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EVERYDAY NARRATION AND ORAL TRADITION IN THE SUBURBAN VILLAGE OF ŠESTINSKI KRALJEVEC NEAR ZAGREB

Summary

The text which introduces the collected material describes the reactions of some people in the suburban village of Šestinski Kraljevec near Zagreb to modern elements which affect this community and the way of life of its members. The author discusses the role of the mountain stream which flows through the village, the life of the Šestine laundresses, work in the nearby quarry, house-to-house milk delivery in the city, the new role of singing in the village, and the attitudes of the story-tellers and narrators to changes brought about by the modern times. The conclusions are drawn from personal observation and conversations with villages centering on the topic or »life in former times and now«. In these conversations, tradition appears in the form of reminiscences of certain »facts« dating back to the narrators childhood and early youth. In their talks with the author the narrators did not confine themselves to mere facts but also gave their subjective interpretation.

The narrated material — real-life stories, traditional narratives, and comic stories — was recorded in the course of these conversations and was also based on the confrontation between the past and the present. Though the narrators were emphatic in claiming that »nowadays« the narrating tradition is not as much alive as it used to be (complaining even that it was dead), oral communication was found to be an important part of life in the village and very closely connected with the narrating tradition of the kind found by the author in the rural parts of the Hrvatsko Zagorje region to the north of Zagreb. The proximity of the big city has not, for instance, made people forget the story of the abolition of villenage, while many stories which tell of the action of dark and mysterious forces that cause a person to get lost in the forest have now changed their setting and take place in Zagreb instead (where the hero gets lost in the maze of streets but in a completely modern setting, so that he even rides the tram).

The narrated material recorded in Šestinski Kraljevec is presented here in a representative selection.

(Translated by Vladimir Ivir)