyrillic and Latin, *Arebica*, a variant of the Perso-Arabic script, was also used in Bosnia and Herzegovina until the 19th century.⁴ At the same time, the common rate of illiteracy and the relevance of an oral tradition especially in the southern region were high by comparison with western parts of Europe. Both during and after the breakup of the Socialist Federal Republic of Yugoslavia, language questions played a crucial role in the national self-identification of the newly founded political entities, especially in Croatia and in Bosnia and Herzegovina, where the institutionalization of (new) official languages, Croatian and Bosnian, marks differences to the former Serbo-Croat by normalizing regional idiomatic and lexical characteristics or by etymological archaisation.

In examining this political-religious-linguistic complexity, our project on the “culture of economy” has a twofold task. The first is to spotlight in a series of articles from different hermeneutic disciplines how culture and economy interacted in the regions of Yugoslavia from the late 19th century to the post-socialist period and the first decade of the 2000s. At the same time, systematic positions are also taken by each of the articles, showing how “cultures of economy” can be fruitfully studied from the perspectives of economic and social history and literature, art and film studies. For this second task, which seeks to place the empirical analyses in a conceptual framework, the following explanation will outline the basic fields of mutual interdependence of culture and economics and try to open up some theoretical perspectives: *economy and ethics*, *money and language* (1), *calculating political, national and ideological identities* (2), *religion and economy* (3) and *aesthetics and money*

3 The Serbo-Croat language of the Yugoslav era is now taught in international university education as Bosnian-Croat-Serbian. The new denomination takes into account the regional varieties and the political fact of three different state languages.

4 In post-Yugoslav Bosnia, a new interest in *Arebica* can be observed. See e.g. the comic book *Hadži Šefko i hadži Mefko* (2005) by the authors Amir Al-Zubi and Meliha Čičak-Al-Zubi. In 2013 Aldin Mustafić's book *Epohe fonetske misli kod Arapa i arebica* (*The Age of Phonetic Thought of Arabs and Arebica*) was published in Belgrade.

(4). Against this theoretical background, a final section will sum up the *topics and theses* (5) of the articles presented in the book.

2. Economy and ethics, money and language (Aristotle, Hamann, de Saussure)

In considering different attempts in various disciplines to reshape economic theory beyond algorithm-based econometry, one can find two main perspectives dealing with “cultures of economy”. The first addresses ethical, the second semiotic and media issues.

The ethical issue is crucial for Aristotle’s economic concept.⁵ He distinguishes between two different forms of purchase or acquisition (*ktetike*). One form is a “natural part of economy (*oekonomia*)”; the purpose (*telos*) of this form of acquisition is dominated by the needs of the household and – in a wider horizon – by the political community (*koinonia*). The ethos of the community regulates the method (*techne*) of acquisition. The achieved wealth (*ploutos*) is limited by the welfare of the household and the political community. But there is also another form of purchase, which is called – as Aristotle claims – the art of gaining money (*chrematistike*). This monetary space is limitless, because it initiates a process of abstraction transforming all concrete utility items in formal and quantified values of exchange. A shoe – in the famous example Aristotle gives – is no longer a shoe, but now has a diabolic double function as an object of utility on the one hand and as an item indicating a value relation on the other. This monetary space is also infinite concerning the status of wealth (*ploutos*). The loss of its *telos* defined by the needs and the welfare of the household’s or political community’s monetary wealth causes infinite procedures of quantification and money trading based on the interest rate (*tokos*). Aristotle rejects this form of money-oriented purchase as unnatural – as an unnatural birth of money out of money. The point of Aristotle’s argumentation is that economy is dominated by two operating modes which exclude but at the same time presuppose each other: the semiotic procedure of monetary abstraction and quantification, and the organization of the material reproduction of the human community as an ethical, social and political entity.

The second perspective, which is relevant for the cultural turn in economic theories, focuses on money as a medium of the economy and its semiotics. In this perspective, money is correlated with language. Referring to a long tradition reaching

5 For economy and ethics in Greek Antiquity and in Aristotle’s philosophy, see Sedláček, Tomáš (2011) *Economics of Good and Evil. The Quest for Economic Meaning from Gilgamesh to Wall Street*. Oxford; Vogl, Joseph (2010) *Das Gespenst des Kapitals*. Zurich: 116-125.

back to Plato, the German Johann Georg Hamann pointed out this semiotic inter-relationship between language and money in the late 18th century with a clarity that remains striking even today:

Money and language are two things whose investigation is as deep and abstract as their use is common. Both are more closely related than one would expect. The theory of the one explains the theory of the other.⁶

Obviously, Hamann has in mind neither the language as such, nor the only spoken language idiom, but the written language as a system of signs. Taking into account the medial and semiotic considerations proposed by Marshall McLuhan, Niklas Luhmann and Jacques Derrida,⁷ Hamann's idea about money and language can be concretized in four moments of convergence: a) in contrast to oral communication and trade as primary exchange of goods, money and the written word operate as abstract, arbitrary and material signs; their function of signifying immaterial semantic and economic values can only be produced within a defined closed language or monetary system. Relating the absent to the present, money and the written word as symbolic signs make social communication observable and produce new options of decision and praxis. That means that the written word, being no longer under the social control of an oral situation, proves to be a powerful instrument for cultural self-observation and also for fictional projections of the self. In precisely in the same way, money motivates and stimulates processes of material production, consumption and speculation. b) Money and writing, especially typography, increase procedures of generalization. The book supports the process of establishing common linguistic standards as well as common topics and notions. When books circulate as commodities, this generalization is essentially connected to the criteria of information value and originality. Similarly, "money makes the world go round", when in monetary space human skills, material goods, social functions and communication become commensurable and exchangeable. Both typography and writing and money generalize their effects in time and space. Yet

6 "Das Geld und die Sprache sind zweien Gegenstände, deren Untersuchung so tiefsinnig und abstrakt, als ihr Gebrauch allgemein ist. Beyde stehen in einer näheren Verwandtschaft, als man muthmassen sollte. Die Theorie des einen erklärt die Theorie des anderen." Hamann, Johann Georg (1762, 1967) *Schriften zur Sprache. Einleitung und Anmerkungen von Josef Simon*. Frankfurt a. M.: 97. On the "close relationship" between money and language from the perspective of a history of semiotics, see: Rotman, Brian (1987) *Signifying Nothing. The Semiotics of Zero*. Stanford; also Shell, Marc (1978) *The Economy of Literature*. Baltimore.

7 McLuhan, Marshall (1964) *Understanding Media. The Extensions of Man*. New York, Toronto, London: 131-144 ("The Money: The Poor Man's Credit Card"); on money as a medium of a "symbolically generalizing communication", see Luhmann, Niklas (1997) *Die Gesellschaft der Gesellschaft*. Frankfurt a. M.: 347-351; see also Derrida's critiques of Marcel Mauss Essay *Le don* (1925) from the standpoint of semiotics: Derrida, Jacques (1992) *Given Time: I. Counterfeit Money*. Chicago, London.

time and space themselves now also appear calculable within rational procedures. c) Money and writing function as media of differentiation, forcing and perpetuating distinctions. They both distinguish between the human and the artificial, the spiritual and the material, past and present, present and future, between mental procedure and action, fiction and reality, between to have and to have not. Last but not least, they both function as media separating the common and the individual. d) This dimension of individualization is one of the leitmotifs in Georg Simmel's *Philosophy of Money*. Both money and writing function as media preconditions for all experiences and all concepts of individualization. While writing and typography transform language into an instrument of analytical self-reflection, introspection and speculation, money in the same way constitutes "spheres of inner experience" ("Sphären des Innerlichen")⁸ by producing wishes and promising satisfaction and fulfillment.

This "close relationship" between language and money was complemented in most remarkable fashion by Ferdinand de Saussure's *Cours de linguistique générale* in the early 20th century. Here Saussure points out the similarity between structural, synchronic linguistics and monetary economic theory. Comparing the linguistic system (*langue*) with a system of currency, Saussure opens up a new perspective with the term "semantic value", which appears as a result of the inner functional structure of a language. Taking this seriously, one can say that literature and other aesthetic productions do not deal with linguistic meanings, but with these untranslatable "semantic values". Saussure also discovers the same diabolic double structure that Aristotle analyzed within the economic system in the space of the *polis*, inside language itself. In its communicational and performative dimension, language appears as a presupposition of the social; in this context Saussure uses the term *parole*. At the same time, language functions as a systemic entity (*langue*) working out procedures of abstraction, which – very similarly to the circulation of monetary signs – initiates a transformation of all communicational qualities in an endless process of fictionalization, especially increasing under the condition of literacy and typography, when language itself begins to circulate on the market as an economic object. In this perspective, "cultures of economy" appear as a mechanism based on the inner structure of language itself and manifesting itself in every moment when language is used. In this inner structure, opposing categories like individualization and the collective, abstraction and concretization, time and

8 Simmel, Georg (1900, 1989) *Philosophie des Geldes*. Frankfurt a. M.; on Simmel's *Philosophy of Money*, see Kintzele, Jeff/Schneider, Peter (eds., 1993) *Georg Simmels Philosophie des Geldes*. Frankfurt a. M.; on money and individualization in a historical perspective (mostly based on German literature), see: Breithaupt, Fritz (2008) *Der Ich-Effekt des Geldes. Zur Geschichte einer Legitimitätsfigur*. Frankfurt a. M.

space, quantification and quality, operate simultaneously excluding and mutually presupposing each other.

3. Calculating political, national und ideological identities

If we take into account this “close relationship” between money and language, then political, national and ideological identities prove to be results of a double calculation – both semantic and economic, linguistic and monetary.

Insofar as a monetary system cannot operate without confidence, trust and faith in a common semiotic and symbolic idea all participants in its economic procedures must share and foster, currency is able to create homogenous spaces of exchange not only of goods, but also of a common idea of value.⁹ This common idea makes money function as a (self-) representation of political spaces, institutions and protagonists; in this way, political entities secure the currency system and always profit from it at the same time. This is quite evident on coins and paper money, where numbers as quantifying signs of value have been combined with portraits, pictures, symbols, emblems, words or text ever since they were invented. The stories they tell about political spaces and identities can be traced from Greek and Roman Antiquity to the present day. Such a common currency as an expression of a homologous political space can be found in the Mongolian Empire and its paper money of the Kublai Khan era (1260-1294), whose stability and value resistance is described by Marco Polo.¹⁰ In a similar way, in the Ottoman Empire political power and integrity were affirmed by the currency *Akçe*, established under Orhan I in the 14th and remaining valid until the 17th century. In the last phase of its existence, in 1867 the Austria-Hungary Empire also decided to strengthen its political identity with the common currency of the *Gulden*. The *Rubl* dominated the Eurasian political space of the Russian Empire and even the USSR. Corresponding to this, the *Dinar* confirmed the first consolidation of Yugoslavia as a political entity under Serbian King Peter I. and even its political socialistic renewal after 1945 under Josip Broz Tito. The US Dollar, as the key global currency between 1945 and 1973, can be seen as a manifestation of political power and space. A very recent and evident example of creating political power space by currencies is the European Union proclaiming the supranational *Euro* as an integral part and a hypostasis of the idea of European political integration.

9 This “common value” is also a leading concept in Georg Simmel's *Philosophy of Money*.

10 See : Moule, Arthur Christopher/Pelliot, Paul (2011) *Marco Polo, Le devisement du monde. Le livre des merveilles*. Paris : 246-249.

In a different way, money promotes the creation of national identities.¹¹ While the integration of political identity via currency includes a contract-based idea of state entities, national identity has an essential linguistic component. As demonstrated by Marshall McLuhan and Benedict Anderson,¹² national identities (as a substance for policy-making) refer to language spaces homogenized by mass media, especially print media. Post-socialist countries in particular provide us with many examples of how the rebuilding of national(istic) identities is based on a strategic coincidence of language and currency politics: for instance, in Ukraine, where the reinvention of Ukrainian as the official state language came along with the change of currency from the Russian *Rubl* to the *Hrywnja*, alluding to a unit of value used in the Kievan Rus' in the 11th century, or in Kazakhstan, where the promotion of Kazakh as the official language coincides with the introduction of the currency *Tenge*, a Turkic word etymologically referring to “te”, meaning balance or being equal.¹³ We observe very similar forms of nation-building by coincident reforms of language and currency in the regions of post-Socialist Yugoslavia. While Serbia self-consciously remains in the Yugoslav tradition and has no reason to change its language and currency politics,¹⁴ in Slovenia the declaration of independence of 1991 was immediately followed by a confirmation of Slovenian as the only and exclusive official language (in contrast to the former two languages Serbo-Croat and Slovenian) and by the change from the Yugoslav *Dinar* to the *Tolar*. It took its name from the German silver coin *Thaler*, which circulated in Western European regions until the late 19th century. By choosing the German word *Tolar*, the national Slovenian identity is defined and communicated as a common value in contrast to the other South Slavic language cultures.¹⁵ Similarly, the national identity of Macedonia was

11 See Pointon, Marcia (1998) Money and nationalism. In: Cubitt, Geoffrey (ed.), *Imagining Nations*. Manchester: 229-254; Unwin, Tim/Hewitt, Virginia (2001) Banknotes and National Identity in Central and Eastern Europe. In: *Political Geography* 20: 1005-1028; Hymans, Jacques E. C. (2004) The Changing Color of Money: European Currency Iconography and Collective Identity. In: *European Journal of International Relations* 10/1: 5-31.

12 Benedict Anderson, (1983) *Imagined Communities: Reflection on the Origin and Spread Nationalism*. London, New York; McLuhan, Marshall (1964) *Understanding Media. The Extensions of Man*. New York, Toronto, London: 170-178 (“The Printed Word: Architect of Nationalism”).

13 It is interesting to note that the Russian noun for money *den'gi* is taken from the Mongolian *tenge*.

14 On this Serbian identification with the Dinar see: Živančević-Sekeruš, Ivana (2012) Banknote Imagery of Serbia. In: Zimmermann, Tanja (ed.), *Balkan Memories. Media Constructions of National and Transnational History*. Bielefeld: 41-48.

15 A remarkable study in this context is a monograph on the history of the Slovenian language that appeared as early as 1989, published and supported by the Slovenian Academy of Science. It attempts to argue against the Slavic origin of the Slovenians and prove they originated from the Adriatic Veneti: Bor, Matej/Šavli, Jožko/Tomažič, Ivan (1989) *Veneti. Naši davni predniki*. Ljubljana, Vienna.

confirmed both by establishing the Macedonian language as the exclusive official language and by changing to the *Denar*, which refers to the Old Roman *Denarius*. In contrast to Slovenia and Macedonia, Croatia proclaimed its national identity by returning to Slavic traditions and choosing the medieval unit of value *Kuna* as the name for the new currency. It also pursued a strict language policy which tried to mark the difference to the modern, common Yugoslav Serbo-Croat idiom by archaizing the lexical structure with old or common Slavic expressions. In a polemical turn against the political role of Serbia in the history of the 19th and 20th century, Croatia seems to insist on a (newly invented) cultural primacy in the South Slavic region through its currency and language. Significantly, Montenegro, Bosnia and Herzegovina and Kosovo did not manage to develop a consistent language policy or their own currency. They went from the Yugoslavian *Dinar* to the European *Euro*, or to the *Euro*-based *Convertible Mark* in Bosnia and Herzegovina. The degree to which currency has symbolic power to create and strengthen language-based national identities can also be seen in the recent discussions in the European Union, where national, nationalistic and populist challenges to the EU in Germany, Greece, France or Italy come along with demands to return to the former national currencies.

While political and national identities are endowed with a symbolic and semiotic relation to money, ideologies include a substantial relationship to the economic sphere. Taking into account that ideologies deal with the pragmatics of selected knowledge and have to balance between individualization and the collective,¹⁶ they can be separated into two categories which are based on different economic options. The first type of ideologies focuses on and proclaims the personal self as a protagonist to produce common welfare, consequently including the category of individual property and ownership and confirming the monetary effects of individualization and differentiation. The second type of ideology is based on the communitarian dimension as the telos of human society and the horizon for the individual. This type is related to the Aristotelian idea of the *oikos*, where the exchange of goods and services and the use of money is regulated by the ethos of the familial and social community. Looking back at the second half of the 20th century, we see both economic options not only as competing protagonists in the global economy and politics, but at the same time as powerful agencies for ideologizing entire spheres of knowledge and culture. This was more than obvious in the 1970s

16 There are many famous definitions of "ideology" and different attempts to categorize ideologies, e.g. Mannheim, Karl (1936) *Ideology and Utopia*. London; Eagleton, Terry (1991) *Ideology. An Introduction*. New York; or Hawkes, David (2003) *Ideology* (2nd ed.). London; Žižek, Slavoj (1989) *The Sublime Object of Ideology*. New York. Here, in our argumentation we refer to the Niklas Luhmann's concept of ideology based on communication theory; see: Luhmann, Niklas (1970; 1991) *Wahrheit und Ideologie. Vorschläge zur Wiederaufnahme der Diskussion*. In: Luhmann, Niklas (ed.) *Soziologische Aufklärung 1. Aufsätze zur Theorie sozialer Systeme*. Cologne, Opladen: 54-65.

and 80s in the Soviet Union, when after a short period of liberalization in the late 50s and early 60s the moral and collective key principle of the socialist planned economy was again and insistently extended as an ideological requirement to all parts of knowledge, science, education, culture, art and literature – as had happened in the 1930s under Stalin. We observe very similar processes of increasing ideologization of the whole cultural sphere in other Eastern and Southeastern socialist countries, which were part of the *Council for Mutual Economic Assistance*, dominated by the Soviet Union.¹⁷ The situation in the Socialist Federal Republic of Yugoslavia was slightly different. It shifted away from the Soviet planned economy towards the concept of a socialist market and in the early 1950s the institution of workers' self-management was introduced, leading to competition not only between different industrial enterprises, but also between the regional economies of the republics. In this way, it undermined the socialist ideology of brotherhood and unity¹⁸ and fostered national ideologies. The political breakdown and the following explosion of robbery capitalism of the 1990s made evident to what extent the Soviet and other socialist ideologies of collectivism persistently tried to suppress the individualizing effects of money. Precisely this suppressed dimension was called to mind by two of the first post-Soviet entrepreneurs, Leonid Nevzlin and Mikhail Khodorkovsky, and their programmatic book *The Man with the Rubl* (*Čelovek s rublem*) of 1992. In its critique of the Soviet collective ideology, the book proclaimed the opposite neoliberal ideology by expanding money to an existential and philosophical principle. Thus, Nevzlin's and Khodorkovsky's book corresponds with the ideological process of financialization and mathematization, not only of the economic sphere but of culture as a whole.

The cultural turn in economic theory as a reaction to the transition process in Eastern Europe in the 90s and to the financial crises of 2007 and the following years can be considered as an attempt to deconstruct neoliberalism as an ideology which not only dominates the economic sphere but also subordinates politics, education, culture, science and research under an econometric, quantifying logic and which categorizes regions, local places and public infrastructures as spaces

17 We also find an analogue mechanism politically enforced by the USA after WW II to permeate the sphere of cultural production by capitalist economics in Western Europe. One of the most remarkable attempts was the initiative of American economists to reform the European education systems. The agreement of European countries signed in Bologna in 1999, intended to unify the different national university systems through the so-called Bologna Process, appears to be a consequence of this American initiative from the 1950s.

18 On the media history of "brotherhood" in East European socialist and post-socialist countries, see: Zimmermann, Tanja (2014) *Brüderlichkeit und Bruderzwist. Mediale Inszenierungen des Aufbaus und des Niedergangs politischer Gemeinschaften in Ost- und Südosteuropa*. Göttingen.

for financial investments systematically excluding the point of view of human and social necessities.¹⁹

4. Religion and economy

In the world of the monotheistic, book-based religions, the semiotic convergence between language and money appears as a tricky but serious obstacle to achieving the essential religious task of transcendence, i.e. to overcome individual and material needs, their exchange and satisfaction and to escape from the mechanism which prevails in the economic sphere and which is driven by money signs.²⁰ Through their theological (and pragmatic) reflections, religions discover in their inner media constitution a semiotic-economic element which they had to eliminate from the point of transcendence. Book-based religions try to manage this semiotic self-purification on two levels, different religions and confessions choosing different ways. One can even presuppose that essential differences between various religions consist in the manner in which every religion solves its key semiotic questions and how religions thereby become involved in history and define their relation to the economic sphere. The first level directly concerns language, i.e. the material, graphic language signs, the second the text with its motifs and topics. Simultaneously, on every level there is the task of incorporating the (holy) text, its sense, in life, either in institutional forms, or in strategies of personal behavior.

19 These processes of financialization, economization and mathematization are analysed in Crouch, Colin (2004) *Post-Democracy*. Cambridge; and Crouch, Colin (2015) *The Knowledge Corrupters. Hidden Consequences of the Financial Takeover of Public Life*. Cambridge.

20 From an epistemological perspective, Niklas Luhmann provides a common and wide-ranging definition of religion: "Religion is immediately related to the peculiarities of the beholder. Any observation must distinguish in order to define something and demarcates an 'unmarked space' into which the final horizon of the world retreats. The transcendence which thereby accompanies all things that are ascertainable is relocated with every attempt to cross the boundary with new distinctions and denominations. It is always present as the opposite side of all ascertainable things, without ever being attainable. And precisely this unattainability 'binds' the beholder, who himself evades observation, to what he can observe. The reconnection of the undefinable with the definable is – regardless in which cultural formation – 'religio' in the broadest sense" (Niklas Luhmann, *Die Gesellschaft der Gesellschaften*, 232). This definition takes a remarkable turn of high analytical relevance from a media theory perspective and indicates the foundation of religion in writing: because only the materialization of acoustic language by graphic signs makes it possible to distinguish between sign and meaning, significant and signifié. This is the *condition sine qua non* to bring in motion the mutual mechanism of rational differentiation, on the one hand, resulting in the progression of "religio", i.e. relation to a transcendental sphere, on the other.

Like the analytical and technological dimensions of material language signs, i.e. how the written language transfers the production and exchange of meaning into the profane inner world sphere, every religion has to develop – on the first level – strategies to overcome this tendency towards profanation. We find this strategy in specific forms and rituals of oral teaching in all religions, in the comprehension and communication of religious meaning – reading and repeating aloud. This can be especially observed in Judaism and Islam, but also in Christianity, foremost in the Orthodox confession. At the same time, every religion elaborates pragmatics to overcome the materiality of written language. In Judaism this is carried out by the mystic and occult doctrine of the Kabbala, where the alphabet system and the combination of graphic signs are used to produce religious, transcendental, secret meanings. In Islam this function is taken over by calligraphy as a holy handcraft, which serves to transform the abstract, economic written signification into an aesthetic, i.e. corporal and sensitive, communion with the holy sphere. Islamic calligraphy thus discovers and makes evident the sacred meaning which is hidden behind the materiality of the graphic signs. Different strategies to overcome the materiality of the written word are used in Christian religions. On the one hand, a philosophical attitude towards the written form of the holy texts and the theory of the four meanings of scripture (*quatuor sensus scripture*) are developed here (under the influence of the Greek philosophical tradition such as in Augustine). On the other hand, in Eastern Orthodox Christianity, where the alphabetization of the Slavs directly coincided with Christianization, the written language obtains a holy status. In terms of its concept, the Church Slavonic language therefore does not allow any philological and grammatical treatment and reflection. That is the reason for the diglossic language situation in the Orthodox region, where the profane everyday language remained excluded from alphabetization for a long time, in Serbia until the reform initiative of Vuk Karadžić. From the perspective of Orthodoxy, reading and writing the Church Slavonic language are liturgical procedures requiring special mental and moral preparation.

The second level concerns the question as to how economic topics and the motif of money operate in the texts of Judaism, Islam and Christianity. First of all, we see that in all religious systems – like the written language form – money signs also prove to be problematic and ambivalent. On the one hand, money destroys prospects of transcendental grace by involving men in procedures of exchange of inner world necessities. On the other hand, it is impossible to get rid of money as a medium when goods and labor circulate. All religions and confessions more or less work with the semiotic function of money as a substitute for the concrete. However, in a certain moment of historical development they all articulate a strict veto when money itself appears as an instrument of acquisition and exchange in credit trading based on interest rates – as was already discussed and rejected by Aristotle. The significant nuance in this common religious prohibition is that in

Judaism this concerns only the Jewish community, but does not prohibit money trading with non-Jewish partners. This nuance stimulates the circumstance that, beginning in the early Middle Ages, the Jews found themselves in the role of the main national and international protagonists engaged in money and credit trading and banking. In this way, a tradition was established which continued to exist even when the religious prohibition of interest rates was later resolved by government-regulated credit markets.

In a closer and more detailed perspective, Judaism, Islam and Christianity show many differences in the way their texts handle economic topics. Judaism and Islam are explicitly concerned in their dogmatic teaching with economic – or, more precisely, anti-economic – issues and articulate prescriptions on how to overcome the secular and rational economy by an inverted practice of charity and gifts. These prescriptions as religious obligations to charity operate in Judaism and Islam in a manner analyzed by the French ethnologist Marcel Mauss in his book *The Gift* (1926), where the gift economy in primary societies is described as a “total exchange” involving both material goods and the spiritual personality of their participants.

In the Jewish tradition, the gift economy results first of all from the concept of justice as *tzedakah*, a religious obligation to give charity regardless of one's economic capacity. Since the Middle Ages and Maimonides' *Laws about Giving to Poor People* (in *Mishneh Torah*, 1170–1180), where donating anonymously to unknown recipients is one of the highest forms of religious charity, the *tzedakah* has functioned as a religious institution of the gift economy within the Jewish communities on a local, regional or even international level. It fostered social and cultural cohesion as well as economic solidarity among the Jewish population, especially during the catastrophes of the 19th and 20th centuries. To this day, *tzedakah* plays a significant role to the extent that some well-known NGOs are based on Maimonides' *Laws about Giving to Poor People*.

In Islam and its dogmatic teachings, we find two institutional forms in which religion and economy interrelate via a juridically based exchange of charity inside the secular economic world: *zakāt* and *waqf*. One of the “five pillars” of Islam, i.e. one of the five basic prescriptions a Muslim has to fulfill in his life, constitutes an economic issue insofar as this *zakāt* demands the interruption and transcendence of economic activities and interests. Similar to the Jewish *tzedakah*, the *zakāt* is a juridical institution defined by religious scholars which obligates every Muslim qualified as rich to contribute alms to the poor, whom at the same time *zakāt* gives the right to receive charity. This way, the religious *zakāt* institutionalizes an exchange of gifts and charity compensating the material and social effects of the economic mechanism (*zakāt* differs significantly from Jewish *tzedakah* in this regard). The Islamic institution of *waqf* is related to *zakāt* and is also based on the gift economy. *Waqf* is a foundation which is set up by a personal and private donor, or even by the sultan, to fulfill a public purpose as stipulated by the Quran and

which has to be registered by Islamic law. The institution of *waqf* is conceptualized as a mortmain and inalienable property whose owner is assumed to be God himself, who takes care of its administration. The purposes of the *waqf* are widespread – mosques, *madrassa* schools, Sufi convention (*khanqah* or *tekije*), but also hospitals, feeding of the poor and help for the pilgrims in Mecca and Medina or infrastructure projects like mills, soil irrigation and public fountains. Even after the end of the Ottoman Empire, *waqf* under the local name of *vakuf* continued to exist in the Balkans as juridical institutions until they were closed by Socialist Yugoslavia after 1945.

In Christianity, such religiously and juridically based obligations for a gift economy do not exist. Instead, Christianity discusses the problem of economy and money in its narratives of the New Testament. The key plot here is the betrayal by Judas, who sells out Christ to the Roman soldiers for 30 silver coins. The story is told in the Gospel according to Matthew (26, 14-16; 27, 3-10), Mark (14, 10) and Luke (22, 1-6). The point in this plot is that money, on the one hand, features as the main medium to fulfill the predicted and prophesied fate of Jesus Christ. Without money, this basic episode underpinning the holy history of salvation would not have happened. *Symbolically*, money relates the sphere of human weakness, represented by Judas, with the holy history of Christ the Redeemer. On the other hand, money evidently is evil, destroying confidence and solidarity between the disciples-apostles. In the strict sense of the word, money is a *diabolic*, i.e. separating medium. This way, Judas appears as a victim of this dissecting energy of money and as a tragic antihero, as is finally confirmed by his suicide, as told by Matthew (27, 5). Thus, here and in other episodes of the New Testament money is both an indispensable medium for the holy history of salvation and rejected as a diabolic, dissecting force. This ambiguity of money is treated in different ways in different confessional traditions of Christianity. Due to the semiotic approach to the Holy, the western – Catholic and Protestant – tradition outlines the symbolic function of money. From this point of view, sin and salvation coexist. In the Eastern Orthodox tradition, which is dominated by a liturgical orientation towards the sacred text, money is understood in terms of its diabolic function dissecting the human community and cutting off the prospects of salvation.

Mainly based on Christ's passion as revealed in the New Testament, Christianity develops modes of ascetic behavior which also imply specific economic strategies and even lead to institutionalized forms of dealing with economy within the religious claim of transcendence – very much like Jewish and Islamic asceticism.²¹

21 Inspired by Buddhism and Hinduism and Greek philosophy, all main book-based religions – Judaism, Islam and Christianity – have elaborated forms of asceticism as an integrative element of performing the Holy in the world of economic interests. Disrupting the logic of economic exchange, asceticism is disposed to provoking altruistic reactions and goes along with estab-

From the very beginnings of Christianity – which reacts to political circumstances, above all the fall of the Roman Empire – the powerful movements of monastic asceticism developed an intrinsic dynamic of cohesion and organization among their protagonists, leading to institutionalization in the form of monasteries. The organization of labor and activities by ascetic rules and orders which all monks have to share enabled the monasteries to act outwardly not only as spiritual, but also as economic and even political entities. This way, a mechanism of mutual legitimization of secular immanence and religious transcendence was installed: the economic (and political) success of the monastery (and also of the Church as a whole) confirmed its spiritual, religious and ethical authority, which – *vice versa* – sanctified and authorized its profane affairs. This is the paradigmatic situation which time and again provoked renewals of the monastic movement with its ideal of poverty. The most prominent and consequential of these is Francis of Assisi and his reformation of the monastic ethos, which includes proclamation of a Christian mission and an initiative for gift economy – to support people by practical means such as education and medical and economic aid. In this respect, the Franciscans played an important role in the Balkans, especially in the region of Bosnia and Herzegovina. They repeatedly came into conflict with the political institutions not only of the Ottoman Empire, but also the Vatican and later the Socialist Yugoslav authorities, where the Franciscans' ideal of poverty and their gift economy may have been perceived as rivaling the Socialist collective ideology. The cultural role of the Franciscans in

lishing anti-economies of gift and charity. Thus, asceticism not only remains in contact with the profane economic world it tries to overcome, but always establishes a specific relationship between calculated, rational economy and anti-economies of the gift (Durkheim). The modes in which asceticism subverts economy differ across the religions and confessions that are relevant in the cultural space of South-Eastern Europe – Judaism, Islam, Catholic, Protestant and Orthodox Christianity. In Judaism – because of the juridical relationship to God installed by the *Tora* – asceticism is partly an individual, but first of all a collective practice to support plees and prayers articulated in the dialog with God and to moderate divine retribution. In the context of the ideas of exile and of salvation as a historical inner world option, Jewish asceticism has a strong collective component and normally does not mean separation from society. In Islam, asceticism has been developed since the 9th century as the mystic movement of Sufism with the aim to overcome all profane desires. Significant aspects are its gnostic and arcane components. Their orders and conventions are sponsored by gifts and mainly by *waqf*. Their protagonists, the dervishes – meaning “beggars” in Persian – perform their experience of transcendence on holy dates and religious festivities via poetic texts, music and body practices (*semā*). Thus, dervishes in some way aesthetically react to the surrounding profane world with its economic, political and also religious rational and discursive order. There are moments of ambivalence and non-conformism that have accompanied the Sufi movement and their dervishes through history. In Socialist Yugoslavia, the dervish as an emblematic figure was remembered in Meša Selimović's novel *Death and the Dervish* (*Derviš i smrt*, 1966), which was read as an allegory of aesthetic resistance to the political and economic order of Socialist Yugoslavia.

Bosnia is impressively described in the novels and stories of Ivo Andrić.²² The mutual legitimation of religious transcendence and economic (and political) power by the institution of the monasteries (and the Catholic Church as a whole) was also the target of the Reformation in the 16th century. As Max Weber has shown in his famous *The Protestant Ethic and the Spirit of Capitalism* (*Die protestantische Ethik and der Geist des Kapitalismus*, 1904-1920), the various Protestant movements (among them Calvinists, Lutherans, Pietists and Baptists) replaced the institutionalized procedures of religion with a personalization of religious faith facilitated by individual Bible reading and comprehension. This was followed by an ethic of secular “inner world asceticism”, in which individual economic success is motivated and legitimized by religious transcendence. This “inner world asceticism” constitutes the basic mental and pragmatic disposition which initiated the capitalistic dynamic of future-oriented and transcendently legitimized profit-making and thereby opened up a new epoch of strategic organized capitalism.²³ In this perspective, to this day, especially in the North American milieu of Baptists, Presbyterians and Mennonites, economic success may indicate individual pretensions to spiritual redemption. This mutual institutional legitimation of religious transcendence and economy works in a different manner in Eastern Orthodox Christianity, where the asceticism of the monastic tradition is not essentially based on a philological, rational and semiotic treatment of the holy texts. Here the emphasis lies on the mystical praxis of an *imitatio Christi* and a simulation of the corporal passion of Jesus as a therapy for profane desires. The famous monastic prescription of the Order of Saint Benedict *ora et labora*, which made the organization of asceticism within monasteries as economic and political institutions possible, is turned to contemplative *ora in passionem* in the Eastern Orthodox tradition. Hence Orthodox monasteries (and the Church as a whole) establish and confirm their spiritual authority by the resoluteness with which they reject all forms of profane economic calculation.²⁴ The consequence of this strategic rejection of economic calculation was a specific form of gift exchange: the monastery (and the Church) as a religious institution offers spiritual goods by commenting on and interpreting the profane political and economic sphere, whose protagonists gratefully respond by supporting the religious institution with material goods. This division of labor and mutual dependence is the reason why the Orthodox Church did not develop autonomous social teaching

22 This is known as the Franciscans stories cycle, containing stories like *U zindanu*, *U musafirhani*, *Kod kazana*, *Ispovijed*, *Napast* or *Čaša* and the famous novel *Prokleta avlija*.

23 On “inner world asceticism” see: Weber, Max (1921; 1972) *Wirtschaft und Gesellschaft*. Tübingen: 329.

24 For more details on economics in Orthodox monasteries, see: Murašov, Jurij (2004) *Irdischer Sinnmangel und göttliche Ökonomie. Wirtschaft, Schrift und Ethik in orthodoxen Heiligenviten*. In: Guski, Andreas/Schmidt, Ulrich (eds.), *Literatur und Kommerz im Russland des 19. Jahrhunderts. Institutionen, Akteure, Symbole*. Zurich: 293-328.

like the Catholic and Protestant churches did in the 19th century and why from its very beginnings to the present day it has displayed a remarkable affinity to apologizing for economic and political power and structures and to giving absolution to their protagonists. Accordingly, within the Orthodox spiritual tradition all those who dare to critique secular economic and political power always tend towards religious heresy. A recent, instructive example of such corrupt cooperation between the Orthodox Church and neoliberal oligarchic and political power is Andrey Zvyagintsev's film *Leviathan* of 2014.

5. Aesthetics and money

Literature, art, cinema, i.e. aesthetic productions in general, are involved in a double relationship with the economic sphere. The first is extrinsic insofar as the aesthetic productions function as objects, as commodities of exchange and especially of the money-based market. This extrinsic relationship is well reflected in a poem by Alexander Pushkin, "The Conversation of the Bookseller with the Poet" (1825). The second relationship is an intrinsic one and consists of economic topics and motifs which are represented and developed by narration or by pictorial compositions. Like love, economy and money are the most significant catalyst for the plot. Great novels of the capitalistic 19th and 20th centuries like Fyodor Dostoevsky's *Poor Folk* (1846), Émile Zola's *Money* (1890/91) or Ivo Andrić *Gospođica* (1945) cannot be imagined without the motif of money. At the same time, these inner relationships between literature or any aesthetic production with the economic sphere have a remarkable formal component. This is the self-referential, semiotic orientation of the text or of an artistic or cinematic object, which results from their aesthetic function. This function, by which the question of *what* is represented, is shifted to the question of *how* it is presented, informs us how the aesthetic representation is related to the basic medium of sense-making, i.e. to language and to its structural and semiotic options as written, visual or oral, acoustic language. Working with this deeply language-based dualism of visuality and acoustics, literature, art and film tell us more by their aesthetic form than discourses do, which deal pragmatically with issues such as love, religion, law, science and economy. In a fundamental way, aesthetic productions make sense for the cultural horizon of human communities and societies by bringing to the surface of representation those semiotic and media mechanisms which function in the depth of the discourses and which must be excluded from observation and questioning here for pragmatic reasons.

In this way, aesthetic productions are not only deeply involved in the economic sphere, but can also serve as outstanding objects which may focus our view on the inner semiotic structures of economic procedures and thereby make us sufficiently sensitive to observe and analyze the cultural foundation of economy.

What aesthetic productions tell us about the semiotics of economy and about the “close relationship” between language and money can be illustrated by a rather famous work of art – Quinten Massys’ picture *The Money Changer and His Wife* of 1514 (see fig. 1).²⁵

Fig. 1 *The Money Changer and His Wife*, Quinten Massys (1514).



At first glance, Massys’ picture confirms Max Weber’s concept of *Protestant Ethics and the Spirit of Capitalism*, written about five hundred years later, in the early 20th century. The picture shows an interplay of language signs and money. Its composition is based on a well-calculated choreography of visual gestures leading from the written words in the holy book on the far right-hand side of the depicted table to the illustration of the Virgin Mary with her Son and from there, following the gaze of the wife dressed in red turning her attention away from the book, towards the

25 There have been many commentaries and much research on Quinten Massys’ *The Money Changer and His Wife*. For art and economics in Massys’ picture, see: Widemann, Reinold (2018) *Artists’ Conceptions of Money: Money Art and Artificial Money*. Soesterberg.

money her husband is handling. The mental concentration of the money changer indicated by his lowered eyelids makes us focus on that green-colored and diffuse part of the table where the money changer is doing his job. At second glance, we discover the filigree scales testing the coins, whose inner and abstract value is approved by the well-balanced scales. The equilibration of money signs and the concrete physical weight on the one part of the table corresponds with the equilibration of graphic signs and the figurative illustration in the book. The very similar gestures of the hands operating with book and scales underline this correspondence. In our argumentation, Massys' picture performs the semiotic similarities of money and graphic signs in order to make us trust in the abstractions of both economic and graphic signs and belief in the spirit of the money and the book.

Massys' *The Money Changer and His Wife* illustrates the cultural foundation of capitalism and demonstrates the historical conditions of the semiotic mechanism, which produces the capitalist concept on the basis of a specific perception of written language and on the basis of a strict convergence of language and money. However, with regard to the evolution of language concepts and pragmatics fostered by communication technologies as it happened and still happens in the ages of typography, radio and television and in the present digital age, it also makes evident that this capitalist concept must be bound and limited to a defined historical segment and only to certain geographic regions.

6. Topics and theses

The spotlight on empirical constellations of “cultures of economy” in the regions of Yugoslavia covers four different fields – historiography, art, literature and visual media (film and theatre).

The field of historiography is explored by Jelena Rafailović's historical overview of the economic development of the Yugoslav regions. She chronologically follows the phases of subordinate (Slovenian and Croatian within the Austro-Hungarian empire), colonial (Bosnian and Herzegovinian in the same state, Macedonian in the Ottoman Empire), and independent (Serbian and Montenegrin) political status. The second part of the article is dedicated to the economy of the Kingdom of Yugoslavia, a country that emerged from the process of unification after WWI. She meticulously studies the three economic sectors – agricultural, industrial and financial – to draw conclusions about the uneven development of the parts of Yugoslavia as well as necessary factors behind the construction of economic growth (particularly foreign investments). Rafailović stresses structural and infrastructural problems as the main obstacle for sustainable economic development – which did not change in the united Yugoslavia either.

Delayed economic development is also a leitmotif in Dubravka Stojanović's article dealing with *zadruga*, a very specific form of economic organization in agricultural Serbia which has attracted great interest in left as well as right-wing political circles. Stojanović begins with the historical fact that even in the time of the socialist Svetozar Marković *zadruga* was already an obsolete form of agricultural cooperative. In Marković's view it features as a utopian organization derived from the patriarchal structure of Serbian society but is capable of its reorganization. Quite different is the ideology of the Serbian Radical Party, which tries to establish *zadruga* as a conservative unit of agrarian (and economic) community. After WWI, *zadruga* appears in the discourse of the far right as the foundation of the popular state. In this part of political spectrum, *zadruga* is seen not as an economic but as an ideological factor. On the economic side, it was perceived as an autochthonous Serbian alternative to capitalism. In this way, it contradicts Western traditions and is close to Russian economic ideas of the "peculiar expression of Slavic civilization". As a social ideal, *zadruga* encompasses egalitarianism, collectivism and anti-individualism. In all of these senses, *zadruga* encompasses the similarities between popular socialism and far-right ideologies in Serbian society.

The later very specific form of socialist organization of labor and economy, the system of self-management and its structural problems, is analyzed and discussed by Aleksandar Jakir and Anita Lunić. The two authors detect in the system of self-management the nucleus of conflict between political and productive entities which defined the crisis of Yugoslav society until the early 90s. Still one more, extremely important component of this conflict is to be sought in the increasingly intensive relationship of those elites to the national core of decentralized society. This aporia inscribed in the system of self-management itself can be identified as one of the main reasons for the disintegration of Yugoslavia. The authors contend that it cannot be denied that the system of self-management was economically successful too in some areas. It brought some sort of market economy, at least partially freed the financial sector, or decentralized the economy. However, this decentralization itself was one of the main reasons for the (political) failure of the Yugoslav experiment. In the context of crisis, the authors concentrate on strikes, which they see as an illicit way of drawing attention to economic mismanagement.

The moral component of the socialist economy and especially the moral status of labor in youth brigades form the focus of Reana Senjković's article. Beginning with a novel by Pero Zlatar (1978), whose hero is the authentic figure of ticket scalper Vimpi, and a sociological study by Rudi Supek (1963), which was the source for Zlatar's novel, she poses the important question as to whether volunteer work was an economic, political or ideological component of Yugoslav social society. To solve this problem, she chooses the specific case of young delinquents sent to youth brigades – for correction on the one hand but also to create social consciousness on the other. It is indicative that the renewal of the federal Youth Work Actions co-

incided with the stronger introduction of the self-management economy in 1958. She further compares adolescent delinquency in East and West and concludes that stereotypes of rebels with and without a cause are not valid. Labor was used as a method of correction in both political and economic systems.

Three articles demonstrate how art production in a very wide scope spanning religious icons, painting and architecture becomes involved in different economic processes. A miracle-working icon from the monastery of Peč is the main protagonist in Ivana Ženarju's article. This icon also appears as a powerful instrument for the economic prosperity of the monastery due to pilgrimages to visit icons, a well-known phenomenon in Orthodoxy. The monastery earned money due to donations from believers, who placed it directly on the icon. A concrete example of this very worldly handling of the icon could be observed in times when the monastery was experiencing economic crisis, caused by the huge debt on the one hand and monasteries' inability to collect debts on the other. During a "holy expedition", the icon visited diverse places in Kosovo and enough money was collected to pay off the debts. This touring of sacrificial objects, and the possibility for the believers to come into direct contact with them, was a successful practice supporting the sometimes frail economy of the monasteries – a strange symbiosis of art, religion, and economy.

Renata Komić Marn takes another side of the relationship between art and economy into account. Her article focuses on the existential and financial situation of the Slovenian impressionist painter Ivan Grohar, who met with some approval from critics but did not have any success in selling his pictures and subsequently died in poverty. This is where the actual story begins, as told by Renata Komić Marn. She almost tells a detective story in which she tries to dismantle the relationship between the painter and the rich timber merchant who acted as his benefactor – but only acted! In fact, he allowed the artist to dwell at his house, without collecting rent and then, after his death, claimed the paintings to settle the debt. Komić Marn shows convincingly that the alleged beneficial help of the rich merchant for the poor artist is no more than an unpersuasive myth.

The national and economic self-representation of the state by architecture is examined by Tina Potočnik, who takes as her example the process of building the National and University Library in Ljubljana. As a national symbol, the library was built in two phases. The first started after WWI and was completed shortly before WWII. The architect was Jože Plečnik, the most renowned Slovenian architect. The second was a project of the independent Slovenian state founded after the breakup of Yugoslavia. The difference between the two projects lies in their uneven symbolic value. While the first, pre-war project contains the idea of national liberation, the second was a combination of pride in the newly won state and the necessity of obeying the laws of the liberal market. In this way it must be seen as a compro-

mise between art and the market. Potočnik uses this premise to draw a broader conclusion on the place of architecture in the neo-liberal world.

The field of studies on literature and economy is opened by a crucial, even classical text dealing with money in Yugoslavia – Ivo Andrić's *The Woman from Sarajevo* (*Gospođica*), which Ivana Perica analyses in comparison with Balzac's *Eugénie Grandet*. She begins with the role of the miser in bourgeois society and sees him as an excessive part of the community in contrast to the usurer, who is typical of modern society. Perica first identifies the similarities between two novels: the peripheral position of the two cities in which the characters live and their apparent resemblance concerning the nature of the miser and usurer. However, the similarities appear to be superficial, while differences abound. Ultimately, Balzac's Eugénie becomes the capitalist who invests her money and Andrić's Rajka remains a prisoner of the idea of the miser who is unable to invest and remains an invaluable part of the community. In this sense, the two stories are about the successful or failed socialization of two women. Perica draws the final distinction between the two novels from their incomparable political, historical and geographic position. Eugénie Grandet had the opportunity to make a transition to modern capitalist society and seizes on it; Rajka Radaković remains a prisoner of her own position in colonial, patriarchal but not largely anti-capitalist Bosnia and later Yugoslavia. She does not accommodate to the society and remains a miser, a part of the community at the time when this very community is disappearing.

Andrea Lešić reads the novel *I, Danilo* by another Bosnian author, Derviš Sušić, as a paradigm of a literary text dealing with the economy in the system of Yugoslav socialism. Lešić begins her analysis with a critique of previous readings of the novel. The canonical interpretation sees in it a conflict between “idealistic humanity [and] dry bureaucracy”. She dismisses this one-sided interpretation and shows that the protagonist Danilo balances existences as a socialist trickster and a conman who uses his power to bring progress to the background society without really gaining profit for himself. Lešić explains his final failure by placing him in the tradition of the character of the “superfluous man” in Russian realist literature. In the same way as his predecessor, he is not able to accept his counterpart – the “necessary woman” – and remains a prisoner of patriarchal society (and economy). That would not be the case if he succeeded in integrating the women into his allegedly new social construct.

Borislav Pekić's novel *Pilgrimage of Arsenije Njegovan* is interpreted by Davor Beganović as a complex narrative combining economic, juridical and literary discourse. The main theme of the novel is the transition from a peripheral rural community to capitalist society. The Njegovan family acts as a bearer of the process of urbanization of Belgrade, its transition from an Oriental town into a modern European metropolis. Arsenije, who is the town-builder and an economist with theoretical pretensions, is at the same time the loser of the next transition from the capitalist

to the socialist economy. He spends the time after the war in a state of hibernation, completely excluded from every development in the country, only to wake up in the middle of the students' revolt in 1968. A *déjà vu* experience (he went "underground" after the demonstration against Yugoslavia's signing of a pact with the axis powers) can only bring him death. He dies, almost grotesquely, of a heart attack and never learns that his wealth is confiscated by the communists and consequently perishes. In this way, Pekić satirically describes the temporary breakdown of the capitalist economy into the socialist society.

In his article on the novel *Buick Rivera* by Miljenko Jergović, Jurij Murašov analyses the intricate structure of the Yugoslav economic mind and draws extensive conclusions comparing it to the theory of the gift developed by French anthropologist Marcel Mauss in his description of potlatch. According to Murašov, Jergović's novel is paradigmatic of the break-up of Yugoslavia, especially the economic background of its destruction. To prove this thesis, he begins with the analogies between the Yugoslav socialist economy and the specific economic mode that Mauss described with the concept of the gift. It is a phenomenon that unites diverse social dimensions. Much the same, the socialist economy is repulsed by possession and suspicious of money. Now, the two characters, the Bosnian Muslim Hasan and the Serbian Vuko, who came from the former Yugoslavia to the USA, meet and each of them, in his own way, exercises disconcertment with the rational American economy. Their uneconomic behavior can be seen in a collecting mania (Hasan) and mania for overspending (Vuko). In those two manic activities, symbolically generated and abstract entities such as money, law, love or politics lose their liability. Murašov cites Mauss, who stresses the violent potential of potlatch, again to show how the socialist economy has the same potential and to emphasize how Jergović exercises the power of this potential in the conflict between two paradigmatic proponents of that economic model. Their antagonism is metaphorically constructed as the process of destruction of Yugoslavia itself. This thesis finds its confirmation in the last scenes of the novel, when money comes into play. The cataclysm at the end of the novel denotes the defeat of Hasan's collecting and the victory of Vuko's overspending.

The book places two spotlights on economic issues in the sphere of visual media, film and theatre. In her article, Tanja Zimmermann turns to contemporary Serbia by analyzing the film *Tilva Roš* by Nikola Ležaić. She begins with an overview of the depiction of the poor in visual art from the 19th century on. Besides the common matrices of representation of the poor inherited from the realist tradition, the art dealing with them in the changed times of neoliberalism has to develop innovative approaches in order to cope with the changing conditions. One of these new approaches is tested in Ležaić's film. Drawing on Freud and Reik, Zimmermann contends that the masochistic principle is the central node of the new aesthetics of the poor. The main characters of the film seem to fulfill these preconditions. They

come from a neglected environment, do not show any will for acting but passively endure the violence inflicted upon them. It is not by accident that Bor is chosen as a place of (un)action. The run-down industrial town is the symbol of the failure of the transitional economy. In particular, the youths that remained in the town are on the losing side. In order to represent their precarious situation, Ležaić uses authentic self-made videos, combining them with fictional material. Zimmermann shows how “[t]he boys work at inventing new ways of suffering and prolong their duration by repetition.” Inflicting self-injuries is their strategy in the devastating fight against the consumerist economy that supplemented the industrial one of the socialist period. Miranda Jakiša deals with theatre production and explores the “economy theater” which emerged in Europe in the wake of the 2008 crisis and has remained virulent ever since. Her approach is twofold: on the one hand, there is a crisis of financing the theaters themselves, on the other hand, the financial crisis features as a topic in the plays. This situation is even more specific in the South Slavic region because of the aberrances caused by “transitional” capitalism. Jakiša chooses several exemplary plays to show how this situation is reflected in theatre: *That is not Us, it's Only Glass* by Ivana Sajko and *Workers Die Singing* by Olga Dimitrijević. Both plays are openly critical of the implementation of the doctrine of the free market economy in former socialist countries. At the same time, they do not try to offer a (revolutionary) solution to the crisis: the working conditions today do not allow for a revolution. Jakiša asks what the theater can do in changed times. She borrows from Jacques Rancière, for whom “theatre like any other art has to contour the border between the excluded and real dissent to be truly political”. New theater should abolish the distance between the scene and the audience, let the audience take part in the play. That is what Sajko as well as Dimitrijević achieve in their plays, incorporating the rich experience of theater into their critique of the economy.

Bibliography

- Al-Zubi, Amir/Čičak-Al-Zubi, Meliha (2005) *Hadži Šefko i hadži Meško*. Sarajevo.
- Anderson, Benedict (1983) *Imagined Communities: Reflection on the Origin and Spread Nationalism*. London, New York.
- Bor, Matej/Šavli, Jožko/Tomažič, Ivan (1989) *Veneti. Naši davni predniki*. Ljubljana, Vienna.
- Breithaupt, Fritz (2008) *Der Ich-Effekt des Geldes. Zur Geschichte einer Legitimitätsfigur*. Frankfurt a. M.
- Crouch, Colin (2004) *Post-democracy*. Cambridge.
- Crouch, Colin (2015) *The Knowledge Corrupters. Hidden Consequences of the Financial Takeover of Public Life*. Cambridge.

- Derrida, Jacques (1992) *Given Time: I. Counterfeit Money*. Chicago, London.
- Eagleton, Terry (1991) *Ideology. An introduction*. New York.
- Graeber, David (2001) *Towards an Anthropological Theory of Value. The False Coin of Our Own Dreams*. Basingstoke.
- Graeber, David (2012) *Debt – the First 5000 Years*. New York.
- Hamann, Johann Georg (1762, 1967) *Schriften zur Sprache. Einleitung und Anmerkungen von Josef Simon*. Frankfurt a. M.
- Hamenstädt, Ulrich (2014) *Theorien der Politischen Ökonomie im Film*. Wiesbaden.
- Harten, Jürgen (2000) *Das fünfte Element – Geld oder Kunst. Ein fabelhaftes Lexikon zu einer verlorenen Enzyklopädie*. Cologne.
- Hawkes, David (2003) *Ideology* (2nd ed.). London.
- Huntington, Samuel Phillips (1996) *The Clash of Civilizations and the Remaking of World Order*. New York.
- Hymans, Jacques E. C. (2004) The Changing Color of Money: European Currency Iconography and Collective Identity. In: *European Journal of International Relations* 10/1: 5-31.
- Kintzele, Jeff/Schneider, Peter (eds., 1993) *Georg Simmels Philosophie des Geldes*. Frankfurt a. M.
- Kozioł, Monika/Piekarska, Delfina/Potocka, Maria (eds., 2013) *Ekonomia w sztuce. Economics in Art. Exhibition catalogue. Museum of Contemporary Art Krakow (MO-CAK)*. Krakow.
- Lizardo, Omar (2007) Fight club, or the cultural contradictions of late capitalism. In: *Journal for Cultural Research* 11(3): 221-243.
- Luhmann, Niklas (1970; 1991) Wahrheit und Ideologie. Vorschläge zur Wiederaufnahme der Diskussion. In: Luhmann, Niklas (ed.) *Soziologische Aufklärung 1. Aufsätze zur Theorie sozialer Systeme*. Köln, Opladen: 54-65.
- Luhmann, Niklas (1997) *Die Gesellschaft der Gesellschaft*. Frankfurt a. M.
- Lynn, Ta. M. (2006) 'Hurt so good'. Fight club, masculine violence, and the crisis of capitalism. In: *The Journal of American Culture* 29(3): 265-277.
- Mannheim, Karl (1936) *Ideology and Utopia*. London.
- Marsh, Nicky (2007) *Money, Speculation and Finance in Contemporary British Fiction*. London.
- Marx, Karl (1867, 1885, 1994) *Das Kapital. Kritik der politischen Ökonomie*. Hamburg.
- McLuhan, Marshall (1964) *Understanding Media. The Extensions of Man*. New York, Toronto, London.
- Moule, Arthur Christopher/Pelliot, Paul (2011) *Marco Polo, Le devisement du monde. Le livre des merveilles*. Paris.
- Murašov, Jurij (2004) Irdischer Sinnmangel und göttliche Ökonomie. Wirtschaft, Schrift und Ethik in orthodoxen Heiligenviten. In: Guski, Andreas/Schmidt, Ulrich (eds.), *Literatur und Kommerz im Russland des 19. Jahrhunderts. Institutionen, Akteure, Symbole*. Zurich: 293-328.

- Mustafić, Aldin (2013) *Epohe fonetske misli kod Arapa i arebica (The Age of Phonetic Thought of Arabs and Arebica)*. Belgrade.
- Piketty, Thomas (2013) *Le capital au XXIe siècle*. Paris.
- Pointon, Marcia (1998) Money and nationalism. In: Cubitt, Geoffrey (ed.), *Imagining Nations*. Manchester: 229-254.
- Rotman, Brian (1987) *Signifying Nothing. The Semiotics of Zero*. Stanford.
- Sedláček, Tomáš (2011) *Economics of Good and Evil. The Quest for Economic Meaning from Gilgamesh to Wall Street*. Oxford.
- Shell, Marc (1978) *The Economy of Literature*. Baltimore.
- Sholette, Gregory/Kim Charnley (2017) *Delirium and Resistance: Activist Art and the Crisis of Capitalism*. London.
- Simmel, Georg (1900, 1989) *Philosophie des Geldes*. Frankfurt a. M.
- Stiglitz, Joseph (1996) *Whither Socialism*. Cambridge.
- Stiglitz, Joseph (2012) *The Prize of Inequality: How Today's Divided Society Endangers Our Future*. New York.
- Unwin, Tim/Hewitt, Virginia (2001) Banknotes and national identity in central and eastern Europe. In: *Political Geography* 20: 1005-1028.
- Vogl, Joseph (2010) *Das Gespenst des Kapitals*. Zurich.
- Weber, Max (1921; 1972) *Wirtschaft und Gesellschaft*. Tübingen.
- Widemann, Reinold (2018) *Artists' Conceptions of Money: Money Art and Artificial Money*. Soesterberg.
- Zimmermann, Tanja (2014) *Brüderlichkeit und Bruderzwist. Mediale Inszenierungen des Aufbaus und des Niedergangs politischer Gemeinschaften in Ost- und Südosteuropa*. Göttingen.
- Zimmermann, Tanja (2014) *Der Balkan zwischen Ost und West. Mediale Bilder und kulturpolitische Prägungen*. Cologne, Weimar, Vienna.
- Živančević-Sekeruš, Ivana (2012) Banknote Imagery of Serbia. In: Zimmermann, Tanja (ed.), *Balkan Memories. Media Constructions of National and Transnational History*. Bielefeld: 41-48.
- Žižek, Slavoj (1989) *The Sublime Object of Ideology*. New York.