

Med deli verjetno najboljšega poznavalca slovenske dramatike in njenega prvega teoretika Tarasa Kermaunerja je mogoče najti tudi en sam dramski poskus: sodno razpravo o vrednosti avantgardistične poezije na primeru obtoženega pesnika Tomaža Šalamuna. Sicer gledališko zelo uporabno zvrst sodnega disputa Kermauner zanimivo razvije, zaključni pa jo s popolnoma antidramskim, antiklimaktičnim sklepom, s katerim preloži odločanje o stvari na drugi časoprostor. Natančnejši pregled besedila razkrije različne konceptualne nedoslednosti, ki jih je mogoče zajeti s pojmom paradoksa. V tekstu je bilo tako mogoče izslediti pet točk, ki bi jih bilo mogoče definirati kot paradokсне, in sicer zadevajo vsebinske kategorije, kot so bistvo umetnosti, vprašanja naroda za umetnost, umetnosti in marksizma ter življenja kot vrhovne estetske kategorije, zadnji paradoks pa je formalen, saj sodna razprava s svojim zaključkom izzveni popolnoma v prazno: ne glede na dovolj izrazito in ostro predstavitev stališč obeh protagonistov, Toživca in Branivca, se Kermauner odloči – namesto za stopnjevanje konflikta do (gledališkega) vrhunca – za razvodenitev disputa na podlagi vključitve občinstva in ugotovitve, da se slednje v vlogi porote ne more odločiti za nobeno od strani. (Raz)rešitev dileme o (nacionalni, umetniški) kvaliteti avantgardistične poezije tako preostane – vsej pirotehniki Kermaunerjeve gledališke sodne razprave navkljub – prihodnosti in literarni teoriji.

Ključne besede: Taras Kermauner, Tomaž Šalamun, sodna drama, avantgardistična poezija, vrednote, socrealizem, kritični realizem

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Disput o petih paradoksih »poezije stranišča« s prologom in epilogom

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Prolog

Svoj edini dejanski avtorski tekst,¹ dramolet *Avantgardistični pesnik pred sodiščem*, v katerem se posluži klasičnega gledališkega postopka sodnega procesa in na odru uprizori sodni besedni spopad, je Taras Kermauner spisal leta 1972, tema pa je seveda napad na in – skladno s pričakovanji – obramba poezije neoavantgardističnega pesnika Tomaža Šalamuna. Slednji sodnega procesa – kot morda drugi pomembni evropski disidenti, kot so Václav Havel, Adam Michnik, Andrej D. Sinjavski in Julij M. Daniel – v resnici ni doživel, torej je Kermaunerjev literarni poskus fiktiven, je pa oblast pesnika osem let prej, torej leta 1964, zaradi poskusa objave pesmi *Duma 1964* v zadnji številki *Perspektiv*, potem ko je bila ta zaplenjena, vseeno za nekaj dni zaprla.

Na podlagi svinčenega desetletja šestdesetih let se zdi vrednostna pozicija osrednjih akterjev zelo jasna: mladi ustvarjalci si za svobodni razmislek prizadevajo razširiti nazorski obroč, ki jih stiska, in se upirajo pritisku režimskega enoumja. Kermaunerjeva pozicija leta 1972 se zdi tako rekoč samoumevna tako glede na vrednote, ki jih je zastopala njegova generacija, kot tudi na podlagi osebne povezanosti, saj je šlo za somišljenike in znanke, če ne celo prijatelje. Zato bi glede na Šalamunovo usodo bilo pričakovati odločno politično obrambo mladostnega upora zoper politično resničnost. Toda Kermaunerjeva dramska sodna debata, ki ni toliko strastna kot cerebralna in – po sodno – teoretično gostobesedna, predvsem ni politična. Za tiste čase bi bilo pričakovati, da bi bilo Toživčevo orožje, s katerim bi Šalamuna lahko obtoževal razredne, družbene ali politične neustreznosti, nabito predvsem z družbenopolitičnimi naboji, vendar se Kermaunerju politični očitki najočitneje niso zdeli več relevantni. Morda zato, ker je že mesec dni po zaplenbi *Perspektiv* DZS kot

¹ Drugi, *Črtomirke* (nanj je v opombi 2 svoje uvodne študije v zborniku *Generator:: za proizvodnjo poljubnega števila dramskih kompleksov* opozoril Blaž Lukan) je prvemu sledil takoj naslednje leto, ni bil pa čisto avtorski, saj je bil sestavljen iz odlomkov besedil Mire Puc - Mihelič, Vitomila Zupana, Igorja Torkarja, Ivana Mraka, Dominika Šmoleta, Primoža Kozaka, Andreja Hienga in Dušana Jovanoviča (prim. www.sigledal.org). Kritiko njegove uprizoritve v eksperimentalnem gledališču Glej je napisal Aleš Berger.

izdajateljica revije, kot poroča Kermauner (prim. 10; opombe zgolj s številko strani se tukaj in poslej nanašajo na Kermaunerjevo dramsko besedilo), v *Naših razgledih* objavila celotno zaplenjeno Šalamunovo pesem, in sicer kot »dokazno gradivo« o upravičenosti svoje odločitve o ukinitvi revije. Morda tudi zato, ker se je že pisalo leto 1972, leto ekonomske liberalizacije in politične »odjuge«, Kavčičevega časa, ko se je zdelo, da je ljudstvo končno le »dozorelo«, Partija pa da dejansko namerava počasi sestopiti z oblasti v boljšo ekonomsko resničnost.

Če je besedilo ostalo brez politike, bi s Kermaunerjeve strani kot presojevalno vrednostno paradigmo dramoleta pričakovali vsaj zagovor estetskega pristopa neoavantgardistične književnosti, a tudi ta v glavnem umanjka. Osrednji argument Kermaunerjevega besedila se ne osredotoči na estetske, temveč predvsem na – kar je v primeru neoavantgardistične poezije še toliko presenetljivejša odločitev – funkcionalne vrednote poezije. Res je namreč Šalamunova poezija tista, na katere hrbtu se lomijo sodna kopja vrednot in ki služi obema protagonistoma, Toživcu in Branivcu, za strelovod, vendar osrednji predmet obtožbe ni le Šalamunova, temveč celotna neoavantgardistična poezija in njena funkcija v okviru narodne književnosti.

Tudi izhodišča obeh protagonistov – Toživec napada z Vidmarjevimi stališči, Branivec zagovarja s stališča marksizma – odpirajo številna vprašanja. Težava je v tem, da Kermauner ne poda jasnih odgovorov gledališko razločnega – ostanemo brez vrednostno nedvoumnega razpleta, kar dvoumja še bolj zaplete. Njegova sodna razprava se zato kaže ne kot dramsko učinkovito, pač pa paradokсно besedilo. In paradoksov smo v dramoletu našli pet.

Prvi paradoks

Prvi paradoks se zgosti okoli ključne predpostavke umetnosti, in sicer vprašanja o bistvu in funkciji književnosti. Čeprav je bila Šalamunova *Duma 1964* zaplenjena prvenstveno zaradi političnih razlogov (oblast je presodila, da gre za družbeno neustreznost pesmi), Kermauner funkcionalističnega razumevanja umetnosti ne postavi pod vprašaj, pač pa svojo razlago umetnosti oblikuje prav na podlagi njene družbene vloge.

Po Toživčevi teoriji – ki pa ji, pomenljivo, Branivec pravzaprav nikjer ne nasprotuje – obstaja namreč prava umetnost, prava poezija, ki »izpoveduje vero v človečanstvo« (19) in nas »plemeniti, dviga, osrečuje in nas dela vse bolj človeške« (6). Umetnost je torej tista človekova dejavnost, ki – cankarjansko rečeno – iz človeka dela Človeka, njen deontološki cilj pa je, da človeka naredi za (družbeno) boljše bitje in

ga dvigne na višjo moralno in etično raven. Ta naloga umetnosti pa lahko obrodi sad zgolj, ko »utrjuje [človekov] življenjski smisel in smisel življenja kot takega« (19). To pomeni, da je bistvo umetnosti predvsem vzgojno. Naravna konsekvence te predpostavke je, da je modernistična, larpurlartistična kvaliteta oziroma samebi-namenjenost umetnosti odrinjena v ozadje, njena funkcionalna lastnost pa vpliva na spremembo vsakega posameznika v ustrezno prilagojen in idealno delujoč zobnik v kolesju družbe. In ker je tako, je treba umetnost ocenjevati po njenih družbenih rezultatih. Na tej podlagi Kermauner avantgardistično poezijo podvrže kritiki predvsem z aplikativnega stališča, izhaja torej natančno iz materialističnega razumevanja umetnosti, točno tako, kakor jo je razumel denimo marksistični estetik György Lukács: umetnost ni le kantovska agnostična avantura, temveč medicinsko uporabna specifika, ki pomaga v skrbi za – in zato krepi – »družbeno, zgodovinsko in osebno zdravje« (Lukács 14).

Temu stališču Kermauner doda še posebni obrat na primeru Vodnikovega *Zadovoljnega Kranjca*. Vodnikov junak je namreč »ubogljiv, vesel je, če bo lahko izpolnil povelje – ukaz – domovine, šel na boj [...], se [...] pridno, vestno, rad učil« (8). Sklep se ponuja sam od sebe: samo priden Kranjec je dober Kranjec in samo dober Kranjec bo preživel! Samo družbeno zgleden človek je ustrezen posameznik. Zato pravi človek ni tisti, ki se (samo) ukvarja z literaturo, ampak tisti, ki literaturo uporabi za pedagoški namen. Navedeno seveda spomni na velikane slovenske literature, ki jih je literarna zgodovina dvignila na piedestal »očetov naroda«, kar potrjuje Kermauner sam: resnični, pravi pesniki ne morejo biti drugega kot domoljubi.

V to smer gre Kermauner s Toživčevim vprašanjem, ali »naj damo naši mladini v roke pesem, ki jo bomo ravnokar slišali [gre za Šalamunovo pesem *Zatonil je čas usranih poetov*, op. pis., prim. »Pesmi Tomaža Šalamuna«]? Kaj naj jo učimo, da je to umetnost?« (24). To prav tako potrjuje njegova ugotovitev, da so »ravno pesniki s svojo borbenostjo vzpodbujali ljudske množice k delu in graditvi boljšega življenja« in ji »vplivali samozavest« (17). Njegov poudarek je ključen: umetnost ni samo prostočasna dejavnost blaziranih umetnikov, ampak je eksistenčno pomemben medikament, borba zanjo pa je življenjsko ključna za skupnost in posameznika.

Naloga umetnosti torej ni umetniško nebrzdana, ustvarjalno originalna in miselno provokativna, temveč – zgolj za dobro posameznika in, posledično, naroda – omejujoča, disciplinirajoča in sedativna. Zato se Toživcu ni treba bati za obstoj ljudstva (naroda), saj bo to – ustrezno kondicionirano in vzgojeno – vselej znalo opraviti tudi s tovrstnimi nihilističnimi pesniki, saj jih bo »naše [...] ljudstvo [...] izpljunilo« (6). To stališče pred nami avtomatično razpre naslednji paradoks: *telos* narodne literature.

Drugi paradoks

Poleg vzgojnega razumevanja poezije se v Kermaunerjevem sodnem dokazovanju prekrijeta še dva pogleda na umetnost: politični, čeprav ga Kermauner omeni le enkrat, in še to ga (spet paradokсно) položi v usta Branivcu, ter narodni, ki pa predstavlja osrednjo os Toživčevega napada: češ da prava poezija vsebuje »program celotnega naroda« (9). Obema pogledoma je skupno teleološko razumevanje umetnosti: biti mora vselej spodbujevalna, slavlina, občudovalna, biti mora (kot Župančičeva *Duma*, ki jo navaja Toživec) »hvalnica delu, [...], lepoti, zemlji, slovenstvu, prirodi, družini« (10). Vlogo in smisel literature Toživec išče (in najde) na za slovensko literarno tradicijo najznačilnejši podlagi: v njenem razmerju do oblikovanja narodove identitete.

Toživčevi argumenti se osredinijo okoli slovenskega naroda oziroma vloge in funkcije umetnosti/literature v njegovem oblikovanju, pri čemer avantgardistične poezije ne obravnava tako, kot bi najverjetneje želela sama, torej neodvisno od družbenih sistemov in aplikacij, temveč jo postavi lepo v vrsto za (in jo s tem izenači z) vsemi doslejšnjimi narodnosposbudnimi umetninami pravih velikanov literature: V. Vodnika, F. Prešerna, O. Župančiča in še koga.

Že prva Toživčeva salva ubere ključni, nacionalni ton in avantgardiste zoperstavi narodu kot takemu. Protislovje avantgardistične umetnosti je v tem, da se ne briga za narodno telo, ki je za Kermaunerjevega Toživca po definiciji »lep[o], zdrav[o], umn[o], topl[o], privlačn[o], koristen[o] in zavedn[o]« (6). In ker je le prava umetnost tista, ki ga tako naslavlja, saj le taka lahko privede do oblikovanja »poživljajoče in razsvetljujoče kulture – prave domovine« (6), je avantgardistična umetnost pravzaprav brez vrednosti. Literarni primer, ki ga Toživec navede, je Šalamunova pesem *Utrudil sem se podobe svojega plemena*, ki da ravno te ideale persiflira, razkraja in tepta v blato posmeha. Šalamuna, precej emfatično poimenovanega »avantgardistični divji lovec« (10), Toživec obtoži, da si privošči »svinjanje vsega plemenitega, [...], predvsem pa napad na narod, na slovenstvo« (25), s čimer da hoče »zbrisati vse slovensko izročilo in naše neumrljive ideale« (10), to pa naj bi pomenilo »popoln[o] destrukcij[o], razdejanje slovenstva in naše družbe« (17). Cilj domače avantgardistične poezije je po Toživčevem mnenju kratko in malo uničenje naroda, za katerega si je pa vsaka poprejšnja literatura od Trubarja naprej krvavo prizadevala. Kar Toživca še posebej tare, je Šalamunova narodna brezvestnost in porogljiv način, s katerim to izkazuje, oziroma »cinično huligansko napadanje vsega (od ustave ter politike SFRJ do slovenskega naroda)« (13). Šalamunu, z njim pa tudi vsej avantgardistični poeziji, da ni nič sveto, saj gre za »strahovito relativiziranje, za odpravo vseh vrednot« (20) in celo boga, ki je še za Toživca (sicer ateista) vendarle »simbol za vse temeljno, lepo, pravo, za ideale, za vzore, za smisel« (24).

Destrukcija narodnega ideala, ki je sicer dobro znan iz uvodnih lekcij o zgodovini slovenske kulture, naj bi bila tem bolj boleča, ker naj bi na njegovem mestu avantgardistična poezija ne ponujala ničesar oziroma namesto tega propagira »močvirno, mrhovinasto družbo« (8), »svet na glavi, [...] svet v močvirju«, svet, ki je »razpad sveta« (20), torej »nihilizem« (6, 20). Naj le omenimo, da je nihilizem ogrožal predvsem nacional(istič)ne vzgibe, saj je družbenemu idealu nasproti postavljal njegov manko, torej malo ali nič. Zato sta s tega stališča seveda razumljivi Toživčevi retorični vprašanji: ali je »narodna budnost danes že sramota« (16) in »ali bi se Slovenci v svoji zgodovini lahko obdržali, če bi imeli same takšne poete in pesmi« (13)?

Avantgardisti torej za Kermaunerjevega Toživca niso nič drugega kot »protinarodni elementi brez morale, defetisti, obupanci« (6), v bistvu »notranji emigranti« (6), torej zagovorniki »najbolj skrajnega individualizma in privatizma« (26), ki utelešajo »svet lenuhov, bohemov, hippijev, razcapancev, ki živijo na račun delovnih ljudi« (8) in »bežijo v abstraktne svetove kozmopolitizma, nenarodnega čustvovanja« (6). Zanje so značilni »globoka naveličanost, utrujenost, obup« (13) ter »beg«, »nemoč posameznikov« in »infantilizem« (22). Zato lahko avantgardistična poezija proizvaja le »bogokletne, umazane, razdiralne« (24) pesmi, »poulične pesmice« (23), še več: »poezij[o] stranišča in razkroja vseh človečanskih vrednot« (9).

Šalamunovo pesnikovanje je, kakršno je, ne zato, ker ga ustvarja kritičen, a verodostojen človek. Šalamun se ne more dvigniti na od njega pričakovani nivo narodnega čaščenja zato, ker je sam tako rekoč človeški izmeček, pokveka, nesposobna višjih oblik čustvovanja. On in njemu podobni – edino drugo avantgardistično delo, ki ga poleg Šalamunove poezije enako kritično omeni Toživec, so Jovanovičevi *Norci* (prim. 19) – niso sposobni konstruktivne (narodne) akcije, ker taki elementi ne morejo ustvarjati, ampak se iz vsega lahko samo norčujejo in le »besede parodira[jo]« (17), to pa je »odpoved angažmaju, družbeni akciji, to je kapitulantsvo« (25). »Šalamun vsak boj, vsako akcijo, dejavnost pojmuje kot negativno, bedasto in smešno« (17). Zato je prizadevanje Kermaunerjevega Toživca jasno in natančno: »Takšno pisarijo je treba prepovedati« (24).

Kermauner vloži veliko truda v oblikovanje tega teoretičnega izhodišča, zato obrambi ostane še manj energije in na napad ne odgovori. Še več, protislovno se namreč zazdi, da sta – kljub navidezni različnosti stališč med neuklonljivim in ostrim Toživcem ter na drugi strani umetnostnega ideala stoječim Branivcem – na nasprotnih bregovih le na videz, saj je za oba ključen idealistični pristop, zato sta si nazorsko bližje, kot bi bilo mogoče sklepati. Obramba svoje argumente namreč utemelji na dveh predpostavkah. Prva predstavlja Branivčevo rokohitrstvo, ki Toživčevemu ultrapatriotskemu stališču ne ugovarja naravnost, temveč mu skuša vzeti naboj in ga razvrednotiti na drugačen način. Branivec Toživčevo slepo podporo domoljubni umetnosti namreč denuncira in

jo persiflira. Tu je logika argumenta obrnjena in zato razmeroma učinkovita: če je dušebrižniška domoljubna poezija najboljša, potem iz tega sledi, da mora biti tudi Jovan Vesel Koseski zaradi svojih zagnano patriotskih stvaritev boljši pesnik od Prešerna. In ker je samoumevno, da Koseski danes ne spada več v kanon slovenske poezije, se s tem razvrednoti teža Toživčevega argumenta o »domovinski ljubezni« (15) v okviru narodnospodbudne poezije.

Druga Branivčeva predpostavka pa je nezadovoljstvo z dejanskostjo, ki da je posebna značilnost poezije nasploh, kar Branivec dokazuje tudi s starejšo poezijo F. Prešerna (*Soneti nesreče*) ali O. Župančiča (*Pesem mladine, Ob uri brezupa*), v katerih je nedvomno začutiti »grozovit[o] obtožb[o] današnjega sveta in družbe« (11) ter tudi razkroj »čudežnega narodnega in humanističnega programa« (12). In v to kritičnost naj bi bili posebej vpeti mladi ljudje, ki da jim nič ni svetega, predvsem si pa želijo »svobodnejšega, bolj igrivega, manj temačnega sveta« (11) in »se [jim] upira smrtna resnost vsega« (11). In če so mladi, pa še pesniki po vrhu, »ima[jo] pravico, da stvari zaostri[jo]« (11). Nezadovoljstvo mladine s tedanjim stanjem družbe pa je mnenje, ki ga lahko predstavimo kot tretji paradoks.

Tretji paradoks

Omenjene obtožbe zvenijo tudi zelo usklajeno z osrednjim ideološkim temeljem časa, v katerem je Kermaunerjev dramolet nastal, saj je bil nihilizem v marksizmu zbirni pojem za vse reakcionarne, meščanske, individualistične, zahodnjaške in podobne odklone, ker je to »napredno družbeno ideologijo« zoperstavljal popolnoma drugačnim in pravzaprav prepovedanim pogledom na umetnost. Ker se Branivec loti obrambe avantgardistične poezije z ideološkega stališča, imamo tu torej opraviti s tretjim paradoksom, osredotočenim na politično uporabnost poezije nasploh v okviru marksistične ideologije.

Po Branivčevem mnenju je Šalamunova poezija namreč popolnoma »na liniji« s partijsko politiko, torej je ne le narodnospodbudno, ampak tudi politično neoporečna. Šalamunova poezija naj bi bila »povsem v skladu s tistim pravilom ali zahtevo, ki ga je najvišje na zastavo vzdignil ravno marksizem: da je potrebna brezobzirna kritika vsega obstoječega« (11), ob tem pa da naj bi Šalamunu kot pesniku ne bilo žal za nič drugega kot le »za nekdanjo revolucionarnostjo množic« (11, *sic!*), je Branivec zatrjeval kljub temu, da se je ideološki horizont v državi spet stemnil šele kasneje, proti koncu leta 1972, zato Kermaunerjevo priporočilo svetovnonazorskim, političnim »bogovom« za ideološko varstvo deluje, odkrito rečeno, anahronistično. Ortodoksna marksistična estetika se je namreč do tistega časa že tolikokrat blamirala, da bi jo bilo težko dojemati kot vrednostno dosledno, ideološko koncizno in teoretično verodostojno.

Po obdobju navdušenja nad proletarsko umetnostjo (glavni pomanjkljivosti, ki ju je po mnenju kasnejših, socrealističnih kritikov gojil že RAPP, Rusko združenje proletarskih pisateljev, sta bila psihologizem in pa »trganje mask« v literaturi, saj naj bi bila oba blizu »dekadentizmu«, prim. Mozejko 20) je na prvem kongresu zveze sovjetskih pisateljev leta 1934 z govori A. Ždanova, M. Gorkega in tudi N. Buharina politični veter zavel v smer socialističnega realizma, ki ga je posebej spodbujal seveda Stalin. Teoretični podlagi socrealizma naj bi po Mozejku bili 11. teza o Feuerbachu in pa Leninova teorija zrcaljenja/odseva, kar naj bi literaturo pripeljalo do tega, da bi postala »objektivna slika zunanje resničnosti« (prim. 34–5). Stalinovo obdobje je imelo več obratov (in posledično tudi žrtev), dokler se ni šele po Stalinovi smrti smelo in tudi začelo kritizirati socrealizma ravno zaradi njegove politične narave, brezidejnosti, brezkonfliktnosti, naivne očitnosti sporočila in nenaravnosti, torej v bistvu nerealističnosti. Kasnejšo kritiko je posebej jasno izoblikoval Lukács, ki je namesto »socialističnega« predlagal besedno zvezo »kritičnega realizma«. Ta naj bi izhajal iz realizma 19. stoletja, obogaten pa je lahko bil z vsemi pomembnejšimi literarnimi novitetami sodobnega časa (prim. Lukács 139 in naprej). Ne glede na presenetljiv značaj omembe marksizma ima v Kermaunerjevem argumentiranju ta ideologija posebej pomembno mesto, saj avtomatično razkriva četrti paradoks.

Četrti paradoks

Kljub vsej svoji ortodoksni trdoti in ideološki zadržanosti je marksizem v svojih mnogih različicah na piedestal postavljala še eno kategorijo, ki ji Kermauner, trdno izhajajoč iz realizma, prizna absolutni pomen pri vrednotenju literature in jo anahronistično vzpostavi kot centralno kategorijo umetnosti: življenje, kar pa nakazuje četrti paradoks.

Prav iz marksizma oziroma njegovega estetskega temelja, kritičnega realizma, je mogoče izpeljati ključni Toživčev pogoj: zahtevo po »življenju« v umetnosti. Od umetnosti in, posledično, od pisateljev se je zahtevalo, da naj »predvsem prikazuje[jo] življenje« (Mozejko 16) ravno v najradikalnejši in do umetnosti najbolj neusmiljeni fazi marksizma – pod Stalinom. (Pravi) pisatelji bi naj bili – apokrifno – »inženirji človeških duš« (prim. Mozejko 16; apokrifno zato, ker naj bi si bil Stalin to tehnicistično, skoraj že modernistično definicijo sposodil pri Juriju K. Oleši na sestanku na domu Maksima Gorkega). Po tej liniji je »življenje« vstopilo tudi v slovensko predvojno liberalno in povojno marksistično estetiko. Njen povojni, marksistični kulturni ideolog Boris Zihel² se je namreč tudi zavzemal za vrednoto »žive stvarnosti« (14), vendar s to

² Prav Zihel naj bi imel posebno vlogo tudi v inkriminirani Šalamunovi *Dumi* 1964, kjer naj bi bil utelešen v verz »o logiki vegeterjanci z dioptrijo minus petnajst« (prim. Repe 68), drugi verz »dežela Cimpermanov in njihovih mozolastih občudovalk« pa naj bi cilj na Matijo Mačka, saj naj bi bil ta v mladosti tesar (prim. Kermauner, »Poker ni poker« 78).

razliko od trdega ideološkega socrealizma, da je že poznal poststalinistično Lukácsevo kritiko, predvsem pa ruske teoretike realizma iz sredine 19. stoletja (k objavam njihovih slovenskih prevodov, predvsem Nikolaja G. Černiševskega in Visarjona G. Belinskega, je pisal spremne besede. Prim. »Visarion Grigorjevič Belinski, njegova doba in delo« ter »O realizmu v književnosti«).

Je imel pa koncept »življenja,« kakor koli ga razumemo, posebno vlogo že v slovenski predvojni literarni kritiki, saj so v njegovem imenu stala in (predvsem) padala mnoga ključna, mnogokrat nedolžna umetniška dela. Življenje je bilo namreč temeljni koncept, tako rekoč »vitrih« za eksegezo literature v pogosto uničujočih kritikah Josipa Vidmarja, vrhovnega *arbitra elegantiarum* slovenske umetnosti, če ne celo civilizacije. Zato hkrati preseneča – ali pa tudi ne – da Kermaunerjev Toživec na nekem mestu naroča: »berite spise največjega živečega Slovenca [...], Josipa Vidmarja, ki je o teh zadevah napisal nemalo pomembnih strani« (19–20). Tako priporočilo bi bilo prav mogoče razbirati tudi ironično, vendar se Kermauner v nadaljevanju navezuje na znano Vidmarjevo stališče o umetnosti, s katerim je močno obvladoval slovensko pred-, sploh pa povojno literarno produkcijo. Samo prava, idealna, absolutna umetnost naj bi po Vidmarjevo privedla do svojega cilja, s tem pa dodatno osmislila tudi tukaj omenjen prvi paradoks, in sicer odsev »pravega« življenja, ki pa se v literarnih delih kaže na način Živosti. Pri Vidmarju ne gre za nobena filozofska (moralna, etična ali estetska) merila. Nasprotno: umetnost mora biti očiščena vsega tovrstnega balasta, saj pridvignjeno človekovo življenje »ne pozna ne potrebe, ne koristi, marveč je svobodno... In vse njegovo stvarstvo – umetnost – je nastalo iz ljubezni in radostne svobode« (*Trije labodje* 1). Toživec tako rekoč jemlje besede iz Vidmarjevih ust: »umetnost je napor, je visoko poslanstvo, ne pa cenena in enodnevna muha« (20). Šele taka umetnost, torej brez ideoloških primesi, je, če se vrnemo k Vidmarju, »najdragocenejša med vsemi človeškimi udejstvovanji« (prav tam). In zato predstavlja Toživcu »Šalamunovo pisarjenje [...] golo norčevanje iz vsega velikega, pomembnega, svetega« (20), »parodira[nje] dozdašnj[e] metafizik[e] in religij[e]« (21).

Če sem podpisani leta 1998 v knjigi *Estetski in idejni vplivi na predvojno dramsko in gledališko kritiko Josipa Vidmarja* menil, da gre pri Vidmarjevem estetskem življenjskem vatlu predvsem za romantični Goethejev vpliv, se zdaj kot precej bolj verodostojna domneva – kljub Vidmarjevemu prevodu J. P. Eckermannovih *Pogovorov z Goethejem* leta 1959 – kaže, da se je Vidmar »šolal« v času svojega vojnega ujetništva v prvi svetovni vojni ravno pri že omenjenih ruskih kritikih. Kot skupni izvir realističnega, utilitarističnega pogleda na umetnost se je tako pri Ziherlu kot Vidmarju mogoče odločiti za rusko estetsko teorijo sredine 19. stoletja: pri Belinskem, ki je pridigal o prednosti družbe pred posameznikom in vplival na Černiševskega, ta pa se je zavzemal za uporabnost literature, pri čemer je po njegovem mnenju življenje v privilegiranem položaju, saj da je umetnost le njegov blede odsev. Tako je epicenter estetske teorije

Černiševskega v truizmu, da je »lepota [...] življenje« (prim. Mozejko 57). S to malodane samoumevno predpostavko je Černiševski kasneje vplival na celo vrsto teoretikov (na primer na Nikolaja A. Dobroljubova pa tudi na Vladimirja I. Uljanova - Lenina). Prav v ideji Černiševskega, da je »pri kmetu v pojmu ‚življenja‘ obsežen vedno tudi pojem dela« (Černiševski 11) je treba iskati Toživčevo sklicevanje na Vodnikovega *Zadovoljnega Krajnca*, *Dramilo*, Prešernovo *Zdravljico* in Župančičevo *Dumo*. To šele da so prave, ustrezne pesmi, saj – na primer Vodnikove – govorijo o načelih »zdravega delovnega človeka, ki neutrudno orje, šiva, proizvaja [...], ima lepa oblačila, ne cape, njegovo lice je sveže, rdeče, krasno, napeto« (8). Zato naj bi »abstraktne misli [...] ne spada[le] v področje življenja« (Černiševski 17). V marksizmu (in Vidmarju) je treba iskati tudi izvor Kermaunerjeve trditve, da je »reproduciranje življenja [...] splošno značilen znak umetnosti in tvori njeno bistvo« (Černiševski 117).

Literarna zgodovina neoavantgardistične poezije narodotvorno še ni preizkusila oziroma dokazala. Ker je povojno obdobje bit slovenskega naroda enačilo z revolucijo, so avantgardistična gibanja, ki jim ni bilo do družbenega vpliva, delovala nujno protidržavno ali celo protinarodno, Kermaunerjev namen pa je bil predstaviti razloge za in doseči njeno rehabilitacijo, poskrbeti za to, da jo namesto na umetnostnem Olimpu varno zasidra v kanon nacionalne literature in ji s tem omogoči brezprizivno vrednost in mesto v slovenskem panteonu. To stališče pa razpre še zadnji, peti paradoks.

Peti paradoks

Pregled vsebinskih paradoksov nas tako pripelje še pred zadnjega, formalnega. Tudi glede razumevanja forme se sodna protagonista ne razlikujeta toliko, kolikor bi bilo mogoče pričakovati in sklepati na prvi pogled. Medtem ko je za Toživca prava umetnost lahko le tista, ki tradicionalno predstavlja idealni spoj vsebine in oblike, saj je več kot jasno, da si mora takšna umetnost, če naj bo kvalitetna in tehtna (prim. 19), prizadevati, da je »v lepi posodi spravljena žlahtna vsebina« (19), Branivca nova avantgardistična forma ne tangira preveč, saj naj bi bila avantgardistična oblika le sodobni izraz večnih človekovih vprašanj, le odraz njene (kritične) življenjske vsebine. Sodobna umetnost odgovarja na probleme današnjega sveta, in ker je kritična, se pravi vrednostna in odzivna, ne more biti lepa, ker je vse kritike vreden tudi današnji svet. Po Branivčevem mnenju to nikakor ne pomeni nizke vrednosti avantgardistične umetnosti, še manj pa kliče po njeni odstranitvi.

In če se Branivec požvižga na formo, ni zanjo vseeno Kermaunerju, saj si po njegovem mnenju avantgardistična poezija zasluži edino (vrednostno nižjo) dramsko obravnavo. Kermauner zapiše, da če bi bila avantgardistična poezija namreč družbeno

že kanonizirana, torej sprejeta med za identiteto slovenskega naroda ključna dela oziroma »vsesplošno priznana kot nekaj, kar je temeljnega pomena za usodo slovenskega naroda« (5), tedaj bi si zaslužila drugačno literarno obliko: morda celo ep! Čeprav bi to Kermaunerjevo trditev lahko razumeli ironično, je preprosto tudi res, da avantgardistična poezija še ni vrednostno kalibrirana in še nima svojega statusa v kanonu slovenske (narodotvorne) literature. In kot taki naj bi ji, po Kermaunerjevem mnenju, najbolj ustrezala dramska oblika. Dramski tekst, ali celo še njegova dramatično priostrena oblika (sodni proces), naj bi najbolje služil za prikaz »težav[...] in muk[...], pa tudi del[a] in zabav[e]« (5) slovenske avantgardistične poezije, ker je najbolj odprt, predvsem pa naj ne bi prejudiciral vrednostnega zaključka, medtem ko ga druge literarne podvrste pač.

Po svojih lastnih besedah si je Kermauner izbral obliko sodnega procesa,³ ker da se ta »našemu predmetu najbolj prilega« (5), saj da ne ep ne lirska pesem ne literarno zgodovinopisje – vsak zaradi svojih razlogov – izbranemu predmetu ne ustrezajo. Današnji status avantgardistične poezije je »mnogo preveč živ, negotov, vznemirjujoč« (26), da bi se z njim ubadala katera koli druga forma kot pa neposreden klasični (sodni) spopad. Vendar tudi to stališče izzveni v paradoks, saj v dramoletu pride samo do ekspozicije nasprotujočih si mnenj, kulminacije v odločitvi o prav ali narobe pa Kermauner ne ponudi. Odločanje sâmo prevale na gledalca. Poleg obeh osrednjih protagonistov vpelje Kermauner namreč še dve dramski osebi: Deklamatorja, ki kot »sodni sluga« prebira posamezne dokazne pesmi, in pa Komentatorja – bi lahko v njem ugledali kar Kermaunerja samega? – ki počne prav to, kar izpričuje njegovo ime: poleg uvodnega in sklepnega komentarja občasno usmerja tudi dogajanje samo, predvsem pa komunicira s še eno, prikrito dramsko osebo, in sicer s publiko (ujeto v funkcije soseda, dobrega rokodelca, umnega učitelja, pametnega politika in modrega kulturnika, prim. 5), ki ji dodeli za sodno dvorano običajno vlogo porote. Občinstvo, kot po navadi v takšnih primerih, zaradi narave samega predmeta obravnave nima lahkega dela, kar ugotavlja tudi Kermauner: »neprizadetemu poslušavcu se je težko pri priči odločiti« (26). Vendar gre avtor še dlje: avantgardistične poezije po Komentatorjevem mnenju ni lahko razumeti, še težje pa je o njej govoriti: »avantgardistično pesništvo je hudičevo zamotana, nejasna, dvo- ali trorezna zadeva« (5). Poleg tega tudi »ni prav nič taka, da bi se jo dalo ljubiti: ni niti lepa niti modra« (6). Skratka, zamotana in neprivlačna je, zato je publika že v izhodišču hendikepirana. In celo v takem položaju ji Komentator, kot kakšen konservativni sodni sluga, ne pusti veliko prostora. Prepreči ji celo, da bi se na koncu o avantgardistični poeziji izrekla, s čimer avantgardističnega pesnika pusti v nedoločnem, neodločenem položaju. Kot klimaks svojega dramoleta Kermauner ponudi naslednji neverodostojni predlog: »Debata se [...] seveda še

3 Dramska predstavitev sodnega procesa je posebna gledališka zvrst že od antike, če si predočimo le najbolj vpadljive: od *Oresteje* in Aristofanovih *Vitezov* do Shakespearjevih *Beneškega trgovca* in *Milo za drago*, Büchnerjeve *Dantonove smrti*, Shawove *Svete Ivane*, Millerjevega *Lova na čarovnice* ter von Schirachovega *Terorja*.

nadaljuje in zmerom bolj strastna je, vendar je za naš današnji večer dovolj. Zato jo prekinimo. [...] Kdaj se bo razprava nadaljevala, bo objavljeno v dnevnem časopisju. Občinstvo naj se mirno razide« (26).

Epilog

V nasprotju z značajem dramske strukture Kermauner sodbe torej ne oblikuje. Prepusti jo občinstvu in mu jo pred nosom izmakne. Razpravo prekine z za dramski spopad popolnoma nelogičnim predlogom, da »za zdaj naj bo polemika med obema stališčema, med napadom in obrambo, začasno zaključena; rekli bi, da je začasno neodločena« (26).

Kermaunerjev Komentator torej razpravo prekine pravzaprav na vrhuncu in publiko v vlogi porote odvzame celo možnost odločanja. Toda problem je še drugje: najbolj avtodestruktivna Kermaunerjeva poteza v dramoletu se namreč zazdi dejstvo, da sodba sploh ni bila mogoča, saj sta Toživec in Branivec govorila tako rekoč isti jezik: jezik idealističnih, domoljubnih, političnih, narodnospodbudnih, umetnostnorealističnih vrednot in v njem razpravljala o avantgardistični poeziji. Ne glede na svoji po definiciji nasprotujoči si funkciji sta Kermaunerjeva protagonista vrednostno izenačena, zato bi sodba – v nobeni obliki: ne estetski, ne družbeni, ne politični – ne bila smiselna. Če pa bi do nje vseeno prišlo, bi to bilo vsekakor na škodo avantgardistične poezije.

Mnenje o njej Kermauner prepusti prihodnosti: »o argumentacijah in seveda o avantgardistični poeziji [...] [naj se] dokončno izrečemo šele kasneje« (26), kot takrat, ko »se bo mošt prevrel v vino [...], pa bomo videli, kako in kaj« (5).

A tudi to ne bo dovoljeno istemu (gledališkemu) gremiju, pred katerim se je pesnik znašel zdaj, torej sodišču (in poroti). Trenutna razvnetost strasti po Kermaunerjevem mnenju ni koristna, občinstvo pa mora ostati brez odgovora na vprašanje o »krivdi« avantgardističnega pesnika. Še več: prihodnja sodba ne bo oblikovana pred očmi javnosti, katere utelešenje naj bi sodna dvorana bila, temveč bo dovoljena le »literarnemu zgodovinopisju«, ki »bo smelo nastopiti svojo službo šele tisti hip, ko bo razprava [ki jo avtor, *nota bene*, sam prekine, op. pis.] končana, ko se bo razčistila neposredno javna in družbena, torej celo zunajumetnostna vloga te poezije« (26). Skladno s Heglovo sovo se bo smela sodba nad avantgardistično poezijo izreči le *ex post*. V to smer kaže tudi Kermaunerjevo napotilo publiko, naj se mirno razide. Tu pa se obelodani »oče vseh paradoksov«, in sicer spoznanje, da se Kermauner kljub prevzemu dramske oblike argumenta možnosti gledališča ali sodišča odreče, odreče se celo temu, da bi »zanimanje občinstva še obstajalo« (26).

Na podlagi ugotovljenih paradoksov in skrajno anemičnega zaključka publiki/poroti ostaja več vprašanj kot odgovorov. Predvsem ni jasno, kakšno je bilo Kermaunerjevo stališče: v igri precej več prostora nameni razpravi o občih vrednotah umetnosti/poezije kot značilnostim njene avantgardistične različice. Čutiti je napetost med pričakovanimi položajema obeh protagonistov, Toživcem, ki je ideološko zakrknjen »zastopnik družbe, njenega reda, perspektiv in čvrstine« (8), in Branivcem, ki naj bi bil umetniško sproščen zagovornik ustvarjalne svobode, vendar to v svojem bistvu ni.

Kermaunerjev tekst je več kot očitno slabo uspel poskus sočasne, ne preveč enostranske ekskulpacije neoavantgardistične poezije na primeru Tomaža Šalamuna, sodba pa neizrazita, ohlapna in – v nasprotju z uvodnim prepričanjem o edini možni obliki (dramski) predstavitve te avantgardistične enigme – popolnoma prepuščena megleni prihodnosti in (nestrastni) literarni zgodovini. Zakaj le se je Kermauner odločil za tako antiklimaktičen zaključek? Je sodil, da je avantgardistična poezija v zadnjih osmih letih (torej od leta 1964) že sama uspela poskrbeti zase, se je torej že umetniško uveljavila in da zato ne potrebuje posebne obrambe? Se je Kermauner sam v sebi boril z obema argumentoma? Je bil narodotvorni argument s svojimi kanonskimi zgledi celo za Kermaunerja premočan, da bi se mu lahko kar tako odrekel, umetnostno avtoreferencialen pa premalo prepričljiv, da bi se odločil zanj?

Je pa za umetnost nasploh in za avantgardistično poezijo posebej spodbudno že to, da je Kermauner pustil vrata sodne dvorane priprta in dovolil možnost nadaljevanja obravnave »seveda z novo argumentacijo in novimi primeri, morda tudi primeri drugih avantgardističnih avtorjev« (26), čeprav se zdi, da to ni več potrebno. Kermauner se k ponovnemu sojenju ni vrnil zaradi v sodobni kazenskosodni praksi pogostega zastaranja primera, temveč najbrž zato, ker je Šalamunov obsežni opus spregovoril sam zase in ni bilo več nikogar, pred komer bi ga bilo treba še braniti. Odpiranje odprtih vrat pa nima posebnega smisla ...

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Among the works of Taras Kermauner, probably the biggest expert on Slovenian drama and its first theoretician, one can also find a single dramatic experiment: a courtroom debate on the value of avant-garde poetry, based on the case of the accusation against the poet Tomaž Šalamun. While Kermauner develops the genre of judicial disputation in a theatrically fitting and interesting way, he undermines the disputation with an anticlimactic, anti-dramatic conclusion that postpones the decision on the matter to another space-time. A closer examination of the text reveals several conceptual inconsistencies that can be better understood as paradoxes. Thus, the five points that might be defined as paradoxical could be traced in the text itself concerning substantive categories such as the essence of art, the meaning of a nation for art, art and Marxism, and life as the supreme aesthetic category, while the last paradox is a more formal one, since the courtroom debate, with its conclusion, does not reach any point whatsoever. Regardless of the sufficiently clear and pointed presentation of the positions of the two protagonists, the Prosecutor and the Defender, Kermauner decides, rather than escalating the conflict to a (theatrical) climax, to dilute the disputation based on the inclusion of the audience and the conclusion that the latter, in its role as jury, cannot decide for either side. The (dis)solution of the dilemma of the (national, artistic) quality of avant-garde poetry is thus left – despite the fireworks of Kermauner's theatrical courtroom debate – to the future and literary theory.

Keywords: Taras Kermauner, Tomaž Šalamun, courtroom drama, avant-garde poetry, values, socialist realism, critical realism

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Disputation on the Five Paradoxes of “Toilet Poetry” with a Prologue and an Epilogue

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Prologue

Taras Kermauner wrote his only original dramatic text in 1972.¹ The short play entitled *Avantgardistični pesnik pred sodiščem* (*The Avant-Garde Poet in Court*), in which he uses the classical theatrical procedure of a trial in court and stages a verbal confrontation on stage, the theme of which is, of course, an attack on and – as is to be expected – the defence of the poetry of the neo-avant-garde poet Tomaž Šalamun. Unlike other important European dissidents – for example, Václav Havel, Adam Michnik, Andrej D. Sinjavski and Julij M. Daniel – Šalamun did not face a trial. Thus Kermauner’s literary experiment is a work of fiction. However, eight years earlier, in 1964, when Šalamun attempted to publish his poem “Duma 1964” in an issue of the journal *Perspektive*, the authorities imprisoned him for a few days after confiscating the magazine.

Based on the 1960s’ “leaden” decade, the ideological positions of the drama’s central characters appear to be very clear: to think freely, young artists strive to expand the narrow ideological views that oppress them and resist the pressure of the regime. Kermauner’s position on this matter in 1972 would appear obvious, both regarding the values represented by his generation and based on his personal ties, since many artists shared his views and were his friends, or at least acquaintances. Thus, given Šalamun’s fate, a vigorous political defence of youthful rebellion against political reality was expected. However, Kermauner’s dramatic courtroom debate, which is much more cerebral than emotional and – in a judicial manner – theoretically dense and wordy, is, above all, not political. At the time, one would have expected that the

¹ As Blaž Lukan points out in footnote 2 of his introductory study in the publication *Generator:: za proizvodnjo poljubnega števila dramskih kompleksov* (*The Generator:: for Manufacturing Any Number of Drama Complexes*), Kermauner wrote his other play, *Črtomirke*, immediately following the first one, i.e., the very next year. This second text, however, was not entirely original, as it was assembled from excerpts from texts by Mira Puc-Mihelič, Vitomil Zupan, Igor Torkar, Ivan Mrak, Dominik Smole, Primož Kozak, Andrej Hieng and Dušan Jovanović (cf. www.sigledal.org). Aleš Berger wrote a critique of its production in the experimental theatre Glej.

prosecutor's main weapon for accusing Šalamun of inappropriate class, social or political views would have been loaded primarily with sociopolitical bullets. However, political accusations no longer seemed relevant to Kermauner. Perhaps this was because merely a month after the confiscation of the journal *Perspektive*, the journal's publishing house DZS published Šalamun's entire confiscated poem in the journal *Naši razgledi* as "evidence" to justify their decision to cancel the journal *Perspektive*, as Kermauner reports (cf. 10; the page numbers with no reference cited here and henceforth refer to Kermauner's dramatic text). Perhaps this was also because Kermauner was writing in 1972, which was the time of economic liberalisation and political "thawing" during the presidency of Stane Kavčič. At this time, it appeared that the people had finally "come of age" and that the Communist Party was planning to slowly step down from power to usher in a better economic reality.

However, since the text was bereft of any political discussion, one would have at least expected Kermauner to defend the aesthetic approach of neo-avant-garde literature and make this the value paradigm of the play, but even this is largely absent. The central argument of Kermauner's text does not focus on aesthetic values at all, but rather – an even more surprising decision in the case of neo-avant-garde poetry – on the functional values of poetry. While Šalamun's poetry is the culprit and bone of contention for the judgement of values and serves as a lightning rod for the two protagonists, the Prosecutor and the Defender, the central object of the accusation is not only Šalamun's poetry but rather the whole of neo-avant-garde poetry and its function in the context of national literature.

The starting points of the two protagonists – the Prosecutor attacks with the points of view articulated by Ivan Vidmar, while the Defender argues from a Marxist point of view – raise several questions. The problem is that Kermauner does not give any clear answers in a theatrically distinct way – we are left without a definitive ideological resolution, which makes the ambiguity even more complex. As a result, his courtroom debate appears not as a dramatically effective but as a paradoxical text. And there are five paradoxes that we were able to discern in his playlet.

The First Paradox

The first paradox boils down to a key assumption about art, namely the question of the essence and function of literature. Although Šalamun's "Duma 1964" was confiscated primarily for political reasons (the authorities judged the poem to be socially inappropriate), Kermauner does not question the functionalist understanding of art but rather formulates his interpretation of art precisely based on its social role.

According to the Prosecutor's theory – which, tellingly, the Defender never actually contradicts – true art, true poetry, “professes faith in humanity” (19) and “ennobles us, elevates us and makes us more and more human” (6). Therefore, in Ivan Cankar's terms, art is that human activity that makes a man a Man. Its deontological aim is to make a man a better (social) being and raise them to a higher moral and ethical level. This task of art, however, can only come to fruition when it “consolidates [man's] meaning of life and the meaning of life as such” (19). This definition means that the essence of art is primarily didactic. The natural corollary of this assumption is that the modernist, art for art's sake quality or self-sufficiency of art is relegated to the background. At the same time, its functional properties influence the transformation of each individual into an adequately adapted and ideally functioning cog in the mechanism of society. And since this is so, art is judged by its social results. On this basis, Kermauner subjects avant-garde poetry to critique primarily from an applied point of view, starting precisely from a materialist understanding of art, exactly as, for example, articulated by the Marxist aesthetician György Lukács: Art is not merely a Kantian agnostic adventure, but a medically useful specificity that helps to care for – and therefore enhances – “social, historical and personal health” (14).

Kermauner adds a unique twist to this point of view by using the example of Valentin Vodnik's 1781 poem “Zadovoljni Kranjec” (“The Satisfied Carniolan”). Namely, Vodnik's hero is “obedient, he is happy if he can fulfil the command – the order – of his homeland, to go to battle [...], to learn diligently, conscientiously” (8). The conclusion is self-evident: only a diligent Carniolan is a good Carniolan, and only a good Carniolan will survive! Only a socially exemplary person is a proper individual. Therefore, a true man is not one who (only) engages with literature but uses literature for pedagogical purposes. All of the above reminds us of the giants of Slovenian literature, whom literary history has raised to the pedestal of “the fathers of the nation”, as Kermauner himself confirms: true, real poets cannot be anything other than patriots.

This is the direction that Kermauner indicates with the Prosecutor's question: “Should we give into the hands of our youth the poem which we are about to hear (Šalamun's poem “Zatonil je čas usranih poetov” (“The Time of Shitty Poets Has Set”))?” (cf. “Pesmi Tomaža Šalamuna”). Are we to teach them that this is art?” (24). This also confirms his observation that “it was the poets themselves who, with their fighting spirit, encouraged the popular masses to work and build a better life” and “gave them self-confidence” (17). His emphasis here is crucial: art is not merely a leisure activity of conceited artists but an existentially important medicine. The struggle to attain it is vital for the community and the individual.

Therefore, art's task is not to be artistically unrestrained, creatively original and thought-provoking but – for the good of the individual and, by extension, the nation

– to be restrictive, disciplining and sedative. Therefore, the Prosecutor need not fear for the survival of the people (the nation) since it will always know – if properly conditioned and educated – how to cope with such nihilistic poets since “our [...] people [...] will spit them out” (6). This position automatically opens up the next paradox: the *telos* of national literature.

The Second Paradox

In addition to the didactic notion of poetry, two other views of art overlap in Kermauner’s courtroom argumentation: the political view, although Kermauner mentions it only once, and even then (again, paradoxically) he puts it in the mouth of the Defender, and the national view, which forms the central axis of the Prosecutor’s attack: allegedly, that true poetry should contain “the programme of the whole nation” (9). Both views share a teleological understanding of art: art should always be stimulating, celebratory and admiring. It must be (like Župančič’s “Duma”, which the Prosecutor quotes) “an ode to work, [...], to beauty, to earth, to Slovenia, to nature, to the family” (10). The Prosecutor searches for (and finds) the role and meaning of literature on the basis that is most typical of the Slovenian literary tradition: in its relationship to the formation of our national identity.

The Prosecutor’s arguments focus on the Slovenian nation, or rather, the role and function of art/literature in its formation, in which he does not treat avant-garde poetry as it would probably consider it most fitting, i.e., independently of any social systems and applications. Instead, he neatly puts it into a line with (and thus on par with) all previous nation-building works of art provided by the true giants of literature: Valentin Vodnik, Ferenc Prešeren, Oton Župančič and others.

In his first barrage, the Prosecutor takes a crucial, nationalist tone juxtaposing the avant-gardists with the nation. He sees the contradiction of avant-garde art in that it does not care about the nation, which for Kermauner’s Prosecutor, is by definition “beautiful, healthy, intelligent, warm, attractive, useful and conscious” (6). Moreover, since only true art addresses it as such, since only such art can lead to the creation of “invigorating and enlightening culture – a true homeland” (6), avant-garde art is worthless. The literary example quoted by the Prosecutor is Šalamun’s poem “Utrudil sem se podobe svojega plemena” (“I Got Tired of the Image of My Tribe”), which is allegedly a persiflage that deconstructs and tramples these very ideals into the mire of ridicule. The Prosecutor dubbs Šalamun, rather emphatically, to be “an avant-gardist poacher” (10) and accuses him of indulging in “sully[ing] everything that is noble, [...] and above all an attack on the nation, on Slovenity” (25), whereby he desires to “erase all Slovenian tradition and our undying ideals” (10), which is supposed to mean “a complete destruction and desolation

of Slovenity and of our society" (17). The aim of Slovenian avant-garde poetry, in the Prosecutor's view, is no less than the utter destruction of our nation, which, however, has been the sacred aim of all previous literature since Primož Trubar. What particularly troubles the Prosecutor is Šalamun's national unawareness and the scorn with which he demonstrates it, or rather, his "cynical hooligan attack on everything (from the constitution and politics of the SFRY to the Slovenian nation)" (13). Nothing appears to be sacred to Šalamun, and with him to all avant-garde poetry, for it represents "terrible relativisation, an abolition of any and all values" (20), and even of God himself, who, to the Prosecutor (despite being an atheist), still represents "a symbol for all things fundamental, beautiful, just, for ideals, for examples, for meaning" (24).

This destruction of the national ideal, well known from the introductory lessons on the history of Slovenian culture, is supposed all the more painful because avant-garde poetry offers nothing in its place, or rather, propagates a "lowlife, vulturelike society" (8), "a world upside down, [...] a world in a swamp", a world that means "the disintegration of the world" (20), i.e., "nihilism" (6, 20). Let us mention that, above all, nihilism threatened national(ist) impulses since it contrasted the social ideal merely with its lack, i.e., little or nothing. From this point of view, it is thus not hard to understand the Prosecutor's two rhetorical questions: Is "national awareness today already a disgrace?" (16) and "Could Slovenians have survived their history if they had only such poets and poems?" (13).

For Kermauner's Prosecutor, the avant-gardists are, therefore, nothing more than "anti-national elements without morals, defeatists, desperate people" (6), essentially "internal emigrants" (6), i.e., advocates of "most extreme individualism and privatism" (26), who embody "the world of sloths, bohemians, hippies, hobos who live at the expense of working people" (8) and "escape into the abstract worlds of cosmopolitanism and non-national sentimentality" (6). They are characterised by "deep ennui, weariness, despair" (13) and by "escapism", "individual impotence" and "infantilism" (22). This is why avant-garde poetry can only produce "blasphemous, dirty, divisive" (24) poems, "street songs" (23) and, even more, "poetry of the toilet and of the dissolution of all human values" (9).

Šalamun's poetry is what it is not because it is created by a critical but by an authentic man. Šalamun cannot rise to the level of national worship expected of him because he himself is human excrement, so to speak, a freak incapable of higher forms of sensibility. He and his kind – the only other avant-garde work, apart from Šalamun's poetry, mentioned by the Prosecutor in the same critical vein is Dušan Jovanović's play *Norci* (The Madmen) (19) – are incapable of constructive (national) action, since such entities are incapable of creation, they can merely make fun of everything and "parody words" (17), which equals "refusing to engage, all social action, it means capitulation" (25). "Šalamun conceives of every struggle, every action, every activity

as negative, stupid and ridiculous" (17). Thus, the aim of Kermauner's Prosecutor is clear and precise: "Such scribbling must be banned" (24).

Kermauner puts much effort into developing this theoretical starting point, which means that the defence has no energy left and does not give any answer to the attack. Moreover, it seems contradictory that – despite the apparent disparity of views between the unrelenting and sharp Prosecutor and the Defender, who supposedly stands on the other side of the artistic ideal – they only appear to stand on opposite shores since the idealistic approach is crucial for both of them, which makes them ideologically more akin than one might think. The defence bases its arguments on two assumptions. The first one is the Defender's sleight of hand, as he does not object to the Prosecutor's ultra-patriotic position outright but instead attempts to disarm and devalue it differently. The Defender denounces and mocks the Prosecutor's blind faith into patriotic art. Here, the logic of the argument is reversed and, therefore, quite effective: if pious, patriotic poetry is the best there is, then it would follow that also Jovan Vesel Koseski, with his zealous patriotic creations, must be a better poet than France Prešeren. Moreover, since it is evident that Koseski no longer belongs to the canon of Slovenian poetry, this devalues the weight of the Prosecutor's argument about "patriotic love" (15) in the context of nation-building poetry.

The Defender's second assumption is that dissatisfaction with reality is a special characteristic typical of poetry in general, as he tries to prove with the example of early poems by France Prešeren, "Soneti nesreče" ("Sonnets of Misfortune"), and Oton Župančič, "Pesem mladine" ("Poem of Youth"), "Ob uri brezupa" ("At the Hour of Hopelessness"), in which one can undoubtedly sense the "horrible complaint against today's world and society" (11), as well as the disintegration of the "wonderful national and humanist programme" (12). Such criticism is allegedly particularly typical of young people, who think that nothing is sacred and, above all, they want "a freer, more playful world with less darkness" (11) and "refuse the deadly seriousness of everything" (11). If they are not just young but also poets, "they have the right to exacerbate [things]" (11). This youthful dissatisfaction with the state of society at the time is an opinion that we can present as a third paradox.

The Third Paradox

The accusations above appear to follow the central ideological foundation of the time when Kermauner wrote his playlet. For Marxism, nihilism was the umbrella term for all reactionary, bourgeois, individualist, Western and other deviations, as it pitted this "progressive social ideology" against completely different and, indeed, forbidden views of art. Since the Defender embarks to defend avant-garde poetry from an

ideological point of view, we are dealing with a third paradox, focused on the political use of poetry within the framework of Marxist ideology.

According to the Defender, Šalamun's poetry is completely "in line" with party politics, i.e., it is beyond reproach not only regarding national awareness but also political integrity. The Defender asserts that Šalamun's poetry is "perfectly in accordance with the rule or rather demand that Marxism itself raised as its flagship proposition: that a ruthless critique of everything that exists is necessary" (11), while Šalamun as a poet is supposed to have no regrets about anything other than "the former revolutionary spirit of the masses" (11, *sic!*), even though the ideological horizon in the country darkened again only later, towards the end of 1972, which makes Kermauner's invocation to the political "gods" for ideological protection appear, to be frank, quite anachronistic. Indeed, by that time, orthodox Marxist aesthetics had already been proven wrong so often that it would be difficult to perceive it as value-consistent, ideologically concise and theoretically credible.

After a period of enthusiastic support for proletarian art (according to later socialist-realist critics, its main weaknesses, which were nurtured already by RAPP, the Russian Association of Proletarian Writers, were psychologism and its "unmasking" in literature since they were both close to "decadentism", cf. Mozejko 20), with speeches by A. Zhdanov, M. Gorky and also N. Bukharin at the First Congress of the Union of Soviet Writers in 1934, the political winds changed towards the direction of socialist realism, which was, of course especially encouraged by Stalin. The theoretical foundations of socialist realism, according to Mozejko, were Marx's Thesis Eleven on Feuerbach and Lenin's theory of mirroring/reflection, which was to lead literature to become "an objective picture of external reality" (cf. 34–35). The Stalinist era saw several twists and turns (and, consequently, victims). It was only after Stalin's death that criticism of socialist realism was allowed and indeed became possible precisely due to its political nature, its idealessness, lack of any conflict, its naive and obvious message, and, essentially, its unnaturalness, i.e., its essentially unrealistic character. The latter criticism was made particularly clear by Lukács, who proposed the phrase "critical realism" to replace socialist realism. This term was to be based on 19th-century realism but could be enriched by all major literary innovations of the modern age (cf. Lukács 139 ff.). Regardless of the surprising reference to Marxism, this ideology is significant in Kermauner's argument since it automatically reveals the fourth paradox.

The Fourth Paradox

For all its orthodox stiffness and ideological rigidity, Marxism, across its many versions, has placed another category on a pedestal, to which Kermauner, firmly rooted in

realism, attributes absolute importance for evaluating literature and anachronistically establishes as the central category of art: life, which brings us to the fourth paradox.

From Marxism – or rather its aesthetic foundation, critical realism – we can derive the Prosecutor's key condition: the demand for "life" in art. Art and, consequently, writers were required to "depict life above all" (Mozejko 16) precisely in the most radical phase of Marxism, which was utterly ruthless with art – under Stalin's rule. (True) writers were – apocryphally – supposed to be "engineers of human souls" (cf. Mozejko 16; apocryphally because Stalin is said to have taken this technician, almost modernist definition from Yuri K. Olesha at a meeting in Maxim Gorky's home). Along this line, "life" also entered Slovenian pre-war liberal and post-war Marxist aesthetics. The post-war Marxist cultural ideologist Boris Ziherl² also advocated the value of "living reality" (14). However, unlike the hardline ideological socialist realism, he was already familiar with Lukács's post-Stalinist critique and, above all, with the Russian theoreticians of realism from the mid-19th century (he wrote several introductory texts to the publications of their translations into Slovenian, particularly for works by Nikolay G. Chernyshevsky and Vissarion G. Belinsky. Cf. "Visarion Grigorjevič Belinski, njegova doba in delo" and "O realizmu v književnosti").

However, the concept of "life", whatever we understand by that, had already played a special role in Slovenian pre-war literary criticism. Many key works of art had been praised and (much more often) rejected in its name, despite being completely harmless in most cases. In the often devastating critiques written by Josip Vidmar, the supreme *arbiter elegantiarum* of Slovenian art, if not culture in general, life appeared as a fundamental concept, a kind of "master key", so to speak, for the exegesis of literature. Thus it can be both surprising – or not – that Kermauner's Prosecutor at some point instructs: "Read the scriptures of the greatest living Slovenian [...], Josip Vidmar, who has written so many important pages on these matters" (19–20). Such a recommendation could also be perceived as ironic. Kermauner, however, refers to Vidmar's well-known stance on art, with which he held Slovenian pre- and especially post-war literary production in an iron grip. According to Vidmar, only true, ideal, absolute art can reach its goal and thus further substantiate the above-mentioned first paradox, namely the reflection of "true" life, which in literary works manifests itself in the form of Liveliness. Vidmar was not concerned with any philosophical (moral, ethical or aesthetic) criteria. On the contrary: art should be cleansed of all such ballast since the sophisticated life of man "knows neither necessity nor profit. Instead, it is free ... And all his creation – art – is born of love and joyful freedom" (*Trije labodje* 1). The Prosecutor takes the following words out of Vidmar's mouth, so

² It was Ziherl who is said to have played a special role in the incrimination of Šalamun's "Duma 1964" as well, as embodied in the verse "on the logic of myopic vegetarians minus fifteen" (cf. Repe 68), while the second verse, "the land of the Cimpermanns and their pimpled admirers", is said to target Matija Maček, who used to be a carpenter in his youth (cf. Kermauner, "Poker ni poker", 78).

to speak: "Art is an effort, it is a high mission, not a cheap and one-day fad" (20). To quote Josip Vidmar again, only art with no ideological additives is "that most precious of all human pursuits" (1). And this is why, to the Prosecutor, "Šalamun's writing [...] represents a bare mockery of all that is great, important, sacred" (20), "a parody of previous metaphysics and religion" (21).

In my 1998 book *Estetski in idejni vplivi na predvojno dramsko in gledališko kritiko Josipa Vidmarja* (*Aesthetic and Ideological Influences on Josip Vidmar's Prewar Drama and Theatre Criticism*), I had assumed that Vidmar's measure of aesthetic life was primarily influenced by Goethe's romanticism. Now it seems it would be much more plausible to assume – despite Vidmar's 1959 translation of J. P. Eckermann's *Conversations with Goethe* – that during his time as a prisoner of war in World War I, Vidmar was instead a "student" of the aforementioned Russian critics. The common source of the realist, utilitarian view of art both for Zihelr and Vidmar can be traced back to Russian aesthetic theory of the mid-19th century: to Belinsky, who preached the primacy of society over the individual and influenced Chernyshevsky, who in turn advocated a utilitarian theory of literature, whereby, according to him, life is in a privileged position, since art is only its pale reflection. Thus, the epicentre of Chernyshevsky's aesthetic theory lies in the truism that "beauty [...] is life" (cf. Mozejko 57). This almost self-evident assumption by Chernyshevsky later influenced a range of theorists (for example, Nikolai A. Dobrolyubov and Vladimir I. Uljanov). It is in Chernyshevsky's idea that "for the peasant, the notion of 'life' always encompasses also the notion of work" (11) that we have to look for the Prosecutor's references to Vodnik's "The Satisfied Carniolan" and "Dramilo" ("Reveille"), Prešeren's "Zdravljica" ("A Toast") and Župančič's "Duma". These are examples of true, relevant poems since they – for example, Vodnik's poems – speak of the principles of "the healthy working man, who ploughs, sews, produces tirelessly [...], who wears nice clothes, not just rags, his cheek is fresh, red, gorgeous, toned" (8). Thus, "abstract thoughts [...] should not belong to the sphere of life" (Chernyshevsky 17). The origin of Kermauner's claim that "the reproduction of life [...] is a characteristic feature of art in general and constitutes its essence" (Chernyshevsky 117) can thus also be traced back to Marxism (and Josip Vidmar).

Literary history has not yet tested or proven neo-avant-gardist poetry regarding nation-building. Since the post-war period equated the very essence of the Slovenian nation with revolution, avant-garde movements that did not care about social influence necessarily appeared to be anti-state or even anti-national, while Kermauner aimed to present the reasons for its recognition and achieve its rehabilitation, to ensure that instead of aspiring towards an artistic Olympus, it was safely anchored in the canon of national literature, thus giving it value and place in the Slovenian pantheon. This position, however, opens up the fifth – and final –, paradox.

The Fifth Paradox

Our review of the substantive paradoxes finally brings us to the fifth, formal one. Even in terms of their understanding of form, the two courtroom protagonists do not differ as much as one might expect and conclude at first sight. The Prosecutor considers true art to be only that which traditionally represents an ideal fusion of content and form since it is clear that such art, if it is to be of quality and relevance (cf. 19), must strive to “contain noble content in a beautiful vessel” (19). The Defender, on the other hand, is not so much concerned with the new avant-garde form since the avant-garde form is supposed to be only a contemporary expression of eternal human questions, a reflection of its (critical) content of life. Contemporary art reacts to the problems of today’s world, and precisely due to it being so critical, that is to say, value-oriented and responsive, it cannot be beautiful since the world today is legitimately subject to such criticism. In the Defender’s view, this does not imply that avant-garde art is of any lower value, and even less that this calls for its cancellation.

But while the Defender does not care about form, this is far from being the case for Kermauner since, in his opinion, avant-garde poetry deserves only (lower-value) dramatic treatment. Kermauner thus claims that if avant-garde poetry were already part of the social canon, i.e., accepted among the works that are crucial to the identity of the Slovenian nation, or “universally recognised as having fundamental importance for the destiny of the Slovenian nation” (5), then it would also deserve a different literary form: perhaps even an epic! Although Kermauner’s statement could be seen as ironic, it is also true that avant-garde poetry has not yet been properly assessed in terms of value and does not yet hold a position in the canon of Slovenian (nation-building) literature. And as such, in Kermauner’s opinion, the dramatic form suits it best. The dramatic text, or even its most sophisticated form (a trial in court), is supposed to be best suited for the presentation of the “problems [...] and tribulations [...], as well as the work and entertainment” (5) of Slovenian avant-garde poetry, since it is the most open of forms, and above all, it supposedly does not prejudge the evaluation, whereas other literary sub-genres do.

In his own words, Kermauner chose the form of a court trial³ because it “fits our subject best” (5). None of the genres – whether epic, lyric or literary historiography – are suitable for the chosen subject, each for their own distinct reasons. The status of avant-garde poetry today is “far too alive, uncertain, thrilling” (26) to be dealt with by any form other than a direct classical (courtroom) confrontation. But even this position results in a paradox since the playlet presents merely an exposition of conflicting

³ The dramatic presentation of a trial has been a specific theatre genre ever since antiquity. To name but a few of the most striking examples of the genre: from Aeschylus’ *Oresteia* and Aristophanes’ *The Knights* to Shakespeare’s *The Merchant of Venice* and *Measure for Measure*, Büchner’s *Danton’s Death*, Shaw’s *Saint Joan*, Miller’s *The Crucible*, and von Schirach’s *Terror*.

opinions. At the same time, it does not culminate in a conclusive decision about who is right. The decision itself is thus passed over to the spectator. Besides the two central protagonists, Kermauner introduces two other characters: the Declaimer, who reads out the individual poems as evidence presented by a “bailiff”, and the Commentator – could this character represent Kermauner himself? – who does just what his name implies: in addition to the opening and closing commentary, he occasionally directs the action itself, and above all, he interacts with another, tacit character, namely the audience itself (to which he attributes the functions of a neighbour, a good craftsman, an educated teacher, a smart politician and a wise cultural worker, cf. 5), to whom he assigns the usual role of the jury in court. As usual, in such cases, the audience has their work cut out due to the nature of the subject of the hearing. As Kermauner himself notes: “It is difficult for an uninvolved listener to immediately reach a decision” (26). But the author goes even one step further: according to the Commentator, avant-garde poetry is far from easy to understand and even more difficult to discuss: “Avant-garde poetry is a devilishly complicated, obscure, two- or three-layered affair” (5). Moreover, it is also “not a thing to be loved: it is neither beautiful nor wise” (6). In short, it is complicated and unattractive, hindering the audience from the start. And even in this situation, the Commentator, just like some conservative court bailiff, leaves them little manoeuvring space. He even prevents them from deciding about avant-garde poetry at the end, leaving the avant-garde poet in an indeterminate, undecided limbo. As the climax of his playlet, Kermauner proposes the following implausible suggestion: “The debate [...] goes on, of course, and it is even becoming more and more passionate, but let this be enough for this evening. So let us put a stop to it. [...] The debate will resume later, which will be announced in the daily newspaper. The audience is asked to disperse peacefully” (26).

Epilogue

Contrary to the form of the dramatic structure, Kermauner does not reach a final verdict. Instead, he leaves it to the audience and snatches it away from under their noses. He interrupts the debate with his suggestion that “for now, the polemic between the two opinions, between attack and defence, should be temporarily suspended; we could say it is undecided for the moment” (26), which makes absolutely no sense in the context of a dramatic conflict.

Kermauner’s Commentator thus interrupts the debate at its very climax and deprives the audience in the role of the jury, even the possibility of reaching a decision. There is another problem here, however: Kermauner’s most self-destructive move in the playlet appears to be the fact that a final verdict was never possible at all since the Prosecutor and the Defender basically speak the same language: the language of

idealistic, patriotic, political, nation-building, realist-art values – the premise from which they discuss avant-garde poetry. Regardless of their, by definition, opposing functions, Kermauner's two protagonists are presented as holding the same set of values, which would make a verdict – in any form, be it aesthetic, social, or political – meaningless. And if they were to reach one, it would undoubtedly be to the detriment of avant-garde poetry.

Kermauner leaves the decision to the uncertain future: the arguments and, of course, the fate of avant-garde poetry [...] [should] only be definitively decided later" (26), and only when "must ferments into wine [...] we will see the long and the short of it" (5).

But even this will not be allowed to the same (theatrical) assembly before which the poet now finds himself, i.e., the court (and the jury). The momentarily inflamed passions are, in Kermauner's opinion, not very useful, and the audience is left with no answer to the question about the avant-garde poet's "guilt". Moreover, the future verdict will not be reached in public space, embodied by the courtroom. Instead, it will be accessible exclusively to "literary historiography", which "will only be allowed to do its duty at the moment when the debate [author's note: which, *nota bene*, was interrupted by the author himself] will be settled, once the immediate public and social, i.e., even non-artistic role of such poetry is clear. In accordance with Hegel's owl Minerva, it will only be allowed to pass judgment on avant-garde poetry *ex post*. Kermauner's instruction to the audience to disperse peacefully also points in this direction. Here, however, the "mother of all paradoxes" is revealed, namely the realisation that, despite adopting the dramatic form of argument, Kermauner renounces the possibility of theatre or the court. He even renounces the possibility that "the audience might still be interested" (26).

Based on the paradoxes identified and the extremely anaemic conclusion, the audience/jury is left with more questions than answers. First of all, it is not clear what Kermauner's position was: in the play, he devotes much more space to discussing the general values of art/poetry than the characteristics of its avant-garde version. There is a sense of tension between the expected positions of the two protagonists, the Prosecutor, who is an ideologically rigid "representative of society, its order, perspectives, and firmness" (8), and the Defender, who is supposed to be an artistically relaxed advocate of creative freedom, but essentially is not.

Kermauner's text is a poor attempt at a simultaneous, not-too-one-sided exculpation of neo-avant-garde poetry in the case of Tomaž Šalamun. The verdict is unremarkable, vague and – contrary to the initial belief about the only possible form of (dramatic) presentation of this avant-garde enigma – left to the uncertain future and (dispassionate) literary history. Why did Kermauner choose such an anticlimactic conclusion? Was he of the opinion that in the eight years (i.e., since 1964), avant-

garde poetry had already established itself artistically and therefore did not need any special defence? Did Kermauner himself struggle with both arguments? Was the nation-building argument with its canonical examples too strong even for Kermauner to give it up, and the self-referential artistic argument too unconvincing for him to rely on it?

However, it is encouraging for art in general and avant-garde poetry in particular that Kermauner left the courtroom door slightly ajar and allowed for the possibility of continuing the hearing “with new arguments and new examples, perhaps even examples of other avant-garde authors” (26), even though this would appear to be no longer necessary. Kermauner failed to embark on a retrial, probably not because in contemporary criminal justice practice, cases frequently fall under the statute of limitation, but rather because Šalamun’s vast opus had spoken for itself and there was nobody left to defend it against. And there is no point in fixing something that is not broken.

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