

**ESCAPE FROM ETHNOS, TRADITION IN TRANSITION,
AND THE BATTLE FOR ANTHROPOLOGY.
RESTRUCTURING THE CURRICULUM
IN BELGRADE ACADEMIA¹**

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The centennial of the ethnology and anthropology curriculum at the University of Belgrade is reviewed, portraying the history of the subject, theory, and methodology of ethnological and anthropological research at the Department of Ethnology and Anthropology. It is also done by revealing some public and intra-academic obstacles for developing anthropology in Serbia into social science in the Western fashion, thus describing certain disputes lasting for several decades.

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PROLOGUE

The “Big Bang” occurred in late January 1880: the newly proclaimed *Act on Changes and Supplements in the Organization of Belgrade Lyceum*

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listed *Comparative geography with ethnography*, among the other courses, featuring retired chivalry colonel Jovan Dragašević, as the very first university teacher of what would become the foundation for prolific curricula, and even more prolific discussions about it, in years to come. Some fifteen years later, *Ethnology* as the autonomous course within the geographical curriculum was taught by Jovan Cvijić, while the Ethnology Seminar was founded in 1906 (Ковачевић 2001a:78,76). The latter is officially recognized as the beginning of the ethnology and anthropology curriculum at the University of Belgrade.

GREAT DISCOVERIES OR YEARS TO BE FORGOTTEN?

An early concept of teaching ethnology at the University of Belgrade used to be as simple as anybody could imagine, associating the notion of “concept” to the notions describing the subject of the discipline at the time. Ethnology was considered as distinctive to ethnography, as the translators had been able to match the distinction between the connotations of German words *Volkskunde* and *Völkerkunde*, and to apply it to their topics of interests. This allowed them to cover a vast field of facts and thinking of them in designated terms like “folk”, “custom”, “tradition”, “national”, “exotic” etc. People who supposedly lived as their ancestors did (city dwellers not included) waited to be re-discovered as some kind of the gathering point conjoining *Volksggeist* and *Kulturgeist* (Ковачевић 2001a, 2005).

Methodology used to be an issue of fashion - as is still the case - and the Catholic style used then strongly suggested tarnishing the images of, and collecting detailed information from the least prosperous villages. This was compared against information from villages that were slightly better off or fortunate enough to be of less interest to the researchers and keepers of folk-treasure, in order to get picture of “comparative perspective.” This, in turn, was presented alongside similar facts from other peoples, preferably hidden by supposed supranational patronyms, like “German”, “Slavic”, to conclude that something is “widely performed” or “widely (and firmly) believed in”, without applying no epistemic interpretations (Cf. Жикић 2003-2004).

The general idea behind that concept was that there was a need of keeping and preserving Tradition, and tradition was meant to be equal to the idea of “National,” thus comprising both the material and intangible heritage of the people. The idea was not so original of course, but was a

common European *esprit du temps* from *fin de siècle* to WWII. Still, it's worth mentioning here because it influenced both public and academic discourses on disciplines dedicated to studying anything associated with living people, tradition, and so on. The general outcome was that ethnology was established to be considered as "science of folk and their ways," and so it was taught that way. While a conceptual background was obtained by the pseudo-theoretical romanticists' interpretation of folk culture as the essence of being a nation, the actual framework was structured around "things people do" – mores, rituals, beliefs, folklore in its many emanations (from folk-artistry to oral culture), and local specificities (Cf. Влаховић 1979).

That was an era of great monography. Research in local areas was presented to meet the demands of depicting "the land and its people" in a comprehensive manner. Particular topics were formulated within the locality, but they were mostly intra-national and tended to be resolved through comparative studies and/or lineal development. The University Curriculum was merely a technical manual of how to question people about the customs and beliefs of their homeland, how to categorize them, and how to memorize them by using localities and subjects as X and Y axes. In fact, there was no particular disciplinary sub-specialization intended in the curriculum, because particularization of any kind could eventually jeopardize the solidity of a cultural cognitive category of tradition.

"We" wanted to know who "We" were? What belonged to "Us"? What made "Us" distinct from "Them?" Ethnology enjoyed its position as a "national" science, firmly dissolved from historical sciences (history, archaeology, art-history), a distinct discipline from philology and literature, but often classified alongside them, due to a common interest in things like folk-literature, comparative philology, folk and comparative religion etc. Still, far from any notion of social sciences.

THE TEMPEST, OR BAT OUT OF HELL

What was a Shakespearean motif in the beginning, turned out to be the Monty-Python of its era. Philosopher, war hero, and self-proclaimed defender of Marxism in its purest sense, Dušan Nedeljković thumped into the University (Faculty of Philosophy) a few days after WWII ended, with the goal of equating everything he was taught there with his only ideology

for everyone and everywhere. Long after he was dethroned², the ethnological curriculum seemed untouched by the serious influence of Marxism: in fact, if not fanatic, what one could say about being a Marxist in either times of hardship or good times was that they tended to be illuminated and consequently liberated by that very teaching and the resulting actions!

The curriculum stayed almost the same through the 50s and 60s, until the mid-seventies. There was only one cathedra at the Department of Ethnology, the one for *General and Particular Ethnology*. The knowledge accumulated by the disciplinary research world-wide tended to be evaluated according to its applicability on home-grown material, and it was presented as an assemblage of facts on various traditional practices in every domain of ordinary life throughout the country. That is mostly throughout Serbia, but as of the second half of the century more and more throughout Yugoslavia (Cf. Барјактаровић 1963).

Nedeljković's time at the University was not futile for Serbian ethnology, although far from moving it towards the dark waters of Marxist theory, or any theory in fact. A collection of People's Liberation War³ poetry, which was directly influenced by him (and later dismissed as an act of *credo quia absurdum est* ideology), was the first act to combine contemporary field research with recent material, thus moving Serbian ethnology one step closer to the social sciences⁴. "Classic" research into matters of tradition have firmly stressed the past as the only perspective of interest. Rituals, beliefs, or perhaps particular ways of housing deserved a positive evaluation for "being traditional/ folk/ national" only if they could be considered more or less resistant to an enormous time-lapse.

² He was removed from the University the same way he was posted there, by the decision of a committee, but he remained untouchable as the president of The Serbian Academy of Science and Arts, as his appointment came directly from the president of Yugoslavia Josip Broz.

³ The Communist regime's official name for WWII as fought in Yugoslav territory.

⁴ An interesting example is Antonijević's study on the contemporary female *guslarka*; indeed poor in theory and weak in methodology, but nonetheless unique as a subject and influential in that what was considered suitable for research after Nedeljković. Antonijević was one of his former students, although never given a chance at the University after his tutor's dismissal (see Антонијевић 1960).

At almost the same time, sociology struggled to be born independently from philosophy, and to prove its leftist worthiness from its clear Western origin⁵. Being the focus of humanism, which was proclaimed as one of the basic values of Yugoslav socialist society, the notion of man suitably served to one of the greatest loops of Serbian sociology. The one designed to set it as one of the disciplines of the overall “science of man”; you guessed it – that is how the freaky idea of anthropology as the “study of Man” came to be (Cf. Golubović 1967). It would have been anecdotal – being based on isolated notions of social and cultural anthropological theories of the time, a mish-mash of psychology, and the same philosophy – if it had not been promoted by another Party soldier, Zagorka Golubović, who later turned to promoting democracy.

Golubović’s authority as an ideological (Communist) theoretician had almost the same power as Nedeljković’s some decades ago. And it looked as though her concept of anthropology would have prevailed over the first clear ethnologists’ attempts to establish the theory and methodology of the discipline according to Western parameters in early 70s⁶. Alas, what gives one life is usually likely to possess ultimate power over it, so the wider social turmoil of 1968 consequently ended half-a-dozen years later, making the University (again, the Faculty of Philosophy) a Communist Party purists’ play ground, expelling several prominent teachers. One of them happened to be Golubović, whose idea of anthropology as the “science of Man” used to be nothing more than a view through the looking glass of the tradition-directed “*ein Land ein Volk*” idea of ethnology as a “national science”.

Golubović kept insisting that anthropology should be only what she perceived it as all the way to the present (Cf. Голубовић 2005), ignoring even the episteme of the international anthropological community. While at the Faculty, a path was cleared for building modern curricula on the basis of upgrading the study of traditions with a social science approach – but

⁵ Yugoslavia was separate from the Cold War, but nevertheless, sympathies from the domain of ideology were directed mostly to the eastern world, whereas “Western” somehow connotated the values of the side opposite to the “scientific socialism”.

⁶ In trying to understand this idea, her text on the “particularities” of Yugoslav socialism is of particular interest (Golubović 1971).

obviously not due only to professional expertise of its designers. Golubović's efforts were recognized, which mostly affected Serbian ethnologists who began paying more attention to the issues of methodology. The methodology for collecting data has been scrutinized in the lights of contemporary anthropology, sociology, philosophy, even psychology, as well as the methodology for interpreting them, which consequently led to the new structure of curriculum.

But, still listed under the file-name of ethnology, the anthropologization of the discipline's theory and methodology, and consequently of its curriculum, did not affect academic discourse on it. It remained a science of folk, tradition etc. for wider academia. Meanwhile sociology, as a social science, made some claims of studying Man too, also trying to impose *Socio-cultural Anthropology* as one of its taught courses, however without any of the crucial research, theoretical, or methodological points with anthropology as practiced at British or American universities.

CERBERUS AT THE GATES OF TRADITION, OR A THREE-HEADED-MONSTER GOING NOWHERE

Recognition of the fact that form comes before structure and content, and that there is a hierarchy between them, should be considered as the great illumination in the view of the world of ethnology curriculum designers at the Belgrade Department. The Curriculum was restructured in 1973 following a trend which supported the upgrading of discipline. That was when the name *anthropology* was first officially mentioned, listing the Department's cathedras (Павковић 1998). In order to establish the idea that we are not alone in the social and cultural Universe, the founding fathers of the time divided cathedras following the Borgesian principle of gold fish, there were those living in sea, and those belonging to emperor: so post-hippy students were taught at cathedras for *General Ethnology*, *Ethnology of Yugoslavia*, and *Ethnology of the World and Anthropology*.

Several new key-points were featured in that restructuring, although some of them were not recognized at the time. First, tradition itself became surrounded by ethnic adjectives, following a developed interest in the cultural traits of all Yugoslav peoples. That in turn produced more research on ethnic issues by them, and consequently ethnos became kind of a research

paradigm, but not in the sense of its conflict generating potential, rather in a form of autonomous cultural category. It is somehow clear that this was derived from the silent equating of the notion of traditional culture, with its ethnic attributes.

The second important novelty was the attempt to generalize the categorization of intra-cultural research subjects: culture is reviewed now as social, spiritual, and material. It is true that deploying thinking like that in the new curricula was motivated primarily by the need to present a variety of research problems, and to demonstrate the advantages of applying western anthropological theory and methodology to them. However, it also laid the foundations for rethinking divisions like that in terms of not just stricter classification, but also of developing concepts of sub-specialization. What's more, featuring a cathedra explicitly devoted to world cultures meant that the Department felt comfortable studying the great "Other" both in terms of disciplinary reasons, and of those which suggest bidding farewell to socio-cultural claustrophobia, usually characteristic to sciences considered nationalistic.

The theories and methodologies of both social and cultural anthropology were introduced by separate courses as well, but named *Ethnological theories* or *The Methodology of Ethnology*, in spite of the fact that barely any bibliographical references of ethnology different from social sciences could be found in the courses' syllabi. Even the slightest mention of anthropology in the curricula was considered unfavorable to the idea that the discipline. No matter the name, anthropology should apply the approach of a social science, and not lean towards the amateur comparisons or cultural genesis of phenomena which was implied by everything tradition had suggested for decades.

Anthropology stood for physical anthropology – physical varieties of mankind, human evolution, biometry, osteology, paleoanthropology and so on. It was a poor and pathetic way of attempting to instill a new disciplinary name-tag, or part of it at least, by attempting to avoid confrontational discourse on the social/historical sciences within academia inspired by Golubović's acolytes. So, We-Other-Man triangulation did not bring deliverance to the discipline, although the curriculum which featured it was the bet step in reaching autonomy as a discipline within the social sciences since the beginning of its life at University.

WHEN SOCIAL LIVING IS NOT THE BEST, OR NO CHECK – NO TECH IS NOTHING TO BE SORRY FOR

Ethnologists (anthropologists) in Serbia discovered the advantages of being marginal a long time before the first NGOs introduced the principle that going against a majority makes the difference between who gets something, and who gets nothing. The “celebrated” 1990s left them essentially unaffected by any of the signs of the times: war & dissolution of a socialist state; ethnic cohesion & marking the “Others”; turbo folk & civil resistance; the black market and criminalization of the economy; war-profiteering & anti-war-profiteering; none found a real champion among the Serbian *Fachleute* – although certain individuals did attempt to be promote it – and nothing has really changed in the Department’s world⁷.

Giving new meaning to the curriculum from the 1970s was the major concern of the Department, and it went mostly peacefully and quietly within the context of academic institutions. This happened in the early 90s, and the tranquility of the occurrence contested by the schizophrenia of the moment suggests that our colleagues of the time had suddenly realized how to make *lege artis* operations work to their advantage. It was simple, in fact. The first step was to fill the course syllabi with all the anthropological matters of subject, theory, and methodology as in The UK and USA. The second step suggested applying all of that to the research on recent home-grown material, and incorporating that into courses syllabi and parts of the curriculum that are clearly ethnological in the sense of tradition studies. The third step manifestly supported the division of cathedras, but with the clear inclination towards putting aside physical anthropology. The fourth step was dedicated to moving the word *Anthropology* from the lower part of the structure to its hierarchical determinant: changing the name of the Department from *Ethnology* to *Ethnology and Anthropology*, which consequently affected the designations derived after the curriculum⁸.

While the steps taken were a bit approximated, it is essentially true and the goal was met. People who graduated from the Department received their

⁷ For some more elaborate discussions on this issue, see (Naumović 2002).

⁸ For theoretical concepts back grounding that, see (Павковић 1992).

Ethnology and Anthropology BAs, and in turn their MPhils and PhDs also included *Anthropology* as of 1990/91, stirring dissent among sociologists of Golubović's legacy, and to the part of academia concerned about "how to preserve what is folk/national/traditional during hard times"⁹. Physical anthropology was marginalized by another curriculum restructuring in 1990, and *Ethnology of the World* became a catalogue of world cultures inspired by the criteria of a particular teacher. The three-headedness of culture rethinking remained the same as it was during 1970s and 1980s, however the theoretical and methodological approaches were further elaborated upon to meet the demands of the social/cultural anthropology of the English-speaking world.

The general situation in the country has impacted research by directing it towards contemporary phenomena and limiting organizations to individual skills in financing the fieldwork. With no particular interest in being popular among either war promoters or anti-war promoters, the *Fachleute* cut off any significant material resource suitable for decent ethnographic fieldwork. So people did their fieldwork either around Belgrade, or at places where they could stay for free. On the other hand, the strangeness of the marginal position of a discipline formerly devoted to tradition studies within the social and cultural context of an exploding interest in Nationality is not very hard to explain. The change in the theoretical and methodological paradigm of the second half of the last century affected the subjects of research too: cultural genesis and national attributing were of no or minor interest to the designers of the ethnological/anthropological curricula from the 1970s. The idea of trying to explain what something means and how it operates pushed aside the concept of explaining how something came to be and to whom it belonged.

Recent phenomena or modern/post-modern interpretations of those from traditional culture dominated both research and teaching since the 1980s. The concept of studying the everyday culture of ordinary people clearly prevailed over anything else (Cf. Ковачевић 2005). At the time, it looked like everybody was happy to give away their "own" privilege of studying, for an example war refugees to nationally concerned people of whatever

⁹ Golubović reacted, clearly denying the "just cause" of that change (cf. Голубовић 1994); for lamenting on de-nationalization of ethnology, introducing Western peculiarities, and a need for further cultivating the tradition studies, see (Тодоровић 2005; Павићевић 2005).

profession, or of studying turbo-folk to the self-proclaimed “culturologists”, again – of different backgrounds. The attitude that “the science of everything accumulates knowledge on nothing” redirected subject orientation towards reinterpretation of “classic” phenomena in new discourses, but also opened the door to disciplinary self-reflexivity as one of its legitimate subjects, and encouraged including some research case-studies in the curriculum courses¹⁰. It may not have been intended, but introducing *Anthropology* into the Department’s title appeared to be the right move at the right time: it suggested moving forward from the ethnic-devoted background of ethnology to promoting values inherent to the contemporary world.

INSIDE AREA 51 OR ANTHROPOLOGY IS MY PLAYGROUND

The Department was the silent witness of what was going on in the world during 1990s, but its waking from the dead occurred after 2000. The basis for accommodating the curriculum to meet international standards has been built through individual efforts to develop a field of intra-disciplinary expertise based on individual’s own research and choices in the intra- or even extra- disciplinary discourses of interpretation and discussion. The early bird concept of formatting the curriculum according to the demands they expected would need to be met for the sake of including the national curricula in the international academic arena played a great part in the Department’s championing the reforms at the Faculty, which in turn strengthen the position of its curriculum, giving it respect and credibility in an academic context.

The crucial point was that the curriculum structure had, for the first time, been opened to developing courses based on whether they are optional or compulsory. This move was considered necessary within formal and informal talks about future curricula at the University, but optional courses within the curriculum were perceived differently according to the notions laying beyond the conceptual thinking of what does it really mean in terms of course status to have some of them which are eligible to all of the students and some of them which are to be chosen. The criteria of who,

¹⁰For an example see some recent discussions (Ковачевић 2001b; Жикић 2002; Миленковић 2003).

when, how somebody would be able to attend a particular course were not, as a unique rule, obligatory for each University unit. Consequently, individual breakthroughs had to be expected.

The Department made its own move. Not guided by any of the parameters which will be implemented later, it offered the Faculty a basis for modeling the curriculum, and remained quiet. The basic idea was governed by three principles: a) it is a preparatory step for what will come by the official demands of Bologna Process; b) provisional breaking-up of the curriculum structure does not have to mean scattering it; c) the teaching staff has to be protected for the eventual cutting of jobs. Of course, further intervention into the content of courses had been encouraged in terms of moving further from ethnicity/tradition studies to a unique kind of social science dealing with culture perceived as ways, norms, and ideas of thinking, living, producing, and reproducing performed in everyday life – in forms of practices, discourses, and institutions.

So the ground was set up for what would be known as “real reform” a couple of years later, or the one required after the new *Act on Universities* in 2006, and following the requirements of Bologna Process. That proto-reform was based on each member of Department’s personnel teaching/ being engaged in one compulsory and one optional course, and after the demands of the *Act of Engagement of University Teachers*. The latter required a certain number of teaching hours from the staff, depending on their entitlement¹¹. The Decision was made that courses of both type are to be equal in crucial parts, for example, the length of courses, basic requirements for exams, or types of lessons. The very first idea was to mark the difference between the levels of the courses: whether a course is general or particular, due to its subject. It was derived mostly after subject division of what is basically taught into social, spiritual, and material culture. For example, if there is

¹¹ The numbers disfavored teaching assistants, requiring 1 and 2/3 times more engagement by them, compared to lecturers and professors. Originally it was the idea of Vojislav Šešelj, serving as a vice-president in one of Milošević’s governments, but was eagerly deployed by Đinđić’s government as well, signed by one of his vice-presidents Jozsef Kasa. Post-Đinđić governments were indifferent to that Act, leaving only the new Act on University to contest it partially.

a general course on religion, called *Anthropology of Religion*, its optional variety could be assumed in courses on *Folk Religion*, *Religion and Gender*, or those on particular religions (Greek, Hebrew or else). In turn, the general courses are appointed compulsory, and the special ones optional.

The sequel of this idea used to be generous enough towards students, enabling certain numbers of optional courses through each of their years of study, save the first one. The initial plan was to offer a certain number of optional courses – about twenty for an example, and to make it possible for each student to make his/her own choice each year, by following a formula: three in sophomore year, four in junior year, and five in the senior year of study. Certain requirements have been imposed, of course, including those of student's eligibility to enroll in the optional course if it is linked to some general course, or based on student's marks¹². It looked like common sense, that whatever makes the difference in the status of courses, must be as clear as possible, to whoever sees, whether a student, university teacher, or government officer.

The distinction came almost by itself – and was implemented in the current curriculum – caused more by the social and cultural post-traumatic stress the discipline has experienced, than anything else. The difference between the names in the title of the Department has been epitomized as what is expected of the *Fachleute*, of how it could eventually be perceived by faceless (and often mindless) government officers to one day come to the position of deciding whether something should be excluded from the University curricula or not. The common perception in the back of academia's mind (and maybe even of those shaping general public discourses) is that ethnology is something dedicated to the historical/traditional sense of what it means to be Us, while anthropology which comes from Western

¹² The latter meaning that if there are more applicants to particular course than it is able to seat, those with better grades previously will be enrolled first, while the others are scheduled according to what they have listed under b), c), etc. Linking to general course means that one cannot enroll in an optional course if he has not already passed the exam for the general course from which the optional one is derived: former Acts on University enabled students to enroll for the next year of study if they passed a certain number of exams. For an example, if there were six two-semester courses in the first year of study, passing four of them would have been considered enough to progress to the next year of study.

academic inventory served well for the purpose of the aforementioned. The line has been drawn between the courses featuring general subjects filed under *anthropologies*, and those devoted to what *Fachleute* really research, backed-up by corresponding theory and methodology, named *national ethnologies*.

For example, I teach *Anthropology of Body*. It is a general course on social and cultural features of human biology, including, among others, bodily communication, ways and means of intervening upon the body, beauty standards, reproductive technologies etc. There are no limits to what kind of material could be presented as a tool of depiction of theory or method, or from where it should come. I use examples from the traditional culture of Serbs, as well those from the Bible, or the contemporary United States. The optional course that I teach is called *National Ethnology – Nonverbal Communication*. The principle of presentation is the same. The difference, which “excuses” the entitlement, is that the factography is based mostly on my own research; which has been and is done in Serbia, of course. So the principle of presenting one’s own work turns into covering certain social and cultural communities by anthropological research.

The “National” in *National Ethnology* stands for where the ethnography is performed and says nothing in fact about the intention of how the subject is perceived, i.e. whether it is meant to be something which will coincide more to the “classic” notion of what ethnology is supposed to deal with (The Unholy Trinity of tradition/folk/ethnos), or not: while, in real life, the subject is not perceived that way at all. Research interests cover the vast field of more or less typical domains of anthropological expertise: from the ways individual identities are constructed, to the bodily expressions of cultural norms, even a way of turning idiosyncrasy of emotional or affectional life into that of mores, or socializing behavior; from accommodation of extra-cultural items to commoditization of everything; from genderizing religion to the mythologization of gender; from rethinking the disciplinary past to inventing new sub-disciplines etc.

Beyond the Department’s ambition to offer as comprehensive a study of anthropology as it can, other motives governing this way of curriculum structuring included the real burst of particular research, and case-studies produced after them, and thinking of “needing the balance, just in case...” the

latter comes after the experience of living in the Balkans, Southeast Europe, or continental Europe, in fact where every kind of discourse on integration, intra-culturalism, and so on, are always in some kind of danger of being obscured if not by real nationalistic discourse, then by one insisting on “what belongs to Us, what/ who We are” and so on¹³. It could be motivated by the most benevolent reasons eventually, but it could still be unfavorable when it comes to what should be financed by the state’s budget, and anyone who does not understand what it really means to lose that kind of budgeting in this part of the world (or in fact anywhere, save maybe the UK and the United States), should not consider him/herself expert on anything but extracting hallucinogens from mushrooms.

The ambition of nearly total coverage of a discipline came almost spontaneously, when it was realized that PhD- and MPhil theses, as well other individual research could be classified under “traditional” categories, only partially – I mean those described as social, spiritual or material culture, or those with geographic attributes in the title, while – on the other hand – they match sub-fields of a discipline as considered worldwide now. That was an official sub-specification of a discipline, in a manner, stating its claim not to be patronized by any other discipline any more, by presenting the ability to cover not just whatever is studied in the world (which usually means the UK & US, from here, but that is a matter for cognitive anthropology to study), but to do so *here* (meaning Serbia, but could stand for any local anthropology), using internationally recognized theory and methodology not in teaching purposes only, but discussing them and even reinventing them by own means and in one’s own research¹⁴.

Those efforts have been clearly recognized by our federation-of-humanities, which the Faculty of Philosophy is indeed, both during the formation of it and after the job was completed, and – again – both in terms

¹³ Beside the concepts deployed to explain the unthankful position of social scientists (Naumović 1999), there were also attempts at explaining it more generally, in terms of crisis-born mythologization of reality (see for an example Nedeljković 2006).

¹⁴ Demonstrated in the clearest way maybe, in discussing the very notion, discourse, and practice of nothing less than education (cf. Baćević 2006b).

of expressing a will and a way to reform, and appearing as a product of quality and distinction in the academic would-be market. The position of the Department is further strengthened, considering previous, by its original way of designing the curricula for master studies; Studies, plural, because those studies have been shaped in a manner of modular studies: a main course, backed-up by two others of a kind supposed to help students improve their sub-disciplinary expertise in a particular field, and optional courses from another Departments (i.e. disciplines, like sociology, psychology etc.), subjects to tutor's recommendation after the topic of a MA-paper¹⁵. Or we just meant so...

BYZANTINE BLUES, OR DO YOU SPEAK *BOLOGNESE*?

To make a long story short, “we won”, but avoiding confrontation of any kind, was impossible. When it looked like everything had been settled by the wide curriculum reform according to the requirements of Bologna Process, including BA and MA studies, all hell broke loose when it came to the matter of PhD studies. Inadequate representation of the structure of those deciding about things concerning the sciences taught at the University, and a total lack of knowledge of what is happening inside each of them in the matters of researching, teaching, and curriculum reforming, caused many disciplines to “vanish” from the list of those granting the PhDs just before new Act on University had to be put into effect. One of them was *Ethnology and Anthropology*, of course. The trick is that the previous official categorization of sciences had seen our discipline as one of historical sciences, together with history, history of arts, archaeology etc. The new divisions put it into sociological sciences; no, not *social* sciences, but *sociological* ones, and it means, or – better – it meant sociology, and ethnology and anthropology. The practical outcome was clear: while there is ethnology and anthropology BA and MA, there is only a sociological sciences PhD. The consequences

¹⁵ For detail information on actual curriculum, visit <http://web.f.bg.ac.yu/index.php?option=modul&sid=13&odeljenje=%D0%95%D1%82%D0%BD%D0%BE%D0%BB%D0%BE%D0%B3%D0%B8%D1%98%D0%B0%20%D0%B8%20%D0%B0%D0%BD%D1%82%D1%80%D0%BE%D0%BF%D0%BE%D0%BB%D0%BE%D0%B3%D0%B8%D1%98%D0%B0> and then follow the links to the particular levels of study.

for our discipline were left to be imagined. Fortunately, the department won the public battle for this cause, thus somehow preventing the nonsense of not being able to grant PhDs, while its proposal had served as a basis for the recommended pattern of how to design PhD studies at the Faculty.

One could ask what was or is so wrong with the Department's curricula (meaning, all academic levels) that provokes constant resentment within certain, but influential parts of academia. Of course, there is no “sociological conspiracy” as there are no disputes between the two disciplines not including Golubović and her henchmen. Beyond the concept of autocracy (“anthropology /or anything else/ is what I think and say it is”), the major misunderstanding between the private conception of anthropology and the one which is accepted worldwide – and taught at every relevant University – is that the first insists that there is a non-evidence-based study of Man. A misty bricolage of thinking and rethinking of the position of an impersonally perceived notion of man¹⁶, its abilities and limitations, conceiving concepts, discussing them, and finally rejecting them in order to do it again. However, without research in terms of fieldwork, sources, data validation, outcome assesment, or even intention to rely upon anything similar, rather to criticise any attempt to draw some general conclusions upon any kind of ethnography.

The Department's policy on curricula reforming, together with applying general researching and interpretative paradigms accepted by the international anthropological community strongly contested the “Manology” concept, if not obscuring it. Not only is mainstream Serbian anthropology focused on modern society and problems inherent to it, handling them in ways and manners elaborated and inspected in contemporary world science (Ковачевић 2005), but it proved to be vivid enough to allow room for what is it reluctant todo, if that is not based on romanticist concepts of tradition¹⁷. The elaborated diversification of disciplinary sub-specification produced not only many of reliable case-studies, but even enabled some kind of disciplinary introspection, and that of significance both to public discourse

¹⁶ Meaning, not related to any kind of real or imagined context or discourse, but Man with capital M, the general category; some kind of vulgar post-Marxist concept of humanism.

¹⁷ See the discussion on evaluating the post-modern and post-post-modern anthropological tradition (Ковачевић 2006, Milenković 2006a,b).

on the discipline itself, and to the general one, as is for an example the illuminative discussion on whether there are reasons to analyse the “guilt complex“ in Serbian anthropology (see Baćević 2006a).

CONCLUSION, OR RATHER NOT

It is hard to conclude anything when the tale of curriculum building, rethinking, reforming and developing is in fact the story of the discipline faced with not searching for its identity, but explaining that there has been one for more than a century. The reason for that is granted by the sole fact of subject-theory-methodology triangulation not being easily insertable to any of the categories imagined by the 19th Century's division of human systematic intellectual inquiries. When such thinking is interferred further with the discourses sprung from the one which used to give basis to the official ideology of “scientific socialism“, it is hard to talk about poetry with the taxpeople: romanticists considered for “their folk and ways” and post-socialist humanists concerned with all that vocabulary which replaced alienation, oppression and so on, each of them lacking the interest in facts as they could be collected, described, analysed, or even lived, but akin just to interpretations in a generalizing manner of natural sciences or mathematics.

Well, it is unlikely to find rules like that “if p then q“ or “ $v=s/t$ “ uncontested by real people in their everyday lives worldwide, neither in conceiving, nor in behaviour. Anthropology knows that, even when it is ready to offer its own kind of general interpretations. That knowledge is mostly what scares people who claim the ability to explain everything, usually clinging onto one particular theory, or a similar one. It is what suggests that there is no Man, or Nation, with their Needs, or Tradition, but Humanity thinking of and doing something, and sometimes even rethinking it in ways commonly shared, with differences, the latter incorporating needs, traditions, and more, in a simple, but terrible manner of ever changing moods/ rules/ or whatever. So the curricula of different study levels at the Department will try to remain persistent in following what is researched, and how, and why all of that is so, and how things function, and what they mean – and to present all of that in the manner most suitable concerning the context of university lessons as a stockmarket of ideas.

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БИЈЕГ ОД ЕТНОСА, ТРАДИЦИЈЕ У ТРАНЗИЦИЈИ И БИТКА ЗА АНТРОПОЛОГИЈУ. РЕСТРУКТУРИРАЊЕ КУРИКУЛУМА У БЕОГРАДСКОЈ АКАДЕМИЈИ

Sažetak

Odsjek za etnologiju i antropologiju Filozofskog fakulteta Sveučilišta u Beogradu proslavio je stogodišnjicu postojanja 2006. godine. Iako se nastava iz etnografije i etnologije držala u različitim oblicima od osamdesetih godina devetnaestog stoljeća, datum osnivanja Odsjeka vezuje se uz službenu uspostavu Etnološkog seminara na beogradskom Filozofskom fakultetu. U tih sto godina nastava je odražavala uvijek aktualno stanje po pitanju predmeta istraživanja, teorije i metodologije, a oni su pak bili uvjetovani društvenom i kulturnom percepcijom onoga što bi etnologija, a potom antropologija, trebala biti. U tom razdoblju prijeđen je put od u potpunosti romantičarske koncepcije znanosti o narodu do samorefleksivne društvene znanosti. U skladu s tim, mijenjao se i nastavni kurikulum: od pridavanja bitnog značaja kategoriziranju „manifestacija narodnog duha“ do naglašavanja principa aktivnosti, društvene svjesnosti i angažiranosti te raznovrsne integrativnosti kao osnovnih postulata onoga što se proučava, zapravo, suvremene kulture kao kontekstualnog načina ljudskog poimanja i organiziranja života i okružujuće realnosti. Ta svojevrsna „antropologizacija“ srpske etnologije bila je spor proces, naravno, ometan i osuđivan te rijetko otvoreno podržavan u beogradskim akademskim krugovima. Dok su osude bile nešto s čim se moglo živjeti, iako su dolazile od tradicionalistički pa i nacionalistički nastrojenih

etnologa i etnologinja, ometanja su imala isti izvor – uvijek su dolazila iz određenih socioloških krugova čiji su pripadnici imali utjecajne glasove u društvenom javnom govoru, ili barem sveučilišnom, a koji su imali vlastitu ideju o tome što bi antropologija trebala biti, ne dopuštajući nijedan drugi mogući pogled na datu problematiku, u skladu s inicijalno marksističkim korijenima svojega uvjerenja. Ta ideja, dakako, nije imala veze s onim kako se antropologija oblikovala na Zapadu, a što je bio put koji je kurikulum beogradskog Odsjeka pokušavao slijediti, u većoj ili manjoj mjeri, u ovisnosti o društvenim i akademskim prilikama najmanje tri do četiri desetljeća unazad. Potreba usklađivanja sveučilišnih planova i programa s Bolonjskim procesom početkom ovoga stoljeća bila je ona prilika koju je Odsjek dugo čekao kako bi u ozračju transparentnosti i javne provjere, doduše pomalo iznuđene, predstavio kurikulum utemeljen na gore navedenim principima kao i na teorijskim i terenskim istraživanjima i interesima vlastitih članova, što mu, kako smatramo, daje osobit kredibilitet.

Ključne riječi: etnologija i antropologija, Odsjek za etnologiju i antropologiju Filozofskog fakulteta Sveučilišta u Beogradu, razvoj kurikuluma, terensko istraživanje, teorija i metodologija etnologije i antropologije, Srbija

