

company boards and writing music reviews or preparing essays for opera programmes. The musicological canon considers that opera belongs to music history, musicology and musical scholarship, and its representatives have the power to produce and reproduce hegemonic perspectives. Its fieldwork is concerned with “*gossip and scandals*” (p. 69).

Interestingly, this canon is based on dogmatic perspectives and inspired by various ideologies identified by the author as essentialism, autochthonism and nationalism, which are related to the “*authentic*” and “*autochthonous*” (p. 69) character of Slovenian music, culture and nationhood. Compared with the neighbouring countries of Austria and Italy, Slovenia does not have a strong articulated musical tradition. According to Kotnik, the function of the musicological canon is precisely to address this weakness. And in its habitus there is a strong component of discourses about the Slovenian nation, which is documented in the study on the press Kotnik carried out from 1991 to 2009, and in an attempt to gain further governmental financial support for the Maribor opera house, not on the grounds of the quality of its performances, but due to its “national” relevance, to be granted a “national” status. This pervasive notion of “national” in the case of Slovenian opera is relevant even for public expenditure, the allocation of funding and (lack of) search for sponsorship.

This is an original study of opera in Slovenia. However, Kotnik’s book

is not only about the history of opera as it has a great deal to say about methodology. By making a link between the anthropology of knowledge and the notion of habitus, Kotnik connects Bourdieu to Foucault in an interesting way, providing a methodological tool for cultural studies of opera. The reflection on how knowledge about opera is constructed is necessary to understand the habitus as, according to Bourdieu, habitus is itself the product of history. In addition, it suggests a perspective of cultural analysis which could be fruitfully applied to the study of “national operatic habitus”, “canons” and operatic “peripheries” in other cultural contexts. The book engages with contemporary debates on the study of opera providing intelligent epistemological suggestions, and it is indeed a must read for academics interested in opera, music and cultural studies.

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Mojca Doupona Topič
Objektivnost v športnem novinarstvu
Faculty of Sport, University of
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In her scientific monograph *Objektivnost v športnem novinarstvu* (*Objectivity in Sport Journalism*) Moj-

ca Doupona Topič studies the conventions and practices of sports journalism and grounds her empirical investigation of Slovenian sport journalism on a relatively functionalist understanding of the norm of objectivity. Doupona Topič, a professor at the Faculty of Sport at the University of Ljubljana, organises her book in six chapters arranged between the introduction and conclusion: in the first three chapters, she positions issues of sports journalism within debates on the norm of journalistic objectivity, the professionalisation of journalists, and journalistic genres; in the next two parts she methodologically frames her study of objectivity in Slovenian sports journalism, and then presents the findings on the basis of a content analysis of Slovenian daily press and interviews among experts in the remaining chapters. Despite the clear structure and organisation, many weaknesses can be identified, leaving the reader somewhat unsatisfied: from not explicitly stating the main research goal of the monograph in the introduction, the superficial literature review on complex notions and processes such as objectivity and professionalisation, methodological weaknesses, particularly insufficient argumentation concerning why a certain method is used, through to numerous spelling, grammatical and typing mistakes throughout the book as if the manuscript has not been proofread. However, the most satisfying part of the book are the insights into journalistic texts on the Union Olimpija basketball team

in the Slovenian press that reveal a culturally specific narration and rhetoric significantly different from that of other thematic types of journalism and somehow remote from established conventions of contemporary Slovenian journalism.

By approaching sport as a social institution on one hand and as a media product on the other, Doupona Topič assesses the relationship between journalism and sport and indicates it as *“full of tension, compromises, disagreements and secrets”* (p. 15). In the first chapter the author enters into the debate on the difficulties of exhaustively defining journalism in different contexts and understanding its role in society, where she approaches these issues through the conceptions of occupational ideology. She then contrasts the latter with the ideas of the public journalism movement which developed in the specific context of American media and journalism of the late 1980s and early 1990s. Therefore, public journalism can hardly be used as a sufficient critique of the dominant journalistic ideology in Slovenia, but more as an example of how participation, democracy and communication can be differently conceptualised and framed within journalism. Public journalism is not used as a conceptual framework later on in the theoretical part, let alone in the empirical study. In the next section of the chapter she introduces the concept of framing and vaguely presents its value for analysing the meaning of media and journalistic texts. In the final section

she takes the notion of objectivity and tries to critically review the literature, although it can hardly be argued that she succeeds in doing that. Namely, Doupona Topič implicitly equates objectivity and professionalism by neglecting the diachronic perspective on journalism, and does not even try to reflect the norm of objectivity through the prism of sport journalism. To some degree, the author attempts to do that in the fifth chapter, but disappoints the reader – not only with the length of the chapter, which is less than three pages, but also with her effort. Namely, with more or less commonsense reflections Doupona Topič idealises objectivity in journalism and does not look beyond the often criticised ideological position stating that objectivity cannot be achieved, yet it is still worth pursuing.

In the third chapter Doupona Topič conceptualises “sport journalism or journalism on sports” (p. 36), but clearly opens up too many issues on too few pages – from the social meaning of sport and role of sport journalism, identity issues of sport departments being labelled “toy departments of news media” (p. 36), the relationship between sports journalism and the audience, the specifics and difficulties of newsmaking processes in sports journalism, to the often explored conflicts of interest among sports journalists. These issues are indeed important when sketching out the political, economic, cultural and technological specificities of sports journalism in the contemporary news industry, but dealing

with them superficially and arranging them unclearly does nobody any favours. Further, due to the superficiality and lack of clarity in the explanation the reader is left on their own when Doupona Topič writes about, for instance, “professional sports journalism” (p. 38), “sports journalism as a global culture”, and the “sports press as the largest advertising agency in the world” (p. 37). In a similar shallow fashion the author links the theory of journalistic genres and journalistic discourse in the next, four-page chapter entitled *Novinarski žanri (Journalistic Genres)*, leaving a demanding reader somewhat conceptually puzzled when she writes about “families of genres” (p. 47). Further, she presents the typology of journalistic genres only by referring to the work of Manca Košir and completely leaves out the context in which the often cited typology emerged. In the last section of the chapter she cites two how-to-do-it journalistic textbooks as possible guidelines for “good” sports journalism. Without critique and contextualisation she finishes the chapter with a recommendation that “it is essential that a sports journalist has a certain distance from sport, athletes and supporters” as s/he might easily “cross the boundary between objectivity and supporting” (p. 51).

In the fifth and sixth chapters Doupona Topič finally gives a hint of what the book’s goal is. By analysing newspaper content and conducting expert interviews with basketball coaches, referees, educators, marketing agents and administration members,

the author plans to investigate “if journalists of the printed newspapers objectively present events connected with KK Union Olimpija and make conclusions about professionalism of sport journalism” (pp. 56–57). Without going into details of the methodological framework, at least two interconnected aspects are worrying in this study plan: the theoretical and methodological aspects. First, the fact that the plan the author wants to investigate whether part of reality has been objectively transferred into text indicates that Doupona Topič unacceptably simplifies the theoretical grounding of her research by neglecting numerous works from media and journalism studies on the complex relationship between news and reality, as well as the construction of meaning in journalism. Second, the content analysis adopted in this book is not properly assessed as it involves some sort of combination of quantitative and qualitative approaches, whereas she mentions critical discourse analysis without explaining it thoroughly. Moreover, if a researcher is interested in the construction of journalistic texts and the underlying conventions why does she not conduct interviews with the authors of those texts. In this case, it is puzzling that Doupona Topič interviews basketball experts who did not write the analysed texts in order to investigate the conventions and practices of journalistic objectivity.

Despite many theoretical and methodological weaknesses, the seventh chapter *Med objektivnostjo in*

navijaštvom (Between Objectivity and Supporting) is the most valuable part of the book. By analysing journalistic texts about Union Olimpija in two serious dailies *Delo* and *Dnevnik*, the tabloid daily *Indirekt*, and the sports daily *Ekipa* for a week in February 2008 Doupona Topič identifies that online journalists are mostly male (94%) and, as she identifies some signs of genre hybridisation, she implies that the texts cannot completely fit the established typology of journalistic genres. In the titles of the analysed journalistic texts the author identifies fragments of war discourse, a nationalistic dichotomisation between “us” and “them”, and an apotheosis of winning in Slovenian sports journalism on Union Olimpija. These can also be ascribed to other parts of the analysed texts, where the pointing out of the skin colour of some basketball players, characterising of the physical and psychological strengths of players and coaches, and dealing with positive or negative emotions of athletes are discussed together with an often hardly justifiable intrusion into an athlete’s privacy by Slovenian sport journalists. In her case study she concentrates on news about the sacking of Union Olimpija coach Aleksandar Džikić and finds that sports journalists have mixed “facts” and “opinion” and that journalists reacted more as supporters than impartial mediators of reality since some of them even employ offensive language to criticise Olimpija coach and players. Journalists “in the process of writing took many subjective

decisions leading to a departure from objective discourse and coming close to increasing non-objectivity”(pp. 134–5). Similar reflections based on shallow theoretical knowledge on the subject are offered by the interviewed experts who as journalistic outsiders do not bring any fresh insights to the study – interviewing the journalists who wrote the analysed texts would probably have been more rewarding.

All in all, *Objektivnost v športnem novinarstvu* is a pioneer attempt at investigating what sports journalism is like in the Slovenian daily press in terms of journalistic genres, how

Slovenian sports journalists are involved in the texts they write, and how sports journalism discourse can be characterised. However, many weaknesses diminish the value of Doupona Topič's work – from theoretical superficiality and simplification, a methodological lack of clarity and precision, through to numerous spelling, grammatical and typing mistakes. Therefore, to salvage at least some of the monograph's value one must drop her/his expectations significantly and concentrate on the discussion based on the empirical study, which holds a greater publicist value than a scientific one.