

Heretical Essays Of Miroslav Krleža

Jovan Bukumira

Abstract

The paper aims to present the heretical aspects of the essays of Miroslav Krleža (1893–1981), the central figure of Croatian and Yugoslav 20th-century literature. I will firstly show the role of the essays in Krleža's voluminous oeuvre, which enabled him to express a comprehensive critique of the contemporary social reality, state of art, political circumstances, religious influences, etc. The fundamental gesture of Krleža's lifelong artistic activity, as I will further demonstrate, is negation, with its destructive (to expose individual and collective lies and delusions) as well as constructive (to establish an alternative canon of values and ideals) character. Finally, I will deal with the heretical position of Krleža as an essayist within Yugoslav culture during the interwar period: as an avid supporter of communist ideas, he criticized harshly the religious dullness, intellectual philistinism, and artistic opportunism, only to find himself subsequently accused of ideological deviations by his political comrades, in a so-called conflict of the literary left.

For there must be also heresies among you, that they which are approved may be made manifest among you.

1 Cor 11:19

In order to practice his craft properly, a writer must have the opportunity to be in some way a dissident, and even a defeatist, regarding his relation to the state and institutions, the nation and the authorities. He is a 'prodigal son' who returns to his paternal authority only to be able to leave it again. Negation is his familial form of accepting the world.

Miroslav Krleža

1. Essay and heresy: common ground

The meaning of essay lies in its search, as Proust would have said, but it is not the lost time that what is searched for but the search itself. An essay starts from a subject more or less contingently chosen – mostly a kind of human creation or craft – and represents a search for a new form of creating begotten in meditation upon the previous one. Jovica Aćin, a Serbian writer and essayist, points to the ambiguous but stimulating Latin etymology of the word *essay*:

The verb is derived from *exagiare*, to weigh. Related is the meaning of *examen*: a needle, a tab on the scales, an estimated load, a controlled test. But there is another meaning to it: a swarm of bees, a flock of birds. [...] The etymology of the above expressions refers to *exigo*, throw out, report, hunt, then demand. [...] An essay would, hence, be a strict, demanding measure, careful examination, but also a verbal swarm in

the swing of its rise¹.

The exact place of an essay in the system of literary genres is difficult to determine, as it remains the genre on which the questions about the (non) affiliation to literature were most often raised – since it occupies *terra incognita* between literature and philosophy, or art and science. It was equally difficult to give a firm definition of it. However, Pierre Glaudes and Jean-François Louette, writing a handbook on the genre, put forward a tentative, but quite satisfactory definition: “Essay is nonfictional prose, subjective, argumentative in intention, but antimethodical in composition, in which style is in itself a practice of thought”².

On the other hand, the term *heresy* comes from the ancient Greek noun αἵρεσις [*haíresis*], which in turn derives from the verb αἰρέομαι [*hairéomai*], meaning choice, acceptance, giving priority, and the thing chosen. Heresy is a teaching that differs and deviates from true doctrine (especially in matters of faith), an apostasy. It is based on the free will to choose and decide something for oneself, as opposed to the accepted or established opinion (*doxa*). Therefore, it shakes the unity (catholicity) of a communion (church) and denies the old dogma *nulla salus extra ecclesiam*, resulting in both moral and intellectual fallacy. It should come as no surprise that – within any strictly organized community – heresy, just like any novelty, has always been regarded with suspicion: it signified the hazardous possibility of stepping out-

¹ Aćin (1996), p. 58.

² Glaudes, Louette (2011), p. 10.

side the ossified corpus of prevailing opinions and customs, introducing a dose of uncertainty into the established order. In short, heresy has always implied the possibility of an alternative, or at least a guidepost to something different.

It is worth mentioning that, at the time of the “establishment” of the essay, the word still bore legal, more precisely criminal connotations – an attempt of burglary or theft, but also the imposition of an appropriate penalty for a misdemeanor – the meanings which could not be overlooked by the genre’s founding father, Michel de Montaigne³. Accordingly, it would not be wrong to think about the “violative” position of the essay in relation to other genres. Adorno seems to have hinted at this, by stating the essay to be “a critical form par excellence; and as an immanent critique of spiritual creations, as a confrontation of what they are with their concept, as a critique of ideology,” concluding that “the innermost law of the essay form is heresy”⁴. The essay respects the “awareness of non-identity,” emphasizes partiality at the expense of totality, the ephemeral and changeable at the expense of eternal: “the essay, so to say, methodically acts non-methodically,” as a result of which “its method itself expresses utopian intention”⁵. In this capacity for dialectical negation, readiness for subjective independence and reference to otherness lies a deep kinship between essay and heresy.

³ *Ibidem*, p. 54.

⁴ Adorno (1985), p. 31, p. 36.

⁵ *Ibidem*, pp. 23-24, p. 27.

Respecting the wisdom of antiquity and German Romanticism, Lukács believed that criticism belongs to art, not science, so he claimed essays and critical writings, especially the ones from distant past, are less read because of their moral or cognitive value, and more because of their carefully crafted form. Humor and irony are the hallmarks of all great essayists – from Plato to Lukács himself – who speak about the last questions in the same way as they comment on books or paintings, which is why the German philosopher wittily remarked that “the simple modesty of that word [essay] is arrogant courtesy,” by which the essayist accepts his own “smallness”⁶. With these remarks in mind, we will also read the essays of Miroslav Krleža, whose famous self-ironic essayistic “humbleness” has, in his colossal opus, grown to such an extent that it has become the most voluminous part of it.

2. Krleža as naysayer

Certain words emerge as leitmotifs in all studies aiming to systematically describe the entirety of Krleža’s literary work. This vast opus is hence primarily defined by terms such as negative, antithetical, antinomic, agonistic and the like – terms denoting the author’s inclination toward conflict and strong opposition, that is, his heretical trait constantly manifested in his books. Polish literary historian and

⁶ Lukács (1973), p. 44.

Croatian literature scholar Jan Wierzbicki as “the main determinants of Krleža’s stance” singles out “antinomic view of reality” and “agon as an essence of the relationship to reality,” recognizing in those features “the attitude of dialectical negation, rebellious disagreement with the world,” whose inspiration he finds in youthful enthusiasm for Nietzsche (Wierzbicki 1980: 68). This basic Krležian gesture of antinomy and agon was also described by Stanko Lasić, self-proclaimed founder of Krležology, i.e. the “history of critical thought about Miroslav Krleža”:

Krleža’s thought springs from agon (struggle) and polemics (war), so the antithesis is not just another figure used to bring one more style into his style but rather the dominant figure shattering the ontological/epistemological identity and making room for a birth of Manichean duality⁷.

Despite the mainly polemical attitude against Lasić in the recent studies of Krleža, similar insights can also be found in them: “Krleža [...] was mostly preoccupied with the problem of human freedom, including his personal, writer’s freedom. His intellectual strength is based on a kind of negative capability: on the ability to doubt, to belong nowhere, to avoid any doctrine”⁸.

The essay was for Krleža one of the generic tools for constructing and maintaining a permanent expression of doubt. His “dynamic militancy,

⁷ Quoted in Visković (1993), p. 13.

⁸ Brebanović (2016), p. 119.

irreconcilable stance, unstoppable movement of thought”⁹, as well as the position of an Enlightenment author within literature and culture of the South Slavic peoples, are just some of the factors that speak in favor of the fact that he was and remained an indispensable actor in the main European spiritual events of the previous century. Quantitatively, essays occupy the most extensive place within Krleža’s work, and essayistic discourse permeates all of his fictional texts. Therefore, “it is worth having a special ear for the specific interrelations of Krleža’s fictional and essayistic texts,” on which Milan Bogdanović, literary critic and the writer’s friend, said that in his writing “everything plays a major role, because there is no specific center”¹⁰. This means that a kind of a “dialectical whole” is being realized in Krleža’s work, as called by Marko Ristić, a Serbian surrealist and Krleža’s long-time close friend and collaborator, and above all one of his most zealous readers.

In that work, as in every authentic work of art, form and content are inseparable, and its synthetic character, which makes that work an objective chronicle of a higher kind, even when it is that what is called fiction, and a work of art even when it is that what Krleža himself calls ‘variations’ or ‘calendars,’ this synthetic character of his work is inseparable from Krleža’s synthetic, comprehensive vision of the real world in its dialectical mobility and complexity of that world¹¹.

⁹ Wierzbicki (1980), p. 7.

¹⁰ Quoted in Brlek (2020), p. 171.

¹¹ Ristić (1954), p. 43.

Krleža's creativity, therefore, cannot be viewed exclusively on the literary level: "Krleža was and remains a writer faithful to the domain of the greatest literary ambitions – the field of social mythology"¹².

But, as for every great writer, it can also be said of Krleža that it is not important only what he wrote about, but also, if not more importantly, how he wrote. After all, in the essay on Erasmus of Rotterdam, carefully choosing quotations from Erasmus' letters, he cites the phrase which could serve as a warning to any essayist: "Someone who cares about seriousness should be careful when choosing a phrase"¹³. Bora Ćosić claimed Krleža managed to "create from this turmoil of disparate spoken and written linguistic motives a sentence with the greatest flowing power in the history of his own people"¹⁴. That sentence is characterized by controlled chaos, in which parataxis, word repetition and sequencing prevail, as well as an overload of elements that demonstrates syntactic control. Krleža's characteristic sentence phrase is based on the initial accumulation, followed by an ironically effective turn in the second part.

Eruptive, irritable speech that engages in associations, without avoiding redundancy; collection of heterogeneous phenomena, the order of names that are reduced to a common denominator being relativized; surprising sparks of inspiration and bold combinations that require new insights – all this accompanied

¹² Wierzbicki (1980), p. 12.

¹³ Krleža (1961b), p. 280.

¹⁴ Ćosić (1983), p. 33.

by one-sided statements, contradictions and things not fully thought out linguistically and logically¹⁵.

All in all, whether it is about poems, plays, novels or essays, Krleža's style is characterized by "lavish-eruptive, intoxicating language orchestration"¹⁶. In addition, Krleža, in his polemics, used the rhetorical means "learned" from Karl Kraus: "The problem of literary expression was and remains: how to bring the modern tragedy of operetta reality unadulterated, true and real? Karl Kraus solved this question with a quotation"¹⁷. Reinhard Lauer also drew attention to this: "An important structural feature of the Krležian style is the appropriation of another's speech in his own text, which could be described as speech interference, or – with Mikhail Bakhtin – as polyphony"¹⁸.

In 1933, the year that marked Krleža's entering into open conflict with his ideological (but not aesthetic) comrades, T. S. Eliot gave a series of lectures at the University of Virginia. Eliot looked back at the work of some of his contemporaries – primarily Joyce, D. H. Lawrence, and Katherine Mansfield – not from the perspective of a literary critic but as a "moralist." The American poet and essayist did not criticize the novelty and originality of these writers, but the fact they glorify these categories, taking them as a goal in themselves.

¹⁵ Lauer (1987), p. XIII.

¹⁶ Brebanović (2016), p. 41.

¹⁷ Krleža (1961a), p. 165.

¹⁸ Lauer (1987), p. XIV.

The essential of any important heresy is not simply that it is wrong: it is that it is partly right. It is characteristic of the more interesting heretics [...] that they have an exceptionally acute perception, or profound insight, of some part of the truth [...]. So far as we are able to redress the balance, effect the compensation ourselves, we may find such authors of the greatest value¹⁹.

Although he was hardly familiar with the Yugoslav literary context of the time, Eliot presented a rather precise guideline for reading Krleža, especially in light of his heretical position. Such a reading would have to take into account which “part of the truth” or which “profound insight” – and against whom – Krleža was ready to express in order to better understand his value for us today.

3. Heressay(s) of Krleža

We will limit ourselves to considering only those of Krleža’s essays in which the author’s polemical and antithetical – that is, heretical – charge is most pronounced. These are, primarily, four canonical essays written in the span of twenty years, circumscribing almost perfectly the interwar period: “Hrvatska književna laž” [“The Croatian literary lie,” 1919], a book *Moj obračun s njima* [My reckoning with them, 1932], “Predgovor *Podravskim*

¹⁹ Eliot (1934), pp. 24–25.

motivima” [“Foreword to *Podravina motifs*,” 1933] and “Dijalektički antibarbarus” [“Dialectical antibarbarous,” 1939].²⁰ In addition, we will address several texts in which Krleža maps the backbone of the alternative (Yugoslav) tradition, based on the historical vertical Bogomils – Jurij Križanić – Silvije Kranjčević, but also about essays dedicated to ideological and political reckoning with petty-bourgeois, narrow-minded and false patriotic mentality of his milieu, and the last phase is considered in the end, culminating in the conception of and the work on *Enciklopedija Jugoslavije* [*Encyclopedia of Yugoslavia*]. It seems to us that this selection and (both thematical and temporal) range of essays would most adequately illustrate the nature of Krleža’s heretical confrontation with literary and political opponents, that is, his effort not only to criticize the current social setting but also to aspire to delineation and building up of the new order.

“Hrvatska književna laž” was published in the first issue of *Plamen* [*Flame*] – the first among numerous magazines (“for all cultural problems”) Krleža started, but not the only he had to give up due to state censorship. The text, which could be described as an

²⁰ Despite being one of the most translated Yugoslav writers, Miroslav Krleža did not arouse much interest in the English-speaking world, at least according to the number of translated works available in that language. Publications in English include novels *Povratak Filipa Latinovicza* [*The return of Philip Latinovicz*, 1959], *Na rubu pameti* [*On the edge of reason*, 1986] and *Banket u Blitvi* [*The Banquet in Blitva*, 2004], travelogue *Izlet u Rusiju* [*Journey to Russia*, 2017], prose selections *The Cricket Beneath the Waterfall, and other stories* [1972] and *Harbors Rich in Ships* [2017], as well as few poems in the translation of Darko Suvin – under the indicative title “Two Heretics: Jure Kaštelan and Miroslav Krleža” [2015]. Therefore, all translations of quotations from Krleža’s essays in this paper are mine.

(expressionistically intoned) avant-garde manifesto, begins with programmatic exclamations: “Flame! Flame! It is time to burn and destroy and break the greatest lie of all our sacrosanct lies, the legendary lie over lies, the lie of Croatian literature”²¹. Viewed from a distance, it would not be an exaggeration to conclude that this very cry *in nuce* represents Krleža’s lifelong program. His targets are representative of the Croatian revival, the mainstream of Croatian literature, which “was not a revival at all” since it “did not revive anything”²². The main motive of Krleža’s critique is actually death, or rather, the deadness reigning in Croatian artistic and socio-political life. Besides, revivalists are both politically compromised (opportunists in conjunction with colonial rule) and artistically immature, shallow and superficial, so the “giant heroism” projected in them is completely disproportionate to the value of the work of these “literary mummies”²³.

Here, Krleža discusses what is, all the way to *Enciklopedija*, to become one of his main political and artistic leitmotifs – the problem of artistic creation in the country of the geopolitical periphery. His answer at the time, as well as from later, was that artists must rely on the creative forces of their own people and environment, which is why he did not support the mere imitation of foreign role models, although it could neither be said he advocated nationalist autism. In “Hrvatska književna laž,” this answer relies in part

²¹ Krleža (1919), p. 32.

²² *Ibidem*.

²³ *Ibidem*.

on the discourses on race at the time, and Krleža's point is that Croatian art does not correspond to the real experiences of the Croatian people, that it fails to bring them to adequate expression and therefore lags behind them: "Everything called Croatian literature today is a poor ornamental wallpaper" and "a reflex of long-extinguished reflexes," "all this a little distinctly alien, and a little over-molded"²⁴. Metaphors of parasitically ill literature and people swollen of health dominate the scene of text, written as a kind of cry for healing.

Since on the one hand there stands the nationalist "marble tomb" of the revivalists, while on the other the larpourlartistic "magazine of rotten goods" of the so-called Modern, Krleža and August Cesarec, the magazine coeditor, are looking for a third way – and find it in Lenin, October and the Russian commune, symbols of the "most gigantic revival of all revivals" which "beats the specter of Capital"²⁵. The text ends on an ironic-biblical tone, which also announces the line of a third way. But, in the end, Krleža does not dwell only on the Marxian "ruthless critique of everything that exists," as he outlines a possible alternative tradition, starting from which one could further "build more solidly."²⁶

Establishing the Bogomils – Križanić – Kranjčević continuity meant not only outlining a new look to the back, but also obliged Krleža to deal with these problems in more detail. Krleža opposes

²⁴ *Ibidem*, p. 35.

²⁵ *Ibidem*, p. 38.

²⁶ *Ibidem*.

the official representations of history and culture, considering them false, and above all he opposes national myth-making: “All this should be challenged by the plebeian view of history ‘from below,’ by the heretical perspective which, according to Krleža, leads from Bogomils to the Croatian Peasant Revolt to the socialist movement in Yugoslavia and finally to Josip Broz Tito”²⁷.

The essay on Juraj Križanić²⁸ is one of the most touching Krleža has ever written. This “excessive and extravagant man” “lived his life in the midst of incessant bloodshed, fire and crime”²⁹ – after all, like almost all of Krleža’s essayistic heroes. “In Juraj Križanić, the masse of problems of a spiritual and material nature appeared with symbolic anticipation, which two hundred years later continuously means all components of the Croatian cultural and political problem”³⁰. Križanić, therefore, “quixotically,” “in manner of vision realizes a very simple truth: the truth about the All-Slavic ethnic and linguistic identity”³¹, resulting in relentless commitment to unite the Slavs into one universal church, which would finally enable the liberation from both Eastern (Greek-Byzantine) and Western (Roman-Protestant) hegemony. “Born in the schism of Rome and Slavdom, torn by the fatal dilemma of East and West, Križanić is a typical victim of our geographical

²⁷ Lauer (1987), p. IX.

²⁸ Juraj Križanić (1618–1683), Croatian Catholic missionary, one of the earliest known pan-Slavist. Križanić supported the idea that all Slavs had a common language and ethnic origin.

²⁹ Krleža (1963a), p. 62, p. 49.

³⁰ *Ibidem*, p. 52.

³¹ *Ibidem*, p. 55.

position”³². Krleža explains these ideas about ethnic and linguistic wholes, the “romance of so-called integration” that characterized the era of Križanić and the Illyrian movement (Josip Juraj Strossmayer) as well as Yugoslavia (Frano Supilo), by the Croatian colonial situation, that is, the inability to get rid of its occupiers in reality. Križanić’s unifying idea (and mission), his undeterred trip to Moscow, a counterpart to Krleža’s own “journey to Russia,” his financial and publishing (dis)opportunities, as well as energy, fertility and breadth of talent, and misunderstanding in wider circles – everything points to great similarities with Krleža’s personality and activity. Just as Križanić constructs the “universal All-Slavic grammar” and Strossmayer the Yugoslav Academy, so Krleža, in line of this continuity, initiates the establishment of the Institute of Lexicography and the creation of the *Enciklopedija Jugoslavije*.

Like Križanić, Kranjčević³³ is important to Krleža as both a strong creative talent and a political visionary. Literary-historical contextualization of his poetry falls into European romance, for which Kranjčević was “belated” for fifty years, but Krleža insists Croatian romanticism could not, like in Western Europe, be a reaction to classicism, “because before it we cannot speak of our overall literary duration.”³⁴ Romanticism of Kranjčević

³² *Ibidem*, p. 58.

³³ Silvije Strahimir Kranjčević (1865–1908), Croatian poet, editor of influential literary magazine *Nada* [*Hope*, 1895–1903], one of the most important representatives of Croatian social poetry.

³⁴ In the quoted book, T. S. Eliot says that the most important negative consequence of heresy – “the crippling effect upon man of letters, of not having been born and brought up in the environment of a living and central tradition” Eliot

takes on another meaning: “This means entering into undiscovered linguistic matter, into unknown and uncharted linguistic spaces of verse, without great role models, without special tradition, without precious heritage and inherited laws of literary taste and poetic form”³⁵. It is no coincidence that, from the famous Matoš’s article on the poet, Krleža quotes the statement about the dominance of adjective “lost” – which, as the whole essay suggests, should refer not only to Kranjčević’s position within Croatian poetry, but also to the position of that whole poetry in relation to the literature of the “central” nations. Therefore, the significance of Kranjčević as a phenomenon

does not lie in the fact that he created an impossible and ridiculous school of imitators and untalented epigones, but in the fact that in the most difficult and darkest circumstances he rose and spoke without role models, without reputation, without precursors, clumsily, ignorantly, helplessly, with a delay of fifty years, but still: spoke³⁶

which meant “raising our literary tension from a dilettante backwardness into the space of contemporary verse and expression”³⁷.

(1934), p. 49 – is the inviolable rule of the author’s individuality. In these essays, Krleža laments the non-existence of domestic “overall literary duration,” and his heresy, unlike what the American poet claims, lies rather in this demand for a more developed “tradition” than in the emphasis of “individual talent.”

³⁵ Krleža (1963b), p. 12.

³⁶ *Ibidem*, p. 27.

³⁷ *Ibidem*, p. 41.

Krleža will write more on Bogomils³⁸ only after the war, and his short essay “Bogumilski mramorovi” [“Bogomil Marbles,” 1954] is part of a larger series of the author’s reflections on the medieval art of the Yugoslav peoples, which to a greater or lesser extent became the backbone of the encyclopedic endeavor. In this case, too, it is about an everlasting search for spiritual relatives, but also an attempt to understand one’s own tradition from an anti-colonial perspective. Krleža rejects the notions of these territories that dominated the intellectual elite of the West, claiming that “based on Mérimée’s poetic suggestion,³⁹ the opinion was established about a semi-civilized, primitive and poor, ignorant and backward people”⁴⁰. On the contrary,

Bosnia has been Manichaeic and Bogomil for centuries. [...] Bosnia was the ‘refugium haereticorum’ of the Western European Manichean world, the seat of the Manichean Antipope and the moral and intellectual center of the Albigensian resistance after the fall of Provence. These Bosnian tombstones, which pagan defiantly tell us about the joys of life, dances, the beauty of hunting, animals and plants, are clear evidence of strong artistic and moral nonconformism, which has lasted for centuries⁴¹.

³⁸ Bogomils [bogumili], Christian neo-Gnostic and dualist sect founded in the First Bulgarian Empire by the priest Bogomil during the reign of Tsar Peter I in the 10th century.

³⁹ Krleža is here alluding to the land of Morlachs as represented in Prosper Mérimée’s literary forgery *La Guzla* [1827], a collection of his pseudotranslations of folk ballads from Dalmatia, Bosnia, Croatia and Herzegovina.

⁴⁰ Krleža (1966), p. 240.

⁴¹ *Ibidem*, pp. 242-243.

Krleža pays special attention to the “artistic value” of these tombstones and above all appreciates their monumentality and “defiant rudeness, which recognizes no style other than its own”⁴². Therefore, for Krleža,

pestilenza bosignana is attractive as a kind of ‘third’ element – the negation of Rome on the one hand, and Byzantium on the other – thus adding a component of autochthony to Bogomilism, without which ‘our Protestants’ and ‘lovers of God’ could not even be properly understood. For him, Bogomils were a symbol of ‘artistic rebellion or revolution’⁴³.

Bogomils and related gnostics, despite the considerable time and space distance, are united in their “anti-cosmic orientation”⁴⁴, as well as in their spiritual alternative, anarchy, rebellion, inclination to iconoclasm and oppositional impulses.

The essay “Nekoliko riječi o malograđanskom historizmu uopće” [“A few words on petty-bourgeois historicism in general,” 1926] – actually, the common title of the two essays, “Malograđanska historijska shema” [“Petty-bourgeois historical scheme”] and “O malograđanskoj ljubavi spram hrvatstva” [“On petty-bourgeois love for Croatia”], both published in *Književna republika* [Literary Republic] – is a review of everyday Croatian historical-political-mentality topics. It adds to “Hrvatska književna laž” by the fact that Krleža acts as a revealer of the truth that

⁴² *Ibidem*, p. 245.

⁴³ Brebanović (2011), pp. 384–385.

⁴⁴ *Ibidem*, p. 383.

Croatia, despite everything, has failed throughout history to become an “independent state and political body,” that is, to impose itself as a historical-political subject, which is why “our petty-bourgeois historiography about the idealistic constant of one and the same Croatianhood, as a supernatural phenomenon, is a forgery!”⁴⁵. Krleža does not view Croatianhood as a monolithic entity, but, given his materialistic assumptions, separates the ruling from the oppressed: “Unlike peasant, serf, oppressed Croats, petty-bourgeois, urban, purger Croats are mostly chatty, benevolent and naive, and prefer the song of wine and moonlight above the vineyard to the consistency in action and firm determination”⁴⁶. Therefore, the ruling Croats have always sought a master to submit to him, while “Croatian petty bourgeoisie is in love with the image of itself as a Western, Latin-oriented, cultural nation that has nothing to do with the East”⁴⁷. Krleža offers himself in the role of a doctor who makes an unpleasant diagnosis, but expresses it for the sake of recovery as the ultimate goal, speaking from the perspective of oppressed Croats who do not feel “petty-bourgeois love for Croatia” but unquenchable “Croatian hatred.”

The essay “Hrvatska smotra” [“Croatian Review,” 1933], in which Krleža referred to the appearance of the eponymous right-wing newspaper, is the best evidence of the achievements of petty-bourgeois idealist thought. At the very beginning, one can

⁴⁵ Krleža (1973b), p. 84, p. 95.

⁴⁶ *Ibidem*, p. 85.

⁴⁷ *Ibidem*, p. 106.

find a characteristic Krležian collage-quotation persiflage, whose “victim” is an introduction by Kerubin Šegvić, a misplaced idealistic pamphlet written in a lamentable tone, while behind the whole endeavor actually stands the indestructible church machinery. The diagnosis that Krleža makes is still valid for every nationalist enthusiasm:

And it seems to me that today it has become the first and only principle of our patriotic (and literary-cultural) patriotism: think nothing, twist facts, misinterpret the most basic truths, spread lies, renew the cult of empty phrases, hastily do everything that contradicts the most primitive taste of common sense⁴⁸.

Moj obračun s njima is primarily a “reckoning” in the field of theater criticism, at the time when Krleža was most intensely involved in dramatic creation, and represents a lively response to the writings of Josip Horvat, Rudolf Meixner, Stanko Tomašić and Kalman Mesarić, the leading figures of a Croatian theater at the time. Krleža wrote that one can think positively or negatively about all the works, including his own, but that one must not write illogically and illiterately, and this is a *pro domo sua* defense against accumulated slander and lies, directly aimed at Krleža’s personality. The book paints the atmosphere of “Croatian literary nocturne” in detail, showing a typical picture of Krleža’s position on the domestic scene:

⁴⁸ Krleža (1973a), p. 98.

When, some time ago, I spoke for my own deeds, about myself, about faces and about the phenomena around me and about how dark it is around me, about the sad appearance of my personal, literary life, where I stand in the miserable room of our literary tavern with candles in my hand (in the semi-dark cracks there is an anxious movement of those tiny creatures, which by their nature are afraid of light), in circles and magazines of our literary crooked nooks, an incredibly loud chase (even for our small occasions) arose against me⁴⁹.

Simply put: “Literary associations, and clerical press, and ‘social thinkers’ point at me in front of the authorities, and everyone unanimously agrees that I should be trampled, expelled, destroyed, denied every single meaning, in a word: that I should be liquidated and ‘reckoned with’”⁵⁰.

Precisely because he likes “consistency and razor-sharp evidence in public conversations,”⁵¹ Krleža decided not to be silent about the increasingly

⁴⁹ Krleža (1932), p. 5. There are also many other testimonies on the issue. For example, Julije Benešić, writer, Polonist and intendant of the Croatian National Theater in Zagreb, who gladly staged Krleža’s plays, presented the writer’s position “in Zagabria sua” to the Polish audience, saying that this author was constantly attacked “from absolutely all sides” and that only that year (1933), *Hrvatska straža* [*Croatian Guard*] – influential Catholic magazine – “printed as many as seventeen editorials against Krleža (as if he were at least a hostile country)” (quoted in Brlek [2020], p. 130). Jan Wierzbicki writes that Krleža has always been “surrounded by an atmosphere of gossip and scandal,” and that his “passionate appearances, his pamphlets and adversary clashes with petty-bourgeois culture and morals have always provoked a reaction from the press, which brought low polemical blows and the most ordinary insults” (Wierzbicki 1980: 31).

⁵⁰ *Ibidem*, p. 8.

⁵¹ *Ibidem*, p. 198.

frequent characteristic methods of attack: “That falsification of facts, false presentation of quotations, distortion of my literary profile, this distortion of printed facts, all this false and superficial play with serious questions...”⁵². Thus, at the end of the introduction, Krleža will write one of his most famous passages on the meaning of writing:

Writing as a craft consists of one single craft: the craft of writing. He who writes writes sentences. Sentences are more imperishable than bronze and stone. [...] Writing means nothing but thinking. Disorder in sentences is a consequence of disorder in thoughts, and disorder in thoughts is a consequence of disorder in the head, and disorder in the head is a consequence of disorder in man, and disorder in man is a consequence of disorder in the environment and state of that (literary) environment. If someone has decided to do a literary criticism, and it means that he wants to create order out of disorder in sentences, in thoughts, in heads, in people and in literary circles, then such a subject must not be disorderly in sentences nor in head nor in thought⁵³.

However, not until the “Predgovor *Podravskim motivima*” (1933), an introductory text to the collection of graphics by Krsto Hegedušić—one of the founders of the The Earth Group, oriented towards creating domestic artistic expression and socially engaged art, but who used strong expressiveness,

⁵² *Ibidem*, p. 208.

⁵³ *Ibidem*, p. 12.

grotesque and satire, which is why the author of the foreword compares him to Brueghel and Georg Gross – has there been deeper divisions among the left-wing, social intelligence. In this essay, where Hegedušić is mentioned for the first time only on page 17 (out of a total of 22), Krleža most clearly presents his understanding of art.

Krleža here also shows a tendency to, as opposed to beauties, cite brutal examples of death and transience, as well as to emphasize bodily aspects of creation and experience, underlining the proverb *ars longa vita brevis* with impressive images, with the thesis that art arises from human consciousness of death and fear of transience: time/temporality makes man create beauties.

Beauties, therefore, last for centuries, and in beauties is reflected through ages what is human and earthly in us and the tendency of that human in us to survive in the reflections of himself, to confirm himself beyond the grave, to resist the laws of disappearance in time and death.⁵⁴

The foundation of art is the “life rootstock,” “the primordial of these raw materials, which feeds art for centuries, it is the reality of our own life which seeks to outlive us and burst out of us in strong excitement, which we conventionally call beauty”⁵⁵. Art has an animal, even physiological basis: “More from the brainstem, from the womb, from the

⁵⁴ Krleža (1933), p. 7.

⁵⁵ *Ibidem*, p. 9.

intestines, mostly from hidden bodily motives, murky passions and selfishly impure instincts, contradictory and defiant, often elementary as a disease, artistic inspirations appear, arising unreasonably, by natural law, often capricious and perfectly contradictory...⁵⁶, which is why the basic leitmotifs of all art are murder, death, full intestines and saturated love. In short, “beauties [...] are nothing but achieved intensities of life in a positive or negative sense”⁵⁷.

With his “program” Krleža consciously resented both the overly rationalistic, “brain” aesthetics of the left and the timeless, “spiritistic” aesthetics of the right:

While aesthetic mystifiers on the right have argued that beauty is neutral and sublime, left-wing rationalists argue (and since the age of forty-eight they especially shout) that beauty must be popular, like a revolutionary leap, and that it only makes sense if it works rationally and according to plan⁵⁸.

Artistically gifted creation is not a matter of the brain nor the mind – which are both necessary in scientific and political matters – but of submission to strong life instincts: “In discovering certain beauties (to this day), the role of temperament is more important than the program, the issue of nerves is more important than the aesthetic system, and the appearance of talent is undoubtedly deeper

⁵⁶ *Ibidem*, p. 11.

⁵⁷ *Ibidem*, p. 12.

⁵⁸ *Ibidem*, p. 13.

than tendentious dogma”⁵⁹. Krleža believes that untalented and ignorant authors with their writing about art – “ignorant mostly, malicious almost always, and ungifted most of all”⁶⁰ – only compromise the bright ideas of dialectical materialism. Citing the names of famous writers, Krleža gives evidence that they created important works regardless of how they lived, thought, or declared politically, and comparing the achievements of the social literature program of these writers he proves that, in this regard also, they achieved more valuable results than the representatives of the “Kharkov line.” The impression is that Krleža is trying to educate them in their own business: “Beauties are the truths of life and established intensities of life, and to deny truths is not only not dialectical but is counter-revolutionary [...] And that beauties are the most intense and perfect revelation of reality, it should be the alpha of every materialistically exact aesthetic”⁶¹.

Krleža’s “Predgovor” was followed by a sharp attack in the magazine *Kultura* [*Culture*] with the warning title “Quo vadis, Krleža,” signed under the pseudonym A. B. C.⁶² Although Krleža and Cesarec were the forerunners of the so-called social literature, and although “members of social literature have always been amazed by the devotion, pathos, critical acuity, courage of the hitherto the only decidedly left-wing writers,” and “relied on the route they have

⁵⁹ *Ibidem*, p. 16.

⁶⁰ *Ibidem*, p. 15.

⁶¹ *Ibidem*, p. 17, p. 19.

⁶² A. B. C., pseudonym of Bogomir Hermann (1896–1963), a member of the Communist Party of Yugoslavia, a collaborator in numerous party magazines.

set”⁶³, a conflict, already simmering, erupted at a time when the “cartel of social literature” was sufficiently consolidated and further strengthened by party directives, which were a consequence of events on the world stage (writers’ conferences in Kharkov and Moscow).

In 1934, in the magazine *Danas* [*Today*], Krleža effectively and wittily summed up all the previous (but not the last) “anathemas” of his “humbleness”:

Nobody wants me! Croats deny I am a Croat, because I am a Marxist, and Marxists won’t go with me, because I am a pessimist, a petty bourgeois and a patriot. Catholics accuse me of immorality, because I write the name of God with small g. and because I am a homeowner (which I am not, and they are), and writers deny I am a writer, because I am a foreign agitator and mercenary. The leftists of *Kultura* don’t want me because I am ‘l’art-pour-l’artist,’ and *Obzor* doesn’t want me because I am Yugoslav, and *Obzor* has been preaching Yugoslavia from the beginning. Apart from the unanimous opinion of our right and left ‘elite minority’ that I am a ‘mystic,’ ‘metaphysician,’ ‘cynic,’ ‘idealist’ and ‘selfish egocentric,’ I am also a ‘mystifier,’ a ‘slanderer of the nationally and morally correct Croatian public,’ a ‘gangster who advertises himself and the Judeo-Marxist capitalist company *Minerva*’...⁶⁴.

According to his own confession, it was harder

⁶³ Lasić (1979), p. 34.

⁶⁴ Krleža (1934), p. 110.

for him to acknowledge the accusations for “turning to right,” perceiving them as “inquisitorial contempt” and attacks on his personality by political like-minded people. However, there is a lot of irony – as Krleža himself notes – that the original question *quo vadis* was not asked to the innocent Jesus, but by the sinful Paul, so in that parallel the socioliterary society around *Kultura* revealed itself as burdened with some kind of psychic *Unheimlichkeit*.

Krleža’s most zealous and famous polemical work is unequivocally “Dijalektički antibarbarus.” The entire double issue of magazine *Pečat* [*Seal*] 8–9 from December 1939 occupies this text only, based on the thesis that “everything that is publicly printed must be publicly criticized.” The founding of *Pečat* once again, despite conflicting opinions, showed “Krleža’s constant need for creative collaborators, people who think about similar problems in a similar way, but at the same time think for themselves” (Brlek 2020: 141). The socio-political context, to which Krleža constantly refers, wondering how his opponents – and in fact (party) friends and comrades from the magazine *Izraz* [*Expression*], *Mlada kultura* [*Young Culture*], *Naša stvarnost* [*Our Reality*] and *Umetnost i kritika* [*Art and Criticism*] – have no better job than to “assail” on the *Pečat*, accusing it of being a “Trotskyist magazine,” marked the beginning of the Second World War. The attacks on the *Pečat* in May and June 1939 were not random but concentrated and conceived by the (then illegal) Communist Party of Yugoslavia for the “ideological consolidation of the Party” and “ideological confrontation with the group

around the *Pečat*,” that is, “the struggle against the *Pečat* was an integral part of the struggle against Trotskyism in Yugoslavia,” as Josip Broz’s May 1939 article in the *Proleter* [*Proletarian*] points to⁶⁵.

The goal of “Antibarbarus” is to finally “clarify” and “enlighten” the confusion about concepts and judgments and to reveal whether all this, after all, is literature or not: “This topic par excellence dialectical has been searching for its Antibarbarous for years, as a negation of all anti-dialectical barbarisms”⁶⁶. This “contribution to the study of the pathology of our literary dialectic”⁶⁷, brings a detailed vivisection of Ognjen Prica’s⁶⁸ text on Marko Ristić’s essay “San i istina Don Kihota” [“The Dream and Truth of Don Quixote”] from the first issue of the *Pečat*. Krleža transmits Prica’s article in its entirety and (pedantically) looks for every inconsistency and contradiction in it, proving that Prica either does not know how to read or consciously distorts the meaning of what he has read or does not know how to write what he intended to express. On the other hand, Ristić’s essay is extensively cited, in a different typographic style, especially enlarged and bold, in order to draw the illiterate critics’ attention – as a school teacher – to what it means to think consistently and write with style. Krleža pays special attention to the very end of Prica’s work, where

⁶⁵ Lasić (1970), p. 204.

⁶⁶ Krleža (1939), p. 172.

⁶⁷ *Ibidem*, p. 87.

⁶⁸ Ognjen Prica (1899–1941), member of the executive bodies of the Communist Party of Yugoslavia, author of numerous articles and advocate of the official party line doctrines.

he rhetorically asks – bringing forth the Fourth International – how come Miroslav Krleža ended among those Trotskyists. Krleža notices analogies between the texts of Prica (on the occasion of Ristić) and A. B. C. (on the occasion of himself), seeing in them similar methods of reckoning with alleged political dissidents.⁶⁹

It is important to point out that Krleža does not deny tendency in artistic creation, but demands that it should be thought of as artistically or poetically successful or unsuccessful. Also, Krleža believes that his opponents diminish or fail to realize the true meaning of the question “why create at all” and overlook the importance of inalienable subjective doubt, since they are working with their pre-given recipes and dogmas for all problems, which is why they are essentially anti-dialectical:

The most flexible, most vivid and witty method of thinking, dialectics, turns, in the writings of our left (as it apostrophizes itself) ‘advanced and correct’ literary criticism, all the principles of common sense despite, into irrational fetish, an attribute detached from reality, and wanders headlong from one of our left magazine to the other as anxious, hysterical, ambitious illiteracy, which in the form of a funny and empty phrase denies everything that

⁶⁹ In favour of that, we can refer that Krleža admitted he had no right in *Šestine*, where he had a long and tense conversation with Broz, and he unequivocally emphasized his faith in the Communist Party as the only force capable of conducting political change, as “the last possible refuge of some political intellect, some positive conception” (Krleža 1983: 258). Krleža, as a matter of fact, did not believe Tito’s struggle would end as a success, and Tito later also admitted the party’s accusations of Trotskyism to be meaningless.

within our aesthetics represents some kind of fiction or some real results of one literature and is beyond doubt ma-te-ri-a-li-stic cult!⁷⁰.

Stanko Lasić pointed out that “Krleža has always been the closest to the concept of man as freedom”⁷¹. Hence,

‘Dijalektički antibarbarus’ is a textbook example of a practice that Foucault calls *parrhesia*, speaking the truth, but in special conditions, such that ‘the fact that the truth is told [...] will cause serious consequences to those who told the truth.’ Thus, *parrhesia* lies neither in its structure nor in the purpose of statement, but in its feedback effect on the one who speaks the truth, ‘parrhesiast are those who engage in speaking the truth at an indefinite price, which may be their death’⁷².

An essay on Erasmus, written in the midst of war in 1942, and published for the first time eleven years later, should be read as Krleža’s confession and testimony to personal and political turmoil. On the one hand, the context of Erasmus’ work was a great intellectual, moral and religious crisis, “European weakness,” “a time of blood, murder and arson so eerily similar to ours”⁷³; on the other, more importantly, one should not overlook the implicit parallel that the author of the essay establishes between Erasmus and himself (as Erasmus did with

⁷⁰ Krleža (1939), pp. 145–146.

⁷¹ Lasić (1970), p. 26.

⁷² Brlek (2020), p. 143.

⁷³ Krleža (1961b), p. 268.

Jerome). The sketched portrait of a humanistic scholar speaks in favor of this:

A philosopher in the midst of an uneducated mob, in a crowd still confused by medieval hallucinations, a brain clearly logical, a linguist and comparative philologist in a world of fanatical blind people, a scholar in an environment that recognized no other measures than brute and animal primitive force, Erasmus knew that everything is transient except for the one and only poetic word, more durable than bronze⁷⁴.

Krleža, moreover, sees Erasmus as a forerunner of the then (Marxist) critique of civil society, because he exposed the aristocratic fabrications and the futility of the church ceremony. However, Krleža especially cared about showing the deep political consequences of a seemingly ordinary act of doubt in authority (be it ecclesiastical) and self-confidence, and the reason for writing this essay was a negative review of the new Hungarian translation of the *Praise of Folly* in the Horthy magazine, in which Erasmus' activity is reduced to "odious" destructiveness. "When it is written about Erasmus that he is in fact the ancestor and legitimate father of this mess, he becomes dizzy, and he feels that it is his destiny to be stoned on both sides: right and left," that is, by both Protestants and papists⁷⁵, Krleža will conclude, telling more about himself than about the Flying Dutchman of humanism.

⁷⁴ *Ibidem*, p. 263.

⁷⁵ *Ibidem*, pp. 291-292.

The style and rhetoric of Krleža's essays, as can be concluded so far, changed slightly over time, depending both on the inevitable authorial alterations and on the occasions for which the texts were written. It is also clear that polemics suited Krleža's contentious spirit, given that his most bitter essays – originated mostly as reactions to the general situation on the literary scene or to direct attacks – were also the most interesting and provocative ones. Not only did the writer use the widest repertoire of stylistic figures, showing himself to be a master of the Kraussian strategies of twisting quotes, but also, clearing a path through the thoughts of others, he managed to formulate his own theses about art and society more clearly. In such works, culminating with "Dijalektički antibarbarus," Krleža became more rhetorically wild, stylistically more polyphonic, and syntactically frenzied. However, the essays dedicated to certain personalities and political matters – for example, about Križanić and Kranjčević, or Erasmus – show the polemicist in a different light. Although they also bear the mark of unequivocal author's attitude, which sometimes even goes as far as identifying with the subject of its discussion, these essays are characterized by a calmer tone of the presentation and a more measured syntax, so Krleža's rich erudition comes to the fore.

4. Encyclopaedism as heretical culmination

In the period after the Second World War, when the Communist Party came to power and formed SFRY, and especially after the Resolution of the Informbureau (1948) which marked Tito's and Yugoslavia's break with Stalin and the Soviet Union, Krleža's activity did not stop, but took a new form. Krleža's essays at the time were, in the first period, marked by the gradual rehabilitation of theses from the *Pečat*, later mostly devoted to medieval themes, while essays on cognitive theory and history of medicine still remain marginal and underread. However, a large part of Krleža's efforts was focused on the work of the newly established Institute of Lexicography and the creation of the monumental *Enciklopedija Jugoslavije*.

Krleža himself marked and determined the reasons, nature and meaning of the *Enciklopedija*, drawing an unequivocal synthetic diagonal through the entire project:

Created mainly by the dialectical method, as an objective review of the retrospective of the historical and cultural heritage of the Yugoslav peoples through the centuries, the *Enciklopedija* was primarily aimed to critically reckon with a bunch of survivals, with the poison of Latin-Greek schisms, chauvinism, megalomania and mutual national negations, to break with romantic delusions of all kinds and to dive into the history of our *ethnos* through the centuries⁷⁶.

⁷⁶ Lončar (1972), pp. 9-10.

Mate Lončar also testifies that Krleža remained a notorious critic even in his marginals, written alongside working versions of the *Enciklopedija*'s entries, writing constantly, bearing in mind the necessity of dispelling the accumulated social mists: "These essays and records of Krleža mean, above all, a critical assessment of established (un) truths, a revision of official historiography, a demystification of history. The opposition is extremely polemical, and it is not an exaggeration to call these texts the new *Moj obračun s njima*"⁷⁷. It is imperative that we know as much about ourselves as possible, and not to inform ourselves only from foreign sources: "Our Encyclopedia should be a broad plebiscite verification of a huge mass of facts, which together create the history of our civilization, to this day largely unseen in its imposing whole," and the Encyclopedia must by no means become "a self-satisfied or boastful apology in the form of vulgar propaganda"⁷⁸.

Igor Mandić, the *enfant terrible* of the Yugoslav literary and cultural scene, published the book *Zbogom, dragi Krleža* [*Farewell, Dear Krleža*] a few years after Krleža's death, in which he acknowledged to his spiritual father that "basically, we all came out of his overcoat, but as prodigal sons we must measure ourselves at the right time according to its size"⁷⁹. Stanko Lasić embodies the same sadness of a son who has to say goodbye to his father, because "reading his chronology we could conclude that

⁷⁷ *Ibidem*, p. 13.

⁷⁸ Krleža (1972), p. 76, p. 78.

⁷⁹ Mandić (1988), p. 25.

Krleža was a man only until 1945,” considering that Lasić writes Krleža after the war ceased to be a “lone rider” and became a “companion of power”⁸⁰. Thus arose and spread a simplified narrative – which could, to a greater degree, be refuted by facts – that not only did Krleža stop writing after the war, but also became morally compromised. His political and artistic stance during the socialist rule still remains a matter of rather different interpretations and valuations among scholars.

Writing on Krleža and the development of his relationship with the party, Mandić stated that “every (current) loyalty eats (former) heretical principles”⁸¹. Comparing in his study on the “antithetical canon” Harold Bloom and Miroslav Krleža, Predrag Brebanović pointed out they both had a recognizable belief in their own excommunication, emphasizing for Krleža that “for some reason he believed he was outside the Normative, and that – since he intimately felt alienated from ideological and any other majority mood – he nurtured the hope that he remained a heretic even when he largely was not one”⁸². The basic paradox, however, lies in the fact that this outcast found himself in the spiritual center of gravity of the entire (Yugoslav) culture within which he felt so lonely, to which the same author draws our attention to in the introductory considerations of his following book, noting that “Krleža definitely remained a central figure in the

⁸⁰ *Ibidem*, p. 29.

⁸¹ *Ibidem*, p. 61.

⁸² Brebanović (2011), p. 383.

literary and cultural history of Yugoslavia. Just as he became an institution starting as rebel during the lifetime, so he *post mortem* became an epoch”⁸³.

Hence, the return of Krleža also went through different phases and was burdened with different, moreover, opposite connotations. Igor Mandić’s book – “variations on the theme of the post-Krležian epoch” – is the best evidence that, for example, towards the end of Krleža’s life and in the first decade after his death, Krležianism itself became “displaced,” connoting in such social circumstances mainly a moral-political conformism. Despite becoming an emblem of a generational confrontation with the painful legacy of a great precursor, Mandić wrote this book (as well as many of his others) entirely in the Krležian spirit, as he was convinced that, at the time, “only anti-Krležianism is true Krležianism.” In recent decades, in parallel with the collapse of the socialist community and the state-verified nationalisms, anti-Krležianism has gained wider proportions and sinister features, based on mechanisms of reducing, suppressing and even distorting Krleža’s work. Due to such circumstances, it should come as no surprise that the return of Krleža could in itself be perceived as a heretical act, given that the name of this author in former Yugoslav societies has become practically equated with mentioning the forbidden word Yugoslavia. In view of that, one of the conclusions, drawn on the basis of Krleža’s opus in the light of Yugoslavia and avant-garde, should read:

⁸³ Brebanović (2016), p. 11.

At the macro-historical level, Krležian cosmopolitan pacifism should be understood as a poetics of challenging the entire capitalist civilization: both former, openly cannibalistic and colonial, as well as the current, neoliberal or postmodern multicultural, which in the meantime has taken over the planet and almost all human activities⁸⁴.

With his inexhaustible and long-lasting writing activity – such that his “texts cannot be gathered into *Works*”⁸⁵, since they resist any final codification – Krleža not only “originally experienced” but in fact covered “huge sectors of life on earth”⁸⁶, and among his literary descendants no one able to follow him at all these fronts has emerged yet.

References

Aćin, J. (1996): “Živa vaga”, *Reč*, issue 18 (1996), pp. 58–60.

Adorno, T. (1985): “Esej o eseju”, in Idem, *Filozofsko-sociološki eseji o književnost*, trans. Nadežda Čaćinović-Puhovski, Zagreb: Školska knjiga, 17–36.

Brebanović, P. (2011): *Antitetički kanon Harolda Blooma*, Beograd: Fabrika knjiga.

Brebanović, P. (2016): *Avangarda krležiana: pismo ne o avangardi*, Zagreb: Jesenski i Turk: Arkzin.

⁸⁴ *Ibidem*, p. 243.

⁸⁵ Brlek (2020), p. 246.

⁸⁶ Ristić (1954), p. 63.

- Brlek, T. (2020): *Tvrđi tekst: uvid i nevid moderne hrvatske književnosti*, Zagreb: Fraktura.
- Čosić, B. (1983): *Poslovi, sumnje, snovi Miroslava Krleže*, Zagreb: GZH.
- Eliot, T. S. (1934): *After Strange Gods: A Primer of Modern Heresy*, London: Faber and Faber.
- Glaudes, P. and Louette, J.-F. (2011): *L'Essai*, Paris: Armand Colin.
- Krleža, M. (1919): "Hrvatska književna laž", *Plamen*, issue 1 (1919), 32–40.
- Krleža, M. (1932): *Moj obračun s njima*, Zagreb: M. Krleža.
- Krleža, M. (1933): "Predgovor *Podravskim motivima*", in Hegedušić, Krsto, *Podravski motivi: 34 crteža*, Zagreb: Minerva, 5–26.
- Krleža, M. (1934): "Najnovija anatema moje malenkosti", *Danas* issue 1 (1934), 106–113.
- Krleža, M. (1939): "Dijalektički antibarbarus", *Pečat* issue 8–9 (1939), 73–232.
- Krleža, M. (1961): "Karl Kraus o ratnim stvarima" [1929], in Idem, *Eseji [knj. 1]*, Zagreb: Zora, 161–170.
- Krleža, M. (1961): "O Erazmu Rotterdamskom" [1942/1953], *Eseji [knj. 1]*, Zagreb: Zora, 261–305.
- Krleža, M. (1963): "O patru dominikancu Jurju Križaniću" [1929], *Eseji [knj. 3]*, Zagreb: Zora, 45–70.
- Krleža, M. (1963): "O Kranjčevićевой lirici" [1931], *Eseji [knj. 3]*, Zagreb: Zora, 11–42.

- Krleža, M. (1966): "Bogumilski mramorovi" [1954], *Eseji* [knj. 5], Zagreb: Zora, 239–246.
- Krleža, M. (1972): *99 varijacija: lexicographica: eseji i zapisi*, ed. Mate Lončar, Beograd: Duga.
- Krleža, M. (1973): "Hrvatska smotra", in Idem, *Evropa danas: knjiga dojmova i essaya*, Sarajevo: Oslobođenje, 85–98.
- Krleža, M. (1973): "Nekoliko riječi o malogradanskom historizmu uopće", in Idem, *Deset krvavih godina: i drugi politički eseji*, Sarajevo: Oslobođenje, 83–126.
- Krleža, M. (1983): "Promemorija istraživačima tzv. 'sukoba na ljevici'", in Idem, *Dijalektički antibarbarus*, ed. Ivo Frangeš, Sarajevo: Oslobođenje, 251–259.
- Lasić, S. (1970): *Sukob na književnoj ljevici: 1928–1952*, Zagreb: Liber.
- Lauer, R. (1987): "Literarische Weggefährten – Ästhetische Weichenstellungen. Zu den Essays von Miroslav Krleža", in Krleža, Miroslav, *Essays über Literatur und Kunst*, Hg. Reinhard Lauer, Frankfurt am Main: Athenäum, VII–XVII.
- Lončar, M. (1972): "Encyklopaedia krležiana ili književni nemir erudicije", in Krleža, Miroslav, *99 varijacija: lexicographica: eseji i zapisi*, ed. Mate Lončar, Beograd: Duga, 7–25.
- Lukács, G. (1973): "O suštini i obliku eseja", in Idem, *Duša i oblici*, trans. Vera Stojić, Beograd: Nolit, 33–55.
- Mandić, I. (1988): *Zbogom, dragi Krleža: polemike o mentalitetu post-krležijanske epohe*, Beograd: Književne novine.
- Ristić, M. (1954): *Krleža*, Zagreb: Zora.

Visković, V. (1993): *Krležijana*, Zagreb: Leksikografski zavod
Miroslav Krleža.

Wierzbicki, J. (1980): *Miroslav Krleža*, Zagreb: Sveučilišna
naklada Liber.