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Singer-Songwriters in Slovenia: An Ethnomusicological Study

Kantavtorji v Sloveniji: Etnomuzikološka študija

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IZVLEČEK

S pomočjo etnomuzikološkega pristopa želi članek odgovoriti na dvoje vprašanj: prvič, kdo so slovenski kantavtorji današnjega dne, in drugič, kako pristopiti k obravnavi njihovega ustvarjanja.

ABSTRACT

Using ethnomusicological approach, the article tries to answer two questions: first, who are indeed Slovenian Singer-songwriters of today, and second: which is the right way of approaching them through research.

This article deals with a particular segment of popular music, *singing-songwriting*, which is not a genre in a stylistic sense of the word¹; however it is marketed as a genre to address specific audience. Broadly speaking, *singer-songwriters* are authors who perform their own songs, yet the definition of the term varies from one language to another, from one context to another. Slovenian term *kantavtor* is not strictly defined; even the artists themselves do not completely agree about its limits and emphases. The first question posed in this article is therefore: Who are Slovenian singer-songwriters?

Connected to the issue of the definition is a methodological question of choosing appropriate research approach. After all, this research is taking place among active authors and there is no historical distance which would serve as a riddle to expose certain musicians as the bearers of the term and let the others fall into oblivion. The lack of historical and spatial distance on the one hand and the artists' awareness of the various aspects of their own musicking² on the other call for an approach which considers the whole spectrum of their opinions, constantly verifying them within the field of contemporary popular music.

In Search of the Definition of *Kantavtor*

Authors who sing their own songs appear throughout history under many different names³ and with different social functions. Among Slovenian-speaking population, there were several names in use from medieval times onwards, including several foreign ones (such as *jongleur* – in transliteration *žongler*), but also *igrč*⁴ which is of Slavic origin. Until the mid-20th century, their musical practices had not attracted scholarly attention. The musical activity of travelling/market singers did not fit the criteria used within the realm of folk music research: the authorship of their songs was known or determinable, the songs were often printed and they did not belong to the countryside. In addition, their authors were living off their performances or (in the case of travelling craftsmen) at least using them to improve their earnings.⁵

1 "In music, genres emerge as labels for defining similarities and recurrences that members of a community understand as pertinent to identifying and classifying musical events. [...] Style [...] is not a subset of genre. Neither is the reverse the case. Rather, these concepts overlap in a multidimensional realm of meaning dealing with recurring musical features of sets of musical events." Franco Fabbri and John Shepherd, "Genre and Style in Music," in *Continuum Encyclopedia of Popular Music of the World: Volume 1: Media, Industry and Society*, ed. John Shepherd, David Horn, Dave Laing, Paul Oliver and Peter Wicke (London, New York: Continuum, 2003), 402.

2 Christopher Small suggests this term, together with the meaning of music as a process, not an object: "[T]he word *musicking* does not appear in any English dictionary, but it is too useful a conceptual tool to lie unused. It is the present participle, or gerund, of the verb *to music*. [...] I have proposed this definition: *To music is to take part, in any capacity, in a musical performance, whether by performing, by listening, by rehearsing or practicing, by providing material for performance (what is called composing), or by dancing*." Christopher Small, *Musicking: The Meanings of Performing and Listening* (Middletown: Wesleyan University Press, 1998), 9 (italics in original).

3 Some examples of historical singer-poets (with different connotations) include *aoidos* and *rhapsode* in Ancient Greece, in medieval times *Meistersänger* and *Minnesänger* (both Ger.), *troubadour* (male, Fr.), *trobairitz* (female, Fr.), *jongleur* and *truver* (both Fr.), *bard* (Celtic) and others. Jani Kovačič, "Kantavtor ali ...Janija Kovačiča skromni pregled pojma", unpublished manuscript, last modified 11 June, 2012. Microsoft Word file. Cf. *Oxford Music Online*, s.v. "aoidos", "minnesang", "meistersang", "troubadours, trouveres", "troubadour", "jongleur" and "bard", accessed 2 May, 2014, <http://www.oxfordmusiconline.com>.

4 Derived from the verb *igrati* (play). Cf. Marija Klobčar, "Pesemsko obveščanje in ustvarjanje tradicije", *Traditiones* 43, no. 4 (2014): 12.

5 *Ibid.*, 13.

After the appearance within Anglo-American context, the term *singer-songwriter* soon gained its presence in other countries as well. *Singer-songwriter* is “used since the late 1950s to describe those mainly American and British singing composer-performers, often with roots in folk, country and blues, whose music and lyrics are considered inseparable from their performances.”⁶ Yugoslavian artists of the time – Tomaž Pengov, Tomaž Domicelj,⁷ Bogdana Herman, Jani Kovačič, Marko Breclj (from Slovenia), Arsen Dedić, Ibrića Jusić, Ivica Percl (from Croatia) and countless others – were influenced by several Anglo-American singer-songwriters: Pete Seeger, Bob Dylan, Joni Mitchell and others. The influence came from other sources, too: singer-songwriters from other parts of the world (e.g. Víctor Jara from Chile⁸), other musical genres and other arts.

The terms used in other languages do not always cover the same set of meanings as Anglo-American *singer-songwriter*. Defining the limits of a certain genre or term is difficult enough even within one language: “[A] musical genre has different meanings for different people or at least that, even if it can denote the same thing for different people, it connotes diverse things.”⁹ Speaking of Italian *cantautore*, Franco Fabbri states that “the terms used to indicate musical genres are extremely difficult to translate, and have different meanings in different languages and cultures: here a term not only connotes different things for two different people – according to the diversity of their interests in the denoted object and therefore according to the diverse processes of understanding involved – but precisely denotes two different things.”¹⁰

The development of its meaning in Italian is explained by Marco Santoro and Marco Solaroli: “The word *cantautore* originally referred to a very small set of singers who were also authors of the music of their songs. [...] If at the beginning it was a rather empty label, a commercial slogan exploiting one technical feature, over a few years *cantautore* became a powerful code charged with a host of cultural meanings and marked by a symbolic power that could be used to discriminate between singers in the field of popular music according to the qualities of their songs. In some ways, the word brought forwards its referent, the coding practices being constitutive of a new web of meanings.”¹¹ The development of the set of meanings resulted in the following outcome: “By the mid-1960s, *cantautore* no longer designated simply a singer who was also a songwriter, but the singer and the songwriter of a *different* song, something that – by its very distinguished existence – could redefine (and circumscribe) the boundaries of ‘commercial’ or a more obviously ‘light’ music.”¹²

The term *cantautore* can be found as *kantavtor*¹³ in Slovenian and other South-Slavic

6 *Oxford Music Online*, s.v. “singer-songwriter”, accessed 18 September, 2012, <http://www.oxfordmusiconline.com>.

7 Domicelj translated several songs of American singer-songwriters, such as Pete Seeger’s “Where have all the flowers gone” (1967, “Kam so šle vse rožice”, sung together with Bogdana Herman). Miha Štamcar, “Trubadurji in uporniki: Slovenski kantavtorji od začetka do danes”, *Mladina*, 1 September, 2013, <http://www.mladina.si/97655/trubadurji-in-uporniki/>.

8 Established the *nueva canción Chilena*, became a symbol of resistance after he was killed by the opposing regime in 1973.

9 Franco Fabbri and Iain Chambers, “What Kind of Music?”, *Popular Music* 2 (1982): 132.

10 *Ibid.*, 132.

11 Marco Santoro and Marco Solaroli, “Authors and Rappers: Italian Hip Hop and the Shifting Boundaries of ‘Canzone d’Autore’”, *Popular Music* 26, no. 3 (2007): 466.

12 *Ibid.*, 467.

13 In this article, I use also the derivatives: *kantavtorica* (female, sg.), *kantavtorji* (plural), *kantavtorski* (adj.), *kantavtorstvo* (singing-songwriting as a musical process, or as an umbrella term for all aspects of singing-songwriting – as a genre). In the Dictionary of Standard Slovenian Language, only the variant *kantavtor* is listed, defined as a “composer and singer of own song”.

languages.¹⁴ In the meaning “singer and the songwriter of a *different* song” the term was adopted by Yugoslavian music scene.¹⁵ Just like in the case of its Italian equivalent, the edges of the term remain unclear and every attempt of defining it more clearly seems to exclude some of the artists that identify themselves as *kantavtorji*. In the past decades, there were some attempts among the *kantavtorji* themselves to change the term into something more “Slovenian”. Jani Kovačič¹⁶ justifies the adequacy of the current term through the process of elimination of the unsuitable ones: *godec* (*musician-fiddler*) refers to an instrumentalist, *igrc* to a comedian; *pevec*, *pevka*, *pevček*, *pevkica*, *popcvkar*, *popcvkarica* (several versions of the term *singer*, some of them with bad connotations) only denote the singing aspect, *skladatelj* (*composer*) only the composing one. The same goes for the terms with the meaning of *poet*, and as for the *šansonjer* (*chansonnier*), it already contains a relation to a specific genre¹⁷ currently present in the popular music field. He mentions some terms that might be more suitable as the current one: *pisec-pevec* (*writer-singer*) or *bard*, *igrc*, however he finally suggests the persistence with the term already in use – *kantavtor*.¹⁸ Matej Krajnc, on the other hand, suggests a different term: *samospevec*¹⁹ which combines the meanings of *soloist* (the prefix *samo-*) and *singer* (*pevec*).²⁰

While conducting interviews with Slovenian singer-songwriters (and studying their interviews published in the media²¹), it soon became clear to me that almost all of *kantavtorji* try to define this term as a way of legitimizing their activity. They usually agree on the essential meaning of the term as an embodiment of poet, musician and performer. However, some other aspects can be singled out, first and foremost the lyrics – Matej Krajnc and Dani Bedrač both stress that *kantavtor*'s lyrics are poetry.²² Socially critical aspect can also be emphasized.²³ In his definition, Adi Smolar²⁴ mentions both: “With the term *kantavtor* I understand a person who creates music, creates lyrics and also performs. But this is not enough. Lyrics are very important, and they have to be engaged as much as possible. So they are not meant only for entertainment, but also for

14 With slight differences in spelling: *Kantautor* (Croatian, Bosnian) or *Кантатор* (Serbian – in Cyrillic). Jani Kovačič suggests the term (together with the musical practice it connotes) spread from Zagreb to other parts of former Yugoslavia around 1970. Interview with Jani Kovačič, 27 March, 2014.

15 Specific term for the songs by *kantavtorji* – such as *canto d'autore* in Italian – is not in use in Slovenian language.

16 He started his career as a *kantavtor* in early 1980s, and until this day led and cooperated in several projects. From my own field experience, he and Adi Smolar are most frequently named when people are asked to list some of Slovenian *kantavtorji*.

17 French *chanson* is often listed as one of the most important influences on the *canto d'autore* and *kantavtorstvo*. Cf. Marco Santoro, “What is a ‘cantaautore’? Distinction and authorship in (Italian) popular music”, *Poetics* 30 (2002): 116–7.

18 Kovačič, “Kantavtor ali ...”.

19 The suggested word is very close to the term *samospev*, Slovenian translation of the German *Lied* of the 19th century.

20 The word *samospevec* in his article refers to Tomaž Pengov (1949–2014), the first Slovenian *kantavtor* who published an LP (*Odpotovanja*, 1973. Matej Krajnc, “Kdo je na vrsti, da bo prerok?: O glasbi Tomaža Pengova”, *Glasna: Revija Zveze Glasbene mladine Slovenije* 45, no. 2 (April–May 2014): 38.

21 Especially helpful were several interviews by *kantavtorica* Katarina Juvančič.

22 Dani Bedrač, in discussion with the author, 8 August, 2013: “Kantavtor performs his own songs, and his lyrics are poetry.” Also, Matej Krajnc: “author who sets his poetry to music and performs it”. Katarina Juvančič, “Kantavtorska 5ka – Kdo je kantavtor?”, *Nova Muska: Revija za glasbe, muzike in godbe*, 20 November, 2011, <http://novamuska.org/?p=3395>.

23 Leon Matek: “Kantavtor – author and performer at the same time – with his poetry set to music holds a mirror to the society, [he] feels, thinks, loves, despises, whispers, screams, and shares his human experience with others.” Katarina Juvančič, “Kantavtorska 5ka: Drugo dejanje – Kdo so kantavtorji I”, *Nova Muska: Revija za glasbe, muzike in godbe*, 1 July, 2012, <http://novamuska.org/?p=4506>.

24 Adi Smolar (1959–) published 15 albums since 1989. He remains one of the most recognizable authors of Slovenian popular music scene.

educating or mediating *kantavtor*'s views of life, expressed through the environment in which [*kantavtor*] lives."²⁵

Most of them would agree that playing an instrument – usually guitar – while performing is one of the characteristics of *kantavtor*.²⁶ For a thorough categorisation of *kantavtorji*, all the above mentioned aspects should be taken into consideration, still more: a disambiguation based on song typology, musical style, performance practices and other aspects would show some of the artists fit certain stereotypic labels, such as protest singer, storyteller, torch singer and so on. However, this generalization would probably result in ignoring some aspects of their musicking, not to mention those artists who would not fit into these categories. Therefore, I decided to avoid this sort of categorisation.

The do-it-yourself (DIY) process is essential for this type of musicking; not just in terms of creating and performing, but also when it comes to arranging, marketing, and other tasks involved in the process. Just like their Italian neighbours, *kantavtorji* tend to stay outside of the mainstream; and the explanation of *cantautori* seems to fit them perfectly: “despite being positioned within the music business field, *cantautori* stood at a distance from it in order to develop cultural projects that presupposed and produced a relative autonomy from market constraints, evoking the consolidated icon of the artist, with his professional ideology and his social aura.”²⁷

Until recently, *kantavtor* was not accepted as an official profession by Slovenian administration, and *kantavtorji* themselves devoted to the task of legitimizing it. As freelancers applying for government funding, they were subjected to the same criterion as other artists (either singers, composers or poets), while not really fitting the criteria for any of them. The Cultural Ministry's legitimation²⁸ makes these applications easier. Because of the unprofitable nature of their work, most of the *kantavtorji* support themselves with a job in some other profession. That adds to the difficulty of defining the noun *kantavtor* and labelling artists as such (this is usually not their only activity) – however defining their creative process – their musicking – would be slightly easier.

Applying ethnomusicological research approach

Drawing on the various definitions of and/or by Slovenian *kantavtorji*, three essential elements can be deduced from their musicking: lyrics, music and performance. A comprehensive research should take into consideration all three of them, because all three are the potential bearers of the meaning of a certain song.

25 Interview with Adi Smolar, 5 March, 2014.

26 Even though guitar is the most commonly used instrument, it is not obligatory. Explained by Peter Andrej: “It doesn't matter if [*kantavtor*] uses guitar or digital junk – as long as he is convincing and honest.” Juvančič, “Kantavtorska 5ka.”

27 Santoro and Solaroli, “Authors and Rappers”, 468.

28 The “Petition for the *kantavtor* profession” (<http://www.ipetitions.com/petition/za-poklic-kantavtorja>) was published online in the beginning of 2012. In 2014, *Kantavtor* is listed as a profession in the “Proposition of the Edict of changes and completions of the Edict of self-employed in culture” (“Predlog Uredbe o samozaposlenih v kulturi”, published 20 February, 2014, www.mk.gov.si/fileadmin/mk.gov.si/pageuploads/Ministrstvo/Zakonodaja/Predpisi_v_pripravi/2014/Uredba_o_samozaposlenih_v_kulturi/Predlog_Uredbe_o_samozaposlenih_v_kulturi.pdf).

After the decision which artists are to be included in the research, the selection of research methods follows: from ethnomusicological perspective, the combination of anthropological (interviews, participant observation) and musicological methods (textual analysis) takes place, not excluding the historical, sociological and some other aspects to ensure the coverage of both the historical and spatial contexts. Henceforth, this article focuses on textual analysis of two selected songs which should serve as models for explaining the meaning and purpose of a certain performance.

Textual analysis includes both the music and the lyrics. However the history of popular music research is dominated by lyric analysis.²⁹ The lyrics mediate the story, and most of the *kantavtorji* would agree that their stories represent the most important part of their songs:

[W]e're not trying to be good singers, but to be good interpreters of lyrics. [...] You have to be convincing when mediating your lyrics: people have to believe you. Therefore, it's not about some serious tests of vocal chords; the message is that really matters. [...] When you focus on a story, the most important thing is to tell this story.³⁰

This is also the case in Anglo-American researches of *singer-songwriters*. Roy Shuker mentions the premise of the lyrics in his short explanation of (Anglo-American) *singer-songwriters*: "An emphasis on lyrics has resulted in the work of such performers often being referred to as song poems, accorded auteur status, and made the subject of intensive lyric analysis."³¹ The previously mentioned emphasis on the *kantavtor*'s lyrics as poetry is one of the reasons for neglecting other aspects of their musicking.³² As for music, it is not present only in form of an accompaniment, but is an integral part of the musicking: it appears as melody, rhythm, metre, tempo, harmony, timbre and pitch. These parameters are present in the complex intertwinement of lyrics, music and performance that manifests itself as *kantavtorstvo*. Therefore, a song cannot be explained merely as a specific intertwinement of music and lyrics, the performative aspect is also crucial; in Christopher Small's³³ terms: "[T]he performance does not exist in order to present musical works, but rather, musical works exist in order to give performers something to perform."³⁴

29 The dominating discipline in popular music studies was sociology: "In the 1950s and 1960s, for example, the tiny field of the sociology of popular music was dominated by analyses of song words. Sociologists concentrated on songs (rather than singers or audiences) because they could be studied with a familiar cultural research method, content analysis, and as they mostly lacked the ability to distinguish songs in musical terms, content analysts, by default, had to measure trends by reference to lyrics. It was through their words that hit records were taken to make their social mark." Simon Frith, "Why do Songs have Words", in Simon Frith, *Music for Pleasure: Essays in the Sociology of Pop* (New York: Routledge, 1988), 105.

30 Interview with Adi Smolar, 5 March, 2014.

31 Roy Shuker, *Popular Music: The Key Concepts* (Abingdon; New York: Routledge, 2005), 248.

32 I hereby agree with Philip Tagg who stated in 1982: "Studying popular music is an interdisciplinary matter. Musicology still lags behind other disciplines in the field, especially sociology. [...] It should be stated at the outset that no analysis of musical discourse can be considered complete without consideration of social, psychological, visual, gestural, ritual, technical, historical, economic and linguistic aspects relevant to the genre, function, style, (re-)performance situation and listening attitude connected with the sound event being studied." Philip Tagg, "Analysing Popular Music: Theory, Method and Practice," *Popular Music* 2 (1982): 40.

33 Christopher Small, widely perceived as a representative of cultural musicology, received with his concept of musicking a notable attention within the ethnomusicological circles. Both cultural musicology and ethnomusicology are concerned with the notions of music and culture, and are influencing each other. In his seminal book *The Anthropology of music* (1964), Alan P. Merriam defined ethnomusicology as "the study of music in culture" and this initiated the move of the research focus from traditional music to any music. This article considers a segment of popular music and proves the above claim.

34 Small, *Musicking*, 8.

To emphasize the most important characteristics, each performed song demands a proper analytical approach: the analysis should therefore focus on elements which make this particular musicking meaningful: the lyrics, the song's harmonic and melodic structure, rhythm, tempo, the performative routine or any other element. To illustrate two (of many possible) approaches, two songs by two artists are analysed in the following chapters.

Boštjan Narat³⁵ – “Romeo Julija”: Not just the lyrics mediating the idea



Picture 1: Boštjan Narat.³⁶

The first selected example embodies some of the potential aspects of the intertwining of lyrical, musical and performative elements that appear in *kantavtorstvo*. Boštjan Narat himself often stresses the importance of lyrics in his songs: “In *kantavtorstvo*, everything stands and falls on lyrics. Lyrics should have the same expressive power with or without music.”³⁷ And yet, as it is evident from this performance,³⁸ the musical part

35 Boštjan Narat (1976–) is a musician and philosopher; known for his ethno group Katalena (2001–). As a *kantavtor*, he published two albums: *Strah je odveč* (2010) and *Konec sveta vedno pride nenapovedano* (2012).

36 Boštjan Narat (Dom KULTure - muziKafe, Ptuj, 23 November, 2012), photo by Boris B. Voglar, accessed 10 May, 2014, http://www.mladina.si/media/www/slike/2012/48/_610/p09.jpg.

37 Vanja Pirc, “Boštjan Narat, glasbenik in filozof,” *Mladina*, 8 June, 2012, <http://www.mladina.si/112897/bostjan-narat-glasbenik-in-filozof/>.

38 Salon za ENO glasbo, Ljubljana, 26 October, 2013. “Kako končati to pesem? – Romeo Julija,” published 2 December, 2013, <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=OQC7vJZseG4>.

of the song contains the same ideas; in a way, the music supports the ideas of the lyrics. Similarly, the performative elements enhance the message. The song “Romeo Julija” is the last song from the author’s album *Konec sveta vedno pride nenapovedano* (2012).³⁹

The title itself indicates a duality: “Julija” can mean either “Juliet” or “in July”. The whole song can be explained in two ways: the three verses⁴⁰ describe what Romeo does in June and July, or what Romeo and Juliet do in June.⁴¹ The duality of the meaning is redoubled with a contrast within each of these two interpretations: when “Julija” means “Juliet”, we have a contrast between her happenings and Romeo’s happenings. And in the case of Romeo in June or July, there’s a contrast between his doings in either of these two months. The banality of the verses’ content is reflected in the chorus, which offers a moralized statement of the absurdity of summer love. The repetition of the chorus⁴² enforces the impression of banality. The latter is evident also from the use of vulgarisms⁴³ and various other expressions.⁴⁴ The translation of the lyrics⁴⁵ is the following:

In June, Romeo stands under the window
Cursing the past and drinking absinth,
In July / Juliet in a room with closed windows
Waits for the dark and is being treated for gout.
In June, Romeo writes poems,
Because he knows a letter is stronger than a horse.
In July / Juliet reads trivial novels,
Forgetting the word, despising memory.

Summer love is a poor solace,
A thing to forget, a pure eyewash.
It’s here just for you, but also without you.
In July / Juliet Romeo is a son of a bitch.

Romeo wants to chase clouds
Which keep bringing rain in June.

39 Boštjan Narat, *Konec sveta vedno pride nenapovedano*, Pivec, PIV CD 004, 2012, compact disc.

40 First two consist of 8 lines, and the third of 4 lines.

41 Except for the last verse in the chorus, which makes no sense if we read it as Juliet instead of In July.

42 The chorus appears after each of the three verses, the last appearance is doubled and enhanced with a double repetition of the last line – the second time with an alternate ending – words “a nobody” instead of “son of a bitch”.

43 Such as “kurbin sin” – “son of a bitch” and “pičkin dim” – “a nobody”, word-for-word translation would be “cunt smoke”.

44 Such as “drinking absinth”, “being treated for gout”, “reads trivial novels”, “cheap advertisement/ from a free magazine from male toilets”.

45 My own translation (non-poetical). Original lyrics in Slovenian:

Romeo junija vztraja pod oknom,/ preklinja preteklost in pije absint./ Julija v sobi z zaprtimi okni/ čaka na temo in zdravi protin./ Romeo junija piše pesnitve,/ ker ve, da je črka močnejša kot konj./ Julija bere pogrošne romane,/ pozablja besedo, prezira spomin./ Poletna ljubezen je slaba tolažba,/ je stvar za pozabo, je pesek v očeh./ Je tukaj le zate, a tudi brez tebe./ Julija je Romeo kurbin sin./ Romeo hoče preganjat oblake,/ ki junija vztrajno nosijo dež./ Julija gleda soncu čez ramo,/ beži pred vročino in kolne starost./ Junija Romeo hodi po mestu/ naravnost in v stilu naslovne strani./ Julija je le še poceni reklama/ iz zastojne revije, z moških stranišč./ Poletna ljubezen je slaba tolažba,/ je stvar za pozabo, je pesek v očeh./ Je tukaj le zate, a tudi brez tebe./ Julija je Romeo kurbin sin./ Junij je čas za popolne podvige,/ čas, ko si Romeo upa vse./ Julija utrujeno slike prešteva,/ približne ljubezni so kot star beden vic./ Poletna ljubezen je slaba tolažba,/ je stvar za pozabo, je pesek v očeh./ Je tukaj le zate, a tudi brez tebe./ Julija je Romeo kurbin sin./ Poletna ljubezen je slaba tolažba,/ je stvar za pozabo, je pesek v očeh./ Je tukaj le zate, a tudi brez tebe./ Julija je Romeo kurbin sin./ Julija je Romeo kurbin sin./ Julija je Romeo pičkin dim.

In July/Juliet gazes over the Sun's shoulder,
Escaping the heat and cursing the old age.
In June, Romeo walks the streets
Straight and in the front page style.
In July/Juliet is only a cheap advertisement
Of a free magazine from male toilets.

Summer love is a poor solace,
A thing to forget, a pure eyewash.
It's here just for you, but also without you.
In July / Juliet Romeo is a son of a bitch.

June is a time for bold actions,
A time when Romeo dares to do anything.
In July / Juliet is tiredly counting the pictures,
Approximate loves are like an old, lame joke.

Summer love is a poor solace,
A thing to forget, a pure eyewash.
It's here just for you, but also without you.
In July / Juliet Romeo is a son of a bitch.
Summer love is a poor solace,
A thing to forget, a pure eyewash.
It's here just for you, but also without you.
In July / Juliet Romeo is a son of a bitch.
In July / Juliet Romeo is a son of a bitch.
In July / Juliet Romeo is a nobody.

In this particular performance, *kantavtor* starts with the introduction of a song, accompanied by the guitar.⁴⁶ His explanation of the song offers only the first possible interpretation, as he is counting on the audience to extract the second meaning by themselves. This introduction is not included in the studio recording; its content also varies from one performance to another.

Transcription of the guitar part of the repeating two bars form the introduction:



Picture 2: Guitar part of the Introduction.

⁴⁶ Composed of an undetermined repetition of two bars, in this case it repeats 6 times, there is a short pause after the 4th repetition, and the 6th repetition is finished with a ritardando. The same material appears before the second and the third strophe as well (each time repeated once - formed of 4 bars altogether).

The introduction is twofold: the bass line forms two tritons separated by a semitone: C - G - F sharp and B - G flat - F. The upper two tones (in the first seven broken chords) form major second B flat - C, and in the last bar a minor second A sharp - B.

The accompaniment of the “Romeo in June” part (from here on: Part 1) of the verse is the same as the introduction. However, the “Romeo in July / Juliet in June” part (from here on: Part 2) has a different setting. In Part 1, the melody of the voice is circulating in thirds of indefinable quality - it is not clear whether this part is set in minor or major:



Picture 3: Voice pattern in Part 1.

The repeating sequence of the accompaniment offers a contrast to the voice; the resulting dissonant combination serves as a contrast to the consonant Part 2 of the verses. The accompaniment of the Part 2 is formed by the chord sequence in C minor: I - $\frac{V}{V}$ - V. The pronunciation of the consonants also differs: in Part 1, certain consonants⁴⁷ are explicitly pronounced, while in Part 2 they are less emphasized, thus the narration of Part 2 sounds softer than in the Part 1. In both parts, the rhythmical elements are similar; the tempo is steady and the rhythm of the melody is close to speech, more or less equalized with the rhythm of the lyrics.

The main idea of this song is duality (including the contrast between two elements). In lyrics, this duality is clearly visible. The same goes for music and performance: the contrast between two exchanging parts of the verse is set on melodic and harmonic level and with the characteristics of the narration:

	Part 1	Part 2
Content	Romeo in June	Romeo in July / Juliet in June
Melody	Lingers between minor and major; between speaking and singing	Clearly in minor, clearly sung
Accompaniment	Dissonant, just guitar, no reverb	Consonant, guitar + back voice, reverb
Tone colour	Harder pronunciation	Softer pronunciation
Tempo	Steady	
Rhythm	Not exact (closer to speech), ternary	

Table 1: The contrasts between two parts of the verse.

The uneasiness of all these contrasts is resolved in the chorus. At the end of every verse, there is an additional bar which prolongs the suspense before the chorus. This suspense is enhanced after the third (shortened) verse; the Part 2 narration of the last line of the third verse (“Approximate loves are like an old, lame joke”) equalizes with the narration of the Part 1: while ritardando is added, the voice is harder and closer to speech, the dominant chords (the second chord has an added sixth step) are plucked

47 Sibilants c, s, z and č, š, ž.

strongly and a short pause follows the cadenza.⁴⁸

The chorus is clearly in Major, although the major third step sometimes lowers and becomes a blue note, connecting the chorus with the Part 1. The voice is no longer lingering between talking and singing, which is reminiscent of the narration in Part 2. The chord progression is simple, set in C major: I - I⁶₄ - IV - I repeated once, then I - vi - IV - V - I. The rhythm slightly changes and leans into binary (in contrast to the ternary tendency from the verse). At the last repetitions of the last line at the end of the song, there is a pause before the words “a nobody”, and the quickly plucked C7 chord leaves the impression of an open ending.

As shown in the analysis, the lyrical, musical and performative elements all work towards representation of the song’s idea: the duality (indicated with the use of archetypical love couple Romeo and Juliet) serves to demonstrate the contrasts, however the banality of the motive of summer love represented in the chorus seems to overshadow the importance of these contrasts in verses.

Adi Smolar – Pesem o rolici papirja: The importance of a live performance



Picture 4: Adi Smolar.⁴⁹

In *Studying Popular Music*, Richard Middleton warns about the convenient use of notation in music analysis: “[T]he score comes to be seen as ‘the music’, or perhaps the music in an ideal form.”⁵⁰ In the case of *kantavtorji*, similar problem emerges with finding the “ideal form” of a certain song in the form of studio recording (especially audio

48 These added bars are the only ones which break the conventional structure of the song (formed by even number of bars).

49 Adi Smolar (Hiša kulture, Šmartno, 1 June, 2012), photo by David Verlič, accessed 10 May, 2014, http://www.e-fronta.info/uploads/7/9/0/2/7902716/2545438_orig.jpg.

50 Richard Middleton, *Studying Popular Music*, reprint. ed. (Milton Keynes; Philadelphia: Open University Press, 2010), 105.

recording),⁵¹ as the performance is the third essential element of *kantavtorstvo* (together with lyrics and music, as shown above). In addition, every performance is unique and therefore the results from the analysis of one performance would not be applicable to all of the potential performances of a certain song. An analysis of a performed song therefore serves as a comparative example for other performances.

The following example illustrates the importance of including some aspects of the performance into textual analysis. “Pesem o rolici papirja” (“The Paper Roll Song”) was written by Adi Smolar on the occasion of 130 years of the toilet paper factory Paloma.⁵² A year later, in 2004, the author included it in his album *Vse je krasno*.⁵³ It’s an example of a song which outgrew its original context and became one of his most popular songs.

From the harmonic perspective, the song is relatively simple and easy to recreate: instructions including lyrics and chord progression (although simplified) can be found online. The lyrics were even published as a children book – which emphasizes the educational message: “Not only the great deeds matter, but small deeds, small attentions.”⁵⁴

The regular verse-chorus song form (of even number of bars) is often breached here, leaving out the unnecessary bars without the vocal. The simplicity and the importance of the message correspond to the author’s opinion on the unnecessary distractions within a song:⁵⁵

[I]f an ensemble is included [in performance], an occasional solo is welcome. But if I’m on the stage alone, and if I’d interrupt certain songs with some solo insertions (which I could do) – I rarely do that, I rarely take such breaks. [...] Mostly I just introduce the story, and if there is [such an insertion], then there is “La la la” instead of an actual solo – that “La la la”, like a small chorus. I believe that is a good thing because it keeps the audience interested. [...] The role of the guitar is accompaniment – accompaniment of lyrics, of story.

Sometimes [...] it seems like you are changing three, four chords. But that’s also mastery. Making this many interesting songs with so few chords is not easy. [...] It happens, that there is a “Dim[inished seventh chord]” in there – and some kind of interesting chord – but it disturbs me. Because it sounds like bragging [...]. I’ve got a feeling that this would make me lose that simple credibility. And I throw it out.

Similarly to the previous example, a performance of “The Paper Roll Song” includes introductory text, but here it outgrows an explanatory function: the *kantavtor* gives specific instructions to the audience. These instructions are explained at every performance of this song and therefore represent its essential part.⁵⁶ For the purpose of this analysis, I took into account two performances and compared their elements.

51 Studio recording could be used as a comparative source together with live performances.

52 *Sladkogorčan: Glasilo delavcev Palome, sladkogorske tovarne papirja, d.d. Sladki Vrh*, July 2003, 8.

53 Adi Smolar, *Vse je krasno*, Nika Records, NR-CD-S-0171, 2004, compact disc.

54 Interview with Adi Smolar, 5 March, 2014.

55 Ibid.

56 The studio recording does not include the introductory text or the instructions for the audience; in my opinion, the specific instructions were added to the performance spontaneously and over the years became more or less an integral part of this song.

In first case (from now on, Example 1) Adi Smolar starts introducing the song in a clear and soft voice:

If good-hearted, you can do a lot of good even with small things. Even with a toilet paper roll, a lot can be done. So, as a cheer-up for all of us, to be kind to each other even in small deeds. The Paper Roll Song.⁵⁷

Introduction is similar in the Example 2:

Not only great deeds and large sums of money matter. Small acts of attention are very important in everyday life. To brighten life with friendly greetings, with friendly relations amongst ourselves. Or with a paper roll.⁵⁸

Specific instructions to the audience follow in the next sentence; his narration is more serious, he makes sure the audience is paying attention:

When I sing “la la la”, you clap, when I sing the verse, you don’t clap, when I shut up, you clap very loudly!⁵⁹

When I’m singing “la la la”, you clap, when I sing something else, you don’t clap. When I shut up at the end, you clap very loudly!⁶⁰

After receiving a positive feedback (laughter) from the audience, he continues with a few words which lead to the beginning of the song:

Are you ready? Let’s go ...⁶¹

Are you ready? Can I start? Three, four ...⁶²

In Table 2, formal structure of the song is introduced. The song starts with the chorus immediately introducing the vocal. The chord progression consists of interchanging of first and fourth degree, finally landing on the sixth degree. The chorus is concluded with a sequence of IV – I – V⁶₅ – I repeating once. Before the last tonic, the dominant is prolonged to create more suspense. The guitar picking is executed with plucking of the whole chord with the bass note interchanging with the top notes of the chord without bass. The tone of the voice is friendly, and the tempo is steady (the tempo of the Example 1 is slightly faster than in Example 2). The chorus is accompanied by the audience’s rhythmical clapping.

In the verses, the rhythm of the vocal is not completely confined by the bars; instead, it flows with the words. *Kantavtor* offers a sincere and kind narration of his words. The chord progression and the melody are the same in every verse.

57 Example 1: Performed at Red Cross concert, 22 September, 2012. “Adi Smolar – Rolica papirja & Je treba delat,” published September 25, 2012, <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=2zYzXesSSCo>.

58 Example 2: Performed at a DSR members’ meeting, 25 March, 2013. “Rolica papirja”, published 26 March, 2013, <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=fZ4ViaZ0XUk>.

59 Example 1.

60 Example 2.

61 Example 1.

62 Example 2.

	Content	Number of measures	Chord progression
Intro.	Introduction of the topic, instructions for clapping; after receiving the feedback (laughter), he starts with the chorus.	/	/
Chorus	Consists of repeating <i>la la la</i> and the audience's clapping; at the end of chorus, the performer thanks the audience. ⁶³	4+4 4+4+4 4+4+4+4	IV-I-IV-I IV-I-IV-I ⁶ -vi IV-I-V ⁶ ₅ -I-IV-I-V ⁶ ₅ -I
Verse 1	<i>I bought a roll, a paper roll. I went through the town with it, with the paper roll. I'll carry it home, I whispered to myself, I'll put it next to the toilet. It will come in handy, the paper roll. It will come in handy, the paper roll.</i>	4+3+4 4+3+4 4+4 4+4+4 4+4 4+4+4	I-IV-I ⁶ -IV-I-V ⁶ ₅ -I I-IV-I ⁶ -IV-I-V ⁶ ₅ -I IV-I-IV-I ⁶ IV-I-IV-I ⁶ -vi IV-I-V ⁶ ₅ -I-IV-I-V ⁶ ₅ -I IV-I-V ⁶ ₅ -I-IV-I-V ⁶ ₅ -I
Verse 2	<i>A lady with a puppy passed me And he left two small numbers on the street. This is not good for a promenade, I said to myself, Quickly picked them up and carried to the rubbish. And the paper roll came in handy. And the paper roll came in handy.</i>	4+3+4 4+3+4 4+4 4+4+4 4+4 4+4+4	The same as Verse 1
Verse 3	<i>I met a homeless man drinking wine, But clumsy as he was, he was pouring it on his chin. I gave him two sheets to wipe it And to wipe dust from his shoes. And the paper roll came in handy. And the paper roll came in handy. At the end of the last line, the performer reminds the audience to join the performance of the chorus.⁶⁴</i>	4+3+4 4+3+4 4+6 4+4+4 4+4 4+4+4	The same as Verse 1
Chorus	As before; before the end of it, he thanks to the audience. ³	As the first time	As the first time
Verse 4	<i>Kids were playing in the park. Running around, their noses dripping. I hurried there, to the first boy, Handed them the sheets for their noses and cheeks. He addresses the audience again;⁶⁵ the next two lines are sung together: And the paper roll came in handy. And the paper roll came in handy.</i>	4+3+4 4+3+4 4+4 4+4+4 4+4 4+4+4	The same as Verse 1
Verse 5	<i>Little lady was crying on a bench, Because another girl took her boyfriend. I gave her lots of sheets to ease her pain, If you wipe your tears right, the lipstick doesn't smear. And the paper roll came in handy. And the paper roll came in handy.</i>	4+3+4 4+3+4 4+6 4+4+4 4+4 4+4+4	The same as Verse 1
Verse 6	<i>Only five sheets were left at the end. Enough for this song, not for a sonnet. I took a pen, wrote on the sheets I shortly described what happened that day. How the paper roll came in handy. How the paper roll came in handy. Before the end of the last bar, he reminds the audience: "It's 'la la la' again, let's clap."</i>	4+3+4 4+3+4 4+4 4+4+4 4+4 4+4+4	The same as Verse 1

Chorus	As above. The last bar slides in a ritardando, slowing the tempo altogether.	As the first time	As the first time
Verse 7	<i>At the end, I'm adding a request for you: You should feel sorry for those who have nothing to eat. There are many children among them! I'm asking you to give Some money, at least for a meal – for these golden buttocks. So they'll ever be able to use a paper roll. So they'll ever be able to use a paper roll.</i>	4+3+4 4+3+4 4+6 4+4+4 4+4 4+4+4	The same as Verse 1

Table 2: Formal structure of “The Paper Roll Song”.⁶⁷

In Verse 7, the accompaniment is quieter, the picking becomes thinner; the last chord (C) is plucked as an arpeggio after the voice already finishes. The voice is closer to speech and occasionally steps out of the previous form both melodically and rhythmically.⁶⁸ Thus, the last verse is more carefully interpreted, acting as a plea to the audience.

From the structural point of view, the two analysed performances of “The Paper Roll Song” are almost identical – except for the slight difference in tempo and the addition of some instrumental measures in the Example 2.⁶⁹ The third line in Verse 3, 5 and 7 is prolonged by two measures, offering the audience some extra time to reflect the words that have just been told. The whole song is carefully constructed and not much is left to musical improvisation. All of this concurs with the author’s opinion of simplicity and importance of the lyrics, as stated above. When compared with other performances⁷⁰ of the same song, there are no significant differences from the form described above:

63 “Thank you very much. You can rest now.” In both examples.

64 “Now follows the ‘la la la’, you’re clapping”. In the Example 2, he almost runs out of time to say the instructions, and he helps himself with a slight ritardando.

65 “Thank you, you can rest now again” (Example 1) or “Super, thank you” (Example 2).

66 “Now you can sing it with me,” in both examples. From now on, he is gesturing to the audience and encouraging it with “we sing again” and “bravo” to participate in singing the following verses.

67 Original lyrics in Slovenian:

Kupil sem si rolico, rolico papirja./ Skozi mesto šel sem z njo, z rolico papirja./ Jo odnesel bom domov, sem si tiho pravil./ na straniščni jo pokrov si jo bom nastavil./ Da mi bo prav pršla rolica papirja./ Da mi bo prav pršla rolica papirja./ A mimo mene je gospa kužka pripeljala/ in za njim na cesti sta kupčka dva ostala./ To ni dobro, sem dejal, za sprehajališče!/ Hitro kupčka sem pobral, ju nesel na smetišče./ Pa mi je prav pršla rolica papirja./ Pa mi je prav pršla rolica papirja./ Sem naletel na klošarja, se z vincem je nalival./ A neroda štorasta, po bradi ga je zlival./ Dal sem lističa mu dva, da se je obrisal./ pa še za čevlja švedrasta, da prah si je pobrisal./ Pa mi je prav pršla rolica papirja./ Pa mi je prav pršla rolica papirja./ V parku nekaj se otrok veselo je igralo./ Tekali so naokrog, je iz noskov jim curjalo./ Nemudoma sem tja zavil, do prvega fantička./ jim papirčke razdelil za noske in za lička./ Pa mi je prav pršla rolica papirja./ Pa mi je prav pršla rolica papirja./ Je na klopici damica milo se jokala./ ker ji druga deklica fanta je speljala./ Dost' papirčkov sem ji dal, pa ji b'lo je laže./ Če si solze brišeš prav, se šminka ne razmaže./ Pa mi je prav pršla rolica papirja./ Pa mi je prav pršla rolica papirja./ In tako mi le še pet je lističev ostalo./ Dovolj za tole pesmico, za sonet premalo./ Kuli sem v roke vzel, na lističe zapisal./ kaj ta dan sem doživel, na kratko sem orisal./ kako mi je prav pršla rolica papirja./ Kako mi je prav pršla rolica papirja./ A na koncu bi dodal še prošnjo za vse zbrance./ naj vam vsak dan bo tistih žal, ki nimajo nič hrane./ Med njimi mnogo je otrok, prosim vas, da date/ kak tolar, vsaj za en obrok, za te ritke zlate!/ Da sploh jim bo kdaj prav pršla rolica papirja./ Da sploh jim bo kdaj prav pršla rolica papirja.

68 This happens in many other performances of this song. The exception is the studio recording, where this strophe sticks to the rhythmical and melodic form of other strophes (except for the ritardando at the end).

69 Four measures (consisting of guitar accompaniment only) are added at the end of the Verse 1 and 5 of the Example 2.

70 E.g. the performance at acoustic festival FAG Griže, 28 August, 2010. “Adi Smolar – Rolica papirja,” published 30 August, 2010, <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=8KuvtOHipQ>. Or the performance at a charity concert in Ljutomer, 20 April, 2013. “Adi Smolar – Pesem o rolici papirja [v živo, z besedilom],” published 8 May, 2013, <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=5ooNwTEFTzQ>. These two performances were not included in the analysis because were the introduction of the song is cut from the recording.

the only variations might be in a form of added instrumental measures after the verses, different comments when addressing the audience during the performance,⁷¹ and tempo (of the whole performance or of the last verse). The involvement of the audience also varies – it may depend on the context (the performance at the Red Cross concert – Example 1 – in a huge setting of the Gallus hall of Cankarjev Dom⁷² and transmitted live on the public television turns out more formal than the intimate performance at DSR⁷³ members meeting with only some 20–30 listeners – Example 2) or on the audience's familiarity with the song (at FAG⁷⁴ Griže, some members of the audience sing along all the time).

This is not the only case in which Adi Smolar includes the audience in his performance; his introductions of songs are often humorous to keep the listeners interested, or he encourages them to participate in singing the chorus (this can be seen at any live performance of his). Other artists may have different approaches – in fact, every *kantavtor* has his or her own way of interaction with the listeners. Verbal interaction during songs is less common (besides Adi Smolar, it can be witnessed e.g. at the Jani Kovačič's performances) since this kind of interaction interferes with the narration of the lyrics. Hence, the most convenient part of the performance for the artist's interaction with the listeners remains in the form of introduction before each song (rarely at the end of the songs – because of the applause). Including all these notions in a research correspond to Small's concept of *musicking*:

We take into account not just what the performers are doing and certainly not just the piece that is being played or what the composer, should there be one, has done. We begin to see a musical performance as an encounter between human beings that takes place through the medium of sounds organized in specific ways. Like all human encounters, it takes place in a physical and a social setting, and those, too, have to be taken into account when we ask what meanings are being generated by a performance. [...] That being so, it is not enough to ask, *What is the nature or the meaning of this work of music?* [...] Using a concept of musicking as a human encounter, we can ask the wider and more interesting question: *What does it mean when this performance (of this work) takes place at this time, in this place, with these participants?*⁷⁵

Conclusion

In conclusion, *Kantavtorstvo* is a notion determined by three essential points: first, the identification of authors with their messages by the audience; second, the message (sometimes equalized with lyrics; the message should outweigh the entertaining and aesthetic function of a song); and third, the do-it-yourself process. However complex the definition of the term *kantavtor* is, finding the answer to the question "Who are

71 At the performance at FAG Griže, during the 4th verse before the last two lines he says: "You can help me." At the performance in Ljutomer, he encourages the audience at the one but the last line of the 5th verse with leaning away from the microphone, thus letting them to sing the words "rolica papirja" without his guidance.

72 Cultural institution and national cultural centre, located in Ljubljana.

73 "Društvo Slovenija Rusija" – Slovenia Russia Society.

74 "Festival akustične glasbe" – Acoustic Music Festival.

75 Small, *Musicking*, 10 (italics in original).

Slovenian singer-songwriters” seems essential for the quest of finding the right research approach. All this time, my primary research goal remains to describe and explain their creative process – *kantavtorstvo*: the musicking, not just the music or lyrics, and the meaning of this musicking.

Ethnomusicological approach to the task of researching *kantavtorstvo* includes the use of several interdisciplinary methods and approaches. The method of textual analysis described above explains this musicking from within. In order to contextualize the performances, some other methods such as interviews and participant observation are used. My focus is on the performers, not on their audience.⁷⁶ Focusing on individual performers is not uncommon in recent ethnomusicological research; as Jesse D. Ruskin and Timothy Rice⁷⁷ notice from the comparison of several musical ethnographies:

The notion that musical cultures are fragmented and deterritorialized seems to drive the now common – indeed, practically unavoidable – ethnomusicological study of individuals. No matter the reason, our survey of musical ethnographies points to how ethnomusicologists seek to understand the cultures and communities they study by paying careful and respectful attention to the individual musicians they encounter in their research.

While conducting actual research, other motives can emerge: conducting interviews could for example become a very personally involved process. In addition, to conduct a research of a musicking without any temporal distance (especially the one with such a small group of representatives as *kantavtorstvo*), one can scarcely stay uninvolved in current issues. Instead of worrying about keeping an indifferent approach, I finally decided to assume another stand, the one of applied ethnomusicology: all things considered, advocating the ideas and goals of these artists does not contradict the main research objective. As long as my approach avoids carrying out the propaganda of *kantavtorstvo* and my personal likes or dislikes do not blur my perspective; as long as I keep to the scientific criterion of my discipline and its ethical code, my research of *kantavtorstvo* offers an interpretative⁷⁸ contribution to my discipline.

⁷⁶ To determine the impact on the audience, a simple questionnaire would not suffice; instead, individual interviews would have to be conducted with a broad range of individuals.

⁷⁷ Jesse D. Ruskin and Timothy Rice: “The Individual in Musical Ethnography.” *Ethnomusicology* 56, no. 2 (2012): 318.

⁷⁸ “Interpretive methods of research start from the position that our knowledge of reality, including the domain of human action, is a social construction by human actors and that this applies equally to researchers. Thus there is no objective reality which can be discovered by researchers and replicated by others, in contrast to the assumptions of positivist science. Our theories concerning reality are ways of making sense of the world and shared meanings are a form of intersubjectivity rather than objectivity. Interpretivism is thus an epistemological position, concerned with approaches to the understanding of reality and asserting that all such knowledge is necessarily a social construction and thus subjective.” Geoff Walsham, *Interpretative information systems in organizations* (Chichester: Wiley, 1993), 10.

POVZETEK

Izraz kantavtor, izhajajoč iz italijanskega *cantautore*, je v slovenskem prostoru navzoč od začetka sedemdesetih let prejšnjega stoletja, skupaj s poimenovanjem pa smo prevzeli tudi pomenske konotacije, ki jih je italijanski izraz pridobil v nekaj letih svojega obstoja: »Od sredine 60. let prejšnjega stoletja *cantautore* ne označuje zgolj pevca, ki piše pesmi, ampak pevca in avtorja drugačne pesmi, nečesa, ki – že zgolj s svojim obstojem – zmore prestaviti (in označiti) meje 'komercialne' ali očitnejše 'lahke' glasbe.«⁷⁹ Nekaterim slovenskim kantavtorjem tujka ni bila všeč in so poskušali najti ustrežnejši izraz s pomensko podstavo v slovenščini, vendar se je poimenovanje kantavtor kljub vsemu ohranilo, saj bi ga bilo zaradi splošne razširjenosti težko izkoreniniti.

Definicija pojma kantavtor ni enostavna. Kot ugotavljam v raziskavi, se z iskanjem definicije ukvarjajo tudi kantavtorji sami, saj želijo na ta način razjasniti in legitimirati lastno identiteto; poleg splošnih značilnosti (»kantavtor je pevec in izvajalec lastne skladbe«) posledično nekateri od njih poudarjajo aspekte, ki so z njihovega vidika pomembnejši za razločevanje kantavtorjev od preostale glasbene scene: bodisi pomen besedila, ki naj bi štel za poezijo, bodisi družbenokritični vidik njihovega ustvarjanja. Vendar pa bi vsaka podrobnejša označitev izključila nekatere ustvarjalce, ki se predstavljajo kot kantavtorji, ali vključila takšne, ki se s to oznako ne istovetijo. Nekoliko lažje je definirati glasbeni proces oziroma kantavtorstvo, za katero so običajno značilni trije aspekti: istovetnost (poslušalci kantavtorje istovetijo s sporočili njihovih pesmi), sporočilnost (ta pogosto zasenči zabavno in/ali estetsko plat

določene pesmi) in ustvarjalni proces po načelu »naredi sam«. Razrešitev vprašanja definicije pa je bistvenega pomena za izbiro ustreznega raziskovalnega pristopa.

Prikazana metoda oblikovne in vsebinske analize poudarja pomen upoštevanja treh bistvenih vidikov kantavtorske pesmi: besedila, glasbe in izvedbe. Čeprav je pri kantavtorstvu običajno v ospredju besedilo, je pri podrobnejši analizi moč opaziti edinstvenost prepleta teh treh sestavin. Na primeru pesmi »Romeo Julija« Boštjana Narata ugotavljam, kako besedilo in glasba izražata idejo dvojnosti in kontrasta, dodatno poudarjeno še z načinom izvedbe. Čeprav že besedilo samo jasno prinese idejo, je ta ob podpori glasbe in izvedbe še izrazitejša. Drugi primer, »Pesem o rolici papirja« Adija Smolarja, pa prikaže, kako ključno je pri analizi upoštevati živo izvedbo pesmi – vključenost občinstva v samo izvedbo namreč presega slučajnost in preraste v integrirani del same pesmi.

Namen raziskave je opisati in razložiti, kdo so slovenski kantavtorji. Poleg analize primerov uporabljam tudi antropološke metode, kot sta intervju in opazovanje z udeležbo, medtem ko za kontekstualizacijo pojma kantavtorstvo posegam tudi po zgodovinskih in socioloških pristopih. Zaradi časovne in prostorske bližine je nevtralnost raziskovalca hitro postavljena pod vprašaj. Posledično prevzemam advokativno vlogo aplikativne etnomuzikologije (vendar se izogibam propagandi) in interpretativni⁸⁰ pristop, s čimer lahko zadostim kriterijem in etiki svoje discipline, obenem pa s pojasnjevanjem in kontekstualizacijo pojma ustvarjalcem pomagam k boljši razumljenosti in prepoznavnosti znotraj konteksta popularne glasbe.

79 Marco Santoro in Marco Solaroli, "Authors and Rappers: Italian Hip Hop and the Shifting Boundaries of 'Canzone d'Autore'", *Popular Music* 26, nr. 3 (2007): 467.

80 "Interpretativne raziskovalne metode izhajajo s stališča, da je naše poznavanje realnosti, vključno z domeno človekovih aktivnosti, družbena konstrukcija človeških dejavnikov, kar se v enaki meri nanaša na raziskovalce. Za razliko od stališča pozitivistične znanosti torej ni neke objektivne realnosti, ki bi jo raziskovalci odkrivali, drugi pa replicirali. Naše teorije, ki zadevajo realnost, so način osmišljanja sveta, skupni pogledi pa so oblika intersubjektivnosti in ne objektivnosti. Interpretivizem je torej epistemološko stališče, ki razlaga pristope k razumevanju realnosti ter zagovarja mnenje, da je vsako tovrstno znanje nujno socialni konstrukt in zatorej subjektivno." Geoff Walsham, *Interpretative information systems in organizations* (Chichester: Wiley, 1993), 10.