**“The limits of my language do not signify the limits of my literary world”**

***Prestigious Literary Awards for Carinthian Slovenes, Florjan Lipuš and Maja Haderlap***

Paraphrasing Wittgenstein is probably the best way of linking together two authors, both born into Slovene minority families in remote Carinthian villages, both addressing in their work the painful period during and after the Second World War, both repeatedly and each in their own way searching for their linguistic expression. Treading literary and linguistic paths of their own, both are due receive important literary prizes this autumn.

**Florjan Lipuš** (born 1937) nurtures the Slovene language in his spoken and written word, constantly enriching it with new expressions. He relentlessly reveals the Nazi past of the places he comes from, the persecution of the Slovene minority in Carinthia and all the harshness of the period during and after the Second World War, which robbed so many of words and emotions. In surroundings where silence prevailed, he developed an individual style of rhythmicised prose. His key work *Zmote dijaka Tjaža* (The Errors of Young Tjaž) (1972) in an excellent German translation by Helga Mračnikar and Peter Handke (1981) influenced numerous contemporary authors such as Josef Winkler. Peter Handke recognized Lipuš’s novel *Boštjanov let* (Bοštjan’s Flight) (2003) as world literature and claimed that, after receiving numerous prizes from either side of the border, the author would also deserve the Grand Austrian State Prize. Josef Winkler then took the initiative to revise the prize rules, stipulating that top quality Austrian literature can also be written in languages other than German, for example in Slovene, the language of the Carinthian minority. After the change in the statutes, many readers were disappointed that Lipuš was not awarded the prize in 2017 on his eightieth anniversary, he is however the 2018 recipient of the prize which will be awarded in Vienna on 1 October. The explanation by the Austrian Art Senate for bestowing what is the highest prize in Austria for exceptional artistic achievement, states that Lipuš is known for his aesthetic autonomy, linguistic experimentation and literary innovation.

**Maja Haderlap** (born 1961) first wrote poetry in Slovene and worked in academics and the theatre as a dramaturge. In 2012 she wrote a wonderful self-critical essay (in German) for the annual international literary festival that takes place in Vilenica, Slovenia, about her view on the position of the Slovene language in Carinthia and her decision to start writing in German. Certain compatriots in Carinthia sharply attacked her as a traitor or calculatingly aiming for a larger book market. Slovenes in Slovenia did not begrudge her decision and readers almost accept as originals the excellent translations of her work that are made with her collaboration. She herself explains that using German allows her the necessary distance from the painful story of her family, linked to partisan resistance in Carinthia, and that her direct contact with German readers greatly contributed to the recognisability of the Slovene minority in Austria. She adds that standard Slovene language was never her mother tongue but the first foreign language she had learnt at school; at home they only spoke the Carinthian-Slovene dialect. She received numerous prizes for her first novel *Engel des Vergessens* (Angel of Oblivion)(2011). Haderlap has also become firmly anchored in the Slovene literary canon – indeed, in 2019 her novel will be the key text on the secondary school graduate reading list in Slovenia. On 16 September 2018 Maja Haderlap will receive the prestigious Max Frisch Prize in Zurich, an award bestowed every four years upon authors who in an artistically uncompromising way address fundamental issues of democratic society.

Irrespective of the language they have chosen, both Florjan Lipuš and Maja Haderlap remain authors of a very special, Carinthian literature. It would be hard to determine why so many excellent authors hail from this particular area, among others Robert Musil, Ingeborg Bachmann, Peter Handke, Josef Winkler, Florjan and Cvetka Lipuš, Gustav Januš, Fabjan Hafner, Anna Baar and Maja Haderlap. Good literature so often arises from the margins and boundaries, and it seems Carinthia is one such fertile ground.

Amalija Maček