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THE FIRST FIFTY YEARS OF ETHNOLOGICAL THOUGHT AT THE INSTITUTE

The authors present the theoretical approaches along with the practice and results of ethnologists who have been active at the Institute over the past decades. During that period, ethnological output constantly grew and opened up new questions, changing both the theoretical approaches to the subject, and the subject itself. One of the trends of those ethnological efforts defined its attitude towards history in a new way, and the other drew nearer to epistemological research and the postmodern questionability of the very essence of ethnological scholarship — its text and writing.

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In the politically eventful year of 1948 when the Institute for Folk Art was founded (on February 6), cultural policy in Croatia — as well as in all of the former Yugoslavia — maintained an ambivalent stance towards folklore and popular culture. The ruling ideology had used folklore during World War II as a means of mobilisation and propaganda, while almost at the same time coming down hard on tradition which was conceived as being rural, backward, possibly even nationalistic, and bound up with religion. On the other hand, at that time and later, the Yugoslav state followed Soviet cultural policy models, and started to found institutions which would present the country and its multicultural nature. In any case, perhaps the establishment of the Institute in Zagreb grew out of the idea that a state scientific institute should gradually replace some functions of *Seljačka sloga* [Peasant Harmony], the peasant

cultural organisation which had been founded by the very influential Croatian Peasant Party before WW2. It was natural that this organisation was increasingly regarded as inappropriate in the ruling scheme of things after the war. However, whether the Institute for Folk Art was founded in such an environment or some other is not now of particular importance. What is significant is that the Institute's stated objective at its foundation was the collection of folklore material — primarily music — as a testimony to the richness of the folk heritage. The focus in the concept was set more on folklore than on popular culture; ethnology was not yet featured in the Institute's documents. Today, one can only ask oneself if one of the reasons for the omission of ethnology lay in the dogmatic Marxist viewpoint about the superfluosity of a theoretically based ethnological science.

Be that as it may, the first of the Institute's major projects — research into the folk traditions of Istria, which only became part of Croatia and/or Yugoslavia in 1945 — was conducted without ethnologists. Ivan Ivančan participated in the research project as an ethnochoreologist. He dealt with popular culture only in those aspects linked to dance.

Pre-conditions for ethnology

Efforts today to review and evaluate the development of ethnological research at the Institute first show that from its foundation, notwithstanding the initial motives, the Institute was permeated with the ambition that research be scientifically founded and that new avenues be constantly opened up. At the very beginning, the Institute's director, musicologist Dr. Vinko Žganec, employed Olinko Delorko — providing him with a kind of political asylum. Delorko's job was to note down the texts of the folk songs whose melodies Žganec collected. However, the presence of Delorko, an expert on Benedetto Croce's aesthetics, augured a farewell to the entrenched Romantic approach to folklore. This poet-novelist collected, compiled and published collections of Croatian folk poetry guided by his refined literary sensibility. Until then represented almost exclusively by decasyllabic verse and with heroic motifs, Delorko's selection of folk poetry brought to the surface a poetic worth equal to the greatest attainments of Croatian writers. Folk poetry ceased to exist as the poetry of *Others*, who were primitive and always at war. Delorko

deserves the credit that such poetry was accepted by literary criticism and finally found a sure place in the body of Croatian literature.

However, the final turnabout towards conscious scientific approaches and towards entry into the dominant currents of the European scholarly discourse in and about ethnology and folkloristics was given by Maja Bošković-Stulli. Although the debut of the *new* paradigm was not announced, nor even raised to awareness in the texts — and who did that in ethnology or folkloristics at that time? — the new approach started to influence research — and texts — in all the disciplines which would later be given a home by the Institute, and which would, from time to time, alternate the emphases in scholarly output.

Still, in the first issue of the journal *Narodna umjetnost* [since 1995, published in English as *The Croatian Journal of Folklore Research*] published in 1962 i.e. in the fifteenth year of the Institute's activities, the articles on ethnology were written by external contributors; there still being no in-house ethnologist on the Institute's staff. This was the case with the following three issues. It should be borne in mind that at that time, apart from the Zagreb-based Yugoslav Academy of Science and Art's fairly irregular publication of the *Zbornik za narodni život i običaje južnih slavena* [Review of the Folk Life and Customs of the Southern Slavs], there was not even one regular ethnological publication in Croatia (there being only the *Etnološki pregled* [Ethnological Review] at the Yugoslavian level). In those first issues, the articles on ethnology by contributors to *Narodna umjetnost* dealt with phenomena from so-called material culture (Gabrić 1962:53-65) or customs (Čulinović-Konstantinović 1963:73-96) or even folk art in the context of customs (Benc-Bošković 1962:81-91). The articles were compiled using the classic cultural-historical method, with a description of the phenomenon and data about its diffusion, and with efforts to reveal its origins. It is interesting to note, although not at all unexpected, that the contributions by field researchers who were not trained ethnologists differed somewhat from this norm. For example, Zvonko Lovrenčević described a specific wedding with all the details. Such a description differed from the customary canonised models used in relation to folk culture until that time (1963:176-191). On another occasion Lovrenčević tried to set the chronological position of the researched phenomena which was regularly absent in the ethnological papers of that period (1969/70:71-100).

The column called *Prikazi* [Surveys], featured from the very first issue, was carefully edited by Maja Bošković-Stulli — in fact, she set the tone of the yearly publication — and gave up-to-date reports about domestic output and recent ethnological output abroad. This initiated — or, if one recalls A. Radić and his surveys in the *Zbornik za narodni život i običaje*, reinstated — the practice of ensuring a flow of information about actual tendencies in ethnological research and made possible their reception. It was that direct connection with ethnological thought, primarily from Germany, but also from the Scandinavian countries, France and the United States of America, which would have considerable influence on the work of ethnologists who would be active as full-time members of staff at the Institute from the mid-1960s.

Towards radical criticism of ethnology

Josip Miličević worked in the *Department for Customs* which was established at that time. (Prior to Miličević, research into customs had been the assignment of the folklorist, the late Miko (Nikola) Bonifačić Rožin. However, he had much more of an ear for popular drama, and then took over that field of study.) The name of the department speaks for itself i.e. it indicates that ethnological work at the Institute was conceived mainly as research into the context of folklore phenomena. Still, from its institutionalised very beginnings, ethnological research could not be limited in that way. Miličević started to work on one topic which had been considered rarely in Croatian ethnology until that time — customs and beliefs connected with the economic life of peasant communities (1966:191-207). Later, his interest widened to include other customs, but also traditional economy (1967/68:433-513; 1974/75:399-462). He shifted away from cultural-historical methodology, was not interested in diffusion and origins, and barely inclined to canonisation of customs. He noted down and used what was an almost biographical approach, visited his informants on more than one occasion, and looked for them in their new locations when they moved. In addition, providing a parallel view of the local culture, he made extensive use of the works of writers describing the life of the communities which he himself was investigating.

A new ethnological question was opened up in 1969 in the 7th issue of *Narodna umjetnost*, in a survey by Nives Ritig-Beljak (1969:17-25). She commented on the debate about folklore and folklorism which had

just been published in the *Zeitschrift für Volkskunde*. Although, from today's perspective, one can see the flaws in the theory of H. Moser and H. Bausinger, primarily because of the tacit assumption on the stability of the initial state of folklore, information about the theory drew attention both to the life of folklore in the contemporary, consumer and media society and the responsibility of scholars in the application, representation and use of contemporary folklore. As a result, in contrast to the ethnological dogmas entrenched until that time, which asserted that traditional culture and folklore disappeared in contact with urban civilisation, so that ethnology should not pay it any attention, at the beginning of the 1970s we started thinking about the position of traditional culture in contemporary society (Rihtman-Auguštin 1971:3-17). A different approach in ethnology was sought, which much later (1984, 1988) would be called the *new paradigm*, although, in fact, no new paradigm was being firmly conceived. It was still a matter of radical criticism of cultural-historical ethnology. That is why it is difficult — and even impossible — to decide where the turning-points came about in evolving theory and in concrete research and field work. They occurred gradually both through criticism of the *old* ethnology and its canons and in perceptions which grew out of direct contact with everyday life in empirical research. This can also be clearly seen, for example, in two reviews of a bibliography prepared by Ingeborg Weber Kellermann (Gavazzi & Rihtman-Auguštin 1973:379-382). M. Gavazzi could not conceal his surprise that this classification of customs included papers on the way of life and customs of *Gastarbeiters*, about merchant customs, about food and nutrition, and the like. This new classification of the literature on customs and rituals — together with I. Weber Kellermann's introduction, which saw customs as the markers of the behaviour codes of social groups — opened up new possibilities to D. Rihtman-Auguštin to study one of the central themes of the old ethnology. Firstly, customs were observed in the changing social context including the social dynamics of human groups in which customs denote relationships. Within the Institute, customs and festivities were perceived as the *loci* of folklore, so that their study and the study of beliefs was approached as the basis for understanding individual folklore phenomena. In her article *Narodni običaji okolice Donje Stubice* [Folk Customs in the Surroundings of Donja Stubica] (1973:152.216), Zorica Rajković Vitez took a critical view of the previous practice in the research of customs. In contrast to looking for the *authenticity* of customs, the favoured aim of numerous

Croatian ethnologists, she directed her view at the contemporary state and status of the customs and rituals. She observed customs as part of a process and expressed marked resistance to the then-current timeless understanding of all folklore phenomena. As a skilful field researcher, she drew attention in her article *Obilježja etnografske grade i metode njezina terenskog istraživanja* [The Characteristics of Ethnographic Material and the Methods for Its Field Research] (1974:129-134) to the clash which exists between the ethnological canonisation of customs and their individual realisation. Through very pedantic criticism of sources, she proved the existence of one more mistaken ethnological notion — not exclusive to Croatian ethnology — i.e. the one about the ostensible *trial marriage* (1975). She showed how both the notion of the trial marriage and the literature which described it partly followed the miscomprehension of the functioning and symbolics of the traditional communities, demystifying in that way the phenomenon which some ethnologists regarded as being one of the Balkan specifics. Somewhat later, Aleksandra Muraj investigated the culture of habitation and life in the suburban village of Jalsevac in a way not used before, introducing what was for that time unconventional material into her monographic article: personal letters and family documents along with statistical and demographic data, evaluation of the relationships between village and town both from the aspect of their destructiveness regarding traditional culture, but also identification of the stimulus provided to traditional culture which emerged in those relationships (1977:95-149).

If the research into customs and the culture of habitation started out from the traditional ethnological subject and attacked its canons, research into the transformation of traditional culture set out on a search for a new or at least different subject.

The search for new approaches

As early as the 1960s, in addition to collecting material in the villages, social reality called for ethnologists to make the trip to town, following their peasants who were leaving rural communities in increasing numbers. In essence, the interdisciplinary project on transformation of folklore traditions was set in motion by Maja Bošković-Stulli, and she had considerable difficulties with funding. Branimir Bratanić, professor of ethnology at Zagreb University and chairperson of a commission of the Fund for Scientific Work, at that time the body which authorised

ethnological projects, asked for a progress report after the end of the first year, although that had not formerly been the practice. We did not produce a report for him because we were still in the research stage, doing something which had never been seen in Croatian ethnology, nor, for that matter, in many other ethnologies. We prepared ourselves for research through theory. Many very brisk discussions were held at the Institute on a series of individual theoretical questions. Ethnologists and folklorists took part on an equal footing. Dunja Rihtman-Augustin recalls the lively debate about her introductory text (1976:1-25), and has remained grateful until today to all the participants for their very critical and very stimulating comments. The original contributions by Olga Supek, Milivoj Vodopija, Zorica Rajković Vitez and Aleksandra Muraj, still an external associate at that time, were also discussed in detail. Those papers really coloured both the Institute's work and Croatian ethnology, and evoked attention in the ethnologies of other centres in the former Yugoslavia.

The project which commenced as research into *the transformation of folklore traditions in contemporary culture* (the results of which were published in *Narodna umjetnost*, Issues Nos. 13/1976, 14/1977 and 15/1978) was soon to correct its own starting points. Today it is regarded as a commonplace that traditions constantly circulate, not only during historical periods or through geographical regions, but also among the social strata. During that process they change. The stimuli for their circulation and change come from the so-called upper social classes and are directed towards the lower, but stimuli also exert their influence from below. The traditions of past generations inspire the new, and they accept, interpret and change them. All this sounds self-evident today but at the mid-1970s it was still necessary to struggle for the acceptance of the ethnological relevancy of certain ostensibly banal phenomena such as everyday urban narratives (Bošković-Stulli 1978:11-35); high school graduation celebrations and processions (Vodopija 1976:77-92); children's games, those played on asphalt, which was a newly-opened theme in European ethnology as a whole (Rajković Vitez 1978:37-96); numerous, seemingly trivial newspaper death notices (Rihtman-Augustin 1978:117-175); or the symbols of death in road accidents (Rajković Vitez 1976:27-56). These latter themes were associated with death, a taboo in modern middle-class society and, it seems, even more so in socialist society. The project's objective could only be achieved through thorough re-thinking of ethnological approaches and interpretations. To a certain

extent this meant production of texts which in some way transformed everyday life and its trivia into something strange and wonderful, as I. Prica interpreted it (1996) — but we would also venture to say, even more than that.

In this sense, the project's focus of interest was re-directed away from *transformation* towards research into the *interaction of folklore traditions and contemporary culture*. The change of the title in *mid-stream* speaks for the creative climate of the multi-disciplinary Institute team at that time when the firm boundaries of the discipline were becoming less clearly marked. It was explained in this way in *Narodna umjetnost* Issue No. 16/1979:

In other words, it has become evident that the transformation process is always present in cultural phenomena which we regard as folklore and that they should always be studied in respect of past as well as current changes. Therefore, we cannot be satisfied with the identification of this or that transformation, but must try to uncover the trend of historical changes and their meaning. In addition, on the one hand there is also the significant issue of the current, contemporary interaction between traditional creativity in the narrower sense and folklore creativity in the broader sense, and trends and phenomena of contemporary culture on the other. Therefore the title of the project was changed after the first stage... (p 179).

It is obvious that the perception of both the entertainment industry, being talked about by Bausinger at that time, and the influence of the media which would later essentially change popular culture, folklore and our scholarly perceptions had also crept into the project.

Parallely with the efforts to set frameworks for research of the relationship between popular culture and folklore tradition on the one hand, and contemporary culture considerably marked out by the market economy and the media on the other, ethnological thought at the Institute was oriented towards radical criticism of the general hypotheses of cultural-historical ethnology and something which we could call the deconstruction of its canons. This related to the fundamental concepts such as, for example, folk, the extended family (the *zadruga*). This also meant the introduction of theoretical approaches offered at that time by the structuralism of C. Lévi Strauss and the post-structuralism of E. Leach, written about by M. Vodopija (1973:385-387); or the theory of practice in its anthropological version: from theory to practice and back,

in the programmatic article of Olga Supek (1976:57-76), very much in step with then-current European ethnological thought. It was in this aura that D. Rihtman-Augustin's *Struktura tradicijskog mišljenja* [The Structure of Traditional Thinking] (1984) was written. In the book, the author relied on two assumptions of Lévi Strauss' structuralism. On the one hand, she identified structural relationships in the material on Croatian traditional culture, including extended families. On the other, she insisted on the differentiation and inter-relation between the *ordre conçu* and *ordre vecu* in the interpretation of the traditional ways of thinking. Through critical perusal of monographs about folk life, she in fact rehabilitated the value of the material itself for that ethnology which would be joining historical research in a new manner. However, interest in the structure of traditional thinking does not belong solely to history because tradition is approached from the present, from everyday culture, and this type of research was to be joined by numerous ethnological studies at the Institute.

Regional and thematic monographs — compensation for ethnological arrears

However, theoretical postulates are never implemented in the way they are conceived or in the way that their promoters preach, while scholarly work takes places in the fissures of the given conditions of life and in diverse combinations of former and current paradigms.

The Institute's ethnology felt that it had an obligation to *pay off* some of the debts and arrears from the past of its profession. It is a known fact that, right up until the middle of the 20th century, Croatian ethnology had not done even the most essential positivistic work i.e. no regional nor thematic ethnological monographs had been published. In Central European ethnologies, this task had been performed if in no other aspect at least with the help of research within the national or regional ethnological atlases, and the publication of the corresponding maps and studies. At that time, European ethnologies were working on community studies. As the results of Croatian and Yugoslav research in ethnological atlases were not being published, the void was even greater.

Consequently, the Institute included the compilation of monographs of the individual regions in its programme. The first stimuli were fairly traditional, because it was believed that models — and perhaps the canons? — of the regional characteristics of popular culture had to be

determined. However, research experience indicated that no regional models of popular culture exist but rather that diversity reigns and that phenomena have to be treated individually. At the time it seemed that this type of research could only be conducted in precisely defined, small communities. Monographs about individual local communities were prepared through team work and a multi-disciplinary approach, with contributions being made by historians, folklorists specialised in literature, music and dance, and ethnologists who no longer limited themselves to the study of customs. These monographs included *Studije i građa o Sinjskoj krajini* [Studies and Material about the Sinj Region] (*Narodna umjetnost* 5-6/1967-68), *Folklor Gupčeva zavičaja* [The Folklore of Gubec's Countryside] (*Narodna umjetnost* 10/1973), *Folklor otoka Brača* [The Folklore of the Island of Brač] (*Narodna umjetnost* 11-12/1974-75), *Povijest i tradicije otoka Zlarina* [The History and Traditions of the Island of Zlarin] (*Narodna umjetnost* 17/1980; *Narodna umjetnost* 18/1981). There was an obvious move away from ethnographic inventories and descriptions (Gamulin & Vidović 1967-68:95-105; the same authors 1974-75:463-496) to innovation in conception and interpretation, particularly of material culture, folk costume, and everyday life (Muraj 1981a:159-220; 1981b:257-320).

It was only in the first half of the 1990s that the second part of the debt was *paid off*. In a different historical time, but also in a different theoretical climate, monographs were prepared and published about two of the most significant cycles of customs in Croatian popular culture i.e. those accompanying Christmas and those accompanying Easter. Fully aware of the criticism directed at the concept of custom, the subject of a conference organised by the Institute in 1986 — the papers presented being published in *Narodna umjetnost* 24/1987 — but also of ethnological practice in the research of customs (Prica 1991:243-267), Dunja Rihtman-Auguštin (1992b) and Jasna Čapo Žmegač (1997b), each in their own way tried to fill the void in the study and publication of the ethnography of customs. Presenting Christmas and Christmas customs, D. Rihtman-Auguštin drew in equal measure from material published by Croatian ethnologists and folklorists from the beginning of the 20th century until the present day, and from existing ethnological and historical literature about Christmas customs (Weber-Kellermann, Blaumeiser-Blimlinger, Burke, Bogatyrev, Gajek, Sklevicky, Miller). She tried to step outside the traditional ethnological frameworks for approaching customs which located them solely in the village and not in

the town, solely in peasant and not in urban communities, solely in the past and not in the present. She took into account the influence of the changeable power relations on the formation of religious and popular traditions and even on popular piety itself. In her monograph about Easter and Easter customs mainly in the first half of the 20th century, Jasna Čapo Žmegač utilised the significant body of ethnological theory on customs (Weber-Kellermann, Scharfe, H. Moser, Johler, Haringer, van Gennep) and structured a hypothesis which abandons the dichotomy of the pre-Christian/Christian in customs. She supported a much more well-founded approach which encompassed the interaction of religion, religious teaching and religious ritual with popular comprehension of religious teaching and with the numerous and diverse popular interpretations of the sacred with the corresponding practice of piety. Following previous discussions on research of customs at the Institute, she paid particular attention to the analysis of customs in the changing social context, reading off their meaning in communication and social integration.

Here, we should mention another significant book which joined in the above-mentioned *payment of debts*. Ivan Lozica's *Hrvatski karnevali* [Croatian Carnivals] (1997), was the first synthesised presentation of carnival customs to appear in Croatian ethnology and folkloristics. Lozica treats the carnival in the light of the concepts of time and customs, speaking of the power and attractiveness of carnival customs, presenting them in all their known historical and contemporary forms, which he frequently researched in his own field work. As the author is a folklorist, the book is spoken of in more detail in the article herein on folkloristics.

Finally, the third repayment of Croatian ethnology's debt is being made precisely in the Institute's fiftieth year with the publication of a manual of Croatian ethnology. Although it is hard to believe that we did not until now have an appropriate handbook, the book *Etnografija. Svagdan i blagdan hrvatskoga puka* [Ethnography. The Every Day and the Festive Day of the Croatian People] is the first attempt to examine in ethnological terms the complex of popular culture in Croatia as a whole. The authors are aware that the book's publication is well overdue and taking place at a time in which one finds in Croatian ethnology three diverse and often opposed approaches to tradition. One is radical criticism which finds flaws in the construction and intention of traditions. The second is traditionalist tendency which continues to petrify material in its timelessness. Finally, there are various modifications of the

cultural-historical approach. The titles of the main chapters in the book (*Elementi hrvatske seljačke kulture u prostoru i vremenu. Osnovni pojmovi i polazišta. Kritika grade* [Elements of Croatian Peasant Culture in Time and Place. Basic Concepts and Starting-Points. A Critique of the Material] by J. Čapo Žmegač; *Obrisi svakidašnjeg života* [Contours of Everyday Life] by A. Muraj; *Iskorak iz svakidašnjice* [A Step out of Everyday Life] by Z. Vitez with R. Senjković, G. Marošević, T. Zebec, and I. Lozica; *Seoska društvenost* [Village Sociability] by J. Čapo Žmegač; and, *Predodžbe o životu i svijetu* [Conceptions about Life and the World] by J. Grbić), mark the new approach undertaken by the authors, dealing with the known, but actually insufficiently articulated material on Croatian popular culture. An additional and useful contribution is found in the chapter called *Povijest etnološke misli u Hrvata* [The History of Ethnological Thought among the Croats] by V. Belaj, the only author who is not a member of the Institute's staff.

From research of custom to the diversified cultural-anthropological approaches

As has been seen, the ethnological approaches in the function of researching the context of folklore utilised the advantages provided by close multi-disciplinary co-operation with the professionals active in other disciplines at the Institute. Still, that co-operation to an extent hampered and narrowed the ethnological perspectives because it allowed them to range only in the set frameworks of the customs concept. It was only in 1991 that the name of the *Department for Customs* was changed in the documents of the Institute into the *Ethnological Department*.

However, the openness towards the flow of cultural-anthropology and the radical criticism of the subject referred to above imposed a question on the folklorists — and the ethnologists — at the Institute: that of the meaning of the communication processes. The contributions of non-Croatian and Croatian authors to the book which was often quoted later — *Folklor i usmena komunikacija* [Folklore and Oral Communication] (1982, edited by Maja Bošković-Stulli) — drew attention to the meaning of research into the communication processes in everyday life and to the dynamics of the social groups, whose culture belongs to this field. In a discussion about that book held on the Institute's 35th anniversary, November 22, 1983 (published in *Narodna umjetnost* 21/1984:35-50) the somewhat radical rejection of the *folk* concept was re-examined,

expressing awareness of its various dimensions, thus emphasising the need to research ethnicity and the interrelationship between cultural and ethnic processes.

Contributions in the Institute's documentation still speak of team projects in the collection of folklore and ethnographic material, also from nationally diverse Croatian environments (for example, Serbian Sjeniĉak in the Kordun region) and the old Croatian Diaspora such as the Austrian Burgenland Croatians and/or those in Slovakia. Still, there was a gradual falling-off in the complex field research of folklore and folk culture aimed at collecting material. Olga Supek, the author of an individual study with participant observation in Sveta Jana, following in the footsteps of Roĉić's Prigorje monograph published in 1907, built in to her doctoral dissertation the approach to symbolic anthropology (1982). Identifying as early as 1976 the ethnological relevance of ostensibly banal phenomena such as the marking of death in traffic accidents, Zorica Rajković Vitez expanded her research to cover the entire territory of the former Yugoslavia. In her book *Znamenja smrti* [Memorials to Death] (1988), she analysed the sense and meaning in general of memorials to sudden death, the socio-cultural context which surrounds them and the non-verbal message which they emit. At almost the same time, Aleksandra Muraj also carried out participant observation in Sošice in the Žumberak hills (1989), critically examining both Radić's and Gavazzi's approach to material culture. Consequently, she no longer speaks of folk architecture but of the people who live in the houses in question, and about the symbolic world connected with their home and place of residence: in a word, about the culture of habitation.

Abandoning team work in local and regional research, the Institute's staff — both ethnologists and folklorists — still came together around one thematic research project, throwing light on various aspects of Carnival customs and rituals which were long-lived and showed enduring vitality (Zeĉević 1985:15-30; 1988:115.122, Lozica 1985:31-57; 1988:87-113; Rajković Vitez 1985:59-97, Ritig-Beljak 1985:99-117, Povrzanović 1988:15-66; Supek 1988:67-86; Sremac 1988:137-174; Galin 1988:175.204). *Pokladna događanja* [Carnival Events] — as was mentioned in the introduction to *Narodna umjetnost* 25/1988:

are interpreted as a highly valued symbol of cultural identity, as an expression of the relationship of the village to the global society, as a shift from earlier manipulation of Nature to a symbolic manipulation of people, as a symbolic expression of order and

disorder (and/or solidarity and conflict in the social sense and tradition and changes in the cultural sense), as a rite of passage which includes the symbolic act of sacrifice, as a remnant of fertility cults which contain polysemic conventional and standardised symbols and exist beyond the life of their forgotten messages and meanings.

Ethnological thought at the Institute does not tend towards a school of thought nor it is guided by any particular theoretical school. Since the 1980s, the number of ethnologists at the Institute has grown; ethnology has been manifesting a diversification of themes and theoretic approaches and, of course, more profuse output.

In *Ethnologija naše svakodnevice* [The Ethnology of Our Everyday Life] D. Rihtman-Auguštin presented a hypothesis for researching folk culture as the culture of everyday life. In a situation in which ethnology is constantly questioning its own meaning in the contemporary world, the author was inspired by the current trends in the profession, and offered an open system of research hypotheses: "a conceptional framework based on the structural and communicational definitions of culture which, however, is set once again in each concrete research project" (1988:38). Snježana Zorić made an effort to settle custom in the space between ethnology, theology and philosophy (1991). Relying on her field experience, Maja Povrzanović questioned to a certain extent the folklore-folklorism model and showed how the media maintain and shape folklore (1988:15-66). Somewhat later, in 1995, Zoran Čiča carried out a theoretical examination of Croatian research into witches and drew attention to the representations of witches and fairies in Croatian folklore.

Several new, until then completely wanting, and, in fact, non-existent areas of ethnological scholarly interest were opened up. Jasna Čapo Žmegač dealt in a qualified manner with historical demographic research and focused her attention on an unusual, and almost *unsuitable* ethnological field for that time — a landed estate (1991a). Through historical demography, she showed certain ethnological phenomena — the extended family, for example — in a different light. J. Čapo Žmegač asked why Croatian ethnology had dealt to such an extent with the extended family, or *zadruga*, and not at all with the nuclear family, when in reality such an insignificant number of village families were organised on the *zadruga* principle (1996:375-398). Other under-researched fields — ethnicity, ethnic identity, the relationship between

language and ethnic identity — became the focus of Jadranka Grbić's papers (1994). She did research, both theoretical and empirical, into the issues of identity, ethnicity and inter-ethnic permeation in the region of South Eastern Europe, particularly among Croatians living outside of Croatia. In her papers she analysed the dynamics of the identification process on the basis of linguistic and other cultural determinants, emphasising the importance of creating a model of community in multi-ethnic and multi-confessional environments (1997a:7-23). Her interest also focused on the phenomenon of multiple identity, which she established and interpreted in history and politics (1997b:317-329).

Ethnology, war and transition

Oriented towards everyday life, ethnology at the Institute was sensitive to political changes such as the fall of Socialism and the establishment of the Croatian State, which changed human destinies. Suddenly, the phenomena with which we had been dealing opened up new perspectives; suddenly, we identified cultural phenomena in everyday life with which we had not dealt for various reasons in the time of Socialism. The political changes in government *bombarded* us with the change of symbols, new national awareness and nationalism, ethnic conflicts and, finally, with war. Powerless, living with our own personal fear of war and its consequences, while still desirous of contributing to new interpretations of the new reality, but also of own identity, our ethnological approaches moved in two directions.

In the first years of the 1990s, part of Croatia was occupied, people were forced out of their homes; houses, villages and habitats were devastated. Traditional popular culture was irreversibly destroyed. One group of the Institute's ethnologists and folklorists turned to its field material collected over decades, and tried to document, publish and interpret folklore and ethnological material from the occupied regions: the Dubrovnik hinterland, Banija and parts of Slavonia (Perić-Polonijo 1992:121-153; Dukat 1992:155-167; Čale Feldman 1992a:169-184; Muraj 1992:185-218; Jambrešić 1992:219-252; Šimunović 1992:253-274; Grbić 1992:275-295; Ceribašić 1992:297-322). Although criticism is heard of the insistence on the memories of people who have lost their homes because of the war, because such a discourse maintains their status as victims (Greverus 1996:285), it has to be said that each human community has its places of memory — *lieux de memoire* — and that the ethnology of a

country which really has undergone intense devastation, cannot, nor is it able, to abandon such places.

The second group of ethnologists and folklorists turned directly to the war, the poetics of resistance and political rituals, warrior symbolics, everyday life in war-time, death in war and posthumous rituals, refugees and their narratives, the fear experienced by ordinary people in the whirlwind of war (Rihtman-Auguštin 1992a:25-43; Čale Feldman, Senjković and Prica 1992b:45-105; Ritig-Beljak 1992:107-118). Possibilities for interpretation of certain sub-ethnic and inter-ethnic relations and conflicts were drawn from older material, particularly from its almost informal data (Jambrešić 1992:219-252).

Differences in approach were not manifested only in the selection of themes but also in methodology. While the former group persisted in the research pattern which grew from the criticism of cultural-historical ethnology, the latter drew its inspiration from the postmodern criticism of ethnology and ethnographic writing. It happened that this very approach to deconstruction was identical with something which war imposed on us: the destruction of our conceptions about life and of life itself. The joint issue of *Narodna umjetnost* 29/1992 which resulted from the efforts of both groups in articles of postmodern sensibility which were re-edited and translated into English, made up the book *Fear, Death and Resistance* (1993, edited by L. Čale Feldman, I. Prica, and R. Senjković). This book created quite a stir among the scholarly public in Croatia, and, more particularly, abroad.

Yet another of the Institute's significant ethnological projects dealing with refugees/internally displaced persons and war was realised firstly by an international conference on the subject, and then by the book *War, Exile, Everyday Life. Cultural Perspectives* (1996, edited by Renata Jambrešić Kirin and Maja Povrzanović). The book critically examined the practice and strategy of help given to refugees. The authors dealt with the narratives of war-time experiences, memory and recollections of the war. They paid particular interest to art as part of the displaced person's experience and the function of the arts — music, drama — in overcoming the desperation and identity crises of refugees. Finally, they considered the ethnological and/or anthropological challenges offered or imposed in the research of war and refugees of war, along with the accountability of ethnology in researching refugee destinies and/or in interpretation of war, its causes and consequences.

A particular contribution to the ethnology of war was made by Maja Povrzanović's doctoral dissertation *Kultura i stah: ratna svakodnevnica u Hrvatskoj 1991/92* [Culture and Fear: Everyday Life in War-Time in Croatia 1991/92] (1997). The author examines the multiple causes and consequences of fear. In its ethnographic aspect, the thesis uncovers the cultural processes in everyday life: new, fear-motivated behaviour, as well as that which is untouched by fear, allowing the continuance of everyday life. In its analytical aspect, the thesis is devoted to fear as a cultural experience and/or to the cultural consequences of fear among the civilian population. One chapter from the dissertation was published in the journal *Dubrovnik* 1(IX), 1998:118-140, which is — with some other papers written by the authors from the Institute — completely dedicated to the folklore and literary heritage of Konavle.

At the end of the century: deconstruction of Croatian ethnology

It could be asked whether ethnology at the Institute over the fifty years of its work shared the crisis destiny which has been a constant subject in contemporary ethnology and anthropology. This question could be answered both negatively and positively. It seems to us that ethnological output at the Institute has continually grown during these years, and continually been open to new questions, as we have attempted to present in this review. In answer to these questions: both the theoretical approach and the subject itself were gradually changed. In this process, one orientation in these ethnological undertakings defined in a new way its attitude towards history, while the other orientation separated itself from essentially historical questions and drew nearer to epistemological research and the postmodern questionability of the very marrow of ethnological scholarship — its text and its writing.

However, the influence of the postmodern discourse on the crisis of ethnology can be felt in the majority of the ethnological papers which have issued from the Institute's workshops over the last decade. This is most evident in the growing number of papers about Croatian ethnology itself. The most wide-reaching paper in this field is definitely Ines Prica's doctoral dissertation, *Odlike etnografskog pisma u modernoj hrvatskoj etnologiji: Kulturni i znanstveni dijalog u diskurzu etnologije suvremenosti* [Distinguishing Features of Ethnographic Writing in Modern Croatian Ethnology: The Cultural and Scholarly Dialogue in the

Ethnology of Contemporary Times] (1996a). The position of Croatian ethnology is examined within the frameworks of the demands for its historical reconstruction and the establishment of its place in the European horizons of the discipline. I. Prica approaches Croatian ethnological tradition from the standpoint of the theory of the ethnographic discourse as the post-critical viewpoint. She does not draw back from diagnosis of its state of crisis, but observes it in the light of postmodern deconstruction, in the movement towards the interdisciplinary, the fragment, autobiographisation, and finally to the founding of own scientific identity (1996b; 1996c).

In fact, the influences of the postmodern commenced as early as 1989 with a survey conducted by Lydija Sklevicky about the status of Croatian ethnology as a profession, and the author's brilliant comments on the responses to the survey (1991:45-67). A significant contribution to the examination of ethnological approaches was given by Jasna Čapo Žmegač who showed the changeable positions of the concepts of *culture* and *people* as the focal points of Croatian ethnology (1991b:7-15), and also the differences between Radić's and Gavazzi's ethnological approaches (1995:25-38; 1997a:9-33). With her paper on J. Matasović and the journal *Narodna starina* [Popular Antiquities], Aleksandra Muraj drew attention to the multiple ethnological voices in the period between the wars, which we thought of as speaking in unison (1993:11-34), and to the process of canonisation of popular culture that was confirmed by Vjera Bonifačić in her interpretation of Croatian traditional textiles (1996:239-263). Asking *what was it that we did not research during Socialism*, pointing out the political context of Radić's ethnology and endeavouring to explain Gavazzi's distancing himself from politics — despite his engagement during the 1930s in organising the *Folklore Festivals*, which were politically motivated — D. Rihtman-Augustin added an aspect to deconstruction which opened up the opportunity for researching power relations from the ethnoanthropological viewpoint (1995:107-122; 1996:54-61). This tendency which examined the alterations in the meaning of New Year rituals under Socialism (1988:59-72) was anticipated by L. Sklevicky in her article on the new New Year (Sklevicky 1990). On their part, Reana Senjković's papers radically changed the very paradigm of folklore art with the premise that such folk art "... adds the artistic output produced for the masses to the innumerable host of individual art creations which, inspired by differing reasons and for differing purposes, were created by

individuals who were not trained for such [work] nor professionally engaged in it" (1996:4; 1996a:41-57; 1997:95-132).

What and how in the years to come?

In the Institute's fiftieth year, the staff includes a team of new recruits to ethnology, so that there are now thirteen female and male ethnologists doing research. A larger number of associates allows for a broader encompassing of themes. For example, after the tragically early death of Lydija Sklevicky, research is being renewed in the framework of anthropology of gender (Tea Škokić). Historical ethnoanthropological research is being broadened (Valentina Gulin); research is being done into youth culture (Sanja Kalapoš); while an absolute innovation at the Institute is research being done into visual anthropology (Sanja Puljar) and economic anthropology (Goran Šantek).

Consequently, it is evident that approaches will continue to change and to broaden. Will the old paradigm and old material be set aside completely in the coming decades, or will some new modes of coexistence between the diverse approaches to folk culture *alias* everyday culture *alias* something else be found? They will, surely. What will remain will be both the scholarly and moral obligation of ethnologist-researchers. And this is where the chances for the Institute's ethnology will lie in the years to come.

(Translated by Nina H. Antoljak)

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