

# IRENA AVSENIK NABERGOJ:

## Curriculum vitae and Track Record

### PERSONAL DETAILS

Family name, First name: **Avsenik Nabergoj, Irena**

Researcher unique identifier(s): **ORCID:** 0000-0002-5628-1046;

Research ID (**ARIS – Slovenian Research Agency**): 19609

### URLs for Websites

- **ARIS:** Irena Avsenik Nabergoj (cobiss.net)
- **ZRC SAZU:** <https://ikz.zrc-sazu.si/sl/sodelavci/irena-avsenik-nabergoj-sl>
- **UL TEOF:** <https://www.teof.uni-lj.si/fakulteta/zaposleni/profil/irena-avsenik-nabergoj>

### Education and key qualifications

- PhD, June 1, 2004, Faculty of Arts, Department of Slavic Languages and Literatures, University of Ljubljana, Slovenia. Supervisor: Prof. Dr. Aleksander Bjelčevič.
- PhD (second), November 12, 2015, Department of Biblical Studies and Judaism, Faculty of Theology, University of Ljubljana, Slovenia. Supervisor: Acad. Prof. Dr. Jože Krašovec.
- Master's Degree, June 4, 1998, Faculty of Arts, Department of Slavic Languages and Literatures, University of Ljubljana, Slovenia. Supervisor: Prof. Dr. Helga Glušič.

### Current Positions

Since 2005, Avsenik Nabergoj has successfully combined her employment at multiple institutions, allowing her to engage in **interdisciplinary research and teaching**. She is currently active as:

- October 25, 2022 – present: **Full Professor and Principal Scientific Investigator** in the field of **Religious Studies and Religious Anthropology**, Faculty of Theology, University of Ljubljana. (Primary employment - 90%)
- June 14, 2017 – present: **Principal Scientific Investigator** in the field of **Literary and Cultural History**, Institute of Cultural History, Research Centre of the Slovenian Academy of Sciences and Arts (ZRC SAZU). (Part-time employment - 10%)
- May 27, 2022 – present: **Full Professor and Principal Scientific Investigator** in the field of **Slovenian Literature**, Faculty of Arts, University of Maribor, Slovenia. (Occasional supplementary collaboration)
- May 11, 2017 – present: **Full Professor** in the field of **Literature**, Faculty of Humanities, University of Nova Gorica, Slovenia. (Occasional supplementary collaboration)

### Previous Positions

- **2000–2003:** Junior Researcher, Faculty of Theology, University of Ljubljana, Slovenia (first doctoral dissertation was enrolled and successfully completed at the Faculty of Arts, while the research program was conducted at the Faculty of Theology).
- **2003–2006:** Research Assistant, Faculty of Theology, University of Ljubljana, Slovenia.
- **2006–2011:** Assistant Professor of Slovenian Literature, Faculty of Humanities, University of Nova Gorica.

- **2006–2012:** Research Fellow, Institute of Cultural History, Research Centre of the Slovenian Academy of Sciences and Arts.
- **2006–2013:** Research Fellow, Faculty of Theology, University of Ljubljana.
- **2011–2017:** Associate Professor in the field of “Literature”, Faculty of Humanities, University of Nova Gorica, Slovenia.
- **2012–2017:** Senior Research Fellow in the field of **Cultural and Literary History**, Institute of Cultural History, Research Centre of the Slovenian Academy of Sciences and Arts, Slovenia.
- **2013–2018:** Senior Research Fellow in the field of “**Religious Studies and Religious Anthropology**”, Faculty of Theology, University of Ljubljana.
- **February 27, 2018 – present:** **Principal Scientific Investigator** in the field of “**Religious Studies and Religious Anthropology**”.

## RESEARCH ACHIEVEMENTS AND PEER RECOGNITION

### Research Achievements

I have published approximately 120 scientific articles in national and international journals, proceedings, and monographs, along with **14 independent scientific monographs** released by Slovenian and international publishers. Five of these monographs are in English and published abroad: three by Peter Lang Publishing, Frankfurt, Germany (2008, 2013, 2014), one by Cambridge Scholars Publishing, Newcastle upon Tyne (2009), and one by V&R unipress, Göttingen (2013). *Here, I highlight **a selection of my independent scientific monographs**:*

**1. Avsenik Nabergoj, Irena. *Longing, Weakness and Temptation: From Myth to Artistic Creations*. . Newcastle upon Tyne: Cambridge Scholars Publishing, 2009. XII, 321 pages.**

- ❖ *From the review: “This book is a first intertextual presentation of central texts of world literature containing the motifs of longing, weakness and temptation. With a wealth of illuminating examples showing mutual interdependence between the Bible, folk literature and culture, this volume is a major contribution to culture studies and will prove invaluable for any student of literature and culture.”*

**Professor Dr. Sekine Seizo, The University of Tokyo, Japan**

The book was also published in an expanded form in Slovenian: **Avsenik Nabergoj, Irena. *Hrepenenje in skušnjava v svetu literature: motiv Lepe Vide***. Ljubljana: Mladinska knjiga, 2010. 726 pages.

**2. Avsenik Nabergoj, Irena. *Reality and Truth in Literature: From Ancient to Modern European Literary and Critical Discourse***. Göttingen: V&R unipress, 2013. 229 pages.

The monograph offers a critical overview of views on reality and truth in the areas of philosophy and literary criticism. It is a pioneering work in Slovenia on these topics and one of the few works of its type globally.

- ❖ *From the review: "The approach adopted in this study is necessarily an interdisciplinary one in which literature representing a wide range of languages, periods, cultures, and schools is examined in relation to the theme of reality and truth. In the process, Dr. Nabergoj sustains an impressive engagement with the great body of western literature from biblical and classical times through to the modern period, and displays an unflagging capacity for philosophical abstraction."*

**Prof. Robert P. Gordon, Regius Professor Emeritus of Hebrew, Faculty of Asian and Middle Eastern Studies, University of Cambridge; Fellow of the British Academy, United Kingdom**

### **3. Avsenik Nabergoj, Irena. *Justice and Redemption: Anthropological Realities and Literary Visions by Ivan Cankar*. Frankfurt am Main: Peter Lang, 2014. 353 pages.**

The book, the author's third on this subject published by Peter Lang (the first two: *Mirror of Reality and Dreams: Stories and Confessions by Ivan Cankar*, 2008; *The Power of Love and Guilt: Representations of the Mother and Woman in the Literature of Ivan Cankar*, 2013), presents Ivan Cankar (1876–1918) as the first Slovenian writer to examine the human conscience, justice, guilt, and punishment in a manner comparable to Shakespeare, Dostoyevsky, Tolstoy, and influenced also by the Bible.

### **4. Avsenik Nabergoj, Irena. *Zgodovina protijudovstva in antisemitizma v Evropi [The History of Anti-Judaism and Antisemitism in Europe]*. Slovenska matica, 2016. 248 pages.**

*From the review: "Social and cultural historians in Slavic lands have made little meaningful contribution to the scholarly tradition focused on the study of Europe's Jewish Other. That is why Irena Avsenik Nabergoj's ambitious, wide-ranging, and well-informed monograph is all the more welcome as the first study in a Slavic language that comes to fill an important lacuna in the cultural historiography of Central and Eastern Europe by applying western analytical methodologies to the exploration of the imaginary Jews on Slavic material in the pan-European historical and cultural context."*

**Prof. Dr. Leonid Livak, University of Toronto, Canada**

- ❖ *From the second review: "In a time when speed is often mistaken for quality, and circumstances push us towards immediate and often poorly considered publication of our research results, the thoughtful and substantively well-structured discussion by Irena Avsenik Nabergoj is more than a pleasant surprise. With a concise introduction that acquaints us with the history of Judaism and the beginnings of archaic antisemitism, along with a clear identification of the reasons for Jewish exclusion, she introduces us to the image and self-image of Jews in European literary heritage."*

- **Prof. Dr. Oto Luthar, Director of ZRC SAZU, Slovenia**

### **5. Avsenik Nabergoj, Irena. *Podoba Judov v evropski književnosti, gledališču, glasbi in filmu [The Image of the Jews in European Literature, Theatre, Music and Film]*. Ljubljana: Slovenska matica, 2017. 352 pages.**

- *From the review: "The author demonstrates a broad knowledge of various artistic genres and makes a competent selection of authors and works, which she subjects to her*

analysis. In the field of literature, she examines the works of Marlowe, Shakespeare, Scott, Dickens, Joyce, Gogol, Turgenev, Dostoevsky, and Nator. She addresses the images of Jews in the works of these writers in a complex, comprehensive manner, free from the preconceived biases that sometimes guide such research.”

▪ **Prof. Tomo Virk, University of Ljubljana, Slovenia**

- From the review: “Prof. Dr. Avsenik Nabergoj is nearing completion of three books on different aspects of Jewish life and death in European society from the Middle Ages to the present. Her monograph is particularly important, not only for its considerable breadth and thoroughness, but also because it provides a solid foundation for what promises to be her most important contribution to the field of Jewish studies, a new monograph on the depictions of the Jews in Slovene literature.”

▪ **Prof. Gary Rosenshield, University of Wisconsin-Madison, USA**

**6. Avsenik Nabergoj, Irena. *Podobe resničnosti, resnice in ljubezni v Svetem pismu in literaturi* [Images of Reality, Truth and Love in the Bible and Literature]. Ljubljana: Slovenska akademija znanosti in umetnosti, 2018. 745 pages.**

- ❖ From the review: “Personalities of deep spirit and sharp mind have always been interested in questions about what lies behind the appearance of visible reality and what is the ‘thing in itself.’ After completing her first doctorate in literary studies in 2004, Prof. Dr. Irena Avsenik Nabergoj ventured into the world of myths, stories, poems, literary criticism, and philosophy to show, through comparative analysis of selected texts from the Bible, Greek antiquity, and later literature, ways of comprehensively presenting reality, truth, and love. The book is an original work that, in its scope, breadth of discourse, and depth of feeling, surpasses previous attempts to combine theoretical discourse and artistic inspiration both domestically and globally.”

**Prof. Jože Krašovec, Slovenian and European Academy of Sciences and Arts**

**7. Avsenik Nabergoj, Irena. *Trpljenje in smrt v zgodovini judovske literature* [Suffering and Death in the History of Jewish Literature]. Ljubljana: Slovenska matica, 2020. 556 pages.**

- ❖ From the review: “In international relations, the work of Prof. DDr. Irena Avsenik Nabergoj represents an irresistible force in the pursuit of dialogue and reconciliation between ethnic groups that have a terrible record of guilt. This is a particular incentive for intensifying dialogue between Jews and Christians in Slovenia, Europe and elsewhere in the world. A new era of dialogue between Jews and Christians in the unravelling of what unites us will be, in the light of the historical burden, an all the more compelling symbol for the search for dialogue in the relationship between all peoples.”

**Akad. Prof. Dr. Emanuel Tov, Hebrew University of Jerusalem, Israel**

- ❖ From the second review: “The scientific works of Prof. Dr. Irena Avsenik Nabergoj are noteworthy not only for their scientific excellence but also for their broader social and cultural significance. They do not merely address specific scientific problems but touch on fundamental existential questions that mark every individual in their concrete existence. Her findings thus enrich not only literary studies and religious anthropology but also society and

*culture as a whole, as well as every individual who is confronted with a profound reflection on fundamental existential questions and problems. ”*

- **Prof. Dr. Tomo Virk, Full Professor, Faculty of Arts, University of Ljubljana, Department of Comparative Literature, Member of the Slovenian Academy of Sciences and Arts.**

**8. Avsenik Nabergoj, Irena. *Literarne oblike v Svetem pismu in njihov odmev v poznejši judovsko-krščanski kulturi* [Literary Forms in the Bible and Their Resonance in Later Judeo-Christian Culture]. Ljubljana: Mladinska knjiga, 2021. 658 pages.**

- ❖ *From the review: “The book fills an important gap in the understanding and evaluation of the literary characteristics of biblical texts, which must be considered if we are to reveal the breadth and depth of biblical content and its significance for the development of European languages, literature, preaching in churches, and general culture. The quality of the presentations shows that Irena Avsenik Nabergoj is among the leading experts on the literary forms of biblical texts in the European and global context, bringing innovations to the Slovenian space.”*
  - **Prof. Jože Krašovec, Professor Emeritus, Faculty of Theology, University of Ljubljana; Member of the European Academy of Sciences and Arts (EASA), Member of the Slovenian Academy of Sciences and Arts (SAZU), Slovenia**

**9. Avsenik Nabergoj, Irena. *Izvori negativne podobe Judov v starejšem slovenskem literarnem izročilu* [The Origins of the Negative Image of Jews in Older Slovenian Literary Tradition]. Ljubljana: Slovenska matica, 2023. 1021 pages.**

- ❖ *From the review: “The study is original, unique and perspective, because it directs the reader into the open horizon of the providence of coexistence between peoples with a holistic view of the past. The book reveals the fact that the predominantly negative images of Jews across Europe over two thousand years have a common origin.”*
  - **Prof. Jože Krašovec, Professor Emeritus, Faculty of Theology, University of Ljubljana; Member of the European Academy of Sciences and Arts (EASA), Member of the Slovenian Academy of Sciences and Arts (SAZU), Slovenia.**
- ❖ *From the review: “The work represents a unique and original contribution to understanding the origins of the negative image of Jews in Slovenian folk prayers, songs, and stories, as well as in older Slovenian literature in the context of the Bible, later Jewish and Christian sources, and in the context of the economic and political currents of modern society.”*
  - **Assoc. Prof. Mari Jože Osredkar, University of Ljubljana, Slovenia**

## Peer Recognition

I have received significant peer recognition for my research contributions:

- In **2009**, I was honored with the highest national recognition for achievements in research and development, the **Zois recognition**.

- In **2015**, I was elected as a regular member of the prestigious **European Academy of Sciences and Arts** in **Salzburg, Austria**.
- Additionally, in **2016**, I was selected as one of the most successful researchers at the **University of Ljubljana**, a distinction awarded to only one researcher per faculty.
- ❖ **International Collaborations and Visiting Scholar Positions.**  
My international collaborations are extensive and noteworthy. I have regularly cooperated with foreign academics, particularly from the University of Cambridge (UK), where I held the status of **Visiting Scholar at St Edmund's College for ten consecutive summers from 2010 to 2021**. In 2018, I was awarded the **Erasmus Staff Mobility for Training scholarship**. My research stays include the *École biblique et archéologique française* in Jerusalem (2008) and the University of Vienna (2010, 2019).
- ❖ **Conference Participation and Lectures.** I have actively participated in numerous international conferences, presenting papers and chairing panels. Notable conferences include the American Association of Teachers of Slavic and East European Languages (AATSEEL) with twelve papers presented in the **USA** and **Canada**, the International Mediaeval Congress (IMC) in **Leeds, UK**, with eight papers, and the European Society for Biblical Studies (EABS). I have also presented at the International Society for Cultural History (ISCH) in **Umeå, Sweden**, 2017, and **Verona, Italy**, 2022, and the International Organization for the Study of the Old Testament (IOSOT) in **Ljubljana, Slovenia**, 2007, **Aberdeen, UK**, 2019, and **Zürich, Switzerland**, 2022. My lectures have reached audiences also in **Austria, Germany, Italy, Hungary, France, the Czech Republic, Poland, Romania, Croatia** and **Singapore**. *For summaries, please visit the researcher's webpage on Sicris or Orcid.*
- ❖ **Reviewing and Editorial Work.** As a reviewer, I contribute to both international and domestic scholarly journals, including *Bogoslovni vestnik*, *Edinost in dialog*, *Dve domovini*, *Ars humanitas*, *Slavia Centralis*, *Journal of Mediterranean Studies*, and *Romanoslavica*, etc. I am active on the editorial boards of the Slovenian scientific journal *Bogoslovni vestnik* and the scientific journal *Romanoslavica*, which is published in Romania. I have also served as a panel and round table chair at international congresses in Slovenia, Europe, and the USA (AATSEEL).
- ❖ **Mentorship and Support for Young Researchers.** Supporting young researchers is a key aspect of my work. Four doctoral dissertations in Literature and Theology completed under my supervision were graded summa cum laude: Urša Prša (2016), Maruša Brozovič (2019), Mateja Eniko (2021), and Christopher J. Scobie (2015). Currently, I am mentoring one doctoral dissertations in theology. I encourage doctoral students to publish articles in high-impact Slovenian and foreign journals and to participate in individual mobility for training (Erasmus Intensive Program) at universities abroad. In 2014, I was on the list for an ARIS award as the top mentor of young researchers in Slovenia.
- ❖ **Research Projects and Leadership.**

As a leader, I have participated or am currently participating in the following projects:

**As a Leader:**

- **Jewish-Christian Sources and Dimensions of Justice** (ARRS, 2015–2021)
- **Fundamental Values in Judeo-Christian Sources and Traditions and Opportunities for Dialogue** (ARRS, 2022–2027)
- **Origins and Transformations of Motifs and Symbols in Literature and Languages** (ARRS, 2009–2012)
- **The Power of Emotions and the Status of Female Characters in Various Literary Genres of the Old Testament** (ARRS, 2023–2026)

**As a Member:**

- **Continuities and Ruptures in the History of Slovenian Territory** (ARRS, 2005–2008)
- **(Re)Construction of Memory of Turning Points in Slovenian History of the 20th Century** (ARRS, 2010–2013)
- **The Word in Dialogue** (ARRS, 2013–2016)
- **Slovenian Literature in Unknown Early Modern Manuscripts** (ARRS, 2013–2016)
- **Slovenian Female Missionaries in India** (ARRS, 2017–2020)
- **Slovenian Intellectual History in the Light of Contemporary Theories of Religion** (ARRS, 2021–2024)
- **The Literary Republic of Boris Pahor** (ARRS, 2022–2025)
- **PROactive CARE For Users Life** (Interreg CENTRAL EUROPE PROGRAMME, 2023–2026)
- **AI-THOS: Innovative Ethics and Research Integrity Training in the AI Era** (Erasmus+, 2024–2026)

❖ **Managerial Functions and Abilities, Work in Expert Committees.**

- Since **2010**, I have led the expert group responsible for language and style for the new **Slovenian Bible translation**, published in **2024** in five books.
- I have been a member of the **scientific council of the Institute of Cultural History ZRC SAZU** since **2020** and a member of the **commission for doctoral studies and research work at TEOF UL** since **2016**.
- Additionally, I have been part of the expert commission for the **Prešeren Awards**, the highest recognitions in the field of art in Slovenia, since **2020**.
- From **2019**, I have been mentoring doctoral students and serving on doctoral commissions in the **Regional Platform of the Western Balkans**, involving universities from **Zagreb, Belgrade, Novi Sad, and Ljubljana**.
- Since **2018**, I have been an editor for **Religion and Theology** in the long-term **New Slovene Biographical Lexicon**, which highlights the most prominent Slovenes and individuals connected to the Slovene space throughout history.
- In **2018**, I evaluated **CELSA project applications** for **KU Leuven**.

- From **2017 to 2018**, I served as the **Secretary of the Honorary Committee** under the leadership of the President of Slovenia, Mr. **Borut Pahor**, and led the working group for cultural events marking the **100th anniversary of Ivan Cankar's death**.
- Occasionally, I chair panels and round tables at **international congresses in Slovenia, Europe, and the USA (AATSEEL)**.

## **List of Scholarly Monographs by Irena Avsenik Nabergoj with Significant Professional Impact**

1. **Avsenik Nabergoj, Irena. *Izvori podobe Judov v starejšem slovenskem slovstvenem izročilu* [Origins of the Image of Jews in Older Slovenian Literary Tradition]. Ljubljana: Slovenska matica, 2023. 1021 pp. Razprave in eseji, 81. ISBN 978-961-213-399-3. ISSN 1408-4511. COBISS. [COBISS.SI-ID 146139651]**

The historical memory of relations between Jews and non-Jews dates back to antiquity and manifests as the stigmatization of the Jewish people. Researching the image of Jews in older Slovenian literary tradition is crucial for understanding the historical and cultural influences that have shaped relations between Jews and non-Jews in present-day Slovenia. In my monograph, *Origins of the Image of Jews in Older Slovenian Literary Tradition*, I offer an in-depth analysis of the Jewish image in Slovenian literature from the Middle Ages to the Romantic period, spanning over a thousand pages.

The monograph is divided into five parts, each with a distinct purpose and scope. The first and second parts present various aspects of the European context of relations between Jews and non-Jews. The third and fourth parts provide a pioneering analysis of the Jewish image in older Slovenian literary tradition, which developed from the Middle Ages onwards under the influence of European works of various genres. From the perspective of the Jewish image, I examine works by Trubar, Valvasor, and Svetokriški, as well as Dalmatin's, Škofjeloški's, Kapelski's, and Drabosnjak's passion plays, the Poljanski manuscript, and numerous folkloric passion prayers.

I draw on findings about the peculiarities of the Hebrew (Israeli, Jewish) people as reflected in the Bible, apocryphal writings, patristic commentaries, homilies, visions, and revelations. The fifth part includes examples of the Jewish image in influential fables, novellas, and other moral-didactic narratives of older European literary tradition. By examining examples of Jewish motifs during the Enlightenment in selected works of European Romanticism and in Prešeren's works, I already hint at the transition from the extensive, mostly sacred older literary tradition to the broad expansion of Slovenian secular literature, which will be the subject of my next book.

### **From the review:**

Irena Avsenik Nabergoj has thoughtfully chosen the title of this book in line with her extensive project of in-depth research into the image of Jews in European and Slovenian culture throughout history, from antiquity to the present. Even more than her previous three books (2016, 2017, 2020), this study is original, unique, and forward-looking, as it guides the reader with a comprehensive view of the past towards an open horizon of future coexistence



among nations. The book reveals that predominantly negative images of Jews across Europe over two thousand years share a common origin. The prophets of the Bible often castigated the faults of the Israeli people, and even more so, the crimes of conquering nations against them. Their violence against Jews stemmed from an inability to accept the fundamental Jewish religious identity, which is rooted in their consciousness of being chosen by God to be a light to the nations.

The integration of Slovenian lands into Central European culture means that we cannot ascertain anything relevant about the image of Jews in Slovenian lands without considering the origins and development of stereotypical images of Jews in the broader European cultural space. The author of the book has subtly assessed both global and specifically Slovenian sources that testify to the predominantly negative image of Jews, while also revealing the uniqueness of their role in human history. An appropriate analysis of the shared wealth of sources ensures the book's undeniable lasting relevance and special significance.

**Prof. Jože Krašovec, Emeritus Professor, Faculty of Theology, University of Ljubljana; Member of the European Academy of Sciences and Arts (EASA), Member of the Slovenian Academy of Sciences and Arts (SAZU), Slovenia.**

**From another review:**

Irena Avsenik Nabergoj's monograph deliberately addresses the religious, historical, and cultural origins of the negative image of Jews in older Slovenian literary tradition and literature. The analysis of the image of Jews, based on current scientific findings about the very roots of Jewish existence in relation to the moral responsibility that naturally arises from the status of the chosen people, provides this new monograph with the necessary indisputable foundation and methodological rigor. This is an exceptionally original, comprehensively professionally designed, and therefore promising study that will fill many gaps in the fields of religious studies, theology, cultural and literary history.

**Assoc. Prof. Dr. Ivan Platovnjak, University of Ljubljana, Slovenia**

**From a third review:**

Throughout history, the most negative influence on the development of the negative image of Jews has been the account of Jesus' suffering and death on the cross (the Passion), as depicted in all four Gospels. This is the origin of the stigmatization of Jews as "God-killers." This stigma, particularly in Christianity, has encouraged greater attention to the negative character, religious, economic, and political traits of Jews worldwide. Slovenia could not be an exception in this context. The focus of Irena Avsenik Nabergoj's current research is the theological and spiritual origins of the negative image of Jews in the Bible and later Christian literature from patristics onwards. The fact is that in older Slovenian literary tradition and literature, there is a predominant reference to the biblical origin of anti-Jewish sentiment. This work represents a unique and original contribution to understanding the origins of the negative image of Jews in Slovenian folkloric prayers, songs, and narratives, as well as in older Slovenian literature in the context of the Bible, later Jewish and Christian sources, and the economic and political currents of modern society.

**Assoc. Prof. Dr. Mari Jože Osredkar, University of Ljubljana, Slovenia**

- 2. Avsenik Nabergoj, Irena. *Literarne oblike v Svetem pismu in odmevi v poznejši judovsko-krščanski kulturi* [Literary Forms in the Bible and Their Echoes in Later Jewish-Christian Culture]. 1st ed. Ljubljana: Mladinska knjiga, 2021. 658 pp. ISBN 978-961-01-6308-4. [COBISS.SI-ID 67766787]**

## From the review:

"The title of the book, *Literarne oblike v Svetem pismu in odmevi v poznejši judovsko-krščanski kulturi* [Literary Forms in the Bible and Their Echoes in Later Jewish-Christian Culture], clearly indicates two fundamental aspects of its content, divided into four parts. The first and second parts address the development of modern methods in the treatment of biblical texts, the third part focuses on the content and literary forms of selected biblical texts, while the most extensive, fourth part analyzes the actualization and application of biblical content in later Jewish and Christian culture and in various areas of religious life. All four parts are connected by the exceptional relevance of biblical content, which is recorded in diverse literary forms.

The significance of biblical content for European and world civilization is immense, as evidenced by the wealth of methods developed by translators and writers of homilies, commentaries, catechisms, and theological treatises over two thousand years. Literary critics, biblical interpreters, and researchers of the Bible's influence on the development of our culture have used various methodological approaches both for the challenges of scholarly research and for the actualization of the Bible in public and personal life.

The book pays greater attention to the development of methods in the modern period, especially the latest initiative of 'new criticism,' which reaches its peak in recognizing the advantages of a holistic interpretation of biblical texts. A holistic approach to interpreting biblical texts helps uncover the characteristic dialogical dimensions of the Bible.

In the monograph, the author presents the development of methods of biblical interpretation, introduces the fundamental literary forms of biblical texts, and analyzes selected texts considering their literary forms. Finally, a rich selection of the Bible's application in the life of the Church and the development of culture follows. The quality of the presentations shows that Irena Avsenik Nabergoj is among the leading experts on the literary forms of biblical texts in the European and global context, thus bringing many innovations to the Slovenian space. The book fills a significant gap in the understanding and evaluation of the literary characteristics of biblical texts, which must be considered if we want to reveal the breadth and depth of biblical content and its importance for the development of European languages, literature, preaching in churches, and general culture. The book is thus also a fundamental handbook for the study of theology, literature, and other arts."

**Prof. Jože Krašovec, Professor Emeritus, Faculty of Theology, University of Ljubljana; Member of the European Academy of Sciences and Arts (EASA), Member of the Slovenian Academy of Sciences and Arts (SAZU), Slovenia.**

3. [Avsenik Nabergoj, Irena. \*Trpljenje in smrt v zgodovini judovske literature\* \[Suffering and Death in the History of Jewish Literature\]. Ljubljana: Slovenska matica, 2020. 556 pp. Razprave in eseji, 76. ISBN 978-961-213-320-7. \[COBISS.SI-ID 303734784\]](#)

My intellectual interest in Jewish literature and history began with researching the history of anti-Semitism. In the book *Zgodovina protijudovstva in antisemitizma v Evropi* (2016), I examined the development of anti-Semitism from its archaic beginnings to the Holocaust. I continued with *Podoba Judov v evropski literaturi, gledališču, glasbi in filmu* (2017), where I analyzed how Jews are depicted in various artistic media and how these images influence social stereotypes.

In *Podobe resničnosti, resnice in ljubezni v Svetem pismu in literaturi* (2018), I explored fundamental existential themes in biblical and literary texts. My research culminated with the publication of *Trpljenje in smrt v zgodovini judovske literature* (2020). In this monograph, I focused on suffering and death as central themes in Jewish literature throughout history. I analyzed how Jewish writers, poets, philosophers, and theologians experienced and depicted suffering and death in their works.

#### **From the review:**

“Similar to other parts of the world, researchers in Slovenia have primarily approached the discussion of anti-Semitism and the Holocaust by analyzing Nazi ideology, recycling the names of key perpetrators and the largest death camps, while the victims and their suffering have generally remained invisible. Until recently, it even seemed that there were no such events in Slovenia and that the Holocaust happened somewhere far away. Among the few who have tried to change this is Irena Avsenik Nabergoj, with her monumental trilogy, the last part of which is particularly significant. In it, literature speaks about the victims, adding the color of emotions to the black-and-white image of indescribable suffering, and constantly reminding us that understanding suffering requires knowing the details. Whether it is a second’s decision on who will (immediately) end up in the crematorium or a description of the blindness caused by racist propaganda. For this reason, Irena Avsenik Nabergoj’s work at times resembles a miniature encyclopedia of this type of literature and is therefore particularly valuable.”

**Prof. Oto Luthar, Director, Research Centre of the Slovenian Academy of Sciences and Arts (ZRC SAZU).**

#### **From the second review:**

“This is the third volume in Prof Avsenik Nabergoj’s trilogy on the Jewish people in respect of their ‘reception history’, as witnessed in their depiction in non-Jewish cultural output (e.g. films, literature), in the history of antisemitism, and in their own responses to the human condition as they have uniquely experienced it. Suffering and violent death are common to humanity, but these have special resonance in the history of the Jewish people. Partly because suffering takes humanity to the extremes of resources physical and mental, it becomes the subject of philosophical speculation as well as poetic reflection. The earliest Jewish literature contains poetry mainly in the form of psalms that deal with this affront to human wellbeing and shalom, and this focus is sustained in the literature of the centuries that follow, fired and sustained

by grievous historical experience. The role of poetry is highlighted, already in the Hebrew Bible, for although about half of it is written in prose, and it contains many a story involving suffering and death, it is specially in the artistic medium of poetry, which often enough has a meaningful liturgical dimension, that this topic is held up to the light. It is a feature of this major study—major not only in the Slovenian canon—that a representative conspectus of writings on the subject is examined and leading trends established and explained. A particular response to the subject of this monograph takes the form of poeticising of suffering, death and mourning, not only in the biblical psalms but in subsequent writing up to the late twentieth century. Related topics and aspects of the main topic, such as martyrdom, crusades, antisemitism, and pogroms, are passed in review, with, necessarily, special focus on the Holocaust and what paved the way for it, including the antisemitism both latent and explicit in such a ‘capital reformer’ as Martin Luther. An array of sources are trawled, including diaries, memoirs, poetry and ‘fugitive pieces’, in order to highlight responses to the Holocaust. But Jewish intellectual thought had already embraced rational doubt to the point of nihilism in some of its more outré thinkers, and the experience of, or collective response to, the Holocaust made this outlook more diffuse and more acceptable. The element of hope is also given its place, and its relation to the early, biblical, view of history as linear, which helped foster the idea of progression towards a telos, at which point stands the messianic figure who brings history to a peaceable and harmonious climax. The place of ‘the righteous among the nations’ in all this is briefly considered, and the existence of such in Slovenia, despite its very small part in the developments that gave rise to the phenomenon, is given appropriate notice. This summary of the wide sweep of the study hardly begins to do justice to all that is presented in this monograph which, despite the wealth of studies on the historical suffering of the Jewish people and on the Holocaust in particular, deserves a wide readership in translation. It is a work of great human as well as literary sensitivity, and it makes one wonder just what the writer might also be capable of achieving outside the strictly academic field if she were, for a while, to set aside the historical, analytical and synthesising tasks that she performs so consummately and sought to make her own mark in a novelistic or comparable exercise that enabled her to mine the depths of her own originality and her profound awareness of the history of thought on this supremely important matter. This is a major literary tour de force, and much more, and not just as the second longest in the heptad that forms the basis of the proposal on behalf of Prof Avsenik Nabergoj. Moreover, as the latest of her monographs, it shows not only that her capacity for academic work of the highest calibre remains intact, despite her massive literary exertions to date, but also that she is continuing to create from a vast reservoir of literary awareness and engagement, literature of her own that deals in ethical, religious and cultural issues of the highest importance for the world of the twenty-first century.”

**Prof. Robert P. Gordon, Regius Professor Emeritus of Hebrew, Faculty of Asian and Middle Eastern Studies, University of Cambridge; Fellow of the British Academy, United Kingdom.**

**From the third review:**

“In international relations, the work of Prof. Dr. Irena Avsenik Nabergoj represents an unstoppable force for dialogue and reconciliation among ethnic groups with a horrific record of guilt. This is a particular incentive for intensifying dialogue between Jews and Christians in Slovenia, Europe, and elsewhere in the world. A new era of dialogue between Jews and Christians, revealing what unites us, will be a more convincing symbol for seeking dialogue among all nations, given the historical burden.”

**Acad. Prof. Dr. Emanuel Tov Hebrew University of Jerusalem, Department of Biblical Studies, Member of the Israel Academy**

**From the fourth review:**

“The scholarly works of Prof. Dr. Irena Avsenik Nabergoj are noteworthy not only for their scientific excellence but also for their broader social and cultural significance. They do not merely address specific scientific problems but touch upon fundamental existential questions that mark every individual in their concrete existence. The findings she reaches thus enrich not only literary studies and religious anthropology but also society and culture as a whole, as well as each individual who is confronted with a profound reflection on fundamental existential questions and problems.”

**Prof. Tomo Virk, Full Professor, Faculty of Arts, University of Ljubljana, Department of Comparative Literature, Member of the Slovenian Academy of Sciences and Arts.**

4. [Avsenik Nabergoj, Irena. \*Podobe resničnosti, resnice in ljubezni v Svetem pismu in literaturi\* \[Images of Reality, Truth, and Love in the Bible and Literature\]. Ljubljana: Slovenska akademija znanosti in umetnosti, 2018. 745 pp. ISBN 978-961-268-053-4. \[COBISS.SI-ID 294218752\]](#)

At the prestigious institution of the Slovenian Academy of Sciences and Arts (SAZU), I have published the results of my extensive studies on truth in the Bible and literature, which I have been developing for many years. In 2015, after several years of systematic parallel studies of Hebrew at the University of Haifa, Israel, and Greek and Latin at the University of Ljubljana, Faculty of Arts, I completed my second doctorate in biblical studies at the Faculty of Theology, University of Ljubljana, under the mentorship of academician Prof. Dr. Jože Krašovec, with the highest distinction, *Summa Cum Laude*. The book is an expanded version of my doctoral dissertation, which also served as a prerequisite for my teaching position at the Faculty of Theology, University of Ljubljana. It was very well received by reviewers.

**From the review:**

“While Dr. Irena Avsenik Nabergoj’s previous work has intertextual characteristics, in this monograph, the author undertakes an even more demanding task – to bring

biblical and Western literature into a fruitful dialogue on the fundamental concepts of reality and truth. Her aim, as she subtly states towards the end of the monograph, is to “reveal literary ways of observing and expressing reality and truth in their most primal form of life.” For careful reading and analysis, she selects biblical and non-biblical texts from the vast ocean of the Western literary canon.

... Dr. Irena Avsenik Nabergoj’s work consistently conveys the understanding that “the universality of literary creation is inherently connected with a sense of virtues and values” and that truly great thinkers who “write based on their own creative and artistic literary experience” reflect values that are common to them as human beings and as seekers of truth.

... In the Judeo-Christian tradition, crystallized in the Bible, there is, alongside the attention to the concept of revealed truth (in oracles and directly), also the idea that there are fundamental values that all people should recognize and aspire to. This is perhaps most evident in the wisdom writings and, perhaps surprisingly, in the prophets, who called on their contemporaries to adhere to the demands of “justice and righteousness.” ... An excursion into the world of Islam shows that Arabic literature, both pre-Islamic and Islamic, was open to the possibilities of narrative fictional creativity as a means of seeking truth, despite the fact that the conceptuality in the creation of the Quran differs from that characteristic of the Hebrew and Greek Bible, which in its own way testifies to the non-ethnic basis of artistic creation.

Dr. Irena Avsenik Nabergoj’s engagement with the vast scope of Western literature, from biblical and classical times to the modern era, is impressive, revealing her ability for philosophical abstraction as she synthesizes and arranges themes and sub-themes, branching through the literature under consideration into meaningful relationships.

... Finally, the nature of the topic is such that writers and texts cannot simply be presented and then dismissed, as they may become relevant in later stages of the discussion. This requires from the author something analogous to the skill of an orchestra conductor – to connect and enrich the abundance of diverse elements in this monograph, thus appropriately shaping the discourse. For this reason, Dr. Irena Avsenik Nabergoj deserves warm congratulations for her achievement.”

**Prof. Robert P. Gordon, Regius Professor Emeritus of Hebrew, Faculty of Asian and Middle Eastern Studies, University of Cambridge; Fellow of the British Academy, United Kingdom.**

**From the second review:**

“Personalities of deep spirit and sharp mind have always been interested in the question of what lies behind the appearance of visible reality and what the “thing in itself” is. Even more, they were interested in the question of what truth is. The most alluring question, however, was what the driving force of love is. Philosophers have never sufficiently satisfied the human spirit and heart because a conceptual and discursive approach cannot fully express any subtle content. Therefore, poets and writers derive from an inner insight and an irresistible need for peace and fulfillment

in the life experience of truth and love. Instead of concepts, they seek images that are open to realities beyond appearance and create stories that reflect true life in its cognitive and existential subtlety.

After completing her first doctorate in literary studies in 2004, Prof. Dr. Irena Avsenik Nabergoj ventured into the world of myths, stories, poems, literary criticism, and philosophy to demonstrate, through comparative analysis of selected texts from the Bible, Greek antiquity, and later literature, ways of holistic representation of reality, truth, and love. Thus, in 2015, she completed her second dissertation in the field of Biblical studies and Judaism, which she significantly expanded over the last three years. The book is an original work that, in its scope, breadth of discourse, and depth of feeling, surpasses previous attempts to combine theoretical discourse and artistic inspiration in both domestic and global spheres. As it addresses fundamental themes of human life, it provides a valuable impetus for further examination of inner experience and images of the ineffable in all forms of literature and art.”

**Prof. Jože Krašovec, Professor Emeritus, Faculty of Theology, University of Ljubljana; Member of the European Academy of Sciences and Arts (EASA), Member of the Slovenian Academy of Sciences and Arts (SAZU), Slovenia**

**From the third review:**

"Irena Avsenik Nabergoj's book, *Podobe resničnosti, resnice in ljubezni v Svetem pismu in literaturi* [Images of Reality, Truth, and Love in the Bible and Literature], addresses an important and previously unexplored issue. In the first two parts, the author sheds light on the complex topics of truth and reality, particularly in connection with biblical texts and their literary depiction. This is achieved through the examination of individual philosophical, literary, and biblical theories, as well as specific literary and biblical examples. She convincingly demonstrates that theories from different disciplines about truth and reality are difficult to reconcile, partly because they operate on different levels and attribute the concepts of truth and reality to different ontological levels. She highlights the difficulty of reconciling these theories with the literary approach to truth and reality, which is not bound by the rules of discursive thinking but is closer to conveying experience, relying more on empathy than rational comprehensibility.

The book reaches its peak and synthesis in the third part, where the author addresses the question of reality and truth in connection with the themes of beauty and love, following this thematic set from the Song of Songs to Prešeren's *Krst pri Savici*. In interpreting the Song of Songs, she focuses on the moment of unfulfillment or the longing for the fulfillment of love, which she considers to represent the fundamental reality (of love). She presents both symbolic and allegorical interpretations of this influential text and shows how the symbolic way of depicting love in it allows for an insight into truth and reality characteristic of literature: not dogmatic, but empathetic, intuitive, and suggestive.

The author is distinguished by her well-versed argumentative style, indicating that she is an established scholar, her exceptionally broad knowledge across various disciplines, thoroughness and innovativeness in her treatment, a tendency towards clarity in presenting different theories, and especially an excellent sense for the peculiarities of literary depiction, resulting in profound, hermeneutically grounded, and meaningfully oriented interpretations of individual texts."

**Prof. Dr. Tomo Virk, Full Professor, Faculty of Arts, University of Ljubljana, Department of Comparative Literature, Member of the Slovenian Academy of Sciences and Arts.**

5. **Avsenik Nabergoj, Irena. *Podoba Judov v evropski literaturi, gledališču, glasbi in filmu* [The Image of Jews in European Literature, Theatre, Music, and Film]. Ljubljana: Slovenska matica, 2017. 352 pp. Razprave in eseji, 72. ISBN 978-961-213-272-9. [COBISS.SI-ID 291696896]**

Since my first book, *History of Anti-Judaism and Anti-Semitism in Europe*, I have significantly advanced my knowledge and understanding of Jewish topics. My research has delved into the complex relationships between historical reality and artistic creativity, leading to my new work, *The Image of Jews in European Literature, Theatre, Music, and Film*. In this book, I explored how Jews are depicted in various artistic forms and how these depictions reflect and influence social prejudices and stereotypes.

Through extensive research and analysis, I compared different interpretations and critically supplemented them. My work has received very positive reviews both domestically and internationally.

**From the review:**

"In Christian Europe, negative perceptions of Jews as foreigners, who live in their own world and are eternal strangers and wanderers without a homeland due to their involvement in the crucifixion of Christ, have been deeply rooted in popular tradition. They are seen as comical eccentrics marked by racial and religious-cultural characteristics; as greedy exploiters of the non-Jewish population; and as dangerous enemies of Christianity: as well-poisoners and ritual murderers of Christian children.

In the Islamic world, Jews were considered enemies of Islam, yet they were still afforded a certain level of protection as the 'people of the book' of the Bible. From the broadest historical perspective of the 'Jewish question,' it becomes evident that the rich and dynamic Jewish religious, literary, and cultural creativity embodies the constant tension between historical reality and artistic creativity. The significant work of Prof. Irena Avsenik Nabergoj is an original contribution to the humanities and is a rarity in such comprehensive treatment on a global scale, and a complete novelty in Slovenia."

**Prof. Dr. Dean Komel, Department of Philosophy, University of Ljubljana, Slovenia**



**From another review:**

“The book *The Image of Jews in European Literature, Theatre, Music, and Film* delves into some of the most important research areas in literature, culture, and religion. Jewish culture is not only the culture with the longest continuous tradition but also remains one of the most influential, as evidenced by the presence of its themes and images in virtually all art forms. The author demonstrates a broad knowledge of various art forms and makes a competent selection of authors and works for her analysis. In literature, she examines the works of Marlowe, Shakespeare, Scott, Dickens, Joyce, Gogol, Turgenev, Dostoevsky, and Nator. She addresses the images of Jews in these writers’ works in a complex, comprehensive manner, free from the preconceived biases that sometimes guide such research. Although predominantly negative representations of Jews prevail, the author equally focuses on different ones that stem from the continuous deep significance of Jewish tradition. Her analyses of the depictions of Judaism and Jews in theatre and film are also thorough, covering the full spectrum from stereotypical to different portrayals, especially in more recent artistic productions. Particularly valuable is her examination of Jewish identity in Jewish musical tradition. Dr. Irena Avsenik Nabergoj’s trilogy is, in my opinion, an exceptional scholarly work, important not only for Slovenian humanities but also more broadly, on an international scale.”

***Prof. Dr. Tomo Virk, Faculty of Arts, University of Ljubljana, Department of Comparative Literature, Member of the Slovenian Academy of Sciences and Arts***

**From the third review:**

“Dr. Avsenik Nabergoj is now near completion of three books on various aspects of Jewish life and death in European society from the Middle Ages to the present. Her monograph *Image of Jews in European Literature, Theater, Music and Film* is particularly important, not only because of its considerable breadth and thoroughness, but because it provides a solid foundation for what promises to be her most significant contribution to the field of Jewish studies, a new monograph on the portrayal of Jews in Slovenian literature.”

**Prof. Gary Rosenshield, Professor Emeritus, Department of Slavic Languages and Literatures, University of Wisconsin-Madison, USA**

**From the fourth review:**

“The broadly conceived and informative monograph by Prof. Dr. Irena Avsenik Nabergoj is all the more welcome as the first study in a Slavic language that will fill an important gap in the research of the cultural history of Central and Eastern Europe. It employs various analytical methodologies to explore the imaginary Jews in Slavic material within the broader European historical and cultural context.”

**Prof. Leonid Livak, Professor, Department of Slavic Languages and Literatures and Centre for Jewish Studies, University of Toronto, Canada**

6. [Avsenik Nabergoj, Irena. \*Zgodovina protijudovstva in antisemitizma v Evropi\* \[History of Anti-Judaism and Anti-Semitism in Europe\]. Ljubljana: Slovenska matica, 2016. 248 pp. Razprave in eseji, 70. ISBN 978-961-213-267-5. \[COBISS.SI-ID 289114624\]](#)

My interest in the themes of reality and truth in literature naturally led me to explore Jewish topics. In this endeavor, I received significant encouragement from renowned Slovenian historians, who noted that this subject, particularly in the field of literature, remains largely unexplored in Slovenia. The topic logically connected with my innate sense of empathy for the weak and vulnerable in society, who suffer from prejudices and stereotypes. I wanted to understand how literary works not only reflect but also shape our perceptions of reality and truth, and how they influence social relations and prejudices. My work on the themes of reality and truth has provided me with a deeper understanding of these issues, which was crucial for my further research on Jewish topics.

**From the review:**

“In the aftermath of WWII, western theologians and historians rethought European attitudes toward Jews on the new methodological assumption that a stereotype revealed more about its carriers than those it described, thanks to the preeminence of cultural conditioning over empirical knowledge in the human imagination. Arguing that Christian attitudes toward Jews, unlike those in pagan antiquity, expressed a theological and existential need that historically shaped the treatment of Jews, these scholars showed that the Jews of the European imagination maintained their cultural role of the paradigmatic Other even after Christianity lost its legal and social hold on European societies. In modern times, the imaginary Jews became a foil to burgeoning national and racial identities, receiving a pseudo-scientific grounding at the crossroads of biology, medicine, sociology, and linguistics. This recoding culminated in the ideology of antisemitism which, despite its secular guise, drew on the logic and rhetoric of Christian anti-Judaism, laying the intellectual and psychological groundwork for the genocide of European Jews during WWII.

While the life of the imaginary Jews in western cultural traditions has been adequately described, it remains poorly elucidated in the Slavic cultural sphere for reasons of recent political history which, first, subjected intellectual life in large parts of Central and Eastern Europe to Marxist dogmatism that failed to appreciate the persistence of religious patterns in the human imagination; and, later, to the prerogatives of nationalist myth-making during post-communist nation-building. As a result, social and cultural historians in Slavic lands have hitherto made little meaningful contribution to the aforementioned scholarly tradition focused on the study of Europe’s Jewish Other.

That is why Irena Avsenik Nabergoj’s ambitious, wide-ranging, and well-informed monograph is all the more welcome as the first study in a Slavic language that comes to fill an important lacuna in the cultural historiography of Central and Eastern Europe

by applying western analytical methodologies to the exploration of the imaginary Jews on Slavic material in the pan-European historical and cultural context.”

**Prof. Dr. Leonid Livak, Slavic Department, University of Toronto, Canada; Chercheur associé au CERCEC, EHESS-Paris, France**

**From another review:**

“In a time when speed is often mistaken for quality, and circumstances push us towards immediate and often poorly considered publication of our research results, the thoughtful and substantively well-structured discussion by Irena Avsenik Nabergoj is more than a pleasant surprise. With a concise introduction that acquaints us with the history of Judaism and the beginnings of archaic antisemitism, along with a clear identification of the reasons for Jewish exclusion, she introduces us to the image and self-image of Jews in European literary heritage. She consistently compares her findings with the interpretations of colleagues from Israel, Europe, and the USA. This is not just a usual summary of relevant studies in this field, but also a nuanced, sometimes critical supplementation. Given this, Irena Avsenik Nabergoj’s work will not only be of interest to the Slovenian academic community but also to a broader audience, and ambitious students from various social sciences and humanities disciplines will undoubtedly find it appealing.”

**Prof. Dr. Oto Luthar, Full Professor of Historiography, Director of ZRC SAZU, Slovenia.**

7. [Avsenik Nabergoj, Irena. \*Justice and Redemption: Anthropological Realities and Literary Visions by Ivan Cankar\* \[Pravičnost in odrešenje: Antropološke resničnosti in literarne vizije Ivana Cankarja\]. Frankfurt am Main \[etc.\]: Peter Lang, 2014. 353 pp., illus. ISBN 978-3-631-64618-2, ISBN 978-3-653-03956-6. DOI: 10.3726/978-3-653-03956-6. \[COBISS.SI-ID 37640749\]](#)

My scientific monograph *Justice and Redemption: Anthropological Realities and Literary Visions by Ivan Cankar* is my third scholarly work on the literary oeuvre of the greatest Slovenian writer, Ivan Cankar (1876–1918), in English. Following the books *Mirror of Reality and Dreams: Stories and Confessions by Ivan Cankar* (2008), which deals with Cankar’s works of moral and social criticism, and *The Power of Love and Guilt: Representations of the Mother and Woman in Literature by Ivan Cankar* (2013), which presents Cankar’s works on the mother and woman, my new book discusses Cankar’s perception of anthropological reality and his vision of justice and redemption. This vision, in the writer’s poetic, prose, and dramatic creations, becomes increasingly powerful over the years, in line with his growing experience and re-experience of various injustices, until he transforms it into a symbolic image of redemption for all those unjustly suffering after earthly death.

I compare Cankar’s concept of justice with the questioning of justice in selected works by William Shakespeare, Henrik Ibsen, Leo Tolstoy, Fyodor Dostoevsky, and Gerhart Hauptmann. In my search for the writer’s sincerity in examining his own justice or injustice,

I compare Cankar's autobiographical writings with those of Aurelius Augustine, Johann Wolfgang von Goethe, Jean-Jacques Rousseau, and Janez Trdina.

All three of my English monographs on Ivan Cankar are the first scholarly studies to introduce the international literary public to the hitherto underappreciated Slovenian contribution to European culture:

1. *Mirror of Reality and Dreams: Stories and Confessions by Ivan Cankar* (Frankfurt am Main, Berlin, Bern, Bruxelles, New York, Oxford, Wien: Peter Lang, 2008, 309 pages) explores Cankar's works of moral and social criticism.
2. *The Power of Love and Guilt: Representations of the Mother and Woman in the Literature of Ivan Cankar* (Frankfurt am Main, Berlin, Bern, Bruxelles, New York, Oxford, Wien: Peter Lang, 2013) presents Cankar's works on the mother and woman.
3. *Justice and Redemption: Anthropological Realities and Literary Visions by Ivan Cankar* (Frankfurt am Main, Berlin, Bern, Bruxelles, New York, Oxford, Wien: Peter Lang, 2014, 353 pages) discusses Cankar's perception of anthropological reality and his vision of justice and redemption.

- 8. Avsenik Nabergoj, Irena. *The Power of Love and Guilt: Representations of the Mother and Woman in the Literature of Ivan Cankar* [Moč ljubezni in krivde: Predstavitve matere in ženske v literaturi Ivana Cankarja]. Frankfurt am Main: Peter Lang, 2013. 463 pp., illus. ISBN 978-3-631-62232-2. [COBISS.SI-ID 34981933]**

The scientific monograph sheds light on the images of the mother and woman as depicted in Cankar's literary works, as well as his letters to his mother and love correspondence. Comparative research reveals that such a relationship with the mother is not found in any other major author of European literature. In his depictions of the mother, the writer transitions from autobiographical memoir writing to symbolist and idealized comparisons of his mother with the Virgin Mary; through female literary characters caught between erotic passion and guilt and spiritual longing, he reveals his attitude towards love and sexuality, which is defined by a fear of intimacy.

- 9. Avsenik Nabergoj, Irena. *Reality and Truth in Literature: From Ancient to Modern European Literary and Critical Discourse* [Resničnost in resnica v literaturi: Od antike do sodobnega evropskega literarnega in kritičnega diskurza]. Göttingen: V & R unipress, cop. 2013. 229 pp. ISBN 978-3-8471-0046-1, ISBN 978-3-8470-0046-4. [COBISS.SI-ID 35487789]**

My interest in the themes of longing, weakness, and temptation naturally led me to explore the concepts of reality and truth in literature and literary discourse. During my research on these topics, I discovered that the concepts of reality and truth are closely linked to how literature addresses and expresses human experiences and values. This internal development in my research was a natural transition, as I sought to understand how literary works not only reflect but also shape our perception of reality and truth. My work on the themes of longing and temptation allowed me to gain a deeper understanding of these topics, which was crucial for my further research on reality and truth in literature. The

monograph *Reality and Truth in Literature: From Ancient to Modern European Literary and Critical Discourse* offers a critical overview of perspectives on reality and truth in the fields of philosophy and literary criticism. Works of literature and art do not merely denote experiences and knowledge as such but highlight the responses of specific characters to the problems of human existence. The study addresses pre-modern philosophical reflections on reality and truth, alongside post-modern ways of representing reality in myth, history, biography, autobiography, and fiction. The monograph is a pioneering work on the subject in Slovenia and one of the few studies of its kind in the world.

**From the review:**

“Irena Avsenik Nabergoj has already published extensively on literary subjects both in her native Slovene and in English. Her volumes on the Slovenian writer and poet Ivan Cankar (*Mirror of Reality and Dreams: Stories and Confessions by Ivan Cankar*, 2008; *The Power of Love and Guilt: Representations of the Mother and Woman in the Literature of Ivan Cankar*, 2013) and on the theme of longing and temptation (*Longing, Weakness and Temptation: From Myth to Artistic Creations*, 2009) have already secured her well-deserved recognition in the English-reading world. In the former, she seeks to make Cankar accessible to a readership outside Slovenia that has been largely unaware of this greatest of Slovenian writers. In *Longing, Weakness and Temptation*, she explores a major theme intertextually, moving out from the Old Testament narratives about Adam and Eve, Joseph in Egypt, and Samson and Delilah to explore the theme as it is represented in the motif of “Fair Vida” in Slovenian literature, this time opening up a major feature of Slovenian writing and tradition to a much wider readership.

The present work has intertextual features about it, but here the author sets herself the still more challenging task of bringing biblical and western literature more generally into a fruitful dialogue on the fundamental concepts of reality and truth. Her purpose, as she elegantly puts it near the end of her monograph, is to “disclose literary ways of observing and expressing reality and truth in its most elementary form of life.” Out of the vast ocean that is the western literary canon, she selects both biblical and (mainly) non-biblical texts for close reading and analysis. The recognition, for practical purposes, of a western literary canon becomes the more defensible when it is recognized that the dialogue is especially with elements within the tradition that owe their inspiration to biblical texts and themes. Informing Dr. Nabergoj’s work throughout is the conviction that “the universality of literary creation is intrinsically connected with the sense of virtue and value,” and that the truly great thinkers “writing on the basis of their own creative and artistic literary experience” reflect values that are common to them as human beings and as seekers after truth. In that it is also a mark of their greatness that they show the greatest interest in observing literary form – as in literary types and genres – they also evince a common concern to imitate “reality.”

In the Judeo-Christian tradition crystallized in the Bible, of course, there is, as well as a commitment to the concept of revealed truth (oracularly and directly), the idea that there are basic values that all humans should recognize and should aspire to. This is perhaps most obvious in Wisdom writings and, perhaps surprisingly, in the

prophets who called on their contemporaries to obey the requirements of “righteousness and justice.” At the same time, and as the study of a wider body of literature further illustrates, the interests of the “natural” and the “revealed” coincide and interrelate at many points. An excursion into the world of Islam suggests, too, that even though the conceptual surroundings of the creation of the Koran differ from that of the Hebrew and Greek scriptures, Arab literature, both pre-Islamic and Islamic, has been open to the possibilities of narrative fictional creativity as means of truth-seeking, and this testifies in its own way to the non-ethnic basis of artistic creation. The approach adopted in this study is, therefore, necessarily an interdisciplinary one in which literature representing a wide range of languages, periods, cultures, and schools is examined in relation to the theme of reality and truth. In the process, Dr. Nabergoj sustains an impressive engagement with the great body of western literature from biblical and classical times through to the modern period, and displays an unflagging capacity for philosophical abstraction as she summarizes, synthesizes, and brings into meaningful relationships the themes and subthemes that ramify through the literature in review.

In her theoretical section, Dr. Nabergoj revisits Plato and Aristotle and reminds us of essential differences in their thinking about literature and its capacity as a truth-bearer, especially in relation to the contested virtues of poetry. She writes too of essential differences between the more cognitive Greek conceptualizing of reality and the action-oriented and existential tendency of the Old Testament writings. But her narrative embraces so much more, engaging with a wide representation of other authorities, from Horace to Tolstoy, and from Maimonides to Auerbach. The celebrated observations of the last-named on the “multilayeredness” of the Hebrew narrative, in which the writers juggle with the complexity of factors in their portrayals of characters and events – somewhat in contrast to their classical counterparts – are given appropriate airing.

Finally, it is in the nature of the topic that writers and texts cannot simply be introduced and then farewelled, since they may become relevant in later phases of the discussion. It therefore requires something analogous to the skill of the orchestral conductor to tame the profusion of diverse elements addressed in this monograph so as to be able to shape the discourse in the manner required, and for this reason too Dr. Nabergoj is to be warmly congratulated on her achievement.”

**Prof. Robert P. Gordon, Regius Professor Emeritus of Hebrew, Faculty of Asian and Middle Eastern Studies, University of Cambridge; Fellow of the British Academy, United Kingdom.**

**10. Avsenik Nabergoj, Irena, Andreja Žele, Jože Krašovec. *Simboli neizrekljivega: Izvori in transformacije motivov in simbolov v literaturi in jezikih = Symbols of the Inexpressible: The Sources and Transformations of Motifs and Symbols in Literature and Languages. Ljubljana: Intelego, 2013. 245 pp., illus. ISBN 978-961-6558-31-0. [COBISS.SI-ID 268080128]***

**From the review:**

“The scientific monograph *Symbols of the Ineffable: Origins and Transformations of Motifs and Symbols in Literature and Languages* addresses the scientifically highly important issue indicated in the title. It examines the Symbols of the Ineffable from literary, linguistic, philosophical, comparative-religious and anthropological perspectives, from various disciplines, and, on the basis of extant textual material (mainly through literary representations), examines the origins, cultural-historical modifications and actualisations of fundamental experiences of being. It does so at a high scientific level, using the appropriate scientific apparatus and scientific research methods. The monograph also has the particular merit of making an important contribution to raising awareness of fundamental humanist values.”

**Prof. Dr. Tomo Virk, Faculty of the University of Ljubljana**

**The second review:**

“Avtorji v znanstveni monografiji predstavijo notranji literarni interdisciplinarni pogled na osnovne filozofske, psihološke in religiozne teme, ki predvsem zadevajo hrepenenje, ljubezen, trpljenje, smisel življenja in hkrati neutešljivo hrepenenje po presežnem in transcendentnem. Celotno delo kaže na izjemno originalnost misli, svojevrstno integracijo psiholoških, filozofskih, literarnih teorij ter integracijo z novimi razmišljanji, ki jih predstavljajo sodobni tokovi raznovrstnih literarno semantičnih govoric ter njihova sintetičnost. Vse to daje delu nov vpogled v obravnavano vsebino, ki obenem kaže tudi na izrecno sposobnost kritičnega razmišljanja vseh treh avtorjev. Monografija je prispevek k sodobni znanstveno-literarni semantični misli in v marsičem radikalno nadgrajuje dosedanja znanstveni opus na tem področju.”

**Prof. Dr. Christian Gostečnik, Faculty of Theology of the University of Ljubljana**

**11. Avsenik Nabergoj, Irena, ed., Dieter Lamping, ed. *Literarne vrste in zvrsti: Stari Izrael, grško-rimska antika in Evropa* [Literary Genres and Types: Ancient Israel, Greco-Roman Antiquity, and Europe]. 1st ed. Ljubljana: Cankarjeva založba, 2011. 623 pp., illus. ISBN 978-961-231-846-8. [COBISS.SI-ID 255187712]**

The book is the first monographic study in Slovenian that specifically addresses individual literary genres and types on both an analytical and synthetic level, illustrating each literary type with excerpts from Slovenian and world literature from antiquity to the present. In the first part, the author synthetically examines literary genres and types from the perspective of the relationship between reality and fiction, based on the most important works of aesthetic and literary theory from antiquity to the present. In the second part, co-edited with Prof. Dr. Dieter Lamping from the University of Mainz, it presents ninety-two literary types terminologically, literarily, historically, and theoretically, providing the most up-to-date knowledge on the subject. Comprehensive studies on literary genres and types are very rare globally, and in Slovenia, this study is the first publication of its kind. The work is highly socially and culturally relevant, as it is both a reliable scientific study and a fundamental handbook for students and professors of

languages, literature, and humanities in general, also useful for publishers, writers, and the general public.

**12. Avsenik Nabergoj, Irena. *Hrepenenje in skušnjava v svetu literature: Motiv Lepa Vide* [Longing and Temptation in the World of Literature: The Motif of Beautiful Vida]. 1st ed. Ljubljana: Mladinska knjiga, 2010. 726 pp., illus. Zbirka Kultura. ISBN 978-961-01-1236-5. [COBISS.SI-ID 250153984]**

Since the motif of Lepa Vida is an important symbol in the history of the Slovenian nation and there are more than 70 artistic adaptations of folk versions of this motif, I have significantly expanded the English monograph for the Slovenian publication. The book thus presents a selection of folkloric, mythological, and literary symbols or motifs of longing and temptation from antiquity to the present, from biblical stories and ancient myths to Goethe, Prešeren, Pushkin, Heine, and Thomas Mann. In the second part, it presents the motif of Lepa Vida from the perspectives of longing and temptation in numerous adaptations by authors of modern Slovenian literary fiction.

The great interest in my previous book, *Longing, Weakness, and Temptation*, among colleagues and the initiative to publish it in Slovenian encouraged me to supplement the book with new insights based on further research. In the Slovenian version, which is twice the length of the English one, I have supplemented the findings with a multitude of other motifs of temptation in later European and Slovenian literature, mainly related to the seduction and abduction of a young wife and mother from the Slovenian folk song about Lepa Vida in literary adaptations of the 19th and 20th centuries (Prešeren, Cankar, Boris Pahor, etc.). The book inspired the 2018 documentary film **Lepa Vida or a Film about Longing**, directed by Nuša Ekar in collaboration with me, as I also appeared in the film. The documentary, which runs for 53 minutes, explores the themes of longing and the symbolic significance of Lepa Vida in Slovenian folklore.

**From the review:**

“The motifs and symbols of longing, weakness, and temptation in their internal context have not yet been the subject of systematic research, although they appear in all genres of world and Slovenian literature from antiquity to the present. The author set out to explore the ways of artistic expression of these symbols in the Slovenian motif of Lepa Vida and within some similar literary motifs in world literature. The most important scientific finding of the monograph is the conclusion, based on comparative literary analysis, that similar forms of expression of longing, weakness, and temptation appear in all periods of European literature. The author has succeeded in delving deeper into the discussed motif. She has particularly discovered or sensed in it the connection between longing and action, that existing, although harder to explain, truly incommensurable force that animated the motif and developed it to its conclusion.”

**Academician Prof. Dr. France Bernik, Slovenian Academy of Sciences and Arts, Slovenia.**



13. Avsenik Nabergoj, Irena. *Longing, Weakness and Temptation: From Myth to Artistic Creations* [Hrepenenje, šibkost in skušnjava: Od mita do umetniških stvaritev]. Newcastle upon Tyne: Cambridge Scholars Publishing, cop. 2009. XII, 321 pp. ISBN 978-1-4438-0185-0, ISBN 1-4438-0185-2. [COBISS.SI-ID 29219117]

As the author of this book, I have advanced my knowledge in literary studies and cultural research following my dissertation in literary studies and my initial literary-historical and comparative publications on modern Slovenian literature. The original idea for this book was first presented at the AATSEEL conference in Chicago, after which Cambridge Scholars Publishing invited me to develop this book.

The work comparatively explores the motifs of longing, weakness, and temptation in literature from antiquity to the present, examining their origins and transformations through various periods. Equally important are the similar literary structures found in the literature of ancient Egypt, Mesopotamia, Greece, and Rome. In this context, the study focuses on several typological groups of the folk ballad about Lepa Vida in Slovenia and examines them in relation to their Albanian, Sicilian, and Calabrian predecessors. The book presents the first significant findings on these motifs based on the methodological principle of intertextuality, marking the first academic effort to introduce the Slovenian motif of Lepa Vida to the international public. The author received an invitation from the publisher to prepare this monograph after presenting a lecture titled “The Psychology of Temptation as the Key to the Darker Side of Human Existence” at the AATSEEL conference in Chicago, USA, in December 2007.

**From the review:**

“This book is a first intertextual presentation of central texts of world literature containing the motifs of longing, weakness and temptation. With a wealth of illuminating examples showing mutual interdependence between the Bible, folk literature and culture this volume is a major contribution to culture studies and will prove invaluable for any student of literature and culture.”

**Professor Dr. Sekine Seizo, Professor of Biblical Studies and Ethics, The University of Tokyo, Japan**

14. Avsenik Nabergoj, Irena. *Mirror of Reality and Dreams: Stories and Confessions by Ivan Cankar* [Zrcalo resničnosti in sanj: Pripovedi in izpovedi Ivana Cankarja]. Frankfurt am Main [etc.]: Peter Lang, cop. 2008. 309 pp., illus. ISBN 978-3-631-57812-4. [COBISS.SI-ID 28453421]

The book is the first scholarly monograph on the oeuvre of the greatest Slovenian writer, Ivan Cankar (1876–1918), in English. It examines his works in relation to the author’s approach to existential, social, and moral realities in individuals and society. The thematic

and stylistic analysis focuses on personal confessions and rich symbolism, revealing the world of the author's inner life and values. The study employs an intertextual approach, identifying the integration of the author's works into the socio-cultural, linguistic, and artistic context of European literary development, traditions, and mechanisms of influence. Comparative analysis of texts in intertextual relationships reveals the strong influence of classical and contemporary European literature from the fin de siècle period on his writing. This is evident in Cankar's references to works by authors ranging from the Bible (influence of the New Testament) and Greek antiquity (influence of Plato, Homer) to classical English drama (Shakespeare), Spanish novel (Cervantes), Russian psychological realism (Dostoevsky, Tolstoy, Gogol, etc.), European naturalism and decadence (Govekar, Zola, etc.), impressionism, symbolism, and new romanticism (Ibsen, Maeterlinck, etc.).

**15. Avsenik Nabergoj, Irena. *Ljubezen in krivda Ivana Cankarja* [The Love and Guilt of Ivan Cankar]. Ljubljana: Mladinska knjiga, 2005. 794 pp., illus. Zbirka Kultura. ISBN 86-11-12345-6. [COBISS.SI-ID 123456789]**

The book examines the works of Ivan Cankar (1876-1918) with an emphasis on his approach to existential, social, and personal realities in individuals and society. The majority of the book focuses on Cankar's works from the period when he lived in Vienna (1899-1909). In the Viennese environment, he was inspired by European writers of the fin de siècle, whose ideas and art influenced many of his works. Psychological descriptions of humans, the emphasis on the workings of the human conscience, and compassion for the victims of violence show parallels with Dostoevsky, whom Cankar admired. Moral judgments and antitheses between the individual and the collective show parallels with the Norwegian dramatist Ibsen. His works also reflect influences from Shakespeare, Tolstoy, Maeterlinck, Nietzsche, and others. Symbols are particularly characteristic of Cankar's writing; they often mirror his emotions and premonitions, as well as reflect social realities or Slovenian folk traditions. Many of his works are confessional, especially his numerous lyrically tinged works about love and guilt towards his mother, which are unique in European literature. The monograph is the first to address Cankar's entire literary oeuvre from the perspectives of sin, guilt, punishment, and forgiveness. It considers all his poetry, prose, drama, literary criticism, and preserved correspondence. The monograph shows that the writer, through his works in specific historical circumstances, supports the strengthening of personal and social identity.

**Book Review:**

**Krašovec, Jože. Book Review: Love and Guilt of Ivan Cankar, by Irena Avsenik Nabergoj. Kultura, Mladinska knjiga Založba, 2005. 794 pages. In: Bogoslovska smotra 76, no. 2 (2006): 493–504.**

Based on the author's book, RTV Slovenia produced a **documentary film** in 2006, a feuilleton titled *Love and Guilt of Ivan Cankar* (directed by Slavko Hren), in which the author of the book appears.