

THE FULL CIRCLE OF THE CENTURY: ETHNOGRAPHIC REALISM IN CROATIAN ETHNOLOGY OF THE LATE NINETEENTH AND THE LATE TWENTIETH CENTURIES

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The aspiration of *realistic description of culture* appears to be a common place of continuous inclination of Croatian ethnology towards so-called historical approaches, only in form of different, even opposed conceptions -- mostly within the understanding of "history" as diachronic narration on the one hand and with its understanding as a phenomenological context on the other -- although both tendencies eventually reconcile with the necessary intervention of the scientific text towards the reality of culture. This paper questions the idea of the late-nineteenth-century ethnology (the idea that is usually considered to be the initiative of its founding) as a far-reaching epistemological anticipation of the current state of the discipline, which owns its strength to the conceptual questioning, but also the originality and bravery of the scientific figure of Antun Radić.

If it is not questionable that Croatian ethnology of the turn of the century¹ offers direct intimacy to its contemporary reader, the reason for this also

¹ It was founded by the social and intellectual atmosphere in which *Zbornik za narodni život i običaje* (*Journal of Folk Life and Customs*) of the Croatian Academy of Science

lies in the fact that the value of those texts does not allow the today's ethnologist a possibility to stretch in the well-meaning, smug view towards the scientific past, the view that is usually acquired by the benefits of contemporary knowledge. The awareness of the decay of its object - traditional folk culture, which characterizes the very beginnings of ethnological discourse,² has, until today, lasted as the *credo* of the discipline permanently marked by tension between the *two cultures*,³ the cleft within which its object is both being produced, but also escapes its scientific language. The feeling of how the "long-lasting process" of European history, more than century and a half old, and crucial for the development and survival of folklore and folk culture, is finally replaced by superiority of modern civilization processes, is most certainly one of the reasons for epistemological problems of ethnology appears to be the matter of "long-lasting process" themselves. The today's sense of history, together with the leveling the evaluation of scientific paradigms, additionally make the starting questions regarding the professionalization of Croatian ethnology, not only worth and legitimate nowadays, but also stated clearly and sharply within an ambitious, but also attentive and self-critical beginning.

We can assume that the realistic⁴ aspiration towards the integrality and interrelation of the description and construction of ethnographic

and Arts (then Yugoslav Academy of Science and Arts) was established as the first institutional place of Croatian ethnology.

² Josip Milčetić, the first editor of *Zbornik za narodni život i običaje*, emphasizes it in his note written in 1897: "The folk treasure is being rapidly destroyed lately, as if the wind of modern culture is blowing it away. What lived and flourished fifty years ago is today long gone. There were many wonderful collectors of folk treasure, who saved many seeds. The best sons of our nation gave their best for the folk poem and story, in order to present us to the world as a nation with a great poetical strength. There are also excellent collectors of folk customs" (1897:vii).

³ It is well-known that Radić uses the arguments of social difference for his conception of ethnography as a medium between peasant and gentleman culture. In spite of changeability of understanding, the duality, nevertheless, still remains a constant characteristic of this discourse.

⁴ Realism of ethnographic description is a mark according to which a hundred years' *work of theory* gets its wide counterpoint space of meanings. So, today, together with the term *history* with which it is permanently connected, it shares the state of "latent meaning" of scientific terms, where, in the stratification of always nuanced and distinctive interpretations, the outlines of its "original" associations emerge. In spite of semantic arbitrariness of the term, its primarily literary meaning, because of which it is - just like other markers of stylistic forms - considered to be more suitable for folkloristic than to ethnological scientific history (and there is also difficulty of transmission from developed European ethnologies of specific national cultures), it continues to be functional for marking the moment when a text starts to fill "socio-analytical functions within a society", and to show reality "as it is" (see Flaker 1976:46, 149). The antipositivistic criticism, for example in the American postmodernism, interprets the realism of ethnographic description within the objectivism and rhetorics of authority,

knowledge was founded also as a part of this initial effort (in which it has been achieved as the understanding and empirical researching of *field* as a "new world"),⁵ so that a large part of this later fragmentarization and autonomization of certain "research subjects" can be ascribed to the loss of this *initial wholeness*. Identically, classical ethnological dilemmas (like relationships between *urban* and *rural*, *progress* and *domiciliation*, etc.), which are nowadays worn out through formulaic rotation within the methodological withdrawals and abandonment of deceitful holistic approaches, are here still fresh, stated as "healthy controversies" of the production of an ethnographic text. Besides being current last-century anticipation of the problems of ethnology even as a contemporary science, early Croatian *native* ethnography⁶ can, with its persuasiveness and its functionality, arouse real longing among today's professionals. Of course, it would not be perspective, even not serious, to expect that in its century long development - and here we are talking about a century of strong paradigmatic and aggressive historical challenges - this writings have remained inviolably the same, just like it would be inappropriate to weaken the importance of the professionalization of ethnological science in any way. The palpability of ethnographic documentary writings from the late nineteenth century is something that cannot be "imitated"; anyway, if nothing else, the majority of these texts realizes the professional requests in the narrative and life authenticity of *native folk narrator*.

Therefore, although we have to introduce partial caution towards the generalization of Radić's idea of how *folk is the best ethnographer*, because this statement aroused from a temporary conception, where many solutions were simply of an operative value, focused on the problems of the very founding of the discipline, the unusual and provident Radić's experiment of self-reflection and self-writing of folk life still lingers on as

but later on follows the realism of the models of documentary, dense ethnographic "prose", where discursive "correction" is achieved by auto-reflection. Radić's ethnography also had characteristics of modernism, if his aspiration to portrait the reality is characterized by the possibility that the author describes the world from different views, seeing it with eyes of different heroes, using the distinction of the language of the narrator and the characters (see Flaker, *ibid.*:159–160), and it certainly satisfies the "iconoclastic" tendency of realism where the social analysis and the cognitive function are achieved by using the "voices" of different strata, aspiring to get to know the society as a whole.

⁵ This motif is very much present in the introductory parts of late-nineteenth-century ethnography, which are therefore precious for an epistemologist. It is impossible, for example, nowadays to start a text with the following words: "We are feeling here on the new ground, because it is - the old ground, where the ethnological observation will find a grateful, rich and deep field in every way" (Kuba 1989:2–3).

⁶ In monographic works of the Academy's Journal of Folk Life and Customs, such as Lovretić's and Jurić's "Otok", Ardalić's "Bukovica", etc. (see also later). Some texts are published much later than they had been written.

a remainder of how the professionalization of discourse does not have to stand for the uniformity, the "drying" of the individuality of an empirical experience, the "juice and taste" of text the author himself is talking about, and all in the name of the objectivity of a scientific text that we all long for. Therefore, the subjectivity of *native* ethnography stands for the valuableness of the autonomy of scientific authorship as one of the achievements of professionalization, because it shows how individualized insight does not have to include implicitly the incomplete or deformed processing but how the individual is the very meeting point of the complexity of cultural powers, the projective and reflexive place in which the identity is given to and formed by the empirical contents of context. This way the Croatian ethnography of the late nineteenth century achieves its openness towards understanding with which it removes layers of a century's time distance as well as the gap -- that has been deepened in the meantime -- between the scientific subject and object and the division of the ethnographic text into the *agnosticism of materials* and *telos of scientific interpretation*.

! The aspiration of enrolling the general comparative idea of already founded European disciplines by means of scientific discourses (that is, theory, or "clear and real science", as Milčetić calls it), and at the same time taking the descriptions of empirically available national culture for autonomous and autochthonous national contribution, is a principle of scientific communicativeness and cultural relativism, the ongoing hundred-year-old characteristic of Croatian ethnology. This readiness of communicating with the subject-matter of one's own culture within the different interpretations of culture's comparable or universal essence, had not been then, as it is not now, an easily achieved goal. Although it is a duality inscribed within the pre-beginnings of this European science,⁷ it is not - if we now still lean on the contemporary knowledge - equally disposed in scientific histories which make difference between so-called great and small scientific traditions.⁸ If we are to judge according to the certain *caution towards theory* that has been introduced at this protoscientific stage of ethnology, Radić had already known this; he advises that "ethnographic materials are not collected in order to be a dead witness of endless parallels and dead little theories for the modern erudite

⁷ See inspirational discussions on the enlightenment-romantic controversy which, as an ambivalent relationship towards the subject-matter, follows the history of the discipline, in Vermeulen and Roldán, 1995.

⁸ The problem of the *ground of interpretation* is today a place of larger number of decentralized discourses: the small national sciences being *the other* in relationship with the metropolitan discourses lead us towards the research of amalgamated, syncretic masses of interpretative knowledge, that are somehow out of reach of the classification of developed European scientific history, i.e. periodization.

ambition" (1899:309). This attitude is not, however, the direction about the shaded ambition of this project to enter the comparative field of European and global magnitude, just as this attitude does not have to be perceived as the direct forerunner of antitheoreticism, that has been founding the positivistic tendencies in a part of Croatian ethnology until the 1970s, as persistency on the sufficiency of the descriptive character of ethnography.⁹ It is more about the detailed differences between the types of generalization, i.e., the interpretative subordination of contents in complex scientific-historical circumstances that demand the placement of the conceptions of so-called national sciences within the already founded epistemology of European sciences. Almost one hundred years ago, Radić introduces *the need for semantics in ethnography* in his paper under the same title, in which he tries to perceive the way in which semantics should be separated from etymology (an insight in the historical contents of the meaning of words as opposed to transhistorical concretism of etymological projections) as orienting in generalization of ethnographic contents that will save it from the mermaids' call of *backing of parallels and theories*.¹⁰ The successful early conception of Croatian ethnology, although it strongly anticipates the contemporary problems of initiation and survival of the unique contents of national folk cultures in global interpretative projections¹¹ are indebted to quite determined historical

⁹ Dunja Rihtman-Auguštin (1976) and Olga Supek (1976) also point this out.

¹⁰ "What heritage could show us briefer and better the social position of peasants, than the words villain (scoundrel) and pagan? These words show us that everyone who lived in those villages (pagus) and hamlets (villa) was considered to be plain and pagan. How could it be different, if even today there is not another glass to drink the fraternity of nations from, than the glass called civilization: a proud word in which the superiority of Europe over other continents seems to live, and its meaning derived from the Roman citizen (civis). Which document could bear a more authentic mark, a mark that could identify more clearly the heritage that a Roman left to Europe and European barbarians!! This is not etymology. The etymology of a word is often well-known, but we are still not able to determine or interpret its meaning, and we do not know the way one meaning derived from the other, we do not know the history of word, or to put it better, we do not know the history of thought. (...) If anything could be called a mermaid call, it is etymology. When you start putting things together, there is no way of stopping until you go astray and by proving everything you prove nothing. This is how the caution in dealing with etymology appeared naturally; this caution demands a reliable basis in combining letters: letters should be a curb for an untamed thought. People used to take it very far; it is still taken very far - in combining letters, people search for the mathematical precision, just like people search for physiological precision in unconscious phenomena, which is impossible to reach. (...)we could, if we were that lucky, observe the development of each nation's thought and life by studying its language, and I mean the development of thought and life from times immemorial" (1898a:18).

¹¹ But also anticipates the comparative advantages of such a position, their more direct relationship with the *secular theories* and the *communal meanings of culture*. Communal theory of culture is Jameson's (1984) term, and secular discourse is Said's

circumstances in which some "congenital" epistemological contradictions of ethnology were somehow neutralized.

One should also keep in mind the reception side of the writings of early ethnography. The enlightened European nineteenth century and the local uneducated population with the knowledge characterized as "medieval ruins", i.e., the situation that derives a continuous counterpoint of ethnography between the popularization and professionalization of discourse, find their form in the characteristic hybrid of so-called popular literacy, i.e., ethnography. Radić seemed to have in mind audience as "identity loosing nation" in the scientific conception of ethnography as a medium between the two cultures (noblemen's and peasant), but he also considered the return of ethnography back to the people as very important (although he emphasized the inevitability of the rising of level, or he at least pleaded that the level of "writing for a peasant" is not lowered too much).¹² Therefore, it is obligatory to differentiate between the early and the desired developed stage of ethnology as the *knowledge of the self*. In the beginning stage, the description of culture earns its cognitive value primarily as a text written for the *other culture*, otherwise, the description would meet the presupposition of the reception redundancy, and especially the description as Radić imagined it: the "original" description of a situation that overlaps with the topic perception. However, the conception of ethnology as a self-knowledge science that escapes the clear distinction of the two cultures (in which only one actually profits cognitively, while at the same time it is exclusively about the other) is also conceived within his wider programme of the education of the masses, as

term (Sprinker 1992). They both aim at the "dialogue interpretation" that respects the functionality of knowledge.

¹² "Some of my friends have written to me, and I have also heard it myself: some people throw away "Dom" ("Home") immediately, and do not want to read it at all because, as they say, it is not for them, "it is for a peasant, for a country-man, for a bumpkin. Why would I want to read it?!" So, you see! However, this is not peculiar. And it is not peculiar because our books for "peasants", for "people" are written in a stupid manner, without juice and taste, in a manner that could not be (pardon the expression) swallowed at all! I give you my word for that! Our people, who attended schools, and many of them lost in school the rest of common sense they were given by almighty God, they think that peasants are so stupid, limited, dumb and rude, that they cannot even understand anything that is not stupidity and dumbness. I know how the books for peasants are written. One takes a book for gentlemen (most often a German book), and then he throws out of the book everything nice and intelligent, and the remains - the bones, the whey, the hogwash, the slops (pardon the expression) - they should be gnawed and swallowed by the peasant. And if you ask "Why did you, for God's sake, throw that out?!", they would say "Peasants do not understand it", or "Peasants do not need it!". You see, that is why properly educated people who would want to write for peasants are rare and hard to find" (1937).

well as within the wide idea of ethnology, whose sketch remained unfinished or did not come true.

So, the interconnection of national and scientific interests still has the characteristics of a dialogue conjunction, besides the facts that knowledge was not specified and that the disciplines were not academically founded. The conjunction somehow manages to overgrow the *enlightenment* and *romantic* impositions that permanently follow ethnology, within the swing of the scientific realism in which the sentimental and pseudo historic understanding of the *nation* fade, facing the real existential questions of the *people*.¹³

An important European and historical question of the superstitious, i.e., pagan character of ethnological subject-matter got its good scientific measure by settling the hundred-year-old humanistic range as viewing the folk beliefs and customs as cultural values and by tolerating national differences.¹⁴ In distinction from the natural and exact sciences, which

¹³ Šicel describes the Croatian modernity from the turn of the century as a reaction to the stagnation of the whole Croatian society in all domains. The resistance of the Croatian university students (1895) had a generation character of the "young" or of the "modernists", the character of emphasizing the individuality, of the negation of the authority, of the aspiration towards the antihistoricism and antidogmatism, and toward the avant-garde role of the intelligentsia. The wide social movement (1897—1903) counted on the "common people" in the aspiration towards the cultural renaissance, "the movement was searching for the type of a new, modern, Europeanized intellectual who is aware of the fact that nation is composed of different, but equally valuable and significant social strata" (1978:18).

¹⁴ "There is perhaps not a single person among us who would not approve of the chase against folk "superstition", "magic" and "sorcery". Some people claim it is all in the name of the development of positive sciences, that sweep away every belief, and other people fight against those beliefs and in favour of some other. I am almost afraid of saying a word or two in defense of folk "superstition". Still, I shall try not to step into the backwardness in the late nineteenth century. Nineteenth century! It has been mentioned so much, as if it had - by simply being the nineteenth century - confuted everything and created everything new. This nineteenth century is unusually conscious; so conscious, that many of its representatives have cut off the traditions not only of some nations, but also of the whole mankind. I wanted to warn about this. The occurrence and development of materialism have their own past, that is not discussed here. We are interested in the relationship between materialism and the traditions of mankind and nations: materialism demolishes those traditions. The inborn impressions of thousands of generations preserved in life, poems and customs, spiritual symbols, the perspective of history filled with emotions, joy and tragedy of life... all of it is torn apart in front of the pure substance. Common people suffer the most because of this trend: day after day, they are ridiculed and mocked because they still believe that there is a force in the world which is not tangible or material. A note that I shall present here will show, I suppose, that "meaningless" and "dumb" tradition of uneducated people has its basis; uneducated people with their tradition are indeed very often in the company of educated and smart people. The aim of these lines is merely a wish -- when sentencing the ignorance and wrongs of the people, more consideration should be given to the general cultural and intellectual development of mankind, with a little less faith in the latest word of science; you should always be

have had - thanks to their immanent universality - a more difficult time to gain the academic emancipation within Rački's conception of national sciences,¹⁵ the early ethnology (or ethnography) gets the additional advantages of the discussion about then not loved materialism of natural sciences. Rački claims that the positivism, that would be copied from the natural sciences into the understanding of spiritual and social movements, can bring nothing but distortion that usually follows the domination of one knowledge and discipline in relation to the other, as it had already been the case with domination of theology, philosophy and natural sciences. Of course, anthropology and ethnology can employ the ideas of natural sciences, but they can keep the anatomy necessary for their identity and development.¹⁶ Although the tendency of monolith and blurred knowledge, which is observable in early professional ethnographic studies, can be associated with the remains of the model of polymath knowledge of the peripatetic conceptions of school knowledge within the so-called natural philosophy,¹⁷ it is certain that this tendency is also a debt of such "democratic" founding of a system in which different types of knowledge intermingle within the desired whole of so-called *folk science*.

guided by thought that the mankind did not start to think and feel yesterday; thousands of generations had to leave the trace of their thinking and feeling" (1889b:17–18).

¹⁵ "For centuries, the universal was associated with something foreign, since our people were educated in the Latin language, philosophy, literature, and even science, with no national feelings. There was a clear aspiration of science to gain national features. It is very simple with the sciences that can have national features, such as linguistics, history and ethnography, and it is more difficult with the sciences that are universal by their meaning. (...) Therefore, one can speak only of the contribution of a certain nation to the particular science" (...) "Within the framework of Rački's thesis about national science, the academy could research Croatian flora, fauna, mining/mineral treasure, and natural resources of our country within the natural sciences, but it would be difficult to place the research of warmth, light or electricity, and especially research of equations and integrals, within this framework" (Dadić 1982:127, 179).

¹⁶ Franjo Rački said in his presidential speech in 1886: "... the research of natural sciences fill the important hole in human knowledge, that was intensely felt in the past. (...) speculative sciences - theology, anthropology, ethnography, and history - can only be grateful to the natural sciences for those great achievements, because they can be used for solving many problems of those, speculative, sciences" (Zenko 1979:112–113).

¹⁷ It was the model that dominated the education until the mid 19th century. However, during the 1850s the need for natural sciences got stronger within the aspiration of economical reforms (Rački) and enlightening the population with the natural facts. It was a time when the development of positivism and exact sciences could appear as a possible enemy of ethnography. Dadić emphasizes that it is not clear to what extent superstition has been present among the reformers. "it is certain that the calendars for common people were published on the basis of hundred years' calendars". Dadić gives the example of the Newly Edited Illyrian Calendar (1836) with the confusion made of the old and new folk beliefs and scientific ideas: although the elements of heliocentric system were present, the economic advices are dominated by astrology and "star fortune-telling" (ibid.: 72).

Certain eclecticism is a historical heritage of ethnology as inter cultural science and the science that develops, in a way, on the margins of other social knowledge and humanities. Still, it is possible to assume the difficulty that this eclecticism sometimes created, and especially in the forthcoming twentieth century race for the identity of disciplines, just like the solving of this "renaissance" amalgam of the common knowledge and science¹⁸ is going to be one of the more important tasks of the future self-reflection of ethnology. At that time, however, the heterogeneous combinations of knowledge, especially the ones in the form of expert's reminiscences of the fieldwork contents, often have the curious effect of imbuing of both folk and legitimate knowledge. The biological knowledge and Latin terminology, for example, do not seem to reflect any "contraindication" to the folk knowledge (so-called folk beliefs) of floral and animal world (e.g. "If mistletoe, *Viscum album*, is on the hazel-tree, there must be a nest of the white snake and it is sleeping in it" (Hirc 1896:10)).¹⁹

In a significant polarization of *pro et contra* for materialism, characteristic for the late nineteenth century,²⁰ ethnology takes its famous

¹⁸ See Bošković-Stulli (1978:159) for more information on the renaissance "folkloristic" model as "counter-scientific", as the one that does not impose the strict categorization and autonomy of object, and, thus, does not recognize the authorship, as well.

¹⁹ "Anti-enlightenment" attitude towards some - especially medical - beliefs should be viewed in the light of the development of the ideas of natural and exact sciences which did not have the entirely positivistic and contemporary reflection in the mid nineteenth century. Žarko Dadić (1982) explains the relative backwardness of the modernization of the ideas of exact sciences during the reformatory period with the fact that those sciences had not have the national significance (the parallel between today's "national reformation" and minimization of natural sciences would be interesting). In the mid-century decline of positivism which characterizes contemporary sciences, it was possible to approach certain *beliefs* (such as healing a snake bite with a snake stone) not only as *superstitions*, no matter whether in the light of homeopathic and placebo effects, or in the light of knowledge about the serum healing, and the value of early ethnography is that it left some similar issues open.

²⁰ But with local specific qualities, such as materialistic-theistic "koine" of the turn of the century in Croatia. The spreading of the materialism from the second half of the nineteenth century is followed by the fear of the strengthening of atheism and materialism. That is why the natural scientists accept so-called moderate materialism (empiricism and realism, but not the orthodox materialism). "Almost from the very beginning of the second half of the nineteenth century, they [Croatian natural scientists] follow empiricism and realism, but they distance themselves from the materialism. They accept a formulation that had already existed in other Austrian countries, namely, the claim that natural laws must lead to the conclusion that there has to be a creator of nature. In the beginning, they did not only failed to deduce the material world view from the natural laws, but they also wanted to take it as an argument for the existence of the Creator. So, the natural sciences are not the starting point of the spreading of materialism and atheism, but the starting point for theism. Those were the formulae that were systematically and almost literally transmitted from one book to another, from one paper to another, but still, they did not manage to

position in-between -- it is empirical, fieldwork, and speculative science, it documentates superstitions, sometimes even "odds and ends" (as Radić mockingly valued its never completely extinguishable tendency for the sensationalism of cultural difference), but at the same time it reaches the actual and everyday aspects of the researched culture using subjective and individual insights. That is how ethnology occurs as a potentially significant syncretic place of self-knowledge, "self-science", a place that is not, and does not have to be, exclusive to anything.²¹

In spite of historical and academic circumstances, the early conception of ethnology is doubtless defined by the peculiarity of the scientific persona of Antun Radić, who is going to paint its epistemological portrait in extraordinary clear and far-reaching frame, but the contradictions and problems will emerge in their extremes, bringing it closer to the situation of the late twentieth century. His ethnographic texts, which often inform us, with their forms and addressing, that they are marginal, almost "unofficial" observations, "smaller contributions", glosses or even administrative reports, and which could be called -- for the sake of differentiation between them and *native* ethnographic writings -- the ethnographer's writings, reflect the position of the author's subject as a legitimate contents of the description, i.e., fieldwork situation, while the interviews conducted with people find their place in texts as valuable episodes of carefully remembered replicas and documentarily described characters (such as the anthological "Report from Bosnia-Herzegovina" from 1899).

There might be reasons for calling that text untypical. It is of itinerary character, which adds at least a bit of suspicion towards the credibility of the busy projections of travelling researcher, who has -- according to Radić's restrictions in *Osnova*²² -- only accidental and partial views at disposal, so "the itinerary literature is full of such fragments, and we can thank them for numerous little theories and hypotheses that turn into nothing when the whole material gets familiar" (1899:293). But he also does not surrender himself to the cognitive inertia of the familiar *domestic context* in writings that are not "exotic" at all, such as the

convince anyone in Croatia. That is the reason for the chase after the materialist natural sciences not to slow down; it only got stronger and stronger with time" (Dadić, *ibid.*:103–105).

²¹ The feature of self-knowledge and self-reflection, as a specialty of small national ethnologies, with all of its epistemological and ideological problems that are connected with them, as recently emphasized by Michael Herzfeld in his dialogues with Greek ethnology (see 1987).

²² The famous Radić's questioner "Osnova za sabiranje i proučavanje narodnog života" ("The Base of Collecting and Studying Folk Life"), printed in the second edition of *Zbornik za narodni život i običaje*, 1897.

reflection on the cultural meaning of reel [*kolo*].²³ Regretting that his position, one which even by so softened objectivism eluded him from the one of the common people, did not allow him the actual entering the reel that was danced in front of him, he preferred to take note of the witty and quick improvisations that came from the shrieking carrousel, and were related to him - the unknown scientific guest, rather than to search for the archetypal refrains. If he previously doubted the legality of the contingent research, here he confirms to himself that "no and no-one's questionnaire in the world can comprise everything" (ibid.:294). Besides all the restrictions based on his own subjectivity, or precisely because of them - for it is a necessity, and perhaps even the tragedy of an ethnographer, to understand the different and opposed cultural worlds as well as their individual carriers, and using his own human limited insight - Radić adds so impressive texts, that we can ask ourselves if the genre or thematic convention (which is, however, the necessity of the European development of this science) would sometimes be more harmful than advantageous.

Doubtlessly, Radić considers each and every moment of the encounter of the ethnographer and the fieldwork as paradigmatic:²⁴ there are no unimportant places or observations, therefore there are indeed no models or topics; there is merely a difficult decision on what is important, and what is tacit, what is visible, and what is invisible, and, deriving from all that, the decision on where is the level of understanding through which the communication between two cultures can be achieved. Therefore, we have to establish first that this aim is at least partly contradictory to the classification according to topics and the holistic aim of different questionnaires (together with *Osnova*), so that the later fragmentation, i.e., specialization of ethnographic insights, is going to be the necessary step towards the solving of diverging and primarily too abundant demands for this discipline's writings. The influence of the paradigmatic theoretical idea should be therefore viewed as the efforts essential for the emancipation of

²³ "On the second Sunday, I went towards the reel [*kolo*] with the holy father Karlo Stručić. The reel was performed in front of his mansion. As soon as we got closer, I could hear from the reel: *Sir, I'd like you attention to pay: are your guests from far away? Oh, how I wished I could have joined the reel! If I could created, composed and sung like those women could, I would have sung in front of all the people gathered there, I would have told them through song where I was from and what brought me to their reel. I would have sung to them, that their reel is widely famous -- or, perhaps, notorious; I would have blamed those who scatter the reels and do not see evil elsewhere; I would have sung to them, that their happiness is in their souls*" (1899a:10).

²⁴ As well as the unrepeateness of authenticity of the fieldwork situation besieges him in the text: "Since I heard this singer, I do not have the will to read the heroic poetry: I am not impressed, and it seems to me, as if it is nothing. A song should be heard when it is sung" (1899a:319).

a scientific discourse, as well as the attempt of escaping the empiricism that was also spied upon the enthusiasm of the nineteenth-century idea of translatableness of the untouchability of reality into the timelessness of descriptive ethnography. Radić was more than aware of all those contradictions, and we owe the evidence for this awareness to his unusual choice to express and form conceptually the problems of description and interpretation of folk culture, however banal they might have seemed. He faces the "abundance of materials", i.e., the continuous gaps that seem to be created with their always growing filling,²⁵ although smaller texts that will emerge on the basis of the boiling of the materials outside of the limitations of *Osnova* are most often the impressive minimalist reflections upon a cultural phenomena.

Dunja Rihtman-Auguštin gave a similar evaluation in the 1980s. She finds the materials that "break through" the thematic scheme of *Osnova* to be very inspired for the so-called ethnology of everyday life. Therefore, Rihtman-Auguštin sees the materials without which we are going to lose "the most valuable witnessing on the social communities, their culture and the time of the gathering of materials" in those incidental "notices, in the parallel flow of thoughts that imposes itself upon the authors so powerfully that *Osnova* cannot restrain it, or in individual examples which are expressed by the authors at their own will, sometimes as autobiographic or biographic data, or anecdotes" (1976:70).²⁶ In this way, "besides all the positivistic determination of *Osnova* as a questionnaire, there is a certain mixing, methodological unclarities, smashing of *Osnova*".

²⁵ Except for criticizing the "sporadical journey" as a way fieldwork research is conducted, he gets his co-workers acquainted with the problems of fieldwork (informers and co-workers disperse throughout fields, everything lasts too long, etc.) in a sincere and almost naive way. "Asking for this or that, I noticed that I was listening to entirely new, and at the same time interesting and valuable stuff, that is not mentioned in the materials. I want to fill in all the gaps and to notice everything, but there were so many things, that the collected materials now does not seem valuable and I am losing my enthusiasm for filling in and noticing, and I am starting thinking of new materials" (1899:293).

²⁶ Rihtman-Auguštin says the following about the approach of the ethnography of the time: "the individualization and dating of data are hardly foreseen. So, when persons who record say that something is done in a certain way and when they describe the way, we do not know whether it was actually done this way or there was merely a wish to do it this way; we do not know whether they think of the desired situation or of reality. We are also in trouble when they tell us how it 'used' to be. We do not know to what this 'used' refer - two years ago, five, ten or fifty, or whether it was like that at all - it could have merely been a model projected backward. Only the anecdotes, the biographic data, the notes, and often the juicy texts of certain authors - actually the popular writers - witness about the reality and allow us to compare the ideal and the real cultures" (ibid.:70). Therefore, the author is primarily critical toward the evaluation of the relationship between the reality and the ideal in those texts. Still, it seems like it does not apply to the "juiciest" ones.

The materials based on *Osnova* are, therefore, a settlement between "text" and "life", it "contains the known description model and described model that had themselves disturbed this everyday life in reality" (ibid.:71). When she presents the "juiciest" and the most lively seven monographs written on the basis of *Osnova*,²⁷ she deals with texts by "inspired authors, people who managed to perceive reality", the qualities that help them to skip the insufficiencies of the "positivist pedantry of *Osnova*" (ibid.:73). Still, Rihtman-Auguštin has to draw a conclusion about certain model experience and textualization, no matter to what extent they are the result of the author's characteristics of *men from the folk*.²⁸ Only with the juxtaposition of all the "models" or simply using the author's insights into the problem, especially into the family life of the peasantry during the past two decades, the author believes that she can reach more realistic pictures of the social syntagmatics, and they speak of difference, opposition or contradiction: "people in our traditional communities (had) often valued opposite values and respected different systems of norms at the same time".²⁹

Therefore, *the other* historical contents are indeed observable in the materials based on *Osnova*, the materials that are created from the resistance of the cultural reality towards every kind of formed structure. Except not missing this point, Radić was, moreover, determined to express more basic doubts about the direct relationship of so-called fieldwork reality and scientific conceptions and interpretation: he admits that he often gets "a completely different impression on folk life, when he observes it in person, than the impression he gets when he reads the

²⁷ Lovretić's *Otok* (which is indeed written before *Osnova*, but is later rearranged according to *Osnova*'s order), *Trebarjevo* by Kata Jajnčerova, Ardalić's *Bukovica*, *Poljica* by Frano Ivanišević, Rožić's *Prigorje*, *Lobor* by Josip Kotarski and Lukić's *Varoš* (see references cited).

²⁸ "Rožić's monograph is full of resignation: after the abolishment of feudal system, there was a crisis. (...) There is a certain distance in the description of *Lobor*. Author does not write in dialect, and a large extended family (*zadruga*) is more a memory than the everyday reality. The juicy Ardalić's descriptions of *Bukovica* tell us about the community that is not - and does not want to be - integrated within the general socio-cultural system in the way it was usual in the modern times. Ivanišević presents a complex social, cultural, and economic organization of the *Poljica* villages, with a feeling for differences and with awareness of their common historical fate. Lovretić is solid and comprehensive. Lukić supplements Lovretić in many ways, and he also, with his realism and criticism - makes possible for us to peek into some relationships that were not shown by other authors. Kata Jajnčerova is a person with a special sensibility. Still, she is not going to break loose from her brothers' influence (the Radić brothers, note by I. P.): the wanted and desired state and need to educate the peasant are penetrating *Osnova*" (ibid.:163).

²⁹ A particular case: "common property and individual ownership, common benefit and small theft, male power and female influence, and a number of other, actually opposed values" (ibid.:178).

materials!" (1899:293). Doubtless, the trace of the Micheletian empirical doubt, expressed in the seemingly paradoxical claim: "Folk - the way it should be properly understood - is very difficult to find in the folk",³⁰ is also present here. Radić notices the discord between "participating" and "observing", that are usually put together in a classical ethnological methodological paradigm "participant observation", and he especially notices the issue of taking notes, that is often even contradictory to the true communication that he has been looking for.³¹ Later ethnography is therefore labeled with the difficult experience of unifying description and all the impossibilities of monographical approach. It becomes clear that the classification according to topics is only the associative impulse around which the ethnographic telling is unwrapped and then again wrapped, and that it is the reason for the metaphors of the picturesque expression to be nearer to pointillist than to mural technique. Of course, phenomena of "folk life" do not stand alone in their essentials, and if the very folk is more inclined to synthesize than to analyze the individual experience - the reason why some early *native monographs* have this synthetic uniqueness of the "folk theory", then the fragmentation of scientific description is offered as a possibility of the valid phenomenological record in which a part can reflect the whole.³²

A valuable and, because of some of its characteristics, rare experimental moment of *native ethnography* and *folk theories* was facing

³⁰ "No matter whether you observe it here or there, it is no more itself, it is this or that stratum, this or that form of people, changed, changeable" (according to Radić 1898c:193).

³¹ "But once this kind of folk conference, that talks, criticizes, acclaims, competes, is gathered, I do not feel like going away. And so, time is wasted, and the materials gathered and recorded in a busy is anyway not valuable" (1899:293).

³² Radić is here directly inspired by Michelet's conception of "people of instinct" against whom there are "people of science, studies": "since the first steps into science, there was the arrogance, the subtlety; critique has murdered the rudeness. The reflection, irrationally proud of its early manhood, has contempted the instinct as a weak child; the vain, aristocratic, reflection started, as soon as it could, to mix with the golden unit of sophists, it kept the low kinship, that tied it too firmly to the people, a secret from their laughter" (Michelet, cf. Radić 1898c:192). "So, where is the advantage of so often mentioned instinct?", asks Radić. "Our author (Michelet, I. P.) has analyzed it in detail. The people of instinct 'connect and tie, and they separate and analyze less. They do not like to tear something apart from life, and everything seems alive to them. They go back in the very moment when the analysis is about to damage something that contains a trait of life harmony... this gift, so rare in civilized people, is general, as it is well known, in the plain nations, no matter whether they are wild or barbarian. Plain people like life, and in return they are given the magnificent gift to see and anticipate life. It is their secret kinship with the ingenious people... if you study carefully... the secret of nature, that we call a genius, you will generally find out, that it is the one who still has - although he reached the capability of a critical person - the gift of a plain person. When he thinks that his inner man - the critic - has reached endless analyzing, he simply has the plain person in front of his eyes." (1898c:193).

such *realism* of socio-historical, individual and critic contents of folk culture that it eventually confronted the on-growing inevitability of keeping the contents hushed up; the contents that, as Radić says, *were not for ethnography*, i.e. at least, that shattered the identity of discipline. This way, the later attempts were at the same time saving of the discipline from its utopian ideal in which its cognitive and interpretative autonomy is completely overlapped with its social programme.

This is why later theoretical conceptions, especially since the direct introduction of the need for theoretical discourse in the late 1910s, insist primarily on the interpretative autonomy of science and on a kind of dehistoricization and decontextualization of the subject-matter. "Theoretical erosion" of the descriptive monograph principle³³ is going to follow the "questionnaire" research with too much inertia, in the positivistic procedure in which elements of *folk life* are "court evidence" of some, most often *cross-cultural* conceptions, or, on the other hand, in the self-sufficiency of collecting principles, except for the "ornamental" ones, completely alienated of their cultural and life meaning.

Still, if it seems to anyone that subjects have flown too far into the *empire of comparisons*, we have to remember that such autonomy was meant to oppose the other autonomies of "unhistorical histories" and to take a distance from different up-coming direct offers proposed to this science by various "social contexts".

Anyway, it is perhaps going to stay on directly from this escapist procedure the charm of the science in which studies named "Room dust, rubbish, broom and rubbish-heap" (Stojković 1935) and "Recipe for the cucumber salad" (Šimčik 1939) are possible.

The ethnography of the late nineteenth century is leaving behind a descriptive-interpretative ambition that actually demands the *overpouring of discourse*, which is also the framework of the critical prototheory of the contemporary state. If facing doubt, or even the *aporia*, that derive from

³³ The syndrome of what Frykman calls "turning the ancestors into the superstitious children" (see 1990), what is partly the result of the tendency to overdo the description of cultural difference. It is indeed possible to view it sometimes also in early ethnography. For example "a role significant for people is played by the snake's head" (Hirc, *ibid.*, 10). One of the tendencies of early ethnography that later on developed in an unfavourable direction is the separation of materials according to geography and topics; it can sometimes result in the impression of chaos, disharmony, controversy, almost senseless of beliefs. "If a poisonous snake's head comes under the cattle's hoofs, the cattle will get hurt (Sveti Kuzam near Bakar). In Lijepa Vina people carry such a head with them, and everywhere people go, they are going to be happy" (*ibid.*:10–11).

here, was at least a small cause of Radić's giving up too early,³⁴ the fact that ethnology has not solved them, might have comforted him. After a hundred years' scientific adventure, the epistemology of this discipline is more and more at peace with the contradictions, fragments and combinations of approaches as its scientific-historical place and producer. The conditionally labeled simplicity, that seems to -- after a century of particularization, specialization, positivization and utilization of knowledge -- return to the place where ethnography is both the way of writing and the construction of humanistic knowledge, could be even tied to some "pseudo romantic" sign of "searching for counter world" and the repeated dismay for the products of civilization. This kind of effort goes together with a continuous parallelism that demands from ethnographical discourse a certain homology with its own object. However, it still depends on the whole social constellation whether the diversity, difference and contradiction are again going to speak as the greatest truth of the folk life.

(Translated by Sanja Kalapoš)

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³⁴ Namely, Radić is retiring from science after only four, but intense, years of the initial research, scientific and enlightening (also the scientific "managing") work; it is mainly explained by the "economic and political" reasons" (see Marković 1988).

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PUNI KRUG STOLJEĆA: *ETNOGRAFSKI REALIZAM*
U HRVATSKOJ ETNOLOGIJI KRAJA DEVETNAESTOG
I KRAJA DVADESETOG STOLJEĆA

SAŽETAK

Težnja zbiljivosti opisa kulture, tzv. stvarno-činjeničkom tekstu etnografije, pojavljuje se kao zajedničko mjesto trajnog nagnuća hrvatske etnologije tzv. povijesnim pristupima, ali u obliku različitih, pa i suprotstavljenih koncepcija - uglavnom unutar shvaćanja povijesti kao dijakronijske naracije, na jednoj strani, i njezina shvaćanja kao fenomenološkog konteksta na drugoj strani - iako se obje tendencije na kraju mire s nužnim interventnim i modelskim pristupom znanstvenog teksta realitetu kulture. U ovome se tekstu propituje zamisao etnografije kraja 19. stoljeća, koja se obično uzima kao inicijalna za utemeljenje ove znanosti, i to kao dalekosežna epistemološka anticipacija suvremenoga stanja discipline koja svoju snagu zahvaljuje konceptualnom propitivanju, ali i osebnosti i hrabrosti znanstvene osobe Antuna Radića.

Težnja realističnosti etnografskog opisa, odnosno cjelovitosti i svepovezanosti deskripcije i konstrukcije etnografskoga znanja i njegova socijalnog značaja, uspostavlja se u ovoj ranoj zamisli hrvatske etnologije unutar povijesnog i epistemološkog ozračja čija se bitna određenja propituju kao: a) inicijalna situacija utemeljenja discipline, njezino prototeorijsko stanje, uz koje ide i shvaćanje terenske slike kulture kao istraživanje "novoga svijeta"; b) socijalno utemeljenje radićevske etnologije u kojemu dominira komunikacijski motiv međusobnog upoznavanja "dviju kulutra" i kulturno prevrednovanje seljačke kulture, zajedno s težnjom za prikazivanjem egzistencijalne slike predmeta; c) povijesno određenje utemeljenja različitih akademskih disciplina unutar Račkijeve zamisli "narodnih znanosti" kao, internacionalno komunikativnih, ali iskustveno "autohtoniziranih" diskurza. Pokazavši se za utemeljenje etnologije pogodnim, ovakav se postav, dodatno potpomognut Radićevim entuzijazmom, odrazuje u iznimno vrijednim radovima kasnodevetnaestostoljetne tzv. pučke etnografije, iza kojih je moguće rekonstruirati obrise svjetonazora i samopromišljanja koje možemo nazvati i pravim "narodnim teorijama". Izbjegavajući dovođenje u pitanje probitaka profesionalizacije i institucionalizacije etnografskoga diskurza u stoljeću koje slijedi, u radu se provlači pitanje posljedica kasnije fragmentarizacije i autonomizacije pojedinih "tema istraživanja", kao i izbljeđivanja individualnoga iskustva (i istraživačeva i

kazivačeva) u objektivizaciji znanstvenoga pisanja. Atomizacija i tzv. postvarenje kulturnih elemenata i njihovo "poslagivanje" u različite tipove znanstvenih naracija, dug je, međutim, nužne internacionalizacije i teoretizacije etnološkoga jezika i podliježe suvremenim recenzijama "u paketu" s ostalim velikim temama i problemima humanističkih znanosti (jaza znanstvenog subjekta i objekta, podvojenosti etnografskog teksta na *agnosticizam građe* i *telos znanstvenog tumačenja* nadovezujućeg problema znanstvenog autoriteta, itd.). Prije toga će, sedamdesetih godina, utjecaj jedne nove *realistične težnje*, suprotstavljanja znanstvenih modela i "stvarnoga života", odnosno omjeravanje tradicionalnoga aparata etnologije otvorenosti empirijskoga iskustva, biti zaslužno za, i danas utjecajnu, kritičku paradigmu hrvatske etnologije.