

“WE DON’T NEED ANOTHER HERO!” THE IMPORTANCE OF CELEBRITIES IN THE POST-TRUTH ERA

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The article presents and compares the rise of two self-made politicians, Donald Trump in the US and Ivan Kramberger of Slovenia. Their presidential candidacies were based of their fame and fortune, rather than on the basis of their political experience. The author notes that the self-promotion strategies, utilised by Trump and Kramberger, are not used only politicians, but also by other outstanding individuals who take care of their own popularity with pseudo-events, spread through the media and online networks.

Keywords: Donald Trump, Ivan Kramberger, celebrities, politics, pseudo-events

Prispevek predstavi in primerja vzpon dveh samoniklih politikov, Donald Trumpa v ZDA in Ivana Krambergerja v Sloveniji. Oba sta za predsednika države kandidirala na temeljih svoje slave in bogastva, namesto na podlagi političnih izkušenj. Avtor ugotavlja, da podobnih strategij samouprizarjanja kot Trump in Kramberger ne uporabljajo le politiki, temveč tudi drugi izstopajoči posamezniki, ki skrbijo za lastno priljubljenost s psevdo-dogodki, ki jih širijo po medijih in spletnih omrežjih.

Ključne besede: Donald Trump, Ivan Kramberger, slavne osebe, politika, psevdo-dogodki

Even if it is not true, it is well conceived.

– Giordano Bruno (1548–1600)

“Post-truth” is a neologism denoting the circumstances in which verifiable facts are less important for shaping public opinion than an appeal to emotions and personal beliefs. It has grown so important recently that Oxford Dictionaries, a respected institution that records and reifies contemporary language, declared it Word of the Year 2016.¹ Of course it is no coincidence that the very same year in which “post-truth” ended up on the lexicographic throne the US presidential election was won by Donald Trump, a billionaire and real-estate mogul famous not only for his wealth, but also and primarily for his role on the TV reality show *The Apprentice* and especially for his catchphrase “You’re fired!” Trump’s rise to the leading US political position and an exceptionally important position globally seemed nearly unimaginable before the election: the media predicted a clear victory by his political opponent. However, what happened was not really anticipated by any of the leading analysts: the people elected a self-aggrandizer, whom many also consider egotistical and a womanizer. The victory went to a man that would step up to the podium without a prepared speech, yet still manage to persuade his audience by repeating shallow but catchy phrases, and by presenting seemingly persuasive information that changed from one appearance to the next and was adapted to the atmosphere in the hall and the current

¹ A similar expression, *postfaktisch* ‘post-fact’, was declared Word of the Year 2016 by the German Language Society (GfDS).

social situation. A famous, wealthy individual ended up winning the presidency, one that managed to use both his words and appearance (including his baseball cap perched on top of his characteristic hairdo) to convince voters that he was a normal guy, too, even though he lives in a luxury apartment in the middle of Manhattan and flies around the world in a private jet. The winning candidate was despised by the media and set up his own public space using online social media, especially Twitter, and won voters without proper support from the established media.

Is such a presidential candidate just part of the actualization of the “American dream” as a fairly indefinite set of conceptions about how anyone, even a beggar, has the potential and opportunity to succeed, become rich and famous, and even become the leader of a country? Maybe the “dream” part is right, but not the “American” part. Similar candidates can also be increasingly found in other countries as well, and even Slovenia had the chance to listen to one and get to know him during its first democratic election in 1990—that is, right before the breakup of Yugoslavia. The presidential candidate presenting himself on the speaker’s podium as “the father of the Slovenian nation” was Ivan Kramberger. During the 1980s, this man returned home from Germany, where he was said to have made quite a fortune by patenting a special type of a dialysis machine. He crossed the threshold of his homeland with the nickname “the good man from Negova”; this was what he called himself, and the nickname also caught on among the people. He traveled around Slovenia in a refurbished vintage Bugatti, accompanied by his monkey Ančka, selling books that he wrote and printed extremely quickly and entertaining people with his speeches. People remembered him for his broad-brimmed hat, black coat, long hair, and, first and foremost, for making people roar with laughter during his speeches. When he decided to run for president of the emerging state, he used the same approach as for his book presentations. As he explained in his pre-election speech in Sevnica, which is also available on YouTube,² he decided to run for this position in order “to fight for the farmers, working people, elderly, disabled, and children.” He said that nobody else would fight for them as fiercely as “Kramberger, who grew up on a farm, was a street-cleaner in Germany, went through a lot in his life, became a dialysis specialist in Europe, and then also wrote eight books in just one year.” (He often referred to himself in the third-person singular.) He tried to persuade the hundreds of people in the audience by listing unusual statistical data; for example, that Yugoslavia earmarked 40 or even 45% of its budget for defense and only 2% for healthcare, adding the following: “Look, there is money available for killing people, but none for saving them or for a better future.” As he said on the improvised stage, he felt very sad reading “communist newspapers” (which he implied also included *Delo*), which presented him in the worst possible way in the photos: disheveled and thus seemingly incapable of running the country. He believed that all of this was part of a communist plot against him, the main purpose of which was to ensure that “workers, farmers, and

² See <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=uesjhBnjFWM>.

the poor” would not win. In the end, Kramberger did not attain the presidency, but he nonetheless received nearly one-fifth of all the votes, which was a miracle considering that he was an independent politician without support from the social and economic elites. He continued to be politically active after the election and two years later he announced that he did not plan to run for president again, but that he was going to take part in the parliamentary election with his own party. However, his campaign ended tragically even before it officially started: in June 1992, Kramberger was shot while giving a speech in Jurovski Dol. Following a short investigation, the alleged perpetrator (a drunk local) was arrested and sentenced to prison. Soon after the attack, rumors started spreading about his politically motivated “liquidation” because this newcomer to the political scene was a thorn in the side of other, more established politicians and influential individuals. It is interesting that, nearly a quarter-century after his death, Kramberger remains in the Slovenian social consciousness primarily as “a good man” that looked out for the poor, whereas only rarely has he been treated as a controversial personality constantly seeking a balance between illusion and facts, or between lies and the truth (this perspective is presented by Niedorfer 1990). Precisely because of this ambivalence, he became and has remained a conspicuous figure in Slovenian politics and also the first (and certainly not the last) celebrity candidate for an important political position in independent Slovenia.

Would Kramberger have won the election today? We will never find out. However, his campaign would probably rely on self-promotional approaches similar to those used by Donald Trump, including a constant presence on social media. Even before the election, Kramberger made a considerable effort to stir people to write and talk about him. He frequently wrote letters to the editor, announced his return from Germany in advance, and described his good deeds: the number of dialysis machines and medicines he donated to Slovenians and the financial support he provided to them. Within this context, this excerpt from an interview with Srečko Lukovnjak Kramberger, who worked for Ivan Kramberger and even took his last name, is very informative:³ “He always wanted to be in the newspapers because he loved to be in the spotlight. If the media don’t look for you, you have to look for them yourself. If he happened not to be featured in a newspaper in a given week, his friends and relatives would write letters to the editor using fake names or most often signed ‘Anon. from Ljubljana’” (Zadravec 2011: 30). He continued by explaining how Kramberger helped spread additional rumors about himself: driving from Radenci to Maribor, they would buy up all the newspapers covering “the good man from Negova” at the newsstands along the way. And then the next day the newspapers again reported that they had sold out due to their articles on the famous philanthropist.

Similar self-staging strategies are used today not only by self-proclaimed politicians, but also other “instant celebrities” (Podjed 2012), who boost their popularity and media

³ He adopted Kramberger’s last name partly because he admired him and partly, as he explained in the interview, because Ivan Kramberger advised him to do so himself.

presence with pseudo-events, which they create and promote on the internet themselves. In his book *The Image: A Guide to Pseudo-Events in America*, published in 1962, the US historian Daniel J. Boorstin—somewhat tautologically, but nonetheless completely appropriately—described such individuals as people that are primarily known for their well-knownness. Their “character and actions” were discussed at the international symposium *Put a Spotlight on Me! The Meaning of Celebrities in Central and Southeastern Europe*, which was hosted in 2015 by the ZRC SAZU Institute of Slovenian Ethnology and the University of Ljubljana’s Faculty of Arts and formed the starting point for this issue of *Traditiones*. At this event, the presenters focused not only on politicians such as Kramberger and Trump, but also current and previous CEOs and economists that have to constantly nurture their public image. They elucidated the image and activities of pop-culture figures from various angles; for example, musicians and actors, who appear at important public events and enhance their fame by staging pseudo-events. They also analyzed the fame of athletes, whom people applaud when they stand on the podium with a medal around their neck and ridicule when they fail to win the podium—or tipsily fall off of it.

At the Ljubljana symposium, presenters also discussed the fact that the social role and public image of these famous individuals are increasingly interconnected. Heroic acts no longer emerge following the canon that the comparative mythologist James Campbell (2004) described as a self-contained “monomyth.” If individuals followed the path of a monomyth, they would leave their community and face perils in a foreign place, far away from home, where they would become seasoned. Only then would they return to their people and tell them about the horrors they had experienced. Then the community would recognize and glorify them as exceptional individuals or heroes. However, modern self-proclaimed heroes no longer go anywhere because they simply do not have time for that. Instead, they create events in the safe havens of their homes, write provocative tweets, formulate resonant Facebook messages, and post their photos on Instagram to highlight their social importance.

One of the speakers at this symposium was Ivan Čolović (2016), editor for the prominent Serbian publisher XX Vek. In his article, which also appears in this issue of *Traditiones*, he critiqued individuals that skillfully use political crises and wars in order to enhance their own fame. Specifically, such critical situations provide an excellent opportunity for certain ambitious people from the bottom of the social ladder to climb to the top. During the Yugoslav Wars this was exploited by criminals, for example, who skillfully used the uncertain and liminal conditions to strengthen their privileged social status, either as politicians, artists, soccer fan leaders, or war heroes in general, who made decisions regarding Serbian politics and social and economic life in the country.

Tomislav Pletenac (2016) illustrates Čolović’s story with the concrete example of the Croatian musician Mark Perković Thompson, presenting his path from a fighter and war hero, who joined the Croatian National Guard immediately after the armed conflict started in Croatia in 1991, to a singer that uses patriotic tunes and references to past and current

heroic acts by the Croatian people to fill stadiums. As Pletenac explains, Thompson has managed to create a myth about himself as an everyman that has a bit of talent and sense for music, but that became a music star more by coincidence than anything else. Thompson distinguishes himself from the stars that appear on various TV talent shows by the fact that he managed to use the war in the former Yugoslavia to create his own reality show, in which he himself ended up in the spotlight.

Peter Simonič (2016) directs attention to those individuals that put other celebrities in the spotlight and at the same time often ended up under one themselves as the main representatives of Slovenian cultural institutions. For example, the Cankar Center in Ljubljana was personified by its long-standing director, Mitja Rotovnik, the Ljubljana Festival is represented by its director Darko Brlek, and Vladimir Rukavina has become the symbol of the Lent Festival in Maribor. Among these three “rulers” of cultural institutions, Simonič focuses on Rukavina, explaining that the success of an exceptional individual largely relies on a network of people that support him both financially and morally, and help him rise higher and higher.

In his article, Božidar Jezernik (2016) presents the role of great men in Slovenia during the nineteenth century (i.e., during the period of national awakening), explaining that even at that time exceptional individuals did not come to the fore on their own, but with the help of various social factors and groups that fought for their own predominance. These groups put certain individuals, such as the poets Valentin Vodnik and Janez Vesel (a.k.a. Jovan Koseski), on a pedestal for a while, until the central nation-building position was assumed by France Prešeren, again with the support of a specific group of people with their own political interests.

Sara Špelec (2016) demonstrates the power of the media to create fame, using the example of King Alexander I of Yugoslavia. The review of the leading Slovenian newspapers shows how his image changed from 1918, when he became prince regent, through 1921, when he became the king of the Kingdom of the Serbs, Croats, and Slovenes, and the 1929 introduction of dictatorship, to 1934, when he was assassinated in Marseilles. Špelec explains that the king’s media image completely overshadowed the real ruler and perhaps even obliterated his actual character.

Josip Broz Tito’s image also gradually became distorted in a similar way. This is discussed by Lada Stevanović (2016), who describes the cult of personality of the leader of Yugoslavia, established based on real and fictitious acts of heroism, using the example of Tito’s magnificent funeral in 1980 and his mausoleum. At first, this mausoleum served as a kind of pilgrimage center and later on it became a popular tourist attraction in Belgrade, where one can buy coasters and key fobs with Tito’s portrait, among other things. Since his funeral, Tito has transformed from a national hero and a firm anchorage of the former state into a pop icon that is becoming increasingly semantically empty.

A nation-building role can be played not only by a famous individual, but also a group, such as a soccer team. Ivan Đorđević (2016) elucidates the foundation and importance of

the Belgrade football club *Crvena zvezda* and describes the social, political, and historical processes that led this club to become a national symbol and also the “pillar of Serbdom” when Yugoslavia began to break up.

Tatiana Bajuk Senčar (2016) presents the typology of famous economists and describes the characteristics and roles of this specific group of celebrities, who operate at the national and international level. She pays special attention to four prominent personalities: Irving Fisher, Paul Krugman, Jeffrey Sachs, and Yanis Varoufakis. According to Bajuk Senčar, celebrity economists are ambiguous and controversial social actors, whose public image is presented in a variety of ways. Regardless of how they are presented by the media, their actions and words can have far-reaching consequences.

Songs, too, can have far-reaching impact, such as the *sevdalinka* discussed by Miha Kozorog and Alenka Bartulović (2016). They describe how both the individuals that sing songs and the discourses connected with them are constitutive for the musical genre on the one hand and for the political efforts in Bosnia-Herzegovina on the other. The authors focus on both the individuals and discourses (both nationalist and anti-nationalist) that accompany the *sevdalinka* and give it a special social meaning.

Janusz Baranski (2016) moves away from the present and focuses on the semi-legendary hero Juraj Jánošík, a Robin Hood character from Polish and Slovak folk tales and songs, who was a real person that lived at the end of the seventeenth century and the beginning of the eighteenth century and allegedly stole from the rich to help the poor. Jánošík functions almost exclusively as a mythological hero that transcends the national ethos and borders, and is embedded in the wider social network. In this way, he both unites and divides Poles and Slovaks because both want to claim him as their own.

Vanja Huzjan (2016) argues that heroes are in fact nothing special: in principle, every individual could become a hero, which means this is something that happens completely randomly. Or not. According to the author, who bases her arguments on Freudian psychoanalysis, potential heroes may also be special because many of them are narcissistic personalities. This could be connected with their childhood, in which one can often follow a type of a Campbellian monomyth: from a childhood trauma (separation), life trials, and sacrifice for the Ordeal (initiation), to a symbolic death or rebirth (return). The author explains how their personality structure is not passive and introverted, but rather makes an effort to be seen because it feeds on the attention from others. At that point, the media of course come to their aid, putting the potential heroes under the spotlight, where their public image can shine to the fullest.

Presidents, prime ministers, and the like occupy a special place among heroes and celebrities. They are special in many ways; for example, based on the fact that their privileged position, which they achieved through a general or parliamentary election, already places them at the center of public discourses. This allows them—and at the same time demands of them—that they express their opinion on a broad range of topics, events, and other issues. A previously “ordinary” individual suddenly becomes a central figure that determines which

topics take priority and which are secondary, which discourses are politically correct, and so on. The main focus of Saša Babič's and Jurij Fikfak's article (2016) is on the analysis of conceptual metaphors in the speeches of four Slovenian presidents and selected leaders of other countries during various rituals, especially those involving state-building.

While reading the article by Vanja Huzjan in this issue of *Traditiones*, you may recall Tina Turner's song from the mid-1980s with the chorus: "We don't need another hero!" It seems this chorus has materialized in an unusual way: we may in fact no longer need real heroes because there are more than enough celebrities available to blind us with their glamour during the post-truth era; this, however, is merely a reflection from the spotlights that the traditional media have been providing for a long time and the online media in more recent times. With all of this glamour, real heroism almost completely fades away.

“NE POTREBUJEMO ŠE ENEGA JUNAKA!”
POMEN SLAVNIH OSEBNOSTI V ČASU PORESZNICE

*Če ni resnično, je pa zelo dobro izmišljeno.
Giordano Bruno (1548-1600)*

“Poresznica” (angl. *post-truth*) je novonastala beseda, ki označuje okoliščine, v katerih so preverljiva dejstva manj pomembna pri oblikovanju javnega mnenja kot apeliranje na čustva in osebna prepričanja. V kratkem času je postala tako pomembna, da so jo v Oxfordskih slovarjih, ugledni instituciji, ki beleži in sooblikuje sodobni jezik, razglasili za mednarodno besedo leta 2016.⁴ Seveda ni naključje, da se je v ZDA prav v letu, ko se je poresznica znašla na slovarskem prestolu, na predsedniško mesto povzpел Donald Trump, milijarder in lastnik številnih nepremičnin, ki je bolj kot z bogastvom zaslovel z nastopi v resničnostnem šovu *Vajenec (The Apprentice)* in posebej s frazo iz te oddaje: »Odpuščen si!« Trumpov vzpon na vodilni politični položaj v ZDA in izjemno pomembno pozicijo na svetovni ravni se je pred volitvami zdel skoraj utopičen – mediji so namreč napovedovali gladko zmago njegovi politični nasprotnici. Zgodilo pa se je tisto, česar skoraj nihče od vodilnih analitikov ni zares verjel: izvoljen je bil nastopač, ki ga mnogi predstavljajo še kot samovšečneža in ženskarja. Zmagal je človek, ki je stopil na oder brez vnaprej pripravljenega govora in uspel prepričati občinstvo s ponavljanjem plehkkih, a všečnih fraz in predstavljanjem navidezno prepričljivih podatkov, ki so se od nastopa do nastopa spreminjali in se prilagajali vzdušju v dvorani in situaciji v družbi. Na predsedniškem položaju se je znašel slavni in bogati posameznik, ki je tako z besedami kot pojavnostjo – vključno z bejzbolsko čepico, poveznjeno čez značilno pričesko – znal prepričati volivce, da je slehernik, čeprav živi v razkošnem stanovanju sredi Manhattna in se po svetu prevaža v zasebnem letalu. Zmagal je kandidat, ki so ga mediji prezirali, sam pa je vzpostavil lasten javni prostor s pomočjo spletnih družbenih omrežij, predvsem Twitterja, in pridobil volivce brez prave podpore etabliranih medijev.

Je takšen predsedniški kandidat zgolj del udejanjenja *ameriškega sna* kot precej nedoločena skupka predstav o tem, kako ima vsak – celo revež – možnost in priložnost, da uspe, obogati, zaslovi in celo postane vodja države? Del *sna* morda res, *ameriškega* pa niti ne. Podobne kandidate vse bolj pogosto vidimo tudi v drugih državah, enega od njih pa smo imeli priložnost slišati in spoznati tudi v Sloveniji, in sicer na prvih demokratičnih volitvah leta 1990, torej tik pred razpadom nekdanje Socialistične federativne republike Jugoslavije (SFRJ). Kandidat, ki se je na govorniškem odru predstavljal za »očeta slovenskega naroda«, je bil Ivan Kramberger. V osemdesetih letih prejšnjega stoletja se je možakar vrnil iz Nemčije, kjer naj bi si prislužil izjemno premoženje s patentiranjem vrste dializnega aparata, ter prestopil prag domovine z vzdevkom »dobri človek iz Negove«, kot se je poimenoval kar

⁴ Podoben izraz, namreč pofaktičen (nem. *postfaktisch*), so kot besedo leta 2016 razglasili tudi pri Združenju za nemški jezik (GfDS).

sam, poimenovanje pa se je prijelo med ljudmi. Po Sloveniji se je prevažal v predelanem starodobniku znamke bugatti, prodajal knjige, ki jih je pisal in tiskal v izjemno hitrem tempu, ter zabaval občinstvo z govori, med katerimi ga je spremljala opica Ančka. Ljudje so si ga zapomnili po širokokrajnem klobuku, črnem plašču in dolgih laseh, predvsem pa po plazovih smeha, ki jih je znal sprožiti med svojimi govori. Enak pristop kot med predstavitvami svojih knjig je ubral, ko se je odločil postati predsednik nastajajoče države. Kot je pojasnil med predvolilnim govorom v Sevnici, ki je na ogled na portalu YouTube,⁵ je kandidiral, »da bi se boril za kmeta, za delovnega človeka, za starega človeka, za invalide, za otroke«. Po njegovih besedah se nihče drug ne bo boril zanje tako kot »Kramberger, ki je v štali gor rasel, ki je v Nemčiji ulice čistil, ki je skozi življenje dal in postal strokovnjak za dializo v Evropi in potem tudi osem knjig napisal v enem letu.« (O sebi je pogosto govoril v tretji osebi ednine.) Večstoglavo občinstvo je prepričeval z nenavadnimi statističnimi podatki, denimo da namenja SFRJ 40 ali celo 45 odstotkov proračuna za obrambo, za zdravstvo pa samo 2 odstotka, ob čemer je pribil: »Poglejte, za človeka ubiti je denar, za človeka rešiti, za boljšo bodočnost pa ni denarja.« Kot je povedal na improviziranem odru, mu je bilo zelo hudo, ko je bral »komunistične cajt'nge«, med katere naj bi sodilo tudi Delo, saj so ga na fotografijah prikazali v najslabši podobi, skuštranega in zato navidezno nesposobnega, da vodi narod. Vse to naj bi bil po njegovem del komunistične zarote, katere glavni namen je bil, da ne bi zmagali »delovni ljudje, kmetje, reveži«. Krambergerju se vzpon na predsedniški položaj sicer ni posrečil, je pa na volitvah prejel skoraj petino glasov, kar je bil čudež za političnega samorastnika brez podpore družbenih in gospodarskih elit. Tudi po predsedniških volitvah ni odnehal s političnim udejstvovanjem. Dve leti kasneje je sporočil, da ne namerava znova kandidirati za predsednika, temveč da se bo namesto tega s svojo stranko podal na državnozbornske volitve. Še pred uradnim začetkom se je njegova volilne kampanja nesrečno končala. Junija 1992 so Krambergerja ustrelili v Jurovskem dolu, in to na govorniškem odru. Domnevnega storilca – pijanega vaščana – so aretirali po hitro opravljeni preiskavi in ga obsodili na zaporno kazen. Takoj po napadu so se začele širiti govorice o politično motivirani »odstranitvi«, saj naj bi bil novinec na političnem prizorišču trn v peti drugim, bolj uveljavljenim politikom in vplivnežem. Zanimivo je, da se je Kramberger v družbeni zavesti Slovencev skoraj četr stoletja po smrti obdržal predvsem kot »dobri človek«, ki je poskrbel za revne, le redko pa se ga je obravnavalo kot kontroverzna osebnost, ki je ves čas lovila ravnotežje med utvaro in dejstvi, med lažjo in resnico (tovrstno perspektivo predstavlja Niedorfer 1990). Ravno zaradi te ambivalentnosti je postal in ostal izstopajoča osebnost v slovenski politiki in tudi prvi (nikakor pa ne zadnji) zvezdniški kandidat za pomembno politično pozicijo v samostojni Sloveniji.

Bi Kramberger v današnjem času na volitvah zmagal? Tega ne bomo nikoli izvedeli. Lahko pa domnevamo, da bi se v svoji kampanji oprl na podobne samopromocijske pristope kot Donald Trump, vključno z nenehno prisotnostjo na spletnih družbenih omrežjih. Že

⁵ <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=uesjhBnjFWM>

pred volitvami se je Kramberger namreč trudil, da bi se o njem čim več pisalo in govorilo. Redno se je oglašal v rubrikah s pismi bralcev ter najprej najavil vrnitev iz Nemčije, nato pa opisoval svoja dobra dejanja: koliko dializnih aparatov in zdravil je razdelil Slovencem ter kako jim je finančno pomagal. V tem kontekstu je poveden odlomek iz intervjuja s Srečkom Lukovnjakom Krambergerjem, ki je delal pri Ivanu Krambergerju in po njem celo prevzel priimek:⁶ »Vedno je želel, da se piše o njem, ker je imel rad pozornost. Če mediji ne iščejo tebe, moraš ti poiskati medije. Če kak teden v časopisih o njem ni bilo kaj napisano, smo pisali njegovi ožji in se podpisovali z izmišljenim imenom osebe, največkrat neznane osebe iz Ljubljane, za objavo v pismih bralcev.« (Zadravec 2011: 30) Nato je pojasnil še, kako je Kramberger dodatno podpival širjenje novic o sebi: na poti z avtomobilov od Radencev do Maribora sta v kioskih ob poti namreč pokupila vse izvode časopisov, v katerih je pisalo o »dobrem človeku iz Negove«. Naslednji dan pa so časopisi znova poročali, da je zaradi objav o slavnem dobrotniku zmanjkalo časopisov.

Podobnih strategij samouprizarjanja v sodobnem času ne uporabljajo le samooklicani politiki, temveč tudi drugi »instant zvezdniki« (Podjed 2012), ki skrbijo za lastno priljubljenost in medijsko pozornost s psevdo-dogodki – te pa ustvarijo in po spletu razširijo kar sami. Ameriški zgodovinar Daniel J. Boorstin je v delu *The Image: A Guide to Pseudo-events in America* (Podoba: Vodnik po psevdo-dogodkih v Ameriki), ki je prvič izšlo leta 1962, nekoliko tavitološko, a povsem korektno predstavil takšne posameznike in posameznice kot ljudi, ki so poznani in prepoznavni predvsem zaradi svoje slave (angl. *known for his well-knownness*). Njihovemu »liku in delu« so se posvetili na mednarodnem simpoziju z naslovom *Osvetlite me z žarometi! Pomen slavnih oseb v Srednji in Jugovzhodni Evropi*, ki je bil izhodišče pričujoče številke *Traditiones* in ki sta ga leta 2015 v Ljubljani sopriredila Inštitut za slovensko narodopisje Znanstvenoraziskovalnega centra Slovenske akademije znanosti in umetnosti ter Filozofska fakulteta Univerze v Ljubljani. Na dogodku se predavateljice in predavatelji niso posvetili le politikom, kakršna sta Kramberger in Trump, temveč tudi sodobnim in preteklim direktorjem in ekonomistom pa tudi znanstvenikom, ki morajo nenehno loščiti svojo javno podobo. Z različnih smeri so skušali osvetliti podobo in dejavnosti kulturnikov, na primer glasbenikov in igralcev, ki se pojavljajo na pomembnih javnih prireditvah in poudarjajo svojo slavo z uprizarjanjem psevdo-dogodkov. Analizirali so slavo športnikov, ki jim ploskamo, ko stojijo na zmagovalnem odru z medaljo okoli vratu, posmehujemo pa se jim, ko se ne uspejo povzpeti na stopničke – ali ko okajeni padejo z njih.

Na simpoziju v Ljubljani so razpravljali še, da se družbena vloga in javna podoba teh slavnih posameznikov vse bolj prepletata. Junaška dejanja ne nastajajo več po kanonu, ki ga je kot zaokroženi *monomit* opisal komparativni mitolog James Campbell (2004). Če bi sledil poti monomita, bi posameznik skupnost namreč zapustil, se nato na tujem, daleč od zavetja doma, soočil z nevarnostmi in se tam prekalil. Šele nato bi se vrnil med svoje ljudi

⁶ Priimek je prevzel deloma zaradi občudovanja, deloma pa, kot je pojasnil v intervjuju, tudi zato, ker mu je tako svetoval Ivan Kramberger.

ter jim pripovedoval o grozotah, ki so se mu zgodile. Takrat bi ga skupnost prepoznala in častila kot izjemnega posameznika – junaka. Sodobni samooklicani junaki pa se ne odpravijo več nikamor, saj za to preprosto nimajo časa. Namesto tega ustvarjajo dogodke v varnem zavetju doma, pišejo provokativne *tvite* in snujejo odmevna sporočila za Facebook ter objavljajo lastne podobe na Instagramu, s katerimi skušajo izpostaviti svoj družbeni pomen.

Med govorniki na simpoziju je bil tudi Ivan Čolović (2016), urednik ugledne srbske založbe »XX. vek«, ki je v svojem prispevku, objavljenem v tej številki *Traditiones*, okrcal tiste posameznike, ki za napihovanje lastne slave spretno izkoriščajo politične krize in vojne. Takšne kritične situacije namreč nekaterim ambicioznim ljudem z družbenega dna nudijo izvrstno priložnost da priplavajo na površje. Med vojnami na območju nekdanje Jugoslavije so, denimo, na vrh splavali kriminalci, ki so spretno izrabili nejasne in liminalne razmere ter vzpostavili in utrdili svoj privilegirani družbeni položaj – bodisi kot politiki, umetniki, vodje navijačev ali nasploh kot vojni junaki, ki odločajo o srbski politiki in družbenem ter gospodarskem življenju v državi.

Čolovićevo zgodbo na konkretnem primeru hrvaškega glasbenika Marka Perkovića Thompsona prikaže Tomislav Pletenac (2016) in predstavi njegovo pot od borca in vojnega junaka, ki se je takoj ob začetku spopadov na Hrvaškem leta 1991 pridružil Zboru narodne garde, do pevca, ki polni stadione z domoljubnimi napevi in sklicevanjem na nekdanja in sedanja junaštva hrvaškega naroda. Kot pojasnjuje Pletenac, je Thompson uspel ustvariti o sebi mit o sleherniku, ki ima sicer kanček nadarjenosti in smisla za glasbo, a je glasbena zvezda postal bolj po naključju. Od zvezd, ki nastopajo v različnih televizijskih kalilnicah talentov, se Marko Perković razlikuje po tem, ker mu je iz vojne na območju nekdanje Jugoslavije uspelo ustvariti lasten resničnostni šov, v katerem se je sam znašel v središču žarometov.

Peter Simonič (2016) usmeri pozornost na tiste posameznike, ki so žaromete postavljali drugim slavnim osebam, hkrati pa so se pogosto tudi sami znašli pod njimi kot osrednji predstavniki slovenskih kulturnih institucij. Cankarjev dom v Ljubljani je, denimo, posebljal dolgoletni direktor Mitja Rotovnik, Festival Ljubljana predstavlja direktor Darko Brlek, medtem ko je simbol Festivala Lent postal Vladimir Rukavina. Peter Simonič se v svojem prispevku (2016) posveti slednjemu med omenjenimi »vladarji« kulturnih institucij in pojasni, kako pomembna je za uspešno delovanje izjemnega posameznika podpora omrežja ljudi, ki ga držijo pokonci, in to tako materialno kot moralno, ter ga pomagajo dvigniti više in više.

Božidar Jezernik v svojem prispevku (2016) prikaže vlogo velikih mož 19. stoletja na Slovenskem, torej v času narodne prebuje, in pojasni, da tudi takrat izjemni posamezniki niso prišli na plan sami od sebe, temveč ob pomoči različnih družbenih dejavnikov in ob podpori skupin, ki so se potegovala za prevlado. Ti so nekatere posameznike, kakršna sta bila pesnika Valentin Vodnik in Jovan Vesel Koseski, nekaj časa kovali v zvezde, dokler ni osrednjega narodotvornega položaja prevzel France Prešeren – znova ob podpori določene skupine ljudi z lastnimi političnimi interesi.

Sara Špelec v članku (2016) prikaže moč medijev pri kreiranju slave, in sicer na primeru jugoslovanskega kralja Aleksandra I. Karađorđevića. Ob pregledu vodilnih slovenskih časopisov spoznamo, kako se je njegova podoba spreminjala od leta 1918, ko je postal regent, prek leta 1921, ko je postal kralj Kraljevine Srbov, Hrvatov in Slovencev, uvedbe diktature leta 1929 do atentata, ki so ga v Marseillu nanj izvedli leta 1934. Avtorica ob teh prikazih pojasni, da je resničnega vladarja lastna medijska podoba povsem zasenčila in morda celo uničila njegov dejanski lik.

Podobno zmaličena je sčasoma postala tudi podoba Josipa Broza Tita, ki se mu v prispevku posveti Lada Stevanović (2016). Kult osebnosti voditelja nekdanje Socialistične federativne republike Jugoslavije, ki so ga vzpostavili na podlagi dejanskih in fiktivnih junaštev, opiše na primeru veličastnega Titovega pogreba leta 1980 in mavzoleja, ki je bil sprva nekakšno romarsko središče, kasneje pa je postal priljubljena turistična destinacija in beograjska atrakcija, kjer lahko kupimo med drugim podstavke za pijačo in obeske za ključke s predsednikovo podobo. Od pogreba do danes se je, kot pokaže članek, Tito iz narodnega heroja in trdnega sidrišča nekdanje države preobrazil v pop ikono, ki postaja vse bolj pomensko prazna.

Narodotvorne vloge nima nujno le slavni posameznik, temveč jo lahko ima tudi skupina – denimo nogometna ekipa. Ivan Đorđević (2016) osvetli nastanek in pomen beograjskega nogometnega kluba Crvena zvezda in opiše družbene, politične in zgodovinske procese, zaradi katerih je klub postal nacionalni simbol in v času, ko je razpadala Jugoslavija, tudi »steber srbstva«.

Tatiana Bajuk Senčar (2016) predstavi tipologijo slavnih ekonomistov ter opiše značilnosti in vloge te specifične skupine slavnih oseb, ki delujejo na nacionalni in mednarodni ravni. Pri tem se posebej posveti štirim izstopajočim osebnostim: Irvingu Fisherju, Paulu Krugmanu, Jeffreyju Sachsu in Janisu Varufakisu. Kot pojasnjuje, so zvezdniški ekonomisti dvoumni in kontroverzni družbeni akterji, katerih javna podoba se predstavlja na najrazličnejše načine. Ne glede na to, kako jih prikazujejo mediji, pa imajo lahko njihova dejanja in besede daljnosežne posledice.

Daljnosežne učinke ima lahko tudi pesem, denimo *sevdalinka*, ki ji pozornost namenita Miha Kozorog in Alenka Bartulović (2016). Kot pojasnita, so tako posamezniki, ki pojejo pesmi, kot diskurzi, povezani z njimi, konstitutivni po eni strani za glasbeno zvrst, po drugi pa tudi za politična prizadevanja v Bosni in Hercegovini. V prispevku se posvetita tako osebam kot diskurzom, in to tako nacionalističnim kot tudi anti-nacionalističnim, ki spremljajo *sevdalinko* in ji dodajajo poseben družbeni pomen.

Janusz Baranski (2016) se odmakne od sodobnosti in se posveti napol legendarnemu junaku Juraju Janosiku, robinhudovskemu liku iz poljskih in slovaških ljudskih pripovedi in pesmi, ki je dejansko živel ob koncu 17. in v začetku 18. stoletja ter bojda pomagal revnim in kradel bogatim. Janosik funkcionira skoraj izključno kot mitološki junak, ki presega nacionalni etos in meje in je vpet v širše družbeno omrežje. Janosik Poljake in Slovake tako povezuje in jih hkrati razdružuje – oboji si ga namreč lastijo.

Vanja Huzjan (2016) razloži, da junaki oziroma heroji niso pravzaprav nič posebnega – vsak posameznik lahko načeloma postane heroj, in v tem je nekaj povsem naključnega. Ali pa tudi ne. Po avtoričinem mnenju, utemeljenem na freudovski psihoanalizi, so kandidati za heroje tudi posebni, in sicer zato, ker so mnogi med njimi narcistično motene osebnosti, to pa bi lahko bilo povezano z njihovim otroštvom, v katerem lahko pogosto sledimo nekakšnemu campbellovskemu monomitu: od otroške travme («ločitve»), življenjskih preskušenj in žrtvovanja za Stvar («inicijacije») do simbolne smrti oziroma novega rojstva («vrnitve»). Kot razlaga avtorica, njihova osebnostna struktura ni pasivna in vase zaprta, temveč skuša biti vidna, saj se hrani s pogledi drugih. Na tem mestu pa jim seveda priskočijo na pomoč mediji, ki kandidate za heroje osvetlijo z žarometi, pod katerimi zasije njegova javna podoba.

Med heroji in slavnimi osebnostmi imajo posebno mesto predsedniki držav, vlad ipd. Posebni so na več načinov, npr. s tem, da jih že njihov privilegirani položaj, na katerega so prišli po splošnih volitvah ali volitvah v parlamentu postavlja v središče javnih diskurzov. Na ta način jim omogoča in hkrati od njih zahteva izjavljanje o najrazličnejših temah, dogodkih ipd. Včerajšnji »navadni« posameznik naenkrat postane osrednja figura, ki določa, katere teme so prioritete ali sekundarne, kateri diskurzi so politično korektni itd. Osrednji fokus besedila avtorjev Saše Babič in Jurija Fikfaka (2016) je analiza konceptualnih metafor v govorih nekaterih tujih in štirih slovenskih predsednikov ob različnih, predvsem državotvornih ritualih.

Ob branju prispevka Vanje Huzjan v tej številki *Traditiones* se bo morda kdo spomnil na pesem, ki jo je sredi osemdesetih let 20. stoletja prepevala Tina Turner, in sicer z refrenom: »We don't need another hero!« («Ne potrebujemo še enega junaka!») Refren iz te pesmi se je, kot kaže, na nenavaden način udejanjil: pravih junakov morda res ne potrebujemo več, saj imamo na voljo več kot dovolj slavnih oseb ter zvezdnikov in zvezdnic, ki nas v času poresnice slepijo s svojim bliščem – ta pa je zgolj odsev žarometov, ki jih že dolgo zagotavljajo klasični mediji, po novem pa še spletna omrežja. Ob vsej bleščavi prava junaštva namreč skoraj povsem zbledijo.

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