While Yugoslavia existed the concept of Yugoslav literature was a strongly politicized and highly contested term. Its history and use were to a large extent contextualized and conditioned by the official interpretation of the concept of Yugoslavism, hence in the last decades of the existence of the common country the term was practically not in use, at least not institutionally, being replaced with more (politically) acceptable term Yugoslav literatures.

Following the recent debates on transnational literature the lecture argues that the term Yugoslav literature needs to be reintroduced in Yugoslav studies. It is the finality of the existence of Yugoslavia which creates a particular perspective to the use of the term which refers now to a completed historical period, and to the cultural practices that were part of it. The lecture proposes for Yugoslav literature to be understood as a case of minor transnational literature (Françoise Lionnet and Shu-mei Shih) combining it with Franco Moretti’s idea of ‘waves’ in world literature. Within such an interpretative framework it becomes possible to understand the specificities of the Yugoslav cultural situation, where soft socialism with its open borders enabled for the globally dominant trends (or in Moretti’s terms ‘waves’) to be influential, while the local distinct cultural traditions interacted producing minor transnational practices of Yugoslav literature and culture.

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