

Face to Face:
Contemporary Poetry of the Netherlands, Flanders and Serbia

Commented [J1]:

Jelica Novaković-Lopušina
University of Belgrade
Filološki fakultet

1. Introduction. To a translator his own bilingualism represents, in a certain way, a latent form of schizophrenia: due to the two different languages, the two different cultures, temperaments, and perceptions of the world that have formed him; he is a split personality, aware of the dualism inside him and the creative tension it provokes. This tension usually is not a frustrating one, as long as there is free communication between the two cultures, for, as an intermediary, the translator is indebted to cultural and intellectual exchange. His frustration begins when there is a break in communication, when in political and cultural conflicts he is expected to make a choice and be reduced to only one part of himself. In such a situation the only way for a translator to maintain the link between his two inner worlds is to involve them in a conversation within himself. Remembering the poem *Poëzie* (Poetry) of the Flemish poet Herman de Coninck (de Coninck 1984: 181), which suggests that the benefit of poetry is that of a beloved hand on the hot forehead of a sick child, I have tried to bring contemporary Dutch/Flemish and Serbian poetry face to face, hoping that, in spite of all the cultural differences and linguistic obstacles, I would feel on my forehead the comforting touch of their communicating universality. As a result, two bilingual anthologies have been published: one of contemporary Dutch/Flemish poetry in Serbian translation titled *Kleine akte van geloof/Malo svedočanstvo vere* (A Small Act of Belief; Novaković-Lopušina 1994), and the other of contemporary Serbian poetry entitled *Bivši anđeli/Gewezen engelen* (Former Angels; Novaković-Lopušina 1995) and translated into Dutch with the help of distinguished Dutch/Flemish poets and critics.

2. Differences and correspondences. The origin and development of Serbian poetry differs in many ways from that of Dutch and Flemish poetry. The patriarchal Christian-orthodox morality, a strong epic literary heritage due to 500 years of lost Sovereignty under the Turkish reign of terror, and – last but not least – the social and political changes that have taken place with the establishment of communist rule after World War II have had a great impact on the development of arts in Serbia, altering and molding global renewal tendencies that, for Serbian poets, mainly came from Paris. Besides surrealism and neosymbolism, another source of influence in the fifties was the work of T. S. Eliot. Although these

influences can be found in Dutch/Flemish poetry as well, the difference in their impact and chronological appearance renders a broad comparison of literary periods and movements rather difficult. But if we take the autonomous poem as a starting point, we will find a surprising number of themes, motives, and forms that can find their contemporary Dutch/Flemish counterparts. In spite of the differences in psychological and social determination of their authors, these poems seem to capture the same moment of universal poetical time, whose pendulum swings between the far ends of traditionalism and modernity. This shared moment, whether it points to conventional forms or marks the transition towards new expressions, enables contemporary Dutch and Flemish and Serbian poets to communicate with one another through their poems.

2.1. The theme of homeland and nature. Although Serbian poetry is mostly known for its epic, decasyllabic verses with patriotic and heroic themes that caught the attention of the literary world during the period of romanticism, it also has a rich lyrical heritage that, among others, inspired the Dutchman Christian Lodewijk Schüller tot Peursum to translate and publish several Serbian ballads in 1849 (Schüller 1849), less than a decade after the originals, which were collected and published by the famous lexicologist and reformer Vuk Stefanović Karadžić in Vienna in 1841, under the title *Srpske narodne pjesme* (Serbian Folk Ballads).

DESANKA MAKSIMOVIĆ (1898-1993) is a descendant of that lyrical tradition and one of the great classical poets of contemporary Serbian lyricism. She is also one of the most translated Serbian poets. In her poems inspired by national themes, her bond with nature, and her place of birth, she resembles the traditional lyric poetry of ANTON VAN WILDERODE (1918). These two doyens of contemporary lyricism both enjoy great popularity among readers, but are also both occasionally characterized by critics as poetical craftsmen (Janssens 1994: 258), mostly because of their traditional form.

The serene and harmonious rural world of this Flemish poet also has a counterpart in the landscapes of DOBRICA ERIĆ (born 1936), one of the so-called naive poets (in analogy to naive painters). What connects them is not so much the form, for Erić is more playful and modern in his expression, but their almost pious attachment to nature, which seems to free them from all the anxieties and doubts of modern man. This is perhaps a reason why Anton van Wilderode hasn't made a name in the Netherlands (Janssens 1994: 225). Erić's poem *Veče uoči setve* (On the Eve of Sowing) has been translated with the help of Jozef Deleu (Novaković-Lopušina 1995: 18-19), a well-known Flemish writer and poet, whose poems also resemble snapshots of the silent and eternal

beauty of landscapes, especially in his latest anthology *De jager heeft een zoon* (The hunter has a son) (Deleu 1995).

Veče uoči setve
Dobrica Erić

Zemlja se preoblači
pod jorgovanom tišine.

Ratar je dahom kadi.

Nebo je kao njiva
tek zasejana pšenicom
i još nepovlačena.

Mesec se pomalja na brdu
s belim volovima
i srebrnom drljačom.

De avond voor de zaai
Dobrica Erić - Jozef Deleu

De aarde verkleedt zich
onder een sering van stilte.

De boer zijn adem bewierookt haar.

De hemel als een akker
pas bezaaid met tarwe
is nog niet geëgd.

De maan beklimt de heuvel –
achter witte ossen
een zilveren akkersleep.

On the Eve of Sowing¹
Dobrica Erić

The earth changes its attire
under the lilac of silence.

¹ Unless otherwise indicated, all Dutch and English translations of the Serbian originals are mine, JNL.

The farmer sprays her with the incense of his breath.

The sky is like a field
freshly sowed with wheat
and still not harrowed.

The moon mounts the hill
with white oxen
and a silver harrow.

Generally speaking, Serbian poetry shows more resemblance to Flemish poetry due to similar historical background (a predominantly rural Catholic tradition and the loss of Sovereignty for a long period of time) and a sense of esthetics that tends more to emotionality and opulence than rationality.

2.2. Personal lyric. When it comes to other universal human themes, the clarity and simplicity with which DESANKA MAKSIMOVIĆ expresses emotions and sings about joys and fears of life reminds one of M. VASALIS. How wide a range of lyrical expression this poetess masters is shown by her latest poems, which, with a less traditional structure, possess the modernity of a CHARLES DUCAL (born 1952). In her poem *Tajna snova* (The Secret of Dreams) she is preoccupied with the restrictive morality and hypocrisy of matrimony – the dominating theme of Ducal's debut collection *Het huwelijk* (Marriage) (Ducal 1987). Asked to help with the translation, Charles Ducal first showed surprise and scepticism, but after having read the poem that so closely matched his, he gladly accepted, adding in his translation some of the vigor and cynism so typical for his style (Novaković-Lopušina 1995: 39).

Tajna snova
Desanka Maksimović

Iste noći, istog sata,
u dva sna kao na dva kontinenta,
u istoj odaji bliskih dvoje
ne znaju da se vole,
da postoje.

Čovek grli nepoznate žene,
žud oseća vučju,
privija ih uz grudi,

i kao da sluti da je samo u snu,
ne bi hteo da se probudi.

I oko žene nepoznati ljudi,
ne zna im ni govor,
ali u njihovih pogleda
tone ponor,
ne može da se brani.

Ujutru sede ćutke,
omaglica snova se razvejava,
od čuđenja i stida
ne mogu da dignu glava.

Het geheim van dromen
Desanka Maksimović - Charles Ducal

In dezelfde nacht, hetzelfde uur,
in twee dromen als op twee continenten,
in dezelfde kamer liggen zij, een paar,
en weten niets meer van de ander
en hoe zij houden van elkaar.

De man kust onbekende vrouwen,
hij voelt de wolf in zich, de lust,
en drukt hen aan zijn borst,
bang dat dit maar een droom is,
en hij straks wakker wordt.

Ook om de vrouw zijn vreemde mannen,
zij kent niet eens hun taal,
maar werpt zich
in de afgrond van hun blikken,
en is weerloos, naakt.

's Ochtends trekt de nevel op,
dan zitten zij aan tafel, elk op zich,
en zwijgen, verwonderd, vol schaamte,
bang van elkanders gezicht.

The secret of dreams
Desanka Maksimović

The same night, the same hour,
in two dreams as on two continents,
in the same room two close souls
don't know of each other's love,
of each other's existence.

The man embraces unknown women,
he feels a wolfish lust,
he presses them to his chest,
and as if he knew it's just a dream,
he'd rather not awake.

Men unknown surround the woman, too.
She doesn't even know their speech,
But into the abyss of their looks
she sinks,
she can't resist.

In the morning they sit silent,
the mist of dreams has faded,
astonished and ashamed
they can't raise their head.

This universal theme of love and the colloquial, direct form in which it has been sung connect the poem of the young DRAGAN JOVANOVIĆ DANILOV (born 1960) *Blago, rukom* (Gently, with her hand) with the erotic poetry of HERMAN DE CONINCK (born 1944) and, to a certain extent, that of ANTON KORTEWEG (born 1944). It is interesting to note at this point that almost all the other poems from Danilov's three published anthologies are written in a mystic, hermetic style. Yet this one shares the same understandable, colloquial language with a whole generation of Dutch and Flemish poets who turned their backs on hermetic and sophisticated style. Asked to help with the translation, Korteweg stated that he wished he had written the poem himself. Thanks to his help, the Dutch translation is in no way inferior to the original poem (Novaković-Lopušina 1995: 17).

Blago, rukom
Dragan Jovanović Danilov

U razdanje, prijatno je oslušivati
te zvuke: ona se budi, ljubi me nežno

umišljajući da spavam, a onda se mjahko,
da me ne dotakne izmigolji iz postelje
kao riba, meko obuva papuče, otvara vrata
i ulazi u kupatilo, čujem taj volšebni
žubor dok obilato mokri u šolju, zatim
šum vodokotlića, prskanje vode dok se pljuska
po licu, slalom četkice po klavijaturama
zuba, osluškujem kao kroz san pucketanje
srebrnih kristalića dok češlja kosu
(češljanje kose važno je već i zbog muzike)
to svileno svlačenje pižame, šuštanje
najlonskih čarapa, zveket žabica na butinama,
ozonski dah kombinezona, blagi dašak
dezodoransa pod pazusima, pućkanje
dok karminiše usta, zveckanje grivni i –
pre nego ode na posao – pomiluje me onako
blago, rukom i utisne poljubac, mek i tajanstven
kao sumerski pečat, bešumno otvara vrata
i odlazi, oh, ti mukli odjeci štikli
u hodniku dugom ko godina, to kuckanje
iza koga ostane tek gromoglasni okean tišine –
ne, ne sanjam ja. Samo hoću da kažem –
eto, to bi bezmalo bila Ona,
a da nije prozborila ni reči.

Zachtjes, met de hand

D. J. Danilov - Anton Korteweg

Bij dageraad is het prettig te luisteren
naar geluiden: zij ontwaakt, kust me teder
in de waan dat ik slaap, en dan, zachtjes,
zonder mij aan te raken, glipt ze als een visje
uit bed, zacht stapt ze in haar slippers, opent de deur
en betreedt de badkamer, ik hoor dat wonderlijke
bruisen als ze rijkelijk plast in de pot, daarna
het ruisen van de stortbak, het spatten van water als ze
haar gezicht nat maakt, de slalom van de borstel op het toetsenbord
van tanden, als in een droom luister ik naar het knisteren
van zilverkristalletjes terwijl ze het haar kamt
(het kammen is al belangrijk vanwege de muziek)
dat zijden uittrekken van haar pyjama, het ruisen
van nylon kousen, het tingelen van jarreteles op haar dijen,

de ozonlucht van haar onderjurk, de zachte bries
van deo onder haar oksels, het tuiten
van lippen als ze zich opmaakt, het rammelen van armbanden en –
voor ze naar haar werk gaat – streelt ze me
lichtjes, met de hand, en drukt een kus, zacht en raadselachtig,
als was het een sumerische zegel, geruisloos opent ze de deur
en gaat, o die klikklakkende hakken
in de gang die geen einde kent, dat tikken
dat een donderende oceaan van stilte achterlaat.
Nee, ik droom niet. Ik wil alleen maar zeggen –
zo, dat is Zij, min of meer,
zonder dat ze ook maar een woord gesproken heeft.

Gently, with her hand

D. J. Danilov

At dawn it's pleasant to listen to
these sounds: she awakes, kisses me gently
thinking I'm asleep, and then softly,
without touching me she slips like a fish
out of bed, gets softly in her slippers, opens the door
and enters the bathroom, I hear that magical
murmur while she richly urinates in the pot, then
the noise of the water flushing, the splashing of water
on her face, the slalom of the toothbrush on the keyboard
of teeth, as in a dream I hear the crackling
of silver crystals while she combs her hair
(for combing is essential because of the music)
the silken stripping of her pyjama, the rustling
of nylon stockings, the rattling of girdles on her thighs,
the ozonic breath of her slip, the soft breeze
of deodorant in her armpits, the pursing of lips
during make-up, the jingling of bracelets and –
before she goes to work – she strokes me
gently, with her hand and brands a kiss, soft and mysterious
as a Sumerian seal, then soundlessly opens the door
and leaves, oh, those clacking heels
in the corridor that has no end, that ticking
that leaves behind a thundering ocean of silence –
no, I'm not dreaming. I just wanted to say –
well, that's HER, more or less,
although she hasn't even spoken a word.

2.3. Language renewal. The fifties are marked in both countries by the search for a new poetic language. In the Netherlands we immediately think of experimentalists like LUCEBERT (born 1924), the "language enricher", and GERRIT KOUWENAAR (born 1923), the "language purifier" (Brems/Zuiderent 1992: 9). Comparable only to the impact of those two poets on the further development of Dutch poetry is the impact that VASKO POPA (1922-1991) and BRANKO MILJKOVIĆ (1934-1961) had on Serbian poetry.

2.3.1. Surrealistic and hermetic style. Vasko Popa, a latter-day representative of surrealism, developed an obscure, hermetic language with which he sung about isolated particles of reality. He is the best-known contemporary poet whose impact reached beyond the borders of Serbia. His poems with personifications of natural elements resemble some of the poetry of CHR. J. VAN GEEL (1917-1974) whose work also was inspired by surrealism. Popa's poem *Belutak* (Pebble) (Novaković-Lopušina 1995: 54) shares the same poetical language as, for example, Van Geel's poem *Wolken* (Clouds) (Vancrevel 1989: 147).

Belutak

Vasko Popa

Bez glave i bez udova
 Javlja se
 Uzbudljivim damarom slučaja
 Miče se
 Bestidnim hodom vremena
 Sve drži
 U svom strasnom
 Unutrašnjem zagrljaju
 Beo gladak nedužni trup
 Smeši se obrvom meseca

Pebble

Vasko Popa

Without head and without limbs
 he announces himself
 with the exciting tremble of coincidence
 he moves
 with the shameless pace of time
 he holds everything

in his passionate
inner embrace
A white smooth innocent trunk
smiles with the eyebrow of the moon.

This hermetic quality is also a characteristic of the poetic language of Branko Miljković, as we can see in his poem *Suza* (Tear) (Novaković-Lopušina 1955: 42). Much like CEES BUDDINGH' (1918-1985), for instance, in his surrealist poems, or JOS DE HAES (1920-1974), he uses a rather conventional verse form for his powerful and bizarre metaphorical language.

Suza
Branko Miljković

Hiljadu violina – krilatih pasa
Preleće nebom i jeca
S istoka prema zapadu
Samo je suza bez senke

Vodo moja napaćena
Iza tebe zvezde se raspadaju
I nariče noć-udovica
Nad svežim rukopisom zore

Tear
Branko Miljković

Thousand violins – winged hounds
Fly over the sky and sob
From East to West
Only the tear is without shadow

Oh, my tormented water
Behind you stars fall apart
and the widowed night laments
On the fresh writing of dew

2.3.2. Individual development. The development within Kouwenaar's work makes it possible to compare some of his more recent poems to those of IVAN V. LALIĆ (born 1931). In Kouwenaar's poems *Een geur van verbrande veren* (A smell of burnt feathers) (Warren 1992: 327) and

De laatste dagen van de zomer (The last days of summer) (Brems 1994: 76) we recognize the same recording of material reality pregnant with its own decay that we find in Lalić's poem *Melanholija* (Melancholy) (Novaković-Lopušina 1995: 32).

Melanholija
Ivan V. Lalić

Godina koja okleva, kvaran martovski sneg,
Neumereno obilje goriva za rad vrtova,
Hrtovi zime što još se osvrću na izmaku,
Pod mokrim krznom već nestvarni: to je praznik
Praznine, optočene romorom što kaplje
Sa krovova u zoru

...

Na jugu proleće raspliće čvorove mokrih vetrova,
Smrt ima mokru senku dok prolazi kroz zid.

Melancholy
Ivan V. Lalić

A year that lingers, moldering snow of march,
Excessive abundance of fuel for garden growth,
The greyhounds of winter still looking back on their retreat
Already unreal under their wet fur: this is the feast
Of emptiness, bordered with murmur that drips
From the roofs at dawn...

....

In the south spring unties the knots of moist winds,
Death casts a wet shade while penetrating the wall.

2.4. Social criticism. The criticism of society can allude to concrete political or social grievance, as we find, for example, in Gerrit Komrij's parody of Marsman's poem *Herinnering aan Holland* (Thinking of Holland) (Lodewick et al. 1985: 360), or in Eddy van Vliet's poem *America* (Lodewick et al. 1985: 429). As for Serbian poetry, we could refer among others to the poem of Milan Komnenić *Nosač važnog prezimena* (Bearer of Important Name) (Novaković-Lopušina 1995: 26), where the poet mocks the unlimited power of nepotism within the communist elite. What they have in common is the means of expression, like irony and sarcasm for example. What differs, of course, is their social and political reality.

2.4.1. Alienation and absurdity. Another sort of criticism is more concerned with the failure of human society in general and with the anxiety and alienation of modern man. Poems that could communicate in this context would be, on one side, those of GUST GILS (born 1924), and on the other those of MILORAD GRUJIĆ (born 1950). What some of their poems have in common is the somewhat bizarre and grotesque way of portraying modern life. This portrayal is intensified by the colloquial tone of the poem, as we can see in Grujić's poem *Ujutru se uplašim* (In the morning I fear) (Novaković-Lopušina 1995: 20-21) or in Gils' poems *Gedicht met morele strekking* (Poem with a Moral) (Brems/Zuiderent 1992: 66) and *Interieur* (Interior) (Brems et al. 1993: 117).

Ujutru se uplašim
Milorad Grujić

Stanujem u soliteru,
neljudski. Svuda uokolo
deca plaču, iz zidova.
Valjda su zazidana,
pa gladna,
i nikako da umru.
Ne plačite, deco!
Možda ih grizu žuti mravi.
Noću grebe nešto iz zidova,
kopa, ruje, cvrči.
Ujutru se uplašim
da mi se nisu pocepale tapete,
i da kroz poderotine
ne ugledam desetine i desetine
raznobojnih dečijih očiju.
Žmurite, deco!

's Morgens ben ik bang
Milorad Grujić - Paul van den Heuvel

Ik woon in een torenflat,
onmenselijk. Overal om me heen
huilen kinderen, vanachter de muren.
Ze zullen wel ingemetseld zijn,
dus hongerig,
en kunnen maar niet sterven.
Huult niet, kinderen!

Misschien worden ze door gele mieren gebeten.
's Nachts krabt er iets vanachter de muren,
graaft, boort, sist.
's Morgens ben ik bang
dat mijn tapijten gescheurd zijn
en ik door de flarden heen
wel tientallen en tientallen
kleurige kinderoogen zie.
Oogjes toe, kinderen!

In the morning I fear
Milorad Grujić

I live in a skyscraper,
inhuman. All around me
children cry, from within the walls.
They must be immured
thus hungry
and just cannot die.
Don't cry, children!
Maybe they're being bitten by yellow ants.
At night something scratches within the walls,
something digs, bores, sizzles.
In the morning I fear
that my wallpaper is ripped up
and that through the shreds
I'll look into a multitude
of multicolored children's eyes.
Keep your eyes closed, children!

Gedicht met morele strekking
Gust Gils

als je smorgens vóór je spiegel staat
en je ontwaart een hoofd op je schouders
en het is niet het jouwe

dan moet je daarvan onmiddellijk
melding maken
bij de dienst voor bevolking
van je gemeente
die doen dan wel het nodige.

maar herken je inplaats van je hoofd
je lichaam niet meer als je eigen
daarmee helpen ze je niet
"meneer zo kunnen we bezig blijven!"
en ze hebben gelijk.

kijk dus goed uit
bij partnerruil

Poem with a moral
Gust Gils

if one morning you look in your mirror
and you notice a head on your shoulders
and it isn't your own

then you must immediately
report the fact
to the registrar's office
for your district
and they'll do what is necessary.

But if instead of your head
it's your body you don't recognize
they won't help you with that
"there'd be no end to it, sir!"
and they are quite right.

So you just watch out
when you swap partners
English translation: Tanis Guest

2.4.2. Feminine sensibility. The feminine criticism of the household world of women connects JUDITH HERZBERG's (born 1934) poem *Afwasmachine* (Dish Washer) (Lodewick et al. 1985: 406) with MIRJANA BOŽIN's (born 1952) *Ženska poezija* (Feminine Poetry) (Novaković-Lopušina 1995: 12). They are both concerned with the sense of life beyond the triviality of cooking and dishwashing. What separates them, though, is the degree of their emancipation: Herzberg is a step ahead of Božin because she has enough emancipatory experience to be ironical about the achievement of her so-called liberation. Mirjana Božin

is yet still a prisoner, dreaming of freedom "kraj štednjaka - moj štit od beskraj!" (at the cooking-stove, my shield against infinity!) (Novaković-Lopušina 1995: 12).

A totally different view on femininity has TANJA KRAGUJEVIĆ's (born 1946) poem *Okupani bog* (The Bathed God) (Novaković-Lopušina 1995: 28), which is an ode to the devotion and love with which her grandmother completed household work, granting it a higher, almost metaphysical sense. This touch of Slavic feminine devotion is also present in the poetry of Maja Panajotova, a Belgian resident of Bulgarian origin, who helped with the translation.

2.5. Pain. Poets from the Netherlands and Flanders are rather concerned with the existential pain of the modern alienated individual, with pain that comes from disbelief in the possibility of communication and love through language. This modern sense of torment is best put to words in poems like *Ik treur niet, geen tederheid trekt me aan* (I am not sad, no tenderness attracts me) of HUGUES C. PERNATH (1931-1975) (Brems/Zuiderent 1992: 67), or in the poetry of LEONARD NOLENS (born 1947).

Although individual grief and anxiety is a present theme in the work of contemporary Serbian poets, they still are much more preoccupied with collective pain and suffering caused by an "indigested" past of slavery, terror, and wars that, suppressed during the Communist rule, has resulted in a grave national identity crisis. While some poets thought they could resolve that crisis with glorification of the national being through myths of the past, others succeeded in sublimating the experience of collective pain, misery, and suffering into a modern and universal poetical expression, freed from pathos and self-deception. Among the latter ones are Ljubomir Simović, Slobodan Rakitić, Miodrag Pavlović, MATIJA BEČKOVIĆ (born 1939). In his poem *Bodež* (The Dagger) (Novaković-Lopušina 1995: 8), Bečković expresses clearly and concisely one of the most striking warnings against the (self)destructiveness of narcissistic nationalism.

Bodež
Matija Bečković

Po čuvenoj priči
Sa dalekog severa
Lovci na vukove
Bodež sa dve oštrice
Umoče u svežu krv

Balčak pobodu u led
I ostave u snežnoj pustinji

Gladan vuk
Oseti krv nadaleko
Pogotovu na čistom oštrom vazduhu
Pod visokim mraznim zvezdama
I brzo pronaže krvavu udicu.

Oblizujući smrznutu sukrvicu
Poreže jezičinu
I svoju toplu krv
Lapće s hladnog sečiva.

I ne ume da stane
Dok se ne skljoka
Nadut od sopstvene krvi.

Kad su takvi vukovi
Koji se najteže love
Kakvi li su tek ljudi
Pa i čitavi narodi
A pogotovu naš
Koji se vlastite krvi
Ne može nadostiti
I pre će nestati
Nego se opsetiti
Da će krvav bodež
Ostati
Jedini
Spomenik
I krst
Iznad nas.

The Dagger
Matija Bečković

According to a well-known legend
From the far North
Wolf hunters dip
A double-edged dagger
Into fresh blood,
Drive the handle into the ice,

And leave it in the white desert.

The hungry wolf
Scents the blood from far
Especially in the fresh, biting air
Under high, frosty stars
And soon finds the bloody hook.

Licking the frozen serum
He cuts his tongue
And slurps his warm blood
from the cold edge.

And he can't stop
Until he collapses
Swollen from his own blood.

If wolfs are such,
Who are so difficult to hunt,
What must people be like
And whole nations
But especially ours
That can't get enough
of its own blood
But would rather perish
Than realize
That the bloody dagger
Will remain
The only
Monument
And cross
Above us.

3. Conclusion. This brief survey shows that, despite cultural differences and the widespread negative stereotypes of Dutch poetry being mainly sterile rationality, Flemish poetry being full of Catholic revelling, and Serbian poetry consisting of a wolf's howl of atavism² – as variations of modern European expression they all still have more than enough in common to communicate with each other. Universal modern trends and their influence on themes and forms can be detected in individual poems

² This is the impression one gets of Serbian poetry after having read the article of professor Reinhard Lauer "Aus Mördern werden Helde" (1994).

by very divergent poets. Characteristics of literary movements that play a role in contemporary Dutch and Flemish poetry are also evident in poems of Serbian authors with different literary backgrounds and developments. Like highly sensitive seismographs, their poems seem to have detected the same tremors of change within the lyrical *Zeitgeist* of the second half of the twentieth century.

References

- Brems, Hugo (ed.). 1994. *Dichters van deze tijd. De Nederlandstalige poëzie na 1960*. Gent: Poëziecentrum.
- Brems, Hugo & Ad Zuiderent (eds.). 1992. *Contemporary Poetry of the Low Countries*. Rekkem: Stichting Ons Erfdeel.
- Bousset, Hugo, Stefaan van den Breemt & Mark Insingel (eds.). 1993. *Noordzuid. Hedendaagse dichters uit Vlaanderen*. Gent: Poëziecentrum.
- Coninck, Herman de. 1984. *Onbegonnen werk. Gedichten 1964-1982*. Antwerp: Manteau.
- Deleu, Jozef. 1995. *De jager heeft een zoon*. Leuven: van Halewyck.
- Ducal, Charles. 1987. *Het huwelijk. Gedichten*. Amsterdam: De Arbeiderspers.
- Janssens, Marcel. 1994. *Met groter L. Van Couperus tot Claus*. Leuven: Davidsfonds/Clauwaert.
- Komrij, Gerrit (ed.). 1979. *De Nederlandse poëzie van de 19e en 20e eeuw in duizend-en-enige gedichten*. Amsterdam: Bert Bakker.
- Lavrin, Janko (ed.). 1962. *An Anthology of Modern Yugoslav Poetry*. London: John Calder.
- Lodewick, H. J. M. F., P. J. J. Coenen, and A. A. Smulders. 1985. *Literatuur: geschiedenis & bloemlezing. Tweede deel*. Den Bosch: Malmberg.
- Novaković-Lopušina, Jelica (ed.). 1994. *Malo svedočanstvo vere/Kleine akte van geloof*. Belgrade: Luta.
- Novaković-Lopušina, Jelica (ed.). 1995. *Gewezen engelen/Bivši andeli*. Belgrade: Luterazmo.
- Schüller tot Peursum, Christian Lodewijk. 1849. "Servische volksliederen." *Almanak voor het Schoone en Goede voor 1849*: 15–21.
- Vancrevel, Laurens (ed.). 1989. *Spiegel van de surrealistische poëzie in het Nederlands*. Amsterdam: Meulenhoff.
- Warren, Hans (ed.). 1992. *Spiegel van de moderne Nederlandse poëzie*. Amsterdam: Meulenhoff/Kritak.

J. Novakovi}-Lopu{ina

20

20