

# The Lipizzaner Horse: Cultural and Natural Heritage or Free Non-Human Subjectivity

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This article discusses the Lipizzaner horses, now a part of the natural and cultural heritage of the Slovenian nation, claimed also by the Austrians, and in the past an imperial heritage of the Habsburg Empire. Lipizzaner horses are typically perceived as a national cultural monument (trained stallions) owned by the human community, and not as non-human animals that were, only by way of domestication and (even worse) the way they were raised genetically, destined to serve people, first at a feudal imperial court. Based on the interactions of zoofolkloristics, anthropology and philosophical and legal discourses, this article reflects the role and importance of Lipizzaner horses through folklore and literature, and reconsiders the human/animal relationship by establishing non-hierarchy between the animal and the human on the basis of ecocritical analysis. The focus of the analysis is on folkloristic materials (texts), customs and traditions associated with the horse/human community, as well as the literary works that discuss the Lipizzaner horses.

**KEYWORDS:** Lippizaner horses, domestication, genetically breed horses, heritage, folklore, literature, human/animal relationship

## PREFACE

Robert Musil's short story "Can a Horse Laugh" (2012/1935)<sup>1</sup> is an excellent introduction to a reflection on the issue presented in the title. This short story is about a horse that shows a feature that is only ascribed to human beings: it laughs in its interaction with the human being, typically opening its jaws and neighing. Can this story confirm that the human view of animals is first and foremost full of ignorance and lack of knowledge, while also underestimating and disregarding the individuality within a species? And that it needs to be changed?

<sup>1</sup> Napoleon's quote is anthropocentric, but it also includes a reflection on the value of animals: "There is a link between animals and the Deity. Man is merely a more perfect animal than the rest. He reasons better. How do we know that animals have not a language of their own? ... My opinion is that it is a presumption in us to say no, because we do not understand them. A horse has memory, knowledge, and love": O'Meara Voice from St. Helena.: The Montly Magazine. Internet: (<https://books.google.si/books?id=iGY3AQAA-MAAJ&pg=PA638&lpg=PA638&dq>) (14. 5. 2015).

## HORSES AND THE ISSUE OF DOMESTICATION

Lipizzaner horses are typically perceived as a national cultural monument (trained stallions) owned by the human community, and not as non-human animals that were, only by way of domestication, destined to serve human. The aim of the contribution is to acknowledge the intrinsic<sup>2</sup> value of the animal and cultural patterns that exist irrespective of human intervention, which deprived the animal of its “wildness”, separating the animal from its natural environment, and Lipizzaner horses were raised for dressage, which is even worse. According to Regina Bendix “Lippizzans are white breed horses, and they were initially bred to carry noble-bred humans. Horses with carefully monitored genetic heritage for people with carefully monitored genetic heritage” (Bendix 2000: 46).

There are very few animals with such a rich paleontological genealogy as horses (*Equus caballus*). Sixty million years ago, *Eohippus* lived in North America. The genus *Equus*, which the horse as known today belongs to, developed at the end of the Pliocene. The predominant belief today is that modern horses originated in the steppes of Central Asia and the plains of Central Europe. Two subspecies of wild (feral) horse were found in this area in the past century: the tarpan and Przewalski’s horse (*Equus ferus przewalski*). These were the only true wild (free) horses, whereas the only semi-feral horses known today can be found in the French region of Camargue.<sup>3</sup> Horses were domesticated by the nomadic livestock-breeding peoples of Central Asia as late as the third or fourth millennium BC. According to Visković (2009: 238), this animal has had the greatest impact on human civilization. Horses can be ranked by how they are used: horses for meat, war horses, and draft horses; horses as symbols, racehorses, and horses as beauty or motifs in painting, the arts, and literature—and also in folklore.

According to Mullin (2002: 389), domestication is “the most profound transformation that has occurred in human-animal relationships,” whereas Cassidy believes that in the past domestication entailed “human control and the conversion of animals into property” (Cassidy & Mullin 2007: 2), which means this involved a biological-cultural process of the animals’ entry from nature into human society, in which the animals consequently became its property. Cornevin claims that domesticated animals are those that are part of the house and home; they are subordinated to the master’s power, to whom they provide products and whom they serve; they procreate in some sort of a prison and give birth to offspring that will also be subordinated to the master (Cornevin 1891, cited in: Visković 2009: 184). “Domestication, Ducos writes, “can be said to exist when living animals are integrated as objects into the socio-economic organization of the human group” (1978: 54; 1989, cited in: Ingold 2006: 6; cf. Ingold 1986: 113, 168, 233). Sigaut divides

<sup>2</sup> Will intrinsic ecological ethics ever be established? According to Ljubo Mohorič, an instrumental, pragmatic or at least abstract, and also value-related intrinsic ecological stance can be perceived in the Slovenian ecological awareness at the onset of the third millennium; a stance that ascribes an intrinsic value to natural entities regardless of human benefit (Mohorič 2011: 82). The “new ecological paradigm” (Dunlap et al 2000) is directed towards the claim that nature is an ecosystem with all its intrinsic rights, regardless of what meaning it has for humans.

<sup>3</sup> Perhaps also in some parts of Turkey and Georgia.

domesticated animals into utilitarian animals and pets (1988: 59–70). Domestication results in the extinction of wild predecessors (e.g., the tarpans) and the deformation of their anatomical, physiological, and psychological properties; only the properties that humans wanted due to economic and other reasons are developed. The question is whether these domesticated animals, which were able to survive in the wild, could be returned to the wild and whether they would become feral. According to Visković, they could regain their ability to survive in the wild despite it being atrophied. This is what happened to abandoned and runaway Spanish horses in the US (mustangs), and the goats, dogs, cats, pigs, and birds that have gone feral in natural environments and cities around the globe<sup>4</sup> (2009: 197). Domestication was brought about by the paternalistic model of society, which was an expression of archetypal social subordination, including among people (e.g., man to woman). Various types of domestication also pointed to social stratification; for example, horses and dogs were the domesticated animals of the aristocracy (especially the Lipizzaner horses), whereas cows and pigs were the domesticated animals of the rural population. Social inequality was also built through this. The humans beings who domesticated wild animals<sup>4</sup> (horses) also raised them from one generation to the next and selected individuals that contained specific genetic characteristics. Initially, a horse was a slave, who later became more important, but that only happened when it entered the aristocratic environment.<sup>5</sup> It has been personified or anthropomorphized because even today we say that it has four legs and not four paws. This is also what happened with the Lipizzaner, a horse that was crossbred to make it fit for dressage. Horses are thus being exploited, and the only taste of wildness that they enjoy is when they are allowed to graze and run free in their pastures. For the remainder of their time they are subjected to dressage and have to be obedient, tamed, and available to humans whenever they so demand. Domestication was harshly criticized by Nietzsche: “To call the taming of an animal its ‘improvement’ sounds almost like a joke to our ears” (Nietzsche 1980: 57, cited in: Visković 2009: 201).<sup>6</sup> The success of breeding horses, in particular, can be explained with Darwin’s (1859)<sup>7</sup> claim that taming is possible primarily with “social animals” and ones that live in hierarchic communities. Humans take control in these hierarchic communities and “imprint” their hierarchic dominance on the young, which later becomes self-evident and leads to subordination. In the domestication of horses, and especially the Lipizzaners, the dominant’s relation to the subordinate corresponds to the human’s relation to valuable property, and in modern times also to natural and cultural heritage. Therefore, one should nevertheless be aware that the Lipizzaner horses are living creatures, and that the civilization of horses is not inferior to human civilization. However, because

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<sup>4</sup> This is confirmed by introducing thirty wild horses from Mongolia, which were raised in zoos, into the Russian steppes.

<sup>5</sup> Jordan Rufus wrote in thirteenth-century Italy: “No animal is more noble than horse, since it is by horses that princes, magnates and knights are separated from people and because a lord cannot fittingly be seen among private citizens except through the mediation of a horse.” Cited from Joyce Salisburly, 1994: 28-30.

<sup>6</sup> One should not forget how Nietzsche reacted to the suffering of a horse in Turin that was being beaten mercilessly by a coachman. He shouted out to the coachman to stop beating the horse, ran to the horse, and hugged it to protect it.

<sup>7</sup> Darwin denied human superiority as early as 1859 in his *The Origin of Species* (1954).

humans used the horses' trust to dominate them, today the human-horse relationship still remains unequal (perhaps the situation is a little better in organic farming); horses are exploited animals that suffer quietly and endure pain with dignity and pride. But is this really true or it is only that we do not hear their pain? People have used horses in various ways, but they should have regarded them as inherent beings, from which they can learn. Namely, a foal, only a day old, may be faster than the fastest human—what does that mean for this human supremacy that we presume? Horses can symbolize a wide variety of things: the cosmos, fertility, eroticism, nobility, and freedom. But are they truly that different from humans? Westerman wrote the following:

*In a series of drawings made around 1500, Leonardo da Vinci had compared the facial expressions of humans, horses and lions—the expressions he made were so interchangeable that one wondered which face belonged to which creature. Darwin<sup>7</sup> had taken the notion of man as the God-appointed ruler of flora and fauna and knocked it on the head, but the peculiar thing was that man never stopped acting that way: as the tamer of nature which, once subdued, had to serve him in everything. The wild horses of the steppes had been captured with lassos, they had given birth to progeny that were converted into beasts of utility and then—with the exception of a few Mongolian Przewalskis—they were annihilated. Was that progress? Did the subjugation of a species always lead to improvement? (2013: 44)*

This undoubtedly only involves a misuse of non-human animals and this merely based on the assumption that humans as the most highly developed beings are superior to others, which is merely a myth, of course. Klampfer (2010: 259) believes that “the animals’ awareness or ability to feel may indeed secure them membership in the moral community, but their status in it is and will remain second-rate until their lives also begin enjoying the same moral protection as those of humans, alongside the abundance that is already a matter of our concern.” Why this equal membership in the moral community has not been realized can be illustrated with Hearne’s claim (2000: 233) that this has to do with an epistemological fear that animals are nevertheless independent creatures that have the chance to take action. Unfortunately, the two-tiered nature of the human mind continues to prevent the basic law of “Thou shalt not kill” from applying to all living creatures and also being sanctioned as such. Humans justify the fact that they send horses that do not meet breeding conditions to the slaughterhouse by claiming that they are an inferior species that lacks self-awareness. But is this true? How can humans claim that horses do not know about their past or future? The deprecating attitude towards a living creature that is not human of course benefits the human legitimacy of killing millions of living creatures for food. However, today a new ecological paradigm of awareness is being established, according to which any form of using and killing animals is impermissible (Francione 1995, 1996, 2000, 2009; Engel 2000; Klampfer 2010: 269–270). The intrinsic value of animals is what guides the author in discussing horses through the history of culture (folklore and literature), cultural heritage, and their relation to humans.

## THE LIPIZZANER HORSES AS CULTURAL OR NATURAL HERITAGE?

First, it should be determined where the Lipizzaners actually belong—to cultural or natural heritage—or what type of heritage in general? According to the definition of integral heritage—“a heritage that is formed by units of the human environment or nature in which elements of natural and cultural heritage are intertwined and whose value is increased by the fact that both forms of heritage are genetically, functionally, or substantively linked and dependent on each other” (<http://www.zvkds.si/sl/zvkds/varstvo-kulturne-dediscine/o-kulturni-dediscini/kaj-je-kulturna-dediscina/>)—they could belong to this framework. Does this mean that cultural heritage necessarily entails human influence in order even to be able to talk about it in the first place? All of the criteria suggest this. However, can it be assumed that animals also have their own culture and cultural patterns that they transfer from one generation to the next, only that they do not develop a conscious heritage structure or do not establish an awareness of this? Does this involve behaviour or “behavioural variants” as behaviourists would put it, or truly an establishment of culture? Proceeding from an anthropocentric perspective and speciesism (Ryder 1970; Dunayer 2009), culture is truly only a matter of the human species; however, from the viewpoint of the ecocentric paradigm, culture is not reserved only for humans. What about cultural heritage? Is it only connected with the human awareness of the past, present, and future, or is the awareness of cultural heritage as a human construct? Hence, where does the heritage of the Lipizzaner horses belong and where are the cultural patterns that people built into the genetic material of these horses; what makes up the pure “horse culture”,<sup>8</sup> if one can even use this somewhat awkward syntagm? Is this some type of protoculture or subculture (Whiten 2001; Gašperič 2005)? The symbolic pattern that animals use in their communication with one another could definitely be referred to as a cultural, rather than natural, pattern because it varies from one animal to another; of course, proceeding from the viewpoint that every animal is a person or personality in its own right (Ingold 1994). If this is the case, then animals can also have a typical cultural pattern that is part of the symbolic patterns within the single species they belong to. However, there are certainly differences between the cultural patterns of animals that have been tamed and wild ones or ones that do not live in a community together with humans. In the case of wild animals, their cultural patterns do not depend on human presence and influence. The key fact in this regard is that animals have a mental life and that they are mental subjects (Rowlands 2002: 23–24; Klampfer 2010: 250–251).<sup>9</sup> Thus, it can be said that

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<sup>8</sup> By definition, horse culture is an expression used for all activities connected with taming, breeding, and selling horses or, in short, with the ownership of horses and the prevention of their freedom. It originates from the period when Spanish conquerors brought their horses to the US and then this culture also began to be used and developed by the Pueblo people (e.g., in New Mexico; <http://www.gilderlehrman.org/history-by-era/early-settlements/essays/impact-horse-culture>). Of course, what I have in mind here is the indigenous horse culture and not the one created in human interaction with horses.

<sup>9</sup> One wonders if the cultural heritage of lacemaking is truly worth so much more than spiders creating webs, and if one is truly so haughty to believe that creating webs only serves the function of feeding, then one has not truly seen a spider web in the morning dew in a meadow, when the spider knows exactly that it is going to be a sunny day and its spider web will not be destroyed by rain. This lace disappears after a while, but it becomes reestablished. This is a heritage of constant change.

the Lipizzaners combine the cultural patterns of horses as an animal species and the cultural patterns of the human pretension to create a kind of horse with artistic skills envisaged by humans that were enforced in the process of domestication, genetic breeding, and selection.

Today, the Lipizzaner horses in Slovenia are part of the Lipica Stud Farm, which was declared a cultural monument of outstanding importance for Slovenia through a special law adopted in 1996. Article 1 of the Lipica Stud Farm Act reads as follows: “Through this act, the territory of the Lipica Stud Farm, which encompasses the entire protected area of the Lipica Stud Farm and its cultivated karst landscape, herd of Lipizzaner horses, and architectural and art heritage, is hereby declared a cultural monument of national importance for the Republic of Slovenia” (<http://www.lipica.org/en/>.) Thus the Lipizzaners in Slovenia became a cultural monument and are no longer merely living creatures. In his book *Žival, nadžival* (2013), the Dutch author Frank Westerman explores the history of the Lipizzaner horses from the beginnings of their breeding to the modern times in a journalistic manner. He determines that “when you touch a Lipizzaner you are touching history” (Westerman 2013: 44.) Through four centuries of “improvements,” exceptional results have been achieved with the Lipizzaners, which is why they are considered the oldest breed; however, as Westerman critically ascertains, the human species does not like to transform and change and is unwilling to improve itself (2013: 36). This is a kind of paradox. While critically analyzing this type of breeding, Westerman goes on to compare the Austrian breeding standards—because strict criteria apply to purebred Lipizzaners—with the Aryan forms and tables used under Nazism (75). Discrimination within one species spread to a different species.

But what is the history of the Lipizzaner horses and what are these “hallowed” horses like? Ivo Mihelič wrote an extensive book on them titled *Otroci burje: Lipica in Lipicanec / Kinder der Bora: Lipica und die Lipizzaner* (The Children of the Bora Wind: Lipica and the Lipizzaners, 2004). The following can be summarized from this book: his breed developed from the local Karst, Spanish, and Neapolitan horses, as well as Arabian horses later. It is a known fact that strong, fast, and sturdy horses were bred in the Lipica area as early as Roman times. The stud farm was established by Austrian Archduke Charles, the regent of Styria, Carinthia, Carniola, Istria, and Trieste at that time. He purchased the village of Lipica and its associated land from the archbishop of Trieste. He wanted to breed elegant carriage and riding horses at Lipica for his stud farms in Graz, where he had his residence. To this end, stables and residential buildings were built, and meadows and pastures were arranged at Lipica. The first Spanish horses arrived in Lipica as early as 1580, and then more horses came in 1581, 1582, and 1584, when they also bought horses from Palestrina (Italy), which strongly resembled the Spanish ones. Only five of the stallions managed to create their own bloodlines that have survived until today: Pluto, Neapolitano, Conversano,<sup>10</sup> Maestoso, and Favory.

<sup>10</sup> Frank Westerman writes about Conversano’s (*Conversano Primula*) descendants in *Brother Mendel’s Perfect Horse*.



Johann George Hamilton, *The Lipica Stud Farm*, 1727.



Johann Georg de Hamilton (1672-1737), *Lipizzaner Horse*.

Today, the Lipizzaners are bred at seven state-owned stud farms: the Piber Stud Farm in Austria, the Džakovo Stud Farm in Croatia,<sup>11</sup> the Fara in Sabina Stud Farm in Italy, the Szilvászarád Stud Farm in Hungary, the Sâmbăta de Jos Stud Farm in Romania, the Topoľčianky Stud Farm in Slovakia, and the Karađorđevo Stud Farm in Serbia. The work performed by numerous breeding organizations around the globe is also exceptionally important for the establishment of the Lipizzaner horses in a breeding and equestrian sense. These operate in all of the countries mentioned above and even in the US, Australia, and South Africa.

The Lipica Stud Farm and the Lipizzaners experienced several hard blows in the course of history. The first time they had to leave the stud farm was in 1796, when they were taken to Hungary; they returned in the fall of 1798. In 1805, they fled to Džakovo and then Karád, from where they returned in 1807. The third exodus occurred in 1809, when they were taken to a place near the Mezöhegyes stud farm in Hungary, where they stayed in exile for a full six years. However, the Lipica Stud Farm suffered the hardest blow during the Second World War. After Italy capitulated, it was taken over by the Germans, who moved all 179 horses to Hostouň in Czechoslovakia as early as October 1943. This is where the horses from the Piber Stud Farm in Austria, the former Yugoslav royal stud farm at Demir Kapija, the former Yugoslav stud farm at Dušanovo near Skopje (where Arabian horses were bred), and the Polish stud farm in Janów were also sent. At the end of the war, the “combined” stud farm came under American control. The Americans gave part of the herd and the entire archive to Italy, and a significant number of horses were also sent to the Piber stud farm, which renovated and expanded its breeding facilities. It was not until 1947 that Lipica, which then belonged to Yugoslavia, was given back eleven horses. However, thirty years of efforts resulted in a completely renovated stud farm, which now again houses representatives of all the stallion and mare bloodlines.

What are the characteristics of a Lipizzaner, what does it look like, and what are its agility skills? Even though the Lipizzaners are almost always associated with white or at least light gray, which is the only color desired among Lipizzaner breeders (the horses’ natural color is gray), they can also have dark-gray, coal-black, brownish-gray, and dark-brown coats. The foals are always dark. The Lipizzaners became the most suitable horses for the Spanish Riding School in Vienna, whose origins date back to Ancient Greece and Xenophon as the founder of classical dressage. This is the highest possible level of dressage a horse can attain. Classical dressage entails extremely demanding artistic riding, which means that the main purpose of breeding the Lipizzaners was art. Westerman describes his visit to the Lipica Stud Farm and its history, in which his description of the galloping herd, reminiscent of the times when horses ran freely across the steppes and meadows, is most picturesque:

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<sup>11</sup> Horses do not have a nationality and, therefore, they cannot be appropriated by individual countries. Westerman shows the horrific human attitude towards these horses by using the example of the horses stolen from Lipik, Croatia (Džakovo); they were transported to Serbia during the war following 1991, where some of them died of hunger, locked up in stables, because a businessman from Novi Sad was unable to sell them (219–232). In 2007, sixty-six Lipizzaners returned to Lipik, after the person that had stolen them notified the world about their fate. This is another example of human cruelty, of which no other animal species is capable.



Never before had I witnessed so many horses racing towards me simultaneously. Their hooves flung sand and pebbles from the ground. The noise they made was not a ruffle, not a stamping, but a wall of sound. (2013: 72)

After gaining independence, Slovenia began to file applications to obtain these stud books, but all in vain. However, in 1999 it succeeded in protecting the Lipizzaners' geographical origin as a brand name. This is discussed in an interview with Bojan Pretnar, who says that Slovenia managed to register the Lipizzaner's name in the European Union with a protected geographical indication (GPI) status. However, it remains unclear which country has the right to keep the principal stud book. Nonetheless, Slovenia managed to establish the Stud Book of the Lipizzaners of the Slovenian Breed (1999). At that time, EU legislation did not allow the use of protected geographical indications on live animals. However, the TRIPS Agreement extended this protection to any type of goods, including horses (<http://www.mladina.si/52214/dr-bojan-pretnar-varuh-intelektualnih-pravic/>). This means that the Lipizzaners as living creatures have been placed on an equal footing with Carniolan sausage, honey, White Carniola cake, and Cviček wine. They are thus objects. Therefore, the next question one should ask is whether animals can be used for any purpose or whether animals can be manipulated and included in cultural practices in order to serve people? Regina Bendix states: "In [the]case of the Lippizaners, this transfer from heredity to heritage, from feudalistic power structure to a democratic one is fully transparent" (2000: 47). This question in particular is connected with cultural and natural heritage, which of course is humanist and anthropocentric *per se*, and is protected only in relation to the human, and not living creatures or nature. Cultural heritage, which animals become a part of, has been created due to human cultural preferences and hence it is merely a human value, whereas the animals that end up in specific cultural practices (e.g., the Lipizzaners' trot or the Spanish riding school) are actually forced to take part in these practices. They will not even exist without that is the common opinion that is at its core very anthropocentric and denied the Lippizaner horses their intrinsic value. The ownership right of individual countries seems even more perverse: they claim ownership over the Lipizzaners as part of their natural and cultural heritage, but they could not care less about these horses as beings with an intrinsic value. Claiming ownership over the Lipizzaner as the national horse that represents national cultural and natural heritage, as well as rulers and statesmen, has been common in history. Hitler referred to the Lipizzaners as German horses, Mussolini called them Italian horses, Tito referred to them as Yugoslav horses, and Slovenians as Slovenian horses.<sup>12</sup> Westerman illustrates

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<sup>12</sup> Thus, the following can be read online: One of Piber's ... major objectives is "to uphold a substantial part of Austria's cultural heritage and to preserve one of the best and most beautiful horse breeds in its original form." *Austria* can be replaced with *Slovenia* and the sentence remains completely the same. The official website of the Lipica Stud Farm contains the following sentence: "Lipica is the cradle of the Lipizzaner horse (1580)." The struggle for primacy over breeding the Lipizzaners and their origins does not work to the benefit of the horses. The living creature, which could not care less about which heritage it belongs to because it already has its own, is simply being disregarded.

this hot-tempered appropriation in his book by describing how Austrian tourists visiting Lipica found it outrageous that Slovenia dared to depict two Lipizzaners on its 20-cent coin (2013: 62).

Hence, it can be concluded that it is clearly still true that even non-human subjectivities are only protected as long as they serve a specific human purpose and are part of human cultural heritage (UNESCO).<sup>13</sup>



20-cent coin with two Lipizzaner horses (Wikipedia)

#### THE CULTURAL ASPECTS OF HORSES: THE HERITAGE OF SONGS AND NARRATIVES

Tim Ingold wrote: “Just as humans have a history of their relations with animals, so also animals have a history of their relations with humans. Only humans, however, construct narratives of their history” (2006: 1). Yes, only humans can tell stories of our shared relations or, as an African saying goes: “Until lions have their own ‘storytellers’, tales of a lion hunt will always glorify the hunter.”

Slovenian folklore has thematized the relation between horses and humans in various ways. In the folksong tradition, horses are not only part of the aristocratic world, but also part of everyday agricultural life. They were valuable and symbolized wealth. In various

<sup>13</sup> In 2015, efforts started in Slovenia (and Austria) for entering the breeding and training of the Lipizzaner horses on the UNESCO World Heritage List, albeit together with the Piber Stud Farm in Austria. The protection of the Lipizzaner is to move from the national to a supranational level, and become part of world heritage. See the *Delo* article “Lipica bi skupaj s Pibrom v Unesco” (Lipica Going for UNESCO together with Piber) from May 11th, 2015.

ballads, horses are part of the world of the military, knights, and heroes,<sup>14</sup> but they also appear in fairytales and mythological ballads. Frye (1957; 2000: 34, 152–153) believes that in epic and romantic poems horses symbolize fidelity, belongingness, chivalry, and aristocracy. However, in tales, fairy tales, and fables, horses are depicted almost allegorically (with a lesson in fables), but they can also be read in a literary manner and otherwise (Harel 2009), which evokes sympathy towards oxen and admiration for horses as “superior animals.” In her book *Tipni indeks slovenskih ljudskih pravljic. Živalske pravljice in basni* (Typological Index of Slovenian Folktales: Animal Tales and Fables), Kropelj Telban lists several examples: *Konj in vol* (Horse and ox; ATU 207, 1877, Kocijančič: Kropelj Telban 2015: 328); *Vol in konj vprežena skupaj* (Ox and horse yoked together; 329); *Konj in vol* (Horse and ox; 329); *Vol in osel* (Ox and donkey; 330); *Trdosrčni konj in osel* (Cold-hearted horse and donkey; 331); *Konj in osel* (Horse and donkey; 331), and *Konj in vol* (Horse and ox; 332). All of these fables depict the relationship between a superior and inferior animal and thematize the status of individual animals in the human community. Horses were considered superior to other draft animals. Despite this, horses themselves were often used as draft animals. The thematization of the horses’ destiny also reveals human destiny, which means horses also had a symbolic function. However, the aim here is to read these songs from the perspective of animal folklore and ecocriticism because these ballads feature classic anthropomorphization: placing horses into the animal world, which is subordinate to that of humans. Stories can also reveal the true destinies of horses in the past and present.

In Slovenian folk tradition, the Lipizzaners were referred to as *šimelni* (“white horses”). This word is derived from German *Schimmel* (“white or grey horse”). In ballads (especially heroic and historical ones), horses are depicted as helpers to humans; people ride them. Horses can also have supernatural power; for example, the song “Pegam in Lambergar” (Pegam and Lambergar; SLP I/1(10)), features a horse that has not seen light for seven years and so it has a special power. It becomes Lambergar’s helper. It is well fed: they feed it with yellow grain and water it with sweet white wine. It is completely clear that this horse-rider relationship involves mutual dependency and trust. The horse has the characteristic of a hero and can even speak (cf. Piskač 2012: 1071–1089). King Matthias rides a “bridled white horse” (*belču brzdem*; SLP I/3 (18–19)). Horses, especially white ones, symbolize royal blood and aristocracy, and so they can be found in songs thematizing the castle environment. A girl soldier is riding a “bridled horse” (*konjcu brzdnem*; women were only supposed to ride horses without a bridle; SLP I/7 7/ (55)). In the song “Ravbar Gathers His Army and Wins the Battle of Sisak” the horses are fast: “brze konjče napravljajte, / jih sedlajte n vobrdajte, / se na vojsko naravnajte” (prepare fast horses, / saddle and bridle them, / and prepare for war; SLP I/12 (75)). In the song “Prošnja umirajočega junaka” (A Dying Hero’s Request), a hero asks for his black horse to be tied to a plait of rosemary that he will hold in his hands when he is buried; this means the horse should mourn him and die together with him (SLP I/19 (101)). In one

<sup>14</sup> According to Assmann (2005: 317), in chivalry horses symbolized “superhuman speed.” Cf. Škopljanac (2012: 511–538).

of the versions, the hero declares the horse his little brother (107). In the song “Dekle z ugankami rešeno hudiča” (The Girl Saved from the Devil by Riddles), the prince saddles and mounts a fast horse, the horse neighs, and the girl takes it to the stables it by its reins, where she feeds it some grain so that it cannot neigh (SLP I/36 (189)). In another song, a dead man comes to get his sweetheart on a horse (SLP I/59/323). The song “Kamenjanje sv. Štefana” (The Stoning of St. Stephen) depicts the arrival of a white wild horse that is supposed to bite St. Stephen and the saint tames him immediately (SLP II/ 129/397–399).

A surprisingly equal relationship with an animal as though with a human can be found in the lyric love song “Konjiče kupim, da v vas pojezdim” (I’ll Buy Horses to Ride into the Village; Š 1788). A young man wishes that his horse were as strong as a bear, so that it could carry him to his beloved all through the night. And this is what truly happens: when the horse neighs three times, the girl opens her door and: “Konjiča je djala v štalico, / mene pa v svetlo kamrico. // Konjiču je dala čop sena, / meni pa vinca sladkega. // Konjiču je dala pšeničice, / meni pa rudeče ličice. // Konjiču je dala mal ovsa, / meni pa malo kovterca” (She took the horse into the stables, / and took me into her bright little chamber. // She gave the horse a wisp of straw, / and some sweet wine to me. // She gave the horse some grain, / and her red cheeks to me. // She gave the horse some oats, / and shared her blanket with me). The song “Konju postreže, kakor ljubemu” (She Entertains a Horse the Same as Her Beloved; Š 2155) indicates that horses were valuable animals, even though in this case it has more to do with opposing her boyfriend: “Konjiči je jesti dala žolte pšeničkice, / ljubemu je jesti dala, / maličko ovseka. // Konjiču je piti dala / vinca z vedre srebrne, / ljubemu je piti dala / veliki škaf mrzle vode. Konjiči pa je postljala na blazine pernate, / ljubemu pa je postljala / malo suje praproti.” (She fed the horse yellow grain, / and fed her boyfriend / some oats. // She watered the horse / with wine from a silver bucket, / and gave her boyfriend / a big tub of cold water to drink. She prepared feather pillows for the horse, / and only some dry ferns / for her boyfriend.) The boyfriend becomes angry and threatens to leave her for another girl.

### HORSES IN CUSTOMS, BELIEFS, AND SAYINGS

Horses are certainly extremely important animals in Slovenian customs and traditions. St. Stephen is the patron of horses and is commemorated during Christmas time, on December 26<sup>th</sup> (for more, see Kuret 1989, vol 2: 382–397). This saint may even announce the arrival of a new creature, a foal, during Christmastime. White Carniolan Christmas carols include the motif of a black stallion, which symbolizes youth and life force. Kroepej (1998: 98–99) writes about a belief that has been preserved in Istria, according to which a little Christmas horse came to eat grain below the table on Christmas Eve, which is why children in Gažon fasted the whole day on Christmas Eve<sup>15</sup> because they believed they would see the little horse in the evening that way. St. George rides a white horse, heralds the spring, and defeats the dragon with its help. St. Martin also rides a white horse. Horse

<sup>15</sup> Known in the local dialect as *božična vilja*, literally “Christmas vigil”.

processions were common during the Feast of Corpus Christi (Kuret 1989, vol 1: 365). Slovenian sayings and idioms testify that horses were closely connected with humans. The positive seems to be combined with the negative: for example, *delati in garati kot konj* (“to work and toil away like a horse”) as a negative aspect versus *biti na konju* (“to be on a horse”), meaning to rise and advance higher (this is connected with the fact that in the past riding horses was mainly in the domain of aristocracy or higher social classes) as a positive aspect. *Biti fjakarski, paradni konj, pa trojanski konj* (“to be a hackney horse, a parade horse, or a Trojan horse”) are well-known idioms; *ješča kot konj* (“to eat like a horse”), *konjski obraz* (“(to have) a horse face”) or *konjski zobje* (“(to have) horse teeth”) thematize people with such characteristics. One of the best-known Slovenian sayings is *Še kovačeva kobila je zmeraj bosa* “The blacksmith’s mare is always unshod”, equivalent to “The cobbler’s wife is the worst shod” (for more, see Keber 1996: 148–174.)

### HORSES / THE LIPIZZANERS IN LITERATURE

Three literary thematizations of horses / the Lipizzaners in Slovenian literature have been selected that reveal the relationship between humans and horses / the Lipizzaners. In all three, hierarchization is highlighted in terms of ecocritical analysis. It is established that ecocritical discourse emerges from Kocbek’s poem “Lipicanci” (The Lipizzaners; *Poročilo* 1969) via Novak’s play *Lipicanci gredo v Strasbourg* (The Lipizzaners Go to Strasbourg, 2008) and escalates into an ecocritical climax in Komelj’s poem “Hipodrom” (Horse Racetrack; Hipodrom 2006).

#### EDVARD KOČBEK, LIPICANCI (1969)

##### LIPICANCI

Časnik poroča:  
lipicanci so sodelovali  
pri zgodovinskem filmu.<sup>16</sup>  
Radio razlaga:  
milijonar je kupil lipicance,  
plemenite živali so bile mirne  
ves čas poleta nad Atlantikom.  
In učna knjiga uči:  
lipicanci so hvaležni jezdni konji,  
doma so s Krasa, prožnega kopita,  
gizdavega drnca, bistre čudi  
in trmaste zvestobe.

##### THE LIPPIZANER

A newspaper reports:  
the Lippizaners collaborated  
on a historical film.  
The radio explains:  
a millionaire had bought the Lippizaners,  
the noble animals were quiet  
throughout the journey over the Atlantic.  
And a textbook teaches:  
the Lippizaners are graceful riding horses,  
their origin is in the Karst, they are of supple hoof,  
conceded trot, intelligent nature,  
and obstinate fidelity.

<sup>16</sup> This allegedly refers to the 1959 film *Ben Hur*, on which the newspaper *Slovenski Jadran* reported in 1960. The best-known film about the Lipizzaners is *Miracle of the White Stallions*, made in 1963 (perhaps Kocbek was referring to this movie), which depicted the rescue of the Lipizzaners at the end of the Second World War. The Lipizzaners were also featured in the movies *The Tempest* and *Crimson Tide*.

In vendar ti dodajam, sinko,  
da teh nemirnih živali  
ni mogoče spraviti v razvidne obrazce:  
dobro je, kadar sije dan,  
lipicanci so črna žrebeta,  
in dobro je, kadar vlada noč,  
lipicanci so bele kobile,  
najbolje pa je,  
kadar prihaja dan iz noči,  
kajti lipicanci so beločrni burkeži,  
dvorni šaljivci njenega veličanstva,  
slovenske zgodovine.

Drugi so častili svete krave in zmaje,  
tisočletne želve in leve s perutmi,  
samoroge, dvoglave orle in fenikse,  
mi pa smo si izbrali najlepšo žival,  
izkazala se je na bojiščih in v cirkusih,  
prepeljevala je kraljične in zlato monštranco,  
zato so dunajski cesarji govorili  
francosko s spretnimi diplomati,  
italijansko z zalimi igralkami,  
špansko z neskončnim Bogom  
in nemško z nešolanimi hlapci,  
s konji pa so se pogovarjali slovensko.

Spomni se, otrok, kako skrivnostno  
sta spojena narava in zgodovina sveta  
in kako različna je vzmet duha  
pri slehernem ljudstvu na zemlji.  
Dobro veš, da smo zemlja tekem in dirk.  
Zato tudi razumeš, zakaj so se beli konji  
iz Noetove barke zatekli na naša čista tla,  
zakaj so postali naša sveta žival,  
zakaj so stopili v legendo zgodovine  
in zakaj razburjajo našo prihodnost,  
nenehoma nam iščejo obljubljeni deželo  
in postajajo zanosno sedlo našega duha.

Kar naprej sem na beločrnem konju,  
mili moj sinko,  
kakor poglavar beduinov  
sem zrasel s svojo živaljo,  
vse življenje potujem na njej,  
bojujem se na konju in molim na njem,  
spim na konju in sanjam na konju  
in umrl bom na konju,  
vse naše prerokbe sem spoznal  
na skrivnostni živali,  
in tudi to pesem sem doživel  
na njenem drhtečem hrbtu.

But I have to add, my son,  
that it isn't possible to fit these  
restless animals into any set pattern:  
it is good when the day shines,  
the Lippizaners are black foals.  
And it is good, when the night reigns,  
the Lippizaners are white mares,  
but the best is,  
when the day comes out of the night,  
then the Lippizaners are the white and black buffoons,  
the court fools of its Majesty,  
Slovenian history.

Others have worshipped holy cows and dragons,  
thousand-year-old turtles and winged lions,  
unicorns, double-headed eagles and phoenixes,  
but we've chosen the most beautiful animal,  
which proved to be excellent on battlefields, in circuses,  
harnessed to princesses and the Golden Monstrance,  
therefore the emperors of Vienna spoke  
French with skilful diplomats,  
Italian with charming actresses,  
Spanish with the infinite God,  
and German with uneducated servants:  
but with the horses, they talked Slovene.

Remember, my child, how mysteriously  
nature and history are bound together,  
and how different are the driving forces of the spirit  
of each of the world's peoples.  
You know well that ours is the land of contests and races.  
You, thus, understand why the white horses  
from Noah's ark found refuge on our pure ground,  
why they became our holy animal,  
why they entered into the legend of history,  
and why they bring the life pulse to our future.  
They incessantly search for our promised land  
and are becoming our spirit's passionate saddle.

I endlessly sit on a black and white horse.  
my beloved son,  
like a Bedouin chief  
I blend with my animal,  
I've been travelling on it all my life,  
I sleep on it, and I dream on it,  
and I'll die on it.  
I learned all our prophesies  
on the mysterious animal,  
and this poem, too, I experienced  
on its trembling back.

Nič temnejšega ni  
od jasne govorce  
in nič resničnejšega ni od pesmi,  
ki je razum ne more zapopasti,  
junaki šepajo v svetlem soncu  
in modrijani jecljajo v temi,  
burkeži pa se spreminjajo v pesnike,  
krilati pegazi vedno hitreje dirjajo  
nad votlinami naše stare zemlje  
in poskakujejo in trkajo,  
nestrpne slovenske živali  
še vedno budijo kralja Matjaža.

Kdor še ne zna zajezditi konja,  
naj se čimprej nauči  
ukrotiti iskro žival,  
obdržati se svobodno v lahkem sedlu  
in uloviti ubrano mero drnca,  
predvsem pa vztrajati v slutnji,  
kajti naši konji so pridirjali od daleč  
in so daleč namenjeni,  
motorji radi odpovedo,  
sloni preveč pojedjo,  
naša pot pa je dolga  
in peš je predaleč.

Nothing is darker than  
clear speech,  
and nothing more true than a poem  
the intellect cannot seize,  
heroes limp in the bright sun,  
and sages stammer in the dark,  
the buffoons, though, are changing into poets,  
the winged Pegasi run faster and faster  
above the caves of our old earth  
jumping and pounding —  
the impatient Slovenian animals  
are still trying to awaken the legendary King Matjaž.

Those who don't know how to ride a horse,  
should learn quickly  
how to tame the fiery animal,  
how to ride freely in a light saddle,  
how to catch the harmony of the trot,  
and above all to persist in the premonition,  
for our horses came galloping from far away,  
and they still have far to go:  
motors tend to break down,  
elephants eat too much,  
our road is a long one,  
and it is too far to walk. (Kocbek 1977: Internet)

Kocbek's poem about the Lipizzaners remains within the context of a symbolic depiction of horses as national symbols and does not establish a critical discourse. According to Čeh Steger, when analyzing a text portraying an animal, one must determine whether the animal is using its own voice or whether it merely speaks through the voice of the poet. In this case, this is not its autonomous voice; it still involves a personification of nature and a symbolization of the animal as part of national heritage (Čeh Steger 2012: 207). Novak wrote the following in his introduction to Kocbek's poem "Lipicanci" (The Lippizzaners):<sup>17</sup>

"The Lipizzaners" is one of Kocbek's most typical poems. It was published as the last, concluding, poem in his collection *Poročilo* (Report). In it, the poet elevates the Lipizzaners to the level of a national symbol. He poetically expresses the basic characteristics of this noble white horse ... In terms of diction, the poem is an exalted ode imbued with noble humor at the same time ... The narrative tone, which mimics a journalistic report, deepens to reach mythological dimensions and descriptions of things grow into metaphors, which Kocbek uses to lyricize the Lipizzaner as a "holy animal." (Kocbek 1999: 7)

<sup>17</sup> In 2005, the Krainer publishing house published this poem in six languages with illustrations by Slovenian artists (<http://www.delo.si/clanek/2131>).

Kocbek compares the Lipizzaners with the Slovenians because even the Viennese emperors were said to converse with the Lipizzaners in Slovenian. Thus it is no longer a living creature, but a symbol, a holy animal that unites the nation and places it within the global context. Everybody knows the Lipizzaners, but few know where they come from.

BORIS A. NOVAK'S PLAY *LIPICANCI GREDO V STRASBOURG*  
(THE LIPIZZANERS GO TO STRASBOURG, 2008)<sup>18</sup>

The substantive core of Novak's satirical play is dedicated to the Lipizzaners that go to the European Court of Human Rights in Strasbourg to seek justice for themselves because their habitat is becoming smaller and smaller, a golf course is being built there, tourism is becoming increasingly commercial, and the Lipizzaners are only a means for generating profit and a mere tourist attraction. Or, in the words of the horse Maestro: "If we jumped through people's bedroom windows like they jump across the fences into our pastures, the men's nervous, tired organs would also go soft. We used to enjoy our moments of miraculous pleasure right out in the meadows, in privacy. I have no desire to touch you or have intimate relations with you in front of tourists" (2008: 170). They are taken seriously at the court because, legally speaking, human rights can also apply to horses. They press charges against Slovenia and all the other countries that Lipica, as the cradle of the Lipizzaner horses, belonged to over the centuries (from 1580 onwards). The Lipizzaners also complain about the way they are treated.<sup>19</sup> After this, the history of the Lipizzaners and their life in various countries and under different masters is revealed. The horses also explain to the judicial council why Lipica is the cradle of the Lipizzaner horses by singing the following verses: "Na Krasu je dom najlepših konj, / na Krasu je hlev za burjin vonj, / na Krasu je bor, visok kot dan, / na Krasu je teran, kot noč teman, / na Krasu je črn podzemni svet, / na Krasu je bel kamniti cvet, / še črni konj postane bel / in je svet na Krasu cel" (The Karst is home to the most beautiful horses, / the Karst is where stables smell like the Bora wind, / the Karst is where the pines are tall as the day, / the Karst is where the Terrano wine is dark as the night, / the Karst is where there is a black underground world, / the Karst is where there are white stone flowers, / even a black horse turns white, / and makes the world there whole; 2008: 244). Novak even introduces a transformed love lyric folksong into the play. He transforms the original verses "Moj očka ima konjička dva / oba sta lepa, bela šimelna" (My daddy has two horsies, / two beautiful white horsies) into "Moj očka ima konjička dva, / oba prodal je za mercedesa" (My daddy has two horsies, / he sold both of them to buy a Mercedes; 2008: 246), which is an obvious criticism of modern Slovenians and their leaders. Novak also uses the traditional Slovenian love song "Na planincah sončece sije" (The Sun Shines in the Mountains) to criticize the activities of Slovenian politicians in Brussels. A lawyer of Slovenian descent by the name of Volk (which may be read as *Folk*), who goes on to become a minister, sings this song to the Lipizzaners:

<sup>18</sup> The play premiered at the Ljubljana City Theater during the 2006/2007 season.

<sup>19</sup> In the past few years, several Lipizzaners have died at Lipica, either from poisoned hay or improper treatment.



<i>Na planincah sončece sije,</i>	The sun shines in the mountains,
<i>na planincah sončece sije,</i>	The sun shines in the mountains,
<i>na planincah sončece sije,</i>	The sun shines in the mountains,
<i>na planincah lušno je.</i>	It's lovely in the mountains.

The two judges sing this song completely differently:

<i>Nad Evropo sončece sije,</i>	The sun shines over Europe.
<i>v Strasbourgu sončece sije,</i>	The sun shines in Strasbourg,
<i>in v Bruslju sončece sije,</i>	And the sun shines in Brussels,
<i>in v Bruslju lušno je!</i>	And it's lovely in Brussels!

And the horses sing the following in a sad tone:

<i>Lipincem sonce ne sije,</i>	The sun doesn't shine for the Lipizzaners,
<i>lipincem dežek ne lije,</i>	It doesn't rain for the Lipizzaners,
<i>lipincem trava ne kljije,</i>	The grass doesn't sprout for the Lipizzaners,
<i>lipincem strašno je!</i>	It's horrible for the Lipizzaners!

Together with a veterinarian that has her own voice and represents the horses, the horses make an appeal to the high court. This appeal reveals criticism over the depiction of rural life and the inappropriate attitude of the state towards the Lipizzaners. A female judge at the court asks what the Slovenian government ministers are doing and the horses reply to her very informatively: the minister of the environment would like to build in a karst field; the minister of finance is collecting taxes from the casino, the minister of the economy plans to build an industrial empire in the Karst, the minister of transport is looking for an appropriate site in the Karst to build a racecourse or even an airport, the minister of agriculture is selling horses (is a horse trader), the minister of culture only speaks of horses as national symbols, the prime minister likes to play golf, and the president prefers dogs (2008: 335–336).

At the time this play was written, the Slovenian government did not show much interest in the Lipizzaners' fate. The horses say the following: "Nadarjeni za plese in dresuro, / združujemo naturo in kulturo" (Having a talent for dancing and dressage, / we combine nature and culture; 2008: 267). "The word *Lipizzaner* denotes the place of origin, the cradle of these (once imperial) horses, and etymologically it is connected with the linden tree [Sln. *lipa*], which Slovenians celebrate as their symbol" (2008: 264). Novak highlights the problem of the horses' "ownership": "Now they are fighting over who these horses belong to. The Austrians claim that the Lipizzaners symbolize the House of Habsburg, the Italians are convinced that these *cavalli bianchi* are theirs, not to mention the Slovenians, who like to brag that these are purebred Slovenian horses" (2008: 282). Novak inscribes harsh criticism of the Slovenian policy regarding the Lipizzaners into his play: after Slovenia's independence, comprehensive commercialization of Lipica began and the horses became nothing but objects of tourism and generating profit. The protection of natural and cultural heritage became nothing but a cover for exploiting animals and establishing the commercial interests of the capital. Horses as living creatures do not exist in the neoliberal capitalist world.

## MAESTOSO

*V Sloveniji ne živijo samo Slovenci.  
Tam smo tudi mi, prastari lipicanci,  
konjski državljani! Prav mi, lipicanci  
mi smo avtohtoni prebivalci Krasa!  
Mi, vztrajni konji, zmagovalci časa!  
Če smo preživeli Avstro-Ogrsko, Italijo  
in Jugoslavijo, bomo pa tudi Slovenijo  
(2008: 372).*

Not only Slovenians live in Slovenia.  
We're also there, the ancient Lipizzaners,  
Horse citizens! We, the Lipizzaners,  
Are the indigenous Karst residents!  
We, the persevering horses, the conquerors of time!  
If we survived Austria-Hungary, Italy,  
And Yugoslavia, we'll survive Slovenia, too.

Novak's play contains a critical barb aimed at Slovenian politics and a society that shows no interest in the rights of the Lipizzaners, which means it is already approaching ecocriticism; however, it still proceeds from the human viewpoint, despite the fact that the horse speaks through the poet, presenting the government's indifference towards cultural and natural heritage, and ultimately also towards horses as living creatures. According to Grewe-Volpp (2004: 89), this involves a cultural representation of relations between culture and nature, and man/animal/environment relations; moreover, it is actually about getting rid of the dualist relation between man and nature. In Novak's play, the horse is personified and has its own voice, but the main aim is to protect the Lipizzaner as a horse that is not a free entity, but that deserves to be treated decently. In any case, Novak dissects Slovenian policy's indifference towards the Lipizzaner issue within the Slovenian and EU context thoroughly and in detail. A voice can also be heard in support of viewing this creature as such, but it is weak and insufficiently critical of the human relation to the animal within the Lipica Stud Farm itself.

## MIKLAVŽ KOMELJ: "HIPODROM"

## (EXCERPT)

Deske ograd so nagrizene,  
tla ponekod razkopana z nemirnejšimi koraki.  
Edini zapis o nekem uporu.

The boards of the fences are chewed,  
The ground is dug up in places from the restless treads.  
The only record of some kind of resistance.

[...] Zatohla norost perfidne retorike ne  
zakrije strašne, neme podobe:  
konja, ki nemo drvi mimo v galopu.

[...] Stuffy craziness of perfidious rhetoric does not  
conceal the terrible, mute image:  
A horse galloping past mutely.

Električni sunki, poviti v gazo,  
ne premočni – da ne razdražijo.  
Polži, ki prečkajo v nožicah  
kasaško progo ob stalnih urah,  
preden je dan, ki jo zasuje s kopiti.  
Kanje sedijo na belih drogovih, zadržih v  
zemljo, pozimi v sneg.

Electrical shocks wrapped in gauze,  
not too strong, so that they don't upset.  
Snails that cross the harness racetrack with their little  
legs always at the same times,  
Before daylight buries it with hooves.  
Buzzards sit on the white poles driven into the ground,  
and into the snow in winter.

– Mama, ali ne gledajo konji oblačkov?

– Mom, don't the horses look at the clouds?

Obupanost! Ki je nimam pravice nikomur pripisati. To je ne zmanjša. To jo veča. Ko se vpisuje v podobo moči in lahkotnosti, v emblem svobode.	Desperation! That I have no right to ascribe to anyone! That doesn't diminish it. That enhances it. When it inscribes itself into the image of strength and lightness, Into the emblem of freedom.
– Si kdaj videl svobodnega konja? <sup>20</sup> – Si videl nesvobodnega? – Si videl svobodnega? [...] Krogi, neskončni krogi. Aktiviranje krčev bega v dresuri. Smrtna izčrpanost. Skozi zrak šine brez teže telo, težko 500 kg. dva fanta se pogovarjata v baru: – Vsi konji, ki so zmagali na derbijih – nikjer več jih ni bilo [...]	– Have you ever seen a free horse? – An unfree horse? – A free horse? [...] Laps, endless laps. Activating the escape reflexes in dressage. Deadly exhaustion. A 500 kg body darts through the air weightlessly. Two young men chat at the bar: – All of the horses that won the derbies—They were all gone [...]
Muhe, ki lezejo po robovih ogromnih oči in v rano pod belo liso na čelu. konji, ki niso več isti. Pogovori ljudi med seboj: zehanje, omedlevanje.	Flies crawling along the edges of huge eyes and into the wound below the white blaze on the forehead. Horses that are no longer the same. People talking to one another: Yawning, fainting.
Voda, ki teče iz gumijastih cevi po nedosegljivih nogah, ki se prestopajo, po hrbtih, ki v čudnem miru divje trzajo, se umakne pred očmi. [...] (str. 12–15).	The water from rubber hoses Running over unreachable, shuffling legs, Over backs twitching in awkward peacefulness, Disappears before the eyes. [...] (pp. 12–15).
[...] Svojo skrivnost je Nietzsche zaupal le enem spominu – da je srečal to bitje! – konju v Torinu.	[...] Nietzsche only entrusted his secret To one single memory – That he met this creature! To a horse in Turin.
Ki je na trgu drhtel od udarcev in stal, stal, stal. Nekdo ga je v solzah objel in se zrušil ob njem na tla.	That trembled in a square From the blows, and stood there, stood there, stood there. Someone embraced it in tears And collapsed to the ground next to it.

<sup>20</sup> The instrumentalization of the Lipizzaner or the horse for promotional reasons can also be observed in the ad by the Triglav insurance company (2014) featuring a Lipizzaner running freely along the beach, with a voice saying the following in the background: “Someday I’m going to be free.” But this is only a metaphor for a human being. After this, the voice focuses on the life insurance offered by this insurance company that promises freedom to people if they sign an insurance policy.

The poem “Hipodrom” also thematizes the traditional training of harness horses in the Slovenian region of Prekija, which dates back to Austria-Hungary. The first proper harness races were held on September 12<sup>th</sup>, 1874 on the 2,000-fathom country road between the cross on the Lukavci karst field and the bridge over Globetka Creek near Ljutomer. The attraction of racing and the glory of the best-ranked breeders are connected with the suffering of horses. The tradition of harness racing was commemorated by the Harness Racing Museum and the horses’ suffering by a poem. Such tradition needs to be redefined. However, this is about criticism against horse races in general, not only in Slovenia.

[...] (str. 20).

Konji pustijo,  
 da jih pobožam,  
 in medtem gledajo  
 v svoje smeri.  
 Ko se zaustavijo,  
 da jih pobožam,  
 je to del njihovega  
 sproščenege, mučnega bega  
 pred mano. (str. 39).

[...] (p. 20).

Horses let me  
 Stroke them,  
 Staring in their  
 Own directions.  
 When they stop  
 For me to stroke them,  
 This is a part of their  
 Relaxed, painful escape  
 From me. (p. 39).

From the perspective of the ecological paradigm about the human/environment, human/animal, and human/plant hierarchic dualisms of Western consumer society, and the introduction of a cultural-ecological model of studying literature, it can be concluded that the poem “Hipodrom” is one of the utterly ecocritical representations of this dualism and that Miklavž Komelj is a markedly ecocritical and zooethical author (Marjanić & Zaradija Kiš 2012: 11–19). This poem defines or verbalizes the relation between humans and horses, even though it refers to horses and not explicitly to the Lipizzaners. These horses are thematized such that one can see the critical-creative energy flowing through the poem (Zapf 2002). The poet uses poetic devices to draw attention to the suffering and torturing of horses in horse races; consequently, this suffering could also be transferred to the unnatural Spanish riding school, in which horses (the Lipizzaners) were trained to dance using the whip and other types of force, instead of racing around the Karst meadows.

Vičar (2013: 38) establishes that this poem problematizes the appropriation of an animal or the ownership of an animal, whereby “Komelj problematizes the specific abuse of horses (their commercial use).” This means that Komelj used poetic language to directly criticize the humans’ forceful handling of horses; he shows the forced nature of this handling in the first lines when the horse resists this treatment that leads to deadly exhaustion and even death. Therefore, this poem is markedly ecocritical; moreover, it portrays the human/animal relation in purely utilitarian dualism and shows the type of human attitude towards the animal that is typical of speciesism (Dunayer 2008). It is the horse’s lack of freedom in this poem in particular that can be associated with problematizing any type of a human ownership relation to an animal, which is harshly criticized and completely rejected by Garry Francione’s abolitionist theory presented in his book *Animals, Property, and the Law* (1995), and *Rain without Thunder* (1996):

A central thesis of *Rain Without Thunder* (1996), as well as my later work, is that, if animal interests are to be morally significant, we must accord to nonhumans the basic right not to be treated as property, and this requires that we seek to abolish, and not merely to regulate, institutionalized animal exploitation. The status of nonhumans as property, however, militates strongly against significant improvement in our treatment of animals, and animal welfare will do little more than make animal exploitation more economically efficient and socially acceptable. On the social and legal

level, there needs to be a paradigm shift as a social matter before the legal system will respond in a meaningful way. This is why education and social change are so important and must precede legal change. There is simply no political base to support any radical legal change at this time. The first task of the animal-rights movement was to educate society about why such a movement was necessary in the first place and to shift the paradigm away from the commodity status of nonhumans. Those who were trying to develop “no kill” options to the problem of the companion animal population; those who sought to stop the round-up and removal of wild horses from federal lands and to prohibit the killing of deer in suburban areas; and those who wanted to organize lawful boycotts to stop particular forms of animal exploitation. (<http://scholarship.law.duke.edu/cgi/viewcontent.cgi?article=1407&context=lcpGarryFrancione>)

Komelj<sup>21</sup> determines that, even though horses do not allow people to touch them, this is only because they are not free, although freedom radiates through their eyes. They would like to run away from humans (i.e., strangers), but they can only do this in their spirits; unfortunately, this is impossible in reality.

## CONCLUSION

Hence, is it a utopia to list all of these academic findings about animals as persons (Ingold 1994: XXIV), the necessity of cultural and critical animal studies, animal folklore and literary studies, and ethnozoology (Golež Kaučič, Marjanović, Zaradija Kiš, Visković, etc.); the criticism of the capitalist system that supports the exploitation of animals (Tapper 1994: 53; cf. Serpell 1996; Vičar 2013; Best 2009); the disregard for the suffering of animals (Cavel, Diamond, McDowel, Hacking, & Wolfe 2008: 146); the philosophical discourses such as that of Derrida (as presented in discourses by Deleuze & Guattari, 2000, 2002); and ultimately the end of speciesism and the establishment of abolitionism (Ryder 2000, Dunayer 2009, Francione 2008). What does this mean for the Lipizzaners? Will they simply remain part of the natural and cultural heritage of various nations, whereby their grace, beauty, and nobility will be celebrated, but there will be no reflection whatsoever on their own interests? Will the criticism of this endless and repeating human/animal dualism ever achieve its purpose, will animal folklore studies and ecocriticism ever be able to position their findings within the wider social context

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<sup>21</sup> In his collection of poems *Roke v dežju* (Hands in the Rain, 2011), Komelj also problematizes the use of horses in circuses. “V cirkusu je / konj / delal gibe, / ki niso bili / njegovi gibi, / ampak / njegova smrt. // Njegova popolnoma / razločna govorica. / Njegova smrt.” (At the circus / the horse / performed movements / that weren’t / his movements, / but / his death. // His complete / clear language / His death). It is clear that it is only in death that the animals speak up about and to the people that force them into slavery for their own fun. The language of horses is their movements, but humans are deaf and blind to this type of non-verbal communication, and hence death is inevitable in the end. For Komelj animals are creatures from other worlds.

and be heard? Thematizing horses / the Lipizzaners in folklore is truly only a reflection of heritage, whereas the disruptive logic of the human exploitation of animals has already been verbalized in literature. What can be predicted for the future? Will the Lipizzaner still be used as a dancing horse and a horse for entertaining people? Even if one day it becomes part of UNESCO's world cultural and natural heritage, it will still be regarded merely as a highly trained animal only for human purposes rather than a superior animal (*Übertier*). As long as it remains nothing but human or government property, a brand name with a protected designation of origin, and part of world heritage, rather than a free entity, it will remain a domesticated and enslaved horse about which no one asks where its pastures and free fields are—even though it will still be able to race and gallop around the peaks of the Vremščica Hills and other hills and meadows. And even when it is half free and grazes in a nature park, along comes a lunatic<sup>22</sup> who stabs a mare numerous times and he is let free because of the inadmissibility of DNA as evidence. The horse did not even defend itself; it could have easily trampled its attacker, but it trusted the human instead. What a mistake!

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<sup>22</sup> On July 5<sup>th</sup>, 2013, a lunatic from Koper brutally tortured a Camargue mare that was grazing peacefully in the Škocjan Lagoon Nature Reserve. Because the Slovenian laws are completely inadequate regarding animal protection, the man will clearly remain unpunished (*Delo*, May 13<sup>th</sup>, 2015).

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## LIPICANEC KOT KULTURNA IN NARAVNA DEDIŠČINA ALI SVOBODNA NE-ČLOVEŠKA SUBJEKTIVITETA

MARJETKA GOLEŽ KAUČIČ



V članku razpravljam o konjih, predvsem lipicancih, ki so percipirani kot del naravne in kulturne dediščine Slovencev in Avstrijcev, v preteklosti pa so bili del Habsburškega imperija, kjer so bili izšolani in zdresirani. Konji so obravnavani le kot predmet in last nacionalne človeške skupnosti, ne pa kot bitja, ki so šele z domestifikacijo in gensko selekcijo vstopila v prostor služenja človeku. Na podlagi novih spoznanj zoofolkloristike, antropologije, kritične animalistike, filozofskih in pravnih diskurzov ter teorij speciesizma in abolicionizma je predstavljena reflektirana vloga in pomen teh konjev in konjev kot vrste, hkrati pa je na podlagi ekokritične analize ponovno presojana razmerje človek – žival, in sicer z vzpostavljanjem nehierarhizacije živalskega in človeškega.

V poglavju o vprašanju domestifikacije razmišljam o človekovem načinu prilagajanja živali svojim potrebam, genetskem vzrejanju in razplodu lipicancev za služenje aristokratskim elitam. Domestifikacija je bila tista transformacija v živalsko-človeškem odnosu, ki je tudi konja postavila v območje človekove lastnine. Posledici domestifikacije sta iztrebljenje divjih prednikov, npr. konjev tarpanov, in deformacija anatomskih, fizioloških in psihičnih značilnosti divjih prednikov – razvijajo se le tiste lastnosti, ki jih je človek želel zaradi ekonomskih ali drugih namenov. Na začetku je bil konj suženj; kasneje je pridobil na veljavi, a šele takrat, ko je vstopil v aristokratsko okolje. To se je zgodilo tudi z lipicancem, konjem, ki so ga s križanjem vzgojili tako, da je primeren za dresuro. Odnos nadrejenega do podrejenega je pri domestifikaciji konj in še posebno lipicancev, ki so bili vzrejeni in gensko manipulirani za točno določene namene, odnos človeka do dragocene lastnine in v današnjem času tudi do naravne in kulturne dediščine. Pod vprašaj postavljam ta tradicionalni hierarhični odnos do konj, še posebej do lipicancev. Poudarjam intrinzično vrednost živali (kar pomeni, da je lipicanec vreden sam po sebi in ne kot žival v služenju človeku), ki je bila tisto, kar nas je vodilo tudi ob obravnavi konja skozi zgodovino kulture in razmerja do človeka.

V nadaljevanju raziskujem, kam sodijo lipicanci in kam kulturni vzorci, ki so jih v genski material teh konjev vgradili ljudje, in kaj je tisto, kar je popolnoma »konjska kultura«. Simbolni vzorec, ki ga uporabljajo živali v medsebojni komunikaciji, bi gotovo lahko imenovali kulturni in ne naravni, saj se od živali do živali razlikuje, če seveda zastopamo stališče, da je tudi vsaka žival oseba ali osebnost zase. Če je tako, potem ima lahko tudi kulturni vzorec, ki je zanjo značilen, se pa uvršča znotraj simbolnih vzorcev tiste vrste, ki ji pripada. Prav gotovo pa gre za razlike med kulturnimi vzorci živali, ki so udomačene, in tistih, ki so t. i. divje oziroma ki ne živijo v skupnosti s človekom. Tam so kulturni vzorci neodvisni od človekove navzočnosti in vplivanja. Ključno pa je dejstvo, da imajo živali mentalno življenje in da so mentalni subjekti. Tako lahko rečemo, da so se ob lipicancih

združili kulturni vzorci konj kot živalske vrste ter – ob procesu udomačevanja in genetskega vzrejanja in odbiranja – vsiljeni kulturni vzorci človekove pretenzije doseči vrsto konj, ki bo izvajala artistske spretnosti, ki si jih je zanje zamislil človek.

Nato je predstavljena zgodovina lipincev in Lipica kot zibelka teh konj, opisana so tudi prizadevanja za njihovo zaščito v EU. Pri tem sem zelo kritična do percepcije lipincev kot kulturne dediščine, ki je nastala zaradi človekovih kulturnih preferenc in je zgolj človeška vrednota, žival pa, ki se znajde znotraj nekih kulturnih praks (npr. lipincanci v kasu ali španska jahalna šola idr.), je pravzaprav v take prakse prisiljena. Še bolj problematična pa se zdi lastninska pravica, ki jo posamezne države uveljavljajo na lipincih kot delu nacionalne naravne in kulturne dediščine, a jim za lipince kot bitja *per se* pravzaprav ni mar.

Članek nato preide v analizo konj v pesmih in pripovedih, izbranih šegah in pregovorih. V ljudskem pesemskem izročilu konj ni bil le del aristokratskega sveta, temveč tudi vsakdanjega agrikulturnega življenja. Bil je dragocen in je simbolično predstavljal bogastvo. V različnih pripovednih pesmih/baladah je konj del vojaškega, viteškega in junaškega sveta, hkrati pa se pojavlja v pravljicnih in mitoloških baladah, navzoč je tudi v pregovorih in rekah ter nekaterih šegah. V razdelku o lipincu/konju v literaturi izpostavljam tematizacijo hierarhizacije glede na ekokritično analizo. Ugotovljamo, da ekokritični diskurz narašča iz Kocbekove pesmi Lipincanci (*Poročilo* 1969) prek Novakove drame *Lipincanci gredo v Strasbourg* (2008) in doživi ekokritični klimaks v Komeljevi pesmi *Hipodrom* (2006). Kocbekova pesem o lipincih je še v območju simbolne podobe konja kot nacionalnega simbola in ne vzpostavlja kritičnega diskurza. Novak vpisuje v dramo ostro kritiko slovenskih oblasti glede lipincev, saj se je po osamosvojitvi Slovenije začela celostna komercializacija Lipice in konji so postali le objekti turizma in zaslužka, varstvo naravne in kulturne dediščine pa je postalo zgolj krinka za izkoriščanje živali in uveljavljanje komercialnih interesov kapitala. Konji kot živa bitja v neoliberalnem kapitalističnem svetu ne obstajajo. Komeljeva pesem *Hipodrom* pa je prav gotovo ena izmed popolnoma ekokritičnih reprezentacij razmerja človek – žival, kar ga uvršča med ekokritične in zooetične avtorje.

V sklepu je ponovno izpostavljena kritika te neskončne in ponavljajoče se binarnosti človek – žival. Sprašujem se, ali bo lipincanec v prihodnosti ob morebitni uveljavitvi nove ekološke paradigme svobodni konj ali pa bo še vedno le uporabljen kot plešoči konj, ki je ljudem v zabavo, zaslužnjeni konj, potrjen nenehni dresuri. Zato je po mojem mnenju nujno, da bi konjem (lipincem ali drugim) priznali, da imajo intrinzično vrednost in svoje kulturne vzorce, ki obstajajo ne glede na človeško bližino ali oddaljenost, s tem pa bi se bistveno spremenil tudi njihov položaj v odnosu do ljudi.