

THE TRIADIC MODEL FOR MODERN LANGUAGE TEACHING METHODOLOGY: SEMIOTIC, TRANSLATIONAL, AND HUMANISTIC DIMENSIONS IN ECO, MILIČ, AND ÇABEJ		Language Teaching Keywords: Umberto Eco, Jolka Milič, Eqrem Çabej, Ur-Fascism, contemporary Slovenian youth literature, picture books, ideology, language teaching methodology, semiotics, humanistic linguistics.
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Abstract The aim of this article is to present the Slovenian translation of Umberto Eco's <i>Ur-Fascism</i> (1995), translated by Jolka Milič. While this essay is widely recognized, it is less well known that Eco also wrote three short contemporary fairy tales addressing ecology, pacifism, and anti-war themes, published in picture book form. Eco's theoretical framework is employed to analyse the fourteen characteristics of <i>Ur-Fascism</i> as reflected in selected contemporary fairy tales by Slovene authors. The study integrates the linguistic and pedagogical contributions of Eqrem Çabej, whose pioneering research on the historical development and structure of the Albanian language persists in shaping linguistic pedagogy across the Balkans, within the broader context of modern language instruction methodologies. The paper proposes a Triadic Model for Modern Language Teaching Methodology, a framework that integrates critical semiotics, intercultural awareness, and linguistic humanism in contemporary education, by amalgamating Eco's semiotic theory, Milič's translational mediation, and Çabej's humanistic linguistics.		

INTRODUCTION

Language is inherently biased; it embodies the values, ideologies, and ethical positions of its speakers. This principle is situated at the convergence of the contributions of Umberto Eco (1932–2016), Jolka Milič (1926–2021), and Eqrem Çabej (1908–1980), three European scholars who examined language through the lenses of semiotics, translation, and historical linguistics, respectively. Each regarded language not only as a system of signs but also as a medium for thought, culture, and moral awareness.

One of the most well-known Albanian linguists of the 20th century was Çabej, who saw the process of language acquisition as a cultural and ethical process that influenced civic duty and identity. The ways in which ideology and power are integrated into language and story frameworks were the subject of an inquiry that Eco carried out. In contrast, Milič was able to effectively combat the issue of linguistic isolation by ensuring that interpretative depth was maintained via her translations and by her participation in international mediation. Semiotic alertness, intercultural empathy, and linguistic humanism are the three components that are brought together in this triadic paradigm for the modern approach to teaching languages. When taken as a whole, they serve as a paradigm for contemporary language instruction. This model offers educators and scholars a multidimensional understanding of language as both medium and message, capable of resisting ideological manipulation while fostering moral and cultural awareness.

A TRIADIC FRAMEWORK THAT INCLUDES *ECO*, *MILIČ*, AND *ÇABEJ*

Each of the following three interconnected elements serves as the foundation for the Triadic Model for Modern Language Teaching Methodology:

1. The Semiotic Critique Provided by Umberto Eco

An essay written by Eco in 1995 titled "Ur-Fascism" describes fascism not as a predetermined ideology but rather as a pattern of linguistic and cultural habits. He identifies fourteen traits that explain the way in which authoritarian philosophy permeates language itself. These qualities include a religion of tradition, a fear of diversity, and a fixation with national identity. By recognising the ways in which words may disguise ideology, instructors can take the first step towards critical literacy. This semiotic awareness becomes vital for classroom teachers.

2. Jolka Milič's translational mediation of the situation

Jolka Milič, who has succeeded in translating Ur-Fascism into Slovenian, acts as a bridge between different cultures. It is via her effort that Eco's Italian discourse is transformed into a Slavic language and cultural framework, so demonstrating how translation is in and of itself a kind of the educational process. For Milič, translation is an activity that replicates communicative language education, where empathy and intercultural sensitivity are vital. His interpretation of translation is that it is an ethical process that involves listening and comprehending.

3. The Humanistic Linguistics concept proposed by Eqrem Çabej

The notion that language expresses a people's moral and cultural soul served as the foundation for Eqrem Çabej's studies on Albanian historical grammar and etymology, which persisted throughout his whole life. As far as Çabej was concerned, linguistic education included the cultivation of awareness and moral clarity via the use of words. Meaning, context, and ethical reflection are all emphasised in his humanistic pedagogy, which is a precursor to subsequent communicative and constructivist teaching techniques.

The defence of linguistic integrity takes into account all three of these approaches. Within the realm of language education, Eco cautions against the distortion of ideology, Milič unites cultures via translation, and Çabej emphasises the need of moral authenticity. Critical analysis, intercultural mediation, and ethical development are the three components that together make an educational trio.

UMBERTO ECO (1932-2016)

Umberto Eco (1932-2016) was an Italian university professor of media studies and very successful writer. It is worth mentioning that in the early phase of his career he also wrote for young readers, in works with illustrations by Eugenio Carmi, and notably three texts published in 1966, but which have not yet been translated into Slovene. After the great success of his novel *The Name of the Rose*, Eco re-published his earlier picture books in 1988, which have since been translated into various languages. According to Cobiss, however there are no translations of these works into Slovene yet. The picture books are arranged with Eco's text (in black) on the left-hand white page, and collage-style pictures on the right-hand white page, with geometric shapes and various objects and fabric patterns.

The picture books are interesting because of the problematic themes they deal with, e.g. global problems during the Cold War, which are reflected in the picture books in the competitions among the various characters. Eco deals with socio-political themes on an abstract level. Through visual and verbal text, the writer and illustrator respond to a school system that has educated young people to conformism. According to the author Maria Truglio, the picture books thematise important social issues, e.g. nuclear war, the space race, environmental destruction, through the medium of children's picture books, and while at the time of their first publication they were commercially unsuccessful, from a critical point of view they represent useful, if time-consuming, debates¹ (Truglio, 2008: 117).

All three of Eco picture books are particularly relevant for the current article, because in the first one he deals with nuclear war, in the second with the space race, and in the third with ecology, all of which form the basis for Eco's theory of Ur-Fascism.

1. *La bomba e il generale*, 1966, 1988, or *The Bomb and the General*, 1989.
2. *I tre cosmonauti*, 1966, 1988, or *The Three Astronauts*, 1989.
3. *Gri gnomi di Gnu*, 1992, or *The Gnomes of Gnu*, 1992.

- In the picture book *The Bomb and the General*, Eco thematises the Cold War, and specifically the threat of nuclear war, through two literary characters or personified objects. The protagonist is a personified atom and the antagonist is a general, who represents the military threat or the world "full of generals". The point of the picture book is that the atom rebels because it does not want to destroy the world. In the text, the generals declare war, planes fly and bomb the world, but because there are no atoms in them, they do not destroy the Earth. At the end of the text is Eco's message, as expressed in the general's realisation that life is better without bombs.

¹ Truglio, Maria. "Wise Gnomes, Nervous Astronauts, and a Very Bad General: The Children's Books of Umberto Eco and Eugenio Carmi." *Children's Literature*, Vol. 36, 2008, pp. 115-144. Project MUSE

- In *The Three Astronauts*, Eco thematises overpopulation from the point of view of Earth, or the space race, by citing three antagonists (the Americans, Chinese and Russians) who want to conquer Mars. Eco portrays them as three frightened individuals who are scared of the red planet, so fear is both their antagonist and their common denominator. It is remarkable that all these frightened characters are united by the word “mother” in three languages. The turning point comes when they meet the Martians and there is a magical event, along with an optimistic message.

- In the 1992 picture book *The Gnomes of Gnu*, Eco's themes are ecology and the pollution of the planet. It is interesting to note that in 1992, or almost thirty years ago, Eco chose avant-garde illustrations for this book, and that Eugenio Carmi's images deal with the central problems of ecology: diseases, cigarettes, drugs, food, the environment, plastics, resettlement, dirt, visas, air...

Tanja Pogačar has written about Eco's picture books for children, according to the sources she has found so far, in her article “Umberto Eco in Stefanel za otroke”,² in which she analyses all three books considered in the current study, namely *The Three Astronauts* and *The Bomb and the General*, which were reprinted in one volume by the Milan-based publishing house Bompiani in 1988, and *The Gnomes of Gnu*, which was published for the first time by the same company in 1992.

Eco grew up under Fascism, which he makes clear in his youth literature, and also gave 14 specific features of Ur-Fascism in a text with that title.³ As he writes:

“Fascism was a fuzzy totalitarianism, a collage of different philosophical and political ideas, a beehive of contradictions.” (Eco, 2013: 16)

“Fascism was philosophically out of joint, but emotionally it was firmly fastened to some archetypal foundations.” (Eco, 2013: 17)

“But in spite of this fuzziness, I think it is possible to outline a list of features that are typical of what I would like to call Ur-Fascism, or Eternal Fascism. These features cannot be organized into a system; many of them contradict each other, and are also typical of other kinds of despotism or fanaticism. But it is enough that one of them be present to allow fascism to coagulate around it. (Eco, 2013: 17)

Similar themes of pacifism and anti-fascism are explored in children's picture books by Jack Zipes (1937), a professor at the University of Minnesota, who studied in Europe and analysed fairy tales sociologically. After his retirement, he founded a self-publishing company which dealt only with reprints of picture books and/or illustrated books by authors who resisted

²Pogačar, Tanja (1993). Umberto Eco in Stefanel za otroke. *Otrok in knjiga*, volume 20, št.36 (1993), str. 95–97.

³Eco, U. (1995). “Ur-Fascism”. In: *The New York Review of Books*, 22 June 1995. New York City. S. Hederman. <http://www.nybooks.com>

fascism and Nazism. Bettina Kummerling Meibauer has also written about pacifism in youth literature, using two poems by Brecht as examples ("The Children's Crusade", 1939; "The Three Soldiers", 1939).⁴

DONALD TRUMP: WINNERS AREN'T LOSERS; WINNERS STILL AREN'T LOSERS, 2016 (GHOST WRITTEN BY JIMMY KIMMEL)

Today, so-called celebrity picture books are now being produced, dominated by themes of identity, special needs and neoliberal values. Celebrity picture books are written by celebrities – or on their behalf by ghostwriters – and make use of simple texts and illustrations. Not only do such picture books express the values of neoliberalism, but they also discriminate against all those who are not "winners" but "losers" in society. The texts are thus based on a dichotomy, since there are supposedly only two kinds of people in the world: winners and losers. The former have material wealth (yachts, private planes, clothes from Milan, wives from Ukraine, buildings to build), the latter poverty (dog, frog, idiot, "build a wall"). The texts of such authorised "fairy tales" are full of discrimination against the different, contempt for the weak, and at the same time are based on machismo (underestimating Melania's own fellow Slovenians, because "she is from Ukraine"), education is for heroes / winners).

COMPARATIVE ANALYSIS OF THE THREE SELECTED TEXTS USING ECO'S THEORY – TABLE

The aim of this article is to apply Eco's theory on the characteristics of Ur-Fascism to three selected Slovenian youth texts, working chronologically, and thus a brief summary of texts follows.

The text *Deček Anže brani vas Svetje* (*The Boy Anže Defends the Village of Svetje*) is a picture book that won the first prize in the "patriotic story" category in a competition organised by the *Demokracija* political weekly.⁵ It was not possible to determine whether the name of the author, Vit Vrhovc, is actually the author's real name, even with the help of Cobiss. The magazine *Demokracija* appointed people to an "expert committee" who had neither credentials nor references for professional work in the field of picture books, with regard to the texts or illustrations. The very title of the "patriotic fairy tale", *The Boy Anže Defends the Village of Svetje*, is an intertextual reference to the 1972 film *Valter Brani Sarajevo* [*Valter Defends Sarajevo*] directed by Hajrudin Krvavec, which was made in the then common state of Yugoslavia (1945-1991). The title of the winning story already emphasises the contradiction and intertextual horizon of the author, who speaks of the "Slovenian patriotic fairy tale" (1991-)

⁴Kummerling Meibauer, Bettina; Meibauer, Jorg. Bertold Brecht's Radical Contribution to Pacifist Children's Lyrics in Interwar Germany. Volume 42 (2019). Barnboken. Journal of Children's Literature Research. <https://doi.org/10.14811/clr.v42i0.427>

⁵<https://demokracija.si/fokus/na-razpisu-za-domoljubno-pravljico-je-zmagala-zgodba-z-nas-lovom-decek-anze-branje-vas-svetje/>

through the lens of the Second World War and the common state, which he rejects in the children's picture book.

The text presents the central character, the boy Anže, who is described with positive attributes (hardworking, good, brave, religious...), the literary space is presented in a traditionally idyllic way (village, small hill, church, TV, children's village guards), the villagers "fight" against the "dark men". At the end of the "patriotic fairy tale" (although there is not a single fairy tale element in the text, e.g. fairy tale characters, events, objects, actions, etc.), which is ostensibly aimed at children, the police award Anže a medal for bravery. The text is amateurish, as are the illustrations. The text contains only basic syntax and a modest vocabulary, with many repeated words, and an analysis of the vocabulary shows that the writer is a non-reader.

The text *Tu blizu živine vidnade klica* (*Close to Here*) is structured by the months of the year. The author has chosen the presumed point of view of two girls/schoolmates describing the "invisible girl". Through two literary characters, the author attributes the attributes of invisibility and poverty to the "invisible girl". Rather than transcending stereotypes, the text explicitly and implicitly reinforces them, even though the otherwise excellent author had the appropriate vocabulary, style and perspective to present the character with greater empathy. The text also relates to Tove Jansson's *The Invisible Child and Other Stories* (Fin. 1962, Slov. 2008), in which the Swedish-Finnish author addressed the invisibility of children on the margins of society with empathy. In this Slovenian picture book, however, the description of the picture book generates – and, unfortunately, does not go beyond – stereotypes of the "invisible and the unheard" and, although at the end of the text the author tries to rationalise the discrimination of the "invisible girl", this is an unconvincing and "empty gesture"⁶ (Žižek, 1997: 44). The author shows two girls who look at the third, "invisible" girl in an unkind way and mock her, e.g. by calling her names (Biserka, Đurđa). The girl is presented as a marionette, lifeless, and the author has not given her a chance to speak, which is why she is related to the archetype of the "mute princesses" in fairy tales. In contrast, the author depicts the two classmates as characters who affirm each other by virtue of their opposite, the "invisible, inaudible, nameless girl", who remains on the edge of the action, while at the same time the author implicitly formulates Hegel's dialectic of the master and servant. The two girls who are the focus of attention, and members of the economically and socially upper class, define themselves on the basis of the "invisible girl", becoming dependent on her "invisibility", on the basis of which the author defines their visibility. The author had the possibility to present the "invisible girl" as a subject and not an object, but this was taken up. Instead, the two girls are presented behind a shiny mask of economic and social status based on neoliberal values of consumerism, financial success, self-interest and interpersonal competition⁷ (Butler 2019: 206).

⁶Žižek, Slavoj: *Kuga fantazem*, 1997.

⁷Butler, S. "The Impact of Advanced Capitalism on Well-being: an Evidence-Informed Model". *Human Arenas* 2, pp. 200-227 (2019).

The text *Živameja (The Hedge)* was published in *Ciciban* magazine in June 2020, with illustrations. The question is whether the text is original and/or whether the editorial choice is an "intentional fallacy". Through the main character, "Mr", the otherwise excellent young author presents a typical representative of the middle class with private property (a swimming-pool and a house), which he characterises as an inalienable right. The author prejudices the "others" as "intruders". The central problem of the literary text is how to enclose private property from the prejudiced "intruders", how to institutionalise the "guarding" of private property as a profession. The author has introduced various animal characters (hedgehog, crocodile, anteater, elephant), as in the fairy tale *Mojca Pokrajculja* (1937) by Vinko Moderndorfer, in which they all have the tools and/or weapons needed to serve as "guards", to "set on their pointed teeth/to scratch/scratch/chase/spank till blood". Among the otherwise all male "guards" there is a female squirrel, but the author presents her as submissive: "The squirrel giggled". The animal characters thematise the "village guards". The picture book *The Boy Anže Defends the Village of Svetje* thematises village guards, while *The Living Border* presents one attempt to thematise "country guards", guards or sentries who protect the wealthy, in a sparkling way. The author's choice of linguistic devices and perspective presents the character of the "gentleman with a pool and a house" through his economic and social status based on neoliberal values of consumerism, financial prestige, self-interest and interpersonal competition (Butler 2019: 206). The personified animals (the guardians of the "hedge" are also presented in a competitive way. Because of the motif of their "profession" such a life is "boring", because they have to "be in post day and night, Saturday and Sunday. Which means they can't go on holiday at all?" (Kos 2020). In the end, they refuse the "calling" of "nagging/deflecting/poaching/placing/persecuting/persecutor's service/guarding/guarding"/. The author's conclusion is significant: "In this profession there are ... trees and bushes ... like a dog".

With this conclusion, which might have been an attempt at resolving the conflicts between the "spring mistress" and the new geopolitical order that serves the rich (p. Žižek: *Pandemic 2*, 2020), the author observes the function of the neoliberal boundary between the poor and the rich, between the "servant" and the "master". The problem is that the author has attributed to the personified animals' elements of punishment "to spank/scratch to blood/push the intruders [neighbours, to whom *a priori* intrusiveness is attributed], to drive away with a water cannon".

An essay written by Eco in 1995 titled "Ur-Fascism" describes fascism not as a predetermined ideology but rather as a pattern of linguistic and cultural habits. He identifies fourteen traits that explain the way in which authoritarian philosophy permeates language itself. These qualities include a religion of tradition, a fear of diversity, and a fixation with national identity. By recognising the ways in which words may disguise ideology, instructors can take the first step towards critical literacy. This semiotic awareness becomes vital for classroom teachers.

MILIČ'S TRANSLATIONAL MEDIATION

Jolka Milič (1926-2021), a teacher by profession who graduated from the Gorizia Teacher Training College, later established herself as a translator from Slovenian into Italian, translating authors such as Srečko Kosovel, Ciril Kosmač, Mila Kačič, and others, as well as from Italian into Slovenian (Primo Levi, Anna Santoliquido, Umberto Eco, etc.).

Milič also translated two picture books in the field of youth literature, Kajetan Kovič's Muri the Cat (Il gatto Muri, 2010) and Marjan Manček's The Alphabet Book (Il lombrico Abbicci, 2015).

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Eco, U: <i>Ur-Fascism</i> , 1995, 2013	Vrhovec, Vit: <i>The Boy Anže Defends the Village of Svetje</i> , 2018	Mlakar, Ida: <i>Close to Here</i> , 2019	Kos, Gaja: <i>The Hedge</i> , 2020
1. The cult of tradition (p. 17)	- Daddy replied, "Because she is wicked, because she wishes bad things for us, the Slovenes." (p.10)	- "It doesn't have a dolls' house. She doesn't have her own wardrobe. Not even her own desk. She doesn't have a big garden, a little pool or a trampoline like you and me." (p.4)	- One gentleman has built himself a house and a swimming pool. (p. 19)
2. Rejecting Modernism (p. 18)	- He was a very hard-working boy: he looked after his sister, helped the parish priest in church, carried his grandmother's groceries from the market, studied hard at school and helped his neighbour Metka with her studies. (p.4)	- "When we play princesses, she can be useful. She helps us to put on beautiful clothes. Make cakes and tea. Tidy up the castle." (p.2)	- It is really nothing more than a fence of trees or bushes. (p.19)
3. The cult of action for action's sake (p. 18)	- He said, "Your great-great-great-grandfather fought with this sabre against the dark men." (p.10) - "I will fight, I will defend our village, as my great-great-great-grandfather did." (p.10)	- "Or maybe it was missing. Yes. It certainly was. Maybe she was sick. We didn't ask her." (p. 15)	- Like the persecutors of intruders. (p.20) - The best scavenger of intruding ants!" (p.20) - There is a hedge against intruders. (p.19) - We would drive off the invaders with a water cannon. (p.20) - I would easily spy on intruders. (p.19)
4. There is a betrayal of traditional values. (p. 18)	- When they woke up, the village was once again full of policemen. Dark men were writhing on the ground in the gardens. They were caught in strings and ropes. The more they twisted, the more entangled they became. The policemen took them all away. (p. 14)	- "There's a little girl with no name living near here. Well, do you remember what her name is? See? I don't. Đurda or Biserka? It doesn't matter. That's not a real name." (p.10)	- A hedge is a guard by profession. (p.19)

5. Fear of being different: "Besides, disagreement is a sign of diversity. Ur-Fascism grows up and seeks for consensus by exploiting and exacerbating the natural fear of difference. The first appeal of a fascist or prematurely fascist movement is an appeal against the intruders." (p.18)	- They were dark men, and they looked at their father and Anže with a gloomy expression (p. 8).	- "She is not in any of the pictures. I don't see it. Do you? In every picture someone is covering her." (p.15)	- Word quickly spread among the neighbours that the manor, the house and the pool were guarded day and night by a hedge against intruders. (p.19)
6. Appeal to a frustrated middle class: Ur-Fascism stems from individual or societal frustration. (p.18)	- "Poor children come from across seas and mountains. They speak a language we cannot understand; let us welcome them." (p.15)	- "Now the old house will be demolished and a new one built. It will be a square, big and beautiful. For you and for me." (p.18)	- One gentleman has built himself a house and a swimming pool. Word quickly spread among the neighbours that the house, the goose and the pool were guarded day and night by a hedge against intruders. (p.19)
7. "To people who feel deprived of a clear social identity, Ur-Fascism says that their only privilege is the most common one, to be born in the same country. This is the origin of nationalism."	- "Show everyone how families and Slovenian land are defended." (p.15)	- "There's a little girl living near here who doesn't have her own room like you and me. That's why she doesn't invite anyone over. Not on her birthday, not during the holidays [...]. It's cramped and dirty there." (p. 6)	- "I have spikes, and they're shiny. They would scare intruders." (p.19) - "That would be a job for me!" exclaimed the hedgehog (p.19). - "I could easily put them on my pointy teeth." (p.19)
8. "The followers must feel humiliated by the ostentatious wealth and force of their enemies." (p.19)	- Soon a group of people arrived. There were 100, 200, 300, 1,000. They were dark men, looking at my father and Anže blankly. There were no children. (p.8)	- "Maybe it wasn't their house at all. Maybe they didn't have the money for an apartment. Maybe they could have left." (p.18)	- "I have spikes, and they're shiny. They would scare intruders." (p.19)
9. A permanent state of war. (p.19)	- "Grandfather, I will defend our society, I will defend the Slovenian land." (p.11)	- "[H]e has his own room." - "[H]e has his own wardrobe." "[W]e are not rich, but you and I are." (pp.2-24)	- They are excellent pursuers of intruders. (p.20)
10. "Elitism [...] and contempt for the weak." (p.19)	When they woke up, the village was once again full of Poles. There were dark men writhing on the ground in the rows. They were caught in strings and ropes. The more they twisted, the more entangled they became. The policemen took them all away. (p.14)	- "No one is as loud as you and me." - "No one is as notable as you and me." - "No one is as beautiful as you and me." (pp.2-24)	- "I'm going to bet you'd be by far the best chaser of intruding ants! And there are hundreds, no, thousands of them, just so you know." (p.20)
11. "Everybody is educated to become a hero." (p. 19)	- The police officer said: "You're a brave boy, Anže. You have shown everyone how to defend families and Slovenian land." (p. 15) - He reached into his pocket and pinned a big medal on Anže's chest. It read: <i>For extraordinary</i>	- "When we play princesses, she can be useful. She helps us to put on beautiful clothes. Make cakes and tea. Tidy up the castle. Even if she asks, we won't let her be a princess. Because she's not a princess, period. Even when she grows up, she won't be. She can't	- The elephant was listening to the conversation, always betting on its size: "Since I am the biggest, it is clear that I would be the best guard." (p.20)

	bravery. (p.15).	be. And that's it." (p.2)	
12. Machismo (contempt for women): "Since even sex is a difficult game to play, the Ur-Fascist hero tends to play with Weapons –doing so becomes an ersatz phallic exercise." (p.19)	- He opened it and took out a large silver sabre. (p.10)	- "It looks small. She holds a pencil and scribbles something in a notebook. Awkward little chicks." (p.21)	The squirrel giggled: "Gee, I could blow the intruders away with a water cannon, and the master could use you as a shower!" (p.20)
13. Selective populism. (p.19)	- "Because he is evil, because he wants to do us, the Slavs, harm." (p.10)	- "It's like wearing a blind woman's hat. Or an invisibility cloak." (p.15) - "Maybe her brother told her to take it easy." (p.6)	- The hedgehog, the crocodile, the elephant and the anteater thought about it, realised that such a life was a living bore, and immediately thought how perfectly they would guard the pools, the houses and the masters. (p.21)
14. Newspeak: "All the Nazi or Fascist schoolbooks made use of an impoverished vocabulary, and an elementary syntax, in order to limit the instruments for complex and critical reasoning." (p.20)	A boy, Anže, defends the village of Svetje (A reference to the film <i>Valter Defends Sarajevo</i>).	- The invisible girl (the title and recurring phrase) lives near here. - A little girl lived here (p.24).	- [T]hey thought that the hedge was a first and last name, i.e., the Hedge, and that the Hedge was a watchman by profession. (p.19)

All three selected texts contain elements or features of Ur-Fascism as motifs, partial motifs or blind motifs⁸ (Max Luthi: *Evropskopravljica: forma in oblika*, 2011). The features are already visible on the surface (*The Boy Anže Defends the Village of Svetje*) and textual level (*Close to Here* and *The Hedge*). The question is whether this is an "English intentional fallacy" of the author, the reviewers, the editor... or whether it could be a new trend? Readers should form their own opinion based on their own reading of literary texts and the application of Eco's theory.

The comparative literature analysis carried out in this paper also used Stephen Butler's theory, published in his 2019 text "The Impact of Advanced Capitalism on Well-being: An Evidence-Informed Model".⁹ Advanced capitalism is a similar term to neoliberalism, referring to the economic and cultural system that affects individuals and that we have been living in since

⁸ All three texts were analysed several times by different groups, who used quotations from the texts (including the visual texts) to look for similarities and differences with Eco's theory.

⁹ Butler, S. "The Impact of Advanced Capitalism on Well-Being: an Evidence-Informed Model." *Human Arenas* 2, pp. 200-227 (2019)

the Fall of the Berlin Wall or the declaration of an independent, self-governing Slovenia, i.e. since around 1990.

1. Values: self-interest, interpersonal communication, consumerism, economic success	- "Grandfather, I will defend our society, I will defend the Slovenian land." (p.11)	no name/ no body/ rotten egg/ no car/ no sounding girl/ no invisible girl/ no wealth/ no going to the seaside/ not so beautiful/ no friends/ no bright curls/ no room of her own. (pp. 2-24)	- Word quickly spread among the neighbours that a hedge was guarding the manor, the house and the swimming pool day and night against all comers.(p.19)
2.Increasing social instability	- They were dark men, and they looked at their father and Anže with a gloomy expression. (p. 8)	- The people who lived in the old house have disappeared. They just ran out. [...]. Maybe they didn't have any land to stand on. Maybe they had to leave. (p. 18)	- "The hedge is really unlucky. I hear she has to be in her post day and night, on Saturday and Sunday. Which means she can't go on holiday at all!" (p. 20)
3. Neoliberal socialisation: individualism, materialism, consumerism, social success, higher self-esteem	- "Your great-great-great-grandfather fought against the dark men with this sabre. He was brave, and they drove the dark-skinned people from the Slovenian land." (p.10) - "You're a brave boy, Anže. You have shown everyone how to defend families and Slovenian land." (p.15)	She does not live in a new house, nor in a new apartment. (p.4)	- One gentleman built himself a house and a swimming pool. (p.19)

MODERN TIMES AND THE REINTERPRETATION OF THE PAST,¹⁰ 1991-2021

In the period since Slovenia gained independence in 1991, its accession to the EU in 2004 and up to the present day, the redefinition of history, the victory over Fascism and Nazism (1941-1945), and the promotion and canonisation of patriotic themes have been featured in the media, which has had an impact on the educational system, curriculum, and reading curriculum.¹¹

¹⁰Luthar, Oto (2014). Preimenovanje in izključevanje kot sestavni del postkomunistične kulture spomina v Sloveniji. Prispevki za novejšo zgodovino, volume 54, št. 2, str. 195-211.

¹¹The poem by the journalist Igor Pirkovič, included in Petra Kodra's workbook for Year 7 of Primary School, *Za Slovenijo živim* (For Slovenia I Live), has become a curricular reading. If we analyse the text, we can surmise that it is not of any great literary quality, as it includes a chapter named after the song "For Slovenia I live / It's beautiful because it's mine [...]" (Kodre, 2018: 136). In addition, a poem by Tonet Kuntner (Kodre, 2018: 138), is also included: "I sing you a hymn [...] And because I love you, my homeland, / don't you ever accuse me of such lies" (Kodre, 2018: 136). In view of the literary quality criteria set by the Slovenian Institute of Education, one may wonder about the responsibility of the reviewers, editors, publishing house, and so on. The author has classified texts and/or poems about Slovenia in different contexts under the heading of patriotism, without reflecting on the diversity of concepts they express, e.g. Slovenia as part of Austro-Hungary, the Kingdom of the SFRS, the SFRY, independent Slovenia, Slovenia as an EU member, etc.

In recent years, characterised by a redefinition of history and the Holocaust, there has also been an exclusion of *The Diary of Anne Frank* from the Slovenian curriculum from 2018, and from 2020 from the curricula for Slovene in European schools, despite the humanistic message of this work. Similarly to in other countries, however, in Slovenia this redefinition of the Holocaust has overlooked the Jewish victims or presented the Holocaust as a process that did not concern Slovenians (Luthar, 2014: 204).

It is significant that while Anne Frank is excluded, a living author, Vitan Mal – who has been repeatedly accused of child sexual abuse – is included in the curriculum reading. <https://old.delo.si/novice/kronika/vitanu-malu-pogojna-zaporna-kazen.html>

The historian Luthar writes:

What until recently looked like an effort to apportion blame, or a one-way translation of perpetrators into victims, has in Slovenia's post-communist revisionist politics of the past turned into a complete denial of the crimes committed by the crews of Nazi collaborators, while on the other hand, within the same effort, we are witnessing a categorical condemnation of the resistance movement. (Luthar, 2015: 195)

REMOVING THE STARS IN CHILDREN'S ILLUSTRATIONS, 1983-2019

There has been considerable public controversy over the removal of the star from the flag of the SFRY in Jelka Reichman's illustrations¹² in the picture book *Igračkorakajo* (*Toys March*)¹³ (1983, 1987, 2019). The star was also removed in four previously published illustrations in the so-called "fairy-tale calendar" *Igrajmose* (*Let's Play*), from 2019.¹⁴ One has to ask whether this is censorship, self-censorship or "wilful ignorance", since motifs for freemasonry, illicit substances, polygamous sexual allusions, and so on, also appear in children's texts in picture books and/or illustrated books – an issue which will be the subject of an upcoming article.

Therefore, in a given system of post-communist (re)interpretations, one does not necessarily need to know all aspects of the truth in order to be able to identify a revisionist lie (Luthar, 2014: 209).

AN EXAMINATION OF ECO AND CONTEMPORARY SLOVENIAN LITERATURE FROM A SEMIOTIC PERSPECTIVE

Through the use of Eco's fourteen characteristics of Ur-Fascism as a framework, the objective of this study is to investigate a selection of Slovenian fairy tales and youth literature. Most of these stories have aspects that Eco has emphasised, such as the cult of tradition, the fear of diversity, selective nostalgia, and hero worship. A considerable number of these stories also contain elements that Eco has emphasised. By means of Milič's translation, the semiotic concepts of Eco are brought into the literary milieu of Slovenia. Within this framework, authors reinterpret these categories by situating them within the context of their particular cultural and political history.

It has been observed by literary historians that Slovenian children's novels published after 1991 often remove socialist emblems such as stars while simultaneously incorporating new ideological themes. These new motifs include village guards, refugees, and neoliberal characters of competitiveness. Eco's semiotic theory becomes a tool for understanding how ideology grows

¹²<https://www.mladina.si/194762/zastava-brez-zvezde>

¹³<https://www.ostro.si/si/razkrinkavanje/objave/umik-zvezde-z-ilustracije-jelke-reichman-ni-bil-politcen>

¹⁴Based on a discussion, we found that the illustrator was not informed about the deletion of the stars from her illustrations. This is a question of the integrity of editors and/or the politicisation of youth literature.

linguistically, even in seemingly innocent genres like picture books. This is because picture books are considered harmless.

When Eco's theory is used in the classroom, it encourages students to read critically, which means they are able to decode the ways in which power relations and moral views are encoded in language, imagery, and story. Educators are encouraged to transcend beyond the realm of textual interpretation (Eco) and into the realm of cultural empathy (Milič) and language ethics (Çabej) via the use of the triadic model.

TRANSLATION AND PEDAGOGICAL MEDIATION: THE ROLE OF JOLKA MILIČ

Within the framework of translation and pedagogical mediation, the role that Jolka plays is a significant one. Milič's translation of Eco's *Ur-Fascism* to the English language Milič is a really good illustration of how translation may be used as a method of education. She does a thorough mediation between Italian and Slovenian speech, which not only makes the text accessible to a new audience but also ensures that the article maintains its philosophical truth. It is important to note that the act of translation, as it was carried out by Milič, is not just linguistic but also ideological. This presents a challenge to the idea of isolationism by introducing readers to new cultural norms that they themselves may experience.

As a result, this is in line with communicative methods in language education, which put a significant emphasis on international competence. international competence may be described as the ability to grasp perspectives that are different from one's own. The work of Milič provides evidence that demonstrates how translation may be used to foster the development of this capacity, as well as how it can be included into instructional strategies that incorporate language, culture, and social ethics.

THE HUMANISTIC PERSPECTIVE OF ÇABEJ IN THE FIELD OF LANGUAGE EDUCATION

While Eco and Milič are engaged in the field of semiotics and translation, Eqrem Çabej expands the triadic paradigm into the realm of pedagogy. For Çabej, the act of teaching a language included the cultivation of cultural identity and the promotion of intellectual autonomy. The fact that he holds the belief that "language is the spiritual and moral expression of a people" highlights the ethical duty that educators have.

When this is used in contemporary schools, it means that language is taught not just as a means of communication but also as a means of fostering moral and historical consciousness. When seen from the humanistic perspective of Çabej, the language instructor assumes the role of a protector of authenticity, ensuring that words continue to serve as instruments of

comprehension rather than devices of manipulation. This concern is, in fact, shared with Eco's criticism of Newspeak.

COMPARATIVE AND METHODOLOGICAL REFLECTIONS

Analytical Focus	Eco's Semiotic Lens	Milič's Translational Lens	Çabej's Humanistic Lens
Ideological Awareness	Recognizing fascist rhetoric and linguistic manipulation	Translating ideology with critical sensitivity	Teaching linguistic responsibility and moral clarity
Cultural Context	Deconstructing myths of purity or nationalism	Mediating between cultures to foster empathy	Preserving linguistic heritage as cultural identity
Pedagogical Application	Critical reading in the classroom	Translation as cultural dialogue	Language learning as ethical formation

With the use of this comparison model, we will be able to demonstrate how the triadic framework operates in terms of teaching.

Eco is a concept that develops critical awareness, Milič is a concept that encourages cultural openness, and Çabej is a concept that firmly builds its foundation in humanistic ethical ideals.

CONCLUSION: LANGUAGE AS FREEDOM

Umberto Eco, Jolka Milič, and Eqrem Çabej have contributed to the formation of a thorough Triadic Model for Modern Language Teaching Methodology via their collaborative efforts. Milič embodies empathy via translation, whereas Çabej helps to anchor language practice in moral awareness. Eco teaches vigilance against ideological distortion, while Milič represents empathy through translation.

When taken as a whole, they declare that teaching a language is an act of emancipation, a defence against the reduction of mind and the degradation of cultural meaning. This triadic paradigm is used in schools to teach students not just how to utilise language but also how to comprehend the ethical power that language has. The antidote to any type of linguistic authoritarianism is the development of speakers who are critical, empathetic, and culturally grounded. This may be accomplished via the integration of semiotics, translation, and humanism in educational settings. Fascism was referred to as Eco.

We are living in a time when the essence of Umberto Eco's article, as translated by Jolka Milič, is very topical. Elements of Ur-Fascism can also be detected as motifs in short contemporary fairy tales, illustrations and/or picture books. In this article, Eco's theory is used to analyse quotations from various texts, as a way of exploring the hypothesis that they contain elements of Ur-Fascism. This would not have been an issue in itself if the authors had also dealt with this issue in a problem-oriented, rather than problematic, way.

It has been noted that in the years 2018-2021 there were "violent shifts" in Slovenian society, with the Government of the Republic of Slovenia "consistently taking its former and current political opponents to task" (Svetina, 2009). In the field of youth literature, it is impossible to find a critique of the current social or political systems. The transition from culture to pop-culture (*Slovenskeganaroda sin – Son of a Slovene Nation*), revisionist changes (the exclusion of *The Diary of Anne Frank* from the curriculum)¹⁵ and picture books dealing with Slovenian independence, which is a very topical issue, but it should be treated in a problem-oriented rather than a problematic way.¹⁶

The critical intellectual Jolka Milič, with her translation of Umberto Eco's article entitled *Ur-Fascism* (1995, 2013), has linked two cultures, Italian and Slovenian. The translation has mainly drawn attention to the revisionist changes in post-socialist memories (Luthar, 2014: 198). Both the translation of Eco's article and his three-pacifist tales represent a scientific and fictional contribution to the values of world peace, without glorifying one at the expense of the other. In this context, it is reasonable to question the roles of authors, including editors and/or illustrators, the responsibility of reviewers and (self-)publishers, who systematically and systemically ideologise the field of youth – even children's – literature, in order to criticise the previous socialist system, but not the current post-socialist or neoliberal era.

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¹⁶Strlič, Nataša, Stepančič, Damijan. Osamosvojitve (skoraj vse o poti k lastni državi). Dob: Miš, 2021. Urednica Kos, Gaja. <https://www.miszalozba.com/knjige/osamosvojitve/> Eichenseer, Erika, Škerl, Peter: Rajski vrt. Paradise Garden. Dob: Miš, 2021. <https://www.miszalozba.com/knjige/rajski-vrt/>

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