

This dissertation is the first complex presentation of the Serbian novel in the 19th and 20th centuries. The dissertation deals with the dynamics in the development of the Serbian novel from its beginning till the year 2000 and helps to create a complex picture based on concise analyses of 165 novels. The dissertation depicts the ways in which Serbian authors adopted universal stylistic forms (Sentimentalism, Realism, Modernism, Expressionism, Surrealism, Nouveau roman, Postmodernism) and focuses on autochthonic styles in Serbian prose (Zenitism, Neonaturalism, Nationalistic Realism). It demonstrates the high quality of the Serbian novel, but it also points out the weaknesses and cul-de-sacs of the Serbian novel.

The centre of the dissertation covers the years 1961-2000 since this period has not been systematically worked on, despite the fact that the novel genre played a major role in Serbian literature in the last 40 years of the twentieth century.

The most significant feature of the Serbian novel, which for rather a long time (till the twenties of the last century) lagged behind the novels of the so-called dominant literatures, is its close association with the turbulent history of a nation with opposing cultures, religions and socio-political systems. The authors, regardless of poetic adherence to either traditional or innovative narrative discourse, ponder the sense of history and view, in the free world of fiction, epochal historical events and issues. Not infrequently, the writers interpret them from an avant-garde point of view, questioning official historiographic positions.

The Serbian novel can boast of four authors of a European calibre (M.Crnjanski, B.Pekić, D.Kiš, I.Andrić), two authors who have reached the summit of European literature with only one of their works (M.Pavić, V.Desnica) and many other above-average novelists, whose works are rightly respected. ...