

"TO BE HERE - TO PUBLISH THERE"

On the Position of A Small European Ethnology

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The article considers the problem of the position of Croatian ethnology as part of the offer of modern anthropological thought. Decentralisation of interpretative power and the dialogue of *domestic ethnologies* offered by postmodern anthropology, point the way to specific comment on the position of a science with peripheral status. Mention is made of only certain key points of the postmodernistic scheme, which, because of the essentially different history of anthropology as a global science, and ethnology as a national one, are subject to autochthonisation. Primarily, critical potential is in question, particularly that deriving from the anthropological taking of measure of the *problem of the Other* in ethnologies which experience their subject as *their own culture*.

Paraphrasing Geertz's well-known sintagm *to be there - to write here* which denotes the ambiguous position of the "exotic" anthropologist - which postmodern anthropology brought the "domestic subject", the matters of one's own culture and one's own discourse - here the problem of the position of *old domestic ethnographers* is assessed, along with the problem of the internationalisation of small disciplines as "to be here - to publish there".

Criticism and the uncovering of interpretative power as a reflection of the real, is - in this or that form - the already "traditional promise" of anthropology and ethnology as sciences historically aimed at the *weaker Other*. In European scientific heritage set as Lévi-Strauss's cross of Euro-Centrism, *the guilty conscience of Europe* (which, according to Lévi-Strauss, is responsible for the existence of ethnographers) culminates today, however, in American postmodern anthropology. Thus, Steven Tyler observes the history of the *anthropological Other* as the history of an intellectual crime (!). Ceasing to serve with the anthropologist's alienation from his own sick culture, *the native* of the twentieth century, himself having become ill because of the "dark powers of the World system", is no longer even *primitive* - he is mere *data* or *proof* in the positivistic rhetoric of political liberalism, or purely a *difference* - a collection of signs in structuralistic and semiotic rationalism. Those today who believe that they have mastered the dialogue skill by utilising tape recorders, take from him the only thing he has left - his voice -

pressing the "play" button whenever it is necessary to "penetrate" into their text. (Tyler 1986:128).

After having revealed the anthropological undertaking as an *exotic reading of other cultures*¹, "the invention" of the *Other*, by which it halts the operations of the plant producing newer and better interpretations of other cultures, postmodern anthropology puts its faith in solutions through a dual act of arrangement the *Other*: by internalising it in its discourse where the "swallowed" historic anthropological *Other* enables insight into one's own myths, but also by giving it up to "its own identity", ultimately the institution of the *domestic ethnographer* from which the "tattooed" identities of individual cultures will speak out as real social, historical and political formations, and not the anthropologist's fictions.

So, if the demands of postmodern *dialogue ethnography* are such, and so extensive, that its promoters are obliged to qualify them with the characteristic of imperfection (unattainability?)², allowing other voices to be heard in the world anthropological discussion is achieved at least on a literal level, by correction of the perhaps "banal", but nonetheless long suppressed fact that "native" cultures have no chance at all on the textual scene of culture - as writing by domestic ethnographers about their own culture, invoking western-anthropological prejudices about themselves and the offer of their own image of the *Other*.³ Some consequences of this worthy effort carry the sprouts of a new attack of (self)criticism; the cultural responses of the

¹ See, for example, Keesing 1989.

² Although postmodern anthropologists (James Clifford particularly) apparently take a revengeful stance towards the ethnographic text and in some way legitimise its "shortcomings" and imperfection (partiality, subjectivity, etc.), being of the opinion that "transcendence comes from its imperfections and not from perfections" (Tyler 1986:136), the complexity of the demands placed before postmodernistic authors is projected onto the ideal (dialogical) text, which individual authors admit that they do not know. As developed, among others, by Mirna Velčić, supporting its application in ethnographic discourse, the concept of the radical autobiography is near to the postmodernistic ideal of the dialogue text. "In that dialogue, we will be deeply disturbed by lack of a unified, but again constantly necessary to others, and for that very reason we will be directed to the research of the mechanisms of the production of myths about our own history and about the meaning of life and, from that perspective, to the theoretical conceiving of the paradox of human existence in general. These are conditions for a dialogue through which we will perhaps touch on those places in which we appear incomplete, falling apart and used. Only at this price it is possible to believe that we will be capable of opening up to others, so that others approach us in some way, and open up to us." (Velčić 1991:196)

³ The best known are the criticisms of "Orientalism" by Edward Said (1978) which reveal the "exotic approach" of the West to Oriental cultures, and Talal Asad's criticism of anthropological colonialism. (1973)

anthropologist-native are most frequently English texts⁴ by talented non-Americans, students at prominent American universities, conceived and "polished" in keeping with the highest scientific norms of critical western anthropological thought.⁵

Thus, this refined epistemology is now dealing with the deconstruction of the *adjusted Other*, at the same time taking criticism from "Third World" anthropology on how it is not particularly enchanted with foreign insights into its own culture⁶, while signals come from Europe on "fatigue from American discussions on postmodernism and reflexivity, instead of discussions of anthropological problems".⁷

Looking from the perspective of the edge of Europe, the stigma of *interpretative and textual colonisation*, accepted as heritage by American postmodern anthropologists, is primarily reduced to a complex of *exotics as borrowed tradition*, and refers to thousands of pages written from the Indonesian islands, African and Asian deserts, from Native American reservations and "Balkan gorges" or, conceivably, from the so-called Eastern European regions (when interest in *political exotics* ripens).

Because, although aspiring towards global significance for its *new ethnography* and the future world dialogue of identities, it would seem that the fact nonetheless remains ignored, in the interstices of this extraordinary discourse, that "hundreds of people somewhere between the First and the Third World have been writing ethnography for as long as one century"

⁴ While the majority of western anthropologists seem to think that "We have no choice but to describe other cultures as far as possible in their terms but in our own language". (Crane 1991:299)

⁵ An insight into the state of the cultures from which they originate is significant. Seteney Shami speaks of the problems in establishing a discipline(socio-cultural anthropology) at Arabic universities, and why Arabic anthropology has no little influence on international academic discourse. The discipline is torn between the odium of Arabic societies towards the science which treated them as "primitive societies" on the one hand, and uncritical and sterile teaching, without the application of concrete societies and cultures, while those authors who manage to attain a fruitful relationship depart for western universities. A debate began in the Eighties on the possibilities for indigenisation of anthropology in Arabic cultures as a "call for a new methodology and epistemology arising from the specificity of Arab identity".(Shami 1989:653).

⁶ Choong Soon Kim (1990) thus considers that "indigenous anthropology" was only a passing fad in American anthropology. She considers her research of Native American non-reservation communities in the American South (which she regards as a non- -Western anthropological insight, although she herself is a part of the American university system) as "peasant" as being of little influence, because of the traditional rejection - characteristic to American experts - of the existence of a peasant class in the United States of America.

⁷ As a particular achievement of the recent meeting of the European Society of Social Anthropologists (Coimbra 1990), Thomas Hylland Eriksen (1991:75–78) emphasises that not one paper was dedicated to the "reduction to autobiography of the anthropological undertaking", which he regards as being completely uninteresting.

(Povrzanović 1992:71), and that a similar, although different scientific history is parallelly developing, nurturing and revealing its very own "demons". This is the tradition of European national ethnologies in which the *alterity* as the historically inevitable prime mover of the ethnographic text, is permanently located within *identity* (understood in this or that way, expressed or granted, deconstructed or re-constructed), within some aspect of culture also understood as one's own, belonging, as autochthonic traditions, consequently, a "domestic" Other. If the "study of folklore, unlike anthropology, represents an effort to resist exoticism"⁸, then the question of the identity of individual scientific traditions points to elements of the history of the *ethnological Other*, differing from the highly problematic and self-aware *anthropological Other*⁹, as does the difference between primarily national and primarily international insights into culture (within the paradigm which most frequently determined that parallelism: identity as against alterity, historical (temporal) distance as against geographic (spatial), a diachronic row of cultural elements as against their synchronic inter-relations, a penetration into tradition as against a penetration into the exotic, etc.).

We also find one of the reasons for the considerable lack of communication between these two courses in the clearly formed animosity of anthropology towards insider disciplines. "After all, since structuralism (like its many predecessors) made claims to global explanatory capacities, it was obvious that we could, if we wanted, study ourselves. But this was usually regarded as trivial at best, pure narcissism in the less generous view; 'reflexivity' - a very different concept - was not yet part of the day-to-day vocabulary." (Herzfeld 1987:ix) Consequently, if structuralism showed that

⁸ Andrew Lass (1989:9) stressed how national culture too recognises the attribute of exoticity in its pre-history (in the sense of paganism), but it mainly is subjected to a "taming" process in studies about national culture.

⁹ A whole history could be written about the confusion between the terms ethnology, anthropology (social, cultural), ethnography, questions which are sometimes regarded as mere nominalism - meaning that diverse names for the same thing are in question, but also as a crucial factor in drawing lines between the subjects and objectives of the discipline. Thus today in Croatian ethnology we also find the line of thought that the term (cultural, social or simply) anthropology will "set free" that wing of the discipline which yearns for a broader European and world context, rather than the academically frozen concept of ethnology outlined in the superseded paradigm, the clash with the contemporary tendency to reinforce the characteristics of identity of the science as "belonging" to individual cultures, as only they are prepared in this way to enter into world culture dialogues on an equal basis. The source of this "confusion" could be sought perhaps in the two-way nature of European tradition itself (or three-way nature in respect of "the furthestmost East" - particularly the Russian - tradition of the name of ethnography) taking into account the "exotic" tradition of British anthropology and the ambivalence of the French term for ethnology (which also includes the tradition mentioned), and particularly Levi-Strauss's triple concept of ethnography-ethnology- anthropology for the three degrees of the abstraction of writing about cultures, which, to some extent, dismantles the logic described.

anthropological insights also hold for the cultures from which the anthropologists came, it was only post-structuralism - through the concept of reflexive ethnography - which led anthropologists to the domestic subject. It is obvious that the prejudice towards national ethnologies included ignorance of the traditions of their critical tendencies, those which were trying to extract themselves from the position "uncomfortably beset by an ambiguity of purpose, caught between grand impersonal surveys of 'folk culture' and ethnographies of communities intimate enough to seem acceptably exotic in their own right". (Herzfeld 1987:2) Speaking of the profound link between establishing ethnology and folkloristics as a discipline and aspiration to formation of (national) identities, Dunja Rihtman-Auguštin outlined the historical location of the inceptions of the Croatian (within the framework of Southern Slavic ethnologies) as a denotation of "Us" and "Others".

"But let us not forget that their research has involved the selection of those cultural goods which were to be OURS (Slavic, Croatian, Serbian) and those which were ALIEN (pre-Slavic, foreign, West European, Mediterranean, Oriental). In this selection it was preferable for OUR cultural goods to have Proto-Slavic or Old Balkan origin, a quality which could distinguish them from the cultural traits of the hegemonic urban civilisation. In such evaluations ROMAN or GERMANIC cultural elements have always been taken as more negative than OLD BALKAN or especially SLAVIC elements. Elements from the ancient civilisations, on the other hand, were attributed more status value than influences from contemporary civilisations!" (Rihtman-Auguštin 1988:13)

Apart from speaking of the mechanisms of identification through precise and selective processes of alienation, this quotation also casts light on their changeable historical nature - in this instance almost ironical - with respect to the complete rotation of the nomenclature of a desirable state of belonging (to the Central European cultural circle) by which Croatian ethnology today writes its own history as the emancipation from hegemonic and ideological networks.¹⁰

But just as criticism of Euro-Centrism obviously darkened certain "centrisms" so the feeling of belonging and share-holding in "traditions as

¹⁰ It should be mentioned that a more restrictive definition of Croatian ethnology within this part of European scientific tradition of national ethnologies (the German being in the lead) is not, at least in its categorical form, its constant. The last marked stage in its development was characterised by equal (or at least equally influential) reliance on the American and Franco-British part of European ethnology, and also on Soviet tradition (particularly in folkloristics). This was the result, among other factors, of the applicability of "strong" interpretative methods in the modernistic phase of the disappearance of the old subject of research and the turning towards everyday culture by ethnology. Today there are signs and tendencies to the re-examination of earlier concepts and a reversal to historical methods.

European cultural history" will not adequately illuminate the position of small ethnologies on the European outskirts - regions which still attract more researcher than collocutor spirits of the profession. If the global anthropological discussion within which key problems of the discipline *as such*, being subjected to enquiry today, include mainly only that part of European tradition which shares the guilty conscience of *conquest of the exotic Other* (mainly French and British) - so that, in this unusual way, self-criticism becomes a means of exclusion - and also within the "remnants" of Europe, circles of marginality still multiply, reaching as far as "the disturbed and muddy waters that swirl around the margins of European identity" (Herzfeld 1987:x), margins which revive the old ambivalence of European ethnology towards "the exotic" and "the familiar".

So if we set aside suspicious speculation about the sincerity of the decentralisation of textual power and the hand extended from "remorseful" centres, almost the same arduous dilemmas await us if we ask ourselves about our own intentions and possibilities within this, it would seem, mutually desired relationship. All the more so because this "dialogue effort" has recently also been receiving encouragement in the form of conditioning of existential survival of the domestic scholar through publication of internationally recognised papers.¹¹ Thus, it is obvious that the problem of international communication for the domestic ethnologist and ethnology also has it less "puzzling" level, particularly if one takes into account the openness of Croatian ethnology to date, and the international significance of individual texts and authors. However, the paradigmatic nature of the newly arisen situation as the assumption of a world discussion of ethnography allows the voicing of some "native" questions.

Various scientific traditions will no doubt influence the character and weight of these questions, due to the situation as it is in certain "Third World" anthropologies today. There, they have been intensified to the dilemma of whether it is at all moral now to do research on one's own culture at the level of western anthropology, and, in fact, take upon oneself its *exoticisation*, which is necessary for it to be "externalised" for international communication; or, is its fundamental *indigenisation* possible which would include *domestic theory*(!) and not merely *domestic material* (Shami 1989). On the other hand, however, according to Valery Tishkova (Tishkov 1992), it was precisely the over-enthusiastic "indigenisation" of Soviet ethnography over the last few decades which led to its sad state and complete introversion today; the reason for this lies more in *ethnos* than in *graphien*, according to the Armenian ethnologist Abrahamian, because Soviet ethnology, "made up of abstract realities based on roots, finally arrived to the concept of man as an 'ethnophor'

¹¹ See, for example, the propositions for the evaluation of status of domestic scholars in. (*Most*, special edition 1994).

who had very little in common with the 'anthropos' concept." (Abrahamian 1992).

The problems of introduction of national insights into the global discourse are not so obviously only problems of the Third World and science lacking tradition, which are now supposed "freshly" to accept their own disciplines. Systematic cultural colonisation leaves behind even such controversial consequences as the "embryo" of western academic discipline, with the heritage which the centre would now like to abort - - which fits in with Said's argumentation of the false dialogue gesture of postmodernism which "does not include the consequences of European modernism on non-European experience". (Said 1989). The totalising mystification of identity and the "avoidance of the Other", on its part, enmeshes in the same way certain European traditions which, as a consequence of the crumbling of an ideology to which they clung so closely, is followed by an inner dialogue as a precondition of internationalisation. The opposition of these experiences indicates that, observed through the concept of postmodern ethnography, the "domestic nature" of national ethnologists is seen as being primary and burdened (and not secondary and corrective, in some way liberating), and/or that it demands self-insight and not simple "attachment" of this highly demanding epistemology which is very influential today in sciences with various traditions - controversies notwithstanding.¹²

The sketch of the co-ordinates which would mark the place of Croatian ethnology in such a network of relations could commence from the statement that, if self-awareness is one of the conditions for international discussions of national disciplines, Croatian ethnology (taken as a whole and within the limits of its size) has a sound starting-point. There exists a permanently alert point which even warns it that it has - with its questioning, comparisons, contextualisation, critical "refutals" and programmatic articles - superseded and neglected its "direct" activity. The fact that Croatian ethnology, summarising the theoretic state of its basic conceptions, was on the verge of self-accusation on account of eclecticism¹³, at least speaks for its openness and/or more escapist than self-satisfied peripheral position. This is

¹² Steven Sangren's critique struck quite a chord in anthropology, although he castigates the academic position of the postmodernists as the most important implication of their possible inconsistency. According to Sangren, the postmodernists like to criticise, mythologise and demystify "realistic" arguments as being hopelessly limited by historic and cultural contingencies, while at the same time rejecting criticism of their own arguments on similar foundations. The institutional consequence of this, according to Sangren, is that the young can undermine the authority and repute of recognised scholars, while at the same time preempting their conceptions and authority. (Sangren 1988)

¹³ The application of diverse methodologies in research into customs and their relative lack of communication has thus led to the stratification of the concept itself, regarded as an obstacle to and not a stimulus for research. (see Prica 1991).

demonstrated in a multiplication of demands rather than their elimination: in the shadow of the great scientific traditions which encircle it, located at their cross-roads, continually subject to new and attractive methodologies, refined and revolutionary masterpieces which always happen to somebody else, Croatian ethnology has, over the last few decades, been confronted with an ongoing imperative of getting to know, commenting on, and applying methodologies, adopting paradigms, promoting discursive practice ... in some, shall we say, *complex comparative status*. Such high "external" demands should be adjoined to ethnology's permanent state of mobilisation in redefining and preserving the peculiarities of its own scientific tradition as a stake in the function of the standard-bearer of cultural identity - be it educational, demythologising or renewing, depending on the various demands placed upon it in an atmosphere of radical changes in ideological models¹⁴, and its manner of replying to them - particularly the demand for unification of these two tendencies in a uniform textual product as the condition for two-way communication, both as an international text and as a text which is responsible to the realities of a unique cultural situation. It should be mentioned that such density of the moderators of the ethnographic text - - whether we evaluate it - depending on the success of the product itself - - as an assembly (perhaps also ironically as "second-hand anthropology" (Tishkov 1992:375) or even as a *dialogue effort from the edge* (consequently somewhat differently motivated than that from the centres) is not a constant in the history of Croatian ethnology, just as all its participants do not feel called upon in equal measure to comply with them. It is a feature of the state of science today, as the sum of all prevailing and abandoned tendencies which have left after-effects on the understanding of the subject and its objectives, a certain post-critical settlement of accounts, not only because no new *ism* appeared on the scene after anthropological structuralism, which would have exclusively legitimised some manner of writing among its loyal recipients from the periphery, but also because a similar feeling of reality is also added such as *historical reversal and correction* (probably as in all Eastern European so-called societies in transition, which are now experiencing their primary social process as *renewal*).

Apart from trends which have led to such dialectically literal and active participation in science as a social process, the component which survives as an almost unchangeable constant in the tradition of ethnographic writing is not unimportant, mainly untouched as it is because of the stance that metadiscourses "are not even necessary" to ethnology, that it is completely realised in the form of primary text - ethnography as a description of culture.

¹⁴ "Ethnology in Croatia has passed a century long path from an initial close association with political and economic issues of the country to the current marginal position both in social sciences and in the society." (Supek 1988:17).

The distinction "resistant to theory" - not, by the way, a particularity of Croatian ethnology¹⁵ - is demonstrated, in the form of "shrinking from the theory of formulation" (Rihtman-Auguštin 1976:1)¹⁶, in a persistent tendency towards the self-sufficiency of so-called descriptive texts, but, as the empirical nature of ethnography, its essence (the secondary nature and application of theory) does more to delineate the status of *material* in interpretative texts. The so-called material is the empirical content, the text of social and culture reality which yearns to demonstrate its independence within the scientific discourse, to which this or those theoretical approaches are made possible, in accordance with their applicable and arbitrary character.

The inevitability of the ethnologist "speaking in traditional concepts" (Derrida 1988:294), the utterance of the *language of culture (of the people)* within the language of science¹⁷ is a duality which runs through ethnologies as a permanent driving force in ethnographic undertakings, but also as constant unrest and continual balancing of its texts on the border of the scientific genre¹⁸, and also its special position within the other humanistic

¹⁵ "Classical philosophy's definition of reality as 'that which offers resistance' shed interesting light on this tension within the ethnographic enterprise. The latter's results are a 'folk tradition' constituted as ideal object in the discourse and in the spatio-temporal world. Since *theoria* is perception that is given public authority (it is the truth); and since the hegemonic grasp of ethnography is the expression of such truth, it may seem paradoxical that the discipline's practice is governed not only by a resistance to reality but, finally, by a resistance to theory as well. Of all the related disciplines (political or literary history, or folklore studies) ethnography has been the last open to the theoretical developments that have occurred in the social sciences and humanities since the turn of the century." (Lass 1989:10).

¹⁶ "... our ethnology (has) regularly shrunk from theoretical formulations, supporting the view that: let others, the idle ones, philosophise, while we will spend that time in diligent research, and theory will come along after that. Theory was some elevated matter, not given to ordinary ethnographers and ethnologists... in other words, theoretical criticism was not developed, as criticism would allegedly have threatened the unity of ethnology. That 'unity' of ethnological thought was nurtured, while, at the same time, no one noticed that the thought was stagnating at the level of the beginning of the century." (Rihtman-Auguštin 1976:1)

¹⁷ Radić drew up a list of the most successful collectors of material, which he regarded as the basis of ethnology (*narodoznanstva*): first place was taken by "intelligent literate peasants" followed by "people born among the people, working in any sort of school", while "almost nothing will come from other gentlefolk". This was because the collectors manage "to write everything down just as the folk say, speak, narrate, interpret". (Radić 1929:80)

¹⁸ In domestic conditions, the dilemma of whether ethnology is a fashion or science, whether it deals with trifles or truths is as old as Croatian ethnology. Radić solved the matter in the following manner: "Lately, ethnology has been accused of being merely a fashion and not a science, that it engages in trifles. If someone is interested in folk life only to the extent that he finds it interesting e.g. that some wild people greet each other by rubbing noses; if any scholar thinks that such a fact as rubbing of noses is some sort of truth, and that when

disciplines. That is probably why ethnography can always be used for purposes of illustration, visualisation, biographical stations by which the dry lines of "tough" scientific discourses are refreshed, "carnivalised", and corroborated. It is as though ethnography can always, with the mutually highly developed awareness of the character of *ethnographic reality*, be approached as some primary text on culture, a review of "life itself".

Textualisation of reality, whether merely the inert filling in of old textual forms with new "fragments of reality" or even a fundamentally jarred manuscript aware of deformation and "concoction" (such as that which particularly struck the ethnography of customs in Croatian ethnology) is demonstrated as a schism within its discourse, a tenseness through which one can monitor the state of the ethnological Other.

In the concept of *authentic folk culture as the living past*¹⁹ (preserved, criticised and rehabilitated to the present day) the language of culture and the language of ethnography gravitate towards a state of overlapping, folk life is described in the *folk language* in order to be delivered to the "higher strata deprived of national identity" where it is at disposal as a national treasure, an image of their own history and sources.

Criticism and rejection of this conception of tradition and the bringing closer of culture to modern everyday life is characteristic for a major part of Croatian ethnology of the Seventies and Eighties²⁰, producing a marked schism between material and interpretation²¹ in ethnographic texts. The interpretation undertaking requires a more explicit theoretical discourse, emancipation²² of the scientific from the language of culture and/or their multiplication into a uniform interpretation. Although so-called ethnology of everyday life is approached mainly in the customary ethnological manner,

we find it and establish it, everything is finished: then ethnology is a fashion, then it is not a science." (Radić 1929:12)

¹⁹ Andrew Lass states (on the example of Czech ethnology) that efforts are always made to show folk tradition "as still being vital" in order to fulfil the desirable aspiration for a feeling of continuity, which corresponds with the concept of 'folk' as an atemporal object. (1987:7)

²⁰ The works by Dunja Rihtman-Auguštin are particularly important for this radical turnabout (change of the scientific paradigm) as legitimisation of ethnology dealing with the whole field of social and cultural phenomena on the ethnological horizon, inconceivable to that time, prevailing over the idea of the ethnological text as a mere *description of culture*.

²¹ Although "material", to that time, had been subjected to criticism (particularly the ethnography of customs which had become "frozen" as a approach model sentenced to eternal filling in of blank spaces), the new material was no longer realised as ethnography of new customs but as a new approach to the presentation of culture.

²² The concept of emancipation of the language of science from the language of the subject was used by Milivoj Vodopija (1978) for denotation of the multiplication of the scientific discourse.

which can be reduced to a "search for new customs", the discontinuity of meaning within the old "self-evident" text of *tradition* imposes the necessity of (re)interpretation - so, the *inscription* of the new texts within the desirable continuity of the ethnological discourse demands *subscription*. Whether by writing in text the objective is to carry out re-traditionalisation of new texts on culture, by proving that they are the same as the old on some semantic level (consequently their "de- -alienation"), or rather the intention is by using the interpretative procedures of global anthropological insights by which their *meaning (structure, function...)* fit into the uniform and universal content of human culture where they evade traditional contexts, thus succeeding, in some way, in *making an oddity of domestic material* - the text now requires an explicit scientific subject, culture or tradition as though it is no longer writing "by itself", led by the hypnotised hand of the ethnographic medium. The so-called material is arrived at with equally complex effort, the text which ceases to be "a simple description" but seeks, instead, answers to questions on what, how and to whom the description should be done. The fading of the traditional Otherness of the ethnographic text, drawing near to the object both temporally and spatially, and/or the submergence of the ethnologist in the subject culture, at first glance paradoxically produces the inevitability of its re-multiplication as a subject, so that the Other is experienced in the form of duality of the text.

The new, modernistic²³ Other of ethnographic text came into being, consequently, on the ossification of the old duality of culture, the barrenness of the relationship in which the eternally dying tradition of non-existent (mythical) standard-bearers constantly offer the piety of their negative reflection in the mirror - bearers of an ostensibly colourless and ordinary, ethnologically extremely uninteresting, modern culture with the "driving force" of the global unifying process which grinds up any difference, identity, or authenticity. The ethnology of contemporary culture, no matter how deeply in dispute with the so-called ethnology of the past, in fact represents a surmounting of the discontinuity which threatened the discipline as the result of "collapse of the subject" - - although today it may look as if it would have been wiser simply to wait for "the past to return" - and legitimises that *ordinariness* in the discourse of "science about the unusual", showing that something which produces cultural differences continues to exist, rebuilds dominant models, distorts desirable images of reality, creates impossible cultural collages tearing down un-lovely traditional forms, or even makes use of primitive forms, ignoring those of an advanced level of civilisation... Here ethnology is again on the side on which it always should have been, that of

²³ A complex and controversial concept of Modernistic anthropology was developed by Marc Manganaro (1990). Here it primarily signifies the effort for detachment from outlived 20th century concepts of ethnology with the introduction of a critical and theoretical discourse.

the *other* culture (be it called national, folk, everyday or popular, lower, mass, devastating and false) which actually attains its alternative historicity by constant drawing back (from ideological patterns, museums, textualisation, interpretation...) or persistent reminders about its reality²⁴. Thus, by its controversial, survivalistic nature, it denotes ethnography itself as a "habit" of civilisation, always sufficiently subversive (in a marginal manner) to represent a "principle of unease" to systematised sciences, but constantly "extracting its feet" from ideological mire and its pertaining distortions.

So today, with the almost obligatory settling of accounts which accompany the humanities in the changed Eastern European societies²⁵, Croatian ethnology with its modernistic background and the number of its "white spots"²⁶, a theme which could not, would not or did not know how to insert itself in its science, for which reason the current state in society, characterised by a blooming of suppressed forms of expression of identity, was encountered without preparation, innocent of great and important themes, preoccupied in an almost infantile manner with cultural details, marginal, ordinary and non-beautiful forms (to be sure, another current, the so-called historical ethnology, is in a similar situation because of its tendency towards

²⁴ The significance of the ethnology of everyday life to ethnology today is seen by Dunja Rihtman-Auguštin as follows: "The ethnological approach which I have supported points to the singling out of hidden facts of everyday life, that life which unfolds beneath the level and in oppositions towards the global system of power, and, thus also, towards the system. During an era when historical ethnology occupied itself with detached phenomena belonging more or less to the distant past, unwilling to touch on the present, and when more or less official sociology and philosophy concentrated on the great objectives of socialism and self-government - research into everyday life uncovered a hidden world here beside us, a world which was the same but also so very different, a world ignored and negated by the great, ideologised system. While bureaucratic optimism and a taboo on death dominated in public life and in science, the classified ads pages in the newspapers and unimpressive monuments spoke of death without compunction, daring at the same time to draw attention to religious customs and rituals guaranteed, but nonetheless forcibly suppressed, and to people who hid their membership in the former bourgeois social class, along with another thing or too. (...) And even engrossed as it was with the past, culturo-historical research on its part drew attention to another world i.e. that of the suppressed heritage of the traditional world and its withdrawal." (Rihtman-Auguštin 1992:81–82)

²⁵ As we have already mentioned, in the words of Valery Tishkov (1992), totalitarianism had almost catastrophic effects, on Russian ethnology, for example, but the majority of the former Eastern European ethnologies are also engaged today in "a tidying-up" process. It is interesting that most of them consider it urgent to untie the knot of social ideology and national identity, while the need arises in Croatian ethnology for research into the blank spaces resulting from ideological taboos on national identity.

²⁶ Dunja Rihtman-Auguštin sees the neglected parts of Croatian ethnology as: a continued process of suppression of tradition, the national features of traditional culture, cultural and ethnic difference, the theory of the ethnos (ethnogenesis), de-Christianisation of national culture (Rihtman-Auguštin 1992:84–87).

"ethnological history" and/or its immunity to the contexts of national history), and it should be borne in mind that it also built its *ethos* outside the borders of "domestic ideology", in an area where, on an equal footing, it may now join in the distancing from "the *isation*-project (industrialisation, urbanisation, secularisation, democratisation... and the *isms* (individualism, scientism, rationalism, cosmopolitanism, futurism...), as Löfgren (1992:94) summarises the Modernity project. If it had sufficient marginal, "minimalising" consciousness, against the background of social processes "drawn-out" in this way, first to deal with cultural mistakes rather than to compile "integral insights" (although within Croatian ethnology there often occurred a revival of a state of mourning for unattained systematic pictures of ethnographic landscapes), then also its self-proclamation of its own crisis during the Eighties, by which it also indicated, among other, a certain fatigue with the search for a subject, can be regarded as a relatively autochthonic contribution to the global "crisis project" written about by the discipline from the centre, desirous of casting off old baggage.

The aspiration, through the system of elimination: of remnants, latent forms, altered forms, other existences ... to "draw out" the continuity of the subject as a continuity of a real and contemporary culture (in which, be it paradoxical or otherwise, one of the ethnographies written out most intensively was that of death) meant a struggle for identity and survival of ethnology itself, outside of the walls of museums and a desperate nostalgia for the authentic. If *production of alterity* lies at the centre of the anthropology crisis, then in ethnology, (such) a crisis (crisis in the sense of a developed self-awareness which does not allow "simple getting down to cases"), that place is taken by *production of identity*.

The anthropology of Otherness has arrived at a point which it itself called an interpretation of interpretations of interpretations; on its part, the identity imperative, within "national" ethnologies in that part whose interest in the subject moved along the line of the traditional past - changes - the modernity of culture, and reached the point in which the autobiographical utterance of the ethnologist himself/herself figured as a legitimate document on the state of his/her own culture, to the point of departure on that circular path in which objectivity and subjectivity have been competing against each other in the description of culture.²⁷

Consequently, if we have now come face to face at the same "elevation points" of *identity* and *differences*, we must ask ourselves if a meeting is feasible, even as a common ideal - such an ethnography in which "the ethical character of the discourse reverts to the old meaning contained in the family of terms: 'ethos', 'ethnos', and 'ethics'. " (Tyler 1986:26).

²⁷ The level at which "a need arises for personal experience to be legitimised on an epistemological, and not a rhetorical level." (Velčić 1991:175).

(Translated by Nina H. Antoljak)

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