

Predrag Dragojević
NASTANAK I SMISAO JEDNOG LIKOVNOG DELA
Šesti april 1941 Dragomira Glišića (1872–1957)

U godinama koje su prethodile Drugom svetskom ratu, vizuelna umetnost je na razne načine predosetila, naslutila i nagovestila, čak i dosta realno *predvidela* nesreću; sam početak rata je *opisala*, uglavnom, dokumentarnim fotografijama i filmom, a jedno od retkih autentičnih *tumačenja* Aprilskog rata, koje otkriva stanje duha pred nadolazećom opasnošću, dala je kroz sliku *Šesti april 1941*, Dragomira Glišića (1872–1957).

Doživljaj koji ova slika prenosi posmatraču, ili izaziva kod njega, pokušaćemo da artikulišemo primenom nekoliko metoda istorije umetnosti (ikonografski i kulturološki povezani u ikonološki; uporedni, atribucionni), posebnih pristupa (istorijski, tehnički, semi-otički, sociološki), povezanih u jednu strukturu razmatranja koja odgovara informatičkom pristupu slici kao vizuelnoj komunikaciji (na liniji: izvor inspiracije – autor – delo – posmatrač ili publika).¹

I – Izvor i autor. Podsticaj za nastanak



Dragomir Glišić,
Šesti april 1941, 1941–42.

Istorijat. Slika o kojoj je reč nalazi se u umetnikovom ateljeu, u vlasništvu njegove porodice.² Rađena je u tehnici pastela i krede, i čuva se u zastakljenom ramu. Prikazuje deo jedne razrušene spavaće sobe: zid je obrušen, na gvozdenu krevetu leži, očigledno mrtva, mlada žena otvorenih okrvavljenih usta i staklastih očiju, dok se sa njenog torza uzdiže upirući ručicama, jedno uplakano detence. Preko kreveta i ženinih nogu leži deo neke drvene grede, iza kreveta se vidi gomila cigala od razrušenog zida. Objašnjenje ove scene je sledeće: tokom nemačkog bombardovanja, šestog aprila 1941. među mnogim zgradama u Beogradu razrušena je i jedna višespratnica, na kojoj je zid tako razbijen da se sa ulice mogla videti spavaća soba, a u njoj opisani prizor; pošto je soba bila na nekom od viših spratova, niko nije mogao da se popne i spase dete, bar ne u prvo vreme; detetova kasnija sudbina nije poznata.³

Slika je nastala posle bombardovanja Beograda i to – sudeći po tehnici koju je autor upotrebio – dok mu je događaj još bio u svežem sećanju; ili najkasnije, 1942. godine,⁴

¹ Up: Lazar Trifunović, studije, ogleđi, kritike (priredio Dragan Bulatović), edicija Srpski kritičari, knj. 4, Muzej savremene umetnosti, Beograd 1990, 234–236.

² U Beogradu, u ulici Biničkog br. 4, Glišić je svojevremeno sagradio porodičnu kuću, a u njenom dvorištu i prostrani atelje (prizemlje i sprat). Danas je to mesto gde se čuva najviše njegovih dela i može da predstavlja osnovu buduće galerije Dragomira Glišića.

³ To nam je, uz obilje drugih podataka o slikarevom privatnom životu, umetničkom radu, poznanstvima, slikarskom postupku, nastanku pojedinih dela, saopštila Glišićeva kći, gospođa Mara Ristić-Glišić u više razgovora tokom 1987. i kasnije.

⁴ Prema katalogu Glišićevih slika na izložbama, koji nije sastavljen prema stručnim standardima, a sadrži i očigledne štamparske greške, u: V. Kolaković, "Slikar Dragomir Glišić 1872–1957", Glasnik istorijskog arhiva 23 (Valjevo 1967) 247–293, slika je postojala 1942.

mada to ne umanjuje ni autentičnost slike, a ni ono što je autor njome iskazao. Dobila je naslov najkasnije do Druge izložbe ULUSa, održane u Beogradu 1945. kada je prvi put izlagana i dobila lošu kritiku.⁵ Potom više nije pominjana u katalozima Glišićevih izložbi, a o njoj se nisu izjašnjavali ni istoričari umetnosti.

Ipak se može pretpostaviti da je imala nekog značaja za Glišića, čim ju je reprodukovao na svom *Autoportretu* iz 1945. godine.⁶ Tu je sebe predstavio kao slikara u ateljeu: nosi mantil, u rukama drži paletu i kičicu, sedi na svojoj drvenoj stolici, koja je bila (i decenijama posle njegove smrti ostala) postavljena nasuprot štafelaja, a iza sebe je prikazao deo zida svoga ateljea, sa nekoliko radova. Sve je predstavljeno obrnuto, kao u ogledalu. Koliko je poznato, to je prvi i jedini Glišićev autoportret u kome je prikazao sebe kao slikara okruženog svojim delima, pa se može pretpostaviti da je izborom radova u pozadini Glišić hteo da predstavi i svoj rad, odnosno, da ih je možda izdvojio po nekoj vrednosti. Tu je, između ostalog, reprodukovao crtež *Starac*, koji je radio na početku svoje umetničke karijere, oko 1895. kao đak Kutlikove škole; ujedno je to jedini sačuvani đачki rad iz te ustanove, koja je bila preteča i temelj beogradske Likovne akademije (danas: Fakultet likovnih umetnosti).⁷ Zatim, tu se vidi deo velikog portreta kćeri Mare,⁸ iz 1937. koji je naslikao da pokaže šta je u stanju da stvori kao realista i za koji je dobio, njemu veoma drage i značajne, pohvale od realiste Paje Jovanovića.

Tema. Da bismo razmotrili "istinitost" i "vernost" prikazane scene, moramo imati dobar uvid u prirodu Glišićeve umetnosti. U njegovom dugogodišnjem radu prelama se ceo tok srpskog slikarstva prve polovine dvadesetog veka, svaka promena i novost, ali je on u osnovi ostao realista. U osvetljenju i crtežu nekih njegovih ranih dela ima tragova secesije. U nekim drugim, bojom i slobodom poteza postigao je ekspresionistički izraz. Na solunskom frontu, pod jakim suncem i (zbog nedostatka vremena) radeći brzo, ostvario je impresionističku formu. U trećoj deceniji, glatkim slikanjem, upotrebom linije i modelujući tonom približio se tzv. klasičnoj struji, a izborom zanimljivog prirodnog oblika i ekspresionizmu forme. Pred nekim motivima video je samo boju, pa se krajem dvadesetih vratio na, tada opet aktuelnu, upotrebu boje. Sebe je našao i u poetskom realizmu i intimizmu, čija je shvatanja (okretanje realnom, starim majstorima, jednostavnost, prisnost) nosio u sebi odavno i kao nove tokove ih samo "dočekao" tokom tridesetih. Uoči Drugog svetskog rata, umeo je da se izborom teme približi i tzv. "socijalnom slikarstvu". Ali, dok su moderni umetnici duboko proživljavali ovakve promene kao faze razvoja nove umetnosti, u Glišićevom slučaju to su samo *dijalozi* sa modernom umetnošću, izleti u aktuelne tokove, posle kojih se vraćao na svoj osnovni, realistički način izražavanja, koji je gajio tokom više od pedeset godina.⁹ Na taj način je, za razliku od svojih vršnjaka, začetnika moderne struje srpske umetnosti XX veka – to su u prvom redu Nadežda Petrović (1873–1915),



Dragomir Glišić,
Autoportret, 1945.

⁵ O. Bihajić-Merin, "Druga izložba likovnih umetnika Srbije", Naša književnost (Beograd 1946) 129–130.

⁶ Ulje na platnu, signirano "D. Glišić 1945", nalazi se u vlasništvu slikareve porodice.

⁷ O Kutlikovoj školi: L. Trifunović, Srpska crtačkoslikarska i umetničkoznanstvena škola u Beogradu (1895–1914), Beograd 1978, 9–17, 29–116.

⁸ Portret moje kćeri (Moja kći Mara), ulje na platnu, u vlasništvu slikareve porodice.

⁹ Detaljnije o tome P. Dragojević, Dragomir Glišić (1872–1957), 1 – Slike: dijalog sa modernom umetnošću, Beograd 2000.

Milan Milovanović (1876–1946) i Kosta Miličević (1877–1920) – Dragomir Glišić postao začetnik i vodeći predstavnik jedne, svojevremeno jake, aktivne i uticajne konzervativne struje u srpskom likovnom životu prve polovine XX veka.

Uzori su mu bili i ostali srpski realisti Paja Jovanović (1859–1957), Uroš Predić (1857–1953) i Đorđe Krstić (1851–1907), njegovo školovanje (kod Kutlika u Beogradu, zatim u Minhenu) bilo je konzervativno pa i relativno "zastarelo" za tadašnje moderne pojmove, a takvi su i slikarski uticaji za koje je bio otvoren (stari majstori iz Minhenske Pinakoteke i iz Luvra). Sva njegova odstupanja od realističkog prikaza predmeta ka modernim likovnim jezicima imala su strogo određene granice: secesiju je mogao da prihvati samo do granice iza koje počinju vizije i metafizičke poruke, impresionizam do tačke iza koje se gube jasni oblici ili nastupa dvodimenzionalnost, formu ekspresionizma samo do početka deformacije oblika, kolorizam do tačke rastapanja forme. Ali, nikako dalje. Takođe, sva njegova pomenuta stilska odstupanja od realizma proisticala su iz posmatranja prirode: negde je u odabranom motivu video svetlost, negde liniju, boju, temu... itd. Ideja o slici koja nastaje nezavisno od realnosti i apstraktno slikarstvo za njega su bili, kako je rekao, "ludorija koja se ne može održati".¹⁰ Glišić ništa nije radio "napamet", naprotiv, ponekad je koristio i fotografiju kao predložak, a čak je i (retke) ikone i istorijske kompozicije slikao isključivo koristeći žive modele.

Na osnovu poznavanja Glišićevog načina rada, može se zaključiti da je i njegova slika *Šesti april 1941.* prikaz događaja koji je slikar lično video. Scenu nije mogao izmisliti, niti se može pretpostaviti da ju je pri prenošenju u likovni jezik bitnije izmenio, ali to ipak nije samo "snimak" stvarnosti. Odnosom prema motivima, upotrebljenom formom, najzad i izborom tehnike, Glišić je ne samo preneo sliku događaja (izgled, kretnje, stanje, osećanja, atmosferu), nego je dao i svoje tumačenje.

II – Autor i delo. Sadržaj i smisao

Materijal i tehnika. Pastel nalazimo u Glišićevoj zaostavštini srazmerno retko. Čak je i ratne slike na Solunskom frontu radio u ulju, na dasci; a i 1943. je takođe slikao uljem, na platnu.¹¹ Može se zaključiti da njegov izbor tehnike nije bio vezan za materijalne okolnosti. Pretpostavljamo da je u uslovima okupacije pastel na papiru bio možda lakši za sakrivanje i eventualno uništavanje, ali treba misliti i na umetnikovu nameru. Naime, crtež kao medij je za Glišića bio, kao i fotografija, neposredna veza sa prikazanim motivom; prenoseći ga u tehniku ulja, udaljavao se od izvora i prvobitnog osećanja, potiskujući inspiraciju zahtevima zanatskih pravila.¹² U slučajevima kada je želeo da ostvari nešto više od crteža, a da pri tome uljem i tehnikom ne ublaži intenzitet svojih osećanja i delikatnost motiva, koristio je pastel – uglavnom na portretima dece.

1. Forma

Kompoziciono rešenje uvodi posmatrača u dramu koja se odvijala na nekom od viših spratova razrušene zgrade i zauzimala samo mali deo vidnog polja. Glišić je tragičnu

¹⁰ Stenografske beleške razgovora M. Dželebdžića i V. Kolaković sa Dragomirskom Glišićem 4. 1. 1957. u domu D. Glišića, Istorijski arhiv Beograda, Građa za istoriju Beograda k. XIII, 37.

¹¹ Sremčica, 1943, Portret zeta, 1943, neke mrtve prirode, sve u vlasništvu porodice.

¹² Up: "Slikarski postupak Dragomira Glišića. Odnos prema zanatskom i akademizam, odnos prema prirodi i odstupanja od realizma", u: P. Dragojević, nav. delo, 46–48.

scenu "isekao" iz celine i uvećao je, tako da njen prikaz ispunjava celo vidno polje, tj. čitav okvir slike.

Linije, među kojima dominiraju horizontale (krevet, položaj ženinog tela) sugerišu mir, neaktivnost. Nekoliko linija vuče pogled udesno nadole (ženina desna ruka; greda koja je pala na krevet) i sugerišu pad. Između kose linije (greda) i horizontale (ženino telo) javlja se tzv. stroboskopski efekat,¹³ kojim se sugerišu ženina "prikovanost" u horizontalnom položaju. Vizuelno, to je "pad" iz vertikalnog u horizontalni položaj. Tom kretanju pokušava da se suprotstavi kretanje linija detetovog tela: kratka linija (detetove ručice) vuče pogled posmatrača udesno nagore, na nju se nadovezuje zakrivljena linija (detetovo izdignuto izvijeno telo), ali njen oslonac je na horizontali majčinog tela, koja je vuče nadole i od koje ne može da se odvoji. Ovi vizuelni efekti sadržani u položajima tela deteta i njegove majke otkrivaju ne samo pokrete, nego i zle slutnje o detetovoj sudbini.

Položaj deteta (ono leži potrbuške, pridiže gornji deo tela oslanjajući se na ruke) gotovo da je identičan sa položajem jednoga od anđela koji na nebu oplakuju Hrista na Đotovoj fresci *Oplakivanje Hrista*.¹⁴ Ako se radi o namernoj sličnosti, onda to baca novo svetlo na Glišićevo slikarstvo, u kom, inače, nema takvih poigravanja likovnim "citatima", a ni aluzija. Slobodno bismo onda slici pridodali i sledeće značenje: mrtvu majku oplakuje njen anđeo.

Boje, maslinastozelena i zelena sa akcentima bele odaju "paletu" introvertnog umetnika.¹⁵ On polazi od forme, kompozicije i crteža, voli red, izbegava kretanje i izazivanje snažnih osećanja. Razočaran je u svet, život i društvo, pa i u erotsko (ovo je bitno za kasniju analizu značenja motiva). Zakočen u akciji, ne veruje u realnost, prednost daje sistemima (uključujući tehniku, zanat slikanja). Iz protesta protiv postojećeg ili u traženju kompenzacije za neispunjena očekivanja, zagledan je u prošlost i tradiciju, ili u prirodu. Oslanja se na intelekt i *racio*, pri čemu skriva ili potiskuje lirska osećanja. Komunicira u okvirima porodice i ateljea. Ima želju za slobodom, ali se plaši promena. Ovi zaključci o umetnikovoj ličnosti, koje izvodimo iz njegove palete, uvode nas u razmatranje motiva koje koristi.

2. Motivi

Nezavisno od istorijskog objašnjenja, ova Glišićeva slika može da deluje i kao autonomna celina; uzrok rušenja i stradanja ne mora biti poznat (prirodna katastrofa, urušavanje zgrade, rat), očigledno je suočavanje sa vanrednom okolnošću, koja poremećuje prirodni tok života. Glišić je napravio odabir i sklop vizuelno razumljivih motiva. Znamo da je slikao uglavnom pejzaže, mrtve prirode i potrebe. Kompozicije je pokušavao da radi samo u mladosti, ali za to nije bio dovoljno osposobljen. To nam govori arhivska dokumentacija o njegovim studijama,¹⁶ isto se može zaključiti i iz načina na koji je koristio fotografije kao predloške za slike u ulju tokom Prvog svetskog rata,¹⁷ najzad, to se vidi i iz nekoliko

¹³ Vidi: R. Amhajm, *Umetnost i vizuelno opažanje*, Beograd 1987 (preveo Vojin Stojić) 326–330, 365–367 et passim.

¹⁴ Padova, Kapela Skrovenji, freske, datirane u period 1302–1306.

¹⁵ Up. S. Petrović, *Boja i savremeno srpsko slikarstvo*, Beograd 1989, gde je staro iskustvo likovne kritike i istorije umetnosti potvrđeno eksperimentom i dovedeno do uopštavanja.

¹⁶ Glišićeve diplome, kao prepiska sa ministarstvima koju je vodio tokom školovanja u Minhenu, pokazuju da na akademiji nije završio poslednju godinu studija, na kojoj se učilo komponovanje (Arhiv Srbije, Ministarstvo prosvete, f. VII, r.171, 1905; f. XLVI, r.54, 1905; itd, up. P. Dragojević, nav. delo, 89). Dugujem zahvalnost dragom kolegi, poč. dr Dragutinu Tošiću iz Instituta za istoriju umetnosti, koji je dao na raspolaganje kopije ovih dokumenata.

¹⁷ Npr. Izvlačenje teške artiljerije na čeganjski vis, 1917, (ulje na platnu, u vlasništvu vojnog muzeja u Beograd) i jedan snimak iz njegovog ratnog albuma fotografija, u vlasništvu porodice. Up. i: P. Dragojević, "Ratni albumi fotografija Dragomira Glišića", *Likovni život* 45–46 (Zemun 1994) 73

njegovih osrednjih ili nedovršenih kompozicija sa početka veka.¹⁸ Ponovno upuštanje u izradu kompozicije – za njega umetnički riskantno i atipično – svakako ukazuje na neku duboku unutrašnju potrebu da baš na taj način prikaže važan događaj i izrazi svoje stanje.

3. Značenje motiva

Želimo li da ispravno "dešifrujemo" ovaj umetnikov vizuelni iskaz, onda moramo otkriti koje značenje imaju prikazani motivi u okvirima njegove lične kulture – obzirom da krajem dvadesetog i početkom dvadeset i prvog veka prikazi ljudskog tela, smrti, intime... imaju drugačije značenje. Danas možemo govoriti o telu kao predmetu svakovrsne umetničke obrade, o "inflaciji" scena nasilja u vizuelnim medijima i ravnodušnosti prema njima, o narušavanju intime kao svakodnevnoj pojavi, pa i o promeni čovekove telesne i duhovne prirode njenim produžavanjem u virtuelnu realnost ili zamenom tehničkim dodacima.¹⁹

Ruševine, uglavnom, ne postoje u Glišićevoj umetnosti. Nalazimo ih u njegovim dokumentarnim fotografijama Soluna iz novembra 1917.²⁰ U slikama, građevine (kuće, stare vodenice, crkve) koje je prikazivao jesu ponekad po sebi stare i trošne, ali se na njima ne vide tragovi propadanja, jer ih je Glišić na neki način "umivao" i "popravljao". Pukotine, rušenje, raspadanje i slično nije spadalo u repertoar njegovih motiva. Stoga srušeni zid na slici *Šesti april 1941.* ima ne samo funkciju u opisivanju i objašnjavanju tragične scene, nego iskazuje i autorov stav o tom događaju kao teškom poremećaju poretka stvari.

Malo dete sa slike *Šesti april 1941.* se svojom surovom i neizvesnom sudbinom sasvim uklapa u dečji svet prikazan u Glišićevoj umetnosti. Prikazi dece kod Glišića imaju značenje nežnosti, slabosti, stradanja i tuge. Ona su u žiži svih socijalnih nepravdi i istorijskih nesreća. To značenje Glišićevi portreti dece imaju svojim nastankom, umetnikovom namerom, ili su ga dobila naknadno. Evo nekoliko primera. Na nizu fotografija iz Prvog svetskog rata, snimao je pored ostalog i decu u pozadini fronta, sukobljavajući u nizu dirljivih scena dečju bezazlenost i surove posledice rata kao što su glad, razaranja i žrtve. Ponekad je naslovom pokušavao da podvuče smisao prikazanog motiva.²¹ U svojim ratnim dnevnicima iz 1916/17. Glišić govori o svojoj deci kao o "siročićima".²² Posle rata je

¹⁸ Vračara na prelu, 1912 (ulje na platnu, nedovršeno); Miloš [Stojićević] i Meho [Orugdžić] 1913. (ulje na platnu; crtež olovkom reprodukovano u: Srpske narodne junačke pesme, Beograd 1914. up. P. Vasić, *Primenjena umetnost u Srbiji*, Beograd 1981, 18) – obe u vlasništvu porodice, kao i *Fatamorgana*, 1917, ulje na platnu, u vlasništvu Vojnog muzeja u Beogradu.

¹⁹ Ph. J. Sampson, "Die Representation des Körpers", *Kunstforum International* 132 (November–Januar 1996) 94–111; P. Ariès, *Images of Man and Death*, Harvard University Press, Cambridge, Mass. 1985; S. R. Suleiman, *The Female Body in Western Culture*, Cambridge, Mass. 1986; A. R. Stone, "Würde sich der wirkliche Körper bitte erheben? Grenzgeschichte über virtuelle Kulturen", *Kunstforum International* 133 (Februar–April 1996) 68–83; F. Allan, "The End of Intimacy", in: *Human Rights* (Winter 1984) 55.

²⁰ Up. "Registar fotografskih snimaka iz 1916, 17, i 18. god. u ratu počev od Soluna pa na dalje. Svojina Drag. Glišića ratnog slikara štaba Morav. divizije registrovano u selu Gruništu 22 – XI – 1917. godine", r. br. 20–24, Vojni muzej u Beogradu. Negativi njegovih snimaka iz 1916–1918. nalaze se u fotoarhivi tog muzeja, inv. br. 73667606, a ratni albumi sa kontaktkopijama čuvaju se u njegovoj porodici. Up. N. Šuica, Dragomir Glišić. Ratni period 1914–1918, Vojni muzej, Beograd 1983; P. Dragojević, "Ratni albumi fotografija Dragomira Glišića", *Likovni život* 45/46 (1994) 73.

²¹ "Registar fotografskih snimaka iz 1916, 17, i 18. god. u ratu počev od Soluna pa na dalje....", r. br. 7, 9, 10–11, 33–36.

²² Od 21 do 28. XII–916, [Dnevnik 2], Vojni muzej u Beogradu, inv. br. 10747, bez pag. Prepis u N. Šuica, nav. delo, bez. pag.

²³ Ulje na platnu, 109,5 h 79 sign. Drag. Glišić 1920 vl. Narodni muzej u Beogradu.

1920. naslikao *Ratno siroče (Devojčica sa šlemom)*,²³ gde je predstavio svoju kći Maru kako u rukama setno premeće očev šlem. Uoči Drugog svetskog rata radio je portrete siromašne dece bez roditelja – najpoznatiji je *Mali Nikola*, iz 1940,²⁴ usamljen, u pocepanom odelu, tužnog pogleda u krupnim očima. U toku Drugog svetskog rata poginuo je Vlada Ružić, koga je Glišić kao dečaka portretisao na crtežu *Mali Vlada*, 1928. godine.²⁵ Tada je nastao crtež *Manja*, 1942,²⁶ a portretisana devojčica je poginula od minobacača tokom borbi za oslobođenje grada, oktobra 1944. godine. Ovaj pregled Glišićevog pogleda na svet dece kao svet onih koji pate i stradaju, upotpunjuje podatak da je 1943. ostao bez jedinog sina, koji je poginuo kao oficir Narodnooslobodilačke vojske Jugoslavije.²⁷ Tek će pred kraj svog života napraviti radove u kojima dete (njegov tek rođeni unuk) ne doživljava tužnu sudbinu.²⁸

Smrt, leš. Iz Glišićevog ratnog dnevnika i fotografija sa fronta može se saznati kakve je sve ježive scene imao prilike da vidi u Prvom svetskom ratu.²⁹ Ali, kada je likovnim sredstvima prikazivao takve situacije, bio je retko kad eksplicitan u prikazivanju mrtvih i atmosfere smrti³⁰, pa je tražio motive koji ublažuju scenu, ili je usmeravao pažnju na tugu preživelih, koji sede kraj grobova svojih dragih.³¹ Prikaz mrtve žene predstavlja posebno radikalnu novost u njegovoj ikonografiji.

Žena. U Glišićevoj umetnosti najčešće se pojavljuje u uljanim slikama. Prikaz žena je za njega prikaz devojke, sestre, supruge, njegovih kćerki, rođaka, portret poznanica i uglednih gospođica i gospođa. Žena je u njegovoj umetnosti bliska i draga osoba, bezazleno biće, osećajno, ponekad rastuženo i povređeno, a uvek pristojno i uzorno (u patrijarhalnom smislu reči), blisko i pozitivno. Prikazivanju žena prilazio je sa mnogo pažnje i ta dela spadaju u njegove najbolje, čak antologijske, radove.³²

Golotinja. Nastradalu ženu na slici *Šesti april 1941.* prikazao je sa nagim grudima. Taj motiv je sasvim neobičan za Dragomira Glišića. Za razliku od drugih umetnika njegovog vremena, kod kojih su aktovi veoma česti, a pojedini spadaju među njihova najznačajnija ostvarenja ili ispunjavaju čitave faze razvoja – kod D. Glišića se prikazi nago tela javljaju srazmerno veoma retko i kvalitetom se ne ističu u odnosu na ostala njegova dela. Među nešto više od tri stotine evidentiranih njegovih slika u ulju (ako ne računamo njegove studentske vežbe iz Minhena, poznate prema fotografijama), samo je jedan akt: to je s leđa prikazan torzo žene, kojoj je lice sasvim zaklonjeno, a sve je u polusenci.³³ Među

²⁴ Ulje na platnu, uništeno 1941. Takođe Mali Nikola (II), 1940. ulje na platnu, poznato po fotografiji.

²⁵ Olovka na papiru, u vlasništvu porodice Glišić.

²⁶ Olovka i pastel na papiru, vl. porodica Glišić.

²⁷ Stenografske beleške..., 22.

²⁸ Na primer, Studija bebe, (Unuk), 1950, olovka; U dedinom vrtu, 1950, ulje na platnu, obe u vlasništvu umetnikove porodice.

²⁹ "Od 6–22. avg." i "od 22. VIII do 5. IX", [ratni dnevnik Dragomira Glišića], Vojni muzej u Beogradu.

³⁰ Leš vojnika sa gavranom, 1917, olovka na papiru, 145 h 202, Crni album, list 3; Leš u pejzažu, olovka na papiru, isto, list 8, Vojni muzej u Beogradu.

³¹ Crteži olovkom iz Zelenog albuma (1916) Žena na grobu vojnika, list 6, poledina; Vojnik na grobu, list 14, poledina i list 17. Crtež Vojnik kleči pred grobom [1917], olovka, 700 h 920. Fotografije Vojničko groblje, Starac na grobu sina, Starac i oficir pored groba, itd. (naslove je dala N. šuica, u nav. delu, bez. pag.), sve u vlasništvu Vojnog muzeja u Beogradu.

³² Portret kćeri Cice, 1912; Portret moje kćeri Milice, 1920; već pomenuto Ratno siroče, 1920; Portret umetnikove sestre Sofije Jovanović, 1922; Moja kći Milica, 1925; Portret kraljice Marije, 1929; Moja kći Mara, 1937; i tako dalje.

³³ Ženski akt, 1909. (ulje na platnu, vl. porodica Glišić).

sačuvanim crtežima postoje još i tri muška akta – jedan je sa studija, a dva su nastala na grčkom suncu tokom Prvog svetskog rata.³⁴ Pada u oči da je Glišić bio izrazito "stidljiv", "pristojan" ili "konzervativan" pri prikazivanju tela – pogotovo ženskog – i da golotinja ne spada u repertoar motiva kojima se on izražavao. Tek kada imamo u vidu tu činjenicu, postaje jasno koliku težinu, u okvirima njegovog likovnog govora, ima ovaj prikaz nagih grudi na slici *Šesti april 1941*, odnosno, koliko je snažno duševno stanje koje je Glišić pokušao time da izrazi. On, koji nikada nije prikazivao golotinju, sada nije pokušao da je prikrije (da je u kompoziciji "pokrije" pomeranjem nekog predmeta, recimo grede u prvom planu, ili samo promenom svoje tačke posmatranja). Nagota je, u Glišićevom likovnom govoru, u trenutku nastanka slike postala ekvivalent za izrazito šokantan prizor, koji je izraz osramoćenosti (gotovo Kafkijanske sramote koja ostaje posle smrti), krajnje bespomoćnosti, oskrnavljenosti, izrazite ugroženosti, nevine žrtve. Ovim motivom, koji je po njegovim nazorima nesvakidašnji, Glišić je hteo da opiše akt nasilja kakvo se u njegovom životu nikada ranije nije dogodilo (bar ne pred njegovim očima, ne u toj silini ili ne na takav način) i koje je razrušilo dotadašnji poredak stvari pregazivši sve njemu poznate norme.

Autorov stav. Vreme nastanka, likovna tehnika i rukopis, kao i značenja koja su prikazani motivi imali za autora, otkrivaju autorove tačke gledišta³⁵ na prostornovremenskom, psihološkom, "frazološkom" i značenjskom planu.

Time je dao svoje viđenje aprilskog rata, koje ima nekoliko specifičnosti. Prvo, približio je gledaocu poziciju svoga naroda kao žrtve. Fokusirao je pažnju gledaoca na samo jednu tragičnu priču. Prikazao je ono što je lično video. Slikao je ubrzo posle događaja. Koristio je tehniku koja čuva prvi autorov utisak i dočarava nežnost i ranjivost prikazanog motiva. Kompozicijom je aktere prikazao u krupnom planu. Za aktere je odabrao dva bezazlena bića. Istovremeno im je suprotstavio razaranje, smrt, strah, poniženje. Pokazao je da su akteri stradali bez svoje krivice, što kod posmatrača izaziva saosećanje i gnušanje. Posmatrač koji se poistovećuje sa akterima ne doživljava katarzu; ostaje osećaj bespomoćnosti, možda besa i svakako besmisla. To je individualna tragedija kao deo masovne tragedine; stradanje viđeno iz pozicije običnog čoveka, jedne bezazlene majke i njenog deteta.

III – Delo i publika. Razumevanje i vrednovanje

Ubrzo posle rata, Glišić je izložio svoj rad, ali bez uspeha. Za tadašnju publiku je izradio novu verziju, u ulju. Zanimljivo je da je doterao, pazeći na materiju, formu i osvetljenje, te je slika u ulju u tom pogledu "bolja" od prve verzije. Izmenio je neke detalje: pokrio je golotinju mrtve žene, a dete je prikazao kako klonulo, ili mrtvo, počiva na majčinim grudima. U želji da je učini jasnijom, slici je dodao datum (naziv dela), ali pomalo nespretno, tako da liči na omanji grafit na unutrašnjem zidu sobe.

Iz perspektive posleratnih generacija, Glišićevo likovno tumačenje šestog aprila jeste potpuna "promena" ili "otkriće" u odnosu na one vizuelne prikaze Aprilskog rata, kakvi su nastajali tokom druge polovine XX veka, uglavnom u zvaničnoj umetnosti, a najčešće u

³⁴ Muški akt, oko 1900/1902. (olovka i pastel, vl. porodica Glišić); Muški akt, 1917. (olovka, 202 h 145, tzv. Crni album, list 18, poledina, vl. Vojni muzej u Beogradu); Studija muškog akta, 1916. (olovka, 145 h 92, tzv. Zeleni album, list 3, poledina, vl. Vojni muzej u Beogradu).

³⁵ O tome posebno: B. A. Uspenski, *Semiotika ikone*, Beograd 1979, 3–183.

filmu.³⁶ Odgovor na pitanje kako se, i zašto, ovo Glišićevo viđenje "zagubilo" u njegovom okruženju jeste tema za sebe i o tome se ovde nešto samo sažeto može reći.

Naime, kao posrednik, u stvari kontrolor, između publike i umetnika postavio se kritičar, koji je imao drugačiji pogled na svet. Detaljnije poređenje Glišića i njegovog kritičara pokazuje njihove bitne međusobne razlike. Glišić je svojom umetnošću još od ranije promovisao građanske vrednosti, konzervativizam, individualizam i nacionalne interese, a u radu metodičnost i javnost; pozicija kritičara je bila dijametralno suprotna – on je promovisao levičarske ideje, revolucionarnost, kolektivizam i internacionalizam, a u radu improvizaciju i konspiraciju. Pošto je nova ideologija tretirala umetnost kao socijalno oružje, Glišićeva slika je marginalizovana kako bi se smanjio njen uticaj na "mase". Tek sa ponovnim vraćanjem građanskih vrednosti, od kraja XX veka, Glišićevo slikarstvo u celini, pa i ovo njegovo tumačenje šestog aprila, dobija svoju publiku.



Dragomir Glišić,
Šesti april 1941, 1945.

³⁶ Dato sa neprijateljske tačke posmatranja (iz aviona koji prosipa bombe na Beograd) a ne sa gledišta žrtve; sve kao slom „trule“ države i kao kolektivna drama, a ne kao lične tragedije nevinih pojedinaca; objašnjeno kao Hitlerov odgovor na 27-martovske demonstracije, a ne kao neizazvani akt terora; uvek kao istorijski okvir i uvod u priču o narodnom ustanku pod vođstvom Komunističke partije Jugoslavije, a sve shvaćeno kao osnova za čitav posleratni razvoj (izgradnja socijalističkog društva).

Predrag Dragojević

THE ORIGIN AND THE MEANING OF A PAINTING

April 6th 1941 by Dragomir Glišić (1872-1957)

During the years preceding World War II, visual art had in different ways foreseen, foretold and even quite realistically *predicted* the tragedy. The beginning of the war was mainly *depicted* through photographs and documentaries, and one of the rare authentic *interpretations* of the April war, which reveals a state of mind faced with the approaching danger, comes through in the painting *April 6th 1941* by Dragomir Glišić (1872-1957).

An effort will be made here to understand the experience which this painting offers to viewers or causes in them, through several mediums of art history (iconographic and cultural combined into iconological, as well as comparative) and special approaches (historical, technical, semiotic, sociological) combined into an analytical structure suitable for an informational approach to a painting as a means of visual communication (following the pattern: the source of inspiration – author – work of art – viewer or audience).¹

1 The source and the author. The stimulus for creation

The history of the painting. This painting remains in the artist's workshop and belongs to his family.² It is done in chalk and pastels and kept behind glass. It shows a demolished bedroom. The wall is knocked down, and on an iron bed there lies a dead young woman with her mouth open and smeared with blood, an empty look in her eyes. A young crying child is trying to lift itself from her body. A wooden beam has fallen on the bed across the woman's legs. A pile of bricks from the wall is lying on the floor behind the bed. The explanation for this scene is that during the bombing of Belgrade by the Germans on April 6, 1941, among the many buildings that were destroyed there was a multi-storey building with one of its walls so destroyed that people could see the inside from the street. The room depicted in the painting was on one of the upper floors which could not be reached at first so it wasn't possible to get to the child. It is not known what happened to the child later.³

The painting was created after the bombing of Belgrade (judging by the technique used, it was probably painted while the events were still fresh in the memory of the author) or in 1942 at the latest,⁴ which still doesn't diminish its authenticity or what the author tried to express. The painting was named before the second ULUS exhibition held in Belgrade in 1945 where it was first exhibited and received rather poor reviews.⁵ After that there has been no mention of it in catalogues of Glišić's exhibitions nor have art historians commented on it. Still, it must have had some importance for Glišić as he reproduced it in his *Self-portrait* in 1945.⁶ He presented himself as a painter in his workshop, wearing a coat, holding a brush and a palette in his hands, sitting on his wooden chair

¹ Lazar Trifunović, *studies, experiments, critiques* (arranged by Dragan Bulatović), edition Serbian critics, vol. 4, The Museum of Contemporary Art, Belgrade 1990, 234-236.

² Lazar Trifunović, *studies, experiments, critiques* (arranged by Dragan Bulatović), edition Serbian critics, vol. 4, The Museum of Contemporary Art, Belgrade 1990, 234-236.

³ This information came from Mr Glišić's daughter, Mrs Mara Ristić-Glišić, as well as much more information about the artist's private life, work, friendships, painting techniques and the origin of some pieces of work, during several conversations in 1987 and later on.

⁴ According to a catalogue of Glišić's paintings in exhibitions not made to professional standards and also containing some obvious printing mistakes the painting existed in 1942. V. Kolaković, "The painter Dragomir Glišić 1872-1957", *The Art Archive Herald* 23 (Valjevo 1967) 247-293.

⁵ O. Bihalji Merin, "The Second Exhibition of the Serbian Painters" *Our Literature* (Belgrade 1946) 129-130.

⁶ Oil, signed "D. Glišić's 1945", property of the artist's family

placed opposite his easel (even now, decades after his death, the chair is still there). Behind is part of the wall of his workshop with several paintings on it. Everything is presented in a mirror-like fashion. As far as it is known, this is the first and the only Glišić's self-portrait in which he presented himself as a painter surrounded by his work, so it can be assumed that he had chosen pieces that had some value to him. Among other works, a reproduction of *The Old Man* is presented here, the drawing which he did in the beginning of his career around 1895 while he was a student of Kutlik's.⁷ A part of a big portrait of his daughter Mara,⁸ can also be seen in the self-portrait. Mara's portrait was painted in 1937 as the artist was trying to show his abilities in a realistic style. He received great praises for this painting from the realist Paja Jovanović, which was truly valuable and important for Glišić.

The theme. In order to comprehend the "truthfulness" and the "accuracy" of the scene depicted, we need to have a good understanding of the nature of Glišić's art. Although the history of Serbian art in the first half of the 20th century can be witnessed in his work with every change and novelty, he basically stayed a realist throughout his career. The way he uses light and drawing in some of his early work shows some traces of art deco. In some other respects, the use of colour and the freedom of movement point to expressionism. In the heat of the sun in the Thessalonica front (and due to lack of time), working rather fast, he reached the impressionist form. In the third decade of 20th century, he got close to the so-called "classical stream," by using line, painting smoothly and "modeling" through tone. Through the choice of interesting natural objects, he got close to the expressionism of the form. Sometimes, when looking at a scene, he only saw colour, so in the end of the 1920s, he went back to using colour, which was rather fashionable then. He found himself in the poetical realism and intimism, the characteristics of which (turning towards realism, old masters, simplicity, privacy) he had carried in himself all along and only "welcomed" during the 1930s. Just before the Second World War, he showed the ability to choose topics which brought him to so-called "social painting". However, while modern authors experienced these changes as phases of development of new art, in Glišić's case, these were only *dialogues* with modern art, excursions into the current streams, after which he would go back to his basic, realistic expression that he nurtured during more than fifty years⁹. In this way, unlike some of his contemporaries, the founders of the modern stream of the Serbian art of the 20th century, particularly Nadežda Petrović (1873-1915), Milan Milovanović (1876-1946) and Kosta Miličić (1877-1920), Dragomir Glišić became the founder and the leading proponent of the strong, active and influential conservative stream in Serbian painting in the first half of the 20th century. His idols were Serbian realists Paja Jovanović (1859-1957), Uroš Predić (1857-1953) and Djordje Krstić (1851-1907). His training (both at Kutlik's in Belgrade and later in Munich) was conservative and relatively "old-fashioned" from the modern perspective of the time, and so were the influences that he was open to (the old masters of the Munich Pinakothek and the Louvre). Any moving away from the realistic presentation of the object towards the modern artistic expression was clearly defined. He could accept art deco only to the point where visions and metaphysical messages began, impressionism to the point where clear objects were lost or where there was "two-dimensionalism", expressionism to the point where the shapes were deformed, colourism to the point where form was disintegrated. Also, whenever he would step away from realism it was the result of his observation of nature. Sometimes, in the scene he was observing, he would see a line, a colour, a theme etc. The idea of painting that was created without a connection with reality and in particular, abstract painting, was in his words "a craze that cannot survive"¹⁰. Glišić never painted without looking at something. Sometimes he used a photograph and sometimes he used models for painting even icons (the few he painted) and the historical compositions.

⁷ About Kutlik's school: L. Trifunović, *The Serbian drawing/painting school for art and crafts in Belgrade (1895-1914)*, Belgrade 1978, 9-17, 29-116.

⁸ *The portrait of my Daughter (My daughter Mara)*, oil, property of the artist's family

⁹ More about this: P. Dragojević, *Dragomir Glišić (1872-1957) 1- Paintings: A Dialogue With Modern Art*, Belgrade 2000

¹⁰ Shorthand notes of the conversation between M. Dželabdžić and V. Kolaković with Dragomir Glišić on 4th Jan. 1957 at D. Glišić's home, The Belgrade Historical Archive, Materials for the history of Belgrade, vol. XIII, 37

Based on the knowledge of the way Glišić used to work, we can make an assumption that his painting *April 6th 1941* is a presentation of a scene the artist had seen. He couldn't have made this entire scene up and we cannot assume that he changed it much when "translating" it into the language of painting, but still it is only a "record" of reality. Through his relationship towards motive, form used and choice of the technique, Glišić did not only record the scene (the way it looked, the movement, feelings, atmosphere) but also gave his interpretation.

II The author and his work. The content and the meaning

Material and the technique

We don't often see pastels in Glišić's work. He even used oil paints on wooden board for the paintings of war he did on the Thessalonica front, and in 1943 he also used oil on canvas¹¹. A conclusion can be made that his choice of technique was not in connection with the conditions in which he was working. One can assume that during occupation, using pastels on paper would have been easier for hiding and if need be destroying the painting, but there is also the artist's intention to be considered. For Glišić, drawing as a medium, like painting, was a direct connection with the motive presented. If he were to use oil, he would have moved away from the source and the primary feeling, having to put the demands of the craft in front of the inspiration¹². Whenever he wanted to achieve something more than one can in a drawing, and at the same time not diminish the intensity of his feelings or the delicacy of the motive, he used pastels – mostly in portraits of children.

1. Form

The composition presents to the viewer the drama that was taking place on one of the higher floors of the damaged building and was only a small part of the whole view. Glišić "cut" this scene out of the whole view and enlarged it so that it fills the whole of the canvas.

The lines, most of them being horizontal (the bed, the position of the woman's body) suggest peace, stillness. Several lines direct us to the bottom right corner (the woman's right hand, the wooden beam that had fallen on the bed) suggesting the fall. Between the bias (the beam) and the horizontal (the woman's body) a stroboscope effect¹³ is created thus suggesting the state of the woman being stuck in the horizontal. Visually, this is the "fall" from the vertical into the horizontal. This movement is juxtaposed by the movement of the child's body: a short line (the child's arms) takes the viewer upwards and right. This line is continued by a curve (the child's raised body) but it is supported by the horizontal of the mother's body, pulling it downwards and making it hard to separate. These visual effects created by the position of the bodies of the mother and the child reveal not only the movement, but also a bad premonition about the child's fate.

The position of the child (it is lying on its tummy, and trying to push itself up) is almost identical with the position of one of the angels mourning for Christ in Giotto's fresco *The Mourning of Christ*¹⁴. If this resemblance was created deliberately, then it throws new light on Glišić's painting which usually doesn't have any allusions nor does it play with painting "quotes". In that case we could give the painting another meaning: an angel mourns for the dead mother.

The colours, green and olive-green with touches of white, point to the palette of an introvert artist¹⁵. He starts from the form, composition and the drawing. He likes order and avoids movement and arousing strong feelings. He is disillusioned by the world, life and society, and even eroticism (which is important for the analysis of the motives later on). He appears stuck, not believing

¹¹ Sremčica, 1943, *Portrait of a relative*, 1943, also some still-lives, all in the property of the family

¹² "The Painting Procedure of Dragomir Glišić. The relationship towards the craft and the academic approach, relationship towards nature and stepping away from realism", in: P. Dragojević, idem. 46-48.

¹³ See: R. Arnheim, *Art and Visual Perception*, Belgrade 1987 (trans. Vojin Stojić) 326-330, 365-367 *et passim*.

¹⁴ Padova, Scrovegni Chapel, frescos dated 1302-1306

¹⁵ See: R. Arnheim, *Art and Visual Perception*, Belgrade 1987 (trans. Vojin Stojić) 326-330, 365-367 *et passim*.

in reality, and he focuses on the systems (including technique, the craftsmanship of painting). Protesting against the existing or seeking compensation for the unfulfilled expectations, he turns towards the past, tradition or nature. He relies on his intellect or *racio*, thus hiding or suppressing his lyrical feelings. He communicates within the boundaries of his family and the workshop. He yearns for freedom but is scared of change. These conclusions about the artist's personality that we can make by observing his palette take us to consideration of his motives.

2. Motives

This Glišić painting can also be viewed as a whole in itself, outside the historical context. The cause of the destruction and tragedy doesn't have to be known (natural disaster, landslide, war). What is obvious is subjects facing exceptional circumstances which disturb the natural flow of life. Glišić made a choice that makes it visually easy to understand his motives. We know that he used to paint mainly landscapes, still lifes and portraits. He only tried to do compositions in his youth, but was not skilled enough for that. We know this from the documentation of his studies found in the archives¹⁶ as well as from the way he used photographs as models for oil paintings during the First World War¹⁷. Finally, this can also be seen in several of his mediocre or unfinished compositions from the beginning of the century¹⁸. Working on a composition again (rather risky and unusual for him as an artist) obviously points to some deep need to express his feelings regarding an important event precisely through this form.

3. The meaning of the motives

If we want to "decode" properly this artistic expression, we have to find out what meaning the motives chosen have in the artist's culture, given that in the end of the 20th and the beginning of the 21st century, the imagery of human body, death and privacy have a different meaning. Today we can talk about body as the motif for all sorts of artistic presentation, about the "increase" of the scenes of violence in the visual media and the resulting indifference, about the violation of privacy on a daily basis, and even about the change in man's physical and spiritual nature achieved through its transfer into the virtual reality or replacement by technical gadgets¹⁹.

Ruins usually don't exist in Glišić's art. We find them in the photographic records from Thessalonica in November 1917²⁰. In his paintings, the buildings he presented (houses, old mills, churches)

¹⁶ Glišić's certificates, as well as the correspondence with the ministries which he held during his schooling in Munich, show that he didn't finish the last year at the academy where composition was taught (The Archive of Serbia, Ministry of Education, f. VII, r. 171, 1905, f.XLVI, r.54, 1905 etc. P. Dragojević, *ibid.* 89) I owe gratitude to my dear colleague, Dr Dragutin Tošić from the Institute of History and Art, who provided the copies of these documents

¹⁷ E.g. *Pulling heavy artillery to Čeganjski vis*, 1917 (oil on canvas, property of the Museum of War in Belgrade) and one photo from his album of war photos, property of the family. P. Dragojević "The album of war photos of Dragomir Glišić" *Likovni zivot* 45-46 (Zemun 1994) 73

¹⁸ *A Fortune-teller at a Fair*, 1912 (oil on canvas, unfinished), *Milos* (Stojičević) and *Meho* (Oruđžić) 1913 (oil on canvas; reproduction, drawing in pencil in *Serbian epic poetry*, Beograd 1914, P. Vasić, *Applied Art in Serbia*, Belgrade 1981, 18 – both owned by the family, as well as *Mirage*, 1917, oil on canvas, property of the Museum of War in Belgrade

¹⁹ Ph.J.Sampson "Die Representation des Körpers", *Kunstforum International* 132 (November-January 1996) 84-111; P.Aries, *Images of Man and Death*, Harvard University Press, Cambridge, Mass. 1985; S. R. Suleiman, *The Female Body in Western Culture*, Cambridge, Mass. 1986; A. R. Stone, "Würde sich der wirkliche Körper bitte erheben? Grenzgeschichte über virtuelle Kulturen", *Kunstforum International* 133 (February/April 1996) 68-83; F. Allan, "The End of Intimacy", in: *Human Rights* (Winter 1984) 55.

²⁰ "The Record of photographs from the war in 1916, 1917 and 1918 starting with Thessalonica. Property of Drag. Glišić, a war painter in the Morava Division, recorded in the village Grunite on 22-XI-1917" no. 20-24, The Museum of War, Belgrade. The negatives of his photos from 1916-1918 are in the archive of the museum, no. 7366-7606, and the war albums with copies are kept in his family. N. Juica, *Dragomir Glišić, The War Period 1914-1918*, The Museum of War, Belgrade 1983; P. Dragojević, "The war albums of Dragomir Glišić's photos" *Likovni zivot* 45/46 (1994) 73

may seem old and shabby, but there is no sign of decay, because Glišić somehow “fixed” them. Cracks, decay or falling apart were not in the inventory of the motives he used. That’s why the ruin of the wall in the painting *April 6th 1941* does not only describe and explain the tragic scene, but it also shows the author’s attitude as a great deviation from the natural order of things.

The little child in the painting *April 6th 1941* with its harsh and uncertain fate, fits well into the world of childhood presented in Glišić’s art. The presentation of children in Glišić’s art is connected to the feelings of tenderness, weakness, suffering and sorrow. Children are in the centre of all social injustice and historical tragedies. Glišić either had an intention to create this in the portraits of children that he made or it was added to the portraits later. Some examples of this are the photographs he took in the First World War. Among other things, Glišić photographed children behind the line of fighting, thus creating some touching scenes where the children’s innocence was contrasted to the harsh consequences of the war, such as hunger, destruction and casualties. Sometimes he would give the name to a painting that would emphasize the meaning of the motive.²¹ He uses the term orphans when talking about children in his war journal in 1916-1917.²² After the war, Glišić painted *A War Orphan (A Girl With a Helmet)*,²³ where he presented his daughter Mara holding her father’s helmet. Just before the Second World War, he painted portraits of poor orphan children, the best-known one being *Little Nikola*, from 1940.²⁴ The boy is presented in rags, lonely, with a sad look in his eyes. Another boy whose portrait Glišić had painted, Vlada Ružić, (*Little Vlada*, drawing in pencil 1928)²⁵ died during the Second World War. That is when Glišić did the drawing *Manja*, in 1942²⁶, and the girl in this portrait died in a mortar attack during the fighting to liberate the city in October 1944. Interpretation of Glišić’s view of the world of children as the world of suffering and tragedy is supported by the fact that in 1943 he lost his only son (he died as an officer in People’s Army of Yugoslavia).²⁷ It was only towards the end of his life that Glišić made some paintings in which the child (his newborn grandson) does not meet a tragic destiny.²⁸

Death, corpse. Glišić’s war diaries and the photographs from the front show us what kind of horrible scenes he witnessed during the First World War.²⁹ However, whenever he presented such scenes in painting, he was rarely explicit in presenting dead people and the atmosphere of death³⁰. He searched for motives that could decrease the strength of the scene or he directed his attention to the sorrow of the survivors who sit next to the graves of their beloved ones.³¹ The presentation of the dead woman is a rather radical innovation in his iconography.

Woman. Women in Glišić’s art can mostly be found in his oil paintings. A woman in his painting is a presentation of a girlfriend, sister, wife, one of his daughters, cousins, a portrait of an acquaintance or well-known ladies and young ladies. A woman in his art is a close and dear person, innocent, sensitive, sometimes sad or hurt, but always decent and respectable (in the patriarchal

²¹ “The Record of photographs from the war in 1916, 1917 and 1918 starting with Thessalonica...” no. 7, 9, 10-11, 33-36

²² From 21-28, XII-916 (Journal 2), The War Museum, Belgrade, no. 10747. Copy N.[uica, idem..

²³ Oil on canvas, 105.9x79 signed. Drag. Glišić 1920, property of The National Museum, Belgrade

²⁴ Oil on canvas, destroyed in 1941, Also *Mali Nikola* (II), 1940, oil on canvas, known by the photo

²⁵ Pencil on paper, property of Glišić’s family

²⁶ Pencil and pastels on paper, property of Glišić’s family

²⁷ Shorthand notes, 22

²⁸ E.g. *Study of a Baby (Grandson)*, 1950, pencil, *In the Grandfather’s garden*, 1950, oil on canvas, both in the property of Glišić’s family

²⁹ “From 6th – 22nd Aug” and “from 22nd VII – 5th IX” (Dragomir Glišić’s War Diary), The Museum of War, Belgrade

³⁰ *A Corpse of a Soldier with a Raven*, 1917, pencil on paper, 145x202, Black Album, page 3; *A Corpse in Landscape*, pencil on paper, ibid. page 8, The Museum of War, Belgrade

³¹ Drawings in pencil from the Green Album (1916) *A Woman on a Soldier’s Grave*, page 6, back; *A Soldier by a Grave*, page 14, back and page 17. *A Soldier Kneeling on a Grave* (1917), drawing in pencil 700x920; Photographs *Soldiers’ Graveyard*, *An Old Man by his Son’s Grave*, *An Old Man and an Officer by a Grave*, etc. (titles given by N.Suica, idem.) property of The Museum of War, Belgrade

meaning of the word), a positive image. He took a lot of care when presenting women and the pieces of work with women in them are some of his best, even anthological pieces.³²

Nudity. Glišić painted the woman in *April 6th 1941* with bare breasts. This is very unusual for Dragomir Glišić. Unlike other artists of his time, who often painted nudes and whose nude paintings were sometimes their biggest achievements or constituted an entire phase of their artistic development, Glišić rarely ever presented naked bodies and when he did, the quality of those paintings was not better than his other paintings. Among the more than three hundred recorded oil paintings done by Glišić (not counting the ones he did as part of practice during his studies in Munich), there is only one nude painting. It is a torso of a woman, seen from behind, in a shadow and her face cannot be seen.³³ There are three more nudes of males among Glišić's preserved drawings. One is from the time of his studies and the other two were made in Greece during the First World War.³⁴ It is noticeable that Glišić was rather "shy", "decent" or "conservative" when it comes to presenting human bodies, particularly a body of a woman, so the nudes do not fall into the category of the motives he used to express himself in his art. Only when we understand that can we understand the significance of his presentation of the woman's bare breasts in the painting *April 6th 1941* and how intense the emotional state that he was trying to express was. Although he never presented naked bodies, this time he didn't try to hide the nakedness (e.g. moving one of the objects in the composition such as the wooden beam to "cover" the nakedness, or simply changing his perspective). This nakedness takes a new meaning through Glišić's presentation. When the painting was created, this nakedness became an equivalent for a truly shocking scene, a symbol of shame (almost Kafkian sense of shame which lasts beyond death), utter helplessness, desecration and vulnerability of an innocent victim. Through this motive, atypical for his art, Glišić wanted to describe an act of violence which he had never seen happen before (not with such intensity and in such way) and which destroyed the world order and the paradigm in which he had lived.

The Author's Attitude. The time when the painting was created, the technique used and the meaning the motives had for the author, all point to the author's position³⁵ in the context of time, psychology and the meaning. Through this painting, the author gave his interpretation of the April war with its peculiarities. Firstly, he presented to the viewer a picture of his nation as the victim. He focused the viewer's attention on only one tragic story. He presented something that he had seen himself. The picture was painted soon after the event. The author used the technique which preserved his first impression and showed the tenderness and vulnerability in the chosen motive. In the composition, the characters, two innocent beings, are in the close-up. Their innocence is in contrast with destruction, death, fear, humiliation. He showed that the characters had suffered without being guilty for anything, which causes the feelings of empathy and disgust in the viewer. The viewer who identifies himself with the characters does not experience catharsis; he retains the feelings of helplessness, perhaps anger, and certainly meaninglessness. The tragedy that is presented is an individual tragedy which is a part of a larger tragedy, suffering seen from the point of view of an ordinary human being, an innocent mother and her child.

III – The painting and the audience. Understanding and assessment of the painting

Soon after the war, Glišić exhibited his painting, but without much success. For the audience of that time, he did another version of the painting, but this time in oil. He paid more attention to the technique and worked more on the form and the light, so this oil painting is in that respect better than

³² *A Portrait of the Daughter Cica*, 1912; *A Portrait of the Daughter Milica*, 1920; previously mentioned *A War Orphan*, 1920; *A Portrait of the Artist's Sister Sofija Jovanović*, 1922; *My Daughter Milica*, 1925; *A Portrait of the Queen Marija*, 1929; *My Daughter Mara*, 1937 etc.

³³ *A Nude Woman*, 1909 (oil on canvas, property of the Glišić's family)

³⁴ *A Nude Male*, around 1900/1902 (oil and pastels, property of the Glišić's family); *A Nude Male*, 1917 (pencil, 202x145, Black Album, page 18, back, property of the War Museum, Belgrade); *A Study of a Nude Male*, 1916 (pencil, 145x92, Green Album, page 3, back, property of the War Museum, Belgrade)

³⁵ Regarding this see: B.A. Uspenski, *Semiotics of an Icon*, Belgrade 1979, 3-183

the first version. He also changed some details: covering the dead woman's nakedness and presenting the child lying on its mother's bosom as motionless or dead. In an effort to make the painting clearer, Glišić added the date (the title of the painting), but it was done a bit awkwardly so it looks like graffiti on the wall of the room. From the point of view of the generations after the war, Glišić's artistic interpretation of April 6th was a thorough "change" or "innovation" in comparison to the visual presentations of the April war created in the second half of the 20th century, in the mainstream art, mainly in film.³⁶ The answer to the question why this Glišić's painting got "lost" in his surroundings is a long story and we can only make a brief comment on it here.

The painting and the audience were in a way separated by the art critic who had a different point of view than Glišić. If we make a more detailed comparison between Glišić and his critic, we can see some significant differences. Glišić had from early days promoted middle class values in his work, conservatism, individualism and national interest, as well as methodical approach and transparency. The critic, quite contrary to Glišić, promoted leftist and revolutionary ideas, collectivism and internationalism, as well as improvisation in work. Since the new ideology treated art as the means to influence social change, Glišić's painting was marginalized so that its effect on the "masses" would be reduced. Only with the return of the middle class values in the end of the 20th century, did Glišić's art in general and also his interpretation of April 6th find its audience.

Translated by Žana Borisavljević

³⁶ Presentation from the enemy's point of view (from an airplane bombing Belgrade) and not from the point of view of a victim, as a breakdown of a "decayed" country and a collective drama and not as a personal tragedy of innocent individuals, seen as Hitler's response to the demonstrations on March 27th and not as an unprovoked act of terror, always as a historical context of the people's uprising under the leadership of the Communist Party of Yugoslavia and not as the basis of the development following the war (building of a socialist country)