

Marcela Antošová

Socialist-Realistic Consistency (Companionable Summers)

Abstract

This paper deals with a question of existentialism (or non-existentialism) in the novel *Družné letá* (Companionable Summers) written by Dominik Tatarka. The study directly refers to the monograph *Dominik Tatarka in the Context of Existentialism* (M. Antošová), where we focused on the significant “diapason” of Tatarka’s works through the optics of existentialism. We are not dealing with the texts which Dominik Tatarka wrote in the spirit of socialist realist method and would require a special approach for logical and system reasons. This study has an ambition to cover this gap at least from one side and exactly for these reasons the interpretation analysis (in correlation with a comparison aspect) of the socialist realist work *Družné letá* (Companionable Summers) through existentialist sight becomes its subject.

Key words

Atheistic existentialism. Death. Existentialism. G. Marcel. Christian existentialism. J. P. Sartre. Motive. Naturalism. Socialist realism.

Introduction

The center of our focus is a question of D. Tatarka existentialism. This study directly refers to our monograph *Dominik Tatarka in the Context of Existentialism*¹, where we tried to uncover existentialism moments in works of this author and with respect to direct connection of D. Tatarka with French existentialism, namely with authors G. Marcel and J. P. Sartre,² to put his existentialism in direct relation with not only general, inclusive theses of existentialist philosophy about himself and literary depiction of existentialism in literature, but also specifically with the above-mentioned French thinkers. We apply this existentialist optics also to significant “repertory” of the author’s masterpieces - *V úzkosti hľadania (In the Anxiety of Searching)* (1942), *Panna*

1 Antošová, M.: *Dominik Tatarka v kontexte existencializmu*. Nitra : FF UKF, 2011, 158 p.

2 For more information, see: Antošová, M.: *Dominik Tatarka v kontexte existencializmu*. Nitra : FF UKF, 2011, pp. 30 - 41.

záračnica (The Miraculous Virgin) (with the date of printing in 1944, but published in 1945), *Farská republika (The Clerical Republic)* (1948), *(Rozhovory bez konca) Conversations without End* (1959), *Prútené kreslá (Wicker Armchair)* (1963), *Písačky (Scribbles)* (1979)³, by what we were able to prove a presence of existentialism in the author’s works in more complex way with respect to the main “diapason” of analyzed literary texts. For logical reasons, we did not include three works in the monograph from a group of works being analyzed (which are the most important in terms of socialist-realism), namely *Prvý a druhý úder (The First and the Second Stroke)* (1950), *Družné letá (Companionable Summers)* (1954) and *Radostník (Zestful Daybook)*(1954). By their socialist-realist adaptation, these works require a special approach, because in connection with existentialism, as from the beginning there is a significant conflict between the intimacy, authenticity, authenticity of human subject, his inner world, feelings, problems (as it is clearly pointed out by e.g. Vlašín⁴ in connection with existentialism) and non-authenticity, mass collectivization (mobbed individual), construction optimism, external course of history, literature exempted from individualism (as it is pointed out by e.g. R. Bilík⁵ in

3 The work *Písačky (Scribbles)* was published in 1979 as Samizdat in the edition *Petlice* (it contained Tatarka’s texts written in 1976 - 1978). Their re-edition in modified and expanded form was published in *Labyrint* in 1999, which was a basic document for our above-mentioned monograph *Dominik Tatarka in the Context of Existentialism*.

4 Vlašín, Š. et al.: *Slovník literárních směrů a skupín*. Praha : Orbis, 1976, 61 p.

5 Bilík, R.: *Slovenská literatúra po roku 1945 I*. Trnava : Trnavská univerzita v

connection with socialist realism). The study has an ambition to remove this hiatus from at least on part - with regard to spatial possibilities of the paper. As far as we dealt with this subject matter in the work *Prvý a druhý úder* (The First and the Second Stroke) in the past⁶, this text provides a space for another novel from the socialist-realist triad, namely *Družné letá* (Companionable Summers) (as outlined by the name of the paper), which we will analyze from existentialism perspective. Similarly as in the monograph, for the reasons and connections mentioned above, we again base not only on flat determining theses of existentialism philosophy, but mainly on French version of existentialism (J. P. Sartre, G. Marcel), as well as on literary depiction of existentialism in literature.⁷ In terms of methodology, we use interpretation analysis and comparison.

There is still a quite legitimate question at this point about the

Trnave, 2009, pp. 9 - 16.

6 Antošová, M.: *Prvý a druhý úder v kontexte Tatarkovej existencialistickej ladenej tvorby*. In *Slavica Nitriensia*, 2012, Vol. 2, No. 2, pp. 128 - 154.

7 For more information, see: Sartre, J. P.: *Bytí a nicota*. Praha : Oikoymenh, 2006. 718 p. Sartre, J. P.: *Cesty k slobode*. Bratislava : Slovenský spisovateľ, 1994. 295 p. Sartre, J. P.: *Existencialismus je humanismus*. Praha : Vyšehrad, 2004. 112 p. Sartre, J. P.: *Múr*. Bratislava : Slovenský spisovateľ, 1966. 237 p. Sartre, J. P.: *Múr*. Bratislava : Vydavateľstvo Spolku slovenských spisovateľov, 2009. 192 p. Sartre, J. P.: *Štúdie o literatúre*. Bratislava : Slovenské nakladateľstvo krásnej literatúry, 1964. 246 p. Marcel, G.: *K filozofii naděje*. Praha : Vyšehrad, 1971. 137 p. Černý, V.: *První a druhý sešit o existencialismu*. Praha : Mladá fronta, 1992. 152 p. Janke, W.: *Filosofie existence*. Praha : Mladá fronta, 1995. 247 p. Vlašín, Š. et al.: *Slovník literární teorie*. Praha : Československý spisovatel, 1984, pp. 103. Vlašín, Š. et al.: *Slovník literárních směrů a skupín*. Praha : Orbis, 1976, pp. 60 - 62. etc.

meaning of this research problem which from its beginning puts two ideologically controversial views against each other - it means socialist realism versus existentialism (an individual as a part of a collective team and system determination versus authentic self-creating “me”). However, justification and logic of this approach lies at least in this disputableness. Pre-socialist and post-socialist work⁸ of Dominik Tatarka was based on his existentialism (whether intentionally or unintentionally), and if he decided to change his perception of world (continually also to a way of writing) in certain time, then it is absolutely suitable (we think that even necessary) to name changes which incurred in contrary to his works of existentialism character. At the same time, there is a legitimate question, whether it is possible to leave “past” (and also future) in such a way that there is no indication of the past in the “present”. Therefore, it is quite justified to ask, where this “existentialist” aspect of Dominik Tatarka has lost, and whether it has really lost completely without any hints. How it was modified or not modified, which metamorphosis it contained or not contain, and what typical Dominik Tatarka did not use in structuring the text in order to get closer to required socialist

8 Antošová, M.: *Dominik Tatarka v kontexte existencializmu*. Nitra : FF UKF, 2011, 158 p., Bombíková, P.: *Tatarkova raná novelistika (1933 - 1945)*. In *Slovenská literatúra*, 1997, Vol. 44, No. 3, pp. 188 - 199, Hamada, M.: *Dominik Tatarka - sujetová básnik*. In *Slovenské pohľady*, 1992, Vol. 108, No. 2, pp. 14 - 19.

realist language custom⁹.

1 Socialist-Realist Družné letá (Companionable Summers) versus Existentialist Aspects of Tatarka’s Works

Družné letá (Companionable Summers) was published in 1954 and this work dominantly represent author’s simplifying socialist realist line. This fact is immediately underlines by a text composition which is constructed simply and linearly. At the same time, compared to previous honest Tatarka’s work with a human subject, internal psychological and philosophical “dissection” of heroes (e.g. in the works *V úzkosti hľadania* (In the Anxiety of Searching), *Rozhovory bez konca* (Conversations without End), etc.), the work *Družné letá* (Companionable Summers) are “constructed” on the principle

9 Detailed grasp of a method of socialist realism (its character specification) is still in the phase of literary research. However, in the broadest sense of word, it is a method which names requests of communist regime put on literature. For example, this “method” claimed that literary works should depict condemnation of exploiters/capitalists, create strong communist heroes (leaders), admire USSR and Communist Party, promote construction optimism, belaud collective work as the highest value of the society, etc. Subjective world of a hero, his individuality and originality were completely in the background. (For more information, see: Bilík, R.: *Slovenská literatúra po roku 1945 I*. Trnava : Trnavská univerzita v Trnave, 2009, 80 p. Bombíková, P.: *Nové formulovanie spisovateľa a spisovateľskej práce v rokoch 1946 - 1956*. Prípád Dominika Tatarku. In *Slovenská literatúra*, 2000, Vol. 46, No. 1, pp. 100 - 118. Lauček, A.: *Schéma a dogma v literatúre*. Prešov : Vydavateľstvo Michala Vaška, 2006. 103 p. Bakoš, V. et al.: *Umenie v službách totality*. Bratislava : SAV, 2000, 160 p. and others)

of objectivity (in terms of external). Basic “plot line” is about construction of the railway line *Družba*, collectivization of *Dužice* and in (naive) questioning of human relationships (it means love on the male-female platform, while this platform is supplemented also for friendship between men who built the railway line *Družba*).

A phenomenon of human relationships, specifically male-female platform (a love triangle between *Marinka Orendáčová*, *Ďuro Okánik*, *Janko Hreščo*) represents a central problem of the whole plot (even non-conflict, non-dynamic and not ending in a real crisis, as pointed out by *Lauček*¹⁰). In this term, in terms of understanding of love as one of the most serious problems depicted in this work on which a thematic and content line is based, this novel can be compared to Tatarka’s novelette *Prútené kreslá* (Wicker Armchair) or to a literary document *Písačky pre milovanú Lutáciu* (Scribbles for Beloved Lutecia). Of course, a nature of relationship and questioning of love are in these masterpieces completely different than in *Družné letá* (Companionable Summers).

10 Lauček, A.: *Schéma a dogma v literatúre*. Prešov : Vydavateľstvo Michala Vaška, 2006, pp. 29.

1.1 About Non-authenticity of Relations of Non-authentic Characters

In general, love and human relations are phenomenon which earnestly “inflicts” existentialist works of Dominik Tatarka, and of course as we have already indicated, gives them different position, dimension and depth, as it is also in case of the work *Družné letá* (Companionable Summers). Let us to remind that complex philosophical positions of relations, their authentic perception by main characters, their fulfillment or non-fulfillment, gave existentialist works of Dominik Tatarka a depth (“*In loving - non-verbal bottom speech, if verbal speech is the top one, the world from creation takes place, the genesis of world and its development happens and is lived. That our body includes the memory of a mankind, of creation. And nothing, nothing, not even death can cut this memory. We do not start from yesterday, not from our creation. We start with a mystery (...) when we stopped to listen to it, when we stopped to venerate it; our lives become banal, we will be lost in history*”¹¹). At the same time, they sometimes exceeded space/frame of specific characters and in gnomic formal (language) anchoring, they resulted in general knowledge (“*that destinies of our lovers, everyday friends, people who seem to be close to us are inadmissible; that destinies of people are as distant as stars and they never*

11 Tatarka, D.: *Písačky pre milovanú Lutáciu*. Praha : Labyrint, 1999, pp. 99 and 162.

converge”¹²; “*For people we love, we follow them day and night without a certainty that they are the real ones. “There is no peace next to a person despite you love him/her. You have reached it hardly, but it disappears at the same time...*”¹³).

Living of broad-spectrum depicted human relations, their realization and transformation by means of characters also underlines, even outlined existentialism and oscillation between “Sarter” and “Marcel” position of learning. Temperamental desire for a man was depicted in Tatarka’s work in two ways. In his earlier works (e.g. *V úzkosti hľadania* (In the Anxiety of Searching)) the author “armed” his heroes with an endless ontological desire for another human being, but he did not allow the human convergence (friendship, partnership, family, etc.). He “built” an imaginary Sartre “wall” around his heroes and their subtle viscus. He depicted them desiring, but mutually distant, impenetrable, bounded and limited by their difference, as lonely, strange and desolate in Sartre way. In his later works (*Prútené kreslá* (Wicker Armchair), *Písačky* (Scribbles)) his heroes focus on other human being, in committing of their “me” to “you”, they find a sense of their existence and “Marcel” hope and justness of being.¹⁴

However, it is vain to search for these philosophical-existentialist

12 Tatarka, D.: *V úzkosti hľadania*. Liptovský Mikuláš : Tranoscius, 1997, pp. 50.

13 Tatarka, D.: *V úzkosti hľadania*. Liptovský Mikuláš : Tranoscius, 1997, pp. 106.

14 For more information, see: Antošová, M.: *Dominik Tatarka v kontexte existencializmu*. Nitra : FF UKF, 2011, 158 p.

positions in the work *Družné letá* (Companionable Summers). As composition is simple and straightforward, Tatarka’s characters seem to be shallow and so their love has simplified position.

Before we start to discuss character of human relations, we would like to point out that such flattened approach and shallow character of heroes are atypical and unnatural for Tatarka’s works, and so they can be understood as a “tax” paid to the schematism of that times. Outside the simplified socialist realist image (*V úzkosti hľadania* (In the Anxiety of Searching), *Prútené kreslá* (Wicker Armchair), *Rozhovory bez konca* (Conversations without End), *Písačky* (Scribbles)), the author “fights” for true awakening of a man by his literary works. A reader meets existentialistically authentic heroes who desire to create themselves and approach their lives supremely with full awarness, and people in a crowd are depicted as negative contract to real authentic beings¹⁵. Let us mention for example the work *Písačky* (Scribbles) which was published in samizdat publishing house in 1979, and where the appeal to authentic, personable real “awakening” is directly connected with a riot against totalitarian communist regime: “*But we are not very cautious about ourselves, we do not observe, or do not want to observe how we live and so survive. A nation lies in its speech. If a man lives unknowingly, in masses, his life can pass without*

15 Antošová, M.: *Dominik Tatarka v kontexte existencializmu*. Nitra : FF UKF, 2011, 158 p.

perception. *The only things which last here from individuals are small funny stories, anecdotes, events, scandals or they remain as truces in speech...*¹⁶ “*They have withdrawn my passport in a festive way. They predicted. They let me to fly to Paris only if I am personally degraded, if I betray. If I express by personal consent, not only consent, but enthusiasm, understanding that I have finally raised myself above.... That they have made good job for us when they have deprived us of sovereignty and responsibility for ourselves. I cannot make such statement...*,”¹⁷ because “*I cannot destroy my human self-confidence in any way...*”¹⁸, because “*I want to tell you that it is inviolability of human person that becomes a reality of our age*”¹⁹.

In the work *Družné letá* (Companionable Summers) the author leaves indications of authentic line and the entire semantic space evidently contains people in “mass”, in the crowd, people “involved” in objective (external) plots. People who are subject to social (communist²⁰) and

biological (instinctive) determinism without intellectual authentication. Biological factuality is affected by social (communist) level and so ontologically unconscious characters behave and create relations in this sense.

However, in addition to the above-mentioned it is necessary to point out for completeness, that this work occasionally contained sentences (although in overexposed/pathetized form) which evoke sentences from the work *Prútené kreslá* (Wicker armchair) in their meaning and form (“*it is even not possible in love without developed intelligence, but ability and intention to concentrate on one person is a condition*”²¹; “*love is not only enchantment of tow nice or passionate people, but a decision, labour, work...*”²²), and thus deeper intellectual grasp of love. For example, this sense has also an introductory reflection in the narrator’s competence: “*A young man would not become a man, a girl a woman..., if they would not spill from their banks, would not try to be other man because of a beloved person once or twice or for several times. In these personal shocks, intense pain impacts, love wakens up a man in young man, a woman in a girl it only matters, whether they find out enough strength and stability to grow mutual love... great love, love for the rest of life is a*

these terms totalitarian regime of Communist Party in the Czechoslovak socialist establishment in 1948-1989.

21 Tatarka, D.: *Prútené kreslá*. Bratislava : Smena, 1990, pp. 106.

22 Tatarka, D.: *Prútené kreslá*. Bratislava : Smena, 1990, pp. 106.

creation of active mind...”²³

Also the following statement addresses love as ontological moment, phenomenon which is the most important in human life, because a human being finds a reason for living only in focusing on another man (in compliance with philosophy of G. Marcel²⁴): “*(...) the greatest happiness is again talking with a close man whom you carry in your heart with all your strength.*”²⁵

As we have already indicated, these statements evoke statements from the work *Prútené kreslá* (Wicker Armchair), as well as from those works of Dominik Tatarka (*V úzkosti hľadania* (In the Anxiety of Searching), *Rozhovory bez konca* (Conversations without End)), where a center of attention of the author was a man, his subject, and the most important was love (not only love between lovers, partners, but also love, kindness and sympathy itself) and human relationship or at least a desire and “fight” for them (“*From inevitability I revive you, I create you, so you really live for me and fill my empty space.*”²⁶ “*There is no certainty. Only people...*”²⁷). However, in the work *Družné letá* (Companionable Summers) recital

23 Tatarka, D.: *Družné letá*. Bratislava : Slovenské vydavateľstvo krásnej literatúry, 1961, pp. 6.

24 Marcel, G.: *K filozofii naděje*. Praha : Vyšehrad, 1971. 137 p. Janke, W.: *Filosofie existence*. Praha : Mladá fronta, 1995. 247 p.

25 Tatarka, D.: *Družné letá*. Bratislava : Slovenské vydavateľstvo krásnej literatúry, 1961, pp. 12.

26 Tatarka, D.: *V úzkosti hľadania*. Liptovský Mikuláš : Tranoscius, 1997, pp. 54.

27 Tatarka, D.: *V úzkosti hľadania*. Bratislava : Slovenský spisovateľ, 1963, pp. 261.

of fragments about active life-long building of partnerships and ontological inter-human affinity and mutual need is more or less finished in demonstration, but basically these fragments are only unique introductory moments which do not interfere into the structure of the text anymore. Although within the context of knowledge of the entire work of Dominik Tatarka it is possible to feel from these fragments depth and philosophical and intellectual dimension of understanding of love, they do not correspond with specific content-plot depiction and character of heroes in the novel. This fact is also confirmed by initial design of the story, at the center of which is Žofia and Ján Hreščo. A moment of non-authenticity, surrendered fatalism, adaptation, a kind of instinctive accidental adherence of a male to female (Hreščo and Žofka) without conscious decision, simply speaking - biological determinism only underlines statement of the narrator: “*Life or fate or what is was, so they decided at that moment, that high - somewhere under the heaven, a sun-tanned face of a young man appeared above her...*”²⁸ “*Žofka lamented to him from a depth of her soul and so she devoted to him: by soul and by body. Why? Maybe out of sympathy. They both had nothing in this world.*”²⁹

The relationship between Janko Hreščo and Marika Orendáčová

28 Tatarka, D.: *Družné letá*. Bratislava : Slovenské vydavateľstvo krásnej literatúry, 1961, pp. 6.

29 Tatarka, D.: *Družné letá*. Bratislava : Slovenské vydavateľstvo krásnej literatúry, 1961, pp. 7.

also seems to be shallow. It also does not have internal, intellectual-ontological plane and the author depicts/describes it only superficially. The author does not permit the percipient into “insides” of partnership of young people; he does not allow the characters to experience anything internally, to feel, build something, or solve. The author only shallowly non-authentically states: “*Young man, Janko Hreščo fell in love with black-eyed girl Marinka Orendáčová.*”³⁰ And such shallow, light line is typical for the whole work.

It means that love is not “Marcel” desire to surrender my “me” to “you” and it does not reflect justification of human existence as such. The author does not use love (as for example in the work *Prútené kreslá* (Wicker Armchair) to start intention of human convergence, listening, absolute opening, and phenomenological reduction of love (as it was named by M. Hamada³¹), etc. In the contrary, even though a motive of love (love-triangle: Hreščo - Marinka - Okánik) is important in terms of novel composition, its grasping in symbiosis with its protagonists is only shallow and flat, as we have already mentioned. In general it can be stated that this phenomenon (love) so close to young people was “misused” for socialist-educational purposes. Love was a reason why Hreščo participated in the construction of the *Družba* railway line. (from her

30 Tatarka, D.: *Družné letá*. Bratislava : Slovenské vydavateľstvo krásnej literatúry, 1961, pp. 17.

31 Tatarka, D.: *Prútené kreslá* (doslov M. Hamada). Bratislava : Smena, 1990, pp. 112.

desire for “new times”, Marinka encourages Janko Hreščo to do something “magnificent”, to extricate from old “kulak”, rural world, so out of his love to her, Janko leaves to build new socialist republic - *Družba* railway).

Also relationships out of male-female (partners) platform, namely friendships between men, are shallow, tepid and indifferent. They do not have a dimension of authentic intellectual “awakened” and developed ontological need of a man, Marcel internal need “*to be with some You on original basis of love*”³². In this case, characters are determined by social facticity. Subjectivity (inter-subjectivity) is in captivity of “objectivism”; it means building and development of new socialist society. The phenomenon of friendship is also “misused” for this objective.

Again, there is no internal living of any character, no base for building of friendly feelings, inclination, common story; simply speaking, friendship is not an internal relationship, but shallow, artificial result of a working team. It comes from admiration of work: “*Hreščo started to admire Okánik unwittingly... They stood in front of him* (men - tunnelers, note of M. A.) *as real heroes.*”³³ And the friendship is based on joint building of *Družba* railway line: “*(...) Friendship is the greatest beauty of life... although there are so many people here, there is a strict order in place;*

32 Quoted according to Janke, W.: *Filosofie existence*. Praha : Mladá fronta, 1995, pp. 151.

33 Tatarka, D.: *Družné letá*. Bratislava : Slovenské vydavateľstvo krásnej literatúry, 1961, pp. 111.

working clothes are hang under the towels instead of festive ones. People who are able to work in such narrow place as a tunnel without hindering each other, are used to order everywhere.”³⁴ “(...) a man with a man working together, building a tunnel together, it is how it works: he is your friend, within your reach, you understand him: this is what we built together.”³⁵

The author “pushes” the friendship between men to the foreground exactly because in this work it is a synonym of common building, construction, collectivism, and in some places it is explicitly preferred on the expense of a relationship between a man and woman: “You, Hreščo, won’t come back for her – for Marinka (to Družba railway line, note M. A.). But the greatest, the most human thing in the world is friendship of these men (it means of men working on the same construction, note M. A.).”³⁶ “A large construction, a large tunnel - always joined us. We lived nice years, the whole life like this. Nice, in friendship, not with wife, not with children, but with friends in the construction site.”³⁷ “Yes, also Hreščo knows that the most beautiful adornment of life

is friendship.”³⁸ “Girlfriend or wife is good, when she is young, but friends are better.”³⁹

Love, as pointed out by Lauček (“Socialist relationship between a man and a woman misses depths and heights of the most beautiful human feeling, texts repel by their sterility and phrases instead of love confessions of lovers. If something is going on between the lovers, it happens only with emphasis on building and cooperative activity, the characters focus on building, collectivization and fighting...”⁴⁰), is a ballast in socialist realist literary work. It could be counterproductive to focus on a wife or family (“to be distracted by them from building a new society”) at the time, when it is necessary to build a socialist republic.

However, it is a fact that even though a friendship is a synonym of building of socialist society in the novel, and so in this sense it is explicitly preferred on the expense of a partnership between a man and a woman, both positions of human relationships (partnership and friendship) are described in shallow, external, and superficial form. The honest authentic living (successful or unsuccessful) of human correlations which we are used to in case of Tatarka (Prútené kreslá (Wicker Armchair), V úzkosti hľadania (In the Anxiety

of Searching) ...) would not only divert attention from “building of socialist society”, but at the same time it would also require personally authentic, intimate, subtle, subjective, inner space of a character, and Tatarka cannot and obviously does not want to do anything like this in a socialist realist work.

34 Tatarka, D.: *Družné letá*. Bratislava : Slovenské vydavateľstvo krásnej literatúry, 1961, pp. 102.

35 Tatarka, D.: *Družné letá*. Bratislava : Slovenské vydavateľstvo krásnej literatúry, 1961, pp. 70.

36 Tatarka, D.: *Družné letá*. Bratislava : Slovenské vydavateľstvo krásnej literatúry, 1961, pp. 102.

37 Tatarka, D.: *Družné letá*. Bratislava : Slovenské vydavateľstvo krásnej literatúry, 1961, pp. 70.

38 Tatarka, D.: *Družné letá*. Bratislava : Slovenské vydavateľstvo krásnej literatúry, 1961, pp. 83.

39 Tatarka, D.: *Družné letá*. Bratislava : Slovenské vydavateľstvo krásnej literatúry, 1961 pp. 106.

40 Lauček, A.: *Schéma a dogma v literatúre*. Prešov : Vydavateľstvo Michala Vaška, 2006, pp. 38.

1.2 About Non-authenticity of Characters in General

In case of *Družné letá* (Companionable Summers) non-authenticity of characters is in symbiosis with creation of non-authentic relations and besides the fact that this “non-individuality” of characters is implicitly obvious from the entire story (from character of heroes), it is confirmed more explicitly for several times in the book and it applies not only to relations, but to life as such: “Everything has gone its own way so far, without her deciding. She has lived as the life went on.”⁴¹ “They made me a controller in this school, and now they call me a teacher... And I have never heard what a teacher is... All of a sudden, they tell me that from young people like me, they achieve what they want and what is needed.”⁴²

However, there is also a moment in the novel, when Marinka Orendáčová realizes her non-authenticity: “It is a shame. I always act only in the same way as other girls. I don’t think and I should...”⁴³ But aside from the fact that such groan is only unique and it absolutely does not “suite” to this character, because she is more or less inactive throughout the whole story (more dreaming and “groaning” than acting) and

41 Tatarka, D.: *Družné letá*. Bratislava : Slovenské vydavateľstvo krásnej literatúry, 1961, pp. 10.

42 Tatarka, D.: *Družné letá*. Bratislava : Slovenské vydavateľstvo krásnej literatúry, 1961, pp. 134.

43 Tatarka, D.: *Družné letá*. Bratislava : Slovenské vydavateľstvo krásnej literatúry, 1961, pp. 50.

moreover it sounds naive and shallow, a fact is that this appeal addressed to herself is not a call for authentic awakening in true sense of the word, for awakening to her internal world and possible subtle connection of her real “me” with the Absolute (God) of G. Marcel⁴⁴. “True authenticity” (and so false) has “barriers” of “new times” here. Therefore, to think about oneself means to accept directives dictated from outside in this case; it represents a desire of Marinka for new “better” socialist future.

Nor a character who represents a repressor of “new times” (Pavol Orendáč) in the socialist realist work and who finally changes his attitude in terms of (political) directives required from outside, is a conscious character. Resistance of Orendáč is not a rational resistance, internal decision, a revolt against a system, but unwillingness to change the habitual rules. It is unwillingness to change a habit, to surrender previously acquired social acceptance and position (“Pavol Orendáč did not enjoy glory.”⁴⁵) and to leave comfortable “run-in rails” of previous rules defined from outside (private agriculture, habits, church traditions). So again, it is not a strong, self-confident, authentic character and finally he plastically gave up to new socialist reality.

Orendáč’s non-authentic, passive “grasping” (or rather non-grasping) of his own life is supplemented with his non-

44 Marcel, G.: *K filozofii naděje*. Praha : Vyšehrad, 1971, 137 p.

45 Tatarka, D.: *Družné letá*. Bratislava : Slovenské vydavateľstvo krásnej literatúry, 1961, pp. 95.

authentic “attitude” to God - to God not as the Absolute (G. Marcel) to whom a human being awakens in his intimacy on the basis of inter-subjectivity, but to God as a tradition, a “trend” from pre-socialist times: “Songs and prayers being prayed and contained in the book for Sunday service were so known to Orendáč, as well as to other worshippers in the church, that he did not have to think of anything. And as far as he did not have to think of anything, he was dreaming pleasantly - whether he believes or not.”⁴⁶

With regard to the above mentioned, it is interesting to see how desire of Tatarka to walk within the limits of socialist realism changes his perception of heroes. As have been specified above, characters are subject to coincidence; they accept external circumstances and things as they occur, or they behave according to rules dictated from outside. And even it seems that they act (agitation, meetings of young people), it is not an activity of strong authentic personalities, but non-individual beings adapting to rules, and it is evil according to existentialism – “In case for example I passively accept a summary of orders that are seemingly forced on me by an environment to which I was born, by a party to which I was fixed without real thinking, etc., everything happens as if I was just a tool, an ordinary wheel, it means as if I was denied a opportunity to act which is a human possibility par

46 Tatarka, D.: *Družné letá*. Bratislava : Slovenské vydavateľstvo krásnej literatúry, 1961, pp. 195 – 196.

excellence. However, all this after further consideration assumes that the aggrieved person does not know himself/herself, that he/she pushes away exactly what gives him/her own dignity.”⁴⁷

The characters are missing internal “thinking” second plan (contemplativeness, inner world against preferred superficiality and simplicity) depicted by Tatarka in his works dealing with existentialism on the basis of which the characters could be perceived differently as simple and naive. In terms of socialist realist “barrier”, heroes waive their sovereignty and authenticity and they form their lives only seemingly. In fact, they live in a team, a mass and they waive their authenticity in the name of socialist realist rules and needs.

However, despite this shallow turnover, Tatarka works with the same phenomena, it means with an accident, fate, a in case of existentialist - authentic works. “Only” in this case, characters - to prevent “harming” of socialist intents - do not ask on anything, they are not internally awaken (as we have already shown) and they surrender to such accident and fatefulness without conflicts (“*Life, fade or what it was, were decisive in that moment...*”⁴⁸; “*she lived as she could...*”⁴⁹).⁵⁰

Just to make it more interesting and for comparison we can also mention a view of Tatarka’s (let’s call them existentialistic) heroes on fatality or casualness in the work *Prútené kreslá* (Wicker armchair) or in the work *Písačky* (Scribbles): “*I was astonished to watch a coincidence that suddenly incurred. A whole stream of coincidences casted me about like a splinter. And I did not want to surrender, because it did not strengthen my self-confidence at all ...*”⁵¹; “*(...) it could not be a chance that we sit here... Coincidence is in conflict with even the modest self-confidence and so with Daniela, she - Daniela does not meet with random people. She does only what she can justify...*”⁵²; “*Fate? - Slzička smiles bitterly. There is also something what is called a fate. Fate in all of us...*”⁵³

in the novel who manifests rebellion, such character is either finally transferred pro-socialistically or he remains a “black” hero/saboteur. However, a role of such saboteur is not to fight for personal awakening, but he represents a byword in the socialist realist work. For more information, see Lauček, A.: *Schéma a dogma v literatúre*, 2006.

⁵¹ Tatarka, D.: *Prútené kreslá*. Bratislava : Smena, 1990 , pp. 13.

⁵² Tatarka, D.: *Prútené kreslá*. Bratislava : Smena, 1990,pp. 33.

⁵³ Tatarka, D.: *Písačky pre milovanú Lutáciu*. Praha : Labyrinth, 1999, pp. 156.

⁴⁷ Marcel, G.: *K filosofii nádeje*. Praha : Vyšehrad, 1971, p. 80.

⁴⁸ Tatarka, D.: *Družné letá*. Bratislava : Slovenské vydavateľstvo krásnej literatúry, 1961, pp. 7.

⁴⁹ Tatarka, D.: *Družné letá*. Bratislava : Slovenské vydavateľstvo krásnej literatúry, 1961, pp. 10.

⁵⁰ Of course, according to socialist realist standardization, if there is a character

1.3 About Potential Existentialist Moments and their “Socialist Modifications”

Socialist theme and superficiality, shallowness of relationships, building of communist society, etc. present in the whole book strictly “prevent” Tatarka’s escape into more complex and so existentialist positions. In the work *Družné letá* (Companionable Summers), there is nothing at first sight, what would primarily - by form and meaning - protrude, “scream” and potentially attract attention on the topic of existentialism.

Although Tatarka occasionally uses existentialist motives (death, strangeness) and also motives or poetic methods which preferentially do not refer to existentialism, but also with help of these methods, Tatarka created existentialist axioms in this existentialist works (station, nature-human parallelism⁵⁴), but in this case, he consistently modifies them so they look like pro-socialist. And so, if the writer attracts attention to existentialism somehow in the work *Družné letá* (Companionable Summers), then it is exactly this vehement “clumsy” effort to avoid it.

Let’s focus on a feeling of strangeness as a basic existential. Even in connection with Hreščo the narrator says: “*Coldness has passed through Hreščo, he shaked because of a feling of strangeness.*”⁵⁵ Notwithstanding the fact that

⁵⁴ For more information, see: Antošová, M.: *Dominik Tatarka v kontexte existencializmu*. Nitra : FF UKF, 2011, 158 p.

⁵⁵ Tatarka, D.: *Družné letá*. Bratislava : Slovenské vydavateľstvo krásnej literatúry, 196, pp. 56.

the writer does not speak about this moment any more, it is not authentically depicted, it dos not have an atmosphere of authenticity and seriousness, the author does not provide this feeling larger space and it is really only a negligible moment (in the whole novel - only few sentences and laconic groans), just “for sure” the author returns to this moment later on, so he can upturn it by a team and work: “*(...) he admired the men fighting with the element of earth. They grew in front of him as real heroes. Hreščo stopped to think or be sorry for himself, I, Hreščo, captured in this foreign world, when I get out of here?*”⁵⁶

A motive of station (or a place crowded with many people, such as: station, hotel...) is also intersting and penetrating the work of Dominik Tatarka. Tatarka used this motive to create atmosphere of a crowd of people who are passing by, who are strangers, inaccessible to each other in existentialist-tuned works, to underline essential Sartre loneliness of a human existence in the crowd of people⁵⁷.

Also in this case Okánik is at the station, but now it is not a place of existentialist human distance, but a place with an express train Prague – Moscow (“*Ďuro Okánik discovered another place: station. He feels the best here. There is a noticeboard on the whole wall. Prague and Moscow are drawn in white edges and*

connected with a red ribbon...”⁵⁸).

A natural-human parallelism is also evident in this work. For example, in the part *Rozprávka o prichádzajúcej jari* (Tale about Upcoming Spring) (V úzkosti hľadania (In the Anxiety of Searching)), Tatarka used this parallelism to underline biological-spiritual (natural-spiritual) dimension of a man⁵⁹. He likened natural facts to a human subject (to feelings, inner processes) and with help of natural-human parallelism he drawn attention to intimate, inner world and feelings of the characters. In the work *Družné letá* (Companionable Summers), the author likened a hill Bujanová (its majesty and untouched internal beauty) to Marinka specifically: “*She is inaccessible to feelings and intellect of Hreščo. She hides her secrets, her interior, her soul. Hreščo took a think, wants to know what is inside, as if he does not look at the hill Bujanová, but rather to a pretty face of a girl (Marinka), who burnt her face to his soul forever.*”⁶⁰ Later on, this parallelism (untouchable interior of the hill, it means not knowing the internal world of Marinka) takes more general dimensions, as if a general desire of Jano Hreščo to enter the insides of the hill (“*If it was*

⁵⁸ TATARKA, D.: *Družné letá*. Bratislava : Slovenské vydavateľstvo krásnej literatúry, 1961, pp. 85.

⁵⁹ See ANTOŠOVÁ, M.: *Fenomén existencializmu v Tatarkovej rozprávke o prichádzajúcej jari*. In Obert, V. (ed): *Literárnovedné štúdie III*. Nitra : FF UKF, 2003, pp. 122 133.

⁶⁰ Tatarka, D.: *Družné letá*. Bratislava : Slovenské vydavateľstvo krásnej literatúry, 1961, pp. 93.

possible, I would immediately roll up my sleeve and reach out what is inside that hill⁶¹), (in the context with Tatarka's existentialistic-tuned works) demonstrated Hreščo's need to deal with intimacy of the subject and know its "insides", its internal world. But Tatarka needed to set this negligible moment (turn into the interior of the human subject) straight. A desire to know the interior of the hill Bujanová opposes a work carried out on the hill Bujanová, a thinking devoted to building and development, unburdened and undispersed internal psychological "dissection" of a human subject: "We, tunnelers, reach the rock with drills.... Really? How is he thinking? (...) People from Liptov region think completely differently than he, Hreščo, a blacksmith from Zemplin region.... There is no mysterious interior of the earth in front of them, but work.... Hreščo thinks like a savage who does not know anything."⁶²

As if Tatarka encouraged himself and called attention to the way of perception of world which should be applied in terms of communist-totalitarian directives. He supported it with behaviour of a character admiring the attitude of the tunnelers and reproaching himself for "unworthy" thoughts (in contrast with communist directives). I would like to mention here that if we stated about the characters of the work *Družné letá* (Companionable Summers)

that they are shallow, this part reflects a fact how difficult it is for Tatarka to maintain this "status" of shallowness. We can feel "old" Tatarka behind this moments of self-persuasion, for whom this absolutism of shallowness, publicity and outwardness is unnatural.

Another motive typical for Dominik Tatarka used in this work is a motive of death. It has only a minimal, laconic space, and different dimension than in existentialistically tuned works. As we have already mentioned, in existentialist works death is a motive to hopelessness, despair, pain, loss, meaninglessness of life, or on the other hand it "wakes up" a need to turn own existence towards another person and to give him/her our love⁶³.

This motive occurred in the work *Družné letá* (Companionable Summers) only negligibly and again the author used it only to "protect" dictated perception of the world (absolutely without any formal or meaning connections with existentialism). This laconic moment had the following form: "At the moment when he kissed old woman's hand (Hreščo, note M. A.), he himself felt as an old, sad man: this old woman dies, a girl grows up and turns to a nice young woman. And then the world will be different."⁶⁴

In this case the "sadness" from realization of her end is not provided any further space, and not only that it could not be evoked

by a severity of this testimony in one sentence, but its existentialist "maturation" also does not allow the author to make statement in terms of optimism for new, better, socialist times - the old is transferred to new and the past to better future in the spirit of building of new socialist society.

A motive of death can be perceived in the work once again, but again it does not have a dimension of individual drama, but it directly points to non-sense of private property collection. It is a situation when the master Liech tells a story of the old woman Kutlíčka (she was married to a forester who collected a dowry for their daughter who finally died when giving a life to her child). The author "educates" a reader in a desired way - new generation "from new, better, socialist world" no longer has to deal with private ownership issues and "will no longer be bothered by absurdities (it means collection of private property, note M. A.)"⁶⁵.

In general, it can be stated that the work does not offer any existentialist "shouts" or "fragments". And everything what could be existentialist is modified in such a way that it supports communist directives.

Final World

Socialist realist line is evident in the work *Družné letá* (Companionable Summers). Building, adoration of the Soviet

Union, is not disturbed by anything from existentialism. Nothing in the text will surprise a percipient by its existentialist form or existentialist content. Motives, moments (more or less existentialist) which the author used for existentialist purposes in the existentialistically tuned works are not moved to these positions here. Therefore, we cannot speak about existentialism in this masterpiece. But if something can remind us a liberal and existentialist Tatarka far behind the text of this work, in symbiosis with knowledge of his other works, then paradoxically it is already mentioned exaggerated desire to ground each of the motives, which could potentially lead to existentialism, in such a way that percipient would not explain it with a "code" from existentialistically tuned works, with a "code" which he used in his previous literary texts in fight for authenticity of a personality and for solving of existential problems of authentic human subject.

Bibliography

Antošová, M.: *Dominik Tatarka v kontexte existencializmu*. Nitra : FF UKF, 2011.
Antošová, M.: Fenomén existencializmu v Tatarkovej rozprávke o prichádzajúcej jari. In Obert, V. (ed): *Literárnovedné štúdie III*. Nitra : FF UKF, 2003, pp. 122-133.
Antošová, M.: Prvý a druhý úder v kontexte Tatarkovej existencialisticky ladenej tvorby. In *Slavica Nitriensia*, 2012, Vol. 2, No. 2, pp. 128-154. ISSN 1338-7464.
Bakoš, V. et al.: *Umenie v službách totality*. Bratislava : SAV, 2000.
Bílík, R.: *Slovenská literatúra*

po roku 1945 I. Trnava : Trnavská univerzita v Trnave, 2009.
Bombíková, P.: Tatarkova raná novelistika (1933-1945). In *Slovenská literatúra*, 1997, Vol. 44, No. 3, pp. 188-199. ISSN 0037-6973.
Bombíková, P.: Nové formulovanie spisovateľa a spisovateľskej práce v rokoch 1946-1956. Prípad Dominika Tatarku. In *Slovenská literatúra*, 2002, Vol. 46, No. 1, pp. 100-118. ISSN 0037-6973.
Černý, V.: *První a druhý sešit o existencialismu*. Praha : Mladá fronta, 1992.
Hamada, M.: Dominik Tatarka - sujetová básnik. In *Slovenské pohľady*, 1992, Vol. 108, No. 2, pp. 14-19.
Lauček, A.: *Schéma a dogma v literatúre*. Prešov : Vydavateľstvo Michala Vaška, 2006.
Marcel, G.: *K filozofii naděje*. Praha : Vyšehrad, 1971.

Janke, W.: *Filosofie existence*. Praha : Mladá fronta, 1995.
Sartre, J. P.: *Bytí a nicota*. Praha : Oikymen, 2006.
Sartre, J. P.: *Cesty k slobode*. Bratislava : Slovenský spisovateľ, 1994.
Sartre, J. P.: *Existencialismus je humanismus*. Praha : Vyšehrad, 2004.
Sartre, J. P.: *Múr*. Bratislava : Slovenský spisovateľ, 1966.
Sartre, J. P.: *Múr*. Bratislava : Vydavateľstvo Spolku slovenských spisovateľov, 2009.
Sartre, J. P.: *Štúdie o literatúre*. Bratislava : Slovenské nakladateľstvo krásnej literatúry, 1964.
Tatarka, D.: *Družné letá*. Bratislava : Slovenské vydavateľstvo krásnej literatúry, 1961.
Tatarka, D.: *Písačky pre milovanú Lutáciu*. Praha : Labyrint, 1999.
Tatarka, D.: *Prútené kreslá*.

Bratislava : Smena, 1990.
Tatarka, D.: *V úzkosti hľadania*. Liptovský Mikuláš : Tranoscius, 1997.
Tatarka, D.: *V úzkosti hľadania*. Bratislava : Slovenský spisovateľ, 1963.
Vlašín, Š. et al.: *Slovník literárních směrů a skupín*. Praha : Orbis, 1976.
Vlašín, Š. et al.: *Slovník literární teorie*. Praha : Československý spisovatel, 1984.

Profile of the author

doc. PhDr. Marcela Antošová, PhD.
Constantine the Philosopher University in Nitra
Faculty of Arts
Department of Journalism
B. Slančíkovej 1
949 01 Nitra
Slovak Republic
mantosova@ukf.sk

Doc. PhDr. Marcela Antošová, PhD., (born 18. 1. 1976) is the head of Department of Journalism at Constantine the Philosopher University in Nitra. She graduated in Slovak language, literature and philosophy (2000). She has Doctorate (2006) and a lectureship (2012) in the field of Slovak literature. She gained all the degrees (Mgr., PhD., doc.) at Constantine the Philosopher University in Nitra. Her research area is Slovak stylistics, interpretation of literary texts and relationship between Slovak literature and philosophy.

61 Tatarka, D.: *Družné letá*. Bratislava : Slovenské vydavateľstvo krásnej literatúry, 1961, pp. 94.

62 Tatarka, D.: *Družné letá*. Bratislava : Slovenské vydavateľstvo krásnej literatúry, 1961, pp. 95.

63 See Antošová, M.: Dominik Tatarka v kontexte existencializmu. Nitra : FF UKF, 2011, 158 p.

64 Tatarka, D.: *Družné letá*. Bratislava : Slovenské vydavateľstvo krásnej literatúry, 1961, pp. 100.

65 Tatarka, D.: *Družné letá*. Bratislava : Slovenské vydavateľstvo krásnej literatúry, 1961, pp. 70.