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The Narrative Strategies in the Slovak Modernist Poetry of the First Third of the 20th Century

My dissertation research focuses on the narrative strategies of the Slovak modernist poetry coming from the first third of the 20th century. Applying methods of literary narratology to the selected corpus of lyric poetry, the research examines the ways in which aspects of the narrative exist within the lyric structures of the poems and elaborates on the ways in which they are presented. In my research, I analyse the prototypical schemes of modernist narration, strategies the poets use, and the ways in which the fictional worlds of the poems are constructed and shaped. Considering these frameworks, I approach the topic across several levels: the theory of possible/fictional worlds (Pavel 1986; Doležel 1998; Fořt 2005), position of the speaker in the narrative structure of the poem (his/her participation in a dialogue and the gender-based specificities of speakers) (Foucault 1982; Butler 2024), representation of the category of an event with its spatial and temporal dimensions (Hühn 2011; Ryan 2012; Scheffel et al. 2013) and last but not least, the structure of the presented narrative itself (fictional facts, gaps) (Doležel 1998; Červenka 2003). The main aim of the dissertation is to explore the Slovak modernist poetry through the new methods of narratological analysis and show its benefits and shortcomings when analysing lyric poetry generally. The focus on the self-presentation of the speaker in the modernist poem and his/her role in a social interaction could reveal new aspects of the modernist subject, for instance, recurring period-specific tendencies in stylization, or, in terms of the formal aspect of the poems, incompleteness of the narrative, frequent use of the narrative gaps, and overusing of the inner monologue. Through this, my research recognises the structure of an event in a poem and uncovers a recurring pattern of the speaker's position in a modernist event. The position of the speaker also conveys a different starting point according to the speaker's gender. At the same time, my dissertation thesis seeks to blur the strict boundary between lyric and epic poetry in general through the theory of possible worlds.

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