

Title: Regarding Socialist Realism: Miroslav Krleža's Version of a Yugoslav Literature
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My paper will discuss the historical and stylistic context of Miroslav Krleža's three-part, satirical novel *Banquet in Blitva*. Even though the novel is often broken up into two halves since parts one and two were published prior to the Second World War and the final volume did not come out until 1962, I will argue that Krleža always planned for the novel to be treated as a constitutive whole. Besides the obvious obstacles to publishing during wartime, I will investigate what else impeded the publication of the third volume of *Banquet in Blitva*, especially considering that a version of the final volume was ready for publication in 1939. In this regard, I want to consider links between the publication history of this novel and its author's engagement in debates over the nature of Socialist Literature. On the eve of the Second World War Krleža composed the lengthy, polemical essay "*Dialectical antibarbarus*," criticizing socialist dogmas that mandated artistic conformity. After the war, in 1952, he delivered a critical speech at the Third Congress of Yugoslav Writers, titled "On Cultural Freedom." In this speech, Krleža again attacked socialist realism and defended the right of individual writers to describe the world as they saw it. In an attempt to make a single, unified YU culture, the Communists had attempted to enforce a highly centralized and rigid cultural model. In this system, writers were viewed as engineers of human souls whose task was to optimistically depict all the great changes that were taking place in Yugoslavia. In relation to Krleža's advocacy for artistic freedom and criticism of ideological constraints, the focal point of the paper will be the satirical nature of *Banquet in Blitva* and the function of satire within socialist literature.