

# *“Home is Where We Are and Where We'll be”*

## A Conversation with Taja Kramberger

(Summer 2012 & Winter 2013)



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*Taja Kramberger is a prolific writer, poet and social scientist. She is also a university teacher and researcher, and a socially sensitive person, engaged in struggles for human and civil rights. She spent most of her life, before she moved to Paris in 2012, in Slovenia: she was born in Ljubljana, spent her childhood in Koper, an old and small Venetian town near Trieste, studied history and historical anthropology in Ljubljana and Koper, had fellowships in France and Hungary, and came back to Koper in 2006 with her husband Braco Rotar, a university professor, to help build the new University of Primorska in Koper. Oppressive events that happened there at the faculty and university in Koper at the time of the “university purge” in 2010 and immediately afterwards led her and her husband to leave the country. She now researches and works in Paris, in exile, “in relative peace and in more or less normal and humanly dignified circumstances,” as she says.*

*She has published nine books of poetry, two books for kids, a drama, three monographs in history and social sciences (fourth is on the way), seven books of translation, many essays, introductions, articles, few hundreds of shorter texts and edited some forty numbers of anthropological journal Monitor ZSA. Her poems have appeared in many languages, she was invited to numerous international poetry meetings and festivals. She has organized, directed or coordinated hundreds of national and international cultural and intellectual events, mainly as a volunteer. And this is not all. She certainly is a resistant, vivid, devoted and warm human being with a piercing and humorous personality. And last but not least she is a wonderful and powerful poet.*

I've listened to Taja Kramberger's poetry reading at the "Poetry Parnassus" in the Southbank Centre in London in a hot summer of 2012. There was this annoying guy leading the "Balkan section" who didn't even perceive the immense force behind Kramberger's poems. He did a *faux-pas*: in front of a rather big audience he rudely protected male poets as his pals, gave them more space, time and exalted them. In his unrefined manner he cut us off the last Taja's poem, and I saw other people in the audience were as disappointed as I was. But this devious lapse stimulated me to search for the poet from Slovenia in the canteen at the ground floor of the Southbank Centre where poets socialized after the readings.

She was in a good mood, smart, witty, energetic. Her green eyes were just magnetic as her whole personality is. We had a liberating laugh about the accident during the reading. She said "Oh, don't mind him ... he kind of apologized later in his robotic style" ... "to me he seems just another p(o)et on the lead of the 'biggest Slovenian Poet'. They're all alike, they're a part of this *initiated sect*, you know, sonny boys with almost radioactive glaring face as if looking at you from post-mortem Bacchanals, and locomotion of an agitated tin-machine. When talking they act like suddenly awakened sleeping agents. They all hate me, all in the same way, as if being under a strong spell of my lovely Slovenian detractors. I must have become a real "menace to my enemies" in Slovenian poetry in the last two decades, as June Jordan would put it. Poetry, of course, has nothing to do with these small diversions and accommodations, but they're always there."

We spent some three hours drinking, giggling and chatting literature, poetry, translation, anthropology, London, Paris. One thing was clear: she's perfectly able to keep a distance from her products, an ironical sense of detachment from regime pats and her "homeland's" dirty tricks. Her elegant and precise verses draw from her life and intellectual experiences. I took some notes after our conversation, it seemed important to me. After seeing her reading in Argentina on the internet in autumn 2013 (I add links to these videos at the end of the interview) and a positive reception of her audience there—similar to that in London in 2012, I decided to edit my notes. I have accompanied them with some new questions and sent the package to Taja who kindly responded to it. So, this interview was born in two steps—in the summer of 2012 and in the winter of 2013, and a few time lapses in the conversation are result of that.

Finally, I'm indebted to Taja, who affably helped me organize the final version of this interview; authorized it, supplemented it with some important information, connections, photographs and an illustration drawn by her for her children's book—I begged her for it—I just love it. It is so clear, naked and simple. I think it perfectly manifests her dialogic, ironic and essentially human relations with the world. I added, and it's my personal choice, some of the web-pages or book publications with Taja's texts or works which I think readers should check out.

As for me, I decided to stay her anonymous admirer and supported. I don't want any undesirable goblins from Slovenia or UK or elsewhere come knocking on my door and teach me what a good poetry is.

All the linguistic faults and other small errors are mine; I apologize for them in advance—neither I nor Taja are proper native English speakers—but I'm certain, in spite of that, that the message is perfectly clear.

P. F. (December 2013)



## INTERVIEWER

Hi, Taja, it's been great meeting you! I'm glad to be able to talk to you about your work and life and draw both of them closer, at least a little bit, to the English speaking public. Your poetry brought us here to the Southbank Centre this enormous vital force. After your reading at the Southbank many people considered you like a shining star of the 'Balkan section' if not of the whole festival. A friend of mine there whispered to me: *she's got it all, the others have parts of this poetic vision, holly shit, but she's got it all*. It is so obvious that you must have been through Hell to write in such a vivid and direct way about oppressions in your home country, and sublimate a very real material in a way that can be used as a universal poetic reference. Your poems seem to explode into life in front of the public? Are you aware of that?

## TAJA

I am—in my own way. I enjoy reading, so a part of that inner pleasure of mine goes to my public. When you read in front of a good and attentive audience—a competent audience or at least audience sincerely fond of poetry—your whole body becomes a transfer field. And people in the audience take a ride that a poem offers. When you reach proper intensity of thought, silence becomes condensed, and every moment prolongs into an extendible time unit. Inside a poem, as if in a familiar space that you know and command well, there's a sequence of scenes, rooms, through which you walk together with the audience, interacting with it. You lead people through these scenes, have enough time to allocate the accentuation accordingly to the audience, change rhythm or tact of verses, move a chair unnoticeably slightly to the left, light the lamp or put a table little closer to the sofa, so there is a space for, say, women who just stepped closer.

Poetry reading is a manipulative act, certainly, but if you don't abuse it for demagoguery or narcissistic spectacle the result is a positive stimulation of people's thoughts, which again stimulates a poet's mind. You have to know that *poetry* is at its best a very *disruptive force*. Not in a devastating sense, I don't mean that, but it surely opens spaces, attacks our assumptions and it raises questions which sometimes were not raised, or at least not in that specific way. These questions can therefore sometimes be "unsettling". Not always nice and cosy.

And I've always felt great satisfaction if people were stimulated *to think* by the performance, by some verses or images or thought that runs through them. I mean stimulated by my mode of thinking *to think further in their proper mode*. That's a small contribution to the cognition and thinking, I suppose, poetry can make—it is in its *transformative* nature. But there are also other types of poetry; it's only that I'm more interested in this particular one.

## INTERVIEWER

So you think poetry is or can be an important social force, not only a source of epiphany?

## TAJA

If poetry is penetrating enough—I mean if it has reached or touched upon the *core* discursive level of the social discourse (in particular time/space) where fundamental social actions, shared experiences and ties are coded, yes, I think it can be. But of course, I don't mean that this small poetic "revolution" in a form of discursive cognition is something that should mobilize the masses. I'm more to the side of subjective and personal changes that are *condition sine qua non* of collective transformations (and I prefer small collectives).

I believe in these small transitions and transformations that poetry can trigger, but not in some kind of a poetic saturation of desires of large masses of people. Though, at the same time, I love the idea to teach poetry in a different and more democratic way than it's done in today's schools. Poetry is much closer to the people than people usually think, and June Jordan's program "Poetry for the People" at Berkeley University was a remarkable idea.

## INTERVIEWER

How can poetry change one's mind? How does it actually work inside one's mind?

## TAJA

People who read poetry, accumulate some images and verses of poets that they like, and these images and verses, consciously or unconsciously, operate in their minds. It's not a neutral process; these images and verses can act as catalysts of their thoughts in crucial moments. So, it is important what kind of poetry you read; if it's a poetry combined of *langage meurtrière* (a concept elaborated by Jean-Pierre Faye, a French social scientist and a poet himself), in which words are not absorbed through experience and reflection but aimed at other rather anti-human goals, this will lead you to completely other direction than *an open structure poetic language*, based on *musica humana*—where personal elaboration of collective language is tangible. Of course there are nuances and choices between these two poles, but basically *langage* is an extremely strong mental tool.

So, if you read a lot of open structure poetry or literature in general, which basically stimulates your own emancipatory forces and mental apparatus, you eventually come to realize that there are also many other more or less open perspectives in looking over the same things and life constellations. You become aware that there's never *only* one supposititious possibility, intruded by the media or by one Chef, one Writer or one Poet, and that we need to talk to each other about this variety of worlds, values, images, perspectives, representations, instead of passively submitting ourselves to only One of them. I'm inevitably describing here a terribly stuffy situation in Slovenia where *langage meurtrière*, which I consider one of the languages of a closed structure (I elaborated a concept of *transfirmative discourse* for that purpose; *trans*—over, across, beyond, *firmité*—strengthen, confirm, as an opposition to *transformative discourse* that is an open and remodelling structure), is a dominant force of social and mental suppression. And you finally learn that the most important achievement in life is to learn to live with each other despite all the differences and distances that are growing all around us, but use them instead to function as bridges. Poetry, if it's a *strong transformative poetry* (by saying *transformative* I mean poetry with a potential for a social change for the better, not for the worse ...), contributes to comprehension of this democratic *plurality*, also *pluri-vocality*.

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To illustrate what've I just said and how poetry operate in attentive individuals: once a while I receive short honest and moving messages from my readers or listeners around the world—this is what I got recently from a woman who was in the audience at my reading in Canada (I don't know her, but she loved my poems and I gave her a small homemade booklet with some of my poems... as I didn't have a proper book in French to offer; I hope she won't mind if I reproduce her short message here as a sign of trans-national human touch and a gentle travel of thoughts):

*Comment passer sous silence le bien renouvelé que je ressens à lire les poèmes de votre recueil 'On est toujours dans le train qui part' (en impression miniature) offert par vous, comme ça, spontanément un soir à Trois-Rivières ?*

*Un ami m'écrivait que la poésie aimée est celle qui nous amène à voir différemment, à sentir différemment, à être différemment. Je le sais et quel phénomène étrange et heureux. Merci.*

*[How can one pass over in silence renewed senses that I've felt when reading poems of your miniature booklet 'We're always on the train that parts' that you gave me spontaneously one evening in Trois-Rivières?*

*One of my friends wrote to me that a poetry that one loves is the poetry that leads you to see differently, to feel differently and to be differently. I know now, and what a strange and happy phenomenon is that. Thank you.]*

## INTERVIEWER

You're also multilingual, and you use different types of languages—poetic, essayistic, analytic, also figurative etc.—to express yourself and to describe the reality around you?

## TAJA

It seems I've discovered rather early in my life that I need different modes of reaching out and coming out, of addressing this world, yes, you're perfectly right. When I was around four, I produced

comics (drawing and writing) in episodes for my mother. I learned to read very early). I tend to combine different modes of expression from early on. As long as I have all these channels of communication—I've established many of them, but two or three are for me more important than the others—I feel I can keep a good balance in my life. But all these *modalities* are interconnected, mutually responsive in many ways and fertile when in cognitive and reflexive relation. After all, I'm the one and only (I'm neither split nor divided) to signify and coordinate the nature of their articulations and connections. Every aspect of my work is related to both of my principal preoccupations, that is social sciences and literature, and can't be understood as a separate or isolated one. My poetry book on the Dreyfus Affair is a good example of that: it is not explainable only in literary or poetical terms, if at all. It becomes clearer in relation to my other activities and my *oeuvre* as a whole.

I feel fine in the society of many options, heterodoxy, where individuals have choices and take responsibilities for them. That's why leaders of sects and "chosen ones" give me creeps (my unfortunate Slovenian heritage which tortures me), as I clearly see that the intention behind such adulatory projects is a general catalepsy, amnesia of any singular and valuable thought. This might not be entirely achieved in multi-cultural societies, as there are contra currents, obstacles, protests, but so much easier in homogenized ones, such as Slovenia.

Otherwise, I'm a studious character, a questioning mind, if you want. I explore this world from childhood on; I don't think others can explore it for me. I research, I dig and dig, establish relations, think them over and over, collect data from every level and domain I can think of in relation to the *topic* (I don't stop in the *archives*), make mistakes, acknowledge errors on the way if I realize I was wrong, go back again or start all over, search for other approaches, more coherent, more differentiated—till I find out why I'm doing it and what are *more* genuine and more authentic relations between the "object" components. I don't think anything is just given on a plate... and I prefer my closest company to be on the same track. So, besides intellectuals from various fields, I have some very close friends in visual arts and music, who as strenuously insist in their work as I do.

INTERVIEWER  
Slovenes don't do that?

TAJA  
There's a paradox here, which Slovenians mostly don't seem to get: *reality is not just given, it can't be taken for granted*. Poets who after 50 years still live out of the same infantile poetry phrases they created for the first books, still use the same self-deception myths as at the beginning are just jerks or bluffers. The idiocy of such a position is so obvious, but still in Slovenia precisely such subjects are appreciated. The immobility lifted to the criterion actually means: no singular trajectory has been drawn in their lives, no reflection has been made, no experiences have been gained, reflected and

### HOME IS WHERE WE ARE

*Home is where we are  
and where we'll be.*

*We have left our native country  
long time ago, indeed.  
We have left the ghetto  
of bleating and of chosen ones.*

*They would throw the cubes of granite to us  
if they dared to be courageous.  
They would lower their haughty heads  
if they dared to be human.*

*We have left the human misery  
which pretends to be a wealth.  
We have also left the century  
in which we lived.*

*Home is where we are  
and where we'll be.*

© Taja Kramberger, *V tvojem objemu je prostor zame-In Your Embrace There's a Place for Me* (forthcoming in 2014)

carried over to the literary reality, no life has been really lived through and rationalized, no individual cognition has been achieved, no point of fixation moved or altered. Ergo: it seems a “highly successful” waste of a lifetime; simply because they were, those poets and their social milieu too, of course, unable to insert a needed distance, each time a new distance between them and the collective *doxa* ... that is a *common sense*. They were unable during the decades to produce a simple reflexive device, *un écart* which only allows the world to appear. But such non-reflected subjects are wanted and needed in Slovenia—for the *social stasis* purposes. Others are neither wanted nor needed.

*Reality* is not and can't be consistent of common sense, stereotypes and prejudices; more solid and firm grounds have to be searched for and found to build a community on intellectual basis. You have to fight for it (for this *basis*, for far more accurate perception of *reality*), incessantly research its containing currents, components in order to be able to grasp it at all. To come to terms with reality of the time is a hard work, not a weightless and worthless pinning to the circumstantial conjuncture. Clarice Lispector, whom I love to read dearly, knew that not one intellectual activity, including writing, is an easy work: “No, it is not easy to write. It is as hard as breaking rocks. Sparks and splinters fly like shattered steel”, she writes in *The Hour of the Star*.



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The less you work on that, the more alienated you're from reality. And Slovenia, I can tell you from very harsh experiences—as every deeply anti-intellectual environment and as an idle social space—is terribly and horrifyingly alienated from it.

INTERVIEWER

Do you consider “anger” a constructive force? Can it be a kindling spark, a motor of a literary work?

TAJA

I surely do. In this particular matter I'm more on the side of Georges Bataille, who considered “*instants de rage*” (“moments of rage”) and “counter ideas” —which in each period of time are and

always were less visible than the cheaper, fashionable and conventional ones—as key elements of literature. Or, another example, I feel close to Adrienne Rich’s “Phenomenology of Anger” (from *Diving into the Wreck*, 1972), “anger” and “rage” can be very powerful transformative sources for writing and creating, but you have to learn how to use them precisely, and not being used or guided by them. Adrienne Rich speaks of “anger and tenderness” which are breathing in her, but not as simple and antagonistic “polarities” (poem *Integrity*), so she wants to integrate all these transgressive moments into life itself and use them as a source of poetic and emancipatory force. And I think she managed to do it wonderfully; there’s a moment of beauty in her highly liberating and transformational poetic power. The same goes for Margaret Randall who apart from her remarkable poetic opus has written brilliant memoirs and reflections of her engagements in Latin America, and still continues to do that, relating to her rich life and background experiences.

I also firmly believe that *personal* is tightly connected with *social/political* and that, in fact, *life is a source of literature*. I’m fond of poetry which remains steadfastly anchored in this world. I believe action stirs a thought, differentiates it, peels off superfluous words, it strips us of unnecessary thoughts. This means that source for literature is *extra-literary*. I can recognize instantly which/whose verses are loaded with life and which/whose are not.

#### INTERVIEWER

Your poetry has something to do with music. It is like a musically propelled poetry, at any case very close to a complex music composition and even to the musical scores? Have you ever thought in these terms about your poems?

#### TAJA

I think about my connection to music in a broader sense; music gets into me very deeply and stirs me into action or makes me asleep.

It’s exactly how I react to it in its various manifestations. When I was a child, my father took me to the opera many times (he loved opera), and after around three high-voltage screeches of the local Prima donna, I became incredibly sleepy. I didn’t like it at all; going to the opera in Ljubljana became a nightmare for me. I was a vivid child, why should I have these sleeping hours in the opera (I didn’t even want to sleep in the kindergarten in the after lunch time). I thought the singers were a-musical and awkward.

But later, in Vienna and Paris, I was very moved by some opera performances. Now that I think of my infant reaction and dislike of “whatever I listened to” at this early age (I must have been 4 or 5 years old), I can only say, that I’m obviously physically allergic to the particular provincial component added to interpretations of originals, that somehow kills the spirit, the dynamic flight of the artistic work. It’s foisted as a *local colour* almost upon every good and animated creative work.

In order to be accepted and appreciated in the Slovenia and by the local audience and artistic consecrators, you must make it toneless, dull and flaunted. I’ve experiences and observed that phenomenon in many ways later in my life. In the case of music and opera, small adaptations to the loopy-limp local ears have to be made, which I couldn’t stand. I still can’t. I recognize this stiff thread immediately and leave the scene.

You can say I left Slovenia because of that “deadpan symptom” and it wouldn’t be totally wrong.

See, hmmm, maybe my poetic or reading force is my retarded and obstinate reply to this blockade of life in Slovenia. Thank you for helping me to come to this interesting thought.

#### INTERVIEWER

But I haven’t done anything ...

TAJA

Of course you did: you asked me a question and switched my mind into “ON” position ... and now you discuss in fruitful exchange interesting topics with me. I feel agitated (laugh).

In a way music saved my life during my college/grammar school years, when I kind of *unplugged* myself from being an exquisite and obedient scholar that I was in the primary school. Besides literature, poetry and visual arts it became my balancing tool. I didn't like the obtrusive and stultifying system of Ljubljana's elite school, where I ended up as an 8-year A-schoolgirl, excellent in all subjects, noted in music school and a solid club-swimmer.

I still despise this kind of exclusivist society run by instructed *idiots* that they were producing and generating there. At the “Gimnazija Bežigrad” in Ljubljana (Bežigrad Grammar School is a Slovenian secondary school considered “top-elite” school) I was probably for the first time in my life ruthlessly confronted with the noxious social-Darwinist effects of a furious vertical promotion of servility and stupidity—in combination with Ljubljana's *structures obligatoires de la parenté* of fairly mediocre and presumptuous provincial middle-class.

But as Slovenian educational system is built on that, and on a mnemonic and *non-thinking* transmission of knowledge (later I've researched its strategies), I finally decided to invest just enough of my energy to school subjects to pass (let's say some 10–20 % of my capabilities, I've really shut myself off), and displace my real engagement to the other fields of interest, an informal and autodidact way of acquiring knowledge. I read voraciously and more systematically than before, as I had a lot of time, I listened to the music, collected records obsessively, collected books, translated poems, prose, painted, drew, journeyed.

It was a great time, mid-eighties, when socio-political pressures in ex-Yugoslavia were considerably loosened, and I had a relative liberty to make a decision that I'll do what I want in my life. I kind of took my life into my own hands. Of course it provoked some scratches in the family, but nothing special. It was just a usual growing up process.

If I had read by then about *critical pedagogy*, it would have helped—it would have been *my thing*. But I couldn't have read about it, as it was practically not yet existent, with an exception of Paolo Freire and his *Pedagogy of the Oppressed* (1970), about whom I also didn't know anything. That was in the middle 1980s, and I was fifteen years old.

If anything I became aware during my secondary education of the insidious interconnections between education, power and politics. I didn't share the social vision that was thrust upon me there: it was a particular version of sneaky and competitive compliance, a sudden colonization of inequality (which was much less insistent in the primary school), an accumulation of data as empty forms with no interrelations. I also didn't like a non-reflective form of socialization and distinction that this elite-school offered us.

INTERVIEWER

During your college years have you written any poems?

TAJA

As a matter of fact I did. I fell in love, I must have been some 16 years old, and wrote some 20 poems out of that floating feeling in a very short period of time, a week or something, miserable ones, some with rhymes, but most of them in a free verse. Some of my close friends liked them very much. So, they almost pushed me to show them to my grammar school teacher of literature, who didn't like me very much ... But strangely enough, she almost always gave me the best mark (“5”) for my literary essays (not for interpretations, though, no, she was not that free to allow my own opinion in matters

of canonized literary interpretation). She returned the poems to me a couple of weeks saying nothing. But when we met at the school's stairs a few days later and we were alone, she said to me that she does not know from where I've pulled my writings as they're so different and outstanding that she can't compare them to the others in the school. So it was a small laudation after all, and I was grateful to her. But I did nothing further; only put these poems in my drawer (still have them). Of course, poems which were selected to be printed in a small grammar school edition were only written by "representative" pupils, and I never interfered with it.

INTERVIEWER

You're familiar with English literature and other writings at the fringe of literature. Do you have any preferences, some favourite authors?

TAJA

Surely I have. Some English women writers have been incredibly inspiring to me, not only for literature and emancipatory reasons, but for my historical and anthropological courses too. There's this incredibly interesting and extraordinary "travel guide" to the old Yugoslavia written in mid-Thirties by Rebecca West (*Black Lamb and Grey Falcon*). Further, I admire Martha Gellhorn, whom I've discovered during my university years, and read whatever I could find by her or about her. Later I lectured about her, when I gave university courses on Spanish Civil War and protest music as a form of memory transmission.

Not to descend to classics such as Virginia Woolf, her diaries are incredibly rich data for social research and have beautiful literary passages, or Catherine Mansfield who appeared in the UK from New Zealand ... and all the perplexed productivity of Bloomsbury Group about which I also lectured at the university.

By all means, I should not forget Jessica Mitford. I couldn't possibly understand dimensions of Claribel Alegria's poem *The American Way of Death*, when I translated her poetry, if I hadn't previously read Jessica's pioneer book with the same title. Her autobiography, *Hons and Rebels*, is also marvellous—one of the English poets directed me to it. I can easily connect with those women; I feel them close to my mind and preoccupations.

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INTERVIEWER

O, yes, good old Jessica, I remember John Pilger's series "The Outsiders" with Jessica talking ...

TAJA

I know this series! I've downloaded it years ago and enjoyed it terribly (Martha Gellhorn was his guest as well, and Salman Rushdie, Helen Suzman, Costa Gavras and others). Oh, how in the world have you come to this ... huh— I loved it, it was wonderfully done. I vividly recall Martha Gellhorn how she explained a "total and absolute horror", "skeletons still breathing", "dead melting bodies" when she entered the Dachau extermination camp on the day the Second World War ended.

And Jessica sat beside that window (I think all Pilger's "outsiders" were recorded in the same room, weren't they?) explaining how poor they were, I mean her *rich family* pretending to be poor, and how she was saving money to run away and even open "an running away bank account" for that purpose... She was just adorable in her straightness of how English high classes were absolutely in favour of Fascism and Nazism, or how a "third rate actor Reagan" might become a politician. And the small gag about how her USA passport was issued by mistake, in the middle of witch hunts, and she used it from time to time... And again, how she mentioned in front of her children that Americans are building concentration camps for "*subversives*", and that they might go there ... and kids were delighted *to go to the camp* ... they though it was a good thing. Of course I remember that interview.

INTERVIEWER

John Pilger is still on his track of social issues and criticising mainstream politics, Establishment. Have you seen his Cambodia and Apartheid documentaries?

TAJA

I did, also some others, about East Timor, Burma etc.

Good for him that he's still working, he's been a strong and precious voice for a long time, and I hope he'll still be among us for a long time. I wish somebody like him would exist in Slovenia.

It's a great loss when people like him, who continuously reveal dark sides of the humanity, and through this maintain a thin line between justice and corruption, die. When Pierre Bourdieu died, I remember this like yesterday, it was in January 2002, Slovenian TV at the prime time daily news reported how Paris's *Riesenrad*, *Ferris Wheel (Roue de Paris)* has been moved to the other side of the city. Not a word about a really important event of the day. But that's exactly it: it's a staging of the competence of selection of what's important and what's not in my unfortunate birth-place. How can you expect that those people know what is intellectual or creative work whatsoever?

INTERVIEWER

Have some special passages from English literature been important to you, have they guided your work?

TAJA

In fact, there's one that comes to my mind immediately. I've been researching different writers and artists who stayed in Paris during the Thirties, and—as you know well Eric Blair—George Orwell spent his 15 months in 1928/1929 at 6 Rue du pot de Fer in 5ème (in the narration of *Down and out in Paris* it is named Rue du Coq d'Or), and I've walked many times around the place where Madame Monce screamed *Sacrée salope!*—as she didn't want her clients in the rooms squashing bugs on the wallpapers.

INTERVIEWER

It seems you're enjoying Paris, researching it ...

TAJA

I consider Paris my mental home, in a special way also my emotional refuge. I feel calm here, inspired, open, it is an inexhaustible place, and that's exactly what I love about it. You can never grasp it in its totality; you always discover something new, small but beautiful, hidden, something that you've overlooked before. I have my places of memory here, my places of socialization, cultural events, my favourite cinemas, tagged places for sporting activities.

When I came to Paris for the first time for a longer period (I was here before, in the 1980s, but on shorter visits), with a fellowship in 1999, I was already in my late twenties, I went through a mental and cultural shock: I suddenly understood what real intellectual disputes are, what social science is, if it's taken seriously. It was an awesome and marvellous rupture in my life. I knew I had many things to make up to, and this experience gave me force and will to do it.

INTERVIEWER

To me it's surprising that you are able to convert into poetry experiences so different in magnitude and so distant from each other—from small everyday events to the war dramas (experiences of your father), then there's your university seminar work with your students shifted from analytical to poetical ... In the same line you're bringing into verses port workers' revolt, woman's emancipation from 19<sup>th</sup> century France, discuss social corruption, transmit your own hard life experiences (dismissal, university purge), translate beautifully into poetic language strong and loving relationship

with your mother. You do that in an amazingly light form and with such a vital delivery? This is quite unique, I guess.

TAJA

I don't know, maybe it's just normal. Well, if anything, I'm not a sombre or a bitter person; some Slovenian ex-colleagues and "influential" "poets" (*please, add quotation marks to both words here, as I have my doubts if those men have any relation to poetry at all, or else—I suppose they gained their influence through other means*) would like to push me into that "representational formula" they invented and set up for me (as an auto-projection it appears). Their efforts—I must admit—of almost two decades in this totally wrong direction are quite exquisite.

The truth is that I'm as active and full of will as I've always been.

I love life, human touch and people, and had (and have) enough warmth and love that no matter what happened I was able to go on with my plans, looking forward, not back. I can get tired of people as my engagements are real and intense, but after a breathing space and some time alone, I always come back to them and share my thoughts with them.

I have a great respect for Paul Celan, if you want, but I'm not onto that path. I come from different reality and another epistemic horizon, and search into different direction for a more supportable utopian and concrete reality. I went through very hard experiences, and I wouldn't change one thing so far. I'm glad I'm alive. I had established this path of mine almost utterly alone and against many strings and currents of the collective inertia, and it was not easy at all. In the frames of Slovenian social space it is *not possible to have your own path and be publicly influential* at the same time—still less if you are a woman. I somehow slipped into that position at the university, avoiding the obstacles, as I was a very popular teacher and students liked me. We were really doing hard intellectual work together that had shown its first results (for example in the extensive exhibition about the Dreyfus Affair in its European context and in its echoes in Slovenia and Trieste—as an outcome of an intensive seminar research), so in spite of all sad and tragic events later, I firmly believe that what we did together with my students at the Faculty of Humanities of the University in Koper and what we were able to do in spite of all the obstacles and oppressiveness of dominant current, against constant smoke-screens, was actually a proof that *transformational force* is well and working.

## KOPER HARBOUR

*I saw the sacked female textile workers,  
worn out, squeezed like lemons,  
I saw the harbour workers standing in  
front of the factory,  
their hands hung like dry branches  
alongside slumping tree trunks.  
On their faces, boycott and despair,  
anger, justifiable upset.*

*There will be no dinner today,  
no breakfast tomorrow,  
we will make lunch from  
the leftovers of dinner and breakfast.*

*A five-year-old girl,  
the daughter of a harbour worker,  
said that it was her  
fifth mayday birthday and  
smiled at me.*

*Desperate thoughts  
chase through my head,  
echo in the ears like  
the roaring of cannons at the frontlines.*

*How to manage  
the cruel and unpredictable tide  
of life in capitalism gone wild.*

*The moon, an inorganic  
celestial body,  
is a more just judge  
than the un-employers.  
Her low tide is  
predictable.*

*It lasts impossibly,  
says Vasko Popa,  
but even an armed  
kindness does not wane.*

© Taja Kramberger, *Z roba klifa-From the Edge of a Cliff* (2011)  
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## INTERVIEWER

When you mention “transformational force”, what do you mean exactly?

## TAJA

If you want to have your own way, you have to break down, first of all, the oppressive mental and language structure that binds you and renders impossible your intellectual development. That’s a first step to do in order to be able to change social relations in the following phases. In Slovenia this structure was established during late 19<sup>th</sup> and 20<sup>th</sup> centuries, as a rigid mentality vice. You have to be really consequent and obstinate in analysing and comprehending every strata of it and your implications in it, then make your own discursive reality, a more open one. With your command of discursive reality you establish your own specific and idiosyncratic relations with this world. American historian Howard Zinn didn’t say in vain that human beings shape history, and that history can’t be shaped by speculations, disconnected from reality.

At the university I was actively engaged in two faculties: on one hand I introduced critical thinking to my students and on the other hand I submitted them to transformative praxis through selected research themes. My theoretical and practical work was fairly close to the postulates of critical pedagogy. But I’ve intuitively made a choice in my mind even before I came to Koper and get to know theoretical texts of critical pedagogy. It was a choice in somewhat John Dewey’s dilemma between *education as a function of society* (making passive and mnemonic students), as Peter McLaren would say, and *society as a function of education* (making agile thinkers and informed students capable of acting as upright citizens). In fact, the later one was my only possible option. Indeed, I never felt any good among passive recipients of historical data or colleagues who were mere functions of ideological conjuncture.

Through this thoughtful process you become aware that social ties and relationships that have been established as “typically” “Slovenian” are not useful for anything that’s a little more demanding, coherent, complicated and subtle. And they’re not human-friendly at all.

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## INTERVIEWER

Can you very briefly describe what happened at the Faculty of Humanities of the University of Primorska in Koper in 2010 during the university purge?

## TAJA

I can try, but it was such a composite and complex event that I can’t possibly get a hold on it in few paragraphs. I’ve been active in the public sphere very intensively in the last decade, and gained many adversaries, when I pointed at many occasions to the corrupted figures in poetry circles, in Writers’ Union, at the ministries of sciences and literature etc. The purge itself might seem tied only to the Koper’s university on the surface, but in fact all these forces, who hate me for years of not being their humble servant and a follower of strict hierarchy in literary ranks in Slovenia, came together in a small provincial space, either as whisperers or as instigators of the purge.

After the Dean of the faculty in early June 2010 announced that “45 subjects” or their “FTE (Full Time Equivalents)” —people in her discourse were simply reduced to a handy accountability scheme—should be dismissed, teaching personnel at the faculty was shocked. Among many colleagues, who were terribly frightened by these mad “imperative”, only 5-6 individuals (Braco, my husband and intellectual collaborator, and me among them) publicly reacted and protested against such savage methods at the university institution. Rector of university backed up the Dean (for me it was not a surprise as he was not much of an intellectual, but more a politician: he was Yugoslav ex-minister of economy, Slovenian ex-minister of Interior, very probably also a collaborator of Yugoslav ex-secret service UDBA, himself a strong advocate of *university as enterprise*), and director of the research institute did the same. It came out, during the purge, that they stuck together, and that at least two of them paid themselves regularly and annually big sums for successful

leadership of the university, while a permanent formula of *financial debt* was used for all almost the other university personnel. When we asked for some minor financial help, for example, such as travel expenses for symposia or else, we were usually turned down.

So, one rather simplistic and partial but possible reading of the purge is this: those of us who kept objecting during the years *that university is not an enterprise*, and that some legal procedures should be respected anyhow, were very cruelly thrown out. I mean the whole procedure of “dismissals”, which I can’t describe here in its length, was totally illicit and also premeditated, highly sophisticatedly orchestrated (many documents of the purge and of events around it are accessible here: [Save the University](#), though only some in English and French).

I put a plaint to the court immediately after the dismissal, and finally we agreed upon a modest sum of indemnity that university had to pay (also this was paid to my account in a half-illegal way, but I was so sick and tired of the nasty games and daily stress lasting more than a year, that I let it go...), but all in all no justice was really served. After all, Braco and I were invited to the Faculty of Humanities in Koper, and really most generously and openly helped building infrastructure and atmosphere of the faculty and university. I conducted many faculty activities for free, thinking I’m doing a good job for the academic community. Braco and I were co-authors of 12 courses of Historical Anthropology—from undergraduate to postgraduate studies—which were accredited by the state.

At the end of such a black tunnel you remain speechless and utterly astonished by the extreme madness of the purge spectacle. I mean, it’s totally crazy to get rid of people who have rare and specific competences which are not to be found in other places in Slovenia. But, if you think of it in Slovenian mental frames, where *everybody is replaceable by anybody*, then you comprehend better what actually happened in Koper—local friends and relatives of the leadership needed social positions.

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Leadership of the university and faculty was clearly neoconservative in its agenda (you have to know that some of the local people at the top positions made their PhD as a tailor makes a suit in a few weeks during the summer): to quickly adopt management policy, to conjure logic of consumption, to produce articles as on an accelerated conveyor belt, to degrade teachers to low-paid clerks, humiliate students, to use a delirious system of points to measure scientific “success”. As neoconservatives usually do, Koper’s university and faculty leadership refuted the idea of university as a place of gradual social transformation of students’ and teachers’ minds. They only wanted to have a threshing hall of money. The silliest thing of all this *carnavalesque* nonsense is that some of those people from the university and faculty leadership who executed the purge are now trying to make a somewhat central quasi liberal quasi Leftist (!) party in Slovenia ... it was so obvious all the time that political power is their thing not intellectual competence.

At any case, university purge in Koper was a very complex socio-political and criminal event. We, Braco and I, as probably one of the most steady, un-corrupted and unbreakable intellectual couples in this tragic and perverted social space named Slovenia, were by the means of total social degradation and severe *damnatio memoriae* used as a warning example for the others.

This is, by all means, far from being a “minor” provincial conflict, Braco was a known public figure from the early 1970s on, he established many crucial institutions, was and still is a brilliant social scientist and analytic, helped other people in many ways as a human being, always in a most open and generous way. I was socially “elevated” through my first book of poetry after 1995, but because I didn’t want to collaborate with rampant men nor belong to a vulgar and anti-intellectual local clique of the chosen poets and writers, my degradation began soon after. So it’s been almost 2 decades now of repeated launching treacherous stories about me, just to “nail me to the blind spot”, as Vladimir Bartol, a Slovenian writer from the Thirties would describe the phenomenon with which he was familiar (it happened to him too ... and to many others).

But as Braco and I are both fighters and don't give up easily, we thought we could open a structural place for us and for the others with our struggle in this bizarre country. We were wrong in that; no new structural places are allowed to be shaped through life experience, no such open positions survive in this space, only the wanted, close-structured sneaks, and those narrations that can be used and misused by the political power. Slovenia has for a long time maintained a steady and hidden *necropolitics* (constant intimidations of targeted citizens, dysfunction of democracy and law, medicalization of critical intellectuals and women etc.), painted in colours for superficial observers. And people, inflicted by this moral ambiguity of deception (between frighteningly real intra-Slovenian *deathscape* and *sweet success story* representation for fleeting customers), spontaneously stick to the *omerta*, to the silence about the events which they saw, so public testimonies would only rarely surge to the surface.

And, finally, when it was all over—when purge was done and court suit ended with indemnity that the university had to pay me—when Braco and I left the country in autumn 2012, a very quick eradication of the whole event, our achievements and our actual influence was made (I could describe that in details in a novel, there's so much to tell and all that happened is an extremely fertile literary material, though appalling), so the place for apparent topics and surrogate intellectuals, dissidents was established, and submissive “intellectuals”, apparent “feminists”, “writers-revolutionaries” and politically acceptable could immediately fit in. They did. Some of them I considered my “friends”. Well, I don't any more. The state organs and elites seemingly *repaired the tempestuous black hole* that they temporary made visible, so that some people could fall through. Everybody is replaceable in Slovenia. And final cosmetics of the elites in power: *nothing really happened, it was such a minor conflict—they just left, we don't know actually why, it was their decision. We highly respect their work ... You can ask their colleagues, poets ...they will tell you the same story.*

Slovenians are such kind people and good-fellows; only when you're not looking at them they are murderers, relaxed in their “natural” strategies.

INTEVIEWER

I don't like horror movies, Taja...

TAJA

Me neither, believe me, and even less I want to live in one of them.

It looks fine from the outside, Slovenia, beautiful landscape, rather rich, little clumsy but still kind and seemingly helping people. Nice geographical position: on one side encircled by the Alps and on the other by the Adriatic Sea, abundance of everything in small scale, not poor as some other countries of Eastern Europe.

It's a terrific theatre stage put up for the short-time visitors and people who are not integrated in the inner social structure. Speaking nicely—Slovenia is a beautiful short-period touristic destination, you can relax there for some days or weeks, if you're not implicated into the social tissue, but if you're, it is surely not a viable space, even less for intellectually or artistically committed people.

The untarnished image is so well tighten up and camouflaged till the last breath of the “social actors”, that I've lived 42 years in that *black hole* not being completely aware of its murderous grip, investing my best positive energies and thoughts into it. I'm certainly not a naïve and not an anti-intellectual person who would perfectly fit into it. I've never fit into it, but I invested all my energy to make it a better place. I knew something was wrong all the way, but only when I went through *the killing machine* during the university purge in 2010 that is through its *structurally murderous* aspect—a savage social denigration and ostracism, I was able to locate where the core problem is. And it is in *the context*, in *the frames* in which Slovenia is usually observed and perceived. These frames,

through which other observe Slovenia are not the right ones, they're falsified as well. Slovenia is not a complete and heteronomous society, it has nothing democratic in itself (it is a *fascistoid* structure), and should not be seen through such context (success story, democracy, relatively rich society etc.), these frames are totally misleading.

Only when you're able to abandon, to leave out these false frames that only suit current political instrumentalizations, and grasp the *real* genuine frames which are utterly undemocratic, provincial, imbedded into ghetto-like preclusive social *stasis* and generating violently rigid boundaries, you are able to see what's going on inside the Slovenian "society". Only if you look at the Slovenia and its past through the *negative* and *never objectified* logic of provincial lacerations, production of shams, imminent social tyranny and of anti-intellectual and artistic mortifications which were never actually reflected, that is through tightly oppressive frames and a perpetual motion of amnesia and forgery, intimidations and imitation, through a perpetual social mimicry, you can understand its defaults and its bizarre categorical apparatus. In a nutshell, you have to see it through *necropolitics*. Almost nobody wants to see it like that, because it seems so lunatic and to see it like that would take an immense energy to change it (practically impossible). Nevertheless, this is exactly what Slovenia is.

Total negativity—reflected in this secretly kept *necropolitics* (in Agamben sense)—of Slovenia is not only in its absence of other possibilities (you only have *One* possibility in each social field or segment), which is a structural component of the provincial matrix, and in falsified versions of heterogeneity, but in *permanent denying and camouflaging of this very absence*. As soon as this is recognized and rationalized, things could change and go on in a brighter and lighter way, positive foundations could be made. But till now it didn't happen.

In short: also the mental frames, as everything else, are camouflaged: Slovenia as a State (from 1991)—in demand after *construction of its adequate invisibility*, camouflages the frames and context in which it functions. Slovenia is certainly not a *un-conflicted* country, it is totally intrinsically knotted and conflicted herd of traumatized and frustrated individuals acting as a "community". It so deeply intricate in past and present conflicts (but without any solid arguments and with no reflection) that there can hardly be any easy rational way out, as conflicts are not rationally dealt with but permanently suppressed, instigated and interwoven on a personal basis.

INTERVIEWER

Can you tell us how you were invited to this prestigious event called "Poetry Parnassus" in London? You're the only representative of Slovenia. Who selected you, who invited you?

TAJA

The fact is that initially I didn't even want to come to the "Poetry Parnassus"; I don't think "competition" has any place in creativity and in serious intellectual work, and correlation with sport (Olympic Games in London) didn't really seem to me to be a consistent one. Don't get me wrong, I was a swimmer in a sport club, a successful one, we were Yugoslav champions many times during the 80s, and I enjoyed a great deal our sportive community and fairness until the team was coherent and had a good and subtle coach. But I still think that art differs very much from sport, has other set of rules and saturates different social function. So, I wrote a letter to the director of the "Poetry Parnassus", why I don't want to be there and why I found this event semantically displaced, but her reply was so surprisingly intelligent and sensitive, that I finally decided to come. I decided to be open to the challenge. Actually, I've talked with some poets here in London, who did the same, and only after some communications with the organizers decided to come. I'm glad I decided to come. I've met some fairly good poets here. And it surely is/was a special, in many regards even a unique event. And after the university purge I needed a change and a fresh breath more than something else.

I was also told that the choice of poets for "Poetry Parnassus" was made by the international readers, that is a reading public or something similar, but I'm not sure about it. I might have been delegated

by one of the publishing houses in the UK, or even by one of my Slovenian disagreeable persons (who patronizingly acts as my “benefactor”, but who actually helped ruining my life in Slovenia) or a shadows behind the university purge, as this would suit exactly his usual strategy of manipulating my image abroad and simultaneously making his positions better and more benevolent than they really are. But, all after all, I don’t really care. I’ve serious work to do. These people are just loathsome.

#### INTERVIEWER

Who are you talking about, Taja?

#### TAJA

It’s more *what* then *who*: about *epiphenomena* of the *fascistoid necropolitical* provincial social structure. I’ve written and published enough texts and polemics about Slovenian poets with correctly and properly written names, one should only read them (Slovenian language is after all an EU language). I’ll surely not spend another few years translating texts about people in whom I have no interest at all (nor intellectually nor literary nor humanly) just to make my point clear. It’s there in the open; it’s been published through the years. Those poets never written any answer nor openly reply to any of my texts. And I consider that’s actually the core of problem. They rather perform a “university purge” then reveal themselves in an open argument confrontation.

Their names should only be important for criminal or court records, but not in catalogues of cultural and artistic achievements. Although in Slovenia people in power might put them exactly there—to the local referential *Who’s Who*, as such typologies in an intellectually and culturally disoriented states are always a little messy, you just can’t help it—it’s an inner value system: Elena Ceaușescu also got a *doctorate H. C.* But I hope you still don’t consider her to be a part of the symposium with, for example, Umberto Eco.

Exactly at the same time that as I was in London in June/July 2012 (and literary scene in Slovenia knew it) at the “Poetry Parnassus” at a local Slovenian literary festival (Pranger 2012) a little set up against me was prepared. One of the young aspiring woman poets, whom I don’t actually consider any worth reading, but still firmly supported by the Poet and his poets/pets, attacked me feverishly *in* (my) *absentia* at that Pranger festival. (See: one attack in “Balkan section” in London and the other at home, simultaneously.) And with a “reason”: they just launched her “poetry”, called “revolutionary”, as a replacement for my socially engaged poetry. Again the same strategy: *technology of covering*. It goes along with a broadly applicable formula in Slovenian “society”: *everybody is replaceable by anybody*. “If you don’t obey us (power agents), you’ll be replaced immediately.”

After the assault (maybe this was a performance for some invited international poets, Pranger has a small section for invited poets, if I remembered well, I don’t know and I can’t say, or it was just a model prescription for the inner literary scene who should know “who I am”) the whole event was presented in Slovenian media, as if it was done in my presence (probably calculated in advance). As if I was there (also web-page of Pranger 2012 was arranged in that manner with small half-truths and lies added to my presentation, and with an old photo as if I was there), when I was really (with you and the others) in the UK. So I had to write to the daily newspapers, when I came back from London, that it was clearly a prepared manipulation of me and my work, and an assault on me while I was gone. One journalist, who obviously recognized the tactics, responded.

It’s annoying and stupid and totally redundant, but I had to react, as I saw they wanted to kill two things at once: the *fact that I was in London at an important international event as the only Slovenian poet* (and Poet’s pets were not selected, not even the Poet himself), and the *fact that my poetry is really something completely else* than “revolutionary” trifling of new-coming local brawlers.

These absolutely obsolete and cheap games are going on daily if you live in Slovenia, no matter of what you have already achieved or done in your life. At the end you only *shovel the shit* of others in front of your door, as no time is left for anything else.

As you know, exclusive “societies” need an enemy to build a social cohesion. Young aspiring and striving people are constantly used as hammers to put down the newly invented *public enemies*, which function as catalysts for this cohesion. I love young people, never had any problems with an open reception of them, exchange of thoughts with them, but in provincial official selection, almost as a rule, only stupid and pushy young ones come through, so no sense in searching anything *serious* or *real* in the official positions, in the consecrated social places or among “opinion makers” (media *newspeak* in Slovenia). I somehow feel pity for young Slovenian poets who are any good—the sooner they realize that they *have to go out of there* the better. Maybe someday it will be possible to change this country from within but this day, I believe, is not close yet.

After the university purge in 2010, when my relatively good and earned social position was taken away from me, spitting on me publicly even became a step for an accelerated literary career. And many of my colleagues in poetry and in history, and especially young people, who don’t read or study by themselves but only listen to the tittle-tattle here and there, took that opportunity. It’s an easy way up: a rare chance to jump to the top (in 2006 I was—as stupid as it may sound, but that’s bureaucratic language—considered to be a “top” Slovenian poet, and in 2012 and 2013, so after the purge, I received a decree by the state agency that “in the latest time I’m not considered a top Slovenian poet any more”) without any work done, but spit on me.

#### INTERVIEWER

You emphasized biopolitics, notably necropolitics. These strategies, displayed as internal governmental rationality, are usually a sign of the phobia of the state. What do you think was your “offence”, your “crime” against the state or its regime in Slovenia?

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#### TAJA

Our, Braco’s and mine capital “offence” or “crime” was, I think, very simple: our *public criticism* of some texts, individuals and institutions (in normalized democratic society this would be an advantage). Nothing special, indeed, if we lived in a normal, nuanced and plural society. But in Slovenia this was a breaking of the *taboo* (of submissiveness) and of the (anti-intellectual) *omerta*. Our publications were – in the terms of “normal” society – harmless public gestures that made some people think from a different angle, perspective, but were perceived as heretic and terrible transgression by some lunatics in thrones—the same in historiography and the same in poetry. They stuck in the revengeful minds of some well positioned *agents* (in Bourdeiuian sense: *agens, agentis* as a social actor in the specific field), who were during the years unable to answer us democratically—in a written form. It all broke out during the purge and after it.

Slovenians hate written form; I believe Slovenia is in its deeper sense still an “oral society”. Its functionality is the following: a clique makes a decision orally, then opportunistically lurks for the unravelling of the situation, and afterwards fabricates the written documents, *post festum*, accordingly to the outcome. (That means that also the perceptions of time and space are clearly disturbed.) That’s why Ciril Kosmač, a Slovenian writer during the Seventies in Yugoslavia, warned his writer fellow, Pavle Zidar (who was one of the terribly lacerated ones), to “take care, because *nobody who writes* in Slovenia will be spared”. If you write texts which are *testimonies* of real events, either as a *writer*, *poet* or as a *critical intellectual*—you’ve already transgressed the narrow mental borders that people in power had set as normative in Slovenia. You have to submit to total silence; and that’s why all the transgressions, crimes and other escapades of power structure are accompanied by massive silence.

Another example from my experiences: in historiography there was no discussion, no polemics around my book *Historiographic Divergence ...* from 2007, in which I made a rather consequent

critique of Slovene ethnocentric historiography through the analysis (on the European but also Slovenian level) of two, in my opinion, divergent epistemic structures of *faire de l'histoire*: that of the *Enlightenment* (18<sup>th</sup> century, inclusive intellectual agenda, collecting memories with emancipatory tendencies) and that of *Historismus* (19<sup>th</sup> and 20<sup>th</sup> centuries, construction of exclusive “national” narrative). But the content is no so important here...

© Illustration by Taja Kramberger from her children's book *Rifugio Tapù* (2011)



Not even one book review was published till today. But an “anonymous scientific body in power” used a usual political tricky strategy: to amortize the real effects of the book, they proclaimed a book “*a highest scientific achievement*”. Naturally, it still remained a forbidden book to cite or mention among the “famous” historians where my name is in almost total negation, so it was cited a few times outside the field. What I want to accentuate is that *this proclamation had some very specific goals*, which were far from good intentions, positive gestures or care for content or scientific elaboration. For me nothing changed; I still couldn't get a decent job in the country and my intellectual work was still humiliated and underpaid in the very same way as before. Yet more: I was not even notified or officially informed that my book got that “award” or whatever you want to call it. Perhaps, I was not meant to be informed ever, as it might only be used for some other purposes ... not connected to me (?!). Who knows. Probably the actual goal of the “proclamation” was in its use somewhere as a written document or a proof of something—for the easy believers ... maybe of how accepted I am in the country. How there's no problem if I don't make one (belongs to the construction *me as a problem*, not their brutal actions)—they appreciate highly my scientific contributions. The same strategy was later used concerning my poetry.

You can realize by now that you have to think in terms of the “captive mind” (*ketman* by C. Miłosz), unless you can't cope with the situations in Slovenia. There're no positive gestures once you're politically degraded, only tricks and dirty games.

You're illicitly thrown out of the university position on the street, law doesn't function well, lawyers are mercenary, there's an obvious clique lurking around you waiting for your mistake, you struggle on many abruptly opened fronts, polemics, your ex-colleagues fling mud at you, your ex-Dean became your stalker in your new job and tries to prevent your employment there, your apartment loan is constantly under attack, nobody believes you what has just happened to you as the political gossip against you has been spread all over, people around you are silent, some “friends” rather move to the other side of the street when they see you, your ex-Dean wants to sue your poetry book, students one after another morally collapse or broke, your ex-superior of the Dept. of Anthropology wants to sue you because you said that his “theological anthropology” is not the same as the “laic anthropology”, your ex-colleague wants to sue you because she identified, recognized herself in a metaphor you used at the press conference, your husband is sued by a “preposterous youngster” with a totally fictitious plot, one of your friends is sued because two years ago said to this same “preposterous youngster” that he's a moron—and judges find all these *pure nonsense* legitimate contents of suits, you think you're in a madhouse, your life is falling apart, you survive three car attacks ... and this are only some configurations.

And then the power structure strategy of washing its hands steps in: somebody offers you a *translation of poems or a literary book*, somebody proclaims your scientific book “*a highest scientific achievement*”, and both sides they’re telling around the globe of how they support you and they have a proof to show. In the literary field, after the purge, exactly the same strategy was used against me: some of my non–representative poems were about to be published in different combinations in different languages with a little help of the shadow circles who were evidently on the side of the purge oppressors during the dismissals (some even friends and whisperers to the faculty and university leaders), so they could show, again, to the naïve persons outside Slovenia how they care about me. The other, even more abject effect of this is that such a strategy has an implicit aim to make me look like a nuts when I want to tell the truth of what happened, and seemingly fighting against those “who are actually supporting me”. It is highly operative, not on every level, luckily there’re some smart people too, but it is efficient. I’ve seen people who were my good colleagues, turned away.

INTERVIEWER

In what way is Slovenia still important to you, if at all?

TAJA

Slovenia is *my past*, I don’t consider it my present any more, and I’m preoccupied with present and future now. But I don’t deny it either, as hard as it was or it might be there, who can deny his/her past? Slovenia modelled a great deal of my life, I spent wonderful moments there, it gave me decisive kind and hard experiences, some were maybe unnecessary as they’re virtually madness, but that’s an incredibly powerful material for literary journeys and socio-historical and anthropological research.

All in all, I feel as if Slovenian part of my life is over, I’m simply not interested any more in anybody or anything there (with an exception of very rare friends and kin), so many much more interesting things are in this world. A page was turned, though maybe I haven’t written yet the last chapter on it.

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INTERVIEWER

Can you tell us something about contemporary Slovenian poetry scene?

TAJA

*Schmock.*

INTERVIEWER

What?

TAJA

*Schmock.*

INTERVIEWER

What is this?

TAJA

Oh, it’s a word, an epithet that Karl Kraus took from one of the 19<sup>th</sup> century’s plays and used it to characterize stupidity, untoward social ambition and bad narratives.

In addition: question of contemporary Slovenian poets is relative, firstly, to the mode of production of literature in Slovenia [clientelistic], secondly, to the general mental topology (mentality) of Slovenian social space [paternalistic, misogynistic, exclusive, anti-intellectual, conformistic], thirdly, to the admissibility of literature to life experiences, and their translation, sublimation through the creative practices, including literature, poetry [practically zero in Slovenia, rarely concrete reality enters, is transfigured to the subtle literary discourse]. I analysed meticulously in the last two decades

dimensions of literary imaginary, its strata and profile, its potential to model “literature” in Slovenia—and to very poor results. I found some positive references, yes, but only a few. The best were stopped when they came close to *the real*. Only authors, whose narratives directly serve to the political purposes, social immobility (*stasis*) and reproduction of deformed mental topology were and still are canonized at each given moment of a time, all better writers and poets are left to the side if not eradicated or annihilated. It’s just disastrous.

All these processes, that I briefly outlined here, are broadly connected to the past systemic falsification of social fields, to the “simulacrum” “society” in Slovenia. I could go deeper to the past, but I can also pick up a recent example. You have to know that being a “dissident” from the Eastern Europe during the Cold War or Iron Curtain period was a casual *trademark*, a political instrument till the fall of the Berlin Wall in 1989—not much different from the McDonald’s as a trademark for junk food. I don’t mean by that that there were no real dissidents, not at all, but only that they were not many.

This notion of “dissident” was widely-spread, so it became a “successful design” in the eyes of the masses which are not consecrated into the cultural–political games. The trademark (“poet-dissident”) was needed in order to make a poet from the East a “successful poet” in the West. There were even USA poets specialized to introduce such poets to the USA poetry audience. It’s hard to assert, but a very probable hypothesis is these poets were also given some tasks to execute in exchange for a career. Not all accepted them, but some did (one has to study each case a part in its social and historical relations). Some, as C. Miłosz or J. Brodsky, of course, might have been *real dissidents*, as they stayed in the USA, and their poetry has undoubted traces of *real personal engagements* and investments. Plus they’re—linguistically—an open structured poets, they were able to produce other genres, other discourses and critical reflections of their actions and of their past. But many others who “freely” went here and forth from Eastern Europe and the USA and back in the times of the Blocks as *consecrated literary customs officers* were probably not as innocent as they might seem. Inside each country they were surely operative as surrogates for real dissidents, if not for something more. Some are still alive and they still use the same secret-shadows strategies to get rid of their self-proclaimed (by surrogates of course) “competitors”. It’s the only strategy they know. They ruin the liberating potential of literature with their secretive and manipulative presence.

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INTERVIEWER

Taja, what exactly was your reception in Slovenia? It seems to be... it must have been *nemo propheta* ...

TAJA

Though generally you’re right, it is a *nemo propheta* situation, there’re also some other small chances of other readings on the micro-level, albeit not strong enough to be more visible or transformative.

I came to senses that Slovenian literary field is almost utterly rotten soon after my first book was published (1997) and before I published my second book in 1999, so I decided to engage myself firmly in the social sciences. I didn’t want to be a part of that miserable literary voracity and camouflage. I, of course, was a part of Slovene Writers’ Association and a member of a small critical minority in it. There’re still some rare poets that I respect in it, struggling against this *clique* which every single year channels almost all the public money to their pockets (without any transparent qualifications, criteria or for the beginning at least a few pages of strong poetry). In 1995 when I entered the literary scene, I was immediately highly lifted, but soon I realized it was just a political manipulation. I recognized that I brought my poetry to the wrong person in the first place, who seemingly praised my poetry as “genius” and “genuine”, but at the same time he spread lies about me and my alleged character (about which he knows nothing) all over the Slovenian cosy and fusty elite. We hardly knew each other; it was an outrageous trespass from his side—and I naively thought the

poets were sincere or at least genuine. After I experienced this double hypocrite policy, I removed myself from the narrow clique of Slovenian chosen Poets.

If my image is, as a consequence of this, nationally and internationally terribly manipulated precisely by those Slovenian “colleague-poets”, against whom we (a small group of laborious poets) fought innumerable battles (which you can’t win, as the chosen and acceptable ones command the field and they are connected to the political elite) and with whom I never had any close contacts or ties whatsoever, let it be so. I’ll survive this.

So I don’t feel responsible for any of their constructions, be they *good* or *bad*, as I know very well that all their mighty intentions are never any good. So, officially all my books underwent rather paternalistic criticism, the connotation of them being incessantly whispered to the ear of critics by the Poet(s) in power.

But on the micro-level in the reception of my poetry also in Slovenia some other, more hopeful traits are displayed as well. In Koper I had many very attentive readers, who followed my verses from the close. There’s not only one reception on the micro-level, but the critics want to make it look like a unified reception. My last book (*From the Edge of a Cliff*, 2011) was highly borrowed in the public libraries, so it means that it reached a broader public, which remains silent. This is a big problem, that the reading public does not have a visible opinion or voice. The official reception was, as normally is in Slovenia, dictated by some shadow figures from the literature scene—who obviously had motives for it. I suppose there were some fights going on about my book, as the Dean of the Faculty of Humanities in Koper, who co-executed the university purge, wanted to sue my publisher on the basis of the word “purge” I used in the book (!).

But, now listen to this: if all the other books (8) of mine were regularly diminished in literary criticism, one can also say “suffocated” or “amortized” by the critics (with a few exceptions written by the poets themselves)—I believe they were not even read by critics—as the criticisms as a special branch of literature is more or less totally incompetent in Slovenia (I even wrote and publish a long essay on the topic of the lack of competence in literary criticism in the country), this last book was (surprisingly or not) more or less “praised”—in the middle of the university purge, polemics and at the same time when oral degradation of me was disseminated wherever possible. So, it was an *odd* moment.

It must have been a hand washing effect for some subjects after the purge, but maybe also a strategy, orchestrated with the potential suit of my book, which finally didn’t get through (upon the smart intervention of a new rector of the University of Primorska who decidedly and clearly put a stop to this persecuting madness—I was extremely lucky that he just came into the position and in comparison with the previous Rector who was just a servile political marionette and an intellectual zero, the new one had some ethos and principles).

The following events went in an expected way: some of the new young critics who’ve positively evaluated my new book were either pushed away from the levers of power (for example some changes were made in the editorial policy of the journal *Literatura*, where some people who publicly attacked me gained the positions ...) or immediately bought (got awards soon after the positive review of my book, and quickly began to write about “chosen” authors etc.) by the circles which dislike me and their careers again were accelerated in the corrected “right way”.

One of the most pertinent young woman critics, who openly praised my book and was not for sale on the first spot as the others were (as she recognized the motives), lost her job at another (privat) university in a much similar dirty way that I did (Slovenian on whole is like a small village). When three women-writers in Slovenia, all with many publication, organisations and engagements in the past and with years and decades of struggle for minimally correct social positions behind them, proposed their dossiers to enter the Slovenian PEN Club (I was one of them) and who should

routinely be accepted in the Slovenian PEN Club, they/we were refused in a way that was not justified, and four other women—replacements, submissive and immediately ready to throw mud on us (on the “refuted”), were quickly found to enter the Slovenian PEN Club as a new “Women Section”. Those replacements instantly took some of our ideas as theirs, and became practically overnight “feminists”, but, of course, still very meek inside the frames of firmly patriarchal structure of the Slovene literary scene. I, mean, you have to be a total idiot not to see what’s going on there.

I should add that I’ve been fighting in the last decades in many segments of social life, extending from human, women and civil to the worker’s rights, but never considered any of these fights above the others. I’ve lectured at the university for years history of women, constructions of gender and feminism, and still I found a herd of envious women whose identity is based only on biological gender (sex), but otherwise totally dependent of men and willing to humiliate other women (though it’s only one of them—bright and articulate), exceedingly abominable.

So it goes. The most spontaneous and naturalized ideologies function the best, nobody even knows that he/she’s a part of the *necropolitical* action. Poets who fight for their social positions, people’s rights and civil rights in Slovenia have no means and no material support from which they could really fight—they hardly stay above the water, if at all. But the sad thing is that sometimes they don’t even know for what reason they fight. So this combination of *ignorance* and *rebellion instinct* is again something which can easily be manipulated as a replacement against more pertinent intellectual positions in art.

But every time when I went out of the country, almost 100 meters behind the border, reception of my poetry changed drastically. Internationally I have received very warm and open receptions by various publics, though I don’t even have a proper book in English or French (after almost 2 decades of my literary engagements I’ve so to say almost nothing to show in larger languages, and still Slovenian poets, the same who annually receive from public budget support for 2-3 book translations, sell this idiotic “story” about how supported I am—although it’s totally fake. The truth is as much as I was supported in the last decade it was mostly designed for the manipulative and intrigue purposes. And when I needed anything for my minimal existential survival, for example after the purge, when I was at the Office of unemployed, I was denied by all those apparent “literary” and “intellectual” “colleagues” and downtrodden.

I ask myself—for whom, actually, this *image of me as an allegedly supported poet one is so desperately needed*, that he/she reproduces it over all the thrilling miseries I went through, including the final part—leaving the country?

In some places, mostly outside Europe, my poetry audience was ready to start petition in my support of me when they heard the story of the purge. Some others rather carelessly listen to the appropriated and frenzy stories of the famous Slovenian Poets. So, there’re milieus and milieus, receptions and receptions.

INTERVIEWER

Who are then the modern poets from other countries you can relate to?

TAJA

Ooo, many, many. In Latin America which I love to inhabit as a reader: generous gestures and pioneer work concerning women’s writing done by Victoria Ocampo, poetry of Alfonsina Storni, Olga Orozco, Veronica Volkow, Claribel Alegría. Of North American affiliation I would unquestionably put out Emily Dickinson, Laura Riding, June Jordan, Audre Lorde, Muriel Rukeyser, Adrienne Rich and Margaret Randall. Marina Tsevetseva, an incredibly courageous woman and a great poet, was terribly misrepresented—in her time—by most of her fellow male poets (with an exception of Pasternak and some others), Anna Akhmatova. Some of them had a tremendous hold on

me, reading and rereading their essays I discovered a totally new continent of open possibilities, emancipatory instruments before I was confronted with waves of feminism at my postgraduate studies. In Canada I keep coming back to Nicole Brossard's *Installations* (1989), *Langues obscures* (1992) and *Musée de l'os et del'eau* (1999), I've just finished Louise Dupré's *Plus haut que les flammes* (2010). For the moment I'm reading some poetry books of the French poet Françoise Coullin, and I'm very much fond of them. Last years I've been reading a lot of Canadian authors, I advance gradually as I do many things simultaneously, but I'm thorough. Then, there's also exceptional braveness of Taslima Nasrin, I've translated some of her poems, but were unfortunately not published yet. Those are just a few landmark-women poets that come to my mind right now. Of men poets I dearly love human and humorous poetic touch of Roque Dalton and Otto René Castillo; they both underwent terrible political intrigues and brutalities. I love most parts of Pablo Neruda and a liberating contiguity of Nazim Hikmet. Still like Heinrich Heine, Vladimir Mayakovsky, Bertold Brecht. Among French poets Edmond Jabès, René Char. There's an oddly forgotten, but intensive and incredibly beautiful Hungarian poet Jozsef Attila whom I translated into Slovenian together with a young Hungarian translator. I also love almost all of Mahmoud Darwish poetry, I consider him enormous and human at the same time, and then there's Faiz Ahmed Faiz with his half intimate half political approach. I'm also very fond of less known US poets, such as George Oppen, Charles Reznikoff and some others; I love the testimony aspect of poetry. I've translated many poems of the mentioned poets, not all were published, but that's what poets very happily do. Translation is an intimate pleasure and an exercise at the same time.

There was a time, at my beginnings when I read almost all of John Ashbery, Tomas Transtroemer, Roberto Juarroz, Joseph Brodsky, Czesław Miłosz, Wisława Szymborska etc. but later I discovered other poets, who became much more important for my particular intellectual and spiritual itinerary and explorations. I also moved considerably closer to socially sensitive poetry during the years, though this was present all the way from my first book on—it is only more accentuated now; not without relations in my life experiences. And though I'm not a religious person and I don't seek religious elements and transcendence in poetry, I can still appreciate contributions of strong poetry (such as Pound's, Eliot's or Whitman's is), no matter what the socio-political-religious orientation is.

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I totally agree with Roberto Juarroz that bad poetry is not the enemy of good or strong poetry. The enemy is a half-done and half-thought poetry, a media-elevated poetry which does not think all its initial aspects in a consequent way and is not ready to risk anything. Here I can only add Edmond Jabès's thought: *if there's no risk, there's no writing*.

#### INTERVIEWER

Are there some poets in Slovenia you can link to or you find inspiring?

#### TAJA

There are some, a handful of poets. I would name two of them from the past, whom I consider key figures, each in his own time: France Prešeren (1800–1849) in the first half of the nineteenth century, and Srečko Kosovel (1904–1926), in the first quarter of the twentieth century. Both of them were way above the mediocrity of the time, not officially accepted showing puppets. In a great deal they were self-made intellectuals, grand spirits and humanly open to the people of community. They came to similar sharp observation about the Slovenian “society” that Braco Rotar and I did, but it didn't help them a bit in changing intellectually landscape in their times.

Consequently, they both felt outsiders, alone, and were also treated like that (not very welcomed by their contemporaries). Both were intellectually consistent, epistemically honest and consequent in their thoughts, intellectual work and projects. No comparison whatsoever with other poets of their time, who were hold as Poets of that time.

## INTERVIEWER

Taja, I've seen on the web that you were the initiator and a co-founder of the KONS—International Literary Award® that was given away in its second edition in Nicaragua in February 2013. How it came to this award? What was your intention in the first place?

## TAJA

This idea came to my mind when I wanted to establish some more efficient tools whereby we, women poets and writers in Slovenia, could open just a little bit a terribly *méchant* and perverse literary field in our country. We were struggling for almost 2 decades with no visible and palpable results. Slovenia is an absolutely male dominated and brutally secretive world, technologies of laceration are being highly operative inside the country, as I have already described.

I knew that this new *tool* or an *autonomy instrument* for women has to be firmly connected to the outer world, unless the effect will be the same as ever: our work will be downtrodden, seized, attributed to the regime women, twisted around in the inner milieu, politically manoeuvred and ridiculed at the end.

So I shared this idea of mine of an international award with two colleagues of mine, Tatjana Jamnik and Barbara Korun, women-poets, who seemed to be, each one in her own particular way, engaged against corruption and clique in Slovenian literary scene. We talked about it, think it over many times from different angles, and finally decided to go along with it. It's a private award, owned by the three of us, we're the only possessors, decision makers and organizers (not the country), but have a gradually growing international network of associate supporting members. I will not reveal what the prize actually contains, but I can say that it was received well. The second edition especially gave me/us a lot of pleasure and left an unforgettable imprint in my/our memory.

The award is not about the financial enrichment of poets, we can't provide that—and there're many other awards like that. But it's a strong statement in favour of human dimension of poets and writers. It's at the same time an affirmation of literary and life achievements, and also of individual personal integrity and commitment—and as an award it comes unexpectedly to the hands of the receiver from rather unknown coordinates. And sometimes this kind of

## IN GOOSE FILE\*

*The words in the head are different  
from the words in the mouth and  
the words in the mouth are different  
from the words in the ears.*

*The words in the head  
function silently,  
they are untouchable and untouched,  
without form they shoot and they fade.  
Their kingdom is not  
entirely of the head in which  
they have found themselves.*

*The words in the mouth  
are on the path to sound and shape;  
they are like a guttural cavalry mid-attack,  
so that the cannon echoes inside one's  
head.*

*But in the final moment  
they re-arrange themselves and  
march out like geese.*

*The words in the ear are  
a pleasant prickling – more vibration than  
sound,  
more rhythm than meaning  
(or rhythm and meaning ungroup for a  
moment,  
in order to connect differently).  
Their only task is  
to fertilise the words in the head  
and push them into the mouth.*

*This is how a thought occurs.  
This is how dialogue occurs.  
This is how a poem occurs.*

© Taja Kramberger, *Z roba klifa-From the Edge of a Cliff* (2011)  
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\* The Slovenian expression "in goose order" denotes something akin to the American idiom "in Indian file".

surprise, this kind of *gift* is the most beautiful one.

Claribel Alegría, a Nicaraguan-Salvadoran poet and writer, was a 2013 receiver of the KONS award in its second edition. She's one of those rare and dear people, with whom I feel a strong connection from the first time I read their verses. Besides, she is a dearly warm human being, a huge and gentle personality with moral and intellectual integrity of big format, and, of course, an excellent poet. This is an extremely rare and irretrievable combination, and we went along well immediately when we met. I'm not trying to be indiscreet or preposterous, I have no pretensions whatsoever, the fact that it's a very simple human relationship that connected us. We've only met once, in Granada, where the bestowal took place, and then in Managua at her place, but all together we—Claribel, me, my husband Braco and then also her son and his girlfriend joined us—have spent an unforgettable evening together chatting, laughing, drinking a big bottle of excellent Nicaraguan rum, and stay in touch also afterwards. It's as simple as that: I really think that great poets, and Claribel Alegría is undoubtedly one of them, are always also simple human beings. If they've done their best in their poetry then they need no climbing strategies and international turpitudes to be visible as great poets, a skilled eye can see it from their very verses. The hardest part is, however, that they had to stay alive, survived all the base assaults, machinations, imputations, and other forms of attacks from their envious and hidden “rivals” and enemies.

#### INTERVIEWER

When I've heard you in London and talked to some other people who listened to you there, we were absolutely stunned that your poetry and your other texts are not more widely known and distributed. Now, after talking to you I think I understand better this somewhat unfortunate if not *tragic moment*; you don't have any back up, any firm pillar to set out from. In fact, it is even worse: the back-up that is still figuring as your alleged solid ground (your native state) is actually ruining your possibilities just to put others in front of you because you can tell *the truth* while the others are politically obedient and “promotable”. Am I right? What can you do? How can you disengage from this pestiferous hold?

#### TAJA

I would say that you've seized the wider picture very well. My only correction would be: I can tell my truth which might be close to some other truths. It's not about the *universal truth*, but about the truthful relations one establishes with the events of this world. Some relations are more genuine than others.

I think that being underestimated, abandoned and forgotten is not the worst it could happen to you. You can still work and if you're outside the consecrated circle, as a matter of fact, you have more peace to do this work. I consider incessant laceration much worse. So, I can't really answer this question; I don't know what I'll do (Braco and I've already done some things to protect us from “our country”, I hope it will stay like this), it depends on the future constellation.

I don't have Slovenia and Slovenians in my *close-up* picture anymore, I don't believe in good intentions of this country considering my and Braco's destiny, so I hope this “annoying entity” will leave me/us alone. If not, I'll deal with it when it comes. But, as you can see, when you're dealing with a whole society turned upside down, being eradicated and tortured is just another form of inverted appreciation. It's a pity that I don't have any masochistic drive...

#### INTERVIEWER

What're your future plans, now that you live in France?

TAJA

I only have one wish: to go on with my usual intellectual and literary work without ruthless ruptures and stressing discontinuities, and that relative peace and minimal existential conditions for serious work are established anew.

I look into the future rather brightly, and Braco, my love, too. We have a large task to fulfil; that is to gradually compensate with other forms of socialization, voices and places a cruel eradication from the community—to which we contributed our best, but were, as Slovenia is a *necropolitics* state, excluded from the fullness of human possibilities.

Braco is as engaged as I'm; we do many things together, research certain intellectual topics, discuss literature we read, laugh a lot, play tennis, comment on plays and movies we watch, cook together, and I hope we'll have time for many more sharing project.

INTERVIEWER

How do you switch between poetry and history or historical anthropology?

TAJA

Poetry, literature, theatre, figurative arts define my relations with this world, and history and anthropology help me reflect these relations. Then the circulation swerves, it seems, and works in another direction as well. Literature can also figure as a very subtle reflection tool to the very complex social situations. Sometimes analytical language is insufficient and a literary genres take over and one give you better possibilities to outline a situation. As I've already accentuated, I love a combination of analytical and poetical register, I have a need to express myself intensively in both, but also in some other languages, discourses and genres, that's my way of doing things. It's my way of being in this world. I simply don't believe in one total signifier of the world, only in small approximations to our ideals and wishes. Mainly for the purpose, I guess, to see this strangely beautiful and constantly changing reality in front of our eyes a little bit better, clearer and hopefully lighter.



## INTERVIEWER

Dear Taja, I certainly hope we'll get your English book soon. I'm absolutely persuaded that English audience has some appetite for the radical commitment and a human posture that you personally embody and your poetry represents, and will enjoy your verses greatly—as I did our interview.

## TAJA

Thank you, it's been a mutual entertainment, and it's great to be back in London—this time discovering some new places I didn't even know they exist before. As for the book, translations are already made; it's only that I'm not sure if I have really found a good publishing place for my poetry.

### A MUST READ AND SEE (BY TAJA KRAMBERGER)

- **VIDEO**—**POETRY READING IN ARGENTINA (2013)**
  - [El puerto de Koper](#)
  - [Cada muerto tiene su nombre](#)
  - [El hogar es donde estamos y donde estaremos](#)
- **VIDEO**—**[A THEATRE PRODUCTION OF TAJA'S SCRIPT "If the Singer is Silenced"](#) (2010/2011)** (With her students and some poets; this is a rehearsal July 2012 before the group fell apart due to the political intrigue. It's highly interesting. I hope we'll get the translation/subtitles soon.)
- **ANTHOLOGY**—Taja's poem "Mobilisations", in [A fine line: new poetry from Eastern & Central Europe](#). Todmorden: Arc Publications, 2004, 176-191.
- **ANTHOLOGY**—Taja's poems in *Here. An Anthology of Slovenian Poetry in Translation*, Pighog Press, edited by Radharani Pernarčič (translations by Špela Drnovšek Zorko et al.), Brighton, 2011, 41-50. (<http://www.pighog.co.uk>)
- **BOOK (in Spanish)**—[No palabras](#) (translations by Barbara Pregelj, Gemma Santiago Alonso), Gog y Magog, Buenos Aires, 2013.
- **[KONS-INTERNATIONAL POETRY AWARD®](#)**

#### Other information:

[Writers' Residence](#)

[Taja Kramberger's Wikipedia](#)

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