

Cultivating a ‘Slavic Modern’: Yugoslav Beekeeping, Schooling and Travel in the 1920s and 1930s

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This article presents research on the foreign travel of Yugoslav teachers, students and beekeepers in the 1920s and 1930s. It focuses on Yugoslavs’ travels to Czechoslovakia and examines the role that notions of the ‘Slavic’ played in the international circulation of ideas within these particular networks. During this period one finds striking homologies between the modernization of education and the modernization of beekeeping (apiculture); the article examines both of these domains exploring the question of what modulations the ‘Slavic’ worked on the ‘modern’ as both moved within one particular set of geographical and temporal coordinates. In the period under study, alongside the circulation of political, technological and institutional reforms, noteworthy changes in how human beings, their actions and their knowledge were thought about were also circulating. These changes have been referred to as the ‘cultural constitution of modernity’, and here ideas regarding temporal simultaneity, human agency and reason are examined, using travel texts and related documents to explore how these notions were mobilized, moved and embodied by teachers, students and beekeepers. In each of these three areas Yugoslav–Czechoslovak circuits were crucial to establishing a ‘Slavic modern’. It is argued that the notions of Slavic temporal parity and coevalness were central to how Yugoslavia’s relationship to progress was conceptualized and how collective identities were imagined. Similarly, it is argued that Yugoslavs’ travel to their ‘northern Slavic brothers’ played an important part in putting ideas of modern ‘agentic actorhood’ into circulation in Yugoslavia. It is also proposed that these Yugoslav–Czechoslovak networks helped to normalize a set of governing principles in which the ‘rational’ and the ‘emotional’ were closely linked—a scientifically ordered reasoning was joined with a style of emotional comportment that valorized effusive sociability. The ‘Slavic modern’ can be thought of as one of the multiples of modernity, and in the concluding section it is proposed that in fact rather than thinking of the ‘Slavic’ as working modulations on a ‘general modernity’ it would be more accurate to see the ‘Slavic modern’ that was cultivated by beekeepers, teachers and students traveling to Czechoslovakia as one localized staging.

In the early 1920s Yugoslav schools were charged with creating ‘new Yugoslavs’ who would be advanced in their passions and in their reasoning and in this way would help make and unify the newly created nation. In similar fashion, Yugoslav beekeepers were charged with making and strengthening the nation through their beekeeping. This article examines the congruence of modernization projects in education and in apiculture by focusing on the journeys and international circulation of ideas through

which these projects were propelled. I focus specifically on travel to Czechoslovakia, which was a popular travel and study-tour destination for Yugoslavs in the interwar era. Czechoslovakia was regarded as a brotherly Slavic country, and, for both beekeepers and educators, was an important example of the modern. In this article I examine the foreign travel of Yugoslavs with an eye to exploring what analytic purchase we can get on the school and modernity by thinking about the circulation of certain discursive practices through Yugoslavia in the 1920s and 1930s as part of the constitution of a 'Slavic modernity'.

The similarities between developments in schooling and beekeeping do not necessarily imply a direct causal relationship where changes in one domain influenced or provided a model that was imitated in the other. This article approaches these similarities as homologies that can each help make sense of the other as well as point to the historical systems of reasoning that shaped modernization in Yugoslavia in the early twentieth century. The idea of Slavic ethnic/racial identity was one of these. Pan-Slavism powerfully informed the travels of Yugoslav educators and beekeepers.¹ Foreign travels could, for example, include participation in Pan-Slavic Beekeeping Congresses and Slavic Pedagogical Congresses. Examining what Slavic-ness meant for apiculture enables a better understanding of what Slavic-ness meant for Yugoslav education. This strategy of examining two overlapping domains allows for a more rigorous and reliable examination of the interactions between 'Slavic' and the 'modern' as both moved within one particular set of geographical and temporal coordinates.

It is important to note that the modernization under examination in this article concerns the reworking of individuals, not the restructuring of social institutions.² In the 1920s and 1930s in the Balkans, alongside the circulation of political, technological and institutional reforms, noteworthy changes in 'mind' traveled. These changes in the ways that human beings, their actions and their knowledge were thought about can be discussed, in terms proposed by Bjorn Wittrock, as the 'cultural constitution of modernity'.³ Modern ways of living were materially embodied in the child, the teacher, the citizen—and the beekeeper, it should be added. I am using the concepts 'modern' and 'modernity' to talk about certain epistemic transformations. These transformations involved deep-seated changes in the way human beings were

¹ This article is part of a larger study of Pan-Slavic cosmopolitanism and the foreign travel of Yugoslav teachers and students. My research suggests that a Pan-Slavism in which Russia rarely figures was very important in the various circuits of Yugoslav–Czechoslovak interaction during the interwar era.

² Studies that deal with the modernization of social structures and institutions in Yugoslavia include Djurović, Arsen. *Kosmološko Traganje za Novom Školom: Modernizacijski izazovi u sistemu srednjoškolskog obrazovanja u Beogradu 1880–1905*. Beograd, 1999; Marković, Peđa J. *Beograd i Evropa 1918–1941*. Beograd, 1992.

³ Wittrock, Björn. "Modernity: One, None, or Many? European Origins and Modernity as a Global Condition." *Daedalus*, 129/1 (2000). This is related to, though distinct from, the notion of cultural modernity as discussed in Gaonkar, Dilip Parameshwar. "On Alternative Modernities." *Public Culture* XI/1 (1999).

reasoned about as individuals and as collectives, and in this article I will discuss three potential features of a 'slavic modern': the idea of temporal simultaneity, changing conceptions of human agency, and the circulation of certain ideas about human reason.

The notion of a Slavic modern allows us to engage with the question of how useful it is to think in terms of 'multiple modernities'. One characteristic of the cultural concept of modernity-in-the-singular is 'its autocentric picture of itself as the expression of a universal certainty'.⁴ This modernity is the familiar modernity that has been linked to Europe and the 'West' and presented/analyzed as a hegemonic, univocal and teleological pattern for advancing societies and the individual. Currently, however, this modernity is being analytically reappraised by scholars across the globe. In my reading, the reevaluation of modernity centers around two claims: (1) the increasingly popular and convincing argument that European modernity arose not simply within Europe but also outside Europe and through Europe's interactions with other parts of the world;⁵ and, (2) growing evidence that, at least over the past century, the world has witnessed the historical emergence of multiple and not homogenous institutional and ideological patterns.⁶

Regarding the first claim, Eastern Europe—as the designation itself should suggest at the outset—makes an excellent site for examining the articulation of a European modernity as 'European'. A developing body of literature examines European inscriptions of Eastern Europe and the Balkans, frequently bringing in concepts such as orientalism and the colonization of the imagination to analyze the importance of this 'margin' in the development of the autonomy of European subjects and as a theoretical laboratory for Enlightenment political experimentation.⁷ This, as well as arguments emerging from historical work on colonialism,⁸ challenges the notion that

⁴ Mitchell, Timothy. *Questions of Modernity*. Minneapolis, 2000: xi.

⁵ See the essays collected in Mitchell's volume. Though they do not expressly deal with the problem of modernity the following works are relevant as well: Stoler, Ann Laura. "Tense and Tender Ties: The Politics of Comparison in North American History and (Post) Colonial Studies." *Journal of American History* (2001); Stråth, Bo, ed. *Europe and the Other and Europe as Other*. Brussels, 2000.

⁶ See, for example, the Winter 2000 issue of *Daedalus*, particularly Eisenstadt, S. N. "Multiple Modernities." *Daedalus* 129/1 (2000).

⁷ Bjelić, Dusan, I. and Obrad Savić. *Balkan as Metaphor: Between Globalization and Fragmentation*. Cambridge, 2002; Goldsworthy, Vesna. *Inventing Ruritania: The Imperialism of the Imagination*. New Haven, 1998; Todorova, Maria. *Imagining the Balkans*. Oxford, 1997; Wolff, Larry. *Inventing Eastern Europe: The Map of Civilization on the Mind of the Enlightenment*. Stanford, 1994.

⁸ See, for example, Benedict Anderson's argument that nationalism emerged in Caribbean and North American colonies: Anderson, Benedict. *Imagined Communities: Reflections on the Origin and Spread of Nationalism*, revised edn. London, 1991; Gwendolyn Wright's argument that French urban planning first played out in colonial experiments: Wright, Gwendolyn. "Tradition in the Service of Modernity: Architecture and Urbanism in French Colonial Policy, 1900–1930." In *Tensions of Empire: Colonial Cultures in a Bourgeois World*, edited by Frederick Cooper and Ann Laura Stoler. Berkeley, 1997; and Ann Laura Stoler's work on sexuality and regimes of truth in East Asia: Stoler, Ann Laura. *Race and the Education of Desire: Foucault's History of Sexuality and the Colonial Order of Things*. Durham, 1995.

Western Europe's modernity arose exclusively from within Western Europe. Such histories do not mean that the concept of a monological European modernity must automatically explode into heterogenous modern multiples. These histories do, however, suggest that the problematic of modernity's European center (or modernity having a spatial 'center') can be shifted and possibly deferred. A plural genealogy means that the coherence of what gets unified as modern is, at the very least, troubled.

Regarding the second claim, the persistence of distinct local/regional patterns in Eastern Europe would imply that 'globalization' is not the uniform totality that it is sometimes taken to be. Regionalisms would also challenge some of the assumptions of 'world system' theories.⁹ In looking at Yugoslav beekeepers and educators traveling in Slavic countries there is much to be gained from considering this as a 'slavic system-world', as is suggested by the work of Jürgen Schriewer and his colleagues.¹⁰ To an extent, the cultural and epistemic focus of this article means that it side-steps questions of institutional isomorphism by not examining the appearance of a Slavic modern in interwar social institutions and structures. In place of this, however, I take up the issue of regional distinctiveness by exploring the patterns and homologies that emerge in thinking about temporal/historical simultaneity, human agency and reason as these were embodied in the educator and the beekeeper. How these patterns might cohere to point to something that can be properly called 'slavic' and 'modern' is what the remainder of the article addresses.

Simultaneity

The travel texts of Yugoslav teachers, students and beekeepers who journeyed to Czechoslovakia are saturated with ideas about temporal parity and coevalness. As travelogues, these essays, letters, reports and articles are replete with accounts of both the strange and the familiar; the most frequently mentioned similarities between the two countries were shared Slavic-ness and the idea that both countries existed in the same time (that coevalness is not self-evident will be explained below). At least as far as the Yugoslav imaginary was concerned Yugoslavs and Czechoslovaks shared the 'contemporaneity' of a simultaneous present anchored by a simultaneous, coeval past, both of which were linked to a parallel future. This notion of simultaneity is important, I will argue, for how Yugoslavia's relationship to progress was conceptualized as well as for how collective identities were imagined.

⁹ I am thinking here of the work of John Meyer, Francisco Ramirez and their colleagues. See, for example, Ramirez, Francisco O., and John W. Meyer. "National Curricula: World Models and National Historical Legacies." In *Internationalisierung/Internationalisation*, edited by Marcelo Caruso and Heinz-Elmar Tenorth. Frankfurt am Main, 2002.

¹⁰ Schriewer, Jürgen. "World System and Interrelationship Networks: The Internationalization of Education and the Role of Comparative Inquiry." In *Educational Knowledge: Changing Relationships between the State, Civil Society, and the Educational Community*. edited by Thomas S. Popkewitz. Albany, 2000; Schriewer, Jürgen, and Carlos Martinez. *World-Level Ideology or Nation-Specific System-Reflection?: Reference Horizons in Educational Discourse*, 7 vols, vol. 3, *Cadernos prestige*. Lisbon, 2003.

Teachers and students traveled to Czechoslovakia on school excursions and study-tours (*naučne ekskurzije*), as well as on touristic, leisure expeditions. Yugoslavs also went to study at Czechoslovak universities and participate in international conferences. Beekeepers undertook similar travels, though the journeys for which the most documentation is available are study-tours and visits to international expositions and congresses. The writings of these travelers provide evidence for the fabrication of Yugoslav–Czechoslovak coequality in several ways.

One detail that is mentioned in many travelogues is the generous hospitality that Czechoslovaks offered Yugoslavs.¹¹ Such hospitality is a recurrent theme in Jovan P. Jovanović's account of a 1925 beekeeping excursion to Czechoslovakia, and his travelogue serves as a good example of how shared norms on what it ought to mean to be a host and welcome guests helped to construct parity between Yugoslavs and Czechoslovaks in the present moment of that time. Jovanović's impromptu trip followed a beekeeping exposition in Vienna at which he made the acquaintance of Ivan Kicberger, the editor of a prominent Czechoslovak beekeeping journal. 'Kicberger informed me that he was particularly overjoyed to personally meet a brotherly Serbian beekeeper,' Jovanović noted. Invited to visit Kicberger's home and workshops in the Czech village of Nebušnica, Jovanović reported on the efforts and experiments that were devoted to improving the preparation of package bees (i.e. bees used to start a new colony) over 300 shipments of which were sent out annually across the country. Alongside descriptions of Kicberger's microscopes, the special photographic apparatus for documenting bee illnesses, and techniques for shipping bees are multiple references to the hospitality that he extended his Yugoslav visitor: 'Friendly [*ljubazni*] Mr. Kicberger showed that he was full of good will and desired that I stay longer in his home as his dear guest.' At numerous other points in the text Jovanović intermingled descriptions of advanced Czechoslovak beekeeping institutions and practices with mentions of being greeted at train stations, feted till late in the evening, and treated as a valued guest. This effusive hospitality is named in many travel texts as 'brotherly', and even as 'slavic hospitality'. In Jovanović's account, like those of other Yugoslav travelers, it provided evidence of an actual, present equivalence between Czechoslovaks and Yugoslavs. Such hospitality made Czechoslovakia's advanced institutions and practices close and accessible to Yugoslavs—a convergence evidenced in Kicberger's 'very eager' invitation to host Yugoslav agricultural students each summer in order to introduce them to the preparation of package bees.¹²

A second detail that appears in many Yugoslav travelogues is the mention of Czechoslovak historical monuments and commemorative practices. As hospitality did for the present, acts of commemoration bound together Czechoslovaks and Yugoslavs in

¹¹ For a more extended discussion see, Sobe, Noah W. "Feeling Slavic Hospitality and Kinship in the Travels of Yugoslav Teachers and Students to Czechoslovakia, 1918–1938." In *Turizm: Leisure, Travel and Nation-Building in Russian, Soviet and Eastern European History*, edited by Anne E. Gorsuch & Diane P. Koenker. Forthcoming.

¹² Jovanović, Jovan P. "Pčelarska Ekskurzija u Čehoslovačkoj." *Pčelar* XI/11–12 (1925): 165, 166, 169.

a shared past. The First World War was a crucial marker for both Czechoslovaks and Yugoslavs, as its end marked a 'liberation' and the moment when both countries came into existence as political states. Both places could be understood as previously colonized and parallels were commonly drawn between the 1389 Battle of Kosovo and the 1620 Battle of the White Mountain as points when national independence was lost. Yugoslav travelers often visited the Žižkov monument in Prague and their accounts of this enormous, imposing structure show how readily the respective pasts of Czechoslovakia and Yugoslavia could be blended together. The monument was part of a hilltop museum and mausoleum complex celebrating Czechoslovak history and independence.¹³ A Yugoslav student reported in the late 1930s that a segment of the 'Pantheon of the Czechoslovak Nation' was devoted to Serbs and 'formed one of its most interesting parts'.¹⁴ The report of a Yugoslav secondary school teacher, who visited in 1933 and was shown the site by welcoming workmen, noted an exhibit on prisoners held by Austria during the First World War that included letters in Serbo-Croatian.¹⁵ In both these instances a Yugoslav presence in the Czechoslovak past was encouraged by Czechoslovak inclusion of Yugoslav artifacts in certain sites of memory; this was then reinforced by Yugoslav travelers through what they emphasized and included in their travel texts. The Žižkov monument and complex were taken by Yugoslav travelers as proper and advanced in the way that they commemorated past heroes and heroines. Parallels in the histories of both countries spoke to simultaneity in the past; yet in how that history was recognized or memorialized it could also speak to a shared present and portend an even more advanced shared future.

A third detail that consistently appears in Yugoslav travelogues is the description of advancement and progress through imagery of expansion and diffusion. As we have seen above, Kicburger's noted beekeeping accomplishment was that he used scientific methods to help spread beekeeping throughout Czechoslovakia. In line with this, Yugoslav travelers often mentioned the advancement of Czechoslovak villages, noting that it was not just in cities that one encountered cultural and material advances. Diffusion and spread were also themes used in the discussion of literacy and schooling in Czechoslovakia. Several teacher and student travelogues remark on how common it was to come across Czechoslovaks reading—one student reported in 1933, 'literature is so well developed that people are even reading on the streets'. This account presented Czechoslovak public space as saturated with self-cultivation, and continued, 'after work everyone looks to use the time in a park ... if a person is alone there will be a book in hand and he or she will be reading'.¹⁶ The ways that Czechoslovaks

¹³ See Witkovsky, Matthew S. "Tales of an Absent Monument: Views of the Monument to National Liberation in Prague." *Harvard Design Magazine* XIII (2001).

¹⁴ Archives of Yugoslavia (Belgrade), *Ministry of Education Opšte odeljenje*, stipend report from Miloš Đ. Ilić to the Ministry of Education (undated, 1936?) 66-443-702.

¹⁵ Glumac, Djordje. "Moj Boravak u Čehoslovačkoj." *Československo-jihoslovenská Revue* III/5 (1933).

¹⁶ Archives of Yugoslavia (Belgrade), *Ministry of Education Opšte odeljenje*, stipend report from Momčilo Balabanović (11.9.1933) 66-443-702.

put their traveling to productive use was noted as well, and Yugoslav travelers, by virtue of their own mobility, their first-hand presence alongside such manifestations of advancedness, and the re-circulations that their reports propelled, could understand themselves as party to the progress spreading throughout Czechoslovakia. For these travelers the imagery of expansion meant that advancements would also spread through Yugoslavia. Slavic brotherhood and the similarities in national efforts and objectives anticipated a modern future that both countries would share.

The idea that Yugoslavs and Czechoslovaks existed—had existed and would continue to exist—in the same coeval moment¹⁷ helps to further specify how Yugoslavia's relationship to progress and modernity was conceptualized in the 1920s and 1930s. Differences in temporality are central to the distinctions connected with any kind of general concept of the 'modern'. The notion that certain others live in a 'non-modern' time or a 'premodern' time generates a system of inclusion and exclusions, qualifying and disqualifying individuals and groups, a problematic that recent scholarship on colonialism has explored in depth.¹⁸ However, even as Yugoslavs discussed their travels as excursions to the 'most advanced Slavic country', Czechoslovak advancedness does not seem to have presented 'catch-up' problems for Yugoslavs. Instead, these travelers saw Czechoslovak modernity embracing, enveloping and including Yugoslavia.

The idea of simultaneity is an important element in the formation of collective solidarities. In his well-known argument Benedict Anderson points to the possibility of forming long-distance communities through mobility and print culture. Temporal synchronicity enters as part of the technology that enables the imagining of nations: it allows the idea that individuals at spatial distance from one another were thinking and acting concurrently. Alongside national imaginaries, simultaneity can help enable other collective imaginaries. Travel reports and periodicals could bring unity and coherence to a range of practices. They could create, for example, the assemblage of knowledge, institutions and practices that could be unified as 'Yugoslav apiculture'—the shared project through which a beekeeper in Ljubljana and a beekeeper in Skoplje could imagine themselves as similar and connected. In part, then, collective solidarities cohere around the notions of simultaneity and coevalness. 'News from Abroad' and 'Education in ...' reports were a fixture of Yugoslav education periodicals in the 1920s and 1930s, just as 'Beekeeping in Belgium'-type articles appeared in apiculture journals. The circulation of such bulletins speaks in part to a self-sustained world-level educational/beekeeping reform discourse, the logic being that if there was uniformity to the world's social and agricultural problems, there could be uniform

¹⁷ My thinking about coevalness is in part inspired by the now classic work of Johannes Fabian who specifically traces how "a denial of living in the same moment" is generated through the ways in which the objects of discourse are constructed in the field of anthropology. See Fabian, Johannes. *Time and the Other*. New York, 1983.

¹⁸ See, for example, the discussion of evolutionary, stagist theories and the notion of "uneven development" in Chakrabarty, Dipesh. *Provincializing Europe: Postcolonial Thought and Historical Difference*. Princeton, 2000.

solutions as well. However, that the greatest numbers of foreign reports in Yugoslav journals were on Czechoslovakia speaks to the special importance of the circuits that brought Yugoslavia and Czechoslovakia together. The travel texts of Yugoslav teachers, students and beekeepers strongly suggest that a Slavic ‘culture of contemporaneity’ in past, present and future moments undergirded thinking about beekeeping and schooling. All the same, this Slavic system-world and the charting of its linear progress was predicated on the idea of a singular present and the notion of homogeneous, orderly time—characteristics that arguably make these Yugoslav ideas regarding temporal parity and coevalness describable as modern.

Agency

One of the ways that Yugoslavs modernized was through their travels, which means that they can reasonably be considered ‘actors’ in the global circulation of knowledge and models. To the extent that these individuals were reformers who selected and adapted various practices and discourses while leveraging multiple political interests, it is relatively straightforward also to consider them ‘agentic’ at the same time. It bears examining, however, how this agency, instead of being a given human condition, is historically constituted and, in the early twentieth century, was one of the more important ideas circulating internationally. The idea of the agentic subject who was a modernizer intervening in a society for the purposes of advancing it is, in fact, a form of governance. Part of what gives this agency its particular historical character is, as John Meyer argues, the development of the ‘agentic actor’ who is authorized to act for him- or herself and to assume the agency of others, whether they be other individuals or social institutions.¹⁹ What makes this configuration describable as ‘modern’ is that agency is relocated into society rather than assumed to be natural or transcendental in its authority. As in the previous section, the focus here is on how the Czechoslovak–Yugoslav relationship and ideas about Slavic-ness construed or modulated the agentic actor and modernizer who could be found in Yugoslavia in the 1920s and 1930s.

To explore how Yugoslavs modernized through their travels and in what ways this took place within a Slavic system-world, I will examine in detail a May 1933 Yugoslav teachers’ excursion when 25 primary school teachers traveled to Czechoslovakia.²⁰ Noteworthy among the stops on this study-tour was a visit to the industrial city of

¹⁹ Meyer, John W., and Ronald L. Jefferson. “The ‘Actors’ of Modern Society: The Cultural Construction of Social Agency.” *Sociological Theory* XVIII/1 (2000).

²⁰ In this section I am drawing on planning documents in the Archives of Yugoslavia (Belgrade), *Ministry of Education Odeljenje za osnovnu nastavu* 66-2340-2214; a report from the sponsoring organization “Izveštaj o radu godini 1933” (Zagreb, Jugoslovensko–Čehoslovačka Liga, 1933); as well as Debenak, Andrej. “Vtisi iz učiteljske studijske ekskurzije po Čehoslovaški,” *Učiteljski tovaris* 10 i 11 (1933); Ljubunčić, Salih. “Naučno putovanje naših učitelja u Čehoslovačku.” *Napretka i Savremena Škole*, nos 5–10 (1933); Ljubunčić, Salih. *Školstvo i prosvjeta u Čehoslovačkoj: s osobitim obzirom na pedagošku i školsku reformu*, edited by Salih Ljubunčić, *Biblioteka “Škole Rada”*. Zagreb, 1934.

Zlín, which was home to the Bata shoe company and a school system that the Yugoslavs were particularly impressed with. I argue that the excursion helped to mobilize a notion of the modern agentic actor, a regulatory ideal that here was embodied in the teacher.

Before they arrived in Zlín, this group of teachers spent several days in Austria; their accounts of Austria reveal the way in which the ‘otherness’ of Germanic Austria structured Pan-Slavism and Yugoslav thinking about the activities of Czechoslovak school reform. Even in Vienna, Czechoslovak schools featured on the Yugoslav itinerary. In his report, the tour leader, Zagreb professor of education Salih Ljubunčić, commented that the Czechoslovak schools were the best equipped in Vienna and used the best methods, adding that ‘here one can see all the perseverance and devotion of our brothers who were educated through their history on what it means to be themselves and what it means to have—when one has not had—a homeland’. Modern Czechoslovak schools in Vienna spoke to tenacious national survival and a commitment to self-uplift and improvement. For this group, as for many other Yugoslav groups, crossing the border from Austria into Czechoslovakia could be understood as a mid-journey homecoming. Ljubunčić reported, ‘we heard the Slovak language, soft and sweet and so close to ours. We saw Czechoslovak friends and immediately we became close, as though we had known each other from before’.²¹ In one part, the Slavic imaginary was articulated through detachment from things German and Austrian. As with any social imaginary, though, the Slavic gained definition through multiple positionings. One of these was the Slavic relationship with America, which as we shall see later, involved a complex matrix of attachment and detachment.

Zlín was a two-day stop on this 1933 teachers’ study-tour and was seen by Yugoslavs as particularly modern. It boasted a 3000-seat cinema; and had ‘modern houses’, one per family. Zlín also had model schools, in which, one Yugoslav wrote, ‘one feels the spirit of labor and creation, zealous work and productivity’. The group was welcomed by the Bata general manager and toured the factories (‘everywhere order and cleanliness ... everyone quite satisfied’).²² The modernity of the city was linked to Bata and the Yugoslavs made much mention of the company’s philanthropic and civic activities. The full picture that emerges from Yugoslav accounts suggests that labor and civic relations in the city were being reconfigured through the rationality of welfare.

In a number of ways this Yugoslav trip to Zlín recalls the pilgrimages of German industrialists to Detroit and Chicago. In the 1920s and 1930s great numbers of Germans went to the United States, and almost without exception Henry Ford’s Highland Park and River Rouge factories were on their itineraries. In her work on these travels Mary Nolan suggests that the American model appealed not just because of its advancements in industrial technology but because of the reforms it suggested in labor relations and the marketing of consumer goods.²³ The rationalization of work

²¹ Ljubunčić, *Školstvo i prosvjeta u Čehoslovačkoj*: 44, 8.

²² *Ibid.*: 10.

²³ Nolan, Mary. *Visions of Modernity: American Business and the Modernization of Germany*. Oxford, 1994.

along Fordist and Taylorist lines purported to promise relief of the recurring problem of capital—labor antagonism. Indicative that similar phenomena were occurring in Zlín is the Yugoslav comment that ‘with Bata there is no distinction between clerks and laborers, all are employees’.²⁴ Jacques Donzelot argues that Taylorism promised to transfer the problem of discipline from hierarchical, paternalistic supervision to the efficiency and self-optimizing rationalities of the machine, adding that symmetrical to this economic rationality came a social rationality that inscribed ‘norms towards increasing the protection of workers’ health and welfare’.²⁵ Donzelot’s argument seems accurately to apply to what was occurring in Zlín in the interwar period; the Yugoslav visitors in 1933 viewed a modernity that was not merely industrial and technological but social and cultural as well.

The task of protecting welfare moved into pedagogy and the social responsibilities of Zlín schools. One of the chapters of Ljubunčić’s book on Czechoslovak education is titled *Skrb oko Mladeži*, which can be translated as ‘Youth Welfare’ or ‘Welfare Concerns around Youth’ and it focuses on the activities of Zlín schools, noting that teachers regularly measured the health, hygiene and physical growth of students. Health and hygiene regularly appear as concerns in Yugoslav pedagogic literature of the 1920s and early 1930s but the concept of welfare otherwise rarely appears. According to this travel account of Zlín, ‘welfare’ was everything that was done for the child and the family outside of ‘regular’ school upbringing and education. Organizing concerts and providing numerous school clubs were mentioned by Yugoslavs as additional examples of the modern activities of Zlín’s model teachers.

The concern for welfare in Zlín is a perfect example of how the modernization of schooling need not involve institutional reshaping or the introduction of new curricula. The activities described in Zlín were more or less already occurring in Yugoslavia. Ljubunčić noted, ‘all of this we have had before, and we have now, both at home and in Czechoslovakia’. What was being moved along an international circuit in this case were models and knowledge that reorganized the actions and agency of the teacher. In this instance, it was a conceptualization of the connections between height measurements, school concerts and school clubs that was traveling. The May 1933 study-tour clarified how these modern school activities could be related to one another. Pointing to a consequence of these linkages, Ljubunčić wrote that Zlín, with its hygiene efforts and after-school activities, managed to create a ‘social feeling’ that shaped how Czechoslovaks related to their ‘homeland’. To bear out this point he cited the leisure travel of Czechoslovaks, who, evidently, did not merely travel for relaxation, but traveled to study and acquaint themselves with their country. Concern for ‘welfare helps regular school work, advancing it decisively and powerfully, as well as helps families to be more able and better prepared to become involved in national life’.²⁶ In these travels a vision of the work of the modernizing Yugoslav teacher came

²⁴ Ljubunčić, *Školstvo i prosvjeta u Čehoslovačkoj*: 10.

²⁵ Donzelot, Jacques. “The Promotion of the Social.” In *Foucault’s New Domains*, edited by Mike Gane and Terry Johnson. New York, 1993: 124.

²⁶ Ljubunčić, *Školstvo i prosvjeta u Čehoslovačkoj*: 40, 43.

into fine resolution. The role of the teacher was expanded: the activities of the teacher ought properly to include attention to the organization of the home and a pastoral-like approach to the national organization of the self. As we see in these travelers' reports from Zlín, this social agency that the teacher was to embody was not just the ability to act on other people but to assume responsibility (and authority) for acting broadly as the representative of social interests. The movement of these regulatory ideals into Yugoslavia, in one part through study-tours like this May 1933 expedition, meant that a recognizably modern notion of agentic actorhood was coming into circulation.

Similar ideas about social action moved through Yugoslav beekeeping. In Yugoslav beekeeping journals of the interwar era, writing on the 'advancement' [*unapređivanje*] of beekeeping involved discussions on how scientifically to improve technical procedures (such as the best ways to prepare a hive over the winter, etc.) and on how apiculture could be better organized in the country in general. Czechoslovakia appeared in Yugoslav texts as an example in both these areas. One of the major themes that emerges in Yugoslav writings is that Czechoslovak beekeepers were taking upon themselves the tasks of advancing both the technical and the national organization of beekeeping. State support for the apiculture sector was certainly important in the Yugoslav view, and it is a commonplace in journals to find demands that the Yugoslav government do more to support beekeeping (by opening beekeeping schools and making regulations more favorable, etc.). However, alongside such demands were numerous calls for beekeepers to come to action themselves.²⁷ In this regard Czechoslovakia was held up as an example by virtue of the strength of its independent beekeeping organizations, its rich literature and the dedication of individual beekeepers. One report from 1921 noted that 'however widespread and well advanced beekeeping is in Czechoslovakia, Czechs still work non-stop on advancing their beekeeping'.²⁸ Similarly, Jovan P. Jovanović's account of his 1925 visit to Ivan Kicberger (discussed earlier) mentioned how much the Czechoslovak state supported beekeeping but also carefully mentioned how much extra, voluntary work was done. This was done, on the one hand, by people like Kicberger, a parish priest who was the head of a national non-governmental beekeeping organization, and, on the other hand, it was also undertaken by the individuals who worked in the government apiculture institutes. As in the case of the expanded role of the teacher, the expanded (self-initiated) activities of the Czechoslovak beekeeper also helped to put a notion of social agency into circulation in Yugoslavia.

Just as with ideas regarding temporal simultaneity, Czechoslovakia occupied a unique position in the Yugoslav imaginary when it came to thinking about the proper kinds of activities the beekeeper and the teacher were supposed to engage in. Taking the initiative to help advance agriculture; the health and hygiene measurements; the educator as a social actor who improved general welfare—these elements all sound like the characteristics of a 'general' modernity. However, in

²⁷ See, e.g. Budimir, Sima. "Med i šećer." *Pčelar* VI/7 (1923).

²⁸ Jovanović, Jovan P. "Pčelarstvo kod Čeha." *Pčelar* IV/3 (1921): 6.

the examples above, thinking about Slavic-ness consistently accompanied the notion of ‘agentic actorhood’ when it circulated through interwar Yugoslavia. Nevertheless, rather than the Slavic lending a strongly vernacular character to this concept of agency, the preponderance of evidence suggests that Slavic filiations provided the networks and circuits through which a cultural modernization of actorhood traveled.

Reason

The ‘slavic soul’—the romantic notion that enchanted passions governed the actions of Slavs—is a familiar feature of nineteenth-century Russian literature. This notion has frequently been proposed as a diametrical opposite of enlightenment reason and it played an important role in eighteenth- and nineteenth-century debates about modernization in Russia. The idea of the Slavic soul was culturally important in both Yugoslavia and Czechoslovakia in the 1920s and 1930s. However, when analyzing the Slavic modernity that circulated within Yugoslav–Czechoslovak networks in this period, I have found that there is considerable analytic leverage to be gained from collapsing this popular (and academic) soul vs. rationality opposition and instead thinking in terms of a traveling *reason–passion doublet* that in fact joins together the ‘rational’ and the ‘emotional’ as governing principles.

In Yugoslav writings on the modernization of beekeeping we find a notably harmonious conflation of reason and feeling.²⁹ One of the important keywords in interwar journals was ‘rational beekeeping’ [*racionalno pčelarstvo*]. It was a concept that could be mapped both forwards and backwards in time. In its January 1927 issue the journal *Hrvatska Pčela* [The Croatian Bee] identified one Franjo Horvat as ‘the oldest rational beekeeper in the Slavic south’, notable for having, in the 1850s, introduced Johann Dzierzon’s innovative movable-frame hive in the region. Useful, additional detail on what ‘rational beekeeping’ entailed comes from another historical essay which claimed that Dzierzon and other nineteenth-century beekeepers had created ‘advanced beekeeping’ because of the curiosity that had impelled them to investigate and experiment where others had been content simply to keep bees without knowing the life cycles and processes involved.³⁰ Yugoslav beekeeping literature of the 1920s and 1930s detailed numerous elements that composed the ‘rational beekeeping’ of that era, including experimentation and research. In one part, this way of beekeeping relied on scientifically ordered reasoning that was to bring

²⁹ For purposes of convenience I am using “emotion”, “feeling” and “passion” interchangeably in this discussion of the normative organization of what might alternately be called the “affective” domain of human behavior and thought. A more carefully specified study of how these concepts and descriptors have historically traveled is outside the ambit of the present article. For useful analyses of recent anthropological and historical work on emotions see Rosenwein, Barbara. “Worrying about Emotions in History.” *American Historical Review*, 107/3 (2002); Wilce, James M. “Passionate Scholarship: Recent Anthropologies of Emotion.” *Reviews in Anthropology* XXXIII/1 (2004).

³⁰ Jovanović, Jovan P. “Iz istorije pčelarstva.” *Pčelar* VI/1–3 (1923).

progress with its spread. In this respect, to learn about the latest scientific developments Yugoslav beekeepers commonly looked to Czechoslovakia. When we carefully examine this circuit, however, it becomes clear that standards of emotional comportment closely accompanied the rationalization of apiculture practice. For example, a 1923 Yugoslav survey of beekeeping in Europe, which ranked Czechoslovakia third after England and Switzerland in terms of its beekeeping production and the sophistication of the technology used, commented that in Czechoslovakia ‘the propaganda for rational beekeeping is very strong and equally strong are their beekeeping organizations and societies—for our brothers the Czechoslovaks feel [*osećaju*] that in joint work and association [*udruživanju*] lies their shared advancement and general advantage’.³¹

The connection here between sociability and rational apicultural practice is a significant one. In fact, it is quite homologous to the ‘social feeling’ Yugoslavs saw being fabricated in Zlín schools, which indicates that a similar linkage between advancement and sociability circulated in both domains. According to this text, a key part of advancing beekeeping was the social associations that brought people together. It is not incidental that Czechoslovak commitment to these organizations and societies was something felt; the language used here assumes a strong emotional dimension to the proclivity or facility for forming associations (this is true of other documents as well, both those having to do with beekeeping and those concerned with education). Alongside a concern for sociability were other regulatory ideals designed to advance the behavior of the beekeeper as a productive citizen. Rational beekeeping was linked to spiritual uplift, as we see in the assertion from a 1922 journal that ‘work with bees exerts a noble influence on the soul and the disposition of man’. This same text posed the question, ‘has anyone ever not abandoned alcohol when they took up beekeeping?’.³² This last claim is clearly hyperbolic, especially given the articles on producing honey wine in the same periodical; however, the image of the work of the beekeeper that emerges from the beekeeping literature is one in which proper emotional/affective behaviors were blended with the use of scientific reasoning.

Yugoslav teachers and students traveling to Czechoslovakia in the 1920s and 1930s were similarly taken with the advanced state of schooling practices and the emotional behavior of Czechoslovaks. The concept of rational schooling did not commonly appear in Yugoslav pedagogic literature but the frequent reports on Czechoslovak education, with their accolades for the strength of experimental pedagogy and the country’s commitment to pedagogical research,³³ valorized the organization of schooling through scientifically ordered reasoning. Critiques of the Czechoslovak educational system are essentially absent from Yugoslav travelogues. And, with the

³¹ Djordjević, Svetoz. K. “Kako se pčelari u Evropi.” *Pčelar* VI/6 (1923): 88.

³² Budimir, S. “Pčelarstvo kod nas.” *Pčelar* V/3 (1922): 38–39.

³³ See, e.g., Iskruljev, Jovan. “Skola Vysokých Studii Pedagogickih v Praze a v Brne.” *Učitelj*, nos 5–6 (1924); “Ispitivanje dedinjstva u Čehoslovačkoj.” *Učitelj*, no. 3 (1923); Jela Ivanovička, “Narodno prosvjećivanje u Čehoslovačkoj—Masarikov Institut.” *Učitelj*, nos 5–6 (1924).

exception of a few complaints that Czechs were ‘materialists’,³⁴ Yugoslav travel accounts consistently reported very favorable social interactions with Czechoslovaks. For student and teacher travelers Czechoslovak sociability appeared in the form of warm welcomes and effusive displays of brotherly affections. Slavic hospitality helped to create the conditions of coevalness, as I argued earlier; it also spoke to the norms of emotional comportment that were seen by Yugoslavs as appropriate to an advanced educational system. The reception given Salih Ljubunčić’s 1933 study-tour at a trade school in Bratislava is typical of many such interactions. The visitors were treated to abundant food as well as singing, dancing and marching performances, all orchestrated through the joint work of students, teachers and parents. Ljubunčić wrote that ‘one felt an open-armed Slavic hospitality’, and added: ‘We were enchanted and enthralled with these encounters, this knowledge and the great schooling and pedagogical advances. This then is brotherly Czechoslovakia! What will come next!’³⁵

The feeling of brotherly affection was mutual. The report of enchantment and enthrallment speak to a conscious depth of feeling on the Yugoslav side, mirroring the effusiveness of the greeting that was being extended to these Slavic visitors by their Czechoslovak hosts. Other travel texts describe Yugoslavs crying and feeling strongly moved by the sincerity and enthusiasm they encountered as Slavs traveling in Czechoslovakia. The extension of Czechoslovak sociability to Yugoslavs meant that the modernity of Czechoslovakia could be simultaneously seen in the scientifically organized advances and in the standards of emotional comportment. ‘Reason’ and ‘passion’ appear adjacent and linked in Ljubunčić’s account and in the travelogues of other Yugoslav travelers. Miloš Ilić, a government stipend recipient who traveled to Czechoslovakia in the summer of 1936, wrote of his excursion, ‘we saw that the Czech nation is clear-headed and cultured, and that they are very fond of their Yugoslav brothers’.³⁶ In this instance it was ‘clear-headedness’ that attended ‘brotherly fondness’.

Yugoslav–Czechoslovak circuits and travels both in beekeeping and in education strongly suggest that a reason–passion doublet composed a set of norms that governed the actions and self-knowledge of Yugoslavs. This set of norms encompassed an emotional comportment (in which effusive sociability and a spreading, as if contagious enthusiasm were valorized) and a scientifically organized reasoning (in which knowledge, practices and technologies were evaluated in a ‘clear-headed’

³⁴ An excursion of university students in 1930 (of approximately 350 Yugoslav travelers) complained of being “financially exploited” and fed poor food during their visit to Czechoslovakia. The Yugoslav foreign ministry concluded, however, that part of the problem lay in their not being properly guided by their professors. Archives of Yugoslavia (Belgrade), *Ministry of Education Opšte odeljenje*, 66 POV-78-218.

³⁵ Ljubunčić, “Naučno putovanje:” 142. Closely paralleling this account is the report of a Slovenian teacher participating in the excursion. See Debenak, “Vtisi iz učiteljske studijske ekskurzije po Čehoslovaški.”

³⁶ Archives of Yugoslavia (Belgrade), *Ministry of Education Opšte odeljenje*, stipend report from Miloš Đ. Ilić to the Ministry of Education (undated, 1936?), 66-443-702.

manner, according to principles of experimentation, evidence and the promise they held for advancement). Contra the reading of modernity as strictly technical rationalism and a disenchantment of the world, careful examination of this particular Yugoslav–Czechoslovak, Slavic system-world suggests a happy coexistence of the enchanted and the disenchanted within the modern.³⁷

Multiple Modernities

In thinking about temporal simultaneity, human agency and the ideal forms that human reason was to take, Czechoslovakia served as an inspiring example—a beacon of modernity—to Yugoslav student, teacher and beekeeping travelers in the 1920s and 1930s. Each of these three areas contributed to the cultural constitution of modernity. And, as I have argued earlier, notions of Slavic filiations were central to mobilizing the Yugoslav–Czechoslovak networks and circuits through which these ideas and practices traveled. Alongside this, however, was another model of modernity that occasionally came into view. This was the figure of American modernity, which seems to have had a spectral presence in Yugoslav travels, something we see in Salih Ljubunčić’s summation of the advancements the 1933 Yugoslav travelers had seen in Zlín. In an enigmatic yet revealing comment Ljubunčić wrote: ‘Zlín is a piece of America in Czechoslovakia—a pure Slavic America, not the self-estranged Anglo-Saxon America, but a real America.’³⁸

It appears from this statement that it was possible for Yugoslavs to experience Czechoslovak modernity in a purely ‘slavic’ manner. (In beekeeping literature, frequent mention of Czechoslovak beekeepers’ use of the ‘American system’ is arguably similar, though less dramatic.) The Bata factory, the after-school clubs, the measurement of children’s growth, a supposed labor–capital harmony, and single family houses could bring America to mind, yet they could also be comfortably laid claim to through the notion of Slavic. In fact, according to this excerpt, the Slavic offered something more authentic, ‘pure’ and ‘real’ than the tainted and self-alienated model offered up by the existing America. I propose considering this textual appropriation to be a performative gesture and suggest that this tactic offers insights into the multiples of modernity and what exactly we can consider the ‘slavic Modern’ of the interwar era to have been.

One possibility is that multiples of modernity emerged out of local mediations, the idea being that Slavicness indigenized the relocation of modern global universalisms into particular spaces. This would be analytically similar to the way that residual (yet dynamic) regionalisms are often used to theorize contemporary local/global interactions. For this strategy to be entirely satisfactory, however, it would be necessary to identify a definite and uniquely Slavic tinge to the three aspects of cultural modernization discussed in this article—something that has not conclusively emerged from

³⁷ On the problem of “enchantment” and “modernity” see also Bennett, Jane. “The Enchanted World of Modernity: Paracelsus, Kant and Deleuze.” *Cultural Values* I/1 (1997).

³⁸ Ljubunčić, *Školstvo i prosvjeta u Čehoslovačkoj*: 9.

the present study. It would also be wise to consider Frederic Jameson's criticism that there exists an academic 'formula' which 'means that there can be a modernity for everybody'. He suggests that the 'reassuring and "cultural" notion that you can fashion your own modernity differently' is recklessly used in sophistic attempts to overcome subalterneity and everything that is dislikable about the 'standard or hegemonic Anglo-Saxon model'.³⁹ While the warning is certainly cogent, it is still noteworthy to encounter the above 1933 Yugoslav critique of the 'Anglo-Saxon' version and to be reminded that the Slavic or other alternative modernities have a historical presence and are not simply edifices constructed out of the latest critical theory.

My argument in this article has been that the travels of Yugoslav beekeepers and educators point to the existence of a Slavic modern within a Slavic system-world. We can see this system-world as a system and as systematic in that there was a definite regularity and consistency to the references, narratives and styles of reasoning moving across Yugoslav–Czechoslovak circuits. How to see this system-world as a *world* is the key. In this regard Timothy Mitchell's work is quite useful for the way that he takes perspectivism and the notion of world-as-picture to theorize modernity as something that is staged.⁴⁰ If we consider modernity to inhere in serialized, repeated acts of representation, then Yugoslav travels to and travel texts on Czechoslovakia can be usefully analyzed as performative, as a staging of the modern. The 'slavic America' that Yugoslavs found in Czechoslovakia can be read as the performative enactment of a certain picture-of-the-world. In the Slavic system-world of Yugoslav–Czechoslovak circuits and networks a set of universals circulated—norms and ideals, I have argued, that are accurately describable as modern. Simultaneity, agentic actorhood and a reason that connected rationalism with emotion are historically contingent cultural notions that in the 1920s and 1930s were embodied by the Yugoslav teacher, child, citizen and beekeeper—these abstract sets of relations were linked to particular local ones. The implication of this is not that there is a 'general modernity' that precedes its representation but that there are only localized stagings.

³⁹ Jameson, Fredric. *A Singular Modernity: Essay on the Ontology of the Present*. London, 2002: 12.

⁴⁰ Mitchell, Timothy. "The Stage of Modernity." In *Questions of Modernity*, edited by Timothy Mitchell. Minneapolis: University of Minnesota, 2000.