

A WORD FROM THE EDITORS

The first part of this issue of *Narodna umjetnost* consists of a selection of papers presented at the post-graduate course *Gender and Nation, Tradition and Transition* at the Inter-University Centre Dubrovnik on May 20-25, 2002. The weeklong session of presentations, discussions, formal and informal meetings was organized by the Centre for Women's Studies, Zagreb in coordination with the Institute of Ethnology and Folklore Research, as well as the Centre for Women's Studies, Belgrade and the Women's and Gender Studies Department at Rutgers University, New Brunswick. The programme included scholars from the U.S.A, the U.K., India, Slovenia, Serbia-Montenegro, Bosnia-Herzegovina, and, of course, Croatia. More than thirty invited participants – scholars and students coming from Africa, Asia, Europe and North America – gathered around the idea of exchange of their scientific, social and personal experiences while working on scholarly and politically relevant aspects of the course's principal issue. Cultural modes of representing nation and gender were reflected from parallel perspectives of ethno-anthropology, symbolic anthropology, cultural and performance studies, literary history, philosophy, history and gender studies. Interdisciplinary insights presented by distinguished scholars did not only contribute to the feminist critique of the gender-blind theorizations of nationalism and ethnicity, but also offered contextualized insights into specific instances of blending gender and nation in manifold, imaginative and repressive ways. As selected papers illustrate, the most common topics discussed and analysed in individual contributions were:

- the need for intersecting gender studies and feminist theory as a means of bridging reflection and activism
- the importance of theorizing gender in order to face radical political and social changes
- the reduction of paternalism and biases of Western canons and authorities within feminist and cultural anthropology
- the analysis of the role of traditional heritage and ethnic cultures in the new climate of re-patriarchalized production of gender stereotypes and gendered modes of resistance
- the detection of the engendered manipulation in political iconography and cultural practices, particularly in terms of militarisation and pacification

- the discussion on how the engendering of cultural performances follows their function as sites of redefinition of (national) ideologies
- the denouncement of the gendered ideology of roots, locality and belonging reflected in post-communist countries and transitional countries
- the reflection of identities through cross-cultural affiliations.

Unfortunately, this selection will reflect only a part of the vivid discussions that took place at the Inter-University Center in Dubrovnik during our summer course, which was devoted in the afternoons to student workshops. Their research and interest proved the topic to be a controversy opening up avenues for analysing related issues in various transitional landscapes, issues whose elaboration usually tend to disregard the perspective of feminist cultural criticism. Finally, in order to reproduce at least partially the heat of the debates, we decided to publish a polemic surrounding Maja Brkljačić's article on *Tito's Bodies in Word and Image*. Starting as a standard editorial procedure of reviewing, the comments we received brought us back to the methodological challenges of the whole course, since these critical responses grew into a confrontation of different views regarding the modes of representing and theorizing recent political history through the *body politics* of its major figures.

Finally, we draw your attention to the two remaining articles of this issue, by Davor Dukić and Ivan Lozica, which, though they do not fall under the topic of gender and nation, could also be read in the light of this absorbing and fascinating theme.

Lada Čale Feldman
Renata Jambrešić Kirin