Towards the Other Mythology – The Offspring of Darkness: Jocasta's Daughters and Granddaughters

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A B S T R A C T

»It all started with the doubt (perhaps exaggerated) that the Gods do not know how to talk«[1]. The author presents the situation and tendencies in contemporary mythological research. The article starts out from the mythos-logos antithesis and from the twofold conception of the myth as both a fabricated and a sacred story. The allopersonages as characters of different names, who function as markers for the identical element in the structure, are contrasted by the author with the isopersonages bearing names of the same characters, who simultaneously function as markers for diverse elements or semantic strata in the structure. The term sociogony is introduced in analogy to the terms theogony and cosmogony. On the basis of a review of Croatian and mainstream mythological trends, the author perceives two main orientations in mythological research: the historical reconstruction of the Proto-Slavic myth, and research into the myth, mythic consciousness and mythic language in contemporary everyday life. The author supports the idea of differentiating mythology and religion and analyses the role of the myth, and scholarship on the myth, in forming national and cultural identity. From that aspect, we can also identify the contemporary transitional scholarly myth in today's reconstructions of the unifed Proto-Slavic myth. Remythologisation is part of retraditionalisation: Proto-Slavic fellowship is the spiritual solace by which the East responds to the tearing down of the Berlin Wall.

Key words: *Croatian mythology, Proto-Slavic myth, remythologisation, allopersonages, isopersonages, cultural identity*

Introduction

In the age of transition and globalisation, the issue of cultural identity has become the focus of discussions and examinations, both in scholarship and in the everyday life. The past was rightfully evoked and history re-evaluated during the establishment of the Croatian state and in the Croatian war for Independence during the 1990s. At times, sight was lost of the fact that the past was in the past and that history was discursive. Going back to the roots so as to construct a national identity has rekindled interest in folklore and traditional culture, but has also (under the influence of public opinion and the media) restored the 19th century concept of mythology, folklore and traditional culture as surviving elements of the national past. When faced with similar problems, similar cures are used: the national treasure chest from the period of the formation of European nation states has once again been opened in the post-socialist transition. In social sciences this process is known as retraditionalisation[2], frequently interpreted as a reaction to the detraditionalisation carried out in socialism. Analogous processes have been taking place in postcolonial and Islamic societies – as well as in Japan, the USA and Europe.

The way to tackle the issue of retraditionalisation is by examining tradition as a key element of cultural identity and as a basic determinant in the humanities. Ethnology has long ceased to be a historical science, and we do not want to consider mythology, folklore studies or ethnomusicology as mere collection of material dwelling on the past. The main hypothesis is that tradition is a continuing (historical and ongoing) process of multi-level interpretation of repetitive procedures and symbols in the human community, rather than an inherited collection of indisputable facts, spiritual values and material

objects. We have to examine the interaction of the processes of tradition and retraditionalisation in the formation of multiple aspects of cultural identity. The »sacred« subject of mythology should not be an exception.

The title of my paper includes a Croatistic-gendered paraphrase of the title of Milivoj Solar's book *Edipova braća i sinovi* [Oedipus' Brothers and Sons][3]. If Oedipus' brothers and sons are Eteocles and Polyneices, Antigone and Ismene are their sisters. And Oedipus is both their father and their brother, while Jocasta is their mother and grandmother. Jocasta is the real mother of that entire mythic Mediterranean family. In that process, she is also a fourfold grandmother – to all of them except the male head of the family, that is, to her oldest son and husband, the hapless King Oedipus. Antigone's tragedy lies not only in the fact that she resolves to bury her brother against the decision of the authorities, or that only she, perhaps, understands her father and brother, the blind Oedipus – she is also a sister, aunt, niece and cousin who, in burying Polyneices' body, buries at the same time her brother and her cousin and her uncle and her nephew, since the conflict between Eteocles and Polyneices is not a mere Balkan fratricidal war, it is a struggle with multiple meanings in which brothers, cousins, nephews and uncles participate. Viewed theatrologically, there are (at least) eight actants in that *agon* and two acteurs.

Let us translate that by the mythological dictionary: if the *allopersonages* are varied[4] otherwise named personages who function as signs for the same structural element, then Eteocles and Polyneices are *isopersonages*: personages with the same name who simultaneously function as tokens for diverse elements or semantic levels of structure in the conflict.

Fortunately enough, this paper is not an attempt to analyse Ancient Greek mythology from the viewpoint of the ethnology of kinship or the ethnology of the family, nor is it an attempt at actantial analysis in the spirit of performative anthropology or the anthropology of the theatre, and it is not a turn towards gender analysis which, by way of a change of view, would replace the Oedipus complex with that of Jocasta. Just as Solar's book does not, in fact, speak of Oedipus, Eteocles and Polyneices, so I do not plan to speak of Jocasta, Antigone and Ismene. Any similarity between those Greek mythic characters and real characters from our lives is quite accidental. The complex relations in the Oedipus family are only the generalised metaphor for the diverse trends in mythological research, but also a reminder of the neglected, ignored so-called »lower« creatures of mythic legends. Those creatures are alive in the folklore process, they appear as personages in everyday narratives and thus differ essentially from dead pagan gods, but the priorities of mythological scholarship nevertheless leave them in the shadow of the reconstruction of the polyandric triangle of the Proto-Slavic holy family.

In brief, there are two trends of mythological research in Croatian scholarship. One orientation tries to reconstruct Proto-Slavic mythology (and/or the pre-Christian system of beliefs) in an interdisciplinary fashion and on the basis of all the accessible sources, thus opening up the way to research into the oldest stratum of Croatian mythology (and pre-Christian faith).

The other orientation tries to follow the role of tradition in everyday life, researching beliefs and the mythic legends of our contemporaries, alongside earlier writings. The objective is to achieve the broadest possible interpretation of culture as a process, particularly the continuity and changes in customs and folklore phenomena, in which revealing the pre-Christian and mythic traces is not the aim, but instead, one of the means of interpretation.

Sources, Methods and Results

What is Croatian mythology?

Are there any Croatian myths, and what is Croatian mythology? It is here that we encounter a host of problems. Firstly, we have to answer the question on the national belonging of the myth. If we are interested in the earliest stratum – ancient Croatian mythology – then we have already projected the idea of a separate Croatian culture several millennia back into the past, assuming that the mythology of the first Croatians was already sufficiently different from the mythology of our neighbours and other peoples. This is a matter of transposing our contemporary national identity into the distant past, which undoubtedly foregoes the formation of a modern nation.

If we insist upon current or historical state borders, it can happen that our research encompasses only a part of a certain historical mythological entity, for example, the (pre)Southern Slavic, the Proto-Slavic or the Proto-Indo-European. And the opposite could happen: that we attribute some local or regional characteristic to the entire Croatian territory or people. We have also to take into account the historical migrations of the Croatians and their numerous contacts with other cultures, while being plagued in the process by a chronic shortage of data. This has always been a sensitive scientifico-political or politico-scientific decision, a decision that has had to be made by all the domestic researchers of mythological themes, who have lived in the diverse state communities and in changeable cultural contexts in this part of the world.

The national or the supra-national? The decision has also had to be made by non-Croatians who have dealt with Croatian mythology. For example, at the beginning of the 20th century, Edmund Schneeweis wrote about the beliefs and customs of the »Serbo-Croatians« as a unified people of three confessions[5]. His construct of the Serbo-Croatian people/nation was a consequence of the consolidation of then-new power relations during and after World War I, that encompassed the Serbs, the Croatians, the Montenegrins, and the Bosniacs, while the fundamental designator was language (conceived as being a common language). Schneeweis tried to interpret all the differences he encountered through the threefold influence of Antiquity, Christianisation and Islamisation and

by the penetrations of the cultures of neighbouring peoples throughout history. In other words, the national and cultural identity of (re)constructed mythology is actually a construct of the identity of the researcher himself, projected into the distant past. The mythological literature that is at our disposal (particularly the earlier literature) functions as an historical conglomerate of variations on the theme of identity.

Nonetheless, it has been a long time since the choice between the supra-national and the national in mythology has been quite an arbitrary one: even a superficial reading of the introduction to Vitomir Belaj's book *Hod kroz godinu* [A Walk Through the Year][6] shows that the earliest sources treated the Slavs as an entity, enabling a rough division into eastern and western Slavism, in which process we encounter major differences in the characteristics and lists of the gods, which could possibly be the consequence of later development[6].

We do not have even one preserved Proto-Slavic mythic text, but we do have the centuries of mythmaking by learned people who Slavicised Graeco-Roman mythology, the strong mutual influences between Slavic scholars in the 19th century, Jagić's sharp criticism of the utilisation of folklore in the creation of pagan Slavic gods, and the evolutionary approaches to the Proto-Slavic faith on the part of Léger, Niederle and Rybakov, and the more recent works by Uspenskij, Toporov and Ivanov (in the second half of the 20th century), which also influenced mythological research in all the Slavic lands. Belaj noted only two newer attempts at a more direct mythic projection of Croatian identity, although those attempts did not try directly to abandon the Slavic circle. Milan Šufflay's article and Ivo Pilar's study[7,8] were compiled on the trail of the theory of the Czech historian, Jan Peisker, related to the Zoroastrian cult stages in the landscape. Those papers were used later as proof of the allegedly Iranian descent of the Croatians[6].

It thus follows that it is very difficult for the serious scholar to write today exclusively about Croatian mythology, or to write a coherent history of solely Croatian mythological research. It was for that reason that Vitomir Belaj integrated his historical review of research into a comprehensive overview of sources for Proto-Slavic mythology and chose the roundabout deductive way of application of the reconstructed Proto-Slavic mythology to Croatian circumstances[6]. That is why Radoslav Katičić, as a philologist, also set out to reconstruct the Proto-Slavic myth by taking into account the large Southern Slavic material along with Indo-European and classical parallels[6]. And Mislav Ježić behaved similarly: he compared the Proto-Slavic and the Proto-Indo-European myth[9].

The early strata of Croatian mythology can be reconstructed only comparatively, while if we comprehend the myth as a sacred story, that is, as a stable text that must not be altered, we can also comprehend it as a prosodically bound word, as ritual poetry. We are limited by language. If we are not drawn solely by »the ancient Eastern European horse-breeders of the steppes« as the first bearers of the Croatian name, then language allows us only the Proto-Slavic and Proto-Indo-European context[6]. On the other hand, if we take into account the differentiation of mythology and religion, that is, a gradation of faith and sanctity of sorts, the stability of the mythic text remains questionable. The myth is, of course, a sacred story, but a sacred story subject to variations in performance, and that means deconstruction, adaptation, and addition to the text – something that is known to us from Greek examples. Unlike the mythic text, the religious (liturgical) text is canonised and permits of no variation. The conformity discovered between fragments of ritual poetry in the more recent folklore of the Slavic countries perhaps indicates a sacred ritual text, but, by virtue of its thousand-year stability, that text is primarily a liturgical rather than a mythic one.

What if no religion of the so-called »higher« type existed in the Proto-Slavic world? A religion of the »higher« type is questionable even in the small Hellenic world, and they did not even have a word for religion but spoke rather of »divine matters« (*ta theia*). The twelve Olympic deities as known to us today are the product of the Modern Age's learned culture. Is it really essential that we – in this third Millennium – enthrone the *polyandric* triangle of desire (Perun – Veles – Mokoš) as the sturdy pan-Slavic Olympus from Vladivostok to Vienna? Whom would that serve? Is that, at least partly, a new transitional myth under the cloak of science, an anti-globalistic response in mythic language to the political demolition of the Berlin Wall? Isn't retraditionalisation and remythologisation in the post-Socialist countries also partly a spiritual (sacred) source of comfort, a new identification by which the Slavic East defends itself from the profane blows of western neoliberalism?

I am convinced that the Croatian and Slovenian mythologists are cautious and are prompted by scholarly interest, but they should deepen their awareness of the current mythmaking implications of their own field of scholarship in everyday culture, and re-examine their starting-points and their personal motivation. By linkage of a few uniform and codified preserved fragments of ritual text, we do not actually reconstruct a soft entirety of a forgotten living myth, but rather subsequently construct a never-existent firm religious pagan system. Comparison assumes both similarity and dissimilarity. If we are looking for the text of a myth, similarity of languages conditions that we find a Proto-Slavic and Proto-Indo--European context. But are we interested only in the text?

The myth remains a sacred story only in the entirety of a ritual, synergetically and synchretically fused with the ritual act and thought. In his short course on ritual anthropology, Vitomir Belaj invokes Toporov[10] and finds universal correspondence between the ritual worldview (the opposition between order and disorder) and the general scheme of ritual[6]. By that generalisation (a premature one, in my view), the non-verbal components of ritual are excluded, and the Slavic context of myth distribution is imposed. The ritual act (*dromenon*) is, in fact, im-

plied in all today's theatrical codes: dance/movement, gesticulation and mimicry, noise/music, mask/make-up and puppets, décor, costumes and props, the use of light etc. It also includes all those aspects of corporality that the civil theatre rejects: food and drink, sexuality and violence, and, finally, the sacrificial victim as the key element of the ritual. The word is in the background, domination by words is an indicator of the weakening of the ritual function of presentation[11,12–13], the sacred story is created (and transmitted) largely by body language, and body language is not conditioned by language. What comes first: the thought, the word or the act? If the ritual act precedes the myth, if the myth is secondary to and younger than the ritual[6], then the ritual is not a mere staging of the complete mythic story. The ritual creates the sacred story in a non-verbal manner. Thus, linguistic barriers are surmountable.

The exclusivity of the Proto-Slavic context has been imposed upon us *post festum* by the logocentric prejudice of the philologists in interpretation of the ritual and the myth. I agree that the Proto-Slavic and Proto-Indo-European context are inevitable in the search for the relicts of the earliest and most complete variants of the sacred story in the »original« Croatian homeland. Undoubtedly, that search is an attempt to separate the subject of research from the historical process. What was the original worldview? This is a matter of constructing the impossible: stable extra-temporal facts, in fact, an imaginary model[13]. By drawing the Russian-constructed model of the Proto-Slavic myth over our lovely oronyms, toponyms and hydronyms, can we reconstruct the proto-Croatian myth or the beliefs of the first Croatian settlers? Would we be able in that way to encompass the soft tissue of the forgotten myth, or, notwithstanding, would the centuries of the spiritual dynamic and development on the way from the Transcaucasus to the Adriatic Sea still elude us?

Even if we were successful in reconstructing the worldview of the Croatians on their arrival, what happened subsequently to the sacred story in the new homeland, and what is the status of that story today? Why is the story from the proto-homeland that we abandoned back then so important to us today? Have we finally re-settled or would we like to return there and are projecting and (re)constructing the imaginary and powerful *Slavoland* as an apotropaic historical argument in European integrations? We already dreamt that part of the thousand-year dream in the 19th century.

It is worth the attempt, but we must take care in the process to avoid the hegemony of the transitional scholarly myth that unambiguously replaces the Southern Slavic *allopersonages* (and the *isopersonages*) by the Eastern Slavic, Kievan, and Vladimir's Pantheon of Gods.

Mythic topography

Renewed interest in pre-Christian mythology in Croatia is largely the consequence of recent changes in the political and cultural context. Nonetheless, scholarly interest preceded those changes, firstly in the Vienna lec-

tures and German texts of Radoslav Katičić who, inspired by the semiotic-philologic discoveries of the Russian scholars, Uspenskij, Toporov and Ivanov, has been preoccupied with the Proto-Slavic myth for decades now. Briefly put, the contribution made by Ivanov and Toporov consists of a procedure by which the structures of the texts are compared, and then the identical structures are further analysed linguistically. They discovered etymological similarity in the names of the gods, the key concepts and entire phrases, (re)constructed elements of Proto-Slavic legends of the cosmic struggle between order and disorder, the *Gromovnik* [the Hurler of Thunder/Lightning] and the Snake/Dragon (Perun and Veles) and linked the myth of the Proto-Slavic god of vegetation with the heroes of the »fundamental« Indo-European myth of the Divine Duel.

The key lies in the stability of the structure: the structures do not change, but the words in the telling of the tale can be replaced by others of the same meaning. This is a case of *allopersonages* and *alloprops*, personages and props that – depending on various cultural and historical factors – change as tokens for the same structural element.

In his further analysis, Radoslav Katičić noticed the paradigmatic specificity of the Proto-Slavic myth of the hero of vegetation, while Vitomir Belaj, following on Katičić's path in his book *Hod kroz godinu* [A Walk Through the Year][6], restored the dignity of the waning culturo-historical orientation in Croatian ethnology and brought it nearer to contemporary mainstream attainments in the mythological field. Starting out from the thesis that the Slavic calendar follows the growth of wheat, Belaj committed himself to the vegetational mythologeme. He confronted the philological interpretation of reconstructed mythic fragments with the ethnological reconstruction of ritual (customary) acts on the basis of recent customs, and decanted the paradigm of the conflict into the syntagmatic annual sequence of the mythic story about the life of the divine hero (the god of vegetation). Belaj's *Hod kroz godinu* courageously describes the Proto-Slavic myth of incestuous hierogamy as the prototype of »all human weddings«. Belaj finally sums up that sacred story in the Epilogue:

»He was born on New Year (the Great Night) to the supreme heavenly deity, to the God of the Heavens (Gromovnik, on the Proto-Slavic level) and his wife the Sun, as the Young God (the Young King, Božić [the Little God]); on that very same day he was kidnapped by the people of the God of the Netherworld and taken to the land of the dead, whence he returned with the appearance of a horse; unrecognised, in the guise of Juraj on Juraj's Day, he seduces his own sister; he marries her as Ivan on Midsummer Day [Ivanje] and – in keeping with the Moon's fickle meaning – he is untrue to her and is killed in the end. The murder of the son of the supreme god was also comprehended as a sacrifice for the renewal of the entire Cosmos. His sister, the young, innocent virgin Mara, transforms into the cruel Morana after her brother's/lover's death, and she meets a similar fate at

the end of the year. With renewal of the order of time at New Year, the entire story starts again from the beginning«[6].

At the end of the Epilogue, the author of *Hod kroz godinu* concedes that the reconstructed image is too beautifully rounded out to be able to correspond to the final scientific truth[6]. I would add that, happily, there is no final scientific truth in Humanistics in any case, and that it is probable that the myth cannot be definitively reduced to the syntagmatic level of a simple, one and only story.

The building of the paradigmatic series undertaken by Ivanov and Toporov was, undoubtedly, a structuralistic debt to Lévi-Strauss, so that their *allopersonages* and *alloprops* largely corresponded with Lévi-Strauss' mythemes (and/or to the motifs in literature): relations constructed on a paradigmatic level can, admittedly, be expressed in a syntagmatic sequence and only one story, but that story is the ideal typal (re)construction, a logical summation, a new working hypothesis that no longer belongs to the mythic world in which the mythic message undergoes multiple repetitions in the form of incomplete, variable subtypes.

I believe that it is there that the important difference between mythology and religion lies: there is no heresy in mythology, while religion allows only one, canonised story.

In his most recent works, Belaj returns to Peisker's reading of the myth »from the landscape« and develops and applies that method to the reconstructed Proto-Slavic myth. Continuing along the path of the Russian scholars and of Katičić, proceeding from the discovery of the threefold spatial structure[14,15], Vitomir Belaj reveals the connection between the structure of reconstructed texts and the distribution of toponyms in the landscape. He is also interested in the possible function of those spatially-fixed structures as (sacred) inscription of sorts, as pagan consecration of space at the time of the Slavs taking possession of new lands[16,17]. Tomo Vinšćak[18] and Goran P. Šantek[19] joined him in that research, and Marija Novak wrote a book about the traces of Croatian mythology in contemporary folklore[20].

Semiotic, linguistic and ethnological co-operation in the reconstruction of Proto-Slavic scholarship has made a significant contribution to mythology scholarship in both the methodological sense and in the results already achieved, but each new penetration also opens up new questions and requires multiple verifications.

The other mythology: the ethnology of everyday life and literary anthropology

It remains for me to describe the other orientation in Croatian mythological research. Although I feel that I belong to the other orientation, I am aware that that presents no easy task. I would prefer to make a cowardly confession and admit something that I do not really believe; in other words, that the other mythology is in no way a matter of mythological research since – that's how it is –

the living comprehensive myth as a pagan sacred story does not, in any case, exist in contemporary Croatian everyday life.

Mythology would be science about the myth, while the other mythology of which I wish to speak mentions the myth only marginally, the myth not being its main subject or objective. Not even research into living beliefs or mythic legends can be satisfied by mere mythological interpretation.

However, if I do not want to research the myth in Oceania or in the Proto-Indo-European union, I must still write about the other mythology because it is the only one that speaks of the *living* myth in contemporary Croatian culture. That is no longer the long-since forgotten pagan sacred story that we speculate about or which we try to reconstruct in order, subsequently, to accept it as our heritage. That is our mythmaking, our conception of the myth, and, only sometimes, also the recollection of a forgotten myth.

The other mythology does not reconstruct the original sacred story; it is interested in the historical and contemporary construction of sacred stories, it implies the psychological, sociological and cultural analysis of our flight into the mythic past, our yearning for the myth and the utilisation and construction of the myth as a therapeutic time-and-space transposition, or as a metaphor for the idealised opposition to the current cultural context and the ruling order. It also implies an increased awareness of the binary opposition that drives us to arrogate and accept the *logos* without reservations – which immediately results in projections of the myth. It also implies criticism of the conception of the myth as an exclusively prehistoric pre-science. It includes a philosophical discussion about the two cognitions (that of reason and that of the mind) along with theoretical examination of mythic consciousness, mythic thought and mythic language.

The second mythology also encompasses the problem of our representation and interpretation of the myth, since the myth is expressed as the Other. It is becoming increasingly clear that mythology as a science is not exhausted by the subject field, by reconstructing the Proto-Slavic or the Proto-Croatian myth. Mythology as a discipline approaches myths, mythologies and theories of myths in a broader manner, in the working field. The most exhaustive domestic treatment of myth theory has been achieved outside of the ethnological/folkloristic profession, in Milivoj Solar's comparativistic lectures about the myth, mythic consciousness and mythic language. Solar also drew attention in those lectures to the »ominous power« of mythic language, which still establishes the illusion of ostensibly absolute certainty deriving it from »fragments« of science, art and the formalised experience of everyday life[3]. I do not think that that refers only to the »horrific« texts by the unschooled amateurs of whom Belaj writes[6]— the admonition also relates to certain eminent mainstream mythologists.

Solar's lectures were published in the book *Edipova braća i sinovi* [Oedipus' Brothers and Sons][3], a breviary

of sorts of the other mythology, which aids in the re-examination of the theoretical starting points of mythological research.

We should discuss the differences between mythology and religion, beliefs and faith that are passed over in silence, and examine the reasons why abandoned, defeated, or the religions of Others are referred to as being mythology. Finally, we must link current remythologisation in contemporary culture and scholarship with the process of retraditionalisation in society, and must raise awareness of the role of the myth *in* transition and the myth *of* transition. In other words, the fabricated story of transition as a provisional state on the way to the new social system is dangerously reminiscent of the myth about Socialism as a transitional, temporary period between capitalism and the Communist Garden of Eden. *The dogs bark but the caravan still passes by*: we remain in the limbo of the order attained and project the conceived order. Once again, I have overdone the interpretation, but I know that the dear shade of Dunja Rihtman-Auguštin will not take it amiss.

Perhaps someone will object that I have described the other mythology as conceived order, like a list of wishes and assignments, as a manifest of research still to be commenced. I shall present only a random outline of the results to date of the other mythology in Croatia.

In her Ljubljana dissertation and later in the book *Struktura tradicijskog mišljenja* [The Stucture of Traditional Thought], Dunja Rihtman-Auguštin tried, on the basis of Lévi-Strauss' thesis of conceived and attained order as the breach between the structure of thought and reality, to reconstruct as conceived order the model of folk life, and to juxtapose it with actual order and culture[21]. In the book *Etnologija i etnomit* [Ethnology and the Ethnomyth][22], she considered the issue of how much Croatian ethnology itself had contributed to the construction of the national myth.

We find texts that speak of the fabrication of tradition and political ritual in Lydija Sklevicky's *Konji, žene, ratovi* [Horses, Women, Wars][23]. In Ines Prica's book *Mala europska etnologija* [A Small European Ethnology][24] and in many of her later papers, we encounter re-examination of the profession that tries to demystify the conceived order and open up the way to new research. There is no point in enumerating further: many domestic authors have augmented the approach in Croatian ethnology with recent anthropological trends, also doing research into the mythic backdrop to identity construction in the contemporary cultural context.

I shall also mention my own books: they question the concept of single-instance evolution of the theatre from the myth, ritual and games, and speak of the persistence of customs, sword dances, masks and mythic personages in oral legends, seeing in them symbols of open meaning that have outlived their original and historical functions. Tradition is thus re-interpreted dynamically, as a process of attaching new meanings to old symbols.

Discussion

Mythos and logos

The difference between the unreasonable (*mythos*) and the reasonable (*logos*) introduced by the first Greek philosophers included the valorisation. We have two stories (one concocted and one authentic), but also two cognitions that have co-existed until today in their numerous mutations. The parallel existence of two cognitive spheres explains the impossibility of defining the myth by the logical apparatus: reason cannot fully encompass the myth. The contrast also connotes the opposition between order and disorder, chaos and the cosmos – even within the religious sphere itself.

The treatment of the myth as a concocted or even untrue story in early European philosophy indicates tolerance, weakness or even the lack of systematisation of pagan religious concepts and institutions, in comparison with Christianity and the other great religions of more recent history. We have to take it into account in the reconstruction of pre-Christian faiths. Not only were the confused and ethically ambivalent pagan deities all replaced through Christianisation by the consistently good Christian saints, but order was also introduced into the polytheist disorder by the more rigid monotheistic system. The pagan myth was opposed by the Christian *logos*, while the pagan faith was identified with mythology – unlike the official faith, which was granted the status of a religion. We will speak of pagan cults somewhere between religion and myth: a cult infers external signs of worshipping deities, but does not directly assume a developed religious system. In that way, the myth reinforces its everyday reputation as a fabricated, untrue story – a story in which we no longer believe.

The use of the word myth in everyday speech is not only equivocal and polysemic, it is also contradictory. We can interpret the aporia by the historical changes in reception of the myth, as Eliade did – the myth was a sacred story in archaic societies, while in modern societies the story remains a fiction:

»For the past fifty years at least, Western scholars have approached the study of myth from a viewpoint markedly different from, let us say, that of the nineteenth century. Unlike their predecessors, who treated myth in the usual meaning of the word, that is, as »fable«, »invention«, »fiction«, they have accepted it as it was understood in archaic societies, where, on the contrary, »myth« means a »true story« and, beyond that, a story that is a most precious possession because it is sacred, exemplary, significant. This new semantic value given the term »myth« makes its use in contemporary parlance somewhat equivocal«[25].

In the 20th century the sacred nature of the myth is rehabilitated by research into the role of the *living* myth in the so-called archaic societies. Eliade outlines another thought deserving of discussion: the idea of the parallel existence of mythology and religion, which opens up the possibility of their differentiation within one and the same social and historical context. All the great Mediter-

ranean and Asian religions have their mythologies, but those mythologies are largely systematicised, adapted, shaped, processed and elaborated. Eliade (and not only Eliade) committed himself to the study of myths precisely in archaic and traditional societies, since myths there purportedly still lived in the original social and religious context, preserving their authentic status[25]. It would be difficult to defend such argumentation from today's theoretical positions. The original status simply does not exist, while the western forcing of overseas narrative forms into the Graeco-Roman genre-defined mythic mould is, at the very least, Europocentric. In the post-colonial spirit, we must finally admit the colonial significance of 20th century anthropological research in mythically distant lands, we must re-examine the ethical and political backdrop of dangerous theories of socio-cultural evolution, we must reappraise the persistence of »the myth of the noble savage«, which has served us therapeutically for centuries as a social time-machine. Let us remember Fortis' Morlachs: as early as in the 18th century, travel writers who were describing the lives of reportedly primitive societies were trying to find traces of Antiquity, and thus contribute to the prestige and improved knowledge of their own nation's past, that is, that of the modern emerging nations[26].

Interest in the genesis of the myth is as important as interest in the genesis of a people or a nation, but it is also equally justified and necessary to monitor the myth through all the historical eras right up to our present day. This is also the most systematic way of raising awareness and controlling the projection of one's own constructs of identity into that distant past.

The starting point of domestic, historically oriented mythological research can hardly be the living pagan myth: the Croatians were the first among the Slavs to accept the Christian religious system, something they are proud of, even today. What remains for Croatian ethnology and folkloristics as national disciplines is actually a form of cultural forensics: reconstruction of the entirety of the dead pagan myth from the fragments identified in the body of folklore.

If we cannot share the same Olympus with the Greeks and the Romans, the ancient Proto-Indo-European commonality can serve in the construction of the historical identity of the nation. I have no objections, as this is a matter of crucial and completely legitimate scholarly interest in the history of one's own culture and reveals the current social (and political) need for identificational processes within the new European community. That is nothing new either: mythological research projects have never ever been conducted anywhere prompted exclusively by historical interest; we ourselves are always the starting point of the story, here and now. But if we do not recognize our subconscious or concealed motivations, we irrationally abandon *logos* and involuntarily enter into the myth ourselves, diachronically impinging upon the reconstructed image of past synchronics, join the creators of and participants in the myth, and become learned witnesses to theophany.

Theogony, cosmogony, sociogony and the question of identity

If theogony is the story of the genesis of the gods, if cosmogony is the story of the genesis of the cosmos, then we could give the name sociogony to the stories about the genesis of clans, peoples or any other community. We find legends about distant history in old chronicles and other literary testimonials, but it is difficult to differentiate what actually constitutes historical events in those texts, and what literary or oral tradition[27]. There are many false pre-Christian gods born of the Christian pen, and some of those fabricated deities are more influential culturally, even today, than the actual gods who have been forgotten. I wonder whether the false god, of whom we have spoken and written for centuries, is not more real culturally than the authentic forgotten god, who no longer exists in our cultural context.

The need for the myth is not something that belongs only to archaic societies. Intentionally or not, the creation of myths continues, with the production of literary and scholarly texts with mythic themes continuing and even blooming, particularly in communities experiencing periods of crisis. We want to show that our lineage goes far back into the past: mythology is reference to the ancient nature of the clan and the nation, a civil genealogy that replaces feudal coats-of-arms and charters, proof of the excellence of one's descent, giving prominence to membership in the community.

Assuming someone else's myth is assuming someone else's identity. In this era of communication and globalisation, the myths and religions of the world are becoming common property, but we try, at the same time, to preserve national, regional and local culture.

Both the myth and mythology try to penetrate into and explain the emergence of reality. Mythology as science puts the question of the relation between myth and reality from the rational, intellectual cognitive sphere, from the inadequate position of the *logos*. What remains is the cognition of the mind, but it cannot retaliate with a question about the relation between the *logos* of mythological scholarship and reality. The mind's cognition is unquestioned, it belongs to the area of validity. The mind does not ask, the mind immediately and joyfully establishes the myth.

Interest in the beginnings of the beginning is a sacred task worthy of the gods, since the first and last links in the profane chain of cause-and-effect concatenations are not accessible to mortals, surpassing reasoning, logical, and intellectual comprehension and historical knowledge.

Allow me a little humour: mythology is a dangerous job, drawing nearer to what is concealed, the researcher's reason may abandon him/her and he/she could also fall into the divine trance of sacred madness. That is why mythologists often defend themselves in an interdisciplinary manner, looking for help from what are, at first glance, more sober and stable sciences such as philology, semiotics or mathematics, in the hope that they will

more exactly approach the sacred in that way, without being punished.

The unbearable lightness of reconstruction

The procedure invented by Ivanov and Toporov makes possible the reduction of diverse sources to the common level of their structures. It seems to me that a level of common structure is a fairly bold generalisation that offers the impression of mathematical exactness and linguistic strictness, but it could become dangerous if it were to be understood as sufficient proof of the existence of two principal Proto-Slavic gods (Perun and Veles, by name, eastern Proto-Slavic gods) and their polyandric incestuous family as anthropomorphic sacred personages throughout the entire Proto-Slavic region.

The sun of structuralism set long ago, belief in the omnipotence of structure is fading. All we actually have is a paradigmatic scheme of inter-relations, a conflict between order and disorder. As usually occurs in structuralism, the trick lies in transposing from the individual to the general, and back again. Firstly we must forget that we derived the structure as our own hypothesis from a host of details. We then express that general structure in an elegant formula, apply the formula to the same or a very similar host of particularities, and are delighted that the thing largely functions. Forgive me for this impertinent simplification, but it does, nevertheless, contain a grain of truth.

I do not question what has undoubtedly been achieved, I merely offer a word of caution. The paradigmatic structure of the cosmic conflict can also be explained on other mythological interpretative levels, for example, in a twofold manner as the archetype in Eliade's or Jung's thought – that is, as the original structure of the sacred, or as a structure of the collective subconscious, while that structure in both cases precedes each myth, whether Proto-Indo-European or Proto-Slavic. If that is the case, comparative linguistic analysis will not prove the connection between the two mythologies; instead, we will only confirm the universal nature of human nature and the existence of linguistic affinity.

Whoever does not believe in the universal distribution of folklore and literary motifs should leaf through those six thick volumes of Thompson's motif index[28], or at least through the catalogue of narrative types compiled by Aarne-Thompson-Uther[29]. If we do not arrive at the structure of the Proto-Slavic myth by reduction of diverse sources to the common level of their structure, but to an atemporal structure characteristic to human nature, then we have lost the valid criterion for comparing heterogeneous folklore and written data. It could happen that we construct a universal and convincing fabricated story and are then struck and destroyed by Jagić's immortal bolt.

Yes, there are other aspects of mythological research. I shall make use of Solar's lectures[3] as a source for a brief review and classification of mythological theory.

Nineteenth century scholarship on the myth was led by the ideas of evolution and comparison, by separation of the invariant forms and relations and monitoring of their development as advancement in thought, language and belief, from the »lower« degrees to the »higher«, from myth to science as Tylor and Frazer put it. This was common to many mutually diverse mythological theories, for example, Müller, who looked for similarity in the names of the gods, and Frazer, who researched the similarities in rites and ritual relations. Durkheim established the unity of myth and ritual and – unlike the mythology of Nature school – saw an allegory of social forces in myths, but also, further, in mythic consciousness or mythic language he saw just the precursor of scientific consciousness, and still comprehended the myth as the childhood of science. It was only with Lévi-Bruhl that mythic consciousness was radically juxtaposed against scientific consciousness as a completely different form of thought, developed in another way. He introduced the term »primitive mentality«, which sounds colonial to us, but he used that broader concept to encompass the spiritual sphere that was not an exclusively historical category but has persisted to the present day.

This directs us to the need to interpret the myth by a different, extra-scientific mentality. I would say that Lévi-Bruhl's radical change in conceiving the mythic consciousness corresponds to an extent with change in the comprehension of traditional culture in Croatian folkloristics and ethnology during the second half of the 20th century: traditional culture is still strictly separated from learned culture, but it is no longer seen as an ancient remnant, but rather as a contemporary cultural component.

Nineteenth century mythologists largely employed myth comparison as a means of interpreting religion or historical social phenomena. Interest in the myth was relocated into a separate field of scholarship at the mid-19th century, while Solar commented that the particular scientific methods by which the myth was studied (by broadening of the field in question), aimed at absolutisation of the method as a mythologisation of sorts: »the mythic story 'rounded out' what otherwise could not be 'rounded out'«[3]. That element also exists perhaps in contemporary theories, while there has been a noticeable and identified shift from the subject to the working field in the 20th century – methodology increasingly conditions the subject, and particular scholarly areas are being abandoned. The leading current myth theories are actually interdisciplinary and defined by fundamental ways of approach, so that Solar has proposed a basic division of approaches into *functionalistic* (with Malinowski as the leading representative), *symbolistic* (Cassirer) and *structuralistic* (Lévi-Strauss), with the addition of the teaching of Freud and Jung[3].

It is easy to conclude on the basis of Solar's summary that today's philological or ethno-linguistic reconstruction of the Proto-Slavic myth relies methodologically on semiotic elaboration of structuralistic theory, while it finds support and argumentation in the semiotic method

for continuation of the 19th century culturo-historical and philological research of Proto-Slavic pagan religions. The semiotic shift from the working field is applied to the former subject area, but the objective of the research is not reconsidered. Is insistence on the question of genesis all that Croatian mythology offers us today?

As early as two decades ago I designated two basic orientations in mythological research in a review of the Serbian translation of Léger's book:

»One trend is historically oriented and tends towards reconstruction of pre-Christian religion and the mythic notion of the Slavs. The methods of such research are primarily historiographic, philological and archaeological. Another possible trend is folkloristic and starts out from research into the beliefs and the mythic legends of our contemporaries. Mixing the two types of mythological research can be dangerous – if we are seeking for the echoes of ancient religions in contemporary folklore, we add meaning to phenomena that they do not have for the members of the researched group. In the same way, if we draw conclusions on pre-Christian religion from contemporary folklore, it can easily happen that we canonise our own hypothesis. In any case, conscious or unconscious mythmaking is also an interesting subject for folkloristic research«[30].

Even today, I would accept that quotation as an abstract, but, nonetheless, the circumstances have changed somewhat. At that time, the two defined orientations in mythological research were strictly separated and that separation reflected the open conflict in the profession, the change in the scholarly paradigm which took place in Croatia during the 1970s. The revolt against past-oriented research and the question of genesis started out from folkloristics, which, at that time, still regarded the mythic legend as being only a literary genre, that is, a fabricated story. The theoretical breakthrough was achieved by changing the term of folk literature to oral literature, by redefinition of oral literature as direct oral communication.

That was a turnabout from the diachronic to the synchronic, from the historical to the contemporary – undoubtedly under the influence of structuralism. During the 1970s and the 1980s, folklorists and ethnologists were not only engaged with historical levels and collecting material but also tried to monitor and consider the contemporary state of society and folklore – firstly as a transformation of traditional culture and folklore, and then, increasingly, as a legitimate process.

Research into the culture of the everyday life, urban folklore, children's verbal folklore, neglected verbal genres, personal narratives, the theatrical characteristics of customs, etc., brought Croatian scholars nearer at that time to mainstream trends, and that trend was continued also during the 1990s and later, for example, in research of political posters and rituals in politics, marginal music practice and similar themes.

The 1990s brought new changes: war ethnography as a form of resistance was born at the Institute of Ethno-logy and Folklore Research in Zagreb; but we were also involved at the same time in the open postmodern confrontation of theoretical conceptions and the emergence of the new – interdisciplinary and humanistic – scholarly paradigm that aimed to transcend the dichotomy (and dualism) of folkloristics and ethnology by the writing of postmodern ethnography. Folklorists became less interested in the artistic dimension of folklore and turned to the complex interaction between folklore processes and the life of the individual and the community. Mythic legends were no longer treated in folkloristics only as an oral literary genre and more attention was paid to beliefs and living people, particularly to the melding of the human and the superhuman in hybrid mythic personages such as the witch, the fairy, the *grabancijaš*, the *macić* and the *krsnik*[31–36].

What was characteristic was a return of sorts to semantic interpretation in the light of literary anthropology, which brings folkloristic works closer to the research of cultural assets, in keeping with the mainstream turnabout from the aesthetic towards the ethical and the cognitive, which also implies examination of earlier ethnological, folkloristic and mythological approaches. Thus, for example, Suzana Marjanić in her dissertation and other papers[37] analyses in detail and re-evaluates Nodilo's undervalued monograph about the old faith.

Anthropologisation of the profession during transition has strengthened even more its humanistic, interdisciplinary nature and the degree of co-operation. This has been manifested in changes in the teaching curriculum for the study of Ethnology and Cultural Anthropology in Zagreb in 2004, updating the culturo-historical ethnological paradigm by the structuralist and ethno-linguistic approach in research of the Proto-Slavic myth, and in renewed interest among folklorists in mythological and diachronic (historical) issues. If we set aside narrower specialist knowledge, both disciplines are concerned with people and culture, and there are increasingly less disciplinary differences.

Conclusion

So where do the differences lie today in the two orientations in Croatian mythological research? It is clear that there is no longer any conflict between folklorists and ethnologists regarding whether legends about witches, fairies, *moras*, *krsniks* and similar supernatural creatures represent oral literature, or narration about the beliefs of people. One does not exclude the other, they augment each other: mythic legends are beliefs, while beliefs are expressed in the literary genre of mythic legends. Ambivalence is a component of the mythic nature of those legends, and we have seen that the myth is both a fabricated and a sacred story. There is a similar situation with the ritual songs that preserve the fragments of ancient myths, since they are both a folklore literary and music genre, a component part of custom or a folklore performance on stage. Both trends reveal and recognise traces of pagan heritage in contemporary Croatian folk-

lore, and both agree that we must take into consideration both the historical and our contemporary dimension in researching phenomena.

Despite all that, there is a difference between the two main orientations in Croatian mythological research, and it is based on the difference between their main objectives and purpose of research, and on their diverse conceptions of tradition.

I shall conclude by returning to Jocasta's daughters and granddaughters, invoking the rights of minor, living mythic personages, the *isopersonages* who have for centuries been offering superhuman (mythic) resistance to the *logos* of learned culture, the great dead pagan gods and Christianisation.

We have seen that the *allopersonages* have enabled the reduction of diverse sources to a common level of structure – *isopersonages* obstruct the recognition of various elements of structure that are concealed within them. The issue of the *isopersonage* cannot be reduced only to the multi-layered structure within the personage. A more complex problem is that personages of the same name often denote diverse elements of structure, and that even within the same cultural context, that is, also at the synchronic level, the same structural elements cover variously named personages. This is not merely a matter of synonymy, of various names for the same personage: rather it demonstrates a melding of various characters, adoption of characteristics, and isotropic mimicry. Such phenomena are frequent among mythic creatures in oral legends. Demons, spectres, apparitions, creatures in the guise of human beings, people with superhuman powers and quite ordinary people are more inclined to such semantic promiscuity than the long-since abandoned and meticulously Christianised supreme pagan deities, whose names are directly accessible to us only in toponyms, oronyms, hydronyms and rare old documents.

The fluidity of mythic creatures is greater in oral legends than in written sources, because writers tend towards unification and try to make sense of the controversial utterances of the narrators. Like Inquisitors who ask pointed questions about the contract with the devil, the person making the notation looks for, records, and regards as essential, only that which suits the previously cast mould of the individual mythic creature, and rejects everything else as the incompetent ravings of the ignorant victim.

Older folklorists and ethnologists sometimes interpret the protean blending of characters as the outcome of cultural influences and contamination, that is, as subsequent blurring of once clear images as a consequence of vague recollection on the part of the living or the half-forgotten beliefs of their forebears. On the other hand, the vitality and number of oral legends today does not give us the right to ignore them and replace them with uncertain efforts to make sense of them and with subsequent (re)constructions. If the personages in the living oral legend today continue to blend persistently, then that is an important part of their nature and we have to research it. We have to ask whether it could, perhaps, have been that way in the past, and whether the mythic creatures in oral legends and beliefs have always been fluid and ambiguous.

If that is so, then our attempts at reconstructing ancient belief systems are only an involuntary profane continuation of Christianisation, reigning in the *mythos* by the *logos*, by an enlightened introduction of order among primordially irregular creatures, demythologisation by means of systematisation, (re)construction as remythologisation, new mythmaking or even a learned construct of religious systems that never existed, an imposition of order as we conceive it on the pagan (but also current) disorder in belief. When the *logos* tries to bring the mythic consciousness to its senses, the latter inevitably engulfs and consumes it.

Don't get me wrong. Talking sense to the mind is mindless, but the mind without reason is unreasonable. The differences in the priorities in mythological research are actually productive, the two mythologies augment one another, and both are very much needed. I have only been trying briefly to describe them. I did not create this world; I only live in it.

Acknowledgements

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U SUSRET DRUGOJ MITOLOGIJI — POROD OD TMINE: JOKASTINE KĆERI I UNUKE

S A Ž E T A K

Članak je osobno viđenje stanja i tendencija hrvatskih mitoloških istraživanja. Polazi od opreke *mythos-logos* te od dvojakog poimanja mita kao izmišljene i svete priče. Alopersonažima koje Ivanov i Toporov uvode kao drugoimene likove koji funkcioniraju kao znakovi za isti element strukture, autor suprotstavlja izopersonaže, imenom iste likove koji istodobno funkcioniraju kao znakovi za razne elemente ili semantičke slojeve strukture. Po analogiji s terminima teogonije i kozmogonije uvodi se pojam sociogonije. U denotativnom značenju termin se odnosi na mit o podrijetlu zajednice, a u konotativnom značenju na projekciju aktualnog nacionalnog (ili nadnacionalnog) identiteta u daleku prošlost. Autor se zalaže za razlikovanje mitologije i religije te analizira ulogu mita i znanosti o mitu u formiranju nacionalnog i kulturnog identiteta. S tog motrišta u današnjim rekonstrukcijama unificiranog praslavenskog mita možemo prepoznati i suvremeni tranzicijski znanstveni mit. Remitologizacija je dio retradicionalizacije: praslavensko je zajedništvo duhovna utjeha kojom Istok odgovara na rušenje Berlinskog zida. To je aktualni aspekt mitotvorstva koji hrvatski (i slovenski) mitolozi moraju posebno uzeti u obzir. Na temelju pregleda hrvatskih i svjetskih mitoloških trendova autor primjećuje dva glavna smjera hrvatskih mitoloških istraživanja: povijesnu rekonstrukciju praslavenskog mita te istraživanje mita, mitske svijesti i mitskog jezika u suvremenoj svakodnevici. Oba su smjera potrebna i zapravo se dopunjuju.