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## **SCIENCE, SPACE, TIME: CONTOURS OF (CROATIAN) *LITERARY ANTHROPOLOGY***

Literary anthropology is a relatively new terminological syntagm, which grew out of the recent tendency to establish hybrid disciplinary practices. Its field of interest partly converges with that of folklore literary criticism, a discipline which is itself processual not only due to the literary "tradition" as its subject, but also due to the changes within its methodological tradition. Croatian folkloristics has for a long time cultivated a rather ambivalent relationship towards literary anthropology, although it had simultaneously — almost unwillingly — offered a relevant referential framework to this unstable but intriguing field. Namely, through its numerous and important incursions into the interpretation of the so-called "high-brow" culture, as well as its recent problematization of borders between the oral and the written literary corpus, it joined the concomitant contributions to the deconstruction of the opposition between the text and the context, parallelly flourishing in the Croatian ethnology.

Keywords: literary anthropology, folklore studies, ethnology

### **Introduction: Turning point or turning wheel?**

Somewhat overdue, as can happen under the conditions of the inevitable time gap which one can count on with the sluggish "local scholarship" with respect to "always elsewhere" newly cast paradigms, methodologies and terms within the humanities (liberal arts), literary anthropology is about to be introduced even in the Croatian literary and scholarly context. This paper will attempt to consider how and why this approach, already established some twenty years ago — sometimes in the capacity of a common denominator for a general "anthropological turning point" from literary<sup>1</sup> towards cultural theory (cf. Biti 2001a) — could be appropriated

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<sup>1</sup> According to Andrew Gibson, from a contemporary literary-theoretical aspect it is even retroactively possible to establish that the literary criticism, unquestionably

here as a possible gathering place for new interests in literary scholarship, beyond the prescribed professional and disciplinary parameters. It is, however, precisely "here" that this gathering place becomes problematic: not only the otherwise separate, through classificatory necessity, fields of "philology" and "anthropology" are joined to be under the same roof, for which even in the existing division of labour contiguity is not even foreseen — "philology" namely having its place among the humanities, and "anthropology", for its part, among the social sciences — but conceptual and institutional battles are also being waged around the central wing of anthropology itself, with one powerful extension completely outside the socio-humanistic sphere, deeply within that privileged representative of the reign of natural-science exactitude — medicine.

I do not wish to enter into a complex explanation of the reasons for which "anthropology" cannot be given a home within the Croatian academic sphere (on this, cf. Čapo Žmegač 1993; Čiča 1993; and, particularly, Prica 2001), so I shall only mention that the notion of "ethnology" (with "folkloristics" as one of its "branches"), this ingrained European term for the science of folk, has managed also to absorb a good part of the tasks of overseas cultural "anthropologies", for a long time oriented primarily to the exoticism of *other* cultures. In this way, we are immediately faced with the characteristic gap between the methodological authority of the globally disposed and that of the locally immersed researcher: while the latter, the ethnologist, is focused on the distinctiveness of one's difference from which he doesn't dare to ascend in order to make general conclusions on the "humanness", the anthropologist, propped up by an unconscious colonial superiority, sometimes carelessly confronts the otherness and transfers it into his own ethnocentrically adjusted, unquestionable universal conceptual models. The fact that we will not be speaking of Croatian "literary ethnology" on this occasion consequently indicates an interesting intersection of desire for the increase of scholarly dignity: the study of national literature would secure via an anthropological adjunct not only a contextual awareness but also a universalistic dimension, while the reciprocating self-legitimation from the unexpected neighbouring field — of ethnology and folkloristics — — would mean a final liberation of these scholarly practices from the necessity of trampling through muddy fieldwork and of expenditure on the "trivial matters" — the so-called folk "life" and its art residing far from the aura of high (literary) culture.

However, it is here where the woes of decanted borders of scholarly genres and cultural and disciplinary hierarchies begin to multiply. If we

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subordinated to the anthropocentric model, has from time immemorial dealt with anthropological issues: "In the final conjecture, an impression is created that narratology has always dealt especially with two categories. We could conditionally label them anthropological and textual, even though they imply varying aspects: the represented and the linguistic, the human and the material, the world and the structure, the signified and the signifier, the content and the form" (Gibson 2001:162).

add to the aforementioned nominalistic dispute regarding the anthropology of ethnology (and the reverse) — which irreversibly washed away the transcendental foundation of global insights — the growing instability of the seemingly obvious notion of (high) "literature" (cf. Biti 2001b), it will be shown that any attempt at explaining what the concatenation *literary anthropology* actually brings together is condemned already at its (Croatian) outset to bite its own tail in a circle-dance of mutually interlaced and dual-framed national and international conceptual traditions, and the methodological creations of legitimate and illegitimate "subjects of research". They produced our all-encompassing syntagma just at the moment in which both of its branches were being seriously undermined by this undesirable but, perhaps, also fruitful joint tenancy: anthropology, and with it (Croatian) ethnology, with its recently emerging character of "écriture" marked by partially truthful effects (cf. Prica 2001), and literature with its unstoppable submergence into the discursive, aesthetic and ontologically equal network of social and semiotic "systems" and anthropologically relevant cultural "texts" (cf. Biti 2001a).

For that reason, the intention of my article will be not so much to question the directions of acceptance which are opened up by the state of this syntagma on the international methodological market, than to outline primarily the specific nature of the conjured up, circular dynamic within the framework of the Croatian situation, primarily in relation to the already existing, but never clearly canonised underground currents within Croatian ethnology and folkloristics. One could, retroactively, say that they, from various motives, prepared but also suppressed the possibility for this undesirable, hybrid adoptee. The project of literary anthropology will therefore be discussed with regards to the current and future interests of the Croatian research (con)text to take on the already imprinted tracks or to promote their own, new literary-anthropological differences.

### **The status of the syntagma on the methodological market**

If we were, therefore, to first enter into the roughly outlined international field of the complex interdependence of the historical process of re-tailoring both the subject of literary and the subject of anthropological theory within the West-European and Anglo-American circle, along with the parallel and self-reflexive objectives of these research undertakings as conscious discursive entities, we would once again be confronted with the two-way force of historical attraction which the resultant literary anthropology has just unavoidably imposed as a hybrid discipline. What is indicative in this sense is the introduction to the collection *Culture/Contexture*, in which this fertile field, as the authors state, of "anti-disciplinary" hybridisation, is at first illuminated into the clearly demarcated optics of the separate disciplines of anthropology on the one

hand (Valentine Daniel 1996), and literary criticism on the other (Peck 1996), so that their fateful embrace would more clearly be displayed. And while the anthropologist, if adopting the considerations of the "blurred genres" of postmodernist ethnography as promoted by names such as C. Geertz, J. Clifford, G. Marcus and M. Fisher, V. Crapanzano, P. Rabinow, R. Rosaldo and S. Tyler, is forced above all to admit that the literary character of the anthropological reports themselves seriously disrupts the anthropologist's scholarly authority<sup>2</sup> and the desirable objectivistic description of culture, that literature is thus the unrecognised Other of his scholarly identity,<sup>3</sup> the literary expert, in contrast to this — pressured by the realization of the limitation of the range of one's analyses insofar they rely on the inherited projects of positivism, formalism, and linguo-structuralism (cf. Iser 1989) — will wish for a modicum of anthropological contamination so as just to ensure his/her scholarly legitimacy. And it is here, therefore, that a paradox of sorts of mutually alternating enrichment and undermining is at practice, from fear in the face of futility/fruitlessness, narcissism and discursive self-destruction of the ethnographic practice, and also the experimental playfulness of "representational genres", to the affirmation of the extra-literary effect of seemingly self-important discursive idleness (cf. Rapport 1999). The anthropologist endows oneself with literary-critical awareness of one's own subjectivism and the narrative quality of one's scholarly tales in order to reduce the presumptuousness of anthropological authority, namely the confidence that ethnography is a "receptacle of facts" and just one more pernicious deposit in the impersonal world creation (cf. Rapport 1997:12-23). This awareness emphasises the aesthetic, stylistic, rhetoric or imaginative character of the extensive anthropological library, from the influential "literary imagination" of Sir James G. Frazer through Lévi-Strauss to Geertz's "thick descriptions", pieces eagerly read by literary analysts, or to the literariness in the work of leading theoreticians such as Victor Turner, and its literary-analytical methodological repercussions (cf. Ashley 1990). And if anthropology is indeed a story, if, consequently, the anthropologist's experience of "participant observation" cannot be but transposed by narrative techniques, then the authentic statements of the anthropologist's collocutors are equally to be perceived as oral literary forms; and if this is so, then the literary creations of distant and even of domesticated ethnographic "fields" become equivalent to the anthropological "facts".<sup>4</sup> The literary critic, conscious of his own

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<sup>2</sup> For a sharp criticism of anti-Scientism, as promoted by these aforementioned names, cf. Reyna 1994, who categorises them under the common denominator of "panglossal Nihilism".

<sup>3</sup> Of course, every discipline recognizes such a "foreign body", each is based on some constitutive contrariety which guarantees their "self-presentation" (cf. Scott in Biti 2001b:34).

<sup>4</sup> Cf., for example, Poyatos 1988, in whose anthology literary works are treated as relatively unproblematic anthropological documents from which it is possible to extract the cultureemes of the context of their occurrence. However, the procedures of

problematic scholarly pretensions faced with the "inexactness" of his subject, wants to reduce them by certified anthropological insights both into his own "positioning", his institutional, gender, national and historical determination, and therefore into intentional or unintentional selectivity in relation to his subject, conditioned by that determination (Peck 1996:13). Insights into the context of literary production, however, can only lead him to comprehend more harshly that not even the "culture" in which literature is submerged, or from which it emerges, is anything other than the tissue of multiplied textualisations with equally shaky ontological foundations and equally heteroglossal, multivocal, ambiguous, semantic-pragmatical, functional-structural, theoretically-systematic or decon-structionally pliable characteristics, as much as the presumably bordered literature itself. But at the same moment in which it may seem to us that Derrida's "there is nothing outside the text" carries off culture into one of the branches of literary-theoretical interest, literary-scholarly practice, together with its unencompassable subject, will find itself — on the list of cultural-anthropological, largely postcolonial and feminist critical re-sources.

To that extent, traditional conception — reducible to the simplified statement that "the anthropologist studies culture in order to write a text, whereas the critic studies the text in order to understand the culture" (Peck 1996:18) — hushed two key *antidisciplinary* neuralgic spots up, each on a separate disciplinary pole: neither was the anthropologist ever confronted with a culture which would not already be a text, nor was the critic supplied with a text which would not already be mediated by a culture, be it the initial — of the literary text — or the final — of the interpretative one (not to mention that the critic, also, in order to "understand the culture", has to write — a text). "Anthropology", therefore, for the one who studies literature, started to encompass the interest for the recognised cultural intertext of the text (for example, "Renaissance culture" in relation to Shakespeare in the neo-Marxist cultural-materialistic approach and new-historicist orientations, framed in Foucault's interpretations), or for the unrecognised, but politically doubtful colonialist distortions (for example, European literary "Orientalisms" as detected by Said). It provided, however, also the pledge of *one's own* culturological and ideological functions, of a conscious climbing onto the political stage of "contra-hegemonic" processes, to which the practice of literary-criticism, with its legalized focus on literary prefabrications and performative creations of

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ethnographic confrontation with literature cannot be reduced to a simple, non-self-reflexive transformation of literature into a source (material) harnessed for an anthropological purpose: sometimes just the opposite is in question, the potential of literature itself to be the subject reflecting ethnographic material with the aim of delving into the joint imaginative-narrative core of the symbolic construction of the world (cf. Nigel Rapport's study, *The Prose and the Passion*, 1994, in which the author places Forster's novels side by side with the oral narratives of villagers from the Wanet district).

gender, class and national identity, tries actively to contribute to (ibid.:19-20)<sup>5</sup>.

However, if anthropology and literary criticism are really united by a common notion of the interlaced textualisation of culture and culturalisation of text, what remains for us to see is what would really produce "the difference in source and method" employed by these two disciplines. In the study already referred to, of the double-headed — — anthropological and literary-critical — editorship of V. Daniel and J. Peck — the differences are still relatively obvious at the level of preliminary professional affiliations, which, with the entry of a foreign body (literature in anthropology, culture in the text of literary criticism), collapse and dissolve. Thus anthropologists are forced to relinquish "reality", and literary critics to abdicate their position of ivory-tower noninscription in the agonising questions of power, violence and the ethics of literary scholarly output, to that very segment which, in fact, despite the inundation of the "world" in "the word", always elusively evades the semiotic, rhetoric, narrative, structural and systemic, or, in a word, the constructional dimension of the text. At one *anthropological* extreme there is the proposal by Nigel Rapport, who suggests that the method of literary anthropology be based on zigzag ramblings from text (literature) to text (culture) (Rapport 1999), which, in his final deduction, led him to the solipsistic concept of the "transcendent individual" in his "liberal literary anthropology" (Rapport 1997). This is a comprehension which implies the imprisonment of individual imaginations (of the anthropologist, the narrator, the author or the literary researcher) into one's own consciousness, while liberalism is seen in their creative release to free flow and to chance zigzag encounters. At the other extreme, one finds the obsession with group identities and the presumptuous intention of *literary* analysts of cultural study orientations (feminist criticism, gay and lesbian, postcolonial and class studies) to "change the world" (in that sense, cf. Hillis Miller 1992) through their efforts around the destruction of tacit aesthetic and political hierarchies of established national and universally valid literary canons.

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<sup>5</sup> For an articulate confrontation with such a presumptuous project on the part of literary critics, see Fish 1995, whose lectures are also very instructive of the prudency with which we are to approach cross-disciplinary enterprises: "The point can be generalized: whenever there is an apparent rapprochement or relationship of co-operation between projects, it will be the case either that one is anxiously trading on the prestige and vocabulary of the other or that one has swallowed the other; (...) The vocabularies of disciplines are not external to their objects, but constitutive of them. (...)" (Fish 1995:83, 85).

### Joint sources and divisional differences

Perhaps there is nothing left for us than to observe literary anthropology in its sometimes global(istic), sometimes fragmented, hybrid patterning on the dividing lines between genres, disciplines and individually and collectively based assumptions. A name in literary scholarship which paved the way, opening, through his efforts on behalf of literary anthropology, a space for the exceptionally comprehensive and now already considerably established "school" at the Konstanz University is also a familiar name in reception theory, Wolfgang Iser, who in his two books which cannot be overlooked in that respect, *Prospecting: From Reader Response to Literary Anthropology*, from 1989, and *The Fictive and the Imaginary: Charting Literary Anthropology* from 1995, endeavoured to outline the "global" anthropological foundations of literary critical thought, and to touch on the stumbling blocks of literary scholarship: to what purpose literature, where did the need for literature arise from, what is its place, role and function in human culture? The converse, and at the same time, parallel return to *cui bono* questions is characteristic for the so-called generative anthropology of Eric Gans and his postulated "originary scene" of culture, the generative blind spot which cultural history tries to encompass in various ways, among others by its literary signs — a variant of literary anthropology to which Iser's approach is sometimes contrastively connected (van Oort 1997/1998).<sup>6</sup> Far from today's obsession with "diversity and difference" which, according to Iser, "has become an end in itself", but far from the equally self-purposeful "postponement of the source", that is, the postponement of the search for this source, this connection seems, *sit venia verbo*, to revive the controversial and never apostrophised kinship of the former parallel-inverse orientations of Northrop Frye and René Girard.<sup>7</sup> Both of these authors today also seem relatively unpopular both in anthropological and literary-theoretic endeavours, zealous not only for a political-ethical engagement but also for the conscience of the contingency of the historical juncture and firmly anchored geographical location.<sup>8</sup> The paradoxical conjunction of both

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<sup>6</sup> Iser himself described the difference in terms of a reversal in the research position of literature: "while he takes fictional prose as an explicatory tool, I am inclined to use fiction as a research tool" (ibid.).

<sup>7</sup> Here I am largely thinking of the Shakespeareological contributions of both theoreticians: although both of them stepped over the ostensibly clearly recognisable border of Shakespeare's opus in the direction of his culturological resonance, Northrop Frye turned to the host of archetypal imprints in the body of the Bard's texts, and, in doing so, retained faith in their power of what Iser would term the *extension* of human experience, while Girard's *Fires of Envy* related Shakespeare's opus to the violent "primary scene" of mimetic rivalry which Girard's anthropology repeatedly derived from cultural texts.

<sup>8</sup> This is how the neglect of Frye's theoretic heritage was summed up by Hayden White: "Contemporary practitioners of what has come to be called 'cultural studies' have not on the whole found much of use in Frye's work. In part this is because cultural studies is a neo-Marxist activity, inspired by the example of such figures as Gramsci, Raymond

contrasting pairs again reveals how "(scholarly) life is somewhere else"; literary sources are seen either in some human need (in the interweaving of relatively autonomous cognitive spheres of the "real, the fictitious and the imaginary", for Iser), or in the foundations of culture (Frye's "archetype" and "mythological universe" as a cluster of assumptions and convictions developed from existential preoccupations, and, sometimes, the more precise "great Code" of the biblical myth), while anthropologists will find the original source of culture in the — (theatrical? linguistic? literary?) *representation* (Gans in "minimal representational scene", Girard in originary human "mimetism").<sup>9</sup>

However, between the intention that the coinage of "literary anthropology" be comprehended as an opportunity for a united search for a secret code of both literature and culture on the one hand, and the confused divisions of differentiating micro-literary-anthropological studies on the other, its numerous attractive thematisations branch out, carried out from "anthropological fundamentalia" of cultural anthropology, such as **social interaction**: ritual, cult, ceremony, interactivity, speech, aggression and war, conflicts, upbringing, work, procedures of exclusion and distinction; **mental worlds** of imagination, fantasy, topological and semiotic competencies, capability of projection, feigning, cognition, emotions, memories, faith, attestation, attentiveness; **the body**: embodiment, illness, physical and medial bodies, forms of gazing; **everyday and intercultural communication**; **political discourse**: foreignness, colonialism, hermeneutic cultural competence, nationalism, education and pedagogy; **history of science/scholarship**: concepts and patterns of thought, natural sciences, technology, media and intermediality, law, ethics, aesthetics,

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Williams, Stuart Hall, Jürgen Habermas, and Louis Althusser, adamantly historicist therefore and paranoically hostile to anything smacking of formalism, structuralism, idealism, or organicism. Insofar, then, as Frye's work is noted at all by practitioners of cultural studies, it is an example of these fallacious or misguided (insofar as they are ahistorical) ideologies (White 1992:29).

<sup>9</sup> The incentive, namely, of the latter is for the cognitive impulse of anthropology as the evaluation of the human to resist not only empirical description which is predominant in the social sciences, but also the subjection to the precedence of (deconstructional) philosophy, which is averse to a return to sources, proclaiming them to be foundational myths that invoke "the metaphysics of presence". What is indicative, however, is that the *conceptual* core of the generative anthropology of Eric Gans is the hypothesis that the primary human linguistic-representational "scream" — which comes about as compensation for the rejection of Girardian primary mimetic rivalry over the object — is not *declarative* in character, as metaphysical tradition would want, and for this reason exposed to deconstructional undermining, but rather *ostensive*. According to that theory, the primary linguistic utterance is thus not an utterance which warrants the truth of the claim, but a linguistic event which simply endeavours to show semiotically, to recreate compensationally the forbidden object of animalistic lust, and it this linguistic act which is the founding act of humanity, the threshold of human consciousness and culture: a (*literary*) *account* — whose point of reference, a possible source of violence, is forever postponed in a Derridian sense — and not a *notion* like an epistemological and ontological basis for recognised or unrecognised transcendental admixtures (cf. van Oort 1995).



**literature and art:** poetics, image of humankind, self-presentation, staging the body; **media:** the Internet...

If it seems to you that with the appearance of literature within this list, the framework of literary anthropology meta-discursively implodes, you are not completely wrong, and a superficial review of the German literary-anthropological titles published over the last three years will only contribute to this confusion: from the study of eccentric bibliophile-collectors, anthropophagi in literature and cultural sciences, demonstrations of emotions, portraits, landscapes and interiors, concepts of the body, interculturality, gesturing, authorship, to the "art of words" and the proto-aesthetics of communication...

### **Croatian literary anthropology — an underground methodological tradition?**

As I mentioned at the onset, my real intention is, nevertheless, to show above all under which aegis literary anthropology strides in the Croatian academic context, primarily because of the recognised analytical profiling of Croatian modern folkloristics, a discipline that in some places is regarded as the fundamental centre of literary anthropology in those attributes in which it encompasses the study of (oral) literary forms of separate ethnic communities and "folk", "peasant", "primitive" or distant cultures. Bearing in mind the aforementioned profusion of possible research freedoms and disciplinary untameability, I find it much more interesting to observe whether there is, in fact, any underground Croatian literary-anthropological tradition, and why have its virtually attainable potentials as enumerated above up until now been held on a relatively analytical or disciplinary leash. This I intend to do not so much in relation to the fruitful "Zagreb school" of prompt resorption of theoretical-methodological changes (cf. Biti, Užarević, Ivić 1995),<sup>10</sup> but primarily in

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<sup>10</sup> Although they were not made known under that aegis, among the literary-anthropological forays we could include the observations of Milivoj Solar on the relation of the novel and myth, on the joke as a literary genre, and incursions into the sphere of so-called "popular" or "mass" culture: a short-lived but intensive discussion on trivial literature in Croatian literary-theoretical journals of the 1980s, which took place under the influence of German interest of that literary field. Still, these questions were posed regularly from the perspective of the modernist consolidated aesthetics and ontic of literary "essence" (cf. Domić 1995). In this regard, the study of the earlier Croatian literary corpus was far more flexible, compelled by, but also liberated from the historical distance of its material to take into account the interweaving of synchronic culturological strata of "popular" and "learned" literary culture on the level of direct contact in genre and style in a cultural — and literary-historical — perspective, which folklorists gladly accept as a connector and guarantee of their concept of the non-severable, two-way and permanently open encounters of the two subjects. However, it would not do to forget the comparativist contributions of our philologists of other national literatures, who worked on the collection of "all notions or the echoes of the Croatian name and on references of our places" in foreign literature. Maroević, for instance, states that Mate Zorić, in assembling "a mosaic of

relation to the proclamation of the "multidisciplinary footholds of Croatian folkloristics" (Jambrešić Kirin 1997).

Namely, from its Romanticist beginnings, Croatian folkloristics — although its literary-scholarly branch would see the differentiation of its subject material primarily in its *oral* character — was not only oriented to *writing down*, preserving and archiving that decaying segment of "Croatian spiritual individuality" (Andrić 1939:5, according to Jambrešić Kirin 1997:47), but it also based its search and selection principles for that material precisely on the values of *high, learned* literary culture and *its* enlightenment requirements, wishing to add to it the pearls of folk poetry of similar aesthetic qualities. The domination of validating the "authenticity" of a literary creation which, one assumes, originates from the unique, ingenious personality of an individual author, produced the criterion of "authenticity" in the field of folkloristics, which has remained under the jurisdiction of the folklorist-collector, and not that of the narrator of the oral-literary form. The frailty of this literary creation in the face of the brunt of civilisational destruction, similar to the political frailty of the national identity which these forms were meant to support,<sup>11</sup> demanded from folkloristics the emphasis on documentational, and, later, classificational work on positivistic recording. It also required the postponement of theoretical-interpretational undertakings until the second half of the 20th century, although the latter, in fact, were the *preconditions* for building the parameters of search, collection, notation and storage (cf. Jambrešić Kirin 1997:53-54) — which only goes to underscore the thesis that these parameters were taken over automatically from the methodological supply formulated *outside* the folkloristic sphere.

However, it was not only folkloristics, as we will see, that diagnosed relatively early on the paradox of its own efforts around the authenticity of oral-literary identity in the very act of *writing down*, by which in any case "the unconscious influence of the written media and art literature commences" (ibid.:65) — that indefinable, aesthetically certified entity

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cultural-civilisational relations", made the journey "from empirical, positivistic and accumulative philology" to arrive "at theoretical generalisations, to the constitution of specific topoi (stable, conventionalised meanings with largely negative signs) and the creation of *authentic anthropological perspectives*" (Maroević 1999:113, emphasis L. Č. F.). Here too, however, rare are the cases of a consciously arranged encounter of the *highly developed technologies* of the two separate disciplines of anthropology and literary scholarship (an interesting example of the cultural-historical inclination of narrative analyses can be seen in Dukić 1998; for the anthropology of performance in the fold of theatre semiotics, and possible post-colonial resonances of primarily structuralistically oriented analyses cf. Čale Feldman 1997), which intentionally work on the fragmentation of the seemingly methodological incongruence: more often the work is done under the assumption of the inter-discursive nature of "the subject itself".

<sup>11</sup> As Jambrešić warns, it is indicative in the sense that the original predominance of interest is in the epic creations of popular literature and only incidentally in fairy tales, stories and legends.

which floats normatively above oral material, but when it does actually gain access to it, it most certainly "spoils" it. On the other literary-theoretical hand, it is also possible to affirm how the social, scholarly and altogether discursively privileged position of literature itself owes to the very *oral* character of communicational exchange within the academic community, since, according to this thesis, it can only appear to oral societies that literature "is the most exposed custodian of national tradition and historical identity" (Biti 1995:113). An additional paradox is that that particular eminent qualification of the literary-scholarly milieu for the anthropological anamnesis of Lévi-Strauss' "cold" as opposed to "warm" academic societies, zealously maintains a "peaceful co-existence" with the unexceedable allocation of jurisdictions within the humanities (ibid.:114) — among others, therefore, and for us here crucial, the strictly differentiated co-existence between literature and anthropology (ethnology, folkloristics).

Even though literary folkloristics was, therefore, fated in the second half of the 20th century, also, to remain, to an extent, the *ancilla* of literary scholarship, it was in fact the effort of Croatian folkloristics to venture into theoretical-methodological waters and consider its subject's *difference* that conditioned its prompt location alongside academic departments which led the way to conquering new orientations in literary interpretation. That is how, for example, Biti asserts for the route of "semiotic ideas", citing as their first mediators the "ethnological and folkloristic institutes outside of universities", followed immediately by "elite scholarly thought". However, the onslaught and adoption of these ideas had, in the view of this author, to be supervised, as it was this very one that repeatedly broached the "aesthetic ideology" and dangerously disseminated "the empathetic nature" of comprehending literary meaning towards more rational methods of demystifying literature, if not almost blasphemously corroding into the "overall gamut of human thought, activity and behaviour" (ibid.:118-119, 110-111). Let us, however, take a look at what, according to Biti, *held back* Croatian folkloristics in that regard:

The other source, *ethnological and folklore research institutes*, which were deprived of customary academic influence in the former Yugoslavia because their members did not participate in teaching, and which were absolved in this way from the pedagogical imperative, were more free in their acceptance of semiotic ideas, **although they were not equally free in applying them in their full scope. That compromise was comprised of not encroaching into the jurisdiction of *Literaturwissenschaft***" (Biti 1995:118, emphasis L. Č. F).

In other words, folklorists were forced to turn to pragmatic-situational, contextual components as the decisive factors in the production of the above-mentioned *differences* of folk, traditional, oral literature, but that re-organization in conceiving of literature had to remain in the field of "sayings, riddles, myths, legends and other 'simple forms'", while in the

analysis of the fairy tale, for example, the "semiotic method had to be limited" and "augmented largely by the hermeneutic approach", since the fairy tale — I presume and conjecture the author's understatement when the causes for that boundary are at issue — the fairy tale, with its international typological inventory and presumed subsequent "development" in trivial literature<sup>12</sup> was already perilously bordering on complex literary phenomena for which it was not good to contaminate excessively with either "context" or interdiscursive structuralist "schemes", so as not to call into question not only their postulated values — "universal", but particularly national-spiritual — but their very aesthetic features.

Indeed, folklorists, even those semiotically trained, additionally armed with diversified knowledge on "French anthropology, ethnology and sociology, as well as German, American and Soviet folkloristics" (Biti 1995:19), encrached very cautiously the field of "artistic" literary criticism, always with the uncomfortable feeling of bastardised presumptuousness or of betrayal of their own maternal methodological aegis.<sup>13</sup> They heartily pointed to the folkloristic threads woven into many great works of apparently self-made geniuses the likes of the poet who wrote *Ranjinin zbornik* (cf. Perić-Polonijo 1991), Marin Držić (Čubelić 1969, Lozica

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<sup>12</sup> Cf. in this sense the polemic between Bošković-Stulli and Škreb on the pages of *Umjetnost riječi* [The Art of Words] 1968 (1-2, 3) and 1969 (1-2). While Škreb wants to omit the fairy tale when the "linguistic-stylistic intensification" is at issue as a characteristic of an "individual literary work", and prefers to explicate its "structure" as an expression of a "social need" for compensatory formation in relation to the repression of "reality", a role which would later be taken on successfully by trivial literature, Bošković-Stulli defends its very distinction of "the art of words" which seems to emerge from the individual creativity of the individual, contextually and locally-linguistically rooted "master teller of tales". While with Škreb the resilience of the "scheme" is perceived as something which de-individualises the literary work and signals the primacy of certain "mental, spiritual and phenomenal needs" and the secondary nature of linguistic art, Bošković-Stulli insists on that particular linguistic level when the adding of the fairy tale to the artistic literature corpus is at issue and, in that way, reinforces the thesis of that level as being basic when the detection of aesthetic symptoms is in question. In his polemic, Škreb refuses to respond to the argument on the "schematic nature" of all literary works, while Bošković-Stulli, for her part, rejects Škreb's offer for the application of "different criteria" to the fairy tale, fearing the exclusion of her corpus from the domain of elevated aesthetic relevance.

<sup>13</sup> Resolving to venture into the literary presentations of "wine statutes", the culture of "the gentlefolk" in both their "statutory" and literary existence in the works of Šenoa, Đalski, Matoš and Krleža, therefore, in something which does not belong to Radić's nominal "folk culture" ethnological and folkloristic guidelines, Lozica will assign such literary offshoots of the wine-statute imagination to "the culture of the gentlefolk": "I admit that I am a folklorist (whatever that means) and that this text of mine has no great ethnological or socio-historical pretensions. I do not know whether this small contribution will perhaps only follow that (now older) critical path of ethnology — the aspiration to do research into the culture of diverse social strata, and not only that of the peasantry. Be that it may, I accept the idea that two ethnological (or folkloristic) subjects do not exist and that our research must rise above the 'small-minded and static opposition' of two separate cultures..." (Lozica 2002:11).

1996), Ivana Brlić-Mažuranić (Bošković-Stulli 1970, Marjanić 1998), August Šenoa (Marks 1996:195-252), Miroslav Krleža (Bošković-Stulli 1982), Ivo Vojnović (Čale Feldman 1997), and then again, Šenoa, Đalski, Matoš and, again, Krleža (Lozica 2002:11-40). And while ethnologists unaffectedly continued to find ethnographic documents in early literature (cf. Belaj 1998:340-341), folklorists drew a line between their corpus and the artistic literature, always in passing humbly emphasising the literary-aesthetic dignity of strayed folk heritage as an aspect which could at all advance such heritage into a model or even an intertext of authored graftage, "evocations and paraphrases".<sup>14</sup> That this was a hard job is sufficiently proved by the marginal cases of long-term indecisive mutual encroachments such as Lucić's *Robinja* [Slave Girl] (cf. Lozica 1990:193-195) or *Asanaginica* (cf. Bošković-Stulli 1975). Independently of searches for roots at the "folk soul", it was rare here not so much to announce any hierarchical tilting *in favour of* so-called "immanent aesthetics" of folklore material — a full tilt which would abandon the initial unquestionableness of literary geniuses — as to do more work on the unravelling of the strict borders of imaginal and scholarly authorization. This may be the case when *literary texts* that are explicitly impregnated with folklore are in question, as it may be with *literary-scholarly analyses* of aesthetic but also cultural pertinence of the presence of folklore in literary production, even that with an explicit folk genre denominator (cf. Čale Feldman 2001a:187-210).

However, it was the study by Mirna Velčić (1991) that enunciated in a full sense the chiasmic treatment of anthropological testimonies (and their scholarly prefabrications) as narratologically pliant utterances or the treatment of literature (and its scholarship) as an anthropological document on equal footing. Working through the prism of autobiographical narrative interest and its aporia on the discontinuity of the antithesis the text/(its) reality, that study encompassed a broad range from the the right to speak in everyday conversations to (meta)scholarly

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<sup>14</sup> One can see the caution with which Maja Bošković-Stulli announces her folkloristic research when the "significance" of Krleža's "poetic patterning and aesthetic reflections, connected with oral creativity" are at issue: "Krleža, without a doubt, bears no resemblance to the 'folklore' orientation writer. He approached folk themes and impulses from the distance of a modern urban writer" (1982:7). In another place she is once again defensive when considering the possible contamination of the author's genius from "her" field: "Krleža was particularly attracted to another aspect of small, nondescript and unnoticed folk songs..." (ibid.:32). "In his interpretation, it all assumed a new literary intensity" (ibid.:39). In fact, folklore material in the works of that writer shows all the ambivalence of "proto-history" and "originary elementary nature" on the one hand, and, again, "the underground power of fantasy" on the other (ibid.:40). Although Bošković-Stulli mentions that in the case of discovered "original" quotations from folk creativity "one cannot speak of Krleža's direct modelling on them", an insight into the still unelucidated "possibility of their mutual contacts" matters to the author as she extracts the "context of kindred links" from the exclusive "circle of written literature" (ibid.:47), and concludes that this is a case of inspiration which is "both rich and fecund" (ibid.:68).

discourse. Joining forces with studies which had set off in that direction from primarily literary-theoretical impulses, leaving the field of fixed aesthetic and genre lines of demarcation (cf. Zlatar 1989), seemingly occupied with the unresolvable theoretic contentions of discursive decanting and assuming ideologically privileged discursive positions, it was precisely this consideration which gave rise to the efficacious exemplifications of precisely the ethical-political relevance of the "fictionalisation" of war narrative documentarism. With equal attention, they analytically encompassed the seemingly uncontaminated, historiographically, literarily and media-politically most innocent personal histories of the voices of the victims, "the women and children" (cf. Jambrešić 1995; Prica & Povrzanović 1995), and the extremely ideologically provocative, media-exposed and politically "marketable" authorial literary products (cf. Jambrešić 1998 and 2001).<sup>15</sup>

The encounter between anthropological "testimony" and the awareness of its literary patterns was thus induced in Croatia by a highly specific war disruption both of history and of literature. Both of their respective scholarships, each from its own perspective tangent, had to deal with the body of documentary prose, which knocked the methodological arms out of both their hands. For this reason literary scholarship found itself in danger of falling into the trap of the "ontotext" — as Dubravka Oraić-Tolić (1993) dubbed reports on (wartime) "reality" — and that of the guaranteed looking into the dangers of war with "one's own eyes" and of the suffering its consequences "on one's own skin" (Sabrić-Tomić 2000). These attempts tried to promote reserve values in form of criteria for such texts as desirable bearers of testimony of national trauma,<sup>16</sup> pressing back the "aesthetic ideology" into an almost undesirable sign of

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<sup>15</sup> However, insistence on their autobiographic perspectives, and on their rhetorical, narrative character is far from the aspiration that these patterns be divested of their traumatic nondiscursive "surplus", be that it precedes or comes after them: "The questionable status of autobiographic texts as potential historical documents can in some cases — as is surely this autobiography of children of war displaced persons — thus also be observed in light of the seriousness and dramatic nature of the utterances and events to which they refer. But this does not mean to somehow only ensure them against manipulation within *realistic discourses* (whose potential influence on reality, admittedly, is sometimes taken as being more direct than could be spoken by the cautioning awareness of its complexity and the impossibility of a reverse process), but equally against their total unreality in the rhetoric figures of individual theoretical discourses" (Prica & Povrzanović 1995:190).

<sup>16</sup> Conversely, Tatjana Jukić preferred to deal with the neck-breaking "affirming" of the metahistoriographic strategies of Croatian prose during the 1990s, and tried to bridge the "living experience" of national trauma, and the "hardship" of its "transfer into the demonstrated" by obsessive intertextualisation and precipitous structures. It is characteristic, however, that Jukić cautions: "No matter how complex, the borders between the disciplines of metahistory and traditional narratology (which frequently assist the findings, and/or description of the historiographic metafiction) in this case it is therefore necessary to expand them by including the most broadly understood psychoanalytical theory, as well as anthropological and ethnographic praxis" (Jukić 1998).

opportunistic use of writing skills for the purpose of fully pragmatic ideological or, more concretely, lucrative marketing of the misery of others. Paradoxically, Croatian war-ethnography tried to guarantee its discursive effect by reverse "means" — by conscious *bringing to literacy*, discursivisation and aestheticisation of the deafened catastrophes of war and its politically-anthropologically pliant symbolism, searching not for its ontotextual, but, rather, for its *poetic* features (cf. hence the title "The Poetics of Resistance", Čale Feldman et al. 1993).

And thus, when ethnologists and folklorists once again found themselves in a position to revert to their inherited, peaceful themes, nothing was as it had once been: Croatian authorial literary works — for example, the prose of the second half of the 19th century — were no longer just a stock of insights into mutual folklore-"artistic" permeability, but became the arena for quashing the *methodological* oppositions of the oral/written and literary/extra-literary, disconnecting on Bahtin's trail into multiply mediated and framed socially active and secularly modulated "spoken genres" that act subversively on the very concept of centralised and standardised language, for which literature is ostensibly the privileged bearer and supplier (cf. Endstrasser 1997). Further, in the shift away from the earlier folkloristically informed offshoot of Držićology, Držić's works became participants that were equal in status to the negotiating and perhaps more stratified demonstrable dialogue about "cultural systems" and ideologies of gender, class, family, village/town relations, foreigners and "native folk", and about subcultures and worldviews (cf. Gulin 1996 and 1999). Finally, Krleža's prose, besides repeated identifications of this or that in the writer's personal political views, transformed into a document of the intersection of colourful, hitherto unnoticed *micro-* and *macro-*historical levels. Subsequently, with literary-anthropological cross-breeding, the author's obvious *anthropology* of the muffled voices of soldiers and widows emerged from the political and wartime horror Krleža evoked. According to Marjanić, this horror stretches from Krleža's 1918 to his apocryphal 1998, to which he implicitly directed his anticipatory *extraspection*, as the author says (cf. Marjanić 1998).

The research within the framework of the folkloristic institutional "school" now partly continues to move along the paths laid out in the previous decades, which means primarily with the objective of illumination of etymological and etiological cultural-historical traces (cf. Lozica 2002), but also the contextual ingrowth — so, for example, the ethical-worldview inscriptions (cf. Delić 2001) — within *folklore* poetic, prose and performative genre "material". However, the already mentioned wartime cutting and autoreflexion, together with the "settling of (institutional) accounts" (cf. Marks & Lozica 1998) prompted by the Institute's 50th anniversary, and finally the turning-point affirmation of the chances for "glocal" thought tirelessly to examine "the great nothing" of ethnological scholarly and subject tradition in the work by Ines Prica (2001), presented a challenge to redefinition of both ethnology and folkloristics. The

challenges are all the bigger if both these disciplines are to work through their inherited ideological functions, from Romanticism through Socialism to post-Communism. Which does not mean that the transdisciplinary *ethos* arising within these fields of knowledge would not be subjected to taming and reduction to the existing labels: for example, to the sceptical diagnosis of "the return to semantic interpretation" in the younger generation of Croatian folklorists and their "drawing nearer to the anthropological research of cultural values" (Marks & Lozica 1998:86). A diagnosis which puts forward the convergence of semantic preoccupations and "the expansion of the subject to extra-aesthetical phenomena" in the mentioned anniversary review of the development of folkloristics treats this methodological phenomenon as a logical outcome of transdisciplinary disorder, which "weakens" the texture-text-context triad. Its vulnerability, according to the authors, should be protected from the rough winds of "grey theory", since that triad alone — even though it, too, is shaped in the theoretical spirit of American folkloristics during the 1970s — is able to guarantee "the immanent approach" to oral literary art work and the overall "greenery" of the vitality of folklore literature (ibid.:91). Even if we were to ignore that the postulate on "literary art work" could hardly be in a position to assist in the separation of folklore from so-called art literature,<sup>17</sup> and the omission that the mentioned expansion does not relate exclusively to the extra-aesthetic but also to the nominal *non-folklore aesthetic* field, it would be obvious that the claim only reinforces the thesis on the competing conceptual formations of "folkloristics" and "literary anthropology", each of which claims the right to represent certain priorities, completely independent of the "immanence" of the logic by which those priorities "impose themselves". A shift in the methodological "anthropological values" (aesthetic, extra-aesthetic, folkloric and non-folkloric or even the very boundary between them) in the name of which it steps onto the socio-humanistic scholarly stage is, as we have seen, anthropological "material"<sup>18</sup> in itself, as it is also a gripping — story.

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<sup>17</sup> This division — as a result of the singled out folkloristic school, imbued with Russian formalism and Prague structuralism — cannot in any way be guided by the principle of immanence, but must always be established with respect to the context of production and reception, that is, in the case of a folklore creation, with respect to "the connection between the folklore and extrafolklore structures" (Perić-Polonijo 1993:325).

<sup>18</sup> It was in this way that Vladimir Biti observed the "unidirectional" construction of the humanities and, particularly, contemporary Croatian literary historical (meta-)narrations in the work of Viktor Žmegač and Krešimir Nemeč, as symptomatic anthropological material of an unrecognised "post-colonial state", a state, indeed, which suffers "all the consequential risks from the specific reproduction" of the former "dominant" colonial "mentality" community to which Croatia belonged until only recently, a state of "particular conditions" within which the above-mentioned "unidirectional" construction reproduces itself and "can even degenerate into cultural and political extremism" (Biti 1998).



The literary-anthropological gulf or willing methodological patchwork of "high" literature, the media or ideological discourse which opens the space not only for globalist, transnational interference in economic, political, cultural, but also literary-theoretical local practice, continues now to be manifested largely in the field of the analytical selection and interpretative gathering of contrasting discursive material when *gender* (textual and performative) configurations are in question (Čale Feldman 2001a), still strongly imbued with the actualities of war and the (national-)ideological canons of inclusion and exclusion (Jambrešić 2001a and 2001b; Prica 2001; Čale Feldman 2001b and 2002), aimed at non-hierarchical, ontological, poetic and disciplinary mutually dependent interpretative engraftment.

### **Conclusion: the interest of the literary-anthropological (con)text**

The undertaking of literary anthropology — as an unavoidable point of encounter, as it seems to us today, of the logical advance of two once relatively separate fields of scholarship — hence leads less to expansion of the perceptive field to certain aspects, unexplained to date, of its formerly bordered "material" — "literature" and "culture" — than to an auto-reflexive return to the very segmentational impulse of two research views that were what separated those two entities, due to some of their own "interests". Paraphrasing a successful formulation on the occasion of networking of the literary-theoretical and historiographic analytical jurisdictions, one could say that "its outcome is to introduce diversity into the disciplinary matrix" but in the end "it discloses unexpected cavities in the identity of the discipline" (Biti 2001b:35). If the above-mentioned interests are to be reconsidered, abandoned, pooled or, at the very least, transposed, while somehow avoiding the "cavities", I believe they had to be brought to the fore as their methodological traditions had to be located. In other words, both their conceptual and contextual — diachronic and synchronic, international and national — remnants are woven into the work of the discipline which opens up to possible shareholding in the new hybrid conjunctions, and threatens them in advance with historical sedimentation and localisation of the exchangeable semantic fields of its terms and methodological customs. Contrary to the intuition that this is a matter of the coalescence of the subject branches of two disciplines into an integral — literary-anthropologically interpretable — body, there is an emphasised awareness of the fact that this is more a case of the coalescence of two (and more) branched inventories of optical instruments, from which one may selectively draw, along with the danger that one may well succumb to the other but also create in that way a new, genetically modified disciplinary monsters.

Still, the opportunity presents itself that they indeed be transgressive in relation to the systematic normalisation of scholarship as a socially

functional activity,<sup>19</sup> not so much on points of (democratic) agreement on the allocation of jurisdictions and generous lending of appropriated scholarly assets — "source and method" — but rather on the risky disturbance of their subject and object positions and previously anchored relations. Not only is there a permeability between "literature" and "culture" as "subjects" on the one hand, but there is one also between "literary scholarship" and "anthropology" as "methodical" curators of their bodies on the other. If we were to start out from the assumption about possible mutual substitutability of the provisional, historically built autonomy of the roles of *all* these entities<sup>20</sup> — the assumption of their mutual discursive and institutional over-framing — the interest of literary anthropology could be found precisely in the invention of uncertain dance figures in that rectangle discriminated only in principle, since its energetic tendency to fusing in a circle — and melding into other circles of hybrid inclinations — in any case only temporarily hampers it in some hierarchical division of dance "duties".

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<sup>19</sup> Rapport supports the transfiguration creed of literary anthropology following Rorty's division into systematic, objectivistically established disciplines, and disciplines which inspire. The latter, he says, are "abnormal and non-normative", "sceptical, peripheral, relativistic, suspicious of essential concepts, and of the claim that reality can be exactly, holistically explained and described" (Rapport 1999:42).

<sup>20</sup> In the collected papers entitled *The Anthropology of Experience*, which also contained a study about *Hamlet*, its author, for example, justifies the gulf between the literary text, epistemological issues and the guiding theme of the collection, seemingly radically distanced from her literary model, as follows: "Anthropologists may take *Hamlet* as an important cultural text, since *Hamlet* has become for readers the epitome of their deepest aspirations for knowledge, of their quest to penetrate the hidden truth of appearances, and of their sense of responsibility to right a world made corrupt by uncertainty. They may, however, overlook *Hamlet* as a mirror of their own anthropological enterprise..." (Gorfain 1986:207). This is merely a detached example of one of the possible shifts in the literary-anthropological subversion, one of the ways in which it can read texts — literary, cultural, but also those of criticism and anthropology — "against the grain of their original intention" (Biti 2001b:9).

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## ZNANOST, PROSTOR, VRIJEME: OBRISI (HRVATSKE) KNJIŽEVNE ANTROPOLOGIJE

### SAŽETAK

Književna antropologija razmjerno je noviji termin koji je iznjedrila recentna tendencija hibridnih disciplinarnih praksi te koji se djelomično preklapa s interesnim područjem folkloristike, discipline koja je i sama podložna procesualnosti ne samo svoje predmetne nego i svoje metodološke tradicije. Hrvatska folkloristika prema književnoj je antropologiji, međutim, iz niza razloga o kojima se u tekstu raspravlja, imala ambivalentni odnos, premda je istodobno brojnošću i važnošću svojih "izleta" u tumačenje tzv. "visoke" književnosti, kao i recentnom problematizacijom granicâ unutar postuliranog zajedničkog, usmenog i pisanog književnog korpusa, napose družbeništvom s etnološkim priložima dekonstrukciji opozicije teksta i konteksta, pružila relevantan referentni okvir nestabilnom, ali i intrigantnom području književnoantropoloških izučavanja.

Ključne riječi: književna antropologija, folkloristika, etnologija