

LITERARNA KRITIKA

V PISATELJEVEM DNEVNIKU

DOKUMENTI ALI FIKCIJA?

Lado Kralj

Univerza v Ljubljani

UDK 82.0-94

UDK 821.163.6.09-94

Prispevek združuje tri specifične problemske sklope: 1) slovenski pisatelji v dvajsetih in tridesetih letih, 2) dnevnik kot naratološki problem, 3) literarna kritika oz. literarna teorija, ki se pojavlja na neobičajnem mestu, namreč v pisateljskem dnevniku. Konkretno gre za tri dnevnike, vsi trije so bili objavljeni postumno: dnevnik Vladimirja Bartola 1930–1933, Slavka Gruma 1932–1940 in Srečka Kosovela 1924–1926.

Ključne besede: literarna kritika, dnevnik, fikcija, zgodba, dokument

1. Obdobje med vojnama

V tem času je bil značilen poseben odnos do literature in literatstva, ki si ga danes komaj še lahko predstavljamo. Pisatelji so se zelo veliko družili, po gostilnah in kavarnah, pa tudi po domovih, in si tam brali, dajali na pukošino svoje nove rokopise; po stanovanjih so funkcionirali literarni saloni, najbolj znana sta bila pri dveh kritikih, tj. pri Josipu Vidmarju in Franu Albrehtu. Nove tekste so pisatelji pogosto pisali po kavarnah, kot nekakšno javno dejanje. Strastne debate so se razgrevale predvsem ob dilemi, ali naj bo literatura poduhovljena in pridvignjena ali pa, povsem nasprotno, materialna ali celo socialno angažirana. Te polemike so bile take vročične, da se je kar pogosto zgodilo, da je kdo koga v javnosti fizično napadel, »udaril čez čeljust«. Šlo je seveda za turbulence ob spremembi literarnih smeri, tj. za umikanje simbolizma in ekspresionizma, ker je na njuno mesto stopal novi realizem. Takšna dilematična svetovnonazorska pozicija se je kazala tudi v personalni delitvi na katoliške pisatelje na eni strani in svobodomiselnih na drugi; na začetku dvajsetih let so mladi katoliški pisatelji okrog revije *Križ na gori* še sodelovali s svobodomiselnimi okrog Kosovlove revije *Mladina*, v tridesetih pa je bilo takih prijateljskih vezi vse manj,

zamenjala jih je nestrpnost, ki je denimo udarila na dan v škandalu ob uprizoritvi Zuckmeyerjeve neonaturalistične drame *Veseli vinograd* (gl. Kralj, »Teatrski škandal«). Pregreta atmosfera ločevanja med duhovnim in materialnim se je kazala tudi v prenapetem zanimanju za spiritistične in okultistične seanse, ki so se dogajale na nekaterih lokacijah po Ljubljani. V tridesetih letih se je čez vso to situacijo kot pokrov poveznila gospodarska kriza, ki je povzročala, da je bil boj za preživetje vsak dan bolj naporen in tudi oduren, strah pred negotovo prihodnostjo pa vsak dan večji.

2. Dnevnik kot naratološki problem

Da je to sploh lahko problem, je pojmovanje novejšega datuma, traja približno zadnja tri desetletja; pred tem je bil fenomen dnevnika v literarni vedi neproblematičen, tj. samoumeven. Starejša literarna veda je obravnavala pisateljev dnevnik kot gradivo oziroma dokument. Njegov pomen je bil predvsem v tem, da je pojasnjeval notranje in zunanje pobude pri nastajanju pisateljevih del in pisateljevo življenje, to pa je bil referenčni okvir za sklepanje o njegovi literaturi. Potem pa so se pojavili novi pogledi (npr. Manfred Jurgensen, H. Porter Abbott), ki dnevnika ne štejejo več samo za dokument; torej nima več podrejene vloge pomožnega sredstva, saj postane meja med dokumentarnim in literarnim fluidna. In ko dnevnik ni več samo dokument, tudi ni več neizogibno objektiven, ne spada več zgolj med realije, temveč čedalje bolj tudi v fikcijo. Dnevnik, ki je dolgo veljal samo za preprost vir biografskih ali historičnih podatkov, zdaj pogosto postane dejanski predmet raziskovanja, vzpostavi se kot gradivo, ki je enakopravno literaturi – ki pravzaprav že je neke vrste literatura. V trenutku, ko literarna veda vzpostavi do dnevnika takšen odnos, postane dnevnik več in manj od dokumenta, premakne se namreč čez črto, ki ločuje realnost od fikcije. Pisanje dnevnika postane nekakšna vaja za pisanje fikcije, včasih pa je dnevnik že tudi povsem fikcijski. Izjav v dnevnikih danes ne obravnavamo več, kot da so povsem stvarne, pa naj se pisec dnevnika še tako trudi v to smer. Sam akt pisanja dnevnika namreč povzroča nezadržne fikcijske posledice in pisca žene v iznajdljivost in spreminjanje dejstev. In prav to se dogaja s Kosovelovim, Grumovim in Bartolovim dnevnikom: fikcionalizirajo se. Skratka, opisi realnosti, pa naj bodo mišljeni še tako objektivno in iskreno, se v dnevniškem zapisu začnejo »iznajdljivo spreminjati«, kot je iznajdljiva vsaka fikcijska zgodba. Dnevnik sledi svoji potrebi po zgodbi, po fabuliranju, ki je močnejša od želje po objektivnosti.

V dvajsetih in tridesetih letih so slovenski bralci, tako kot po vsem svetu, z velikim zanimanjem brali dnevnike slavnih pisateljev, na primer Strindbergovega, Rousseaujevega, Tolstojevega ali Nietzschejevega; zdelo se jim je namreč, da iz teh dnevniških knjig žari glorijska avtentičnosti, saj so jih razumeli kot način povsem verodostojnega poročanja. Dnevnik je že s svojo obliko zatrjeval, da ni proizvod literarne umetnosti, temveč kos pravega, neponarejenega življenja. V tem hlastanju bralcev po neponarejeni realnosti, po tekstih, ki niso izmišljeni, temveč so poročila o resničnih

dogodkih, je treba vsekakor videti učinke kolapsa simbolistične in ekspresionistične doktrine in, posledično, nastopa novega realizma. Nadaljnja stopnja tega razvoja v času med vojnoma so t. i. 'fiktivni dnevniki' (naziv povzemamo po Hockeju, 109 in po Kosu v leksikonu *Literatura, CZ*; prav tako primeren bi bil tudi izraz 'fingirani dnevniki'). To so črtice, povsem literarni izdelki z naslovi, kot so *Listi iz dnevnika* (Milena Mohorič) ali *Iz dnevnika vsemirskega skitalca* (Miran Jarc). Podobno zgovorni so ponekod tudi podnaslovi: *Iz študentovskega dnevnika* (v Kreftovi črtici *Vas*) ali pa *Zadnji listi iz samomorilčevega dnevnika* (v prvih dveh natisih Grumove črtice *Podgane*). Fiktivni dnevnik je literarni žanr, ki se s posebnimi strategijami trudi, da bi bil videti neliteraren in neizmišljen, skratka, zgolj realen dokument realnega življenja. Želja po materialnem, dokumentarnem, neizmišljenem je torej v času med vojnoma pripeljala do paradoksa, ko prozaiisti, tudi slovenski, proizvajajo simulakre dnevniskega žanra. Tak simulaker si večinoma izbere po obsegu zelo kratko obliko črtice. Ker so avtentični dnevniki, denimo Strindbergov, Rousseaujev itn., mnogo obsežnejši, en tak dnevnik je obsegal celo knjigo, se v naslovu ali podnaslovu fiktivnega dnevnika zelo pogosto pojavi oznaka 'listi iz dnevnika'. Fiktivni dnevnik so torej njegovi avtorji in bralci pojmovali kot nekaj listov, naključno in fragmentarno iztrganih iz obsežnega, pravega dnevnika (več o odnosu med dnevnikom in realnostjo gl. Kralj, »Dnevnik in pismo«).

3. Literarna kritika, umeščena v pisateljski dnevnik

Da se pisatelj ob pisanju literarnih del posveča tudi literarni kritiki ali literarni teoriji, ni nič nenavadnega. V času med vojnoma sta se s takšno dvojno nadarjenostjo posebej izkazala France Vodnik in Fran Albreht, nadalje tudi Juš in Ferdo Kozak, Ivan Pregelj, Matej Bor in drugi. Nenavadno pa je, kadar se zgodi, da se literarna kritika pojavi v sklopu dnevnika. Najprej zaradi pojava, ki smo ga že omenili – da akt pisanja dnevnika žene pisca v fikcionalizacijo, tj. v takšno aranžiranje ali delno spreminjanje dejstev, ki čim bolj pomaga ustvariti zgodbo. Nadalje pa tudi zaradi drugih razlogov, ki vsi izhajajo iz specifičnega žanrskega statusa dnevnika. Na primer: piscu dnevnika nikoli ni povsem jasno, ali opravlja javno ali zasebno dejanje. Si bo kdaj premislil in ta dnevnik objavil, čeprav je trenutno prepričan, da ga nikoli ne bo? Ali pa ga bo kdo objavil po njegovi smrti (kot se je to na primer zgodilo z Bartolovim, Grumovim in Kosovelovim dnevnikom)? In še naprej: biografske dnevniske raziskave, denimo Strindberga ali Rousseauja, kažejo, da pisec dnevnika večinoma piše iz občutja osamljenosti, izoliranosti in zapuščenosti, kar se lahko razvije v subjektivizem, egocentrizem in sentimentalni solipsizem. Še več, pojavijo se celo občutki samovšečnosti in večvrednosti, ki se utegnejo prevesiti v preganjavico. Vse to pa je, vsaj po tradicionalnem prepričanju, težko združljivo z objektivnostjo in distanco, ki ju pričakujemo od literarnega kritike ali literarne teorije.

Bartolov literarni program, kakršnega si je zapisal v dnevniku z naslovom *Literarni zapiski*, je izrazito usmerjen proti vsaki literaturi, ki je

sentimentalna in opravlja neko poslanstvo; ki je torej zavezana idealistični metafiziki in zato od pisatelja, pa tudi od bralca zahteva neko posebno, pridvignjeno etično držo. Gre seveda za doktrino evropskega simbolizma, ki se je v slovensko literaturo naselila prek Ivana Cankarja, vendar je bil teren zanj pripravljen že prej. Ne povsem spretni izraz, s katerim Bartol imenuje idealistično in sentimentalno tradicijo v slovenski literaturi, je »plemenitost« oz. »plemenita literatura«.

Predvčerajšnjim smo z Žagarjem¹ in Lenčkom² sklenili velevažen sklep: razkrinkati vso plemenitost v naši zgodovini (predvsem kulturni, literarni). In pokazati na borce proti njej. Lenček bi se vsaj zaenkrat lotil naloge. Začelo naj bi se že pri Slomšku, o katerem je zapisal Prešeren znani epigram. Oče Bleiweis – plemenitnik. Leglo vse plemenitosti in blagorodnosti pa je vsejal sentimentalni Stritar. Veliki borec proti: Fr. Levstik. Celo ta mu je nasedel osebno. Nebroj plemenitnikov, vplivanih po Stritarju. Potem jih pride cela vrsta: Govekar [...] Meško, Sardenko. – Cankar se začenja napol zavedati te svinjarije in začne napol zavestno borbo proti tem plemenitnikom, ki so samo ena plat klasičnega farizejstva. V plemenitost pade tudi Oton Župančič, posebno v poznejših pesmih in totalno v *Veroniki Deseniški*. To pa predvsem pod vplivom svoje žene. Kali že takoj spočetka. Josip Vidmar dvigne kol zoper plemenitnike, ki se posebej razgalijo v letošnji t.i. Vidmarjevi aferi. Slavni sodobni plemenitniki: Mrzel, Tone Vodnik, Magajna, Ciril Debevec (deloma Kresal) in še marsikdo. (Bartol 625)

Bartol je pravilno ugotovil, da je tradicija slovenske literature idealistična ali, kot pravi, »plemenita«. Bolj je bil v zadregi, kako imenovati tisto literaturo, za katero se je zavzemal sam; njegovi nasprotniki so jo imenovali »magazinska literatura«; s tem so menili, da je trivialna. Ko je leta 1935 izdal svojo zbirko kratke proze z naslovom *Al Araf*, še zmeraj ni vedel, kako naj jo žanrsko označi, in se v zadregi odločil za ne preveč izvirni podnaslov »Zbirka literarnih sestavkov«. Danes lahko Bartolovo kratko prozo označimo kot 'esejistično'. Bartol se je upiral vsaki metafizični uporabi literature, tudi takšni, ki se zavzema za ohranjanje slovenstva ali pa za socialno enakost med ljudmi (socialno angažirana literatura). Ker se je za takšno metafizično uporabo literature zavzemal takratni slovenski literarni kanon, se mu je Bartol uprl, saj je v tem načelu čutil nekaj zastarelega in tudi nepristnega, zlaganega. Proti sentimentu in bolečini je nastopal z objestnostjo in aroganco, proti spiritualizmu z racionalizmom, proti večnim vrednotam z užitkom, proti harmonični in blagoglasni formi s kavarniškim disputom.

Kako se ta Bartolov položaj kaže v njegovem dnevniku? Tako, da se tam začne iznajdljivo formirati zgodba. Bartolu je bilo povsem jasno, da ga slovenska literarna srenja večinoma zavrača, z izjemo Janeza Žagarja, urednika revije in založbe *Modra ptica*, in Vidmarja, ki se je zanj občasno zavzel. Vendar je iz pomanjkljivosti naredil vrlino, češ da je negativni sprejem prav tisto, kar pisatelj njegovega kova potrebuje:

Sedaj vem: v imenu teh ljudi sem upravičen za najvišjo strogost. Ena morala mora biti: tej zalegi se ne sme prizanašati. S tem bi se ji dajalo samo potuho. – Jaz sem itak že a priori tega mnenja. Stranguliert! To so vzmeti, ki mi

dajejo snov in me ženejo naprej. Take stvari palijo mojo kri in dražijo mojo fantazijo. Moj ideal: peščica trdnih prijateljev in ves svet ena sama množica sovražnikov, katerim je treba zasaditi sulico v bok. Borba je meni potrebna kot ribi voda. Borba, katere nisem sam izzval, zato sem tudi premalo aktiven – marveč borba, v katero sem bil siloma potegnen. Potem pa do kraja. Stranguliert! (Bartol 630)

Tudi na drugih mestih Bartolovega dnevnika najdemo na podoben način formulirano voljo do moči, podobno zaupanje v visoko vrednost lastnega literarnega ustvarjanja in zavračanje literarnih izdelkov svoje okolice. Od takratnih pisateljev je Bartol priznal predvsem Gruma, od vseh ostalih komaj še koga. Ta Bartolov vrednostni sistem, v katerem je sebe postavil na vrh, bi v tridesetih letih ne dobil prav nobene podpore, saj bi veljal za čudaškega in samoljubnega, predvsem pa nikakor ne bi ustrežal tedaj veljavnim kanonom. Danes je stvar povsem drugačna, danes vrednotimo Bartolovo prozo skoraj prav tako visoko, kot jo je on sam. Od osemdesetih let naprej se je skupina Bartolovih častilcev sistematično posvečala prevrednotenju njegovega mesta v slovenski literaturi in na Bartolovem simpoziju leta 1991 se je to končno tudi zgodilo. Skratka, Bartolovo brezmejno zaupanje vase se je danes izkazalo kot upravičeno. Njegov dnevnik bi se takratnemu bralcu zdel močno fikcionaliziran, močno izmišljen – ob današnjem branju pa se, nasprotno, zdi kar precej blizu resničnosti, če odmislimo prenapeto metaforiko.

* * *

Vladimir Bartol in Slavko Grum v svojih dnevnikih vodita nekakšen dialog – jemljeta se v misel, drug drugemu se zdita razpravljanja vredna, drug drugemu sta referenčna točka. Grum, ki se je v dnevniku z naslovom *Knjige, ki sem jih čital od oktobra 1932 dalje* skoraj izključno posvečal ocenjevanju knjig, kakor so sproti izhajale, tako domačih kot tujih avtorjev, in je ta svoj dnevniški popravek imenoval »cenzuriranje«, je ob izidu *Alamuta* takole pretehtal Bartolovo pisateljsko pot:

Z veliko radovednostjo sem čakal ta roman. Nekoč smo sedeli mladi pisatelji – pred desetimi leti – pri nekem Vidmarjevem predavanju o naši literaturi, tedaj se mi je zdel Bartol zelo ambiciozen, učen in duhovit mlad mož, ki hoče za vsako ceno postati pisatelj, kateremu pa manjka pisateljskega talenta. Potem so nastajale drobne novele, sprva vse sicer zelo učene, duhovite, toda skoraj prej eseji kot pa povesti. Pozneje pa je vedno bolj rasel pisatelj, in končno so nastale novele takega pisateljskega prijema, da so bile vredne občudovanja. In sedaj leži pred menoj *Alamut*. Nikdar ne bi verjel, da bi zmoget mlad slovenski pisatelj obdelati zgodovinsko snov s tako sigurnim pisateljskim prijemom in tako večščino [...] Interesantno, da sva sedela nekoč z Bartolom v kavarni in sem mu jaz pripovedoval, da se izplača biti današnjemu zdravniku le čarovnik. In postavil sem za čaranje v medicini isto teorijo, kot jo je on oživotvoril v tem romanu za vse življenje: vsako zdravljenje s čaranjem sloni na veri, na sugestiji [...] S tem sva oba istočasno nekaj zgrabila, kar najbrž danes leži v zraku. Bartol je pograbil, oživotvoril, jaz – – – (Grum 278–288).

Ta zadnji stavek v Grumovem dnevniškem zapisu o Bartolu je nedokončan, amputiran je pri besedi »jaz«, ki ji sledijo trije pomišljaji. Herbert Grün, prvi urednik Grumovega izbranega dela, govori v tej zvezi o »strahotno bolečih, molče trobentajočih treh pomišljajih«. Za bolečino gre seveda zato, ker Grum v času tega dnevnika ne more več pisati literature, temveč se kot zdravnik privatne prakse v Zagorju počasi izgublja v alkoholu in morfiju. In njegovo edino nadomestilo, edini simulaker pisanja literature so dnevniški kritični zapisi o novih knjigah. Torej se dnevnik lahko tudi na tak način spreminja iz dokumenta v literaturo, tj. v fikcijo. V tej situaciji je Grum zelo strog kritik slovenske literature v tridesetih letih. Bartola sicer priznava, mnoge druge pa zavrača:

Slovenski pisatelji smo tako radi hudobni drug proti drugemu, vsako stvar moramo kritizirati. Toda saj bi si človek želel, neskončno bi bil vesel, če bi res dobil nekoč kako stvar v roke, ki bi te do kraja veselila in ne kakorkoli neprijetno dirnila, razočarala, pustila h koncu mrzlega, brezupnega. Cankar, sicer tako lep, kdo ni občutil mrzlega brezupa, ki ga ob koncu ustvarjajo v človeku njegove knjige? Mrzel, zakaj je razočaral s svojo knjigo? In sedaj – Pregelj! (Grum 251)

Še ostreje je Grum zavrnil avtobiografski roman svojega rojaka Mirana Jarca, *Novo mesto*, ki je izšel leta 1933:

Jarc ni čarodej, ni umetnik. Človek, ki je mnogo s pridom čital, ki nima slabega okusa, in predvsem z željo: biti za vsako ceno pisatelj. Tipičen občan v smislu izvajanj prof. Prijatelja: *Pesniki in občani*. (Grum 255)

* * *

Dnevnik Srečka Kosovela je nekoliko drugače strukturiran od Bartolovega ali Grumovega, saj v njem ni sklenjenih pripovednih blokov, temveč ga sestavlja velika množica drobnih fragmentarnih enot: gradivo za sestanke ali s sestankov Literarno-dramatičnega krožka Ivan Cankar, deli nastajajoče literarne produkcije, gradivo za prihodnje literarno ustvarjanje, prepisi zanimivih izjav iz časopisov in revij, koncepti pisem in drugo; kratka, le manjši del teksta je posvečen poročanju o sprotih dogodkih. Povezuje pa ga z Bartolovim in Grumovim dnevnikom dejstvo, da je literarna kritika razmeroma pogosto, čeprav večinoma le na kratko omenjena. Kot najbolj relevantno ime takratne slovenske kritike se pojavlja isto ime kot pri Bartolu in Grumu, tj. Josip Vidmar, vendar tokrat v avantgardističnem kontekstu, češ da je treba vidmarjanski tip kritike, kakršen je izhajal v njegovi reviji z imenom *Kritika*, odstraniti in ga nadomestiti z mnogo bolj radikalnim:

Kritika ne sme uspavati, temveč dramiti. Bravničar laže, Hribar igra površno vijolo, ti razpravljaš po očetovsko, Vidmar piše kakor za ubit. Dobida je dolgovezen in se boji povedati, da je razstava slaba; zanj imajo vsi 'nema' talent, dasi ga imajo včasih zelo malo. Zdi se mi kakor letoviščar, ki si je izbral slabo letovišče, pa ga neprenehoma hvali, da bi se prepričal. Kar

Kritiki manjka, je ogenj in bič. V njej bi moralo tako goreti, da se komaj za-
držuje, da ne požge vsega, toliko biča, da bi izgnala vse sejmarje iz templja.
(Kosovel 698)

Ta dnevniški zapis je kritika kritike, tj. kritika osme številke Vidmarjeve
revije *Kritika* v letu 1925. Kosovel je naštel skoraj vse kritiške ocenjevalce v
tej številki, ki so razpravljali o glasbenih dogodkih, knjigi filozofa Franceta
Vebr, gledališču, literaturi in likovnih dogodkih.³ In zavrnil jih je vse po
vrsti, bodisi zaradi njihove lažnivosti ali površnosti, paternalizma ali dolgo-
veznosti, Josip Vidmar pa je kratko in malo »za ubit«. Deset dni pozneje se
v dnevniku pojavi koncept ocene polletnega izhajanja revije *Kritika*:

Slovenska umetnost ima smolo: ali ima opraviti z dogmatiki ali s pijanimi
nezmernimi poeti ali s čistimi razumarji. Akoprav so poslednji vsaj za eno
stopnjo višje od vseh, vendar naj jim ne izostane kritika. O uboga slovenska
umetnost, kdo te vse vodi, kdo te vse skuša voditi! Oskrunjena po žurnalih
in gostilnah prihajaš na operacijsko mizo čistega razuma! Kakor da bi dana-
šnja doba ne bila še dovolj smrtilna za umetnost, da je potrebno še to najne-
varnejši smrtilo umetnosti: čisti razum [...] Bledi cvet razuma je ta kritika,
ki cvete z muko in brez inspiracije. Ta kritika je naš najprimernejši forum;
za klistiranje naših prvakov je brez ognja. Brez semena, brez inspiracije. Zdi
se mi, da tisti, ki pišejo, ne mislijo tako [...] da je v njih abstraktnih besedah
konkreten strah pred policijo. (Kosovel 711)

* * *

Katero funkcijo opravlja kritika v vsakdanjem literarnem pogonu? Verjetno
funkcijo vrednotenja, v nasprotju z literarno zgodovino, ki se ukvarja bolj
z registriranjem sistemskih značilnosti. Prek vrednotenja pa kritika lite-
rarno delo tudi socializira, ga spravlja v promet, učinkuje kot posrednik
med literatom in bralcem. Z opozarjanjem na odlike in slabosti literarne-
ga dela kritika spodbuja bralca, naj do teksta zavzame objektivno stališče.
Kritik bi torej moral biti kar najbolj uravnotežena oseba, takšen je naš ho-
rizont pričakovanja. In kako je s kritiškim ocenjevalcem v Bartolovem,
Grumovem in Kosovelovem dnevniku? Prav nasprotno. Pripovedovalec, tj.
zapisovalec dnevnika, je seveda avtor sam, saj je dnevnik po tradicionalni
definiciji dokument o avtorjevem življenju. Vendar se zapisovalec kar pred
našimi očmi zelo hitro fikcionalizira, okrog sebe gradi zgodbo, spreminja
se v čustveno prenapeto in bizarno osebo. Pri tem se kažeta dve tipologiji:
Bartolov in Kosovelov zapisovalec se nagibata k iluzijam o svojem statusu
nadčloveka, Grumov pa, nasprotno, učinkuje kot morbiden dekadentni po-
raženec. Obe tipologiji razvijata in stopnjujeta močan prezir do obstoječe
slovenske literature: kritičnost se sprevača v totalni negativizem. Bartolov
zapisovalec fantazira o svetu kot eni sami množici sovražnikov, ki jih bo
treba vse podaviti – strangulirati, Kosovelov o ognju in biču, s katerima bo
izgnal sejmarje iz templja, Grumov pa o pisatelju čarovniku, ki ne more več
čarati in gineva v mrzlem brezupu. Bistveno je, da so izjave teh dnevniških

zapisovalcev takšne, kakršnih si Bartol, Kosovel ali Grum ne bi nikoli upali zapisati v kritiki, eseju ali podobnem objektivističnem žanru; to so si upali samo v dnevniku, kjer pritisk jezika in postopek pisanja takoj začneta spreminjati začetno objektivistično pozicijo v nekaj, kar je vse bolj fiksijsko.

OPOMBE

¹ Janez Žagar, urednik založbe in revije *Modra ptica*.

² Rado Lenček, jezikoslovec, od 1956 v Združenih državah.

³ Matija Bravničar, ki »laže«, je ocenjeval koncerte, Mirko Hribar Vebrovo knjigo *Problemi sodobne filozofije*, z zaimkom »ti« je mišljen Kosovelov brat Stano, ki je pisal o gledališču, Josip Vidmar je seveda pisal o literaturi, Karel Dobida pa o likovnih razstavah.

VIRI

Bartol, Vladimir. »Literarni zapiski 1930–1933.« *Dialogi* 18.4, 5, 6–7, 8–9, 10 (1982): 364–390, 505–528, 620–637, 748–782, 827–834.

Grum, Slavko. »Knjige, ki sem jih čital od oktobra 1932 dalje.« *Zbrano delo* 2. Ur. L. Kralj. Ljubljana: DZS, 1976. 244–284.

Kosovel, Srečko. »Dnevniki.« *Zbrano delo* 3/1. Ur. A. Ocvirk. Ljubljana: DZS, 1977. 591–783.

LITERATURA

Abbott, H. Porter. *Diary Fiction: Writing as Action*. Ithaca – London: Cornell University Press, 1984.

Grün, Herbert. »Čarodej brez moči. Obris pisateljske fiziognomije Slavka Gruma.« *Goga. Proza in drame*. Ur. H. Grün – M. Pritekelj. Maribor: Obzorja, 1957. 7–46.

Hocke, Gustav René. *Das europäische Tagebuch*. Wiesbaden: Limes, 1963.

Jurgensen, Manfred. *Das fiktionale Ich: Untersuchungen zum Tagebuch*. Bern in München: Francke, 1979.

Kralj, Lado. »Dnevnik in pismo kot modela slovenske kratke proze med vojnama.« *Slavistična revija* 54.2 (2006): 205–220.

Kralj, Lado. »Teatrski škandal zaradi 'Veselega vinograda'.« *Slovenska trideseta leta: Simpozij 1995*. Ur. P. Vodopivec – J. Mahnič. Ljubljana: Slovenska matica, 1997. 150–157.

LITERARY CRITICISM CONTAINED IN THE DIARY OF A WRITER A DOCUMENT OR FICTION?

Lado Kralj

University of Ljubljana

UDK 82.0-94

UDK 821.163.6.09-94

What happens to literary criticism if it appears in an unusual place – in the diary of a man of letters? With this question in mind, this article analyses sections of three diaries from the interwar period written by Vladimir Bartol, Slavko Grum, and Srečko Kosovel. The conclusion is that the diary has its own narrative logic that is stronger than the objectivist principles of literary criticism. The diary writer, sensitive to the pressure of the diary genre, becomes a fictional hero and his critical remarks tend to become a story.

Keywords: literary criticism, diary, fictionality, story, document, Vladimir Bartol, Slavko Grum, Srečko Kosovel

This paper discusses three specific problem areas: 1) Slovene writers in the period between World War I and World War II, 2) the diary as a problem of narratology, and 3) literary criticism located in an unusual place; in this case, in the diary of a man of letters. To be more precise, three diaries are examined, all of them published posthumously: by Srečko Kosovel (written 1924–1926), Vladimir Bartol (written 1930–1933), and Slavko Grum (written 1932–1940).

1. The Interwar Period

In the period between the two world wars there developed a specific relation to literature and among writers that is hard to imagine today. Writers associated very much with one another in pubs, coffee houses, or their homes, where they read their new manuscripts aloud, thus presenting them to their colleagues. Their homes often functioned as literary salons, and the best known among them were held by reviewers; for instance, by Josip Vidmar

or Fran Albreht. When a writer produced a new work, he often wrote it at a table in a coffee house, as a public act. Passionate discussions were held concerning the dilemma of whether literature should be spiritual and elevated or, instead, materialistic or even socially engaged. These polemics were so feverish that often one writer would attack another one physically in public, even striking him in the face. This was, of course, the turbulence accompanying the change of the ruling *Weltanschauung*: Symbolism and Expressionism were retreating, and New Realism was taking their place. This split in ideological convictions resulted in a formal division into two camps, with “Catholic” writers on one side and “Freethinkers” on the other, and increasing intolerance towards one another, even though they may have cooperated as friends in the early 1920s, as was the case of the young Catholic writers gathered around the journal *Križ na gori* (Mountain Cross) and the Freethinkers, gathered around Kosovel’s journal *Mladina* (Youth). In the 1930s there were increasingly fewer such friendly bonds, and they were replaced by acts of intolerance, such as that which broke out in the scandal on the opening night of Zuckmayer’s neonaturalistic play *Der fröhliche Weinberg* (The Merry Vineyard; cf. Kralj, “Teatrski škandal”). The overheated atmosphere of dividing the spiritual from the material could also be observed in the increased interest in occult séances that took place at several locations in Ljubljana. To top things off, an economic crisis hit in the 1930s, creating a struggle for survival that every day became more tiring and even repulsive; the fear of future appeared.

2. The Diary as a Problem of Narratology

The idea that a diary can be a problem is of newer origin; in fact, it first appeared in the 1970s. Before this, the phenomenon of the diary was self-evident in literary theory. Traditionally, literary theory has treated the diary as material or as a document. The use of the diary was to explain the writer’s biography; specifically, the inner and outer stimuli affecting the genesis of the writer’s work. Once this was achieved, the researcher was supposed to be able to form a general opinion of this work. Later on, new approaches were developed (e.g., by Manfred Jurgensen and H. Porter Abbott) that no longer treat the diary as a mere document. There is no more restriction of the diary to the subordinate function of an auxiliary means because the line between the documentary and the literary has become fluid. At the moment that the diary is no longer a mere document it loses some of its objectiveness; it belongs not only to reality, but to an increasing degree to fiction as well. The diary, which had long been treated as a simple source of biographical or historical data, now often becomes the actual subject under discussion; it is established as a text comparable to literature – in fact, it is some kind of literature. At the very moment literary theory established such a condition, the diary became both more and less than a document: it crossed the line that divides reality from fiction. Writing diaries turns into a kind of exercise in writing literature, and sometimes we perceive it as

something very fictional already. Nowadays the statements in diaries are no longer treated as completely factual, irrespective of how hard the person writing them actually tries. The act of writing a diary creates irresistible fictional consequences and it forces the writer to invent and change the facts. This is exactly what is happening to Kosovel's, Grum's, and Bartol's diaries: they are becoming fictionalized. That is, the descriptions of reality, matter-of-fact and genuine though they were intended, begin to "change inventively" when they appear in a diary, as inventively as any fictional story. The diary follows its own need for story-telling, which is stronger than its wish to be objective.

In the 1920s and 1930s, readers in Slovenia were very interested in reading the diaries of famous writers – for example, Strindberg, Rousseau, Tolstoy, or Nietzsche – like readers anywhere in the world. It seemed to them that these diary volumes radiated the glory of authenticity, and they perceived them as the ultimately credible way of reporting. In its very form the diary assured the reader that it was not a product of literary art, but a piece of true life, no forgery used. In this strong wish of the readers for genuine reality, for texts that are not made up, but report real events, one must of course observe the effects of the collapse of the Symbolist and Expressionist doctrines and, consequently, the arrival of New Realism. The next step in this development in the interwar period can be seen in the appearance of simulated diaries; Hocke calls them "fictive diaries" and Abbott "diary fiction" (Hocke 109; Abbott 9 ff.). These are short stories, totally literary products, yet they bear titles such as *Listi iz dnevnika* (Pages from a Diary, by Milena Mohorič) or *Iz dnevnika vsemirskega skitalca* (From the Diary of a Space Vagabond, by Miran Jarc). Often the reference to the diary comes in the subtitle: *Iz študentskega dnevnika* (From the Diary of a Student) is the subtitle of the short story *Vas* (The Village) by Bratko Kreft, and *Zadnji listi iz samomorilčevega dnevnika* (The Last Pages from the Diary of a Suicide) is the subtitle of the first two editions of the short story *Podgane* (The Rats) by Slavko Grum. The simulated diary is a literary genre that endeavors, using special strategies, to seem not literary, not made up – in short, to be a real document of real life. Thus it happens that the strong demand for materiality, the documentary, the non-fictional in the interwar period created a paradox: prose writers, including Slovene ones, begin to produce simulated diaries. Such a simulation mostly takes the form of a very short narration, called a "sketch" at that time (Slov. "črtica," Germ. "die Skizze"). Because the authentic diaries – for example, Strindberg's, Rousseau's, and so on – are much more extensive, usually the size of an entire book, the simulated diary often refers to itself as "pages from a diary." This is to say that the writers and readers of the simulated diary pretended that this genre was merely a bunch of pages, accidentally and fragmentarily torn from a larger, genuine diary (for more on the relation between diary and reality, see Kralj, "Dnevnik in pismo").

3. Literary Criticism Located in the Diary of a Writer

It is far from unusual for a man of letters to write critical reviews along with producing literature. In the interwar period two writers especially excelled in such double talents: France Vodnik and Fran Albreht. It is unusual, however, if pieces of criticism appear within a diary. First, because of the phenomenon just mentioned above: the act of writing a diary forces the writer into fictionalization; that is, into such an arrangement of facts as to help create a story. Further, there are other reasons that originate in the special genre status of the diary. For instance, the diary writer never really knows whether he is performing a public or a private act. Will he change his mind somewhere in the future and publish his diary, although at present he is so very sure that he would never do such a thing? Or, is it possible that the diary will be published posthumously – as actually happened to Bartol's, Grum's, and Kosovel's diaries discussed here? Moreover, biographical studies of the lives of famous diary writers (Rousseau, Strindberg, etc.), as conducted, among others, by Hocke, show that the act of writing a diary is often based on feelings of loneliness and isolation, which might further develop into subjectivism, egocentrism, and sentimental solipsism – or even into megalomania, sometimes combined with a persecution complex. All of these feelings are hard to combine with the objectivity and distance expected of literary criticism – at least from the traditional point of view.

Let us examine a sample of the literary program of Vladimir Bartol contained in his diary. In it, he strongly defies the sort of literature that is sentimental and/or performs a mission – in short, the literature that believes in idealistic metaphysics and therefore requires an especially elevated attitude from the author and from the reader as well. What Bartol has in mind is the doctrine of Symbolism and Expressionism brought into Slovene literature by its canonical author Ivan Cankar, although the ground for this was prepared even before Cankar's arrival. This is the idealistic and sentimental tradition of Slovene literature, and Bartol calls it, not very aptly, "noble-minded literature":

Two days ago I decided something extremely important, together with Žagar and Lenček: we must unmask all the noble-mindedness in our history (above all in cultural and literary affairs). And we must demonstrate who the fighters are that have defied it. Currently it is Lenček that will tackle this task. This already began with Slomšek, about whom Prešeren wrote his notorious epigram. Father Bleiweis – the noble-minded man. The real litter of noble-mindedness, however, was begotten by the sentimental Stritar. The great fighter against it: Fran Levstik. But personally even Levstik was taken in. Innumerable noble-minded figures were influenced by Stritar. After them another crowd: Govekar . . . Meško, Sardenko. – Cankar began realizing this filth half-heartedly and, only partly conscious of it, he began fighting these noble-minded people, who are nothing but a facet of classical Pharisaic hypocrisy. Oton Župančič belongs to noble-mindedness as well, especially in his later poems and totally in his *Veronika Deseniška*. In his case it is all the influence of his wife. She has been troubling the waters since

the very beginning. Josip Vidmar raised his stick against the noble-minded; they were stripped naked in the "Vidmar affair" this year. Famous contemporary noble-minded people: Mrzel, Tone Vodnik, Magajna, Ciril Debevec (Kresal, in part), and many others. (Bartol 625)

Bartol stated correctly that the prevalent tradition of Slovene literature was idealistic or, as he calls it himself, "noble-minded." He was at a loss, however, how to call the literature that he himself was promoting and writing; his adversaries called it "magazine literature," implying that it was trivial. When Bartol published his book of short prose *Al Araf* in 1935, he still did not know how to label his stories with regard to genre, and so he decided on a not very imaginative subtitle: *Zbirka literarnih sestavkov* (A Collection of Literary Compositions). Today we might define them as "essay prose." Bartol resisted any metaphysical use of literature, including the one that endeavors to preserve the Slovene nation or to attain social equality among people (socially engaged literature). This was exactly the metaphysical use of literature that was supported by the Slovene literary canon of that time; Bartol opposed it strongly, feeling something old-fashioned and even fake or mendacious in this principle. He confronted the myth of sentimentality and suffering with his attitude of arrogance, spiritualism with rationalism, eternal values with the sensation of earthly pleasures, and harmonic form with unpolished verbal dispute as used in the coffee houses.

How is this position of Bartol's reflected in his diary? In the form of a story, which begins to appear inventively, construed from everyday events. It was perfectly clear to Bartol that he was being rejected by the Slovene literary environment for the most part, with the exception of Janez Žagar, the director of the publishing house Modra ptica and editor of the journal of the same name, and the critic Josip Vidmar, who sometimes approved of him, but on other occasions treated him rather harshly. What Bartol did was to make a virtue of necessity, declaring that his negative reception was exactly what a writer of his dimensions needed:

Now I know: because of these people I am entitled to act with the utmost severity. There should be only one moral, saying: this pack should not be spared. It would only mean abetting them. – Such has been my opinion from the very beginning. They'll all be strangled! Those are the stimuli that supply me with subject-matter and drive me forward. Such things incite my blood and provoke my fantasy. My paragon: a handful of constant friends, the entire rest of the world being a multitude of enemies, and I have to thrust my lance into their flank. I need fighting as the fish needs water. I did not provoke this fight and this is the reason why I was not active enough – I was pulled into it by force. But now we go to the very end. They'll all be strangled! (Bartol 630)

In other places of this diary, too, we can find a similarly formulated will for power, a similar confidence in the high value of his own literary work while rejecting that of his surroundings. Among the writers of that time Bartol acknowledged primarily Slavko Grum and hardly anybody else. Such a system of values, in which he put himself at the very top,

would have gained no support if Bartol had published it; just the opposite, it would have been considered eccentric and conceited, especially because it would not have suited the effective literature canon. Today, however, the situation is very different because we value his literature nearly as highly as he did himself. From the 1980s onwards a group of Bartol's fans systematically worked on revaluing his position in Slovene literature, and by the time of the Bartol conference in 1991 this actually happened. This is to say that Bartol's unlimited self-esteem proved today to be justified. To the readers of the 1930s, his diary would have seemed strongly fictionalized, nearly completely made up. When reading it today, however, we perceive it as fairly near to reality, if we put his exaggerated usage of metaphors into brackets.

Vladimir Bartol and Slavko Grum exchanged a kind of a solitary dialogue in their diaries – they thought of each other, considering each other worthy of discussion, they were each other's reference point. From October 1932 onwards, the criticism of recently published books in his diary *Knjige, ki sem jih čital* (Books I Have Been Reading), was about the only thing remaining that Slavko Grum was producing in the field of literature. His time of inspiration was over and he was no longer able to write literature. He was reviewing or, as he put it, “censoring” (Grum 259) the books recently issued by Slovene and fairly often by German publishing houses as well. With the following words he evaluated Bartol's *curriculum vitae* when reviewing his novel *Alamut*, published in 1938:

I have been waiting for this novel with immense curiosity. There was a time – ten years ago – when we, the young writers, were attending one of Vidmar's lectures on Slovene literature. By that time Bartol seemed to me a very ambitious, very learned and witty young man wanting to become a writer at any cost – lacking the talent, however. Later on his short stories began appearing, at first very learned, witty, maybe more essays than stories. And still later a writer was increasingly developing, and finally stories of such a technique appeared that one cannot but admire them. Now there is *Alamut* lying before my eyes. I would never believe that a young Slovene writer was able to treat historical subject matter with such a firm writing technique, with such skill ... An interesting memory: in those past days Bartol and I were sitting in the coffee house and I was telling him that nowadays a surgeon had only one chance: to act as a wizard. I offered a theory of wizardry in the field of medicine, and it was the same theory that he made come true in this novel in the field of an entire life: curing by means of wizardry is always founded on faith, on suggestion. ... This way we both and at the same time touched something that today probably hangs in the air. Bartol grasped it, made it come true, whereas I – – –. (Grum 279)

Grum's review of Bartol's *Alamut* concludes just like that, with the above sentence, amputated at the word *I*, followed by three dashes. Herbert Grün, the first editor of Grum's selected works, speaks in this connection of “three horribly painful dashes trumpeting silently” (Grün 20–21). Painful, because at the time of this diary Grum was no longer able to write literature; he lived in the small mining town of Zagorje as a general physician,

slowly surrendering to alcohol and morphine. His only substitutes for writing literature were the diary reviews of newly published books. One can see that the diary in this way, too, can turn from a document into literature; that is, to fiction. Living in such a state of mind, Grum is a very stern critic of the Slovene literature, especially the contemporary one. He acknowledges Bartol, but he rejects many other writers:

We Slovene writers love so much to behave wickedly against each other; we think we must criticize everything. Still I would wish it, I would be extremely pleased to find something that would make me thoroughly happy. Not again an unpleasant surprise, a disappointment that would leave me in cold despair at its end. Cankar is so very beautiful; still, who did not feel the cold despair created by his books at their ends? Why did Mrzel disappoint me with his book? And now – Pregelj! (Grum 251)

Harsher still, Grum rejected the autobiographical novel *Novo mesto*, published in 1933 and written by Miran Jarc, who spent his youth in the same city as Grum (i.e., Novo mesto):

Jarc is not a wizard, he is not an artist. He has been reading a lot and gained much from it, he has good taste and above all: he wants to become a writer at any cost. A typical citizen in the sense of Professor Prijatelj's concept *The Poets and the Citizens*. (Grum 255)

The diary of Srečko Kosovel is to some degree differently structured than Bartol's or Grum's because as a rule it does not contain narrative blocks, but a multitude of small fragmentary units: material for the meetings and from the meetings of the Ivan Cankar Literary and Dramatic Club, parts of literary production in the making, material for future creative work, copies of interesting statements from the newspapers and magazines, concepts of letters etc.; which is to say that only a minor part of the text is reporting of daily events. Still, Kosovel's diary can be compared to Bartol's and Grum's, because it relatively often contains Kosovel's literary criticism, although seldom in a longer piece. Like Bartol and Grum, Kosovel holds Josip Vidmar to be the most influential Slovene literary critic. This time, however, Vidmar is introduced in Kosovel's avant-garde context, demanding very clearly that Vidmar's type of criticism, as published in his periodical under the name *Kritika*, should be eliminated and replaced by a far more radical one:

Criticism should not put the reader to sleep, it should awake him. Bravničar is lying, Hribar plays a superficial viola, you discuss things paternalistically, and Vidmar deserves to be killed for his writing. Dobida talks too much, he is also afraid to say that the exhibition is not worth anything; as he sees it, all artists have "considerable talent," while actually they hardly have any. He seems to me like a tourist that has chosen a lousy summer resort and now he is praising it constantly to persuade himself of the opposite. What *Kritika* is lacking is fire and a whip. It should contain such an internal fire that it can hardly restrain from burning everything down; its whip should expel all the merchants from the temple. (Kosovel 698)

This diary section is a criticism of criticism; that is to say, a criticism of issue no. 8 of Vidmar's journal *Kritika* in 1925. Kosovel lists nearly all the reviewers in this issue; they discussed musical events, the book by the philosopher France Veber, theatre events, literature, and painting.¹ He rejects one after the other, both because of their falsehood and superficiality, or for their paternalism and verbosity, topping it all with his opinion of the influential critic Josip Vidmar: he simply "deserves to be killed." Ten days later Kosovel's diary contains a summing up of the last half year's issues of the journal *Kritika*:

The arts have bad luck in Slovenia: either they have to deal with dogmatists or with drunken intemperate poets or with men of pure reason. Although the latter stand at least one degree higher than the others, they should not be spared my criticism. Oh poor Slovene arts, who is leading you, who is trying to lead you! After being raped in the newspapers and pubs, you are being led to the operating table of pure reason! As if our time were not deadly enough to the arts, now we need other means, deadlier still: pure reason ... This criticism is the pale flower of reason, blooming painfully and without inspiration. This criticism is our most suitable *forum*; it does not have fire enough to clyster our leaders. It has no semen, no inspiration. It seems to me that the critics do not believe what they write ... that their abstract words contain a very real fear of the police. (Kosovel 711)

What is the purpose of criticism in the public mechanism of literature? Let us propose a heuristic answer: it is evaluation, in distinction from literary history, which is engaged above all in registering the system's characteristics. By means of evaluation, criticism socializes the literary work, puts it into circulation – in short, works as the intermediary between the writer and the readers. Drawing the readers' attention to the imperfections of the literary work on the one hand and to its merits on the other, criticism stimulates them to adopt an objective standpoint in their relation towards the text under discussion. Therefore the critic is supposed to be a very balanced person; this is what our horizon of expectation is telling us. And how balanced is the critical reviewer in Bartol's, Grum's, or Kosovel's diaries? He is not balanced at all. These are supposed to be actual diaries and not simulated ones, and the narrator (identical with the diary writer) is the author himself, because the diary, according to the traditional definition, is a document of the author's life. Yet before our own eyes the diary writer becomes fictionalized very quickly; he constructs a fictional story around himself, he undergoes a change into an emotionally strained and bizarre person. This process shows two typologies: Bartol's and Kosovel's diary writers are inclined toward delusions of a Nietzschean superman, whereas Grum's one, in contrast, toward a morbid decadent loser. Both typologies, however, develop and intensify a strong contempt for contemporary Slovene literature; this critical position gradually turns into complete negation. Bartol's narrator is indulging in fantasies of the world as an immense crowd of enemies that should all be strangled, Kosovel's is imagining fire and the whip he will use when expelling the merchants from the temple,

and Grum's is envisioning himself as a wizard, who has, alas, lost his magical power and is now dying away in cold despair. It is important to realize that the statements of these three diary writers are of such a kind as Bartol, Kosovel, and Grum would never dare to publish in a review, essay, or a similar objective genre; they can only appear in the diary, where the pressure of language and the process of writing immediately begin to change the initially objective position into something that is increasingly fictional.

NOTE

¹ Matija Bravničar, who is "lying," reviewed the concerts; Mirko Hribar Veber's book is *Problemi sodobne filozofije* (Problems of Contemporary Philosophy); the pronoun *you* refers to Kosovel's brother Stano, who was reviewing theatre; Josip Vidmar was of course reviewing literature, and Karel Dobida the art exhibitions.

LITERARY SOURCES

- Bartol, Vladimir. »Literarni zapiski 1930–1933« [Literary Notes 1930–1933]. *Dialogi* 18.4, 5, 6–7, 8–9, 10 (1982): 364–390, 505–528, 620–637, 748–782, 827–834.
- Grum, Slavko. »Knjige, ki sem jih čital od oktobra 1932 dalje« [Books I Have Been Reading from October 1932 Onwards]. *Zbrano delo* 2. Ed. L. Kralj. Ljubljana: DZS, 1976. 244–284.
- Kosovel, Srečko. »Dnevnik« [Diaries]. *Zbrano delo* 3/1. Ed. A. Ocvirk. Ljubljana: DZS, 1977. 591–783.

WORKS CITED

- Abbott, H. Porter. *Diary Fiction: Writing as Action*. Ithaca, NY and London: Cornell University Press, 1984.
- Grün, Herbert. »Čarodej brez moči. Obris pisateljske fiziognomije Slavka Gruma« [Wizard without Power: A Sketch of the Writer's Physiognomy of Slavko Grum]. *Goga. Proza in drame*. Ed. H. Grün and M. Pritekelj. Maribor: Obzorja, 1957. 7–46.
- Hocke, Gustav René. *Das europäische Tagebuch*. Wiesbaden: Limes, 1963.
- Jurgensen, Manfred. *Das fiktionale Ich. Untersuchungen zum Tagebuch*. Bern and Munich: Francke, 1979.
- Kralj, Lado. »Dnevnik in pismo kot modela slovenske kratke proze med vojnama« [The Diary and Letter as a Model of Interwar Slovene Short Prose]. *Slavistična revija*. 54.2 (2006): 205–220.
- Kralj, Lado. »Teatrski škandal zaradi 'Veselega vinograda'« [The Theater Scandal of *Der fröhliche Weinberg*]. *Slovenska trideseta leta. Simpozij 1995*. Ed. P. Vodopivec and J. Mahnič. Ljubljana: Slovenska matica, 1997. 150–157.