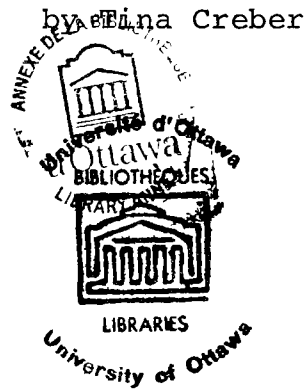


A SURVEY OF AMERICAN SLOVENE
LITERATURE, 1900-1945



Thesis presented to the School of Graduate Studies
in partial fulfilment of the requirements for the
degree of Master of Arts in Slavic Studies.

UNIVERSITY OF OTTAWA
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INTRODUCTION

Following the Second World War, an interest in the literary accomplishments of ethnic groups in the United States led to the establishment of an Immigrant Archives at the University of Minnesota. A program was initiated to gather material written by immigrants, either in their native tongue or in English, and any literary piece was accepted, however insignificant or imposing its appearance. Thus, the literature of a very small minority, the American Slovenes, found itself included in the collection.

An interest in the literature of American Slovenes led this writer to examine those sources in the Immigrant Archives which contained Slovene immigrant writing, in order to determine the extent and nature of American Slovene literature. The objective of this research was to discover when this literature began, who the authors were, what they wrote about, and how they wrote it.

The work done by this writer was essentially of a pioneering nature. Initial research revealed that no bibliographies of authors' works were available, nor had any ever been compiled in a systematic manner. Furthermore, an examination of the material collected in the Archives disclosed that the majority of immigrant Slovene writing had been published in regular newspapers and periodicals.

Therefore, it was necessary to peruse the countless number of publications then available, both for the literary content and for informative articles about the authors. In addition, publishing houses and individuals were also contacted by mail but little or no information could be gained by that means. Consequently, the information in this survey is in many instances incomplete.

A research of the sources revealed that the literature had its beginnings in the early years of 1900 and flourished until the Second World War. Then it began to decline and change in its character. Consequently, this survey has been limited to the period of 1900-1945.

The works of more than a dozen writers were found in the sources, representing the literary genres of prose, poetry, and drama. The field of prose was the most extensive and that of drama the smallest. Most of the writers expressed themselves in both prose and verse, and three of them wrote tragedies and comedies as well.

The writers were concerned primarily with social problems and hence portrayed the ills and mores of contemporary society. They were critical of existing institutions, but were not seeking revolutionary political changes. Rather, they were concerned about the problems of common men in the modern industrial society and endeavoured to awaken the social consciousness of those who had the power to make changes. They depicted the social scene in a realistic manner and tended to use the common language of every day

speech.

From this group of authors and poets, those considered to be of major importance have been chosen for discussion in this survey. They were included either for being the best representatives of the main trends or for being innovative in their approach. Their literature is divided into three chapters under the headings of Prose, Poetry, and Drama, presented in that order.

This survey should offer some basis for further research. At present, Slovenska izseljenska matica in Ljubljana, Slovenia, is engaged in compiling bibliographies of Slovene emigrant writers, and also material continues to be amassed in the Immigrant Archives at the University of Minnesota. Though this work is as yet incomplete, specific details about the authors' lives and writing should soon be available. However, little has been done so far as regards a critical evaluation of individual writer's work, and much more research is required.

In this thesis, critical evaluation is limited, as much more time and research would be required for a more comprehensive treatment. However, some evaluation is offered in connection with the analysis of individual pieces of work, so as to give some indication of the writer's worth. Similarly, quotations taken from original texts are included with translations made by this writer to express as closely as possible the original idea of the passage.

CHAPTER I

PROSE

The search for American Slovene literature in the sources disclosed a prodigious amount of material in prose, mostly short stories and sketches, representing the work of over a dozen authors. It became evident that only two of the authors wrote novels, though several writers produced books of a non-fictional nature. A number of basic trends appeared constantly in the stories, and hence, it can be inferred that these trends are characteristic of American Slovene prose.

The dominant trait of the prose is the social nature of the content. The trend is toward a realistic portrayal of contemporary society, focusing on the faults and weaknesses of men and institutions. Another trait is the critical tone which is present to some extent in all of the prose. Finally, the prose is also characterized by the use of common place language and of folk sayings, metaphors and biblical allusions. Though most of the stories are of a social character, there are many that are treated in a psychological manner.

Six authors have been chosen as being the best representatives of the main trends in the prose. They are Ivan Molek, Frank Kerže, Katka Zupančič, Anna P. Krasna, Ivan Jontez and Etbin Kristan. Ivan Molek will be discussed first, for reasons which will be given later, and the others

will follow in the order of their emergence as prose writers.

A number of lesser writers are being excluded because much more time and research would be required to include them in this survey. Among this group are Jakob Zupančič, Joško Oven, Louis Adamič, Louis Beniger and Janko Rogelj.

1. Ivan Molek

Molek was undoubtedly the most prominent of all immigrant writers. He established the trend toward realism and criticism of society which became the mainstream of American Slovene literature. He was the most prolific writer, an active journalist, a polemic, editor of numerous publications and one of the few authors who wrote continuously during the entire period under discussion here. His works of prose include three novels, over fifty short stories, and numerous sketches. A few short selections and two novels will be analyzed in this survey in order to display his style and themes.

The style of Molek's prose is forthright and vigorous. The action is fast moving and unhindered by description, and the language is terse, metaphoric and full of folk idioms. The words used are common place and often harsh and base. The protagonists are invariably the down-trodden and the destitute and those weakened by their own vices. Hence, the tone of the writing often appears pessimistic and depressingly gloomy.

However, the underlying reasons for the gloomy portrayal of life are the author's compassion for the poor and the deep desire to make the ways of society more just. In his stories, he questions the justice of social practices which condone poverty, suffering, cruelty, hypocrisy and discrimination.

Molek wrote three novels according to an article in the sources, but this writer was able to find only two through research, and was not successful in tracing even the name of the third. His first novel, Zajedalci,¹ (The Parasites), is significant because it is a realistic portrayal of a way of life of early Slovene immigrants. The author depicts the sordid life in mining towns, focusing only on the narrow life of the immigrants in their little ghettos.

It is a novel of social criticism at its fiercest. The author exposes and criticizes aspects of society which, he believes, are instrumental in exploiting and enslaving common man. Among these, he names the immigrant saloon keepers, prostitutes, 'quack' doctors and medical doctors, the owners of newspapers and the clergy. Ultimately, he implicates the various levels of government for tolerating these evils.

The novel is so structured as to provide the optimum opportunity for the author to express his opinions. The

¹Ivan Molek, Zajedalci (Chicago, Illinois: Leposlovna-znanstvena knjižnica Slovenske narodne podporne jednote, 1920), 304 pp., (hereafter cited as Molek, Zajedalci).

plot revolves around the agonizing journey of a young immigrant, Martin Rožnik, who has syphilis but who is too ashamed of his 'sin' to visit a qualified doctor. Instead, he moves from town to town to avoid being found out and searches for a cure through the newspapers. This gives the author the opportunity to attack both the parasitic 'quack' doctors² who sell their fraudulent medicine through newspaper advertisements and the greed of newspaper owners who allow such unethical advertisements.³

Since Martin's wife and child are still in Slovenia, he resorts to living in Slovene boarding houses where men sleep in the same bed in shifts, and where life is crude and undignified.⁴ To escape the crowded rooming house, the men often go to the Slovene saloons, called narodna gostilna where they are at the mercy of the predatory instincts of the salunars.⁵ It was the practice then to import young girls from Slovenia and intern them in the saloon until they paid off the price of their fare. These girls were lures for customers and on display as potential brides. Their life was harsh and their fate often tragic, a fact which is expressed in the subplot of the novel, dealing with a young woman Marička. She marries to escape from the saloon,⁶ but

²Molek, Zajedalci, p. 168.

³Ibid., p. 174.

⁴Ibid., p. 84.

⁵Ibid., p. 54.

⁶Ibid., p. 215.

dies in a few years after an attempted abortion.⁷

Furthermore, Molek attacks the habits of drunk men of visiting dirty brothels. This gives him the opportunity to protest against the profession of prostitution, claiming that it is an unfair exploitation of women.⁸ He blames society for not providing useful and dignified jobs for women. In addition, he criticizes the existing economic conditions which force men in the prime of their lives to be separated from their wives. Finally, he attacks the puritanical attitude of authorities for driving these women into unsanitary, dark holes,⁹ as well as the hypocrisy of the clergy.¹⁰

Zajedalci is Molek's longest novel and of all his prose the most gloomy and depressing. Dr. J. F. Kern, a fellow journalist of Molek's, gave his opinion of this novel in his book, Spomini ob tridesetletnici prihoda v Ameriko,¹¹ (Memories on the Thirtieth Anniversary of Coming to America). He also included a brief character sketch of the author and accused him of being too pessimistic in nature.

The novel is written from the point of view of the author and in an episodic style. The author tells what the hero is doing and what his emotions are, rather than letting

⁷Molek, Zajedalci, p. 274.

⁸Ibid., p. 83. ⁹Ibid., p. 183.

¹⁰Ibid., p. 80.

¹¹Frank Javh Kern, Spomini ob tridesetletnici prihoda v Ameriko (Jugoslavia: F. J. Kern pub., 1937).

the hero reveal himself through action and speech. The plot is stopped at intervals and the author steps in to give his opinions, generally in a reasoned and matter-of-fact manner. Scenes follow each other in swift succession with little transition and no revelation of the hero's emotional changes. Consequently, the hero is not a credible character.

The second novel, Dva svetova,¹² (Two Worlds), is interesting because it is based on Molek's own experiences, and reveals the author's maturing outlook on life. Again, it is full of protest and criticism, but with a new positive element added. The protagonist, Anton Plesec, is a man in search of himself, determined to be master of his own fate. He is a thinking man who seeks answers to his questions and who realizes that he must ignore the heritage of his past in order to fashion a new world for himself in America.

He arrives in the new land at the age of eighteen and works in steel mills, on farms and in mines. He becomes disillusioned as he discovers that life in his new country is no different for him than it was in Slovenia; he believes it is full of injustice, cruelty and corruption. In time, he becomes successful and wealthy, but in the process, he compromises his principles. In trying to forget his mistakes, his sympathies turn to the workers' problems. Finally, he realizes that a new world cannot be found, but the old one can be improved, ". . . novega in bolšega sveta ne najdeš

¹²Ivan Molek, Dva svetova (Ljubljana, Slovenia: Cankarjeva družba, 1932), 169 pp., (hereafter cited as Molek, Dva svetova).

. . . nov in boljši svet narediš iz starega!"¹³ (. . . one cannot find a new world, but he can make a better world out of the existing one!) Subsequently, he decides to dedicate his life to union activities and help improve conditions for the workers.

This is a social novel directing criticism at the vices of men and women, but the theme which predominates is the power of self-determination. Anton Plesec is an example of a man who succeeds because he exercises his will. Thus the tone is more overtly optimistic than is usual in Molek's prose. It seems as though the author has come to terms with the reality about him, yet has not compromised his ideals and goals.

The plot of the novel is simple; the character has a purpose to achieve and the action moves forward swiftly to its goal. Complications to the plot are numerous since the protagonist must achieve self-knowledge and therefore, must experience numerous setbacks and disappointments. However, these experiences are given the minimum of treatment, with the barest discussion of emotions and a flat acceptance of results. For instance, when the hero, Anton, discovers that his wife had married him in order to set herself up in business, he rebels quietly and decides to leave her. He accepts this disappointment in a stoical manner, "Tone je

¹³Molek, Dva svetova, p. 168.

molčal. . . Bolelo ga je pa vendarle,"¹⁴ (Tony kept quiet . . . However, it hurt him nevertheless). He resigns himself to the consequences and moves on to his next experience.

Though the motives of the hero are made obvious and his behaviour is credible, he evokes little sympathy in the reader and allows no emotional involvement. It is obvious that the author's purpose in creating this character is to use him as a vessel for an idea.

The characters in Molek's short stories and sketches are used in a similar fashion. Molek established the style and trend of his prose in his very first short story, "Sveti večer,"¹⁵ (Christmas Eve). It is the story of protest against man's inhumanity to man, and an attack on religious hypocrisy. The author exposes the hypocrisy of a society which pays homage to the birth of Christ and reveres his ideals, whereas in reality, it is totally indifferent to the plight of the poor. The story takes place on Christmas Eve, and in a slice-of-life presentation, the author contrasts the destitution and the affluence of two American families, that of an unemployed immigrant and that of his erstwhile employer. The immigrant's family is waiting for the father to bring home some bread for supper, but when he enters he is empty-handed. He explains that though he had found a few hours' work, his employer had been too busy with Christmas activities to pay

¹⁴Molek, Dva svetova, p. 154.

¹⁵Ivan Molek, "Sveti večer," Glasnik (Calumet, Michigan: Slovene Community, December 22, 1905).

him.

A tone of bitterness is projected in this story, despite the objective presentation. It is accentuated by the ironic repetition that it is Christmas Eve and ". . . po vseh cerkvah odmevala je slava Tistemu ki se je nekdam rodil v bornem hlevu . . .," (in all the churches resounded the glory to Him who had been born in a humble stable).

The destitution of the little family is conveyed in a starkly simple and vivid prose. Virtually no descriptive words are used, yet the hunger and the cold are made concrete by the action of the characters; for instance, ". . . vsi trije so se stiskali okoli majhne železne peči . . . in otroka sta klepetala z zobmi," (all three pressed hard against a small iron stove . . . and the two children's teeth were chattering).

Thus, Molek established his style and purpose in a simple short story, written in a realistic and objective manner. Moreover, he demonstrated his literary craft immediately, as he simply presented what he saw, and controlled any impulse to embellish his writing. This economy of expression is characteristic of all his prose, regardless of the tone or form of the stories.

A different approach is taken toward the problems of the poor in other stories, and an example of this is the short story "Pripovedka,"¹⁶ (The Tale). Here, the author

¹⁶Ivan Molek, "Pripovedka," Ameriški družinski koledar 9 (Chicago, Illinois: Jugoslovanska delovna tiskovna družba (Proletarec), 1923).

attacks in a satirical manner the willingness of the poor to accept their lot. This story consists of a cleverly conceived dialogue between a bricklayer and an inmate of a lunatic asylum. The worker, on the outside of the asylum walls patiently explains to the lunatic leaning out of a window above, that though he works long hours and can lose his job anytime, he is satisfied with his little pay, even though his employer makes a big profit. The lunatic finds the worker's situation hilarious and declares that it is the worker who belongs in the asylum and not he.

This theme may be an old one, but Molek uses it to criticize workers in general for their ignorance and passivity. This fact is manifest in the behaviour of the bricklayer who is not listening at all to the lunatic's rational explanation that he is being exploited by his employer. Instead, he pities the idiot for being closed up in the asylum.

What steps Molek wanted workers to take is never explained in his prose, but his attacks on the rich and the powerful in society remain a constant in his stories. However, the monotony expected in such tendentious writing is usually relieved by stylistic variations. A short story which demonstrates an admirable change in style, is "Trempe,"¹⁷ (The Tramp). The story is told in the first person by a tramp who has just been crushed under the wheels of a train.

¹⁷Ivan Molek, "Trempe," Ameriški družinski koledar 1 (1915), p. 113.

As spectators gather, one of them is mesmerized by the grimacing mouth and one open eye in the dead man's face. He feels himself being accused and hears the death mask speak.

In brief, the dead man chronicles, in epic proportions, the age-old miseries and struggles of the poor. He relates how multitudes of men have had to tramp in search of food, how starvation drove them from place to place and how at times this led to fighting and wars. He admits that he and countless others often prayed for catastrophies so that they would have some work. Their prayers were often answered, ". . . Potres je bil; požar je bil; povodenj je zalila mesta. . . Pa smo delali. . . nekaj časa." (. . . There were earthquakes; there were fires; floods inundated cities. . . And we worked. . . for a short time.). At this point, the narrator laughs ironically, to emphasize the cruelty of man to man implied in praying for disasters, and quotes a Commandment, "Ne želi svojemu bližnemu zla!" (Do not wish evil upon those near to you!).

The style of this narrative has a biblical quality about it; sentences are short and full of imagery, allusions and apostrophes. There is a feeling of movement present, like the passing by of multitudes of men, moving inexorably to a predestined fate. The author concludes bitterly that the fate of the poor is eternal destitution because the indolent rich are indifferent and self-indulgent. Society consists of two levels, as expressed in the following image, ". . . Šli smo posvetu mi trempje. Vozili smo se na vlaku

. . . Eni smo ležali spodaj . . . drugi so ležali zgoraj
 . . . Mi smo trempali brez centa in lačni za delom - oni pa vsega siti, da ubeže delu . . . Življenje!" (We went into the world, we tramps. We rode on trains . . . some of us below the carriages, others above in Pullman cars . . . We tramped without a cent and hungry in search of work - they above us satiated and bored, tramped to escape work. . . This is life!).

In this story, Molek also attacks society for its callous and indifferent attitude toward people hit by misfortune. The criticism is biting, made all the more effective by the offhanded manner in which the accident is described. Only minutes after the tragedy was reported.. priropotal je voz (a police wagon rumbled up), and a policeman hurriedly swept up the pile of remains with a shrug, "je pa samo tremp," (it's only a tramp).

Indignation against man's inhumanity surfaces again in the devastating satire about capital punishment, "Kako smo zamorcu zadrgnili vrat. . .,"¹⁸ (How We Twisted the Negro's Neck). This narrative is a farce, about a young Slovene, Andro, whose daily job of living and working is manipulated entirely by his nagging and shrewish wife. Since she aspires to attaining a social position in the community, she arranges for Andro to become a policeman. Her plans succeed, but she is foiled in her attempt to choose his precinct, and by a

¹⁸Ivan Molek, "Kako smo zamorcu zadrgnili vrat," Ameriški družinski koledar 15 (1929), pp. 75-81.

twist of fate, he is sent as a guard to a prison. There he must assist at a marathon hanging of five men.

This story is full of humour, precipitated by the behaviour of the guileless Andro, who must always wait for his wife to act first. For example, when his wife wonders out loud why he couldn't become a policeman, he wonders also, but has to wait until his wife gives him the answer, " . . . tudi on bi bil rad vedel . . . in je čakal . . .," (. . . he would also liked to have known . . . and he waited . . .).

He also waited until she arranged his entry to the Police School. Andro had faith in her for she had made many connections through the church she attended. One of her friends was the policeman, Patrick, whom Andro knew to be a good man, because, tells the author with tongue in cheek, he was very religious except when he beat his wife and swore at the drunks.

In these humorous incidents, the author satirizes very lightly the social climbers and religious hypocrites. The satire becomes more bitter, however, as Andro's reactions to his prison work are depicted. He finds his job 'no picnic'; it is just too hard on the nerves, watching all those 'snakes in the grass', the prison inmates. Finally, the satire reaches its apogee at the hanging. Andro's sensibility is offended by the behaviour of one of the condemned, a young Negro, who is so terrified that he can't walk to the gallows. Andro is disgusted at having to help carry him and listen to his 'squealing' like a pig.

Since the Negro slows down the proceedings and since the spectators must not be disappointed, the sheriff applies emergency measures. First, he dispenses with the prayers and then he omits putting the hooded shirt over the victim's head, but instead, blindfolds him with a rag. Andro helps to prop him up and he is dispatched swiftly. When it is over, Andro swears with indignation for he finds that the 'swine' has soiled his uniform. What will he tell his wife?

This is a bitter satire about man's inhumanity to man with the theme cleverly disguised in the depiction of Andro's problems. The story is fast moving and devoid of description; the prose is vivid and concrete and full of folk idioms.

Molek is at his best when he writes satire. Normally, his prose is totally devoid of humour, but he excels in writing farce. He is so skillful in disguising his real purpose in laughter that his message is all the more incisive when received.

Another farce of this kind is "Izpoved novega Američana,"¹⁹ (Confessions of a New American), which is an invective against the contemporary immigrant society.

The narrator of the story tells that his father's name is Oblak, but his own is O'Black, that his father is Austrian and his sister is Slovenian, but he himself is an American. He loves America and does not want the Army and

¹⁹Ivan Molek, "Izpoved novega Američana," Cankarjev glasnik 3 (Cleveland, Ohio: Cankarjeva ustanova, 1939), pp. 158-60.

the Navy to go to Europe, but rather, stay at home and practice their football. He admits he knows nothing of current affairs because he dislikes reading. Thus, he prattles on, jumping from subject to subject, giving seemingly naive and inane opinions. However, his character is gradually revealed and he finally becomes a composite of all the faults in immigrants which Molek has always detested and criticized.

Primarily, the author criticizes people who 'live in the dark', who are deceived by appearances, are not inquisitive and do not change with the times. Furthermore, he attacks people for not reading, perhaps reflecting a personal bitterness because at that time the Slovene press appeared to be dying. Moreover, he criticizes workers for not joining unions and not participating actively in the affairs of the country. The theme of this narrative, therefore, is a variation of Molek's main theme; he wants people to be aware of reality and contribute positively to building a better future.

The short story, "Lumberjack,"²⁰ is also a variation on the same theme. In a slice-of-life presentation, the author criticizes immigrant men through the person of Ilija Bubalo, a Croatian. Ilija comes to town from a logging camp and squanders all his money on women and drink, instead of sending some home to his wife. On the way back to the logging

²⁰Ivan Molek, "Lumberjack," Ameriški družinski koledar 23 (1937), pp. 48-51.

camp, he mutters penitently: ". . . Sada čemo raditi za ženu i djecu . . .," (Now we will begin working for wife and children).

In spite of Ilija's promise, however, the ending is not optimistic, for it is made obvious in the story that Ilija is not likely to change. The author exposes Ilija's faults in a stark and cruel manner and shows his contempt in the name, Bubalo, implying 'boob' or 'fool'. He criticizes Ilija unmercifully through the words of the saloon keeper who tries to goad Ilija into sending money to his wife. Ilija is really a pathetic figure, for he succumbs to his vices in spite of the saloon keeper's pleadings. The author does not sympathize with the logger, but rather, makes it clear that a man is responsible for his own actions and is not entirely at the mercy of society. Thus, this short story demonstrates that Molek continues to be concerned about the welfare of the immigrants, and exhorts them in his own way to improve.

2. Frank Kerže

This author is important in American Slovene prose because of his orientation to pure literature. Most of his writing was published in the monthly literary review, Čas, (The Times), which he founded in 1914 and struggled single-handedly to publish for thirteen years.

Basically, Kerže's prose follows the general trend in Slovene immigrant literature, that of realism and social

criticism. However, it is distinguished from the prose of others by its descriptive and lyrical style. Furthermore, it contains themes dealing with intellectual freedom of the individual rather than with his economic situation.

Four selections have been made to illustrate Kerže's style and themes, two novels and two short stories. The two novels both have their setting in Slovenia and both possess an element of nostalgia. The novel "Kadar delo počiva,"²¹ (When Work is at Rest), is a lyrical treatment of rural life in Slovenia, concerned particularly with the activities of the villagers in their leisure hours. Among the activities depicted are the gatherings of young people on a Sunday morning to walk to the parish church, the gatherings of the boys in the village at night to serenade the girls and annoy strict fathers, and the dances which followed the lusty singing on occasions when the girls were allowed to come out.

The story is full of innocent fun and light-hearted humour, described in vivid and picturesque prose. However, behind the façade of gaiety and nostalgia there is the insinuation that life in this society was narrow and oppressive. The author's criticism is subtle, yet nevertheless specific. He gently rebukes the church for its lack of dynamism, implying that the villagers go to church out of habit, and mostly because they can visit the inns, the post

²¹Frank Kerže, "Kadar delo počiva," *Čas* 11 (Cleveland Ohio: Frank Kerže pub., 1925), serialized, (hereafter cited as Kerže, "Kadar delo počiva.")

office and the store in the town.²² Furthermore, the author criticizes the rigid class structure, for the villagers distinguish between those who own property and those who work for others. This becomes evident in the conversation of the young people, as Žolna, a young hired man, obviously regarded as the leader of the group, is told matter-of-factly that he would probably never get married. He retorts, ". . . Ali misliš da je ženitev samo za tiste ki imajo kmetijo?" (Do you think that marriage is only for those who own fields?). In spite of his popularity, however, it is obvious that he is meant to keep his place in the village society.

Others also have to keep their place as dictated by a repressive social morality. For example, a mother watching her daughter dancing, longs to participate, but is afraid of what people would say, for she sighs, ". . . ljudje so taki - človek jim pride v zobe, potem je pa joj . . .,"²⁴ (people are such that if they start gossiping about someone, watch out . . .). The subtle criticism in this novel is obviously intended as an appeal to readers to free themselves of their traditional beliefs and attitudes, and start their life in America with an open mind.

The theme of freedom is more overtly expressed in the novel, "Med našimi lazi,"²⁵ (Among Our Forest Clearings).

²²Kerže, "Kadar delo počiva," p. 166.

²³Ibid., p. 166. ²⁴Ibid., p. 356.

²⁵Frank Kerže, "Med našimi lazi," Čas 12 (1926) serialized, (hereafter cited as Kerže, "Med našimi lazi.")

In this novel the author asserts that people have the right to freedom of the mind and to enlightenment. The theme is expressed in the conflict between the protagonist, Marij Rus, a young school teacher, and the antagonist, Father Turk, the parish priest. Marij believes that the common people have a right to education but the priest claims it is better for them to be kept in ignorance. Marij provides whatever enlightenment he can, by lending books, holding discussions after choir practices and giving advice, when asked. As his popularity grows, Father Turk feels threatened and tries to malign his character and later offers him money to work on the side of the church. Failing in this, he uses his influence to have Marij dismissed. The young man, however, has found his calling in spreading the truth and remains in the parish to work on a sawmill.

The tone of the novel is anti-clerical, brought out by the hypocrisy of Father Turk, who is a symbol of the power of the Catholic Church during the time of Austrian domination. Kerže implies that the teaching of the Church was detrimental to progress.

The story is written in a fast moving, vivid and metaphoric prose. The characters speak according to their station in life, either in cultured prose or in a colourful folk idiom. The novel is full of humour, provided mostly by the behaviour of Tončka, who is the shrewish but kindly wife of Marij's superior, Pepe. She personifies the wily folk character of the peasant, whose penchant for exaggeration

and colourful speech would delight the Slovene readers. Her escapades are legendary, such as her march na Dunaj, do cesarja,²⁶ (to Vienna to see the Kaiser).

The prose is descriptive and lyrical. An example of this is the description of the forest at night, " . . . Od vzhoda zažari med drevjem, kakor da bi goreli gorski vrhovi in trenutek kasneje . . . se prikaže obla srebrne lune . . ."²⁷ (From the East comes a light, as if the mountain tops were on fire, and immediately there appears the disc of the silver moon). Furthermore, there are mood descriptions of nature which are reflections of the moods of Marij, as he contemplates on life and death. On one occasion, as he thinks about his conflict with Father Turk, he becomes aware of the conflicts and struggles in nature, " . . . Tukaj je objem stoletnega življenja, junaki stoje in leže . . . Kakor stari možje se dvigajo velikanske bukve, vmes pa hiti mlado življenje . . . si želi solnca . . .,"²⁸ (Here is life, embracing hundreds of years, heroes stand and lie . . . Like old men, rise the giant beech trees, and among them rushes young life . . . which yearns for the sun . . .).

Finally, the prose is full of symbolism. The objects used as symbols are not original, but are taken primarily from nature and its phenomena. For instance, the rising moon represents hope for mankind, the setting sun is the symbol of the passing ignorance and oppression and the rising sun symbolizes the coming of freedom and enlightenment. The

²⁶Kerže, "Med našimi lazi," p. 166.

²⁸Ibid.

²⁷Ibid., p. 129.

night, also, is a symbol for ignorance, and in fact, is an extended metaphor in all of immigrant literature. The characters themselves have symbolic meanings; Marij Rus represents the spirit of freedom and Father Turk, the yoke of oppression. Whether the author intended the last names to carry any particular meaning is not sufficiently clear, for there are no political inferences evident.

The characteristics found in Kerže's novels are also present in his short stories. Among these are lyrical description, humour and the theme of freedom. Freedom of choice is the subject of the short story, "Meri,"²⁹ (Mary), in which the author criticizes the insidious practice of bartering for brides imported from Slovenia. The character in this story, Mary, rejects marriage with an ugly man who has paid for her, and runs off with a young man. As they speed off on a train, he comforts her with the words mi smo v Ameriki, (we are in America), and this implies that she is free to make a choice for herself.

On the other hand, the short story, "Prvi maj na Šmarni gori,"³⁰ (The First of May on Šmarna Mountain), is a very humorous narrative of a one-day pilgrimage to a church on the mountain top. The humour is brought out by the wit and antics of four starving students from Ljubljana before

²⁹Frank Kerže, "Meri," Čas 6 (1920), p. 76.

³⁰Frank Kerže, "Prvi maj na Šmarni gori," Majski glas (1944), pp. 42-46.

World War I, as they attempt to cross a bridge without paying and later try to extort milk and bread from gullible housewives along the way.

This story, along with all of Kerže's prose, undoubtedly appealed to the Slovene readers because of the element of nostalgia evoked by the depiction of events familiar to them in their youth. Furthermore, the beauty of lyrical descriptions of rural scenes, gave Kerže's prose a quality not found in the stories of other immigrant writers.

3. Katka Zupančič

Katka Zupančič became involved in workers' organizations and cultural societies as soon as she arrived in America in 1923 at the age of thirty-four. She became a well-known writer of short stories and poetry and published her first works in 1929.

She added new dimensions to immigrant prose by giving a prominent position to women as protagonists and by emphasizing the psychological aspects of the characters' behaviour. Her protagonists are often those who have been mistreated or humiliated in some way and have developed emotional scars as a consequence. The background for the action is often a scene in Slovenia, particularly when the author deals with themes of cruelty to women, cruelty, which in her opinion, was taken for granted in the families of the lower class.

An expression of this theme is the story "Dota,"³¹ (The Dowry), published in 1932. It depicts the humiliation of a very plain young woman, Lenka, forced into a marriage with a rapacious man, who barter for an extensive dowry as a compensation for her ugliness. Her fate is sealed when her father adds, for good measure, his favorite productive cow.

There is another wretched being in this story, a little orphan, who is the bridegroom's shepherd. He so longs for some affection that he dreams outside in the snow that the new bride will be kind to him. As he suddenly becomes aware of the sleighs returning from the wedding, he jumps in alarm and causes the horses in the lead to rear and dash off into the fields. When they find Lenka in the snow, she is dead, but there is a smile upon her face.

The story is a criticism of fathers who were indifferent to their daughters' feelings and who ruled the household like autocrats.

The prose of K. Zupančič is concrete, vivid and full of earthy expressions which help to accentuate the pathos of the girl's position. As the father assures the suitor that Lenka would become a good wife, he points with his finger at his wife and says that she too had objected to being married, ". . . se je opletala in brcala . . .," (. . . she too swept around with her tail and kicked . . .). Then he adds conclusively, "Pred oltarjem se jim odkaže samo ena pot, vsa

³¹Katka Zupančič, "Dota," Ameriški družinski koledar 18 (1932), pp. 33-43.

druga se zagrede." (There is only one way open for a woman once she is in front of the altar, all other ways are bricked in.)

The cruelty of a father is also the theme of the story, "Žensko dete,"³² (The Baby Girl), in which the narrator reveals her bitterness about her deprivation of fatherly love. It is related in a very humorous manner from the point of view of a baby girl, and reveals how the father rejected her and her twin sister for being girls.

The rejection of the girls is manifest in the dialogue between the two godparents who are carrying the babies home from the christening and who are somewhat unstable from having stopped at too many inns along the way. Their dialogue is very humorous but the tone is bitter and pathetic. On one occasion, the godfather stumbles and the godmother cries anxiously:

Kaj? Si padel? (What? Did you fall?)

Ne, ne, samo radoveden sem bil, kako daleč je od nosa do. . . (No, no, I was only curious as to how far it is from my nose to . . .)

Zaboga! Ali veš kaj neseš? (For the love of God, do you know what you are carrying?)

Vem. Dve petih koles. (I know. Two fifth wheels.)

Later, the godmother urges the godfather to be careful because he has a human being in his arms, and he retorts:

³²Katka Zupančič, "Žensko dete," in Slike iz vsakdanjega življenja (Chicago, Illinois: Prosvečna Matica, 1946), pp. 72-82, (hereafter cited as Zupančič, "Žensko dete.")

Človeka, to tale črv, misliš da je človek? (Do you think that this worm is a human being?)

. . .

Ženska. Človekinja ne morem reči.³³ (A woman. I can't say it's a human being.)

In some of her stories, the author demonstrates how seemingly insignificant remarks or actions can cause lasting emotional scars. For example, "Ena sama črka,"³⁴ (One Letter Only), describes the humiliation of a boy whose stepmother deliberately called him Tonce instead of Tone. Further, in the short story, "Daj nam danes,"³⁵ (Give Us This Day), a prosperous immigrant refuses to donate money to the Slovenian War Relief because he remembers with bitterness how he was treated by others when he was a very poor boy. He remembers particularly how he had once picked a rotting apple off the ground and how he was accused of being a thief. Finally, in the story, "Moč laži,"³⁶ (The Power of a Lie), the author shows how thoughtless remarks can ruin a man's life. On the whole, the author criticizes people in these stories for being so eager to pass judgment on others.

³³Zupančič, "Žensko dete," p. 78.

³⁴Katka Zupančič, "Ena sama črka," in Slike iz vsakdanjega življenja, pp. 22-30.

³⁵Katka Zupančič, "Daj nam danes," in Slike iz vsakdanjega življenja, pp. 86-101.

³⁶Katka Zupančič, "Moč laži," Ameriški družinski koledar 21 (1935), p. 54.

Some of Zupančič' stories also follow the trend in immigrant literature toward criticism of the economic and social conditions current in American society. For example, in the short story, "Pri zadnjih vratih,"³⁷ (At the Last Door), she criticizes the bankers who withheld the money of a hardworking man, when the Depression started. In another story, "Nandek,"³⁸ she protests against the economic conditions which ruin the family of an ordinary worker and also attacks the hypocrisy of the clergy. Nandek is a little boy, dying of pneumonia, whose last wish is to have a piece of white bread, but dies before the wish is fulfilled. The father is in despair and turns bitterly against the doctors and the church. The author emphasizes the pathos of the situation by the ironic coincidence that Nandek dies on Christmas Day. The priest, in a happy mood, tells the father to be joyful, because " . . . angelčki v nebesih so se zveselili novega tovariša." (. . . The angels in heaven are happy with their new friend.)

The stories of this authoress tend to be lengthy; her language has the quality of fast movement and is accentuated by folk idioms and biblical allusions. On the whole, her writing is characterized by a light tone of bitterness, which is intensified when the author deals with themes of the low

³⁷Katka Zupančič, "Pri zadnjih vratih," Ameriški družinski koledar 19 (1933), p. 210.

³⁸Katka Zupančič, "Nandek," Ameriški družinski koledar 19 (1933), p. 36.

status of women.

4. Anna P. Krasna

Krasna's prose consists of only short stories, and belongs to the mainstream of immigrant literature, but contains a distinctive characteristic which enriches the quality of immigrant prose. Her stories are charged with a spirit of faith in youth and in its potential. Her heroes are meant to succeed for they are thinking men and women who are determined to control their own destiny. They rationalize their problems and understand the forces which manipulate their lives.

One of Krasna's first short stories, "Amerika,"³⁹ (America), is an excellent example of her optimistic philosophy. The plot is an archetypal journey of a young immigrant woman, Lenka, who searches for a place for herself in American society. As she moves about, she learns that one is free to make of one's life anything he wishes. Consequently, she is disappointed with her countrymen for not having improved their lot. However, in time, she realizes that the hope for a better life lies with the younger generation, for the young are not inhibited by traditions as are their elders, but rather, are confident and determined.

The theme of the story is freedom of choice. Lenka expresses this idea in a letter home to Slovenia, as she

³⁹Anna P. Krasna, "Amerika," Ameriški družinski koledar 18 (1932), pp. 110-117.

writes, "Ni tako kot doma, kjer mislite da navadni ljudje morajo tako ostati. V Ameriki ima vsak človek enake prilike." (It isn't the same as at home, where one presumes that common people must always remain the same. In America, all people have equal opportunities.)

Basically, the story is a criticism of immigrant society. The author attacks the people's passivity, their servile and humble attitudes and their blind faith in religion. The criticism is apparent in the very beginning when Lenka arrives in a dirty mining town and is met by her brother. She observes, ". . . Zdi se mi da živite čudno, posebno življenje tu; kakor odrezani od sveta . . .," (It seems to me that you lead a strange, peculiar life here; as if cut off from the world.). Servility is expressed in her brother's words as he explains that a city is not for them, because ". . . saj menda razumeš, da smo otroci delovnega naroda . . .," (you understand, of course, that we are the children of a nation of labourers . . .). The author attacks this attitude with indignation, through Lenka's determination not to be buried in the depressing little cosmos of her people.

Krasna shows a great deal of sympathy and understanding in her writing. Lenka rationalizes as to why her countrymen seem so passive; she imagines how they must have arrived in America full of hopes and dreams and how these must have been crushed by the realities of life.

Finally, Lenka is reconciled, as she watches children at work and at play. She is satisfied and happy and very optimistic about the future.

The style of Krasna's prose is vivid, matter-of-fact and almost devoid of metaphoric imagery so common in immigrant prose. There are many reflective passages expressed in a direct and rational manner.

Another short story which illustrates Krasna's special quality, is "Zibka pod streho,"⁴⁰ (The Cradle in the Attic), written in the form of a grandmother's reflection as she rummages in the attic for a cradle for her grandchild. The old woman remembers her young years in America, when she and her husband struggled to build a better life for their six children. They planned great things for their children and filled them with hopes and illusions. Now these children are adults, some of them unemployed, waiting passively for better times. She seethes with anger at the thought that they are not fighting for anything, that they have no cause for which they could express at least a vestige of will.

The setting of this story is in the years of the Depression and the theme of the story is a plea for some form of activity. The author attacks the passivity of the people as well as the economic forces which foster this evil. However, she concludes on an optimistic note, expressed by the grandmother as she lays her grandson into the cradle:

⁴⁰ Anna P. Krasna, "Zibka pod streho," Mladinski list (September, 1936), pp. 259-60.

" . . . zate pa nikakih iluzij, ampak voljo in zavest . . ." (. . . for you there will be no illusions, only will and knowledge . . .).

Krasna's optimistic and rational approach to life gives her prose a distinctive characteristic. However, this also tends to produce a negative result, for her stories sound more like lectures than creative literature. Conversation sounds contrived and there is little or no spontaneity or humour in the prose. Nevertheless, her stories possess enough literary merit to be included in this work.

5. Ivan Jontez

Jontez emerges as one of the most important literary figures of the 1930's. He was one of the founders of the literary review Cankarjev glasnik (Cankars Herald), and also its consistent contributor, as well as editor, until its termination in 1943.

Jontez' prose reflects the changing forces that were at large in the years before the war and the changes that these forces wrought in the lives of the immigrants. The author delves into the subconscious of his characters and analyzes their motives and reasons for their behaviour. Hence a new picture of immigrants emerges, one in which they are seen as being more prosperous and more 'americanized', with more time for leisure and introspection. Consequently, they turn their eyes back to their old homeland and begin taking

an interest in the questions of dictatorships and freedom. Accordingly, the prominent theme in Jontez' later stories is one of freedom, but the earlier themes are of destitution, exploitation and the early death of workers, common to the basic trend of social criticism in immigrant prose.

Of his earlier stories, two are included as being most illustrative of his attacks on society. In his very first story, published in 1930, "Nekaj vsakdanjega,"⁴¹ (An Everyday Occurrence), he portrays the death of a young immigrant in a mine disaster, blaming the mine owner for the accident claiming that ". . . pohlep njegovega gospodarja . . . ga je ubil . . .," (The greed of his employer . . . killed him . . .).

In "V črnem okvirju,"⁴² (In the Black Frame), the author attacks the false values taught by prosperous parents and the Mammons on Wall Street' whom he holds responsible for economic depressions. The story is about Tom, who has been brought up by an indulgent father, and hence, is irresponsible and wild. He changes when he falls in love and marries. However, his wife dies and he is left impoverished by doctor bills and the effects of the depression. He ends his days on a city dump in Chicago and dies from self-neglect.

Jontez soon turned away from the criticism of society and introduced new themes in his prose. In the narrative,

⁴¹Ivan Jontez, "Nekaj vsakdanjega," Ameriški družinski koledar 16 (1930).

⁴²Ivan Jontez, "V črnem okvirju," Ameriški družinski koledar 19 (1933), pp. 136-53.

"Razklane duše,"⁴³ (The Split Souls), he deals with the dichotomy in immigrant souls--their fate to love two countries and be loyal to both. The personification of this fact is a prosperous middle-aged immigrant, Aleš Prosen, who suddenly begins to long for his native land. He is compelled to take a trip there but is disappointed with what he finds. He wanders restlessly about the countryside where he grew up and wonders what he is searching for. He is happy to return home to America, but once there, begins to yearn for his birth place again. He accepts his divided loyalties and finds consolation in the fact that his children will have no such emotional conflict, for they have only one country to love.

The theme about the dichotomy in the hearts of immigrants became a popular one in immigrant literature and prompted Jontez to analyze its causes and effects in the article "Ljudje z dvema domovinama,"⁴⁴ (People with Two Countries). Here he explains the duality in the immigrant, saying that every man must feel that he belongs to some 'place'. The Slovene immigrant finds that his place in America is still too new to make him feel a part of the nation's history, whereas, in Slovenia he was part of a heritage that was ages old. Therefore, he feels secret ties with his old country, but is obligated to the new, because

⁴³Ivan Jontez, "Razklane duše," Ameriški družinski koledar 21 (1935), pp. 24-44.

⁴⁴Ivan Jontez, "Ljudje z dvema domovinama," Cankarjev glasnik 2 (1938), p. 10.

it gives him his living.

These ties with the native land became a common theme in literature, as the threat of war in Europe increased. Jontez reflected the concern of those in America by writing stories about war in Yugoslavia. In 1940, he published Senca preko pota⁴⁵ (The Shadow Across the Path) in which optimism is expressed about the ultimate success of those fighting for their freedom, when the 'shadow' of the enemy will be dispelled by the sun. However, the short story, "Jutro brez solnca,"⁴⁶ (The Morning Without the Sun), written after the war, is pessimistic. The author was unhappy with the government which was set up in Yugoslavia after the war was won and expresses this through the disappointment of the two main characters of the story.

Jontez uses the literary language in his short stories and embellishes his writing with beautiful descriptions of nature. His stories are full of action and conflict, and the predominant theme is most often love.

6. Etbin Kristan

Kristan was an excellent short story writer, poet and dramatist and contributed actively to American Slovene literature from 1915 until after the Second World War. He

⁴⁵Ivan Jontez, "Senca preko pota," in Senca preko pota (Chicago, Illinois: Prosvetna matica, JSZ, 1940).

⁴⁶Ivan Jontez, "Jutro brez solnca," in Jutro brez solnca (Chicago, Illinois: Prosvetna matica, JSZ, 1945).

was born in 1867 and began his writing career while still in Slovenia, where he was educated in the gymnasiums of Zagreb and Ljubljana. Just before World War One, he emigrated to the United States and there became prominent as a journalist, editor and writer.

His style of writing is realistic and his language is literary and cultured. His themes are based on social and political principles and hence his short stories are full of action and conflict. The dominant impression conveyed in his stories is an abiding faith in man's progress and the belief that justice will triumph.

Kristan's literature divides conveniently into stages and in this work, short stories from his later period, covering the years 1935-1945, will be discussed. These short stories contain themes similar to the themes of his earlier prose, but in addition, reflect the changes taking place in the attitude of the American Slovenes.

A variation on an old theme in literature, appears in the extremely humorous short story, "Nevesta iz starega kraja,"⁴⁷ (The Bride from the Old Country), in which the author gently satirizes men who still consider women as their inferiors. In this delightful farce, a wealthy business man, who mistrusts bossy American women, has sent home to Croatia for a bride, fully expecting a humble and docile woman.

⁴⁷ Etbin Kristan, "Nevesta iz starega kraja," Povesti in črtice 24 (Chicago, Illinois: Prosvetna matica, 1945), pp. 94-95.

However, his expectations are shattered when she appears; she is attractive, intelligent, sharp-tongued and totally emancipated!

A theme with social implications is expressed in the narrative, "Majkova uganka,"⁴⁸ (The Enigma of Mike). The theme is about isolation and loneliness in modern society, or stated in another way, about the lack of communication among men. The narrator of the story tells about a hard-working, reserved man, Mike, who frequents the neighbourhood bar where he is known by everyone, but is not intimate with anyone. When a seemingly insignificant incident occurs in the bar, the narrator is disturbed by a troubled look he notices in Mike's eyes, and determines to befriend the man. Before he has a chance to do so, however, Mike has killed himself. The narrator feels guilty and leaves the reader wondering if he, too, may be guilty. The sense of isolation is brought out painfully by the narrator's breezy and off-handed manner of speaking, when referring to Mike.

Kristan was also concerned with the psychological aspects of the immigrants' relationship with two homelands. This was particularly relevant immediately before the war, when American Slovenes began to worry about what might to Slovenia. The author gives the answer in the short story,

⁴⁸ Etbin Kristan, "Majkova uganka," Cankarjev glasnik 3 (1939), pp. 207-212.

"Nevidni most,"⁴⁹ (The Invisible Bridge), in which a well-established immigrant in America admits that he feels pain and agony at the thought of Slovenia, but he accepts his emotions and believes that he is a richer man for loving two countries.

The threat of war in Europe was of grave concern for Kristan, particularly as he felt an intense love for freedom and for justice. Hence, many of his short stories revolved about the themes of freedom and heroism, set against the background of war. These stories were published as a collection, Povesti in črtice, (Tales and Sketches) in 1945.

"Hudobežnikova povest,"⁵⁰ (The Story of Hudobežnik), expresses concretely the foreboding atmosphere prevalent in Europe in the uneasy years before the war. In this story, a young Slovene, Mirko Hudobežnik, who has just received his doctorate in Prague, becomes restless and indignant as he learns of the growing political repressions generated by Hitler's regime. He returns home to Ljubljana and joins the Reserve army, but feeling impotent and inactive, subsequently leaves for Spain. There he fights against the Fascists and in time is wounded and loses one eye. When he finally returns to Slovenia, it is with a sense of purpose, as he prepares for the coming struggle. He declares, ". . . dobro

⁴⁹ Etbin Kristan, "Nevidni most," in Povesti in črtice 24 (1945).

⁵⁰ Etbin Kristan, "Hudobežnikova povest," Ameriški družinski koledar 30 (1944).

da sem si ohranil vsaj eno oko. Treba ga bo, kadar bo zopet treba braniti svobodo - nemara doma v Sloveniji." (It is a good thing that I have one eye left. It will be needed when we will again have to defend our freedom - undoubtedly here, at home in Slovenia.)

Hudobežnik's determination to fight for Slovenia and freedom personifies the spirit of courage, which appears as the dominant element in Kristan's other stories. In the short story, "Sleci-obleci,"⁵¹ (Undress-Dress), a girl takes the uniform of a dead soldier, during World War One and fights alongside the men. This provides a humorous background for the theme of courage which is manifest in the humble figure of a ferryman, who rows people to safety across expanses of water.

The spirit of resistance to the Occupation armies in Yugoslavia, is manifest in the story, "Zorka."⁵² The story narrates the events which lead to the imprisonment of Zorka's lover, Tine Majstranov, for speaking out against the signed pact with the Axis powers and to his subsequent release, when collaboration is rejected. Ultimately, with Zorka's help Tine escapes into the hills to become a partisan.

In the short stories that Kristan wrote during the war period, the theme of courage is dominant and demonstrates the strength of man's spirit when he is fighting for freedom.

⁵¹ Etbin Kristan, "Sleci-obleci," in Povesti in črtice 24 (1945).

⁵² Etbin Kristan, "Zorka," in Povesti in črtice 24 (1945).

Kristan had always expressed a belief in man and in progress, but the strongest expression of faith is found in his stories of war. Therefore, it is fitting that the phase of the American Slovene literature discussed in this survey end with a discussion of Kristan's prose.

The immigrant prose had all along reflected the changes which affected society, and at the same time revealed the attitudes of the writers. Hence, a discussion of Kristan's prose is a suitable ending to the survey of the prose. This is inferred from the fact that his stories reveal that the bitterness expressed by writers about the shortcomings of contemporary society has dissipated but the desire to help build a better future for man is still evident.

In considering the body of prose as a whole, it can be concluded that its main characteristics are a realistic style and a critical tone. All writers are concerned about the individual in modern society and most criticize the circumstances which control his life. Consequently, the themes of the prose are rather narrow in scope and tend to be repetitious. In this regard, it is interesting to note that as the writers appear on the literary scene, they seem to conform to the trends already extant. However, after a period of time, which may be considered a literary initiation, they tend to become more individualistic.

The most common theme and the first to appear in each writer's prose is that of poverty and unemployment. When this theme is found in the prose, it is invariably expressed in a

cold and serious manner, accompanied by bitter overtones. Yet when other themes are treated, humour is often present in most of the prose, though it is seldom light-hearted in the prose of Krasna and K. Zupančič. Molek's ordinary prose is, of course, devoid of humour, but his satiric pieces abound in humour and hilarity.

The monotony of presenting the same themes, is broken by the manner of approach and stylistic variations of individual authors. Molek, for instance, tends to depict the most miserable conditions of men, and emphasizes their deprivation by excluding any beauty of colour or expressions of sentiment from his prose. Jontez and Krasna, on the other hand, portray reality as it is, including the bright side along with the dark. Kristan, however, tends to ignore mundane details and emphasizes the beauty of the spirit and the intellect.

The language also presents contrasts and similarities. Basically, the language of the prose is the common language of everyday speech, full of metaphors, folk sayings and biblical allusions, so characteristic of ordinary Slovene speech. However, Molek deliberately lowers the level of the speech by introducing words of a base and crude nature, though without lowering the literary quality of his prose. On the other end of the scale, Kristan avoids common speech and uses only a high literary language.

The prose writers discussed here are all accomplished in some aspect of literature. They have created a body of

prose which is characterized by quality, variety and a sense of purpose.

CHAPTER II

POETRY

American Slovene poetry of the period 1900-1945, represents the work of about a dozen poets. Several poets were considered by this writer to be of minor importance, having produced an insignificant amount of verse, and hence are not included in this survey. Seven others, however, were estimated to be more important as they were the major contributors of poems and set the trends in style and theme. Therefore, they have been chosen for discussion in this work, and are presented in the order of their estimated importance. Ivan Zorman is first, because he was considered the poet-laureate of the American Slovenes; he is followed by Ivan Molek, Anna P. Krasna, Etbin Kristan, Frank Kerže, Katka Zupančič and Ivan Jontez.

Ivan Zorman is the only poet in this group who wrote only verse; others were also writers of prose, and three poets, Molek, Kristan and Jontez wrote for the theatre as well. Although an assumption may follow inevitably that the writers express similar themes in their poetry as in the rest of their literature, no comparisons are made in this survey. Only the specific trends and the background forces which influenced the writers are discussed.

The trends and the background forces are clear-cut and obvious. The poets write about the common man in the modern industrial society and they express themselves in the language of every day speech. The language is full of concrete metaphors and interspersed with folk sayings and biblical allusions. Both traditional and modern poetic conventions are present; the traditional forms of ballads, sonnets and epics are used both in their true form and in variation by all of the poets, whereas the modern trend to irregularity in rhyme, rhythm and length of lines and stanzas is evident mostly in the poetry of Krasna and Molek.

The themes of this poetry have their origins in the changes brought about by the forces of industrialization and commercialism in the twentieth century. According to the poets, these changes were the cause of perversion of human values, the cause of wars and depression, and furthermore, the instruments in dehumanizing industrial workers. Therefore, the themes in the poems deal with such subjects as cruelty of man, the loss of Christian ideals and with greed and lust for power.

The tone of the poetry tends to be critical, and at times ironic and satiric. However, at times it is also lighthearted and optimistic.

1. Ivan Zorman

Zorman was unique among the American Slovene poets in that he was the only one to write about the thoughts and emotions of Slovene immigrants. According to Ivan Jontez, another poet, Zorman was the only 'true' Slovene poet among them, the only one to capture in his poetry the true essence of the American Slovene character.¹

Zorman's poetry is subjective, lyrical and melodious, full of bright colours, gaiety and movement. Nature is often called into play and participates actively in the experiences of men; it is connected, for example, with hope and anticipation in the awakening of spring, with fulfilment and joy in the glorious beauty of summer, and with pain and longing in the gloomy days of winter. This use of nature gives Zorman's poetry a romantic tone, which is often intensified by vague yearnings and secret longings for far away places and the lost days of youth.

Zorman uses a cultured and refined language, in contrast to the use of the vernacular by most of the other poets. He writes with sensitivity and compassion and reveals a deep faith in man and in his future.

The poet was a musician by profession and set some of his own songs to music. He was educated in American schools, but developed a great love for the Slovene language

¹Ivan Jontez, "Pesnik po Božji volji," Cankarjev glasnik 5 (1941-1942), p. 290, (hereafter cited as Jontez, "Pesnik po Božji volji.")

and culture as a result of an extended visit to Slovenia, when he was nine years old. There he visited the monuments of such famous Slovene poets as France Prešern, Simon Jenko and Simon Gregorčič. These visits so impressed him that he recorded in his diary: "V tistih trenutkih me je obšla misel, da je najlepše in najdražje, kar more človek v življenju doseči: biti slovenski pesnik."² (In these moments the thought came to me that the most beautiful and the dearest thing a man could reach in life is to be a Slovene poet.)

In fact, the influences of the Slovene poets mentioned can be traced in Zorman's poetry; in his lyrical poems of love and meditation, in his motifs of Slovene identity and in his use of the forms of the sonnet, the lyrical quatrain and the folk ballad.

Most of Zorman's poems were first published in newspapers and journals, but in time, the poet gathered them into anthologies and published them himself in Cleveland, Ohio. In 1919 he published his first collection, Poezije, (Poems); in 1922 Pesmi (Songs); in 1925 Lirični spevi, (Lyrical Poems); in 1931 Pota ljubezni, (The Roads of Love), and in 1938 Iz Novega sveta, (From the New World).

Zorman's poetry records the growth of the poet from a seemingly carefree youth, possessing a boundless zest for life, through years of growth to maturity, when he pauses to evaluate the position of the Slovene immigrant in America. The themes he discusses are innumerable, but they can be

²Jontez, "Pesnik po Božji volji," p. 291.

divided roughly into several categories, among the major ones being the theme of love, the theme of beauty, and the theme of Slovene cultural identity.

In his earliest poems, the dominant topics are love and beauty, and these are inextricably bound with the promise of youth and with springtime. Love is the sweetest when experienced in youth, as attested to in the poem, "Flori,"³ (To Flora), and should be tasted as often as possible in youth: "Kdor ljubezni v mladih dneh ne pije,/on zapravi srčno vso sladkost." (Whoever doesn't drink of love in youth,/squanders all the sweetness of the heart.)

Love is also connected with the seasons and the beauty of nature. In "Poletje srca,"⁴ (The Summer of the Heart), the love for a girl is compared to the eternal beauty of a summer sun, and in "Večna lepota,"⁵ (Eternal Beauty), the beauty of a beloved is reflected in the beauty of a rose, in the distance of the stars, and in the waves of the ocean.

On the other hand, the pain of lost love is felt in one's later years, which are symbolized by autumn days, as

³Ivan Zorman, "Flori," Čas 3 (1917).

⁴Ivan Zorman, "Poletje srca," Čas 2 (1916).

⁵Ivan Zorman, "Večna lepota," Čas 5 (1919).

in "V jeseni,"⁶ (In Autumn), in "Sanje,"⁷ (Dreams) and in "V slovo,"⁸ (Farewell).

In other poems, youth is remembered in old age, either with poignant longing or with feelings of gratitude. In the sonnet "Zarja mladih dni,"⁹ (The Dawn of Youth), the poet remembers how incredibly beautiful were the days of his youth and adds that this was so because he saw the world through the eyes of love. The use of the Italian sonnet form, with its characteristic rhyme based on the iambic pentameter and its division into an octave and a sestet, gives this poem an element of dignity and of universal importance. It implies that memories of love and youth are the property of all men, of all time.

Further, in "V jeseni mladosti,"¹⁰ (In the Autumn of Youth), the poet asserts that love and the hopes of youth mature into a rare and pure substance, once they are tried on the harsh road of life.

Finally, the poet shows his gratitude to the experiences of his own youth, in "Mladih let spomin,"¹¹

⁶Ivan Zorman, "V jeseni," Čas 5 (1919).

⁷Ivan Zorman, "Sanje," Iz Novega sveta (Cleveland, Ohio: Ivan Zorman pub., 1938), p. 46.

⁸Ivan Zorman, "V slovo," Iz Novega sveta (1938), p. 45.

⁹Ivan Zorman, "Zarja mladih dni," Iz Novega sveta (1938), p. 73.

¹⁰Ivan Zorman, "V jeseni mladosti," Čas 12 (1916).

¹¹Ivan Zorman, "Mladih let spomin," Čas 4 (1918), p. 1.

(Remembrances of Youth). For him, youth was the dearest gift from heaven, for it endowed him with deep emotions and longings which awaken in his heart every spring and regenerate his zest for life. This poem is particularly significant, for in it the poet speaks for his countrymen as he alludes briefly to spring in Slovenia and thus reveals how powerful are the ties with the homeland, and what memories the seasons bring. The allusion is expressed in the following lines: "ko tam v domovini se logi bude, / ko njive, livade čez plan zadiše. . . (when there in the homeland the woods begin to awaken, / when the ploughed fields spread their scent across the plains. . .).

The rhythm of this poem suits the idea expressed, that the years pass much too quickly and that each spring helps to dispel for a brief moment the bitterness of life. The rhythm creates the effect of swiftness, in the repetition of the anapaestic foot of two unaccented syllables followed by an accented one, as is evident in v *domovíni* se *lógi* *búde*. An iambic foot begins each line and tends to place special emphasis on some particular word; in the verse just quoted, the significant word is tam.

The choice of words is also significant. Not only does the poet use words of a high literary level, but he chooses the exact word needed to convey his meaning. For instance, the word tam (there), implies a far-off place, attainable only in dreams, but nevertheless indicating a concrete reality. Moreover, the poet chooses words for

their mellifluous sound as well as for rhythmic purposes. One such example is manifest in the phrase sleherno leto (each succeeding year), in which sleherno is used instead of the common word vsako, meaning 'each'. Sleherno has a more tender sound than vsako and in addition, its consonants are emphasized more than the vowels, thus creating the illusion of swiftness.

Zorman admits that life is full of pain and tragedy, but he asserts that this is offset by the beauty and joy that life has to offer each day. The ultimate expression of his gratitude for the joys he had received is given in the poem, "Zadoščenje,"¹² (Fulfilment), in which he expresses his thanks for the displayed wonders of nature, and for the knowledge of the presence of God. His love of nature was deep, as proven by one of the stanzas:

Radosten sem gledal zoro zlato,
solnca blesk, ko vabi cvetke iz dobrav;
bil zamaknjen v stvarstvo sem bogato,
do prirode gorško sem gojil ljubav.¹³

Zorman's poetry does not deal only with beauty and joy found in life, but also with the serious and the tragic events common to every day living. Such themes as war, loneliness and death recur regularly but are treated with quiet compassion and suppressed emotions and often with

¹²Ivan Zorman, "Zadoščenje," Čas 3 (1917), p. 104.

¹³(Thrilled I gazed at the golden dawn,
the rays of the sun which invite the blossoms
from the glens;
I was mesmerized by the wealthy creation,
I loved nature warmly.)

lyrical tenderness. For example, the theme of war is the subject of the poem "Potrjen,"¹⁴ (Conscripted), in which war is viewed in terms of glory by a young man who has just been inducted into the Army. He does not think of the consequences which may follow, but the implication is given in his sudden realization that he has to tell his mother.

The agony of poverty in the depression years is the subject of the poem, "Berač,"¹⁵ (The Beggar). Here the pathos of an individual who has lost all his possessions is made all the more acute, when it is revealed that he is an immigrant who had hoped to return to Slovenia in his old age.

Also present in Zorman's poetry are the themes of loneliness and isolation in society. The lightly humorous poem, "Matic,"¹⁶ (Matt), is about the tragedy of hidden loneliness. Matt is considered a solid citizen and a happy fellow, who is very popular with men but shy with women. No one seems to know much about him and everyone is shocked when the news is spread that Matt has hung himself.

Finally, the themes which make Zorman so truly representative of American Slovenes are those which deal with the inherent aspects of Slovene heritage. The topics range from light lyrical rhapsodies about the beauty of the Slovene language to the sober evaluation of American Slovene

¹⁴Ivan Zorman, "Potrjen," Čas 4 (1918), p. 1.

¹⁵Ivan Zorman, "Berač," Iz novega sveta (1938), pp. 82-83.

¹⁶Ivan Zorman, "Matic," Iz novega sveta (1938), pp. 84-85.

accomplishments in the new world. Praises are sung to Slovene women and to Slovene songs in the poem "Slovenki,"¹⁷ (To the Slovene Woman), and "Slovenska pesem na tujem,"¹⁸ (The Slovene Song in the Strange Land). The latter is an acknowledgment of the value of one's heritage for Zorman believed that songs were the most genuine expression of the Slovene character and he recognized their value in fulfilling the emotional needs of his people.

The poet alluded to the value of Slovene songs again many years later in the elegiac poem, "Na očetovem grobu,"¹⁹ (On Father's Grave). Here he remembers how much his beloved father contributed to the Slovene community with his music and singing. The poet hears his father's voice again, as it soars above the choir and fills the listener with longing: ". . . kako pričaraš radost duši vsaki,/ko ji budiš spomin na rodno vas. . ." (how you conjure up happiness in every soul,/when you awaken in it the memory of the native land.)

The form of this poem is an adaptation from the traditional ballad. The poem is divided into stanzas of four lines and the rhythm is regular, based on the iambic foot. The lines all consist of five feet or five feet and an unaccented syllable, and external rhyme is irregular. This form is suited to the subject matter of the poem, which

¹⁷Ivan Zorman, "Slovenki," Čas 3 (1917), p. 1.

¹⁸Ivan Zorman, "Slovenska pesem na tujem," Čas 3 (1917), p. 1.

¹⁹Ivan Zorman, "Na očetovem grobu," Cankarjev glasnik 2 (1938), p. 5.

is that of a son remembering life with his father and reliving the feeling of their close companionship. The ballad form creates the feeling of intimacy because ideas are simply expressed in a conversational style. Furthermore, the regular rhythm helps to produce the effect that memories crowd into the speaker's mind in a steady flow.

Zorman understood the ambivalence of loving two homelands and not really belonging to either. In "Izseljenec,"²⁰ (The Immigrant), he describes the vague yearnings of the immigrant, whose dreams are divided between the other side and this side of the ocean. His soul is restless, for he is the son of two lands, but, ". . . v obeh je zemlje sin brez korenin," (he is the son of both with no roots in either).

The immigrants loved America in their own way, and this is revealed in many poems, such as "Amerikanci,"²¹ (Americans), and in "Njagara,"²² (Niagara). In the latter poem, the waterfalls of Niagara are used as a symbol of freedom and a show of faith in the future.

On the other hand, love for Slovenia is best expressed in "Ostani še pri nas,"²³ (Stay with Us Longer), a symbolic poem which reveals pride and faith in the Slovene

²⁰Ivan Zorman, "Izseljenec," Iz Novega sveta (1938), pp. 94-95.

²¹Ivan Zorman, "Amerikanci," Pota ljubezni (Cleveland, Ohio: Ivan Zorman pub., 1931).

²²Ivan Zorman, "Njagara," Čas 5 (1919).

²³Ivan Zorman, "Ostani še pri nas," Iz Novega sveta (1938), pp. 76-77.

race. In the beginning of the poem, the infant Jesus looks through centuries into the future and is appalled by the evil ways of mankind that he sees. Suddenly he smiles, for he sees a brighter vision, that of an iron race, the Slovenes, whose people are true and steadfast. In the last stanza, the poet thanks Jesus for keeping the Slovene race safe and strong and begs him to remain with this race forever.

The effectiveness of this poem lies both in the imaginative presentation of the idea and in the slow, majestic rhythm of the lines. The rhythm is created by the regular iambic foot and the repetition of the vowels. An example of this is the line, "V bodočnosti On gleda rod jeklen," (In eternity he sees an iron race).

In addition to the assonance, words denoting nobility and might are used, in order to increase the majestic tone. A few examples of such words are višave (heights), Zveličar (Saviour) and orel (eagle); višave is effective because it carries the connotation of a vast expanse, and orel implies nobility, thus giving the Slovene race some stature when it is compared to this noble bird.

The culmination of Zorman's expression of love for his Slovene heritage is reached in "Slovani,"²⁴ (Slovenes). The poem is defiant and proud in tone, composed in the manner

²⁴Ivan Zorman, "Slovani," Iz Novega sveta (1938). pp. 65-66.

of the traditional Slovene folk 'epic', made strong and stately by the use of iambic pentameter and the heroic couplet. The poet addresses the founding races of the American nation and demands if they really believe that the Slovenes are nothing but an exiled, humiliated and despairing race. He defies this belief and outlines concretely and vividly the ways in which the Slovenes toiled to help build America in the mines, factories, and steel mills, and received only money in payment, and no gratitude or kindness. However, the attitude of others is immaterial, concludes the poet, "ni mar nam vaš napuh, ta dim begotni . . .," (we pay no attention to your arrogance, a fleeting darkness . . .), because the Slovenes have reason to be proud. They are the inheritors of an honourable race, and have participated in the building of America; hence, they have the right to share in the future of their new homeland.

I mi smo dediči moči, časti,
 i mi graditelji smo veličine
 prostrane naše nove domovine;
 i naša njena je svobodna pot,
 i mi kovači njenih smo usod.²⁵

Some of Zorman's last poems are elegiac in nature, especially those addressed to the American Slovenes of his generation. They record the passing of the old generation and the coming of the new, more American than Slovene in

²⁵ (We also are the heirs of power and honour,
 we also are the builders of the greatness
 of our extensive new homeland;
 and ours is her path of freedom,
 and we are the blacksmiths of her destiny.)

character. Nevertheless, the poems are full of faith and optimism, as is evident in "Rojakom,"²⁶ (To My Countrymen), and in the sonnet "O srca naša,"²⁷ (O Our Hearts). In "Rojakom," the poet begs his compatriots not to despair, but rather to continue to hope and to dream, because, "Če ni sanj, smo ptiči s strtimi peroti," (If there are no dreams, we are birds with broken wings).

This short poem is like a fragment of a broken thought; only the end is expressed, the rest may have been said before, in other poems. The idea is implied that something has been lost but people must have the courage to go on. A tone of consolation is present in the poet's plea to be brave, in the line, ". . . prinesite mi vse svoje sanje" (bring me all your dreams). The word prinesite is very effective in this context, for it allows the poet to share in the fate of his compatriots. The form of the poem is also very effective; irregularity in rhythm, rhyme and length of lines creates a feeling of spontaneity, which adds sincerity to the words of consolation given.

Finally, the poet addresses the young generation in "Mladi ameriški sloveniji,"²⁸ (To the Young American Slovenia) and bequeaths to it the only wealth possessed by

²⁶ Ivan Zorman, "Rojakom," Iz Novega sveta (1938).

²⁷ Ivan Zorman, "O srca naša," Cankarjev glasnik 5 (1942), p. 70.

²⁸ Ivan Zorman, "Mladi ameriški sloveniji," Iz Novega sveta (1938), pp. 96-97.

the old generation, the love of Slovene songs and good fellowship, and the appreciation of simple beauty. The poet bids the young farewell and hopes that they will accept the gifts of their fathers and find them a comfort when needed:

Naj vam izgine naših zmot spomin,
 naj spremlja vas le topli žar vrlin,
 slovenske pesmi in srca lepoto
 prelijte v novega sveta dobroto . . . 29

In these last poems Zorman reaffirms his love for the Slovene heritage and faces the future with confidence. His optimism and faith are characteristics found in all his poetry and no doubt provided a source of encouragement for the immigrant readers.

Other elements of his poetry which helped to build his fame as the only 'true' poet of the American Slovenes, were the use of traditional Slovene poetic forms and the melody of his verse. He made use of the familiar lyrical quatrain, the Italian sonnet, the simple folk ballad and the folk epic. He often alluded to the Slovene country-side and described the scenes in vivid colours and with words of a melodious nature, which gave his verse the lilting quality of songs.

²⁹ (May you lose the memory of our mistakes,
 may you be accompanied only by the warm spirit,
 Slovene songs and the beauty of the heart
 pour into the good offered by the New World . . .)

2. Ivan Molek

In contrast to Zorman's seemingly spontaneous lyricism, Molek's poetry appears taut, controlled and even contrived. It is a poetry of ideas and reveals a comprehensive sense of society and the inter-relationships within it.

The poet was deeply concerned about the welfare of man in the changing industrial society but he expressed his concern negatively, in vicious attacks on those elements he held responsible for creating the misery he saw about him.

The tone of his poetry is cynical, bitter, ironic and satiric. His poems are often symbolic and expressed in an episodic manner, controlled by a rigid economy of words. The language is that of every day speech, full of metaphors and folk sayings. The rhythm of the verse is very regular, based on the iambic or the trocheic metric foot, but the length of the lines and the form of the stanza are variable.

As implied earlier, the themes which are basic in Molek's poetry derived from the forces of change in the modern industrial society. The poet saw only suffering and misery in the wake of these forces and cried out against the cruelty of man, the loss of compassion, and the obsession with wealth. How appalled he was by the capacity for evil in man is exposed in the poem, "Iz spominske knjige,"³⁰

³⁰Ivan Molek, "Iz spominske knjige," Čas 4 (1918), p. 1.

(From the Book of Memories), which is a cryptic commentary on man's cruelty and insensitivity, told in a breezy and matter-of-fact manner. Concrete images and a steady pounding rhythm create the effect of a continual, never-ending pattern of evil, as seen in the second stanza:

On vešala je postavil,
 sam pripravil je vrv.
 Kupo strupa je natočil,
 bratsko lil je--svojo krv.³¹

On is 'he', man in general, who sins against himself when he sins against others. The evil deeds he does are turned against him, as stated in the last line quoted, and thus the evil in mankind is perpetuated. The poet cannot understand how man who is part of all men, can show so much cruelty to his brothers.

In the third stanza, man's entire past is suddenly transformed into a drama played on the stage, "Dramo so igrali, dramo divno, resno . . .," (They were presenting a drama, an extraordinary, serious drama . . .), but in its third act the actress who played the queen suddenly took ill and the curtain fell. The poet concludes in a flat tone that the drama is ended, "In tako vam drama divna, resna/je brez zadnjega dejanja . . .," (There goes your serious drama/without the last act . . .).

³¹(He raised the gallows,
 prepared the rope himself.
 He poured poison into the glass,
 he killed his brother--really killed himself.)

He implies that it doesn't matter much that the play had no ending because the audience isn't involved emotionally with the drama anyway and will forget it immediately. However, the use of the metaphors of 'drama' and the 'stage' reveals the poet's bitterness and anger about man's indifference to the suffering of others. This anger is intensified by the sarcastic and whimsical tone of the last two lines in which he addresses the audience, " . . . Oj gledalci,/muhe sitne, le nikar se ne hudujte!" (. . . O spectators,/cranky flies, please don't get angry!)

In Molek's opinion, poverty and man's inhumanity to man are inter-related and though this is not expressed literally in any poem, it is strongly implied. The deleterious effects of poverty are skilfully exposed as if in passing in numerous poems, one of them being "Pomlad,"³² (Spring). This poem is ostensibly a joyous welcome to spring but the poet exclaims that it isn't the buds and the green grass which herald it, but rather, it is the cries of excited children who throng out to play.

Na cestah in smetiščih raj na raj,
obrazkov bledih, udkov drobnokoščenih
mi priča, da pomlad je tu . . .
Čemu iskal bi trat zelenih? 33

³²Ivan Molek, "Pomlad," Proletarec (Chicago, Illinois: Yugoslav Workmen's Publishing Co., May 1920).

³³(On the roads and dumps a merry din
pale faces, thin bodies
testify that spring is here . . .
Why should I look for green fields?)

They are happy that the 'winter prison' (zimsko ječa), has ended and that they can escape from their 'gloomy huts' (mračnih bajt), into the sun. By the deft employment of a few well-chosen words, such as 'the road', 'the dump' and 'the huts', the poet implies rather than states the locality and the condition of poor people's homes. The squalor is brought out all the more effectively, when adjectives such as 'pale' and 'thin' are placed in juxtaposition with such words as 'spring' and 'merry din'. The wretchedness is further accentuated by the swift rhythmical pattern based on the iambic foot which conforms to the happy mood of the children, but its use is really ironical. Finally, the rhythm is broken in the second line of the stanza quoted, by the use of the word, drobnokoščenih, which carries the connotation of an 'emaciated' state, and forces the reader to pause on the word and its implication.

An indictment of war is present in the poem, "Čemu si rodila sina?"³⁴ (Why Did You Bear a Son?) which describes in graphic terms the suffering endured by a mother while raising her son. When the son reaches manhood, the mother hopes for a respite of her suffering, but she is foiled, for he dies on the battlefield. The mother's despair and the futility of war are accentuated by the last line which states that the son was born only to rot in foreign ground,

³⁴Ivan Molek, "Čemu si rodila sina?" Ameriški družinski koledar 2 (1916).

" . . . v tujini gnije." (he rots in the foreign land). The use of the word gnije (rotting) produces a shocking effect for it contains an air of finality, of utter disintegration, leaving no vestige of hope.

Another major theme in Molek's poetry revolves about the deplorable effect of dehumanization of workers and the perversion of personal ideals. The narrative poem "Proletarska ljubezen,"³⁵ (Proletarian Love), is a perfect example of the poet's protest against these manifestations. In it he satirizes people who place more emphasis on material possessions than on love, by telling the story of two lovers who keep putting off their marriage in order to earn enough money to buy a house. However, when they have finally acquired a house, they are old, tired and disinterested in love.

The action of this poem moves along swiftly; regular rhythm and irregular length of lines and stanzas help to create the effect of the passing of many years. The tone is light-hearted, suited to the nature of the subject matter, that of lovers' planning. Thus the irony of the lovers' fate comes as a cruel shock when the poet states flatly that the two are still meeting but are not interested in even holding hands, "roke vsak pri sebi držita" (they keep their hands in their laps).

³⁵Ivan Molek, "Proletarska ljubezen," Proletarec (May 1924).

In another poem dealing with industrialization, "Beračev ni,"³⁶ (There Are No Beggars), Molek laughs bitterly about unemployment and society's indifference to it. He brings out the agony of a beggar and the cruelty of the populace in a satiric way, by denying that there are beggars in the rich country of America. He points out a man standing on the street with his hand outstretched as an excellent actor who amuses the people rushing past him, "Pa se mu smejemo, igralcu . . ./Dobro zna!" (But we laugh at the actor . . ./He knows how to act!).

The poet attacks this insensibility and implies bitterly that men are morally responsible for each other, but they have relinquished this obligation, "In naprej hitimo mimo njega-/berači smo vsi!" (And we rush on past him-/We are all beggars!).

According to Molek, modern society has rejected the basic principles of Christ's teaching and has replaced them with indifference and hypocrisy. This accusation is evident in the symbolic poem, "Na cesti,"³⁷ (On the Road), which portrays Christ as wandering alone and in rags about the modern world. The theme of his rejection is expressed in a dialogue between the poet and the wanderer; the poet asks sympathetically, "Brez dela si kajne, prijatelj?" (You're

³⁶Ivan Molek, "Beračev ni," Ameriški družinski koledar 14 (1928).

³⁷Ivan Molek, "Na cesti," Proletarec (February 1921).

without work, aren't you friend?). The wanderer answers, "Brez dela, da - dva tisoč let. . .," (Without work, yes - for two thousand years). Finally, the wanderer silently offers his hand and reveals the pierced palms.

The style of the poem is admirably suited to the theme. The form is that of a simple folk ballad, with questions and answers, regular rhythm, repetition of words and no transition between the stanzas. The conversational tone and the simplicity of language are qualities one would expect in a dialogue with Jesus. Moreover, the very simplicity of the style intensifies the tragedy of his rejection.

Molek deplored the loss of Christian ideals of truth and justice in modern society, and attacked the practicing religion for being hypocritical and futile. This attack is manifest in the poem "Cerkev,"³⁸ (The Church), in which the emptiness of religion is symbolized by an abandoned little church on a hillside. In order to heighten the idea of futility and emptiness of religion, the church is compared to the old inert moon shining upon it, "Stara luna brez življenja/se v zidovje blede vpira." (The old lifeless moon/ leans palely against the stone walls).

The tone of the poem is contemptuous, brought out by the analogy of the church with the old moon and by the use of

³⁸Ivan Molek, "Cerkev," Ameriški družinski koledar 6 (1920).

the word mrlič (corpse) which has a base connotation. The poet concludes, almost with a sneer, "Dva sta našla se mrliča . . ." (Two dead bodies have found each other . . .).

Molek believed that people were too passive and gullible and too willing to follow unscrupulous leaders. He satirized such people in numerous poems, treating the same theme again and again, but with variation in form and structure. In "Čudež,"³⁹ (The Miracle), he makes an allusion to biblical miracles to bring out the satire; in "V muzeju - Leta 5000,"⁴⁰ (In a Museum - in the Year 5000), he describes the bewilderment of people of the future as they try to fathom the mystery of the inhabitants of the twentieth century, and in "Spomenik,"⁴¹ (The Monument), he describes the stupidity of people in a farcical manner.

All of these poems are told in a breezy, off-handed manner as though the poet was anxious to get the stories told as quickly as possible and move on to something else. The use of quick rhythm and a conversational style help to project this impression and also tend to lull the reader into enjoying what he believes to be a comic tale. For instance, in "Spomenik," a tyrant, whose subjects had made thousands of clubs and axes, asks the people in a sincere manner,

³⁹Ivan Molek, "Čudež," Proletarec (May 1920).

⁴⁰Ivan Molek, "V muzeju - Leta 5000," Proletarec (May 1921).

⁴¹Ivan Molek, "Spomenik," Čas 4 (1918), p. 1.

"Kaj bom z njimi? - vas vprašam jaz." (What shall I do with them? - I ask you.). Then he answers his own question and tells them that he wouldn't want them to get lazy, and subsequently, he breaks all the axes over their heads. Following that, the subjects have to make new ones again.

These last poems possess very little literary merit, though they are imaginative and amusing. Similarly, Molek's poems containing political overtones, also lack artistic quality. Included in this group are "Mesija,"⁴² (The Messiah), "Tujci,"⁴³ (The Strangers), "Bratstva znak,"⁴⁴ (The Mark of Brotherhood), and "Sejalci,"⁴⁵ (The Sowers). These poems sound simplistic and childish, for their rhythm and length of lines are much too regular and often there is too much rhyme. Furthermore, there is little substance in their content and the theme is vague and ambiguous.

The poem "Sejalci," (The Sowers) is a good example of low poetic quality. In the beginning, the poet addresses a field and laments its mistreatment through the ages,

⁴²Ivan Molek, "Mesija," Proletarec (May 1920).

⁴³Ivan Molek, "Tujci," Proletarec (March 1921).

⁴⁴Ivan Molek, "Bratstva znak," Proletarec (May 1928).

⁴⁵Ivan Molek, "Sejalci," Proletarec (April 1921).

Oj kako so te kopali,
 grudo tvojo suho so močili,
 premrvili, prerahlili
 in s krvjo jo namočili . . .⁴⁶

Then the poet urges the sowers to spread the seeds immediately, so that they can reap the rewards of their labour. At first the symbolism is clear, 'the field' is the 'the world' and 'the sowers' are its inhabitants; people are asked to help build a new future after the war. However, at the end, the poet juxtaposes the word proletarci with the word sejalci, and thus makes the theme ambiguous. The question arises as to whether the poet wants people to work for a better future, or whether he hopes that the masses will rise in a rebellion.

As implied earlier, poems of this nature are not of the same quality as Molek's other poems. They are often too topical to be of lasting interest and often very monotonous. However, the greater part of Molek's poetry contains some literary merit. The poet shows an ability to suit the form of the poem to the theme; he varies the rhythm in the line to produce an unexpected effect and he is particularly deft in creating satiric and ironic tones.

⁴⁶ (Oh how they dug you,
 your earth they soaked,
 dug with tunnels, turned over
 and soaked it with blood.)

3. Anna P. Krasna

Krasna's poetry contains several characteristics which help to set it apart from the rest of American Slovene verse. Though the themes in her poetry are basically the same as those of her contemporaries, her style is more innovative and original.

She writes in the syntax and idiom of ordinary speech and uses irregular rhyme, varies the length of the lines and seldom divides the lines into stanzas. There is generally much rhythm in her lines, but it conforms to the pattern of ordinary discourse, and hence involves the use of two or three metric feet. The most significant characteristic of her poetry, however, is the depiction of city life. Many of her poems are purely descriptive, recording the sounds and smells of crowded city streets and tenements.

Criticism of society is present in much of her poetry but the tone is not as intense with anger and bitterness as is usual in the poetry of her contemporaries. Rather, her poetry is pervaded by a tone of optimism which presages a better life to come.

Krasna's first poems appeared in 1931 and in keeping with the trend of American Slovene poetry, they portrayed the harsh reality of contemporary life. The effects of the depression, including poverty, misery, the humiliation of begging, and society's callous indifference are described in

such poems as "Usoda,"⁴⁷ (Fate), "Prepozno,"⁴⁸ (Too Late), and "Vezi,"⁴⁹ (Threads).

The poem "Usoda," is a bitter commentary on man's inability to eradicate poverty in a highly advanced society. If fate has decreed that two classes of people must exist, the rich and the poor, why can't intelligent man control this fate? The tone is obviously sarcastic, as the writer presents a scene, familiar from the depression years, of a long line of men with soup bowls in their hands, and at the door a smiling and prosperous looking gentleman, obviously their benefactor. The men are anonymous and passive as the opening lines indicate, "V dolgi vrsti stoje . . . Brezbrižno, vodeno jim gledajo oči . . .;" (They stand in a long line . . . their eyes are without interest and glassy . . .). However, as they shuffle out after having had their soup, they smile in gratitude at the prosperous looking gentleman, "Vračajo se . . ./Vsi hvaležni se ozirajo vanj," (They are returning./ Gratefully they glance at him,).

The sarcasm is directed at the gentleman, manifested in his magnanimous gesture of providing a soupline. It is intensified by the comment, as if with a shrug, "Toda kaj! Njemu je bila usoda pač mila." (No point in thinking about

⁴⁷Anna P. Krasna, "Usoda," Ameriški družinski koledar 18 (1932), p. 32.

⁴⁸Anna P. Krasna, "Prepozno," Ameriški družinski koledar 18 (1932), p. 75.

⁴⁹Anna P. Krasna, "Vezi," Ameriški družinski koledar 18 (1932), p. 105.

it! Fate was kinder to him.)

The scene is presented concretely, moving before the eyes as if through the words of a commentator. Such common verbs as stoje, (standing), se pomičejo, (move slowly forward), and se vračajo (are returning) tell the whole story.

In the poem "Prepozno," on the other hand, the fact of poverty and destitution is presented in an impressionistic manner. Hunger and indifference are juxtaposed in symbolic terms; the old, the unemployed and the broken, are ignored and left behind as the young rush by toward a brighter future. Those cast off are not named, only implied,

Glad se zajeda v meso, do kosti;
v vdrtih očeh je praznina;
razprte ustne požirajo veseli smeh
- mimo brzi mladina.
Stojte, stojte!
vpijejo razbičani možgani,
tudi mi smo bili veseli, mladi -⁵⁰

The scene presented in this poem has a spectral quality about it, creating the impression that hunger and emptiness loom about everywhere. The stress on glad, and the subsequent emphasis of all vowels help to intensify this impression. In contrast, the happy and carefree youth, rushing by without a glance, appears like a gust of warm

⁵⁰ (Starvation is burrowing into the meat, to the bones;
in sunken eyes there is emptiness;
open mouths gulp happy laughter
- as youth rushes by.
Stop, stop!
shout crucified brains,
we too were once happy and young -)

wind, invisible but tangible. This feeling is created by the change of rhythm in line four, and in the repetition of the consonants and the use of the word brzi, which denotes swift running and extreme busyness.

There are also contrasting tones evident in the poem. Despair and pathos are implied in the description of those outcast, whereas, optimism is manifest in the allusion to youth. The young represent regeneration of life and their rushing and happiness are a sign of their faith in the future.

The last poem of the three mentioned earlier, "Vezi," also deals with the evils of contemporary society and also offers the promise of a better future. The meaning is abstract, but presented concretely; the poetess states that when men do good in the world, they are united by invisible threads into a miraculous harmony, but, when they err, evil is unleashed like a belt of lava, which encircles the whole world. Yet, even at such times, a ray of hope is visible in the distance, in the direction of the sunrise.

In this poem, Krasna reveals an ability to transcend the concrete reality she sees about her, and to rise to the spiritual level of man's existence and thus get a more expansive view of humanity. This ability implies that she possesses the gift of poetic intuition.

Though Krasna was optimistic about the future, she never accepted reality with passive resignation. Instead, she asserted in her poetry that man must always fight for

his rights and face the future with courage and determination. A poem which manifests this philosophy is "Godba igra,"⁵¹ (The Orchestra Plays), presented in symbolic terms. The orchestra symbolizes the forces of life which control the destinies of man and the conductor represents an individual or a social group which uses these forces at will.

In the first stanza, the poetess states, "Prišli smo v tisočih . . ." (We came by thousands . . .), as if moved by the hand of a conductor, and we complied to the rules in wonder. However, now it is different, for we are resisting injustice and breaking the hold of ignorance.

Oblak sive glave na odru vzbesni,
in roka preti-
peha v globine
srce nas tisočih v podžganem uporu
kljubuje, se bori in lomi rohnečo moč
tmine.⁵²

The last word in the quotation tmine, an archaic spelling of teme, meaning 'of the darkness', is a common metaphor in immigrant writing. It symbolizes 'ignorance' and carries with it the implication that men have suffered injustice and humiliation because they were held in ignorance and weren't told of their rights.

⁵¹Anna P. Krasna, "Godba igra," Mladinski list 6 (1937), p. 173.

⁵²(The cloud of a grey head on the stage goes wild and a hand threatens-
pants into the depths
The heart of us thousands in a fired-up resistance
churns, fights back and breaks the might
of darkness.)

Inextricably bound with Krasna's demand to fight for a better future is her concern about youth. To her, youth symbolized knowledge, happiness, justice and all the unrealized dreams of the parents.

This theme is dominant in many of her poems, and is most succinctly expressed in "Companera,"⁵³ (Comrades-in-Arms). The background of the poem is the Spanish Civil War, in which Krasna and other poets were interested because they admired the courage and the will of a weak nation fighting against great odds. The poem is told from the point of view of an American boy who is intrigued by a photo which portrays two boys of his age carrying guns. He thinks they are playing, but his father explains that it isn't a game, but a real war. He further urges his son to take their purpose as his inspiration, for they are fighting for life and justice. The author's own voice is heard in the lines, "Ona dva sama sta življenje, mlado, tovariško, sodružno/življenje, ki koraka vedno naprej." (They two symbolize life, young life, which is constantly marching forward).

In this poem, the theme of war is present as a background, and in later poems, the Second World War is also reflected in Krasna's poems. A poignant little poem, "Pismo od doma,"⁵⁴ (A Letter from Home), expresses the tragedy of

⁵³Anna P. Krasna, "Companera," Mladinski list 1 (1937), p. 13.

⁵⁴Anna P. Krasna, "Pismo od doma," Cankarjev glasnik 6 (1942), p. 3.

war in Slovenia in a lyrical manner.

The writer addresses those who have left Slovenia and tells sadly that their regions are now very quiet, for many inhabitants emigrated earlier to foreign lands, and now the young have left for the hills to fight the enemy. The last stanza alone alludes to war and implies with a simple intensity the tragedy present:

Zaman dekline v noč prisluškuje-
stopinj pod oknom čuti ni . . .
Njen fant v gorah orožje kuje,
ker tujca meč le prebodi.⁵⁵

Here Krasna broke from her usual style of writing and used a variation of the traditional Slovene epic form, a style which makes this particular subject matter all the more relevant to Slovene readers. The rhythm is based on the regular repetition of the iambic foot, a fact which produces a stately effect, normally identified with grand processions. Both the rhythm and the choice of subject matter are elements of traditional Slovene national epics. The girl listening for her lover's step, the flight into the mountains and the preparation for war are topics which are integrally a part of the Slovene literature and a reminder of the Slovenes' heritage.

One other aspect of Krasna's poetry which should be given special attention here, is the portrayal of scenes of

⁵⁵ (In vain the maiden listens in the night-
footsteps under the window there are none . . .
Her man is in the mountains forging armour,
because the sword of the enemy pierces.)

a big city. Some of these poems were written in English and published as a collection, entitled Signs of Babylon, and others, written in Slovene, were published in the anthology, Babilonski stih.

Some poems are simply brief impressions of tenement life in a big city, others are used as instruments for the expression of themes. The short poem, "Mala Italia,"⁵⁶ (Little Italy), describes the scene of a noisy Italian community with a few concrete statements; for example: "Rešilna stopnišča so polna klepetajočih žensk/in otrok" (The fire escapes are full of gossiping women/and children), and another significant detail, "Preko vseh zanikrnih ulic se razliva/česnov vzduh," (Through all the neglected streets pours out/the smell of garlic). The description is based on very common prosaic language, yet the poem presents a comprehensive scene with a decided message. What makes the Italian community so distinctive is explained in the words 'fire escapes' and 'gossiping', implying the idea that Italians love close companionship and are happy regardless of the surroundings. Furthermore, the strong odour of garlic, present everywhere, is in itself very significant. It implies the low grade of housing, lack of ventilation and above all, a dependence on a low grade of food.

Krasna's talent in using ordinary words to convey extensive ideas is deftly displayed in this poem. This is,

⁵⁶Anna P. Krasna, "Mala Italia," Mladinski list 16 (1937), p. 138.

in fact, a characteristic evident in all her descriptive verse. In the poem, "Slumski dom,"⁵⁷ (A Slum Home), a few words suggest rather than describe what a slum area looks like, as is evident in the following two lines, "visoko od zgoraj pa se spuŝča do slednje ŝipe/mračni in sajasti zrak." (from on high air lowers itself, gloomy and full of ash - dust, reaching the last possible window-pane.)

Furthermore, in the poem, "Negotovost,"⁵⁸ (Uncertainty), the quality of life of a family is described through the joy of a little girl who has just moved to a new home, where she sees the sun all day. She is terrified that her family was given this home by mistake and that when the error is discovered, they will be sent back to the slums where the sun would never be seen again:

Če se ne bi potem nikoli več
 Nobeno jutro nasmejalo-
 če bi pod okni, kot prej, neprestano
 vse dolga dni tisto zatohlo in smrdljivo
 dvoriŝče ležalo . . ?⁵⁹

⁵⁷ Anna P. Krasna, "Slumski dom," Mladinski list 16 (1937), p. 100.

⁵⁸ Anna P. Krasna, "Negotovost," Mladinski list 16 (1937), p. 74.

⁵⁹ (If there would never again
 A morning smile-
 if there would under the windows, as before,
 constantly all the long days, that oppressive
 and stinking court lay?)

On the other hand, the theme of racial discrimination is discussed in the poem "Kompozicija o ulici,"⁶⁰ (A Composition about a Street), in which the poetess accuses adults in an indirect manner, that they teach children to be prejudiced. If left alone, children would solve their problems without prejudice, for the narrator of the poem says that whenever there was a misunderstanding on their street, ". . . so črne, bele in rjave ročice vseprek lasale . . .," (black, white and brown hands all took part . . .), and if either a black or a white mother brought candy, all hands reached for it, ". . . so se vse, črne, bele in rjave oči smejale." (all black, white and brown eyes smiled).

Finally, an example of Krasna's English verse will be given from the poems, "Tenements Sleep,"⁶¹ and "Flute from the Street."⁶² The former poem describes the brief peace between midnight and dawn:

From here and there escapes a tired groan,
Or stifled cry,
Soft wind takes on the sighs
As it passes by.

On the other hand, the "Flute from the Street," describes the sound of a flute played by a street musician,

⁶⁰Anna P. Krasna, "Kompozicija o ulici," Mladinski list 16 (1937), p. 66.

⁶¹Anna P. Krasna, "Tenements Sleep," Mladinski list 15 (1936), p. 337.

⁶²Anna P. Krasna, "Flute from the Street," Mladinski list 15 (1936), p. 337.

The wings soar high with spring,
 Youth, love, and flowers -
 Then drop as though through chasms,
 To pick up change from hard concrete
 Beneath majestic towers.

Krasna's poetry written in English does not possess the unity and the smoothness that is inherent in her Slovene poems. However, an analysis of all her poems, estimated to number over two hundred, would undoubtedly reveal a more reliable critical judgment.

Her English verse reveals relatively the same artistry as her Slovene poetry. Her style in both is original and modern, and her themes have universal appeal. She portrays the struggle for recognition of ordinary men and women, and records this in the belief that it is all worthwhile. Furthermore, she uses the ordinary language of speech and portrays familiar scenes, but she enhances her description by the use of a definite rhythmic pattern and well chosen words. These elements contribute a decided aesthetic quality to her poetry.

4. Etbin Kristan

Kristan is another poet who adds variety to the American Slovene poetry with an individualistic style. His poetry divides into stages, coinciding with the periods of time he spent alternately in Slovenia and in the United States. The poetry of his earlier years only will be discussed here, since it contains the nucleus of Kristan's philosophy of man--his firm belief that man has the strength to survive

in a world of adversities.

Kristan's poetry is metaphoric, obscure and expansive, presenting a picture of man as a struggling entity in the universe. This theme is presented in a language which projects a feeling of immense expanse of time and space, and is based on a rhythm that is ponderous and steady. Mankind moves forward like a mammoth beast, blindly and wilfully, on a route filled only with agony and despair. It is controlled by forces which derive from the primeval darkness and carry with them the terrible paradox of good and evil.

The poet was undoubtedly influenced by social and political events of his time, a fact which is made very obvious in his drama and prose. He describes the suffering he sees in the world and wonders why so much evil exists. Descriptions are found in such poems as "V novoletni noči,"⁶³ (On New Year's Eve), in "Ko raj je bil izgubljen,"⁶⁴ (When Paradise Was Lost), in "V megli,"⁶⁵ (In the Fog), and in "Nočni strah,"⁶⁶ (Fear of the Night). In "V megli," man is described as living in perpetual toil and despair, controlled by constant threatening forces, "Vseokrog se sučejo kolesa/

⁶³ Etbin Kristan, "V novoletni noči," Ameriški družinski koledar 4 (1918).

⁶⁴ Etbin Kristan, "Ko raj je bil izgubljen," Ameriški družinski koledar 4 (1918).

⁶⁵ Etbin Kristan, "V megli," Ameriški družinski koledar 6 (1920), pp. 140-141.

⁶⁶ Etbin Kristan, "Nočni strah," Ameriški družinski koledar 6 (1920), pp. 23-24.

in grožečo pesem kač pojo." (All around (man) the wheels are turning/and singing the ominous song of serpents); in "Nočni strah," life is full of horror, all the more terrible because man fears the unknown and doesn't know what to do, "Slutnja zrak je prepojila in srce je kakor led/kot da smrt je zapustila vsepovsod grožečo sled," (A feeling has permeated the air and the heart is like ice/as if death had left everywhere its signs of horror). Furthermore, in the poem, "V obupni uri,"⁶⁷ (In the Hour of Despair), the horror of war is described in terms of cosmic magnitude; "Ves svet topi se v neizmerni grozi . . ." (The whole world is drowning in a measure-less horror), and "nebo žari, ko da je tisoč ognjev . . .," (the heavens are burning as if with a thousand fires . . .).

Kristan blames the evils of the world on man himself. Yet he excuses man, for he has inherited his evil in the primeval darkness, and in his eagerness to progress, reached too far and paid for his mistakes by unleashing the gods of war. In "V obupni uri," it is stated that "Zabredel v zmote je človekov sin,/ker dedščina njegova starodavna . . .," (The Son of Man has lost his-way,/because of his ancient inheritance . . .), and " . . . Ponos ga je začaral v zlate sanje," (pride bewitched him into golden dreams). The poet admonishes man that he must not think that though he has reached the first step toward civilization that he has reached the top,

⁶⁷Etbin Kristan, "V obupni uri," Ameriški družinski koledar 6 (1920), pp. 146-48.

but that " . . . visoko se nad njim še vzpenja vrh" (high up above him stretches that top . . .). However, the sun is beckoning above the clouds and if man has the will, he can succeed: "Iz vsake zmote najde volja pot," (Out of each error, will can find the way).

Hence, Kristan gives the answer to the question he asks in "V megli," as to who will give man the answers, "Kdo razrešil bi uganke take?" (Who will solve such dilemmas?). The answer is that man has a spark in him, which is his will and his strength. This is expressed also in "Nočni strah," where the word 'spark' is used for 'the will'; "iskra se v mrakovih skriva in se v svojem času vžge," (a spark is hiding in the darkness and bursts into a flame in its own time.)

Thus, through the symbolism of his poetry, Kristan reveals his faith in man and delivers his message that man must continue to struggle and depend upon himself. Though the themes of the poems can be summed up briefly, the poems themselves are long and so full of concrete images that it is very difficult to fathom the poems' meaning.

Kristan expresses his ideas in long lines, in stanzas of regular length and the rhythm is based on a regular metric pattern and regular rhyme. The use of the iambic foot and the choice of words of a high literary level, give his verse the quality of dignity and majesty. This quality and his vision of mankind as an eternal force moving to its destiny, distinguish Kristan's verse among the poetry of the

American Slovenes.

5. Frank Kerže

Kerže's poetry indicates that it was written expressly to appeal to the generation of recently-arrived Slovenes in the United States. It was published in Čas, (The Times), Kerže's own literary review, which existed from 1914-1927.

The style of the poetry is traditional, based on the familiar folk ballad form using light quatrains and regular rhyme and rhythm. Furthermore, the subject matter is predictably topical, treating such topics as homesickness, love of nature and the search for values in a strange society. Though the poetry is technically satisfactory, it lacks imagination and emotional intensity, partly because the themes are treated in a superficial manner. Finally, the tone, which vacillates between optimism and cynicism, conveys the impression that the poet had not yet reached a degree of maturity in his personal convictions.

The most characteristic feature of Kerže's poetry is the use of nature as the starting point of all themes. For example, the poem "Večerni san,"⁶⁸ (The Evening Dream), offers advice as to how to overcome the longing for the native land. The poet states that one can find friends and happiness wherever he makes his home. The route taken to express this theme is a journey in a dream in which the poet

⁶⁸Frank Kerže, "Večerni san," Čas 6 (1920), p. 257.

visits his native village and its environs.

Nature is used again in the poem "Življenje,"⁶⁹ (Life), which offers more advice to the reader. The poet asks various objects in nature to tell him what life means, but receives contradictory answers. Finally, his heart tells him that one must find out for himself, "sam začrtaj smer in vzor/sam si zgradi pot in dvor," (you have to plot your own direction and goal/you have to build your own road and home.)

Furthermore, in another poem, "Le kopičite bogastva,"⁷⁰ (Gather Your Wealth), Kerže criticizes those who love material wealth and asserts that wealth for him lies in nature, "Moje ima vse narava,/tam altar je moj in Bog," (My (wealth) is possessed by nature/there is my altar and my God.).

His contempt for people who possess false values and are untrue to themselves is also expressed in the poem, "Hlapci,"⁷¹ (The Servants). He accuses men of being servile and weak-willed and he enumerates the vices of society in a series of flashing scenes. The poem begins with a gambling scene, "Roke se trese/gode zlato, pleše zavest," (The hands tremble . . . gold rules, conscience dances). A drinking scene follows, with the comment that man has lost his reason,

⁶⁹Frank Kerže, "Življenje," Čas 8 (1922).

⁷⁰Frank Kerže, "Le kopičite bogastva," Čas 6 (1920).

⁷¹Frank Kerže, "Hlapci," Čas 6 (1920), p. 61.

"pamet za njimi na vrvi," (Reason (drags) behind them on a rope). Another scene presents a picture symbolizing hypocrisy, "Grešnik brez greha/išče v štirih stenah zarje . . .," (A sinner without sins is searching for light within four walls . . .). The sixth and final scene is an allusion to the biblical "Golden Calf," to symbolize man's loss of reason and sense of balance;

Tele zlato
vodi množico slovesno
gori, doli, levo, desno.
Ljudstvo raja krog očeta:
tele zlato in teleta.⁷²

This poem has an added significance, for in it, Kerže is undoubtedly criticizing his compatriots for behaving in their traditional servile manner, and not asserting their individuality. This meaning is implied in the use of the words tele, (calf), and hlapci, (servants), both of which carry derogatory connotations; tele means a 'fool' and hlapci means 'tenured servants', almost slaves.

In addition to the rather common subjects he treats in his poetry, Kerže writes about the mystery of life. In some poems such as in "Rože moje,"⁷³ (My Roses), he deals with this theme lightly, but in others, such as "Ob morji,"⁷⁴

⁷²(The Golden Calf
leads the crowd in triumph
up, down, left, right.
People dance and sing around the father:
the golden calf and other calves.)

⁷³Frank Kerže, "Rože moje," Čas 12 (1926).

⁷⁴Frank Kerže, "Ob morji," Čas 12 (1926), p. 280.

(By the Sea), his treatment shows a touch of genius. The poem tells in allegorical terms that life goes on, like the rolling movement of the ocean, absorbing into itself the birth and death, of individuals and of nations, without leaving traces of their existence. The 'sea' symbolizes 'life' and the 'shores' and 'islands' are men. The sea moves forward and so does life, "zelena kri je živa," (the green blood is alive), destroying some people and healing the wounds of others, ". . . trga obrežje/rane zaliva," (it tears the shores/it heals the wounds). The sea seems to roll to its end as it reaches the sunset, but somewhere, somehow, its life is regenerated, and it rolls on to eternity. The last two lines sum it all up: "Breg, otok, povest zgubljena:/ Večen konec - večno rojstvo." (The Shore, island, lost tales: /Eternal ending - eternal birth).

This poem attains some depth in thought and treatment, but in general, Kerže's poems deal with simple topics, expressed in the relatively simple style of the folk ballad. Since the style and the rhythm are very regular, words are included more for their sound than meaning; hence, Kerže's poetry tends to lack artistic quality.

6. Katka Zupančič

Zupančič' output in poetry was small in comparison with that of the major poets, but it has a polished quality about it and is characterized by an individualistic approach to the subject matter. In common with other American Slovene

poets, she depicts the contemporary scene in her poetry and writes about the misfortunes of common people. However, she expresses the themes from the psychological point of view, rather than through a description of reality. It is the emotional response of the individual to particular events that dominates the poem and provides the theme.

The style of the poems is a mixture of traditional and modern conventions. Zupančič makes use of the traditional form of the ballad, as well as modern innovations such as irregular rhythm and rhyme and irregular length of lines.

The themes of Zupančič' first poems deal with the emotional casualties of the depression era, as seen in the poem "Spoznanje,"⁷⁵ (The Realization). The theme here deals with the bitterness which possesses men's minds after the realization that they had allowed themselves to be humiliated. They have been summarily dismissed from their jobs, after having long toiled steadily and without complaint. This came as a shock, but in time, they came to realize that they had been exploited and this led to humiliation and subsequently, bitterness. The worst blow, however, is the realization that the fault is due to their own servility:

⁷⁵Katka Zupančič, "Spoznanje," Ameriški družinski koledar 18(1932), p. 82.

A zdaj, ko ni pred nami stroja,
 krampa ni in ne kladiva, ko delo-kruh nas ne slepi
 zdaj šele so se odprle nam oči-
 Zdaj vidimo šele, da hlapci smo Jerneji, vsi!⁷⁶

Another current event reflected in the poetry of this writer, is the Spanish Civil War. A poem in the form of a lullaby, "Begunka poje svojemu otroku,"⁷⁷ (A Refugee Sings to Her Child), tells about the tragedies of war. The mother sings that she and her child are homeless, "Tuje prage briševa/tuje strehe iščeva," (Strangers' thresholds we two rub/strangers' roofs we seek); there is starvation, "Aja tuta nija/Lačna zver zavija (Aja tuta nija/Hungry beasts are howling); and worst of all, brothers are killing brothers (brata brat ubija).

The poetess was particularly sympathetic to the suffering of women and children, a fact attested to in the above poem, as well as in "Povest sirote,"⁷⁸ (The Tale of an Orphan). This poem reveals that children suffer emotionally when they are deprived of love. The narrator explains that she was brought up by strangers, and that though she didn't lack material comforts, she was starving for affection.

⁷⁶ (Now only when there is no machines before us,
 no pick and no hammer, when work and bread are
 not blinding us,
 Now only have our eyes been opened-
 Now only do we see, that we are only servants
 (to be discarded) like Jernej.)

⁷⁷ Katka Zupančič, "Begunka poje svojemu otroku," Mladinski list 16 (1937), p. 138.

⁷⁸ Katka Zupančič, "Povest sirote," Mladinski list 15 (1936), p. 65.

Hence, she missed being a child, "Na zgodnje jutro se večer je sklonil:/otrok sem bila že starica," (In the early morning the evening came/as a child I was already an old woman).

Furthermore, Zupančič also showed concern for the fate of Slovenia during the Second World War, and particularly, for the destiny of the Slovene people. Her poem, "V...",⁷⁹ (Victory) is a plea to the Slovenes to pause before accepting their fate on the eve of victory. She reminds them of their humiliating past, when they were at once humble, servile, and cruel to each other while passively following the paths that strangers cut out for them, ". . . pohlevno se ve/smo se med sabo tem huje suvali,/pa kimali tujcem oholim molče," (humbly, it is known/we kicked each other all the more fiercely/but nodded to strangers in silence). Fate had not been kind to them, but suddenly they were awakened by the threat of annihilation and the hold of the past was broken. Now, the people must purge themselves of their past digressions and face their destiny in a just and honorable way; "Usoda počakaj,/da složno si s krvjo operemo prage," (Fate, wait,/so that we carefully wash with blood our thresholds).

7. Ivan Jontez

Though Jontez became a prominent literary figure in the years before the Second World War, his poetry is comparatively small in quantity and narrow in scope. The

⁷⁹Katka Zupančič, "V...", Ameriški družinski koledar 30 (1944).

themes of war, the current topics of those years, are missing in his poetry, though they dominate his prose and drama. In contrast, his poetry is light-hearted and lyrical.

Jontez seems to be emulating Zorman, by concentrating on the expression of his personal sentiments and thoughts about life. However, he narrows the scope of his subject matter considerably, and deals mostly with experiences in love and metaphysical thoughts about man's being. He expresses his thoughts in light and flowing verses, and achieves a melodious effect by using regular rhyme and rhythm!

In regard to the theme of love, Jontez asserts in "Ljubezen,"⁸⁰ (Love), that love is the basis of life and must be enjoyed. It is so important that, "Še zvezde in pa lunin sij/ji vence spletajo . . .," (Even the stars and the moon's glow/build it wreaths). When the poet thinks about his beloved, as in the poem, "Njen portret,"⁸¹ (Her Portrait), he rhapsodizes about her face and particularly, about her eyes, "oči so mirne ko tolmun spokojen- /ko bi po dežju zrl v nebo umito," (the eyes are as quiet as the calm whirlpool- /which gazes cleansed after a rain into the sky).

In another poem, "Pričakovanje,"⁸² (The Expectation), he is waiting in ecstasy for his beloved, "V ekstazi že novi

⁸⁰Ivan Jontez, "Ljubezen," Cankarjev glasnik (1941-1942), p. 212.

⁸¹Ivan Jontez, "Njen portret," Cankarjev glasnik (1941-1942), p. 212.

⁸²Ivan Jontez, "Pričakovanje," Cankarjev glasnik (1941-1942), p. 172.

spet duša topi se,/drhti od radosti,/medli od sladkosti . . ."
 (In a new ecstasy the soul is already drowning,/it trembles
 from joy,/it faints from its sweetness . . .).

Jontez does not reveal his true potential in such poems as these love lyrics. His expression produces a stilted effect, for the lines are sometimes overloaded with adjectives and sometimes the use of an incongruous word produces unevenness. On the other hand, he achieves greater depth and quality in poems of a more meditative nature. For instance, in "Melanholija,"⁸³ (Melancholy), he experiments with impressionistic description in trying to portray the emptiness of the soul. The second stanza is particularly effective:

Sneg je po doleh.
 A po snegu praj in saje.
 Misli so mi težke, sive;
 mrtev je moj smeh.⁸⁴

Further, in the poem, "Bog,"⁸⁵ (God), Jontez reveals his ability to use the sonnet form as he expresses his thoughts of a metaphysical nature. This poem comprises two sonnets, related by a continuous idea. In the beginning of the first sonnet, the poet tells that he had a concrete picture of God when he was little, but that picture was

⁸³ Ivan Jontez, "Melanholija," Cankarjev glasnik 3-4 (1939-1940), p. 161.

⁸⁴ (Snow lies in the valleys.
 On the snow dust and ashes.
 My thoughts are heavy and grey;
 dead is my laughter.)

⁸⁵ Ivan Jontez, "Bog," Cankarjev glasnik 6 (1942), p. 285.

replaced by a vague intuitive feeling. The second sonnet begins with the last line of the previous sonnet, "Le duh jo čuti, se z njo v eno zлива . . .," (The soul feels it, and is blended with it into one . . .). This feeling of nearness to God can be found in the zephyrs of spring, in the shining stars and in the raging tempests, all of which are manifestations of a planned harmony by an unknown Power. For this reason the poet looks for God in the following place:

marveč pod nebom v dalje razprostrem,
kjer duh, sproščen vezi, nalik nevesti
pređa objemu se neznane Sile.⁸⁶

Jontez adds an element of simple beauty to his verse by using a more elevated language than that of the common speech. Furthermore, his tendency to write poems of a meditative nature, expressed in words of a tender and gentle tone, adds a quality of lyricism and melody to his poetry.

In concluding this chapter on poetry, it must be stated that it is a remarkable achievement for such a small group of immigrants to have produced a relatively large body of poetry, containing some elements of quality and technical diversity. The poetry is, on the whole, relevant, for it deals with the basic problems of ordinary men in a developing and changing society. In addition, it possesses an added

⁸⁶ (. . . under the sky stretching into the distance, where the spirit, carried by threads, resembling a bride gives itself up to the embrace of an unknown Power.)

dimension, in that it portrays the life of a very small ethnic group in its struggle to adapt itself to a strange land.

It is interesting to note that the poets of this group each had firm individualistic styles and convictions which give the poetry variety and interest. Though the poets write about the same topics, they approach their subjects in contrasting ways. Their similarities with modern American and English poets are also numerous. For instance, the theme of loneliness, as found in Zorman's "Matic," is found similarly treated by E. A. Robinson, in "Richard Cory;" the religious hypocrisy as evident in Molek's concrete expressions is also found in the poetry of Edna St. Vincent Millay, as well as in the poetry of others; the passive and spineless attitude of modern man, portrayed so imaginatively by Molek is satirized also by others, particularly T. S. Eliot; and finally, concrete descriptions of city scenes in Krasna's poems are reminiscent of scenes in the poetry of Ezra Pound and Carl Sandburg. Moreover, there are similarities in poetic forms, for the American poets used versions of the ballad form and the sonnet along with forms of free verse, as did the immigrant poets.

Countless numbers of similarities could be cited, but the topic is too extensive to be dealt with here. However, the mention of these similarities is meant to emphasize the fact that relevance and literary value can be found in the poetry of the American Slovenes.

CHAPTER III

DRAMA

Of the literary genres in American Slovene literature, drama presents the smallest field of literary activity. It comprises the works of only three dramatists, Ivan Molek, Etbin Kristan and Ivan Jontez; all three prominent writers of prose and poetry as well.

It is evident that the same factors which were instrumental in shaping the style and purpose of these writers' prose and verse also gave the impetus to their dramatic writing. All three followed the trend in American Slovene literature to write about contemporary society and to portray the scene in a realistic manner. Furthermore, the tone of their plays is critical, intended to stir apathetic minds and awaken an awareness of reality. Accordingly, the themes derive from the current social and political changes of the times.

All three writers reveal dramatic talent in their writing of plays. Each exhibits distinguishing characteristics in style, form and tone. Ivan Molek, for instance, focuses on the dark and evil side of contemporary society and arrests the flight of time to emphasize the misery of the present, whereas Kristan rises above the temporary and the immediate

and projects a sense of historical progression and of lasting values. Molek presents only the negative side of society and individuals in an objective and stark manner, using the barest number of details. Kristan, on the other hand, allows both the good and the bad qualities of men and society to be revealed by means of intellectual discussions and emotional behaviour.

Ivan Jontez also reveals the good and the bad in the contemporary society, but tends to treat the current happenings as being temporary and as intimations of what is to come. He is optimistic that the changes which are in progress will produce a better world. His characters reveal themselves (intellectually and emotionally) as do those of Kristan's, and they do so in a literary language characterized by beautiful descriptions of nature.

All three dramatists wrote serious dramas with tragic overtones. Molek and Kristan also added a note of satire to some of the plays, but Molek alone specialized in pure satiric pieces and farces.

It is significant to note that the writing for the theatre was a response to the demands made by the American Slovene public. Stage presentations were an indispensable medium of social and cultural interaction for the immigrants, and drama groups were established regularly in affiliation with the numerous fraternal and benefit societies. The activities of many drama groups were never recorded, but that - clubs were definitely active in 1932, and

"Prosvetna matica," set up by the newspaper Proletarec, held a rich supply of plays and skits.¹

The three dramatists responded to the need for plays whenever it was necessary to fill a void. At first, in the early years of 1900, Kristan's plays written in Slovenia were made available for staging, as well as many foreign plays translated by Molek. Around 1915, Molek began writing for the theatre himself, among his first works being the comedy, Nevtralni amor, (The Love of Neutrality) published in 1917. Just before the First World War, Kristan immigrated into the United States and continued his writing and publishing there, producing during the war a popular drama, Ne da se prevariti, (We Will Not be Deceived). In 1920, he returned to Slovenia where he remained for many years, leaving Molek alone to fill the role of resident dramatist. Molek continued his dramatic writing beyond 1945, and created over thirty plays and many short skits.

Kristan's drama began appearing again in the thirties, after his return from Slovenia. He became a collaborator and an editor of the journal, Cankarjev glasnik, which was established in 1937 to regenerate interest in literature among the immigrants and to revitalize immigrant writing. One of his first contributions to this journal was the play, Ob zadni uri, (In the Last Hour), which will be discussed later in this chapter.

¹Frank Zaitz, "Delovanje klubov JSZ na dramskem polju," Majski glas (1945), p. 52.

Ivan Jontez, the first editor of Cankarjev glasnik, also began writing plays at this time, and added a refreshing element to the field of immigrant drama. His plays reflect the changing mood of the American Slovenes who found a new sense of identity and pride in being Americans in the years preceding World War Two and later in the entry of America into the war. They became interested in the welfare of Europe and Yugoslavia and Jontez responded to this mood by writing plays with war themes. One of these is Z vero v vstajenje, (With Faith in Resurrection), which is set in 'occupied' Yugoslavia and deals with the courage of 'resistance' fighters. The dominant impression projected by this play is the belief that justice will triumph and tyranny will be destroyed.

Unfortunately, a detailed discussion of Jontez' drama cannot be included in this survey as no original texts have been available to this writer for specific reference. However, some of his works can be found in the editions of Cankarjev glasnik from 1937 to 1942.

Molek's dramatic writing will be discussed first in this survey for the reason that he wrote more than Kristan. Furthermore, his writing was a product of his experiences and education in the United States, and not influenced by any previous educational process in Slovenia.

1. Ivan Molek

The dramatic form of expression seems a most natural one for Molek, since he was a man of action with a predilection for compressed thought and speech. Had he devoted his time to drama alone, he could have undoubtedly attained the highest honours as a dramatist. As it was, however, he used his drama solely as a convenient variant of expression in his fight against social injustice, ignorance and bigotry.

He was constantly on the attack, either satirizing the foibles of men or exposing iniquities in the social and economic systems. In order to avoid the pitfall of monotony, he varied the use of literary forms to suit the gravity of his subject matter. An interesting pattern is found to exist when numerous dramatic pieces are grouped by themes. When he attacks human weaknesses which he believes to be detrimental to progress, he uses farce and satire, often disguised in allegorical terms. On the other hand, when he exposes the hardships of common men, he attacks the wealthy bosses of industry whom he holds responsible for creating the evils in society. Such themes he presents in dark and sombre dramas, shocking and numbing in their effect. Into this category fall such pieces as V Vrtinec, (The Whirlpool), Poročná noč, (The Wedding Night), and Hrbtenica, (The Backbone), all to be analyzed later.

Taken as a whole, Molek's drama follows the classical tradition with a strict adherence to the unities of time,

place and action. There exists a singleness of purpose toward which everything is directed and no detail is included which does not contribute to that purpose. The style of the plays is realistic and rational. The conflict is presented clearly and the action follows a cause and effect development to the climax. Crisis and catastrophe follow inevitably and resolve in logical and expected endings.

The dominant element in Molek's plays is conflict. The relationship between the character and the source of his conflict is clearly presented in the exposition but after this, the character is left alone, cruelly isolated to work out his own fate. This isolation is meant to parallel the isolation of common man in everyday life, where he is left alone to flounder in ignorance and poverty, with no recourse to help and justice.

The main conflict of the protagonist is generally moral and of such magnitude that the protagonist finds himself unequal to the contest. It is significant that he is an ordinary man whose virtues are simplicity and honesty and whose failure lies in his inability to cope with unscrupulous adversaries. His struggle is futile and he falls victim to the machinations of the rich and powerful in society.

Molek seldom sympathizes with the victims in his plays, but rather, treats them with contempt and indignation for being weak. He implies that they fail only because they refuse to listen to progressive minds who want them to shed their traditional shell of passivity and servility. On the

other hand, he implies tendentiously, that those who fight back resolutely will ultimately be successful.

In his work, Molek reflects the influence of many world famous dramatists. He was well acquainted with European drama since he did numerous translations for the stage, among them, Zdravnik proti svoji volji, (Doctor in Spite of Himself), and Bourgeois Gentilhomme, by Molière; Moč teme, (The Power of Darkness) by Count L. Tolstoy; Revizor, (The Inspector General) by Nikolai V. Gogol; Na dnu, (The Lower Depths) by Maxim Gorky and Tkalci, (The Weavers) by Gerhart J. R. Hauptman.

It is interesting to note that influences of these dramatists are evident in Molek's writing. In his comedies are elements reminiscent of Molière, specifically, the sharp wit, the ridicule of social behaviour, the use of situation comedy and the controlled use of humour. The resemblance to Tolstoy and Gorky lies in the symbolic use of darkness and the concentration on the weak and the derelict in society. There is also the archetypal plot of wandering characters, in the tradition of Gogol, and the situations they encounter, which provide much scope for satiric laughter.

In addition, Molek's writing reveals the influence of the important Slovene writer and dramatist, Ivan Cankar, (1867-1918). There is a similarity between the two in the choice of themes and in the use of satiric laughter. Cankar, like Molek, criticized and ridiculed his people, because he loved them deeply and wanted them to protest against their

foreign masters. His style was vigorous and symbolic and his themes dealt with men's rights and social justice. Among his plays performed in America were, Kralj na Betajnovi, (The King at Betajna), and Hlapci,² (The Servants). Molek, however, did not inherit the lyricism which characterizes Cankar's writing. No lyrical overtones enhance his drama, and the result is a harsh and barren style, which conveys the impression in the preliminary reading that Molek lacked humanity and emotional involvement. This impression is quickly dispelled, however, when a deeper study is pursued.

It has been noted earlier that Molek chose the farce and the allegory as the most effective instruments of attack on individuals. The recipients were generally singled out for their ideological convictions or for lack of them. Molek continued to berate his enemies and friends for over thirty years, a fact which was taken for granted by his contemporaries, as recorded by Frank Zaitz in a historical article, "Iz nase zgodovine."

²Frank Zaitz, "Slovenska kulturna društva v Zedinjenih Državah," Ameriški družinski koledar 19 (1933) pp. 60-66.

Kadar je bilo treba deklamacij k jubilejem SNPJ ali enodejanke v isti namen, je bilo pribito, da naj to delo izvrši Ivan Molek. Pisal je simbolične slike in članke vzgojnega in agitacijskega značaja za SNPJ -- satire o nasprotnikih, bodrilne klice somišljenikom -- in tako je Ivan Molek vršil delo, ki bi brez njega ne bilo izvršeno.³

Several dramatic pieces will be analyzed here as representatives of farces and allegories. One of them is "Čez reko,"⁴ (To Cross the River), in which a group of travellers is presented standing on the shore of a river, wondering how to get across. After a time, another traveller joins them and offers several alternatives, one being that they try to swim across, another, that they build a boat, and finally, that they borrow the boat which he finds for them moored in the bushes. None of his suggestions are accepted, however, for each has prohibitive implications. Trpec, (He Who Suffers), vetoes the swimming because it takes too much effort ("je prenaporno delo"); and as for building a boat, that would involve not only labour, but also effort in rowing it.

³(Whenever there was a need for declamations for anniversaries of SNPJ or for one Act plays for this same purpose, it was decided that Ivan Molek must do the work. He wrote symbolic pictures and articles of an educational and tendentious nature for SNPJ -- satires about his opponents, encouraging calls for support from sympathizers -- and thus accomplished a task which would not have been done without him.)

⁴Ivan Molek, "Čez reko," Proletarec (April 1919), pp. 14-16.

Another traveller, Gorečnik, (The Burning One), decides that using the boat is reactionary, old-fashioned, and no doubt a trap set just for them. He reasons the situation out, saying little in high sounding phrases: "--logično je, da je bil čoln prej tukaj, kakor mi in iz tega fakta sklepam, da izgleda vsa stvar kakor zvito nastavljena past --," (it can be concluded logically that the boat was here before we arrived, and from this fact I deduce that the whole thing smells like a cunningly laid trap --).

Duševid, (The Enthusiastic One), on the other hand, is ready to compromise before using the boat; first he proposes to paint it another colour; secondly, he suggests that a few holes be drilled in the bottom, and thirdly, that they leave the oars on the shore. Other equally vacuous suggestions follow until it is noticed that the boat has drifted away and the stranger has disappeared. Consequently, Vrelokrv, (The Hotblooded One) impulsively jumps into the river to swim across, and a woman, Svitana, who professes to hold neutral views, gazes upon the water, completely oblivious of their problems. She sighs sadly and wonders why they had disturbed the tranquility of the river.

The allegorical nature of this play is easy to interpret, since the human failings Molek is attacking are exteriorized and given suitable names. On the surface, the play can be accepted as a revelation of human nature which remains the same throughout the ages. The message can be construed as being the moral that man must seize an opportunity

when he finds it. In actuality, the play is a burlesque of the stagnancy in which the immigrants were caught due to their obstinate adherence to traditional and reactionary beliefs and their hostility to anything new.

Furthermore, a subjective note of bitterness and anger seems to be present in this satiric play, as if Molek were justifying his position as social critic. The stranger reproaches the travellers by saying; "Dobro vam želim, a vi mi grozite, da me vržete v vodo. Zakaj?" (I wish you well, but you threaten to throw me into the water. Why?). It is interesting to note that this tone of bitterness echoes Cankar's reproach to the Slovene people just a year or two earlier.

As a farce, this play is a masterpiece. The use of language is tightly controlled and much is expressed by the use of understatement so as to prevent a degeneration of the humour to the level of the burlesque. Figurative devices of hyperbole, apostrophe and antithesis help to provide the humour and at the same time intensify the tone of satire and irony. When Duševič realizes that the travellers are too stupid to seize an opportunity when they see one, he apostrophizes with exaggerated awe: "Imposibilizem, strašne so tvoje žrtve!," (Impossibility, terrible is the number of your victims!). Similarly, Vrelokrv exaggerates when he contends that a boat is a tool of retrogression, and that the generations of the past who used such tried and practical means of deliverance were tyrants, " . . . naši tirani, ki so

nas vse življenje priklepali na skale v gorah . . ." (. . .
our tyrants, who kept on chaining us all our lives onto
sheer cliffs of mountains . . .).

Furthermore, there is recourse to the use of pretentious and lofty language when the speaker discusses trivialities, or when he has nothing worthwhile to say. At one point, Duševič requests:

Dovolite, da vam pojasnim stvar z znanstveno-filozofičnega stališča naših učiteljev, katerih principe vsaj priznavamo, da so sredstva za dosego našega cilja.⁵

Finally, in contrast to the high sounding phrases, the author deploys expressions in the vernacular, such as " . . . Zakadi se z brega in štrbukne v globočino . . ." (. . . he throws himself from the shore and tumbles into the depth).

A similar theme and style are found in the allegory "Slepici,"⁶ (The Blind Ones). The story is about a group of blind wanderers who are lost in the wilderness. As they feel about for a vestige of a road they argue as to whose fault it is that they are lost. When one of them finds a path, the others are skeptical and demand to know where it will lead them, but he retorts that that is immaterial as long as they

⁵ (Permit me to enlighten you on the subject from the renowned-philosophical premise of our teachers . . . whose precepts we all recognize and accept, so that the means of attainment of our goal . . .)

⁶ Ivan Molek, "Slepici," Proletarec (April 1921), pp. 19-20.

follow a ".novo staro pot . . ." (a new old way). After more bickering, Joško convinces them not to be choosy but to follow any road then can, ". . . Ne bodimo izbirčni s stezami, dokler nimamo široke ceste!" (Let us not be choosy about paths until we find a wide highway!). However, he retracts his encouragement in the end and concludes cynically that it really doesn't matter where it leads, because he knows ". . . da pridemo spet nazaj sem . . .," (. . . that we will come back again to this spot . . .).

This allegory can be analyzed on several levels. First, it can be accorded universal significance by interpreting it as a criticism of Everyman, the common man, whose lack of initiative and will subjects him to the vagaries of ignorant leaders. On another level, it can be discussed as an attack on the aimless and ineffectual progress of immigrants, a failing which Molek blamed on such enemies as traditionalists and reactionaries, including, among others, the clergy and sentimental nationalists.

Finally, the interpretation on the highest level can be taken as an expression of Molek's personal disappointment that there was no social revolution in the wake of the World War. A perfect opportunity was lost because of apathy and lack of leadership. In the story, Marko accuses the others, that ". . . Imeli ste cesto, pa ste jo zafrčkali . . .," (. . . You had the way, but you squandered it . . .), and Dako retorts: "In ti? Kje si bil ti, ko je zmanjkalo ceste?" (And you? Where were you when the road disappeared?).

Later, Marko asserts that they are all guilty: "Vsi smo krivi ali nobeden!" (We are all to blame, or else nobody!).

Interpretations with political overtones can be justified by the fact that Molek's political and social views were revealed in numerous polemical articles and editorials published in the same newspapers and journals as his literary works. However, it is a credit to his artistic talent that in much of his drama his political views are unobtrusive.

In Molek's later allegories the tone becomes more serious. One example is "Zidarji tešejo,"⁷ (The Bricklayers Are Doing Carpentry), in which Molek satirizes people who talk a lot but do nothing. The story is about a number of workers with the wrong kinds of tools who prepare to build a house, but have no plans nor materials. As they argue as to what comes first, a plan or materials, the news-monger, Marina Kolina wanders by with a basketful of news, or rather, rumours. As she pulls out the latest tidbits, the workers begin to realize that their building was obsolete before it was begun and they sadly pack up their tools and leave to find work in other trades.

The situation in the story is farcical but the humour is not always lighthearted. The symbols used are easy to interpret; the building symbolizes the foundation of the new Europe to be established after the war, and Marina's news represents the idealistic planning of some Americans. Molek

⁷Ivan Molek, "Zidarji tešejo," Majski glas (1943), pp. 10-14.

is undoubtedly ridiculing the people for making idealistic plans for the future instead of working at the moment at something concrete. In reality, he ridiculed some of the writing of the immigrant L. Adamic, who wrote numerous books in English, exposing his theories on the americanization of Europe.

A similar theme is the subject of the allegory "Ženitovanski mešetarji,"⁸ (The Marriage Brokers). In this play, Molek reveals how a group of uncles and aunts choose a husband for a niece, in the tradition of the Slovene peasant. The girl is not allowed a say in the matter as they debate on the faults and virtues of two men, a one-time criminal and a policeman.

Interpreting this allegory presents several possibilities. The author could be satirizing a meeting of the Western leaders who met with pomp and ceremony to decide the fate of Europe. On the other hand, the subject of the story could be the discussion of the fate of Slovenia, being made a member of the new political regime in Yugoslavia. Molek felt strongly about these subjects and hence the tone of the allegory is both satiric and ominous. The gathering of leaders is ridiculed by the use of rhetoric and antithesis. Pompous speeches are contrasted with expressions in the vernacular and each character is given an identifying pattern of speech. For instance, Uncle Balon, who calls the meeting

⁸Ivan Molek, "Ženitovanski mešetarji," Ameriški družinski koledar 30 (1944), pp. 45-48.

to order, insists upon a formality which is incongruous with a meeting of relatives. However, as his name implies, if translated roughly as a balloon, he is given to pomposity. He declares at the beginning, "Organizirajmo se, kot zahteva formalnost . . . vas opozarjam da je to zaupen sestavek" (Let us get organized, as is demanded by formality . . . I caution you that this is a secret assembly . . .). Another uncle concurs and adds, in the folk idiom, that they must all concentrate well, "In glavo na vrat, ne pod mizo, fantje!" (And with a head on the shoulders, not under the table, boys!)

Apart from allegories, Molek wrote numerous short farces, which satirized specific faults of immigrants. These dramatic pieces are characterized mainly by their episodic style and skit-like form. Two excellent examples of this division are "Maček,"⁹ (The Hangover) and "Janezki,"¹⁰ (Johnnies). "Maček" is written in the form of a dream in which reality is reversed and all the wishes and objectives of immigrants are realized. Among these are free food and drink, and the availability of instant learning of the English language, as well as the reciprocal learning of Slovene by the American bosses. The author's satiric intent is unmistakably clear, and his message to the people to face reality is forcibly communicated.

⁹Ivan Molek, "Maček," Čas 7 (1921).

¹⁰Ivan Molek, "Janezki," Cankarjev glasnik (1937), 1 pp. 228-230.

"Janezki," on the other hand, satirizes people who behave like sheep and lack the courage of their own convictions. The name "Janezek" is a derogatory Slovene term for a person who is gullible and somewhat stupid, and there are five characters of that name in the skit. One contends that he saw his sister being born and that it wasn't a stork who was responsible. The others beat him up for thinking differently from them and he asks innocently why they should all think the same. The answer is, "Zato da se ti bo med nami dobro godilo," (So that all will go well for you among us). He agrees to join them in their game, but mutters quietly to himself that he still believes that it wasn't the stork.

Finally, Molek also wrote several dark and somber dramas, in which he portrays the tragic consequences which result when ordinary men are placed in circumstances over which they have no control. Two dramas of this kind are the one act play, "Vrtinec,"¹¹ (The Whirlpool), and the three act drama "Poročna noč,"¹² (The Wedding Night).

In "Vrtinec," a scene is flashed before one's eyes in the manner of a slice-of-life, presenting a few brief moments from the life of striking miners. In this brief period, the author bares the innermost soul of a small mining

¹¹Ivan Molek, "Vrtinec," Ameriški družinski koledar 14 (1928), pp. 28-31.

¹²Ivan Molek, "Poročna noč," Ameriški družinski koledar 14 (1928), pp. 100-120.

community, and exposes with cruel directness the faults of immigrant men. The scene takes place in front of a Slovene Hall, where idle miners gather to drink and to pass the time. A mood of apathy and malaise is immediately created as the men drift in and out and speak evasively about the strike and their duty on the picket line. They converse as if in a vacuum; questions remain unanswered and irrelevant comments hang in the air. As one of the men, Gradnar, is asked if he is on strike, he shrugs, "Ne vem, koliko je še stavke. Včasih bi rekel, da je, včasih bi pa rekel, da je ni." (I don't know how much of the strike there is left. Sometimes I would say there is a strike and sometimes I would say there is none left.) Another miner, Hribar, answers with a non-committal, "Da in -- ne. Stavkaš ali ne stavkaš, brez dela si vseeno." (Yes and -- no. If you're on strike or not, you're without work in any case.).

A woman bursts in upon this scene, searching for her missing husband whom she denounces as lazy and irresponsible. She wails about the poverty at home, but draws only phlegmatic responses from the men and finally runs off distractedly. The union leader, Janezic, comes in and makes an effort at conversation but receives little positive response, and finally leaves in disgust vowing to leave this community forever. The scene ends as someone comes running in to report that the missing husband has been found drowned.

The basic element of the play is the mood of apathy, yet there is present the illusion of swift forward movement.

This is created by the constant coming and going of characters and by the style of the dialogue, consisting mostly of short questions and answers. The scene presented is depressing and full of pathos; the characters are static, weak-willed and seemingly incapable of action. They are pathetic figures, caught in circumstances beyond their control.

However, no play by Molek should be accepted at its face value, but must be analyzed in the light of the author's fundamental motive for writing. There is no doubt that the author's intention in the play was to rebuke the miners for their irresolute and apathetic behaviour, and furthermore, to demonstrate that they will continue to be exploited if they do not unite. This is manifested in the speech of the union leader, Janezič, when he decides to relinquish his position. He states that " . . . nočem biti več vodja! Ne, nočem biti! Ljudje naj bodo brez voditelja. Saj niso vredni voditelja . . ." (I don't want to be a leader anymore. Let the people be without a leader. They aren't worth it anyway . . .). And further, " . . . jaz grem med Američane, najbolj zabite: med nje se zakopljem . . ." (. . . I'm going to go among Americans, those who are the most stupid; I will bury myself among them . . .).

The characters of this play could represent any workers on strike, exclusive of nationality or era of history, for they possess human traits common to all men.

The social drama, "Poročna noč," (The Wedding Night), has a subtitle, "Jus primae noctis," (The Right of the First Night). Briefly, this drama demonstrates how common man can become the victim of circumstances over which he has no control. It is an exposé of the corruption rampant among officials in the mining industry and the effects of this corruption on the members of the community.

The theme is based on the law practiced by the feudal barons of Europe, whereby the baron took a newly married bride of a subject away from the husband on the wedding night. In Molek's drama, the modern baron is the "pit" boss, Wilson, who uses the power of his position to intimidate the wives and sweethearts of miners to gratify his lust and greed. He has been abetted in his greed by his mistress, Mrs. Kuba, for whose sexual favours he pays by hiring miners whom she recommends. From each man thus hired, Mrs. Kuba extracts the first two weeks' pay and subsequently shares it with Wilson.

In the exposition of the play, a conflict is revealed between Mr. Wilson and his mistress. Wilson is annoyed by Mrs. Kuba's arrogant and domineering manner, which has given rise to unpleasant gossip. He is accused by his superior of unethical behaviour and by his wife of being the slave of an ignorant immigrant woman. His anger is aroused, but his passion for the woman overcomes him as he confronts her in her home that evening. During their argument, a young miner, Jurman, accompanied by his betrothed, Angela, comes to beg

Mrs. Kuba for a job. Wilson, seized by lust for the young girl, blackmails her into receiving him in her home the next night in return for securing Jurman a job. Mrs. Kuba suspects Wilson of something devious and lays a trap, in order to humiliate him and retain her power over him. The action of the drama gains momentum and reaches an unexpected climax, when at the moment of Wilson's unmasking, a shot is fired and he falls dead. The play ends as Wilson's wife enters with a gun in her hand.

This drama is an artistic piece of work; the action is presented with complete objectivity and with the strictest economy of words. The characters find themselves in certain situations and appear to have no choice of action. Mr. Wilson is a slave to his passion and starts making love to the young girl with an urgency which is desperate and reckless. Angela is naive and fearful of Wilson's power over Jurman and hence consents to his demands. Jurman feels trapped for he needs a job so that he can marry Angela. And Mrs. Kuba, who covets money and power, is helpless in her need of Wilson.

The characters are not fully developed and pose very little appeal as individuals. They are used only to bring out the horror of the situation, and what they do or say could be done by any other character in similar circumstances.

The mood is oppressive and foreboding, in total harmony with the action and the theme. The illusion created is one of a hunter who has cornered his prey and is closing

in for the kill. The tension is built up in a restrained and muted way, achieved mostly by the calm and rational behaviour of Angela and the self-assured manner of Wilson. Angela assures Jurman that she can take care of herself and that nothing will happen to her. She demands that he trust her, "Zakaj mi ne zaupaš?" (Why don't you trust me?).

The theme of the drama deals with justice, and the dominant impression created is that justice is not made available to everyone. It is given to those who have power and wealth and is withheld from the masses of common men. This is expressed concretely in the words of Jurman as he alludes to the unjust practices of the feudal barons and quotes a parallel from modern times. ". . . danes? Drugačni gospodarji, drugačni podložniki, vse drugo pa kakor v starih baronskih časih . . . Kake pravice si jemljejo kapitani rudnikov, današnji baroni, mi pa nimamo nobenih pravic . . ." (. . . and today? Different rulers, different subjects, but everything else is the same as in the feudal times . . . Look at the rights which are usurped by the pit bosses, the barons of today, but we have no rights.)

Molek implies that the owners of big business are really responsible for this. They create companies which are impersonal and indifferent as to the means employed in making a profit, and hence encourage corruption in the official circles. This criticism is manifested in the conversation between Wilson and a Company Director, when Wilson justifies his hiring practices: "Družbi je čisto vseeno, kako pridejo

delavci k nam . . . Vi sami ste enkrat rekli - in morda dvakrat - da kompanija nima duše. Kompanija pozna samo business, . . . Ali ima kompanija moralo? Od kdaj?" (The Company doesn't care how we get the workers . . . You yourself said once - and perhaps twice - that the Company has no soul. The Company understands only business . . . Does the Company have morals? Since when?)

The question of justice was fundamental to all of Molek's drama. He found justice lacking everywhere he looked, and expressed his disappointment in bitter and sarcastic tones. To his credit, however, he does not belabour this point in "Poročna noč," but rather allows the action of the drama to convey his belief. This helps to raise the literary value of the play and gives it a more universal appeal. On the whole, the play is worthy of being considered for inclusion in the field of modern American drama, for it represents an important aspect in the development of the American nation.

Finally, one more drama, the tragi-comedy, "Hrbtenica,"¹³ (The Backbone), must be included in the discussion of Molek's work. It is important because it established the author's fame as a skilful dramatist, and because it recorded with startling realism, the daily life and struggles of a typical immigrant mining community at that time. In this respect, it is particularly notable for its portrayal of the Slovene

¹³Ivan Molek, "Hrbtenica," (Chicago, Illinois: SNPJ, 1926).

national character. Major regional types are represented, including Dolenci, Gorenci, Štajerci, Notranjci, and Primorci, and they are recognizable by their dialects and distinctive mannerisms. The use of such authentic types creates the illusion of more fully developed characters, a fact which is usually absent in Molek's drama.

As regards the basic dramatic elements and artistic technique this play rivals the drama, "Poročna noc." However, it is not its equal in literary value and universal appeal because of its tendentious and topical nature. It was written expressly to advertise the good work of Slovenska narodna podporna jednota, (The Slovene National Benefit Society), an organization which lost its usefulness with the passing of time.

Apart from the excellent characterization, this play follows the course common to all of Molek's dramas. Therefore, only a brief account of the dramatic elements will suffice. The theme is one of justice for the worker, the background for the action is the conflict between the mine owners and the unions, and the main conflict exists between the men who support a strike and those who do not. The personal conflicts are resolved not by the characters themselves but by an external means, a mine explosion which kills several immigrants. The message remains that had the miners supported the strike, they would not have been killed.

In concluding the discussion of Molek's drama, it must be noted that the author provided a valuable service to

the immigrant population, both to the Slovenes and to other Slavs, by writing plays for stage presentation. Furthermore, his plays should be considered a valuable cultural contribution in the sense that they record the daily conflicts of a small group of immigrants who struggled to adapt to the ways of the developing American nation.

2. Etbin Kristan

Kristan was educated at the gymnasiums of Ljubljana and Zagreb, Slovenia, and gained fame as a dramatist in his native land before he emigrated to the United States. He established his style and the trend in his writing in the dramas written in Slovenia, but in the plays written in the United States, he conformed to the trend of writing about the contemporary society.

In general, the action of his dramas derives from social and political conflicts taken from some critical moment in Slovene history. In an early play, "Ljubislavo,"¹⁴ for example, the action takes place at the time when the Slovenes were being converted to Christianity. In the play "Ob zadnji uri,"¹⁵ (In the Last Hour), written in the United States, the setting is again Slovenia but at the time of the break-up of the Austro-Hungarian Empire.

¹⁴Etbin Kristan, "Ljubislavo," in Slovenski izseljenski koledar (Ljubljana: Slovenska izseljenska matica, 1967).

¹⁵Etbin Kristan, "Ob zadnji uri," Cankarjev glasnik 1 (1937), p. 26.

The dominant theme in Kristan's drama is the glorification of the Slovene national spirit which is manifest in the will to survive national calamities. The fundamental theme, however, is the glorification of the will of man. This will is responsible for man's progress from the primal origins through to eternity. This belief in progress is the most cogent single impression created in Kristan's drama, and in his poetry and prose as well. Positive characters of strong convictions are required to project such themes and hence the protagonists in Kristan's plays are distinguished by strong moral and intellectual attributes. They come mostly from upper classes and demand the right to freedom of thought and action. The language used by these characters is literary, the language used by an educated and polite society.

The emphasis on the will and progress of man has a specific purpose of a tendentious nature. The author's intent was to awaken a sense of pride in the Slovene people by making them aware of the courageous qualities of their ancestors, and further, to instil in them the will to resist oppression and injustice in the contemporary world. This was necessary in order to change political and social orders, and hence ensure the creation of a more just society. Though it is obvious in the historical plays, as will be seen in "Ob zadnji uri," that foreign oppressors have to be defeated, it is not clear as to what kind of a society Kristan envisioned beyond that. There are only subtle

insinuations made in the plays and these are ambiguous in nature. However, more can be deduced from the satiric tone used in the play "Svilene nogavice," which will be discussed later.

In the play, "Ob zadnji uri," the theme is one of courage and the setting is in Ljubljana, in the last days of the Austro-Hungarian Empire. The action of the plot is simple, arising from the conflict which exists between Slovene intellectuals and the provincial Austrian governor. Ivan Gornik, a Slovene representative in the Austrian regional government is arrested for treasonable activities. Since the Austrians are afraid of a public reaction which an execution would arouse, their delegate, Count Rauhenburg, appeals to Ivan's wife, Mira, and to his sister, Olga, to persuade him to sign a document which is tantamount to collaboration. After a moral and spiritual struggle, Olga and Mira refuse to intervene, and Ivan himself defies the Count and chooses death. However, at the moment of Ivan's decision, the sounds of martial music and exhilarated cries break out in the street and a Slovene patriot bursts into the room to announce the fall of Austria.

Though the courage of the three patriots dominates the action at the climax, it is evident that the source of this courage is more significant. This source is the spark of hope which is eternal in all men, and unites each man to all mankind. Ivan expresses this belief as he is taking leave of his family before his execution: "Poslavljam se za

kratek čas, zakaj resnična je beseda, da bo moj duh z vami . . ." (I'm saying goodbye for a short time only, because it is true that my spirit will be with you . . .).

According to Kristan, this spark of hope in man must not die, for when it does, a man is like an empty shell. This idea is expressed in the words of Milan Tičar, a professor, and a friend of Ivan's: " . . . O, milijoni, ki leže v kumulativnih grobovih po tujih deželah, niso edini mrtveci v tej vojni." (Millions who lie in cumulative graves in alien lands, are not the only dead in this war.). He pleads with his friends not to despair, for death and starvation have already killed great numbers of people and some must survive, in order to deal with the perpetrators of the evils of war.

A further dimension is given this drama in the insinuation that man is at the mercy of some vague and intangible force which hangs ominously over the universe. This may be the evil which surfaces in man at a time of destruction and calamity and compounds the suffering already rampant. Vera, a school teacher, cries that it isn't the rulers and the generals who have power over what they command, but rather, are themselves the subjects of another power. She doesn't explain what she means, but only exclaims, " . . . pa so tudi oni le orodje one moči, ki je neskončno hudobna in skrivnostna. In vsi smo obsojeni . . ." (. . . but they are only the tools of that might, which is eternally evil and secret. And we are all condemned . . .).

This interpretation of evil can be substantiated, by a reference to Kristan's theory of evil as expressed in his poetry. Since this was discussed in the previous chapter, only the barest summary must suffice here. In brief, Kristan believed that evil was inherent in man and must be recognized and accepted. Man must learn to know himself and overcome it. Then when he succeeds in his battles against the adversities of life, his victory will be all the more significant.

However, the intangible force interpreted as evil could also have other implications, particularly if analyzed in the light of Kristan's polemical writing. It could be that the author wanted to change the social and political order from that based on capitalism and imperialism to one based on a more equitable distribution of wealth and power. Hence, in "Ob zadnji uri," Ivan Gornik may have been imprisoned because he was a political agitator of socialist leanings. Furthermore, when Vera declares that even kings and generals are the subjects of another power, she could mean that they are the passive tools of an established imperialistic and economic order which has held the world in its grip for centuries.

This proposal has validity if Kristan's life as a journalist is considered. He was associated with newspapers and publications known for socialistic leanings during his whole life, both in Slovenia and in the United States. Moreover, this view is strengthened by the fact that in the

play, "Svilene nogavice,"¹⁶ (Silk Stockings), Kristan overtly criticizes the business practices and social attitudes of American capitalists. This criticism is revealed by the satiric tone which dominates the play and by the prologues which precede each of the five acts.

The purpose of this play was very serious. It was meant as a warning against the threat of the rising dictatorships in the uneasy years before the Second World War, focusing specifically on the Japanese aggression in China. Kristan was deeply concerned about the threat to individual freedom and to justice and succeeds in conveying the enormity of this danger in an unusual dramatic presentation. The main plot is frivolous and amusing. It comprises the formation of a league by wealthy society ladies for the purpose of boycotting silk stockings. This is prompted by an article in one of the numerous newspapers belonging to Mr. Grant Overich, the husband of one of the ladies in the league. The article depicted the brutal assault of Japanese soldiers on Chinese women, and hence the American ladies decide to sacrifice themselves for the Chinese women. They believe that by not buying silk stockings they would damage the Japanese economy and thus arrest Japanese aggression.

The action of this plot takes place mainly at dinner and dance parties which the ladies organize for the purpose of discussing their sacrifice. These social occasions

¹⁶ Etbin Kristan, "Svilene nogavice," Ameriški družinski koledar 25 (1939), pp. 102-126.

provide the author with endless opportunities to mock and criticize the ignorance and pomposity of this society.

By means of this frivolous plot, however, the main object of Kristan's attack is revealed. It is the hypocrisy of the American capitalists who continued to trade with belligerent nations in the years before the Second World War because of the lucrative profits. While Lucille Dollarson is planning a boycott, her husband, Jeff, sells scrap iron to Japan. In order to assuage his conscience, the exporter asks for a signed statement to the effect that the iron is not for weapons of war. Mr. Giaponi, who represents the buyer assures him that it is morally acceptable if " . . . če je po zakonu in gre za potrebe civilnega prebivalstva" (. . . if it is according to law and concerns the needs of the civilian population). The scene of this transaction is included in the play in a breezy and off-handed manner for satiric purposes. Mr. Dollarson appears in the office late for the appointment and rushes the transaction because he has a headache due to too many 'boycott' parties.

Another incident revealing the businessmen's hypocrisy is the decision of the husbands to buy out the total stock of silk stockings and other silk apparel in order to save the merchants from collapse. This is mandatory in order to protect their own business of exporting and importing.

A note of tragedy emerges from time to time in the play, in an off-handed but chilling manner. As the

socialites are leaving a mansion one night, the voice of a newspaper boy is heard in the street, shouting "All about the fall of Nanking." In addition, the name of Dollarsons' son, Richard, is mentioned at various times. He is supposedly in Australia, trying to arrange contracts for his father, but it is made clear that he dislikes the family business and would rather be a writer. His sister, Sweetie, tells her father, at one point, that Richard has left Australia, but she did not know where he was going.

The play ends with a fabulous dinner party honouring the founding ladies of the league. However, a cruel twist of irony is injected when a servant enters with a telegram, announcing Richard's death:

. . . vam moramo na svojo globoko žalost sporočiti da je bilo pri zračnem napadu na Kitajskem poleg mnogo kitajskih civilistov, žena in otrok ranjeno tudi nekoliko ameriških državljanov, med njimi vojni dopisnik Richard Dollarson . . . v bolnico . . . je mirno izdihnil . . .¹⁷

Though the play is basically a criticism of American capitalists, written in a satiric tone, the theme of courage and faith in the future dominates the action. This is manifest in the rebellion of the young man, Richard, and his sister, Sweetie, both of whom reject the shallow and hypocritical world of the rich and follow their own inclinations.

¹⁷(. . . we have to inform you in our deep sorrow that in an air attack on China, besides many Chinese civilians, women and children, a number of American citizens were wounded, among them the war correspondent, Richard Dollarson . . . He died later in hospital . . .)

Both personify the courage and will to resist oppression and demand justice; Richard defies the family tradition and goes to China, and Sweetie rebels indirectly. She rises above the phony way of life of her parents; she refuses to marry a weakling whose only interest is money, and asserts her intellectual freedom by learning the truth about the world. Her steadfast and honest character personifies the spirit through which Kristan proclaims his faith in human progress.

Before concluding the discussion on drama, it would prove interesting to compare and contrast the style and purpose of Kristan's and Molek's drama. The motivating forces behind their writing were similar, but the approach and style provide a striking contrast. Both were deeply concerned about the lack of justice in human affairs and both wanted a change in the social system, but they differ in their approach in expressing their demands.

In general, Molek's approach is through criticism, whereas Kristan's is through praise. Molek exposes and criticizes the evils in society which are perpetrated by a powerful few and demands that these oppressors be removed, and that it be done immediately. Kristan, on the other hand, writes about human endeavours which have been successful in eradicating oppression in the past. To this effect he focuses on that which is eternal in man's nature, man's spiritual strength, his courage and will, which are inherent in all men. Thus, Kristan's drama has an element of universality

and a relevance for all times. In contrast, the drama of Molek has little of this quality because the writer concentrates on the social ills of his day. Rather, some of his dramatic writing is accompanied by a consciousness that the conditions described would soon be altered or already have been, by the sheer force of change.

The characters in Molek's plays are of lowly birth and position and speak in a language that is common and often vulgar. They were created as instruments to express the author's ideas and hence are presented in a dispassionate manner. Kristan's characters, however, belong to the educated classes and are eloquent, emotional and dynamic.

Finally, the style of the language provides numerous contrasts. Molek's language abounds with folk idioms, biblical allusions and metaphoric imagery, which are all by their very nature brief and compact but weighted with meaning and implication. Furthermore, he excels in the use of satire. Kristan, on the other hand, uses satire and imagery sparingly, but makes frequent use of irony. Moreover, instead of using metaphoric expressions, Kristan's characters discuss and analyze their problems openly.

Both Molek and Kristan, and also Jontez, can be considered as very good dramatists. Their plays contain relatively high technical perfection, themes of a social and historical nature and numerous stylistic and tonal variations.

SUMMARY AND CONCLUSIONS

The analysis of American Slovene literature of the period 1900-1945 revealed a number of interesting and pertinent facts. All literary genres are well represented and a variety of literary forms and poetic conventions are present. The field of prose is the most extensive of the three genres and within it, short stories form the dominant group. In poetry, short poems and traditional poetic conventions predominate, though some modern conventions are also present. Finally, drama comprises the smallest number of works and serious comedy is the most common form. However, short farces and satires abound in the work of Ivan Molek.

Fundamentally, this literature is of a social nature and written in a realistic style. It has one basic theme and one purpose; it is about common men and their struggle for a position in society and its purpose is to arouse an awareness of reality in the minds of the readers and furthermore to persuade the readers to change their traditional attitudes.

Although the writers were very much concerned about the welfare of the Slovene immigrant, the major authors did not limit the scope of their literature by using only immigrants as the characters of their stories. Often, their

protagonist is any common man, one who possesses qualities of a universal nature. Furthermore, his conflict is often such as could occur to any man under the circumstances. Therefore, this literature possesses some relevance and value and should be given more attention.

As a basis for further study more research must be done into the works of the major authors, among them, Ivan Molek, Etbin Kristan, Anna P. Krasna and Ivan Jontez, in order to evaluate their work more precisely. Moreover, a study of this literature within the context of American literature, drawing comparisons with authors and background influences, would prove to be a relevant and fitting conclusion.

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A family almanac, published annually between the years 1914 and 1951. Probably the most popular type of periodical among the American Slovenes. It provides the richest source of immigrant literature, containing some works of every author discussed in this survey and the works of those not included here. Furthermore, it contains invaluable historical data about journalism and immigrant activities in various American communities, and this helps to provide background information on some of the writers.

Ave Maria, Uprava Ave Maria, Brooklyn. Issues of 1918, 1921, 1927, 1933, and 1939.

Issued annually, this magazine is interesting for its intense religious orientation. It contains European literature and articles about religious history and famous religious men. It also contains immigrant literature, but it is written mostly by monks and is didactic, sentimental and unrealistic in nature. Since the writer of this review excluded religious literature, Ave Maria issues are of no value here.

Cankarjev glasnik, Cankarjeva ustanova. Vol. 1, 1937; Vol. 2, 1938; Vol. 3, 1939; Vol. 4, 1940; Vol. 5, 1941; and Vol. 6, 1942.

A monthly literary review established in August, 1937, in order to regenerate interest in Slovene literature and to revitalize American Slovene writing. It published the works of the important Slovene writer, Ivan Cankar, as well as the literature of immigrant writers. An extremely valuable source for the writings of Etbin Kristan, Ivan Jontez, Ivan Molek and for other authors who were excluded from this survey.

Čas, Frank Kerže, Cleveland. Editions of 1918, 1919, 1920, 1922, 1925, and 1926.

An extremely valuable source. The annual editions aspired to bring good literature to the immigrants. It contains the poetry of Ivan Zorman and Ivan Molek, as well as prose and poetry by Kerze himself.

Glasnik, Slovene Community, Dec., 1905.

A weekly newspaper, issued by a small Slovene community in the area of iron ore mines in Michigan. It is important because Ivan Molek was its editor for a few years and published some of his early poems and stories in its editions. Molek's presence in such mining areas explains the tendency in his writing to portray the plight of poor workers.

Glas naroda, est. 1893-1951.

At first a weekly newspaper, then a daily. It contains a great deal of Slovene and world literature, but very little immigrant writing.

Kern, J. F. Spomini ob tridesetletnici prihoda v Ameriko, 1937.

The autobiography of an author and medical doctor who was in his life time associated in some capacity with many authors and journalists, particularly, Kristan and Molek. Opinions about these literary figures are given but unfortunately no valid literary criticism is provided.

Kristan, Etbin. Povesti in črtice, Chicago, Prosvetna matica, 1945.

A collection of short stories written when the author was in his seventies. A valuable source for Kristan's prose.

Majski glas, Jugoslovanska delovska tiskovna družba. Vol. 15, 1935; Vol. 19, 1938; Vol. 23, 1943; Vol. 24, 1944; and Vol. 25, 1945.

This magazine was established in 1917 as an annual May edition of the newspaper, Proletarec. It is a valuable source for the writings of Molek, particularly for his satirical plays and poems with political overtones.

Mladinski list, Slovenska narodna podporna jednota. Vol. 15, Nos. 3, 4, 5, 11; Vol. 16, Nos. 1, 3, 4, 5, and 10.

A serialized monthly magazine, established in 1922 with the purpose of instructing Slovene youth in America in all aspects of a worker's culture. Written half in English and half in Slovene it contains some works of Anna P. Krasna, Katka Zupancic, and Ivan Jontez.

Molek, Ivan. Dva svetova, Ljubljana, Cankarjeva družba, 1932, 169 pp.

A semi-autobiographical novel; a most revealing source of the influences which helped to shape the author's philosophy of life.

_____. Hrbtenica, Slovenska narodna podporna jednota, Chicago, 1926, 70 pp.

A play written as propaganda for the Slovene Benefit Society. It was one of Molek's most popular plays, often performed by Slovene drama groups.

_____. Zajedalci, Chicago, Leposlovna-znanstvena knjižnica SNPJ, 1920, 304 pp.

Proletarec, Jugoslovanska delovska tiskovna družba. Issues of April, 1918; June, 1919; March, 1921; and February, 1924.

This weekly was the official organ of the Yugoslav Socialist Federation. The issues contain material of political nature written by Ivan Molek and other lesser writers with socialistic tendencies. Most of the material in this newspaper has not been published elsewhere.

Prvi maj, Jugoslovanska delovska tiskovna družba. Issues of the years 1917-1928.

The annual issue of Proletarec of the week of May 1 was given this name. It contains all genres of literature written by many of the important Slovene American writers.

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This is one of the annual issues of a magazine containing information and photographs about the Slovenes who live in various parts of the world. It also contains material about Slovenia which may be of interest to emigrants. These magazines contain biographical material being gathered about American Slovene writers.

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Zorman, Ivan. Pota ljubezni, Zorman, Cleveland.

The above anthologies are invaluable sources for Zorman's poetry. They contain all of his poetry which had been published elsewhere first.

Zupančič, Katka. Slike iz vsakdanjega življenja, Chicago, Prosvetna matica, 1946, 110 pp.

An anthology of short stories; very valuable source.

ABSTRACT OF
A SURVEY OF AMERICAN SLOVENE LITERATURE,
1900-1945

This survey is essentially a pioneering work. As no bibliographies of authors and their works existed, it was necessary to examine masses of newspapers and journals in the collection at the Immigrant Archives of the University of Minnesota.

The objectives of the research were to discover who the American Slovene authors were, what they wrote about and how they expressed themselves.

The sources revealed the works of about a dozen writers, and of these, seven were considered to be the most important and hence were included in this survey. Six of the authors wrote both prose and poetry and three of them wrote dramas and comedies as well. Their writing is treated under the headings of Prose, Poetry and Drama in three separate chapters.

Each chapter contains some information about the writers as well as a discussion of a limited number of their works, chosen for the style, content, quality and literary value. Literary trends and the motives behind individual writing are also included.

This literature is on the whole social in nature and critical in tone. It depicts the contemporary scene and criticizes society and institutions with the intent of arousing social consciousness. Furthermore, it reveals the struggle of a very small ethnic group as it laboured to adapt itself to the ways of a new land.