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TREATISE ON PRIORITIES

Who or what sets the priorities of the profession? The market, politics and scholars. A historical review of the profession's priorities from 1948 to the present day on the example of the Zagreb Institute of Ethnology and Folklore Research. Interpretation of old priorities could well be of help in establishing the new ones.

Key words: folkloristics, ethnology, priorities

I could also have called this text a discussion about championships – *prvenstva* in Croatian – but the current social priorities of such a more Croatian title would have immediately categorised it in the anthropology of sport. My idea was to write in a general way about the priorities of our profession, and not about sports contests. Priority is precedence, but also a right to that very priority, a priority in a temporal sequence. The priority of the profession is what the profession primarily engages in at a given moment or planned period, at least temporarily abandoning, neglecting or setting aside the remaining components of its own subject-matter.

And questions immediately present themselves. Who is it who establishes the priorities of the profession? Is that the privilege of the profession or is it decided upon outside the profession? I am intentionally utilising the broad term *profession* since use of the value-contaminated term *science* (or even listing of the names of the individual scholarly disciplines) would greatly complicate understanding of the issue. In other words, freedom of scholarship has its place amongst the proclaimed committed values of civic democracy, such as artistic freedom, freedom of confession or university autonomy. Freedom of scholarship is linked with freedom of speech and is experienced as the right to the truth. If we replace the term *profession* with some less privileged vocation, it will be easier to answer.

Scholars and cobblers

I admit it, I had given some thought to locksmiths, carpenters and shepherds, but their diverse products seemed inappropriate as examples. Consequently, who

sets the priorities of the shoemaker's craft? Shoemakers, the market and politics. True enough, each shoemaker decides fairly independently and creatively about the quality, quantity, types and models of the shoes he makes, sells and repairs – but on his own responsibility. If he wants to stay in business, the shoemaker must accept the priorities that the competition imposes on the market: the fashion demands, the manner of production, the selection of raw materials, and the relation between quality and price. The shoemaker's priorities are also imposed by politics: taxes, regulations, import quotas, and whether crafts or industry are being favoured. The policy of completely opening up the global market can force the shoemaker to stop producing shoes and to limit his activities to repairs or even to mere (re)sale of imported goods – as long as the very cheap *dumping* prices of global neo-liberalism in the large shopping malls, based on the depreciation of labour, or even the abuse of child labour in the countries of the Third World, do not eliminate him from the game completely.

Do we – Croatian scholars – share the fate of Croatian shoemakers? The principle is the same, all the rest are mere individual details. It is quite clear that Croatian scholarship is not directly threatened by the competitive scholarly output of Far Eastern children, but it is still, nonetheless, very much affected by transitional and globalisation changes.

During socialist times, the shoemaker's craft belonged to the – admittedly limited and neglected – private sector so that transformation and privatisation did not send him tottering. Shoemakers were hit more by increased imports, because they had previously been able more easily to compete with the domestic footwear industry with the quality of their goods.

Unlike them, scholars in the socialist block were financed then almost exclusively by the State budget – the exception to an extent having been certain specialised research institutes that were within the frameworks of the planned economy's outsize production capacities (the factories and the combines). However, with the reformed (self-management) socialism of ex-Yugoslavia, and particularly after 1976 and the Associated Labour Act, direct funding of scholarship from the State budget was abandoned – at least on paper. The self-management socialism system was based on the idea of socially-owned and not State-owned property: scholars were funded from associated labour through the SIZ-es (Self-managing Communities of Interest). The sphere of material production for the market was concealed behind the ideologeme “associated labour”. The system was conceived in such a way that production subjects paid for scientific research and thus defined priorities. Scholarship was ideologically subordinated to production while, with the parallel education reform, so-called vocationally-orientated education was introduced as training for future vocations. It was intended to replace the expensive general education system by attainment of the specialised know-how necessary for material goods production. The objectives were undoubtedly utilitarian: with the reform of

scholarship and education, the competitiveness of the sluggish socialist economy on world markets would be increased, and a new model of market-orientated socialism would be created. Market socialism was implemented later in the PR of China with spectacular results, but it is open to question just how much of socialist ideas has been retained there.

In Croatia, the lethargy of the self-management system prevailed. When the Berlin Wall fell, the difference between socially-funded and State-funded science and scholarship was still merely declarative – and then war broke out. Paradoxical but true: the restoration of capitalism in Croatia returned scholarship, also formally, to the State manger. It was only the launching of the National Foundation for Science, Higher Education and Technological Development of the Republic of Croatia (by decision of the Croatian Parliament, 2001) that we could regard as a new market-orientated beginning in the funding of science, but scholarly projects were still largely being financed directly from the crisis-frozen State budget in 2009. Excellence, the mobility of scholars and participation in international projects is sought in that process, which should help in the recognition of domestic scholarship and lead to additional alleviation of the budget.

Each mode of science and scholarship funding has its advantages and drawbacks. Budget financing offers scholars more social security and is conducive to less harrowed work (within the framework of the approved funds), but that security also modifies international competition and reduces competitiveness, which has a partially unfavourable effect on the quality and scope of scholarly output. Furthermore, such a manner of financing gives the financier/the State an almost exclusive right to selection of priorities – as dispensers in the distribution of budget funds, the power centres directly manipulate scholarship politically. In that process, the degree of democracy in society conditions greater or lesser departure from social (public) interests and the interests of scholarship and/or the scholars' priorities. Under totalitarian regimes, that leads to stagnation and isolation of science and scholarship within state borders.

Market-orientated financing of scholarship imposes market priorities, and that implies favourisation of utilitarian, speedily profitable research that is useful in “rendering services” (trade) and/or the production of material goods for the market. Fundamental, and especially humanist and social knowledge does not bring profit in the short term – or even not at all – and that is why it is not interesting to the market.

If financed only by the State budget, the humanistic profession does better financially when it supports current State policies. In a fully market-orientated economy, all that is left to it is the commercialisation of cultural heritage, the so-called applied research. In our field of humanist endeavour – in ethnology, cultural anthropology and folkloristics – it is a matter largely of application of research results in (cultural) tourism.

It is clear that political and market priorities do not fully coincide with the interests of the profession. But what are the interests of the profession? Are the interests of scholars also the interests of the profession? If they are not, then who determines the interests and priorities of the profession besides politics, the market and the scholars themselves? Our profession is scholarship and has the general objective of accumulating human knowledge, but each scholar still decides on the priorities of research in the end. It is an individual decision whether we accept, without objection, the priorities set by politics and/or the market or whether we will respect them in small doses or modify them in keeping with our own conscience, and on our own responsibility. The decision is not exclusively a matter of personal affinity; it also has an ethical dimension: we are not accountable only to the market and politics as financiers, but also to the people who are the subject-matter of our research in the humanities. The shoemaker makes footwear that is wearable. A conscientious craftsman makes an effort to manufacture good-quality, usable footwear under the given market and political circumstances. If the customer is looking for the latest fashion, the shoemaker will be prepared to sell it to him or her, but he will, at the same time, explain the shortcomings and advantages of the model and, as an expert, offer an alternative. A good shoemaker knows more about footwear than the average pedestrian. If he wants to remain a good shoemaker, he must also *represent* pedestrian interests, and raise awareness of the customers' priorities with his own product and advice.

Production of texts

Can that also be applied in our profession? What do we produce? Texts for the most part – along with an occasional exhibition, excursions into the visual and audio media and live stagings. Texts are the most personal authorial product. Everything else, no matter how successful, implies greater co-operation with others and can be regarded as a creative critical choice and/or the application of research results. Apart from those final products, our production process also includes so-called collection of material: notation of data using various media, collation, storing and preservation. In fact, those notations and records are semi-products – they carry the stamp of the author's choice, but they are intended for future (one's own or someone else's) authorship and production.

The cobbler makes shoes, and we write texts. While the influence of the profession in the life of the community is desirable, the methods by which that influence is implemented are also important. In principle, ethnologists do not produce customs and ways of life, folklorists do not fabricate oral literature, mythologists do not concoct myths, ethnomusicologists and ethnochoreologists do not compose folklore music and devise dances, and culturologists do not directly create culture.

However, we are human and can unintentionally participate in all of that, although that is not exactly a legitimate scholarly mission. Market-orientated and political priorities do not burden themselves with scholarly ethics: their siren call can incline us as individuals to throw ourselves enthusiastically into the torrent of life and forget, in so doing, about our scholarly obligations. The simple form of the contract with the devil asks only for our name and title, social reputation and previous references. However, we must not sign it since, as experts, we do not manufacture our own subject-matter, but research it. There are, of course, creative exceptions on the margins of scholarship and there always have been, but that is definitely not our primary activity. A text resulting from unbiased research should precede the application of knowledge in everyday life. It is said that scholarly ethics accepts only the recurrent (subsequent and thus indirect) influence of verified research results on the subject-matter. Anything else would be nearer to abuse of the social authority of a scholar in carrying out tests on people and animals. I shall paraphrase Krleža's bygone argument from the conflict on the literary left: engaged scholarship is possible only for as long as it is indeed scholarship.

Nonetheless, so-called scholarly objectivity has always been questionable in the humanistic disciplines, while in today's unified humanities it is even more doubtful. We produce texts, while the self-sufficiency of text was challenged in literary and cultural theory as early as during the 1960s. The post-structuralist theory of intertextuality does not recognise the separation of an individual text from the unified text of culture, rather it comprehends text as a place of permutation and transformation of other texts. Intertextuality (which was introduced to semiotic theory by J. Kristeva, prompted by Bakhtin's concept of dialogue) is the name given to the active relationship of text as a network of semiotic systems with systems of signifying practice in culture. The idea of intertextuality is exceptionally productive and authentic in many aspects, but it can be quite pernicious if taken literally. In theory, we have been left textless. If we cannot separate our own or someone else's text from the social context, we are not only being denied our authorship of a product – our position as a scholarly subject is also being challenged, along with the possibility of meaningful individual activity in the community. *We think, therefore we are not.* We do not think with our own heads: we are reified at the junction of the amorphous texts of others, interwoven into the featureless tectonics of our own subject-matter's cultural intertext. Without our own text we have nothing to hold on to and are swept along by the winds of market-orientated and political priorities.

The aporia of the relation between subject and object is in no way new, philosophy has been mulling over it for thousands of years. I am mentioning here the post-structuralist echoes of old aporias only because of the theoretical implications and practical consequences in setting the priorities of our profession in post-socialism. The internal theoretical challenging of the scholarly subject

justifies practical external challenging of its priorities. Questioning the position of the subject undermines his authority in society, but also reduces his individual responsibility. The grand intertextual mechanism of the global markets and the unipolar policies thunderously impose the priorities and trends, while the individual voices of the cobbler and the scholar fade even more.

It is not always easy to accept and work under the imposed priorities, and to achieve the results that others plan for us. We come to know the unknown through science and scholarship, but we cannot actually plan the discoveries we make. Of course, there is always that preliminary (“uninventive”) part of our work that can be quantified, and even prescribed, that collection of data for other users, and even for other priorities. In that way, our scholarly priorities can distance us from discoveries, so that results can fail to emerge. Freedom of choice and thinking with one’s own head are the core axioms of every scholarly and moral activity. The catch-phrase *Think globally – act locally!* conceals a dangerous trap. We can only think *of* the global – taking into account the priorities of the whole, and incorporating them into our own priorities – and act locally. One can only think individually, while global thought is another name for totalitarian priority. Without subjective deliberation and dialogue with external priorities we consent to reification, we become the object, and are caught up by partial identification in the dynamics of cultural intertext. We are transforming into tools, followers (epigones) of faith, clan, nation, political party, profit or some other social ideas. If it is a matter of global absolutisation of market-orientated priorities, we could also awaken as servants or slaves to international capital. The bare submission to social norms (or their infringement) is not in itself a question of ethics – it is merely a question of good manners or an issue for the forces of law and order within the community. Fans do not themselves play sports, to be a scholar does not comprehend only knowledge of market and political priorities and monitoring of the global scholarly trend or paradigm. Those are merely preconditions for our competence. In order to act in a scholarly manner, we have to take the individual responsibility of a weakened subject, and personally set our priorities in the given circumstances (and not only by a civic, political act or low-profit imports of a paradigmatic assortment for domestic consumption) constantly prove the social relevance of the profession with our own research.

Assuming the role and accountability of a subject

Assuming the role of a subject seems to me to be crucial for a discussion on priorities. That is why I am decisively avoiding the customary “scholarly apparatus” in this text. I could corroborate almost every sentence with footnotes, quotations from foreign and domestic authors, add an extensive list of references at the end

and wisely select the key words in harmony with priorities and the current paradigm. Using the *cut and paste* method, that would take me three working days at the most, while it would contribute considerably to a semblance of scholarly relevance. Scientographers and statisticians could count the references, editorial boards and commissions would categorise the text, the Area Council would vote that a higher academic grade be conferred on me, my institution would elect me to a new position, and the ministry would raise my coefficient and my salary. Nevertheless, I shall not do that since I don't have anywhere to advance to any more and, in any case, I want to demonstrate that one does not always have to hide behind authority and curry favour with priorities.

The “scholarly apparatus” referred to is useful and, in some cases, unavoidable, but it is not always – nor has it always been – also customary and welcome in humanistic texts. The difference in style is no accident. Our texts are more personal and “more subjective” than texts in the natural, formal and social sciences. While we interpret, they prove. Their texts have largely to be directly provable, they are “objective” reports on the results of research – the results of our research *are* the texts. That does not mean that we concoct facts; we are neither medical examiners of irrefutable truths nor CSIs of dead facts, we study the living actors, our subject-matters are subjects, people like us, or even we ourselves. We have conscientiously to cite our sources, information has to be checked critically – that also holds in the humanities and the “scholarly apparatus” can help us in that regard. But we can only interpret from our own perspective subjects who live, think, speak and act. Our main job is interpretation, and that is implemented in the text. The result is interpretation, while the interpretation is the text.

Until we consciously adopt the role and accountability of a subject, we are mere objects to other subjects, individuals or collectives. We enter into dialogue and really participate in the cultural intertext only with the singularity of the text. Naturally enough, the singularity of a text can never be absolute. We do not have to aspire particularly to intertextuality, it is incorporated in advance in every text. Intentional quotations, and collage or *patchwork* only serve additionally to relativise the position of the subject. The idea of intertextuality does not imply the intention to cite as many other texts as possible in one's own – to the contrary, I would say that it would reduce one's own texts and in that way actually impoverish the cultural intertext as a whole.

Adopting the role and accountability of a subject is not an irrational subversive act and cannot be carried out *armata manu* by insolently ignoring the aporia of the subject-object antithesis. For as long as we refer in our own texts to other texts and sub-texts – which is unavoidable – we cannot simply eliminate them or completely isolate them by way of the “scholarly apparatus”. It is obvious that we also cannot give up dialogue with people who are the subjects of our research. In order for us to become and remain a subject, we must accept the discursive nature

of our own identity. The cognition that identity is also a dialogical process – and not an unchangeable fact or a gift from above – should not force us into silence, deter us from having an opinion or ban us from signing a text. We do not sign the texts and subtexts of others that are woven into the intertext of text; we sign our own interpretations. Whether we be subject or intersubject, it is our name in the signature. If we become enmeshed in the net of our own textuality, if we resignedly abandon the position of a subject with the excuse that it is weak in any case and intersubjectively contaminated, then we have euthanised scholarship, deconstructed *Self/Ichheit* and renounced our priorities, dialogues and participation in the construction of our own identity. And what has been said about the identity of the scholarly subject also holds to a great extent for the identity of the profession.

After considering the importance of the role of subject and of identity in setting priorities, it remains for us to ponder on the priorities of our profession. If we have agreed that priorities are established by the market, politics and scholars, it could be interesting to recall the priorities of the profession over the last sixty years (under socialism and later) and to weigh how those priorities were set and what share the three above-mentioned factors had in their construction. For the sake of simplicity, I shall demonstrate that on a small scale on the example of the Zagreb Institute of Ethnology and Folklore Research. Perhaps interpretation of old priorities could be of help in setting the new ones.

The first forty years of interplay between political and scholarly priorities

The Institute was founded on February 6, 1948 as the Institute of Folk Art, an independent institution under the direct management of the Ministry of Education of the People's Republic of Croatia. Its main purpose was to collect and research material from the field of our popular artistic creativity (folklore heritage); to establish, analyse and publicise that material in a scholarly manner, to co-operate with institutions that promote folk art; to provide advice and expert opinions on all matters of Croatian folk art and to take care of the maintenance and conservation of the attainments of Croatian folk art.

I sign the authorship of the foregoing fragment although that summary of the founding documents is, in fact, a typical intertext, which has been recast and signed several times from diverse directorial positions over the past decades. Invoking the original document would be superfluous since one can already read off the interplay of priorities in the given formulation. The Institute was founded by the State or, more precisely, the government of one of its federal components. Similar institutes were founded (over a period of a few years) in other centres throughout

the country, but not, however, in all the republics. The organisational differences are also interesting: the Macedonian and Croatian institutes were established as independent institutions directly responsible to the respective republic governments. The founding document of the Macedonian folklore institute (today the *Marko Cepenkov* Institute of Folklore, part of the *Sts Cyril and Methodius* University in Skopje) is almost identical to the Croatian one. The similar institutes in Slovenia and Serbia were not independent and acted under the auspices of academia: *Inštitut za slovensko narodopisje* [Institute of Slovenian Ethnology] (1947) and the *Glasbenonarodopisni inštitut* [Institute of Ethnomusicology] (1934) within the Slovenian Academy of Sciences and Arts, and the Balkanological Institute and the Ethnography Institute (1947) within the Serbian Academy of Sciences and Arts. The Balkanological Institute was active from 1934 to 1941 and was renewed only in 1969. In Bosnia-Herzegovina, an institute was on the eve of foundation, but never eventuated; no similar institute was founded in Montenegro. The organisational differences were probably the consequences of the political changes in ex-Yugoslavia in 1948 (the *Informbiro* – Stalin's Cominform Resolution). The break with the Soviet Union could have influenced the change in the former Soviet model, in which such institutes were established as a rule within the academies. Nonetheless, the fact that the Macedonian and Croatian institutes were directly responsible to their respective republic governments can also provide evidence on additional political priorities: the State favoured the young Macedonian nation in face of Bulgarian and Greek aspirations, while it was thought prudent in Croatia to respond to the pre-war policies of the Croatian Peasant Party, which had promoted folklore as a symbol of national cohesion, as well as a way of (cultural) life, by way of the widely spread *Peasant Concord* organisation. Political identification of the villagers and the people and the idealisation of the peasants as the healthy foundation of the nation was also readily evident in the national orientation of Croatian art in the period between the two world wars. And one should not forget: folklore also remained a powerful national symbol in the wartime period of the *NDH*, the Independent State of Croatia. In order to achieve the cohesion of the multi-national state after the fratricidal war, it was important to re-direct Croatian national charge into the promotion of the brotherhood and unity of the peoples and nationalities of the new socialist Yugoslavia. On the other hand, the non-existence of institutes in Sarajevo in Bosnia and what was then Titograd (now Podgorica) in Montenegro could be seen as the result of the (concealed) unitarian policies of the central government, as a consequence of Serbian hegemony.

The Socialist League of Workers and Peasants (symbolised by a hammer and sickle) was a mere slogan, because the ideological priorities aspired towards the abolition of private ownership and in the direction of industrialisation. So the peasants migrated to the cities and became industrial workers. The remaining peasants on their small family holdings were euphemistically renamed as indi-

vidual agriculturalists, workers of the land. The peasantry (in keeping with the Soviet model) was regarded as a reactionary and conservative social stratum that opposed the social changes. This premise could be publicly executed on the rhetorical level only through differentiation between the poor and the rich peasants (the *kulaks*). The village poor, those who owned no land, and the day-labourers, were treated as part of the proletariat. A good peasant was a poor peasant. As early as in August 1945, the Act on Agrarian Reform and Colonisation was passed. The objective of the reform was to eliminate all the large holdings (the capitalist ones and those that were leased out). Expropriation of the property of banks, stock companies, companies and ecclesiastical estates was put into effect. An agrarian maximum of 35 hectares was proscribed by law (which was later reduced by the 1953 Act to only 10 hectares), and the resultant surplus was confiscated from the richer peasants and also those with medium-sized and small holdings, who did not themselves till their own land. More than half of the land fund acquired in this way was divided among locals who were interested, while the remainder went to those without any land at all, the colonists and (in a smaller part) to the co-operatives and the agricultural estates or combines.

The slogan *Factories to the workers – land to the peasants!* was implemented by nationalisation and expropriation of industries and arable land. Still, in that re-distribution, the poorest villagers were ensured a small holding, and not only new industrial complexes resulted from renewal and development. Electricity was brought to the villages and several successful land amelioration projects were implemented (the Neretva River Delta, and the Vransko Lake projects between Šibenik and Zadar), mechanisation was introduced in agriculture and stock-raising, synthetic fertilisers were produced, new plant sorts and types were cultivated, and the application of insecticides, herbicides and other then-contemporary agronomic and veterinary methods were introduced in the production of food-stuffs. Although many of those measures are considered to be ecologically and bio-ethically objectionable today, they did help in establishing the self-reliance of the system at that time.

However, the new institutes were not founded in order to do research on the current everyday life of the villages. True enough, information was also collected on way of life in the early research of the 1950s and 1960s, but the main objective was to research folklore, comprehended as the art of the common man. Despite Marxist teaching on base and superstructure, contrary to the postulated primacy of the economy (production forces and production relations), the institutes were given the task of collecting, researching, analysing, publishing, promoting and applying folklore heritage. The idea was to pick and utilise the magical fruits of the fallen tree and to keep and conserve in a scholarly manner the tree-top superstructure, while the powerful locomotives of socialist progress undermined and dragged away into the past the politically unsuitable base.

How can we differentiate the political and market priorities of the Institute during the socialist period? Under socialism, the market was largely closed, politically controlled and planned, so that market priorities largely overlapped with the political – even the more so since the Institute was financed as a public State institution. By participation in teaching, co-operation with the media, culture societies, festivals, and folklore festivals or local communities, many scholars were able slightly to augment their modest incomes (as it was in socialism, so it is today), but they were not serious market priorities. Perhaps they still await us – but more on that later.

If we ignore all the deviations from official policies, the socialist state functioned largely as an economically and politically egalitarian community in relative isolation – the market was limited both spatially and politically. Political thought was basically global but, after the break with the Soviet Union, the Marxist block ideology of proletarian internationalism and world revolution was adapted locally at the State level, and modified into peaceful co-existence, non-alignment and self-managing socialism. Big Brother was replaced by a smaller one, their Josif (Stalin) by our Josip (Broz Tito). Dogma was revised, idolatry was modified: from his position as unquestionable leader, smaller brother criticised the “personality cult”. The global idea was adapted to the framework of a multi-national Yugoslav community, and it created at least a semblance of humanisation, the (limited) freedom of individual decision-making and acting, the so-called “socialism with a human face”. Admittedly, the human face was shown only to the like-minded, Nazor’s Partisan verses were still current: *Tko drukčije kaže, pa kleveće i laže, našu će osjetit pest!* [Who says differently, and slanders and lies, he will feel our fist!].

Briefly, the priorities of the Institute under socialism were formed through dialogue (negotiations and coordination) of the political and scholarly priorities. The dialogue was commenced long ago and still continues – it was not always conducted on an equal footing, but has shown itself to be productive in the long term. That is the frail, hidden, crucial link that has also included for decades the consideration of diverse theoretical, political, ethical and other challenges in our small scholarly community. It is not a matter of acrimonious discussions at meetings or at raucous public appearances (although that has not been completely unknown). Dialogue threads consistently and almost unnoticeably through our texts, intertextually building the identity of the Institute and making us recognisable in the domestic and European context.

Was the approach to folklore as folk art imposed on the Institute exclusively as the political decision of its founders? It is hard to establish what came first, scholarly interest or political priority. The former ethnological sector of the Ethnographic Museum in Zagreb (headed up by the ethnomusicologist Vinko Žganec) served as the nucleus of the new institute. Žganec was the first director of the Institute. That

musical beginning sounds like an appropriate overture to the founding concept of the Institute of Folk Art following the Soviet model, but we must not forget that that same quiet Žganec (then a former young parish priest and future Doctor of Laws) marched triumphantly with the Međimurean volunteers and Slavko Kvaternik's Croatian troops, as he entered Međimurje as a liberator from the many years of Hungarian authority on Christmas Eve 1918. His first early volume of the collection *Hrvatske pučke popijevke iz Međimurja* [Croatian Folk Songs from Međimurje] (1916) is said to have influenced the decision of the Peace Conference at Versailles, by which Međimurje was adjoined to the State of Slovenes, Croats and Serbs, the SHS (1920), while that same collection equally inspired the national orientation in Croatian art music between the two world wars. In 1924 and 1925, Žganec held the high position of Civil Commissioner for Međimurje in the capacity of Government Secretary. He left the public administrative service in 1927 to open his own law office in Sombor, continuing his ethnomusicological and melographic work in the newly-adjointed regions: Bačka, Baranya and Slavonia. I would say that the first Institute research in Istria in the 1950s was prompted by his personal experience and his scholarly and political priorities: to research and note down the folklore of the newly-adjointed territories!

Other biographies of the small team of scholars *in illo tempore* also show that the history of the Institute had a significant pre-history. The interplay between politics and art in the research and application of folklore had existed even earlier, while the founding decree only institutionalised the conditions.

Political priorities are not hovering like a Spirit over the waters. Politics is conceived and implemented by people, people cope and act in political situations, and modify set frameworks. This is not a review of the Institute's history – I am mentioning some worthy names only as examples of individual evaluation and activity in the interplay between priorities. For example, I can remember that two Croatian writers (initially) experienced work at the Institute as merely a livelihood, and also even something like an ideological penal rehabilitation measure. If that were the case, the measure was exceptionally successful: without the notations and poetically conceived anthologies of Olinko Delorko, the civilisational, cultural and aesthetic values of Croatian oral poetry would still be there in the shadow of the political myth on the unified Serbo-Croatian heroic epics as the dominant literature in the south-east of Europe. The playwright and poet Nikola Bonifačić Rožin first began research into the folk drama in Croatia, but the breadth of his notational interest in fact also anticipated the precepts of later folkloristic practice, which try to show the life of folklore in the everyday context. The first professional female folklorist under the flat roof at Zvonimir Street 17 was Maja Bošković-Stulli, partly educated in the Soviet Union – but she was precisely the one (rethinking the works of the Prague School, of K. V. Chistov, Bausinger's orality and American contextual folkloristics) who during

the 1970s pierced the decorative aura of folklore as an artistic treasure of the past. By changing the name of folk literature into oral literature, she relinquished the issue of genesis and moved on to the study of folklore performances in the contemporary context. The contextual-performing paradigm was also applied in ethnomusicological, ethnochoreological and ethnotheatological research. With the arrival of Dunja Rihtman-Auguštin, the activities of the Institute were further expanded into the ethnological sphere: the rigid contrast between town and village was disputed, research commenced into the changes in form and content of cultural phenomena, culture was re-interpreted as a process, and research into customs and the contemporary context of folklore performances grew into the ethnology of everyday life. Expanded interest is not the same as change in interest: folkloristics was not replaced by ethnology. Research into the literary, music and dance components of folklore was not abandoned, but here, too, the focus was moved from the works to the process, to the contemporary functioning of the folklore process in everyday life. The possibility of the artistic value of folklore was not rejected, but the role of folklore in the life of the community became the main subject-matter of research. This meant that there was anticipation early on of many themes that are the focus today of cultural studies, literary anthropology, the anthropology of music, the anthropology of dance and theatre anthropology. Folkloristics (unlike its predecessors) turned away from representative cultural phenomena to the everyday, even to those phenomena that may seem banal and trivial at first glance. Research commenced into urban folklore, stories of life and from life, and children's narratives. Ethnologists researched the traditional forms of common law marriages, death notices, road-side memorials to the victims of traffic accidents, the contemporary culture of housing, the culture of young people (processions of secondary school-leavers held in the open in city centres, badges, T-shirts bearing a message), children's games and songs. That was a U-turn from the diachronic to the synchronic, from the historical to the contemporary.

Contextual folkloristics and the ethnology of everyday life together sketched out the recognisable critical orientation of the Institute, which continues today, supported by ongoing examination of research starting-positions. In diachronic comparison with the preceding period (and the founding political priorities) the changes of the 1970s give the impression of an authentic scholarly revolution. Still, shouldn't we also observe the interplay between scholarly and political priorities simultaneously? The Croatian Spring had already passed and all the changes in the scholarly paradigm of the late 1970s took place within a changed political aura, in the shadow of new (or revised) political priorities.

In other words, we must also take into account the historical dynamics in the political sphere, and must not overlook the reshuffling of political priorities in the second half of the 20th century. Charted according to the Soviet model, the initial representative application of folklore heritage as an artistic symbol of brotherhood

and unity (unity in the practical terms of past diversity) showed itself to be inadequate at the State level. In the meantime, folklore had once again been given the significance of a powerful national historical symbol, particularly in its “Springtime” utilisation. It was in that light that the new scholarly priorities in researching then-current everyday life (equally in the rural and urban communities) actually worked in favour of the powers-that-be. Emphasising synchronics, international folklore motifs and the discovery of urban folklore under the conditions of the already implemented urbanisation and industrialisation of a once peasant country neutralised the oppositional national charge and muffled the historical rhetoric. It would be exaggerated to claim that contextual folkloristics and the ethnology of everyday life were politically imposed (by the Party) as a socialist response to Croatian nationalism; in my opinion this was a casual symbiosis of scholarly and political priorities. Nonetheless, that symbiosis did not perhaps come about completely by chance: if we observe somewhat more broadly the emergence of new scholarly paradigms over a longer period, we could also interpret the criticism of the notion of “the folk” in the German *Volkskunde* of that time as a delayed response to the ideology of National Socialism, and the abandonment of historically orientated folkloristics in the West as an adaptation to the new supranational social ideas after World War II. Furthermore, in certain socialist countries during the 1970s (and even in Slovenia to an extent) folkloristics was pushed into the background and the historical phase of ethnology was declared to have been superseded. Research into contemporary worker folklore and the urban community was supposed to replace the former research into peasant culture.

Fortunately, there was no direct political instrumentalisation of the new scholarly paradigm in Croatia. Perhaps we could try to identify traces of an inclination to the official political priorities in the Yugoslavian spirit of brotherhood and unity in the Institute’s favouring of research into the folklore of the nationalities (the national minorities), as a response to the “Springtime” use of Croatian folklore symbolics in homogenisation of the nation in the early 1970s, but that interpretation seems to be unconvincing and exaggerated. Namely, research into Croats outside the homeland (implemented largely in Austria’s Burgenland) was also favoured, and the seemingly politically inspired research at Kordun was, in fact, the result of the fan-like personal initiative of a certain general of the JNA, the Yugoslav People’s Army, who generously offered the Institute his own weekend cottage as a field base. There was also no ideologically inspired systematic research into worker folklore – the Institute’s theoretic discussion ended with the conclusion on the need to study the folklore of all the social strata, age groups and diverse occupations. That conclusion was firstly in harmony with American contextual folkloristics, and its correspondence with the political priorities of the ruling system was secondary (although not unwelcome). Admittedly, the Institute temporarily lost its organisational independence in the 1970s and 1980s, becom-

ing the Institute of Folklore Research, one of the three components of the pooled Institute of Philology and Folklore Research. The administrative change had no direct effect on scholarly priorities, but the political situation did cause staffing stagnation: with the reduction in possibilities for employing young scholars, a generational gap was created.

The 1980s passed in consolidation and elaboration of the paradigms of the 1970s. The time had passed of joint institute field research into individual regions and locations, but interdisciplinary co-operation was preserved and reinforced by focused research on selected themes, while the results were published in thematic and separate issues of *Narodna umjetnost*, the Croatian Journal of Ethnology and Folklore Research. The thematic issues were frequently not solely thematic: apart from a special theme section, they also contained other articles and book reviews. The Institute's journal of those years faithfully reproduced the paradigmatic shifts: in 1980 and 1981, it published the results of the last joint field research on the island of Zlarin during the 1970s; in 1982, papers on folklore and oral communication that we had previously published in the international volume came out in Croatian translation; the issue of 1983 contained three separate studies (on literary scholarly analysis, ethnology and ethnochoreology); the 1984 issue (with an article on the thirty-fifth anniversary and three individual studies) published a discussion from a round-table on folklore and oral communication; and the issue from 1985 gave a review of the Institute's documentation with a bibliography of associates (and, once again, three diverse articles). Between two thematic volumes on research into Carnival customs (1986 and 1988), domestic criticism of the notion of customs, with a theoretically orientated thematic section on the research, concepts and terms of customs was published in 1987. It is not necessary particularly to underscore the importance of that criticism for the profession; it essentially changed and expanded the subject-matter of ethnological research. The last volume of *Narodna umjetnost* in that decade (1989) again contained a thematic section devoted to the relation between folklore and the historical process. That was the theme of the symposium organised by the Institute in Zagreb in 1988 as part of the 12th International Congress of Anthropological and Ethnological Sciences: guided by scholarly priorities, we wanted to draw attention post-structurally to the inadequacies of the synchronic (structuralist, semiotic and communicational) approach to the diachronic dynamics of folklore. Unfortunately, many of the reports at that symposium (particularly those from the socialist countries) remained in the old pre-structuralist theoretical framework, so that the historical theme of the symposium could have been wrongly interpreted subsequently as having been apostasy as a theoretical retreat or even as a concession to political priorities. Such behind-the-scenes criticism (of Western origins) could already be heard at the congress itself: political and market stickers easily adhere to unattained scholarly priorities.

Historical processes do not extend only to folklore, they also cover scholarship, and the humanities particularly. Politics and scholarship are part of the same reality, and are not separate worlds. Political and scholarly priorities are always in interplay, while restacking of political priorities causes a restacking of scholarly priorities. The interplay is not a direct mirror reflection of politics in scholarship, the interplay is more complex and much more subtle since it also includes the market component – moreover, economic priorities largely condition both the political and the scholarly. Be that as it may, changes in social values undoubtedly have effect on the priorities of the profession, the scholarly priorities.

Seen in that light, the shift from regional and local research towards the thematic and theoretical rethinking of the profession during the 1970s and 1980s was a consequence of our early opening up to the world. It was not just the Institute that opened up to the world, so did society, the community in which the Institute was active. That does not reduce the merits of individuals and their personal scholarly priorities, but it locates them within the frame of the interplay – it is desirable to view contextual folkloristics and the ethnology of the everyday in context, since both were part of the everyday life of that time.

Our opening up towards the West and the unaligned world did not happen suddenly and did not coincide with the disintegration of the division into blocks of the late 1980s. Because of the political particularities of the socialist system in ex-Yugoslavia, the process was prolonged and began as early as during the 1960s and lasted until the fall of socialism – and was then, paradoxically, interrupted by the war. Unlike the majority of the socialist block countries that suddenly opened up towards the West with the fall of the Berlin Wall, Croatia and the other newly-created countries on the territory of former Yugoslavia (only Slovenia being somewhat of an exception) unexpectedly found themselves in wartime isolation.

Wartime realignment of priorities

The change in the political system under wartime conditions disturbed the frail balance in the interplay of priorities. War is indeed the bane of human nature, but it is also a continuation of politics employing other means – the social primacy of political priorities was established, and scholarly priorities were forced into the background. Like it or not, we all participated in the events of war, as citizens and as members of the scholarly community. However, I believe that we did not succumb to the siren call of politics, we did not abandon scholarship and throw ourselves into the torrent of life – we tried with scholarship, too, to assist in the attainment of political priorities. It was a difficult task because the homogenisation of the nation in wartime favoured the powerful national symbolics of folklore and invoked the ghosts of the 19th-century scholarly paradigms. Re-traditionalisation

and re-mythologisation are characteristic to the cultures of the transitional societies, but there can still be no turning back in scholarship.

The themes of war prompted interdisciplinary co-operation in the search for new, more appropriate research methods. The folklorists at the Institute had also been interested in the extra-literary aspects of verbal folklore for already twenty years, but it was only during the wartime 1990s that the departure from the exclusive research of *oral literature* towards the entirety of *oral tradition* (that is, also oral non-literary forms) was expressly announced. At the same time, our ethnomusicologists drew nearer to anthropologically orientated music research, started the research on the plurality of music and music-making, strengthened the study of insufficiently researched themes, and continued the research of music as performance and communication. Our ethnologists had long since outgrown the initial task of researching the context of folklore phenomena, that is, folk art. Their openness to cultural anthropological trends and radical criticism of the framework of the customs notion redefined folk culture as the culture of the contemporary everyday already in the pre-war period. The newly-created ethnological approach was sensitive to political changes such as the fall of socialism and the founding of the Croatian state. The new generation of researchers from diverse disciplines joined in on an equal footing in the development of postmodern Croatian theoretical thought, creatively adding to and critically evaluating the scope of their predecessors. We were participants in the 1990s in the open postmodern confrontation between theoretical conceptions and the emergence of a new (interdisciplinary, humanistic) scholarly paradigm that aspired to overcome the dichotomy (and dualism) of folkloristics and ethnology by writing postmodern ethnography in combination with recent trends in narratology and performance theory. The ideas of intertextuality and autobiographic discourse were successfully applied to narrative mediation of personal wartime experiences. With their content, the notations of those oral narratives, stories and testimonies outgrew the poetic and genological patterns of the literary scholarship, but also the historiographic and ethnological analyses, demanding a new pragmatic-semantic approach. The poetics of resistance and political rituals; warlike symbolics, wartime everyday life; death in war and posthumous rituals; the use of art, music and drama in overcoming hopelessness and identity crises – all these were themes of interdisciplinary research and interpretation.

Already throughout the war (an even more intensively in the late 1990s and subsequently) the Institute's research into the culture of everyday life became radicalised, showing keen interest in *gender* studies, and in marginalised, minority and other social groups that had been neglected until that time. There was an obvious influence from feminist and post-colonial criticism and post-structuralism in general, evidenced by monitoring of priorities in the humanities in world terms, even under the circumstances of wartime isolation. The tendency to broaden the

domain of subject-matter continued into the new millennium, for example, in concentrated research into children and the concept of childhood, and cultural animalistics and botany, ecology and bioethics. The breadth of the field of subject-matter unified earlier strictly separated disciplines into the new humanities, such as can be attained only through interdisciplinary co-operation, since it implies diverse specialist knowledge.

I am convinced that the interdisciplinary approach was not a mere consequence of the war, since such an approach was applied not solely in wartime ethnography. It only intensified during the war, to be continued after the war – and that not only on new themes. At the turn of the millennia, several important interdisciplinary monographs on customs and Croatian traditional culture were prepared at the Institute. As I have said, there can be no turning back in scholarship, but what has been overlooked in publishing can be successfully compensated for by subsequent syntheses written from a contemporary viewpoint.

Interplay in the new millennium – the spectre of market priorities

We have already paid out tithing for the first century of the new millennium. The eternal dream of a free world without borders and wars has shown itself once again to be premature. Our thousand-year dream of a Croatian state did come true through the Homeland War, but we are still often dissatisfied with its functioning and frustrated by the time it is taking for us to become a member of unified Europe. The delight at the fall of the Berlin Wall belongs to history now, the unipolar world order has mutated into market imperialism on a global level, defusing the existing conflicts and the war against terrorism is being used in the fight for control of energy sources and new markets. Unbridled neo-liberal capitalism has already provoked an economic crisis of worldwide dimension, privatisation gone wild and organised crime in the former socialist countries brought about the heist of the millennium and threatened the very foundations of the social state. True enough, the social state is in crisis in Europe, too, where the American solutions are being increasingly applied.

Opening up scholarship towards the world in the last decades of the 20th century has brought us closer to the priorities of our colleagues in the West, but, strangely enough, that process has been created under conditions of weakening of the socialist concept of a planned economy and party discipline and has even been financed from the State budget! It may sound paradoxical, but, nonetheless, that is how it was: self-management socialism (declaratively) supported the Marxist thesis on the dying away of the state – state ownership was termed social ownership, and self-management was meant (with time, gradually, as it developed) to replace the authority of the Party. Self-management was not without control, but

it still weakened the ideological pressure and made dialogue possible to an extent, along with the coordination of domestic scholarly priorities with world trends.

We were happy that we did not have to execute party directives like our colleagues in the Eastern block, we could read Western literature, and even do a bit of travelling abroad to congresses and to take up scholarships. We were delighted to accept the expansion of the research field to contemporary everyday life, we welcomed the beating through the 19th century disciplinary systematics of knowledge and held heated discussions on the appropriate demarcations and classifications of scholarship. However, did we ever ask ourselves under self-managing socialism whom or what those demarcations and classifications served and how scholarly priorities were formed in contemporary capitalism? The relation between the base and the superstructure in the West did not interest us: we were financed on a different basis.

I believe that interdisciplinarity (in the humanities and in other fields of scientific endeavour) emerges as the consequence of globalisation. Globalisation is not something that awaits us, it did not start with the demolition of the Berlin Wall – it also brought down that wall. Globalisation is a permanent process of integrating regional (and national) economies, societies and cultures in the world network of communication and exchange: it implies international trade, direct foreign investment, and the free flow of capital, migration and the spread of technology. The thesis on the dying away of the state did not materialise under socialism through world revolution or self-management; it is being implemented through globalisation (of the market for the most part) and through capitalism. Post-industrial society does not aspire to the manufacture of goods – it is based on the global rendering of services (read that as: trade), and that brings into question state borders. There is no need for us to be particularly overjoyed at the new world without borders since it exposes us to the priorities of the global market. The new oligarchy of the world centres of power largely comes from the developed countries, but it is, in fact, international, just like the former European high nobility. National (state) interests are in the background; first place is occupied by the profit of international corporations.

Why do I believe that interdisciplinarity is the consequence of globalisation? The strict division of scholarship into disciplines was definitely set in the 19th century. That century was one of scholarship (inclined to taxonomy, systematics and classification), but also the century in which the modern nations took shape or, more precisely, the national civil states. That was also, of course, the time of developed colonialism and imperialism, which made possible the accelerated development of so-called European culture (or Western civilisation) among the major colonial world powers. Those were not happy Utopian societies or ideal social states, quite the contrary in fact. They were complex social communities with powerful state machinery that stimulated increasingly professional specialisation

in order to increase productivity, while intensifying class divisions and social disparities in that process. The division into disciplines and the classification of scholarship was part of those specialised occupations – they were imposed largely by political priorities, and only partly coordinated with the priorities of the scholars themselves. Culture, art, science and education were ideologised in civic society, and occupied the representative place that religion had once held in feudalism. Those spheres were important for the prestige of the state/nation: the European powers competed in the founding of learned societies and universities and in the building of museums, libraries, galleries, theatres and concert halls.

The 20th century division into political blocks continued to support that competition in creation of the social superstructure. In the socialist countries, the political priorities directly dominated even the market: that is why the old disciplinary borders in the humanities and social sciences there remained more or less rigid. There was a similar situation in the field of art – almost all the breakthroughs took place outside the institutions.

However, a divergence emerged between political and market priorities in Western Europe in the second part of the 20th century. Denationalisation and privatisation were not characteristic to only the former socialist countries. Globalised internationalisation of economic power centres in capitalist countries is also increasingly reducing the possibility for state support in scholarship, culture, art and education. The specialist sectors at state universities are being merged, and the subsidised institutions are being phased out. In that way, the influence of (state) political priorities is also being weakened. In the search for market sources of financing, systematics is receding in the face of thematics: scholars from diverse disciplines are coming together in an interdisciplinary way around the theme of market-orientated financing of projects. In the humanities, the process has advanced so far that it is difficult to differentiate, even at reputed universities, the subject-matter or even the study groups: study is defined through a combination of thematically conceived courses. That reveals to us the darker side of interdisciplinarity. Scholarship can be interdisciplinary only while it is indeed scholarship, while it seems that global market priorities do not stimulate the acquirement of systematic disciplinary knowledge. Education is prolonged, ineffective and expensive. Has the spread of knowledge on a global level become unprofitable to the financiers? Is knowledge reducing someone's profit? The social state requires excessive social outlays in an economic crisis. Perhaps knowledge and scholarship do not have to be equally disseminated over the entire planet. Enough sufficiently mobile scholars well-versed in individual lucrative themes will always be found on the global labour market.

It is time to localise the global picture. Where are we in that story today, how should the priorities of the profession and the Institute be determined? Scholarly research activities in Croatia are largely conducted by the public research sector,

which consists of seven universities and twenty-six public institutes, the Institute of Ethnology and Folklore Research being one of them. The new state is trying to reform and adapt to market priorities its inherited and expensive scholarly infrastructure. We are largely financed by funds from the State budget, which are distributed by the Ministry of Science, Education and Sport. Public institutes were founded to conduct the public service programme in scholarly activities. Their activity consists of research and of contractual scholarly research (projects). The Institute is working on nine projects today financed by the Government, while our permanent research activity is mostly not covered – if we exclude salaries and the costs of our premises, which should, nevertheless, be taken into account. The nine projects are, for the most part, the result of priorities set by science and scholarship: they cover broad and multi-disciplinary thematics in keeping with our proclaimed, long-term interdisciplinary orientation and reputation.

In the coming period, the Croatian State will channel most of the contractual scholarly research (projects) to the Croatian Science Foundation, by which it also hopes to strengthen market orientation in the scholarly sector. Joining united Europe also implies participation in European science projects and their registration – in that way the State budget could also be additionally disencumbered. There is no doubt that favouring market priorities in the interplay will even more forcefully influence the formation of individual scholarly priorities.

What should the priorities of the profession be under such changed circumstances? We ask ourselves what the priorities of the open, world market are. Aren't they actually political priorities? The market is not a deity – if it were, by definition it would be free. The primacy of the absolutely free market (under the magical cloak of globalisation) is advocated by powerful mortals, while that attractive idea is in the political interests of the world financial elite – who, similarly to the former feudal aristocracy, endeavour to rule the world supranationally casting aside the social attainments of the already disempowered national states. The new imperialism (also) hides behind the eternal dream of unification and destruction of state and ideological frontiers. The non-existence (or weakness) of international social institutions, and particularly the global systems of social welfare, work in its favour. I believe that we should not allow market-orientated priorities fully to overcome the political (social) priorities of the community, since we do not answer only to the market and to politics as financiers, we are also responsible to the people who are the subject-matter of our research in the humanities.

Post scriptum

The Croatian version of the “Treatise on Priorities” was published in December 2009 (<http://bib.irb.hr/prikazi-rad?&rad=466220>). A public discussion on the

drafts of the proposed Acts on Science, Higher Education and the Universities was initiated in Croatia in October 2010. The new acts have not been passed by the Croatian Parliament as yet, while the discussion has shown the dichotomy between the market-orientated political priorities and the public welfare.

TRAKTAT O PRIORITETIMA

SAŽETAK

Traktat se bavi aktualnom položajem “struke” i njezinim (ne)mogućim izborima u procesima globalizacije i “pridruživanja Europi”, dakako u svjetlu etičkih i političkih prijedora, ekonomske krize te “znanstvene odgovornosti” istraživača. Tko određuje prioritete struke? Tržište, politika i znanstvenici. Izložen je povijesni pregled prioriteta struke od 1948. do danas na primjeru zagrebačkog Instituta za etnologiju i folkloristiku. Tumačenje starih prioriteta moglo bi pomoći određivanju novih.

Ključne riječi: folkloristika, etnologija, prioriteti