

PROCESSING LITERARY PRIZES: BETWEEN CULTURAL RITUAL AND SCHOLARLY OBJECTIVIZATION

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The first part of this article offers a theoretical definition of the process of awarding literary prizes: on the level of multiple systems, at the intersection between the narrow cultural field of ritualized forms of symbolically honoring literature and literary studies; on the level of the literary system; and at the intersection between literary criticism and scholarly practice. The jury member's role in literature is shown. On the one hand, it is evident in how the roles of action in the literary system interact; on the other hand, it is situated in the field of literary processing and represented in autonomous scholarly judgments. The second part of the article deals with scholarship and the trend towards objectivization. It gives an exact description of the Kresnik Prize judging, and contains an evaluative scale that for the first time furnishes a look at the approaches to evaluating literature. The article concludes with thoughts on the process of awarding literary prizes as a relevant object of analysis in literary studies.

Key words: literary award, cultural ritual, literary studies, literary system, jury, evaluation

The process of awarding literary prizes is a cultural ritual that regulates the exchange of cultural values in a given culture—that is to say, it is symbolic, gracious gesture by which a community thanks authors for their contributions to its literary heritage. Prizes are accompanied by monetary awards, support in the form of honoraria, and the like. Verena Neumann and Burckhard Dücker, who wrote a lengthy and unique synthetic study about the process of awarding literary prizes in the context of researching cultural rituals and awards' influence on the canon, defined the bestowing of literary awards as a form of ritualized honoring of authors. Having tested various hierarchies,¹ they settled on the following parameters for prizes: tradition (i.e., continuity, for how long the prize has been awarded), the so-called spatial principle (i.e., municipal, regional, state, international, world), size of the award, performative intensity at the award ceremony, and media response (Dücker and Neumann 2005: 4, 9–11).

¹ The majority of literary prizes are named after writers, most of them male. Prizes may be linked to a particular town, city, or region where they are awarded. Awards for children's and young adult literature are a special group. There are prizes for different genres and sub-genres. Prizes differ by how people apply for the competition (e.g., the author applies or is automatically included).

Similarly to Angelika Mechtel, who sees the main function of awarding literary prizes as assuring the author's financial security² along with the public presence, publicity function for the responsible institution (Mechtel 1972: 17; Dücker and Neumann 2005: 5), Dücker and Neumann define the award process in relation to the recipient and the institution, only they speak in terms of the commemorative or memorial function. The prize also has positive resonance for the person it is named for and the place where it is given (Dücker and Neumann 2005: 12). Employing Pierre Bourdieu's theory of the literary field in connection with the awarding of literary prizes, they identify the following functions: 1) the social, which refers to supporting and honoring the author; 2) the representative, which relates to both the institution and the named award; and 3) the cultural-political, since an award promotes a language and features a region or town's cultural assets, or it reflects solicitude for genres that are recognized (Dücker and Neumann 2005: 14; Dücker 2005a).

Dictionary definitions of making awards or awarding literary prizes resemble one another and have common content. The essential components of the fundamental concept are praising the writer and the presentation and acceptance of monetary means in exchange for an intellectual accomplishment. The *Reallexikon der deutschen Literaturwissenschaft* (1997–2003) and Internet dictionaries (e.g., wissen.de, Woxikon.de) similarly distinguish prizes according to their compass—international, world, federal or state, district, local, or institutional; and the dynamics of making the award (e.g., one-time, at standard intervals). There is an emphasis on whether prizes are for individual works or bodies of works and achievements in different genres and sub-genres. The list of prestigious international literary prizes includes the Nobel Prize for Literature, the Man Booker Prize (Great Britain), the Pulitzer Prize (U.S.), the Prix Goncourt (France), the Premio Cervantes (Spain), and the Viareggio (Italy).

It is striking that the person of the writer is at the center and not the literary text. This is connected to the symbolic act of honoring, which has religious connotations. Therefore it is not surprising honoring a writer at a ceremony resembles a ritual. Harth, Ulmer, Steinicke, and Dücker (2005b: 10) speak about the public presentation event's staging, during which presenting the recipient's works and accomplishments is less essential than praising a great author. For this reason the staging or ritualization strictly defines roles. Here is the standard ordering:

- Greeting (representative 1, from the institution)
- Speech in praise (*laudatio*) (judge)

² In Slovenia, literary prizes come with honoraria.

- Congratulations (representative 2, in the presence of the recipient)
- Applause and calls (public)
- Speech of gratitude (recipient)
- Applause and calls (public)
- Concluding remarks (representative of the institution)

Two representatives are among the speakers in this “dramatic model”; the second representative belongs to those who play the ancillary role in representing the institution (e.g., the chair). It is quite interesting to note the other participants, how their roles relate, and what the role of the judge is in all of this, being far more than just a member of a media institution. Neumann and Dücker, addressing exclusively the process of making literary awards and the ritualized agenda above and not making awards in general (2005: 14), say practically nothing about the judges. They focus on the interaction between the author-recipient and the institution, leading one (mistakenly) to think that the judges are only representatives of the institution, thus narrowing the view of an otherwise varied dynamic of literary interactions in the course of the process. The process of awarding and the act of making an award are thus understood primarily in the sense of highlighting a union between the author and institution, with the author affirming the value set of the institution. In other words, the prize is recompense to the laureate for a literary achievement, and it enables the institution publicly to present its cultural-political positions (Neumann and Dücker 2005: 17–18).

However, a concept of the process based solely on the mutually beneficial relationship between the awarding institution and the prize recipient—the institution honors the awardee, who in accepting the award in turn honors the grantor—can only be recognized to a certain extent. The role of the judge, who is usually a scholar, is completely subordinate to the institution, and thereby the significance of scholarly opinion, which is in fact supposed to substantiate the decision to award a prize, is nullified. The judge’s literary role is more complicated, as can be seen with reference to the theory of the literary field (Bourdieu) and the social system of literature (established by S.J. Schmidt),³ according to which literature is understood as a form of communication interactively created by linked literary roles (production, distribution, reception, processing), the media, and literary institutions. Further, as a rule it is possible to take any of these components of the communications system as an object of literary study. The judge can be seen as a representative of the (awarding) institution most clearly when he is a full-time employee or honorary member. Among scholarly literary juries these are, for example, (cultural) journalists, essayists, members of

³ The terms “system” and “field” are used synonymously here.

cultural editorial boards, (literary and cultural) editors, and literary critics. Since they frequently have a literary studies education, their role in the process of awarding prizes must be observed in a scholarly light. Other literary scholars sit with them on juries, including researchers, university professors with a humanities background, translators, and publishers; representatives of publishing houses, organizations, societies; booksellers and, not least, literati, whose keep is with such organizations. If we assume that they, too, are but representatives of publishing houses, colleges, universities, and other cultural institutions, the literary field turns into an interesting arena of conflict.

In this case, and in view of the variety of constellations of literary roles, we must also take into account another kind of literary layering, that between the roles of jury member and literary producer or author. We can expect a close connection, reflected in a jury member's explicit preference for a candidate, when the two belong to the same artistic or social group or clique. Other extratextual qualities that the jury member ought not to take into account and that reflect various linkages are philosophical or political position, belonging to a certain generation, sex, regional affiliation, personal interests, or jury members' tastes.

If we remove the role of the jury member from the "give and take" relationship and mutually beneficial understanding between key actors (author and institution) in literary communication and rely on professional and autonomous arbitration, then the jury member's most reliable and effective position—keeping in mind the possibilities of interactions with other actors—is in the sphere of literary reception and processing⁴ of literature (*Literaturverarbeitung*). Besides readers (listeners, viewers, and Internet users), professional and semi-professional literary critics, reviewers, and professional literary historians practice this (Perenič 2010: 178–80). The quality of professionalism, which refers both to occupation and remuneration for carrying out the activity and to its value, is to some degree questionable in such kinds of writing. We are aware that its primary medium is the daily newspaper, and the possibility of subordination to individual, private interests, philosophical tendencies, and editorial demands is generally greater than in autonomous work in an academic setting.

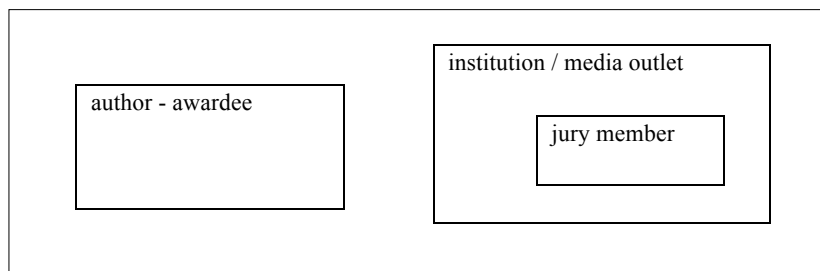
Following this line of thought, the effectiveness of a literary jury's work is foremost determined at the juncture of literary criticism and scholarly practice, where the nature of literary criticism and literary history's approach are respected, and interest in the singular and the general are joined. (The critic usually focuses on individual, new texts, while a

⁴ Unlike, Schmidt, we treat reception and processing together, since each analysis assumes reception (Perenič 2010: 178).

literary historical treatment is characterized by a developmental, processual approach.) However, in cases of distinguishing between individual literary achievements (and not entire bodies of work), the literary historian must transform into a critic in order to give an evaluation that demands acceptance of certain rules of the game. The distance between the role of the critic and that of the scholar can have a schizophrenic effect, but in practice they are in fact difficult to separate. Such an understanding of the jury member's⁵ literary role does not exclude influences of academic, cultural, media, publishing, and other institutions, in the context of which literary activities take place in an organized fashion. Neither does it exclude actors' purely individual characteristics and preferences. It is impossible to conceive of professional evaluation outside of the specific dynamic of multiple contexts (i.e., the social, cultural, economic, political, and spiritual conditions).

In figure 1, which shows the connections between the different areas of activity, it makes sense to place literary judging at the interstices between the narrow cultural sphere of ritualized communications forms for symbolically honoring literature—which judging undoubtedly is—and the sphere of more or less professional communications about literature with the intent of isolating exceptional achievements. In this way in the cultural sphere literary judging is located in the category of metaliterary treatments, which relate to literature in different ways; for example, literary readings and evenings, debates and discussions about literature, book presentations at fairs, and other artistic and cultural events, as well as in television and radio broadcasts, formal presentations of literary honoraria, various forms of cultural performances that involve literature, and literary festivals (Barsch 1995, Perenič 2010: 152, Dücker and Neumann 2005: 4, 6, 15). When we

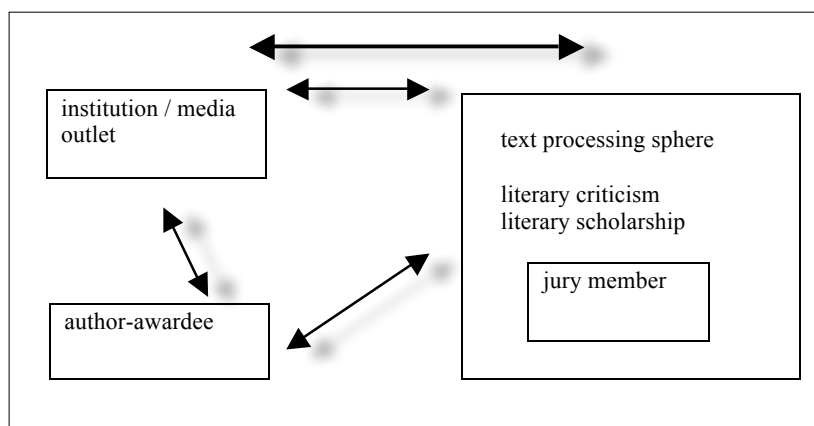
Fig. 1. The awarding of literary prizes, as analyzed according to Neumann and Dücker (2005), with the jury member's role subordinate to the (media) institution making the award.



⁵ In systems theory, roles are always conceived of at the intersection of cognitive and socio-cultural influences.

place literary judging in the professional literary sphere (figure 2), it is part of a group of metaliterary practices that result in criticism, reviews, presentations, evaluations, essayistic presentations, literary historical treatments, scholarly articles, interpretations, explications, and scholarly blogs. They can then generally be summed up as literary critical discourse or discourse on literary knowledge.

Fig. 2. The awarding of literary prizes with enhanced involvement of the jury member in the scholarly discourse of literary studies



The awarding of the Kresnik Prize for the best Slovene novel of the past year also exists in tension between cultural and literary critical and scholarly discourse. The newspaper publisher Delo has organized the prize annually since 1991. For more than ten years the event has been held at Rožnik in Ljubljana on midsummer night's eve. A combination of the jury member's cultural and scholarly roles is evident:

- The public gathers with background music and accompanied by *kresnice* torches; the Kresnik jury and five nominees arrive on the scene.
- The jury retires to the Cankar room, accompanied by *kresnice*.
- The cultural program (a conversation with the nominees and recitations, dance and vocal interludes).
- The jury emerges from sequestration accompanied by *kresnice*.
- The laureate is announced, the justification is read (*laudatio*), a wreath and check are awarded, the media outlet representative speaks, and the awardee speaks.
- The awardee departs accompanied by *kresnice*; the jury and public go to the bonfire.
- The bonfire is lit.

The scholarly jury plays an essential role in the dramatic model of awarding the Kresnik Prize. The jury members in fact orchestrate the event, appearing at all of the key moments: at the beginning, preparing the public or the action, the central part of the event, when they pretend to depart and give space for the cultural activities, but in fact provide a way to increase the dramatic tension while they are physically apart from the public yet present the entire time; and at the end, when with the announcement of the awardee they lead to the impending apogee, the lighting of the bonfire. The jury's composition up to now attests to its scholarly character. The jury members are literary critics by profession (twenty) and literary historians in academia (eleven), among whom Slovenists have been prominent in recent years, and writers (eight). In recent years there is a marked trend towards objectivization in the approach to selecting the awardee. It has notably bolstered the scholarly import of the decision.

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The second part of the article offers an exact description of the scholarly judging that is meant not only to substantiate the objectivity and scholarly nature of the selection, but also to reduce speculation linked to the prize and add to its integrity. It for the most part derives from four years of chairing the jury and reflections, which lead to recommendations for improving the jury's approach. Miran Hladnik wrote more extensively on the Kresnik Prize in 2010 and documented the prize in a Wikipedia entry.

The propositions that the jury must follow when making a selection limit its possible arbitrariness. They were written in 1997 at the newspaper publisher *Delo* and were modified in 2005 and 2012. In 2004, the prize was registered with the government of the Republic of Slovenia as intellectual property. The prize is intended for the best original Slovene novel of the past year from a Slovene publisher, one abroad, or was self-published. All novels are included as candidates, regardless of the author or publisher's desires (with the exception of novels designated as children's novels), and the selection takes place in three stages: ten novels are selected, five are nominated in the semi-final, and the winner is the final selection. The nominees are awarded points; in case of an inconclusive result, the chairman has the final word.⁶

The rules are too robust to have helped solve dilemmas that appeared in past years; for example, should novels by deceased writers be included. Novels that came out in the year a writer died are readily included (e.g., Lojze Kovačič's *Otroške reči*, in 2004, and Maruša Krese's *Da me je*

⁶ In practice, the jury does not refer to the rules a great deal. Two determiners in particular are overlooked: when the winner is chosen, the other four arguments for the winning novel are destroyed, and when the winner is announced, the "facts of the voting" are made public.

strah?, in 2013), but considering novels that appear many years after an author's death is a delicate matter, especially if they have been edited (e.g., Lojze Kovačič's *Zrele reči*, in 2010). Even more confounding is the dilemma of whether to consider novels by Slovene authors (Slovene by birth, citizenship, or another criterion) that were not written in Slovene but translated into the language. In 2010, Dušan Jelinčič translated his novel *La dama bianca di Duino* himself as *Bela dama Devinska*. (Slovene bibliographers nonetheless do not consider it an original Slovene novel.) Others translated the novels of Erica Johnson Debeljak (*Antifa cona* 2012) and Maja Haderlap (*Engel des Vergessens* 2011, *Angel pozabe* 2012) from English and German, respectively. Neither of the authors is included in Cobiss's system of remunerating authors by the volume of library lending, and their borrowing cannot be checked. Contemporary literary studies, which use the reader as a criterion for its object of study and relativizes the exclusive criterion of Slovene language, has no difficulties with such novels and supports their equal inclusion. Outside of academia, in the public sphere, the emancipation of foreign-language novels is problematic, because it collaterally encourages writing in other languages instead of in Slovene. Dilemmas caused by erroneous bibliographic classifications are less sensitive—for instance, when a novel appears and is mistakenly marked as short prose, or when a novel in verse is categorized as poetry (e.g., Feri Lainšček's *Sprehajališča za razhajanje* 2011). Novels with an official publication date the previous year are taken into consideration, even if they in fact appeared a year earlier. Novels that came out with the proper year, but with such delay that the jury could not consider them, come up the following year.

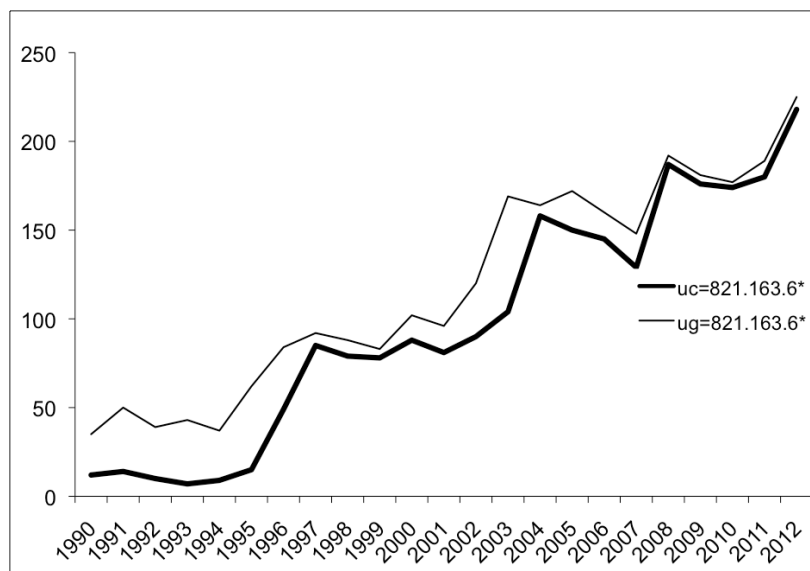
The rules do not contain a list of criteria against which the commission is to evaluate and substantiate its selection; they rely on the scholarly competence and authority of the jury members. The jury members record a series of features along with positive qualitative indicators in their rationales (e.g., ruthless frankness in describing fundamental intimate and social problems; a polyphony of perspectives; current national, ecological, and other themes; engaging motifs; marked independence; dexterity and mastery; stylistic and thematic breadth; spiritedness; authorial insights; surprising; tenseness; thoughtfulness; convincing; suggestive; reflective; help in self discernment; imaginative richness; sensitivity). But in their internal judgments they distinguish texts on the basis of negative characteristics, such as a weak linguistic image, linguistic dilettantism and superficiality, poor language or phrase mongering, stylistic pretentiousness, political messaging, naïvete or a fuzzy message, tediousness, self-satisfaction, and thematic irrelevance. Precise citations of the literary characteristics that are evaluate and evaluative scales are uncommon, as elsewhere in the world.

Among the textual features that constantly garner attention are: masterful narration (linguistic artistry), complexity and topicality of what is conveyed, polyphony of meaning, interpretability, authorial dialog with world and Slovene traditions, and suggestiveness (atmosphere, readability). All of this together leads to artistic convincingness, which cannot be measured like, for example, high school examinations, using numerical scores in given categories, but rather by the power of literary experience, then represented in a ranking of authors on a scale.

Although the scoring of novels is prescribed by a guide, the determination of nominees and winner by means of ranking seems to have taken place for the first time only in 2010. The jury member arranges the novels on a scale and scores them in such a way that the highest receives ten points (in the semi-final five), and each following author one point less, with the last one receiving one point. The means of scoring at first allowed a jury member to award the same number of points to two novels, which provided for more rating flexibility for ten or five authors. We gradually became aware that logical ranking was necessary in order to form independent opinions and force more rigorous reflection and argumentation of points of view, although it also opens the dangerous possibility of very diverging and difficult to compare rankings, and raises doubts about coincidence in evaluative judgments. Such scoring can also be misused: a prejudiced jury member could conceivably aid his favorite by assigning a competitor favored by another jury member the lowest possible point or even leave him out of the reduced group, despite the fact that he actually values the novel more. In order to avoid such behavior, the jury began to consider the additional criterion of degree of agreement among its members. The degree of agreement is measured so that a jury member who rated a novel higher or lower than the average receives a seventy-five percent reduction to his rating. If his rating is two places off the average, then a fifty-percent reduction, and so forth. If a novel receives a high number of total points on account of one jury member but not majority support, then the degree of agreement and not the sum of points would be determining.

How did the selection take place in 2013? At their first meeting, jury members Alojzija Zupan Sosič, Urška Perenič, Igor Bratož, and Miran Hladnik more or less coincidentally and uniformly set aside the first contingent of about eighty books that *Delo* had borrowed from libraries or that publishing houses had supplied. Few publishers send the jury one or more review copies. Bibliographic sources attest 130 original Slovene novels for 2012 (figure 3).

Fig. 3 Slovene novel production since 1990. The Cobiss search criteria $uc=821.163.6^*$ and $la=slv$ and $py=2012$ and *roman not diplomsko*, with variant $ug=821.163.6$, was used. It generated annual lists of novels, including reprints of the classics and novels for young people, which the jury did not consider.



At their next meeting, the jury members reported on what they had read and shared their opinions when a member was certain that a novel would not be considered. They made a list of the books that at least made a favorable impression for being literary novelties and could be of interest to others. After reviewing another two bundles of books and exchanging “promising” ones, a list of five was generated that all thought must be among the ten semi-finalists (figure 4). Three books were added to the list, supported by three members of the jury, though one (different) member of the jury did not agree with the decisions; four books had the support of half the jury. Each of the jury members wished to see an author or two who did not appeal to the others among the semi-finalists. These individual preferences (not in boldface in the list below), which lengthened the list to fifteen names, were the first to be excluded, and all eight novels that had at least three-fourths of the jury’s support became semi-finalists. Two novels had to be selected from the four that had one-half of the jury’s support. Number nine (Tomo Podstenšek’s) was easy, because it had one point more than the

others in the scoring, as was the exclusion of the lowest scorer (Zorko Simčič's). Texts ten and eleven (Stanka Hrastelj and Evald Flisar's) caused difficulties because they had an equal number of points. According to the guidelines, in such situations the chair decides. He annulled his first vote and chose Hrastelj. It was not simply a polite gesture or social (gender) correctness, but an attempt to balance out his action in a similar situation two years earlier, when he had voted for his favorite.

Fig. 4. Selection of semi-finalists, by jury members.

1	2	3	4	Pts.	Sum	Agreement	Place
Krese	Vojnovič	Vojnovič	Podstenšek	10	Vojnovič $7+10+10+9=36$	4/4	1
Hrastelj	Flisar	Sosič	Vojnovič	9	Sosič $6+7+9+6=28$	4/4	2
Babnik	Golob	Krese	Babnik	8	Krese $10+2+8+7=27$	4/4	3
Vojnovič	Sosič	Golob	Krese	7	Babnik $8+3+6+8=25$	4/4	4
Sosič	Filipčič	Babnik	Sosič	6	Filipčič $1+6+5+4=16$	4/4	5
Rezman	Rezman	Filipčič	Rezman	5	Golob $4+8+7+0=19$	3/4	6
Golob	Kleč	Dretnik	Filipčič	4	Rezman $5+5+0+5=15$	3/4	7
Podstenšek	Babnik	Flisar	Hrastelj	3	Kleč $0+4+1+2=7$	3/4	8
Frančič	Krese	Rozina	Kleč	2	Podstenšek $3+0+0+10=13$	2/4	9
Filipčič	Simčič	Kleč	Simčič	1	Hrastelj $9+0+0+3=12$	2/4	10
					Flisar $0+9+3+0=12$	2/4	11
					Simčič $0+1+0+1=2$	2/4	13
					Dretnik $0+0+4+0=4$	1/4	12
					Frančič $2+0+0+0=2$	1/4	14
					Rozina $0+0+2+0=2$	1/4	15

The jury made its list of ten novels public, in alphabetical order:⁷

Sušna doba, by Gabriela Babnik

Mojstrovka, by Emil Filipčič

Raclette, by **Borut Golob**,

Igranje, by Stanka Hrastelj

Trojke, by Milan Kleč

Da me je strah?, by **Maruša Krese**

Sodba v imenu ljudstva: Roman, by Tomo Podstenšek

Zahod jame, by **Peter Rezman**

Ki od daleč prihajaš v mojo bližino, **Marko Sosič**

Jugoslavija, moja dežela, by **Goran Vojnović**

The selection of the final five novels took place the same way: no one novel received one hundred-percent support. Nonetheless, the choice was simple, because exactly five texts had seventy-five-percent support. Babnik's novel, which had the same number of points as Golob's fifth-place novel, was excluded: it had only two votes for the final five. Filipčič's novel had one more point than Golob's, but only one jurist voted for it. The fate of Filipčič's novel became apparent in the quarter final, when it received three fewer points than Golob's (figure 5).

Fig. 5. Selection of the five finalists, by jury member.

	1	2	3	4	5	
1	Krese 10	Vojnović 10	Vojnović 10	Podstenšek 10	Sosič 30	3/4
2	Hrastelj 9	Filipčič 9	Sosič 9	Rezman 9	Vojnović 29	3/4
3	Sosič 8	Sosič 8	Krese 8	Krese 8	Krese 27	3/4
4	Rezman 7	Golob 7	Golob 7	Vojnović 7	Rezman 25	3/4
5	Golob 6	Rezman 6	Babnik 6	Babnik 6	Golob 21	3/4
6	Babnik 5	Kleč 5	Filipčič 5	Sosič 5	Babnik 21	2/4
7	Filipčič 4	Babnik 4	Kleč 4	Filipčič 4	Filipčič 22	1/4
8	Kleč 3	Podstenšek 3	Rezman 3	Hrastelj 3	Hrastelj 16	1/4
9	Vojnović 2	Hrastelj 2	Hrastelj 2	Kleč 2	Podstenšek 15	1/4
10	Podstenšek 1	Krese 1	Podstenšek 1	Golob 1	Kleč 14	0/4

After the voting for the final five, we might have predicted that at Rožnik Sosič's and Vojnović's novel would compete because they had the same number of points and would even have had the same rate of agreement (62.5%) on first place. We could likewise have predicted Vojnović's

⁷ The novels that made the final five are in bold.

victory, since agreement on second place for Sosič's novel (88%) was double that for Vojnovič (44%). At Rožnik, two jury members changed the order of their preferences, both returning to their original ranking of the semi-finalists. This increased the point spread and eased the final decision. Three of four votes strengthened the agreement. The change in places made the jury members feel better because of the increased (now one-half) agreement on the last places; as it was, one-half of the jury members would have agreed only on three of five novels.

The average agreement between jury members was a relatively high seventy-six percent. Seventy-five percent were in agreement about the winner, and eighty-one percent on the second- and third-place novels by Sosič in Krese. There was least agreement on Rezman's fifth-place novel (figure 6).

Fig. 6. Selection of the winner, by jury member

	1	2	3	4	Total pts.	
1	Krese 5	Vojnovič 5	Vojnovič 5	Vojnovič 5	Vojnovič 16	3/4 for 1 st place
2	Sosič 4	Golob 4	Sosič 4	Rezman 4	Sosič 13	2/4 for 2 nd place
3	Rezman 3	Sosič 3	Krese 3	Krese 3	Krese 13	2/4 for 3 rd place
4	Golob 2	Krese 2	Golob 2	Sosič 2	Golob 9	2/4 for 4 th place
5	Vojnovič 1	Rezman 1	Rezman 1	Golob 1	Rezman 9	2/4 for 5 th place

The original "coalitions" that jurists formed around individual works are apparent in figure 7. Jury members 1 and 3 were most united on Sosič in Golob's novels, members 3 and 4 on Krese's, 3 and 2 on Rezman's, and all but member 1 on Vojnovič's. Member 3 was concurred most with others, and thus his ranking was identical to the final result (figure 7).

Fig. 7. Agreement on selection, by jury member

	1	2	3	4	Agreement (%)
1	Krese 50	Vojnovič 100	Vojnovič 100	Vojnovič 100	Vojnovič 300:4=75 %
2	Sosič 100	Golob 50	Sosič 100	Rezman 25	Sosič 325:4=81%
3	Rezman 50	Sosič 75	Krese 100	Krese 100	Krese 325:4=81%
4	Golob 100	Krese 75	Golob 100	Sosič 50	Golob 300:4=75%
5	Vojnovič 0	Rezman 100	Rezman 100	Golob 50	Rezman 275:4=69%
	300:5=60%	400:5=80%	500:5=100%	325:5=65%	381:5 ali 305:4=76%

Although in the future it will likely be impossible to avoid objections to and polemics over the criteria the jury adheres to,⁸ heightened transparency is a good indicator of autonomous scholarly decision-making. It turned out that scholarly readers' evaluations correspond more than we expected. The jury arrived at a very credible evaluation by trying to formalize evaluative criteria, by enhancing jurists' autonomy, quantifying evaluations, and neutralizing divergent ones. Success would be even greater were texts anonymous and the number of jurors were increased and made more diverse (according to sex, generation, education, occupation, civic involvement, philosophy, etc.); however, logistical and financial reasons and conditions dictated by the newspaper publisher make such changes unfeasible.

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The jury's materials, which came out of the process of selecting novels, are documents for empirical research into the process of making literary awards, a quite underdeveloped area of literary studies. Those interested can search out the jury's arguments, which have been published in whole or in part in the print media, but it is rather unusual for voting results to be published. The tables with rankings are in this regard welcome material for analyzing approaches to literary evaluation, because they offer insights into the stages of selecting the novels. Also of relevance are individual reports containing opinions, evaluations, commentaries, any diaries or notes of jury members, the minutes of the jury's meetings and discussions, as well as other scholarly or journalistic responses in newspapers or on radio and television, as they follow the selection; and not least, Internet publications.

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⁸ In 2012, the prize founder, Vlado Žabot, expressed concern about the criteria the jury was using (*Kdo zatira najboljše romane?* *SlovLit* 4, 12, and 30 June 2012). He protested the purported emphasis on novels' readability and demand for a contemporary topic. The supposition that the jury favors contemporary topics over historical ones is based on an erroneous interpretation of the criterion "relevance of a topic" with "contemporary theme." This does not imply discrimination against historical topics, but is recognition of a writer's choice of a topic that is relevant to readers—that is, important in their lives, something that conforms with the understanding of the novel as a genre that narrates life in its social and psychological complexity. The poet Ivo Svetina expresses his unsubstantiated dismay with the selection at the award presentation at Rožnik in June 2013.

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POVZETEK**LITERARNO NAGRAJEVANJE MED KULTURNIM RITUALOM
IN STROKOVNO OBJEKTIVIZACIJO**

Prvi del razprave se ukvarja z osrednjim pojmom literarnega nagrajevanja, ki je opredeljeno v več smereh. Po eni strani gre za ritualizirano komunikacijsko obliko simbolnega čaščenja literature, s čimer se znajde v skupini z drugimi metaliterarnimi ravnanji, kakor so literarna branja in večeri, debate in razgovori o literaturi, predstavitve knjig na knjižnih sejmih in drugih umetniško-kulturnih dogodkih ali v okviru radijskih in televizijskih oddaj, slavnostne podelitve literarnih štipendij, razne oblike kulturnih performansov, v katere je vključena literatura, literarni festivali itd. Po drugi strani pa je literarno nagrajevanje v domeni literarnokritičnega diskurza in diskurza literarne znanosti.

Kombinacija kulturniške in strokovne dimenzije nagrajevanja je prikazana na primeru literarne vloge žiranta. Ob naslonitvi na koncepcijo literarnega žiriranja, kakor sta jo podala Verena Neumann in Burchardt Dücker (2005), je žiriranje pojmovano predvsem v duhu vzpostavitev sporazumnega odnosa med avtorjem in inštitucijo. Po takšnem naziranju je žirant povsem podrejen ustanovi in izničen je pomen strokovnega mnenja, na katerem naj bi bila dejansko utemeljena odločitev za podelitev nagrade. Ker je žirant praviloma iz vrst strokovnjakov, je v nadaljevanju podana opredelitev vloge žiranta, ki gradi na profesionalnosti in avtonomnosti presoje. Zato je najtrdnjša delovalniška pozicija žiranta – z nespregledljivo možnostjo interakcij z drugimi akterji – na ravni literarnega sprejemanja in obdelovanja oz. procesiranja literature (ang. text processing, nem. Literaturverarbeitung), kamor poleg bralcev (poslušalcev, gledalcev in uporabnikov spletnih aplikacij) spadajo profesionalni in polprofesionalni literarni kritiki, recenzenti in poklicni literarni zgodovinarji (Perenič 2010: 178–80). Strokovna vloga žiranta je ilustrirana na primeru »dramaturškega modela« nagrade kresnik za najboljši slovenski roman minulega leta, ki se pod okriljem časopisne hiše Delo dogaja od leta 1991.

Razen sestave žirije v prid njene strokovnosti govori trend objektivizacije v postopku izbiranja nagrajenca. Drugi del razprave prinaša natančen popis kresnikovega žiriranja, ki izhaja največ iz izkušnje štiriletnega predsedovanja žiriji in refleksije, ki je pripeljala do predlogov za izboljšanje žirantskih postopkov. Razkrite so ocenjevalne lestvice, ki prvič doslej ponujajo vpogled v postopke literarnega ocenjevanja in v etape odbiranja romanov. Razpravo zaključuje premislek o literarnem nagrajevanju kot relevantnem predmetu literarne vede.