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## Writing Ethnography and Writing Ourselves

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*V tem članku želi avtor kritično pretresti načine, kako so se antropologi sporazumeli o pisanju antropologije. Posebej dokazuje, da so "interpretativni" in "postmodernistični" preobrat - "kriza reprezentacije v humanističnih znanostih" - pripomogli k diskusiji o nadaljnjih teoretičnih ciljih, ki se niso obravnavali do sredine 80. let (subjektivnost, stili pisanja, glasovi itd.) Vendar pa se iz takih diskusij izpuščajo važna vprašanja, zakaj občutijo antropologi ali etnografi iz različnih kulturnih okolij potrebo po drugačni "reprezentaciji" in zakaj so raziskovalci odtujeni. Avtor pretrese več modernističnih etnografij, da odkrije značilne poteze, ki prevladujejo v stilih pisanja različnih avtorjev.*

*In this paper the author aims to critically reexamine the ways in which anthropologists have come to terms with the notion of writing anthropology. In specific, it is argued that the "interpretative" and "post-modernist" turn - the "crisis of representation in the human sciences" has helped the discussion to further theoretical aims not tackled until the mid-1980s (subjectivity, writing styles, voices, etc). Yet important issues of why anthropologists of different cultural backgrounds have a need for a different tradition of "representation" and why researchers are alienated are left out of such discussions. Several modernist ethnographies are examined to reveal those characteristic features which have been dominant in the writing styles of various authors.*

The highest wisdom would be to understand that every fact is already a theory. (Goethe)

In this paper my aim is to critically reexamine the ways in which anthropologists have come to terms with the notion of writing anthropology. In specific, I argue that

the “interpretive” and “post-modernist” turn — the “crisis of representation in the human sciences” to use its language (Marcus and Fischer 1986) — has created lively debates and helped the discussion to further theoretical aims not tackled until the mid-1980s (subjectivity, writing styles, voices, etc). Yet important issues of why anthropologists or ethnographers of different cultural backgrounds have a need for a different tradition of “representation” are left out of such discussions. At the same time, I maintain that if ethnography (or its broader equivalent, anthropology), wants to remain loyal to its stated aims — critical approaches to human progress and diversities — then it could, without much soul-searching and self-flagellation, continue to preserve what is specific of the field itself: the separation of its own products (visual and textual) from the other disciplines with which it must, nevertheless, remain in close and friendly contact.

Although much has been said about this topic, since at least Clifford Geertz’s **The Interpretation of Culture** (published in 1973), it serves us to remember why this separation exists or why it ought to be preserved for at least the time being. Anthropological writings, just like museums and archives, may serve in exploiting others and generating power imbalances through modernist notions of “truth,” “objectivity,” and “meta-narratives,” as critics have claimed, but they are also useful as historical and material depositories of knowledge, beauty and progress.

European and North American specialists are separated by an even greater hiatus: this has been discussed earlier by Tamás Hofer, a Hungarian ethnographer, who argues that “native” ethnographers have different goals from US anthropologists bound to study the foreign others (1968). Since Hofer’s pioneering insights, we have witnessed the emergence of indigeneous anthropology which, to my mind, has similar incentives: to study one’s culture from the vantage point of the native, with all the knowledge and (mis)information one has at hand. Such a perspective may serve as a balancing device between competing approaches as well as basic information for the outsiders’ perspectives. Furthermore, cultures vary as to what they treasure; foreign anthropologists bring “foreign ideas” and interest themselves only marginally in folkloric songs and dances, embroidery, cooking and plowing implements: objects often interpreted by outsiders as supplying evidences of “nationalism” and “backwardness” or even may boost re-writing of mythical revisionist histories.

These differences aside, however, there is even the difference between ethnology and ethnography; the French and German heritage, which separates the study of “tribal” societies from the “European” peasant cultures (the basis of distinction is that of **Volkskunde - Völkerkunde**). In Eastern Europe, following the post 1989-1990 political and economic reorganizations, most universities have implemented programs in US style anthropologies (or at least what they think of as anthropology). This way anthropology and ethnography seem to be even more separate than before. I want to argue, however, that this distinction decreases if we regard both US anthropologists and European ethnographers as students of cultures, both as culture carriers as well as culture makers, who are ethnographers in the strict sense of the term, i.e. both are “writers” of cultures as I have discussed above. Both practice fieldwork (be it specific participant observation, or library or archival research), both analyze data, conduct interviews, analyze old documents and visual material, and both show a finished

product: the monograph or a text. Whether this is a true monograph of few hundred pages, or just an article or chapter in a book, the result is the same. A product, a textual representation of a culture/society in question for various readership ranging from colleagues, the general public, students, politicians and policy makers (more should be reading them, though!), and, sometimes, yes, sometimes, the people/informants themselves. As Edward W. Said has written recently:

Like my own field of comparative literature, anthropology, however, is predicated on the fact of otherness and difference, on the lively, informative thrust supplied to it by what is strange or foreign" (1989:213).

European and North American scholarship, whatever their historical differences may entail, are still similar in what Said terms an "informative thrust" concerning strangeness and foreignness. Yet, the problem which was raised by the interpretive thrust of the 1970s, and post-modernist arguments of the 1980s, has remained constant: the way anthropologists can and should approach their subjects of study. Writing has, thus, become one of the central issues in anthropological debates of recent years. While my aim is not to rekindle these arguments (this has been done elsewhere and much more eloquently, i.e. Fabian 1990; Said 1989; Smith 1989), I want to propose that we must learn from recent critical insights into anthropological theories of reflexivity and critical approaches by understanding some of the pitfalls and shortcomings of our discipline in general and the ways in which anthropologists have utilized writing in specific.

At the outset, I must agree with Johannes Fabian, who rightly argues that the ethnographic epithet before "writing" is an oxymoron: ethnography itself embodies the notion of textuality: the two Greek words attest to this **ethnos** and **graphein** (1990:757). **Ethnos** may be said to parallel what Said termed "difference" and "otherness." And **graphein** includes the notion of writing with more flexible meanings attached including predication, account, description and information as well as literature. Interesting is the fact that the word anthropology (**anthropos** and **logos**) does not have the same connotations and the etymological roots of the Greek words are quite different: for mankind, humanity and peoples are the subject of study, discourse, argument and knowledge and not necessarily the writing of and about them which they entail. Yet most of the protagonists of the "new ethnography" school claim that anthropologists, whether from Central and Eastern Europe, England and North America, are engaged in identical practice or research plus writing of scholarly treatises on cultures and people.

The results of their efforts may be summarized as a literariness or textuality which, in this sense, embodies the notions of pursuit of foreignness and otherness; in fact, the description of cultures other than one's own or, if that may be the case, describing one's own through the concepts and values of "otherness" and "foreignness." Argued this way, the whole "post-modernist" turn in anthropology, offering to re-write anthropology's textuality-embeddedness may be a questionable exercise, although I am not willing to throw the baby out with the bathwater for I feel the necessity of a critical, self-analytical stance in any scholarly exercise. I am, however, bothered when the experience of the textuality (or visuality when it concerns different ways of

representation such as video, film and photography) parades in the place of the culture it purports to describe, and the writer/author takes the center-stage with his/her witty style, argument, and jargon. It is all the more important to analyze the ways in which anthropology has managed to construct an authoritative voice in the social sciences. In the following section I want to analyze the forms and styles of traditional ethnographies — mostly the classics since they have provided valid models throughout the last one hundred years — to reveal how writing about cultures has been determined by conventions based on accepted definitions and taken-for-granted notions of ethnographic literacy. Such critical re-evaluation may be useful in recognizing the enframing and coding of narrativity, objectivity and empiricism in anthropological discourse.

### Writing

Anthropologists and ethnographers, as argued above, whether in US campus settings, or national research institutions in East and Central Europe, are involved with the production of their texts. In order to critically examine this production process, I will first illustrate some of the “weaknesses” of traditional ethnographic accounts. I utilize “traditional” for mostly the earlier functionalist or modernist (in the post-modern usage) descriptions though I am aware that the two are not always interchangeable in texts which appeared before the 1990s.

There are probably few features more characteristic of modernist ethnographies than the functionalist mode of stylistic representation whether visual or textual. Ethnographic and “cultural” texts permeate our lives in the academe and the popular media. Everyone is beginning to be “doing” anthropology and “participant observation”, and writers and travellers more and more resort to pseudo-forms of ethnographically detailed and sensitized styles. The fashion of anthropology outside of the discipline of anthropology followed the post-modernist turn in the humanities and the social sciences since the early 1980s. At the same time, mainly emanating from the new “ethnography” schools and critical post-structuralist feminist and postmodern writings, authors lament the “death of ethnography” (Clough 1992). This may simply be a take-over of the late existentialist philosophy proclaiming the “death of the subject,” meaning the “death of the author.” Yet, is it clear that in their rhetorical search of new styles, and voices — the idea of “polyvocality” in fact is the result of this — they also (re)invent a new authorship; the anthropologist, the ethnographer with new sensitivities as well as interests. For instance, a series edited by P. Stoller and D. Rose, “Studies in Contemporary Ethnography,” book-length monographs published by the University of Pennsylvania Press, aims just to do that. Yet, a death of certain type of anthropology is inevitable from time to time; just like functionalism lived and died only to be replaced by structuralism, which itself left the scene after two decades of reign in some places. Maybe it is just a necessity of postmodernism to invent “radical anti-ethnology, anti-universalism, anti-differentialism” (Baudrillard 1993:147) only to freshen up what is basically the continuation of earlier thoughts.

Although there were classical works in anthropology (namely, those of R. Benedict, H. Powdermaker, and B. Malinowski earlier and B. Myerhoff, P. Rabinow, M. Shostak, P. Friedrich, and others more recently), the notion of “writing” and “textuality” received

central attention with the publications of George Marcus and Michael Fischer, **Anthropology as Cultural Critique** (1986), James Clifford and George Marcus, **Culture: The Poetics and Politics of Ethnography** (1986), and Stephen Tyler, **The Unspeakable** (1987). This followed the general elevation of the works of the French Michelle Foucault and Jean Baudrillard and the American Frederic Jameson among others into general North American scholarship.

Even before, however, Clifford Geertz, father of American "culturology" whose influence has always been much larger **outside** of anthropology than **within** anthropology, argued eloquently that ethnographic observation is also a product of a culture, which finalizes itself into a text; therefore, in the Geertzian mode, culture itself becomes embodied as a text; hence the notion of "culture as text."

One of the most forceful arguments of post-modernist ethnography has been voiced by Marcus and Cushman (1982:25-69). In surveying the traditional (functionalist) school of ethnography, they identify several perspectives and stylistic devices which characterize it. Mostly written against the eighteenth century notions of rationality and objectivity, they analyze works of traditional anthropological monographs with the understanding that post-modern interests will effect the ways in which ethnographies should be written. Their critiques, while justified in many instances, serve as an illustration as to what is meant by traditional writing methods in anthropology. I have added my own to theirs and this is how I see ethnographic text-making which has been dominant in most anthropological endeavors.

1. Descriptions are always adhere to the dominant/fashionable scholarly models and paradigms, an aspect not so much of a shortcoming but a necessity. From functionalism to structuralism, from psychoanalysis to semiotics, analyses skew data to fit the stated purpose and analytical models; and, in contrast, other data are left out or become "unimportant" for the argument at large. In a sense all ethnographies are related to their previous ur-texts. This connection, while acknowledged by most, is never elaborated in detail. In many instances, ethnographies reveal more about their definite literary progeny than about the society it aims to **represent**.

Traditional ethnographies, written either under the sway of holism or the "total institution" of Ervin Goffman, consider ethnographic presentation as a totality-in-itself which may result in the unwanted objectification of specific cultural traits and patterns. Yet, there is clearly a contradiction here: while certain elements of the culture become "objectified" (if not sanctified), others are simplified, marginalized or simply left out of the discussion. In some monographs, the community may be composed of folksingers and balladeers. In others, the it is is made-up of superstitious individuals who engage in "traditional" shepherding and agricultural work, while in other studies the same community exhibits age-old system of bilateral descent and ritualized god-parenthood. In similar vein, works of the holistic monography-type try to provide vignettes of all the spheres of life (superficial at best), except the "non-traditional" facets may be left out. Yet authors may openly declare the newness of approach undertaken, freshness of ideas invented and the ways in which their work goes beyond traditional definitions and concepts advancing the anthropological quest to newer heights.

Perhaps Roy Rappaport's study on the Tsembaga people of the New Guinea highland, **Pigs for the Ancestors** (1975), may be selected for an illustration. A product of the dominant school of Columbia University of the 1960s, it is not only written in the support of "functional analysis, human ecology, and the study of religion" as Andrew P. Vayda asserts in his introduction to the volume, but it also "effectively challenges" former ideas and "points the way for fresh approaches in the study of religion" (Rappaport 1975:xiii). Reading many introductions of this kind we may wonder: how many more challenges anthropology can carry? how many more "fresh approaches" may be invented in the never-ending search to understand cultures and the human condition?

Rappaport's analysis provides an argument for the ways in which "ritual not only expresses symbolically the relationships of a congregation to components of its environment but also enters into these relationships in empirically measurable ways" (1975:3). Clearly, one of the purposes of this monograph is to refute one dominant functionalist paradigm — i.e. the role of ritual actions in society elevated by symbolical and structural analyses — by replacing it with another, i.e. the cultural ecological one. In this way he is not only able to redefine the nature of ritual action ("**the occurrence of the ritual may be a simple qualitative representation of complex quantitative information,**" (1975:235, emphasis in original), but is able to provide "support" for his ecological and human adaptability model. This is one of the reasons why Rappaport spends so much time on describing economic and productive activities and provides fifty pages of Appendices — many with complicated mathematical formulas — on rainfall, soil, harvesting records, energy expenditure, plant and animal typologies, diet and carrying capacity.

2. Using the "I" pronoun is somewhat representative of the personal, individual style in ethnographies, a way of voicing one's presence in opposition to the more "hard-science" voice of neutrality, objectivity and distance. Diaries and travelogues are two notoriously (in)famous textualizations of personal experiences and emotional selves (relegated to the discipline of psychological anthropology) with the foreign otherness. This practice is consciously countered in ethnographies by simply shifting the first person singular pronoun into either third-person singular, or even, which is counted as "more scientific" or excepted form by some, third person plural. Many ethnographers feel that by so doing closeness and "subjectivity," and the "total personal involvement" may be avoided. Editors of scholarly journals and books of University presses are notorious in making corrections of styles termed "too informal" or "inconsistent" with academic style.

Consider, for example, Pierre Bourdieu's much celebrated **Outline of a Theory of Practice** (1977). In the main body, the pronoun "I" is hardly if ever found; such a personal reference is placed into endnotes although Bourdieu is consciously avoiding its use. Compare this with Leach's profuse use of the "I" in **Political Systems** (1970), a style comparable to that of Claude Lévi-Strauss, Radcliffe-Brown and others but not with Raymond Firth, who in **We, the Tikopia** (1963) shifts between "I," "we" and the third person neutral voices.

3. In the functionalist tradition, the locale and time, as well as informants are also manipulated accordingly the stated/unstated aims of the study. Thus, real personalities

and characteristics may be lost and left out. Pseudonyms are widely used in order "to protect the identities" of the people in question. Sometimes imaginary maps are also invented to show the field work site to the reader, only to leave one puzzled about such an "Alice in Wonderland" sci-fi approach. Often we find pictures published, while "informants" look into the camera, with no names and dates, and little analytical information. In Eugene Hammel's **Alternative Social Structures and Ritual Relations in the Balkans** (1968), examples are provided illustrating this problem: on page twelve a caption reads "Peasant in Western Serbia," and on page forty an older man is playing the bagpipe with the fact-of-the-matter statement "Montenegrin Peasant". In Chris Hann's study of Tázlár, a Hungarian settlement on the Hungarian Plains, we are offered glimpses into individuals' life-histories with full names and date of birth under each portraits (1980:186-195). Such distinct styles of representations, oscillating between the obvious, mundane, the overt disclosure and the "cautious" treatment have been legitimized by the profession for many years. For instance, the American Anthropological Association 1967 "Statement on Problems of Anthropological Research and Ethics," has this much to say about anthropological research:

To maintain the independence and integrity of anthropology as a science, it is necessary that scholars have full opportunity to study peoples and their culture, to publish, disseminate, and openly discuss the results of their research...Constraint, deception, and secrecy have no place in science...

And, later, in "Statement on Ethics," amended in October 1990:

Anthropologists' first responsibility is to those whose lives and cultures they study...The right of those providing information to anthropologists either to remain anonymous or to receive recognition is to be respected and defended...Anthropologists should not reveal the identity of groups or persons whose anonymity is protected through the use of pseudonyms...

While anonymity is a serious issue in some case, such a treatment poses a serious ethical dilemma bringing with itself a whole range of contradictoriness, most important, perhaps, the question of marginalization of informants by the researcher/author.

4. Traditional descriptions utilize a "rational" textual division, a style obvious of a learned, literary mentality. This may be revealed not only in the separate parts — introduction, thematic chapters, conclusion/epilogue, body of text and notes, appendices etc — but also in the separation of the main text and the various "sub-texts," which are important but not enough to be placed there, instead footnotes or endnotes must be created for them. In such "notes," more personal and subjective statements may be found overwhelmingly. This also distinguishes between several voices of the author: more specifically the personal and the professional, the objective and the subjective, the general and the specific. Often issues concerning the research, its methods and fieldwork characteristics, belong to the footnotes or introduction and not in the "objective" text.

Of course, anthropologists are products of their time and their personal idiosyncretisms find their way into the texts they produce. Anthropologists write with as much complexity as they themselves are.

5. Authors often spend a great deal of time to prove why their study is special in that it takes into consideration the peoples' perspective. A result of the shift to the ethnomethodological and "emic" (insiders') perspective in anthropology of the 1960s, there seems to be a need for this in anthropology. For without such understanding of the insiders' mentality, language and cognition, one could not "really" produce anthropologically accepted texts. In fact, modernist anthropology tries hard to argue that it really presents the people's mentality; the words and concepts are the people's not the authors'; and through the voice of the author there are the "people themselves" who speak. Like a reversal of the classic Greek tragedy: the mask and the face are inverted. The anthropologist is the wearer of the mask(s) and behind from which the true voices of the people may be heard.

Maps, figures and photographs bring a sense of authentication for this technique of being there. Local documentation, whether in statements or archival, also serves the purpose of such proof. This point leads us to the technique of using the people's terminology and vocabulary extensively.

6. Most scholarly work is marred by some sort of local and/or professional jargon. This, while not always accepted, plays an important role in ranking scholars: professionals, amateurs, research institutions vs. university departments, folklore vs. ethnography, anthropology vs. ethnology etc. Professional jargon also may fluctuate with trends: hardly anyone would be willing to follow the writing style of E.E. Evans-Pritchard or B. Malinowski today (even though most of that now classic scholarship is unmatched). Such jargon also serves to authenticate a "scientific" work in opposition to popularizing an amateur publication; or, moreover, it situates ethnographies as scholarship when compared with diaries, personal letters or travelogues. This is further exaggerated when the author utilizes profusely local native terminology to make arguments. There are no clear and hard-line rules about this: one may find extensive vocabularies and glossaries listed at the back of books describing native words and concepts. In other instances, they are embedded in the texts as is the case with Bourdieu (1977). Such practice of elevating the indigeneous language into the author's language also provides the reader with a reassuring tactic of "I-was-there-and-this-is-how-I-can-prove-it." This is also the case, of course, with travellers' documents; the anthropologist-ethnographer, however, may claim that "Yes, but I have learned the language and know the culture more intimately." While this may, indeed, be the case such heralding may indicate not what the author intended, i.e. that this book is a "scholarly" study, but rather signify that the writer/researcher is trying to prove scholarlyness beyond the shadow of a doubt and the serious intent just may be too much for the uninitiated.

More serious, however, is the fact that the usage of native terms and texts may mask the inability of modernist anthropology to grasp the full consequence of their research and its product: another text, the monograph-monologue. For the original research involves face-to-face communication, in fact a series of "dialogues" (Crapanzano 1992:195). There is a change, a shift in tone and voice, when these dialogues disappear and the author only corrects it by utilizing "sound-bites" from the field encounters. While this may be scholarly, it is nevertheless a questionable practice.



7. The style of modernist writing has a tendency to oscillate between generalizations and specificities. Some observed phenomena become too small to make a difference in the eyes of the researcher; others receive center stage. Thus, monographs purporting sameness create the sense that certain objects and rituals may be "characteristic" to a certain community or a region, while others are not. This kind of "sorting" may leave out the whole range of possibilities of variation and their existing relationships to one another. The notion of sorting, or exclusion, is even more glaring when we realize that authors often select key groups, families, and individuals to illustrate more in depth the material at hand. Such idiosyncratic specificities, then, are utilized to make the argument more sound and "objective"; this, in turn, provides support for the theoretical argument and generalizations. The idea that one could rely on a "key informant" to gather data about "x" social group may sound reasonable at first, yet often this sole individual is the only base for the characterization about the group as a whole. There is a whole range of book-length studies concerning a single individual and, ironically, no scholar is willing to take up the issue of having written an "individual's monograph" (itself a notion which may sound ridiculous to many).

Yet, the notion of "sorting," or what is "typical" of a culture and/or an individual and what may be an aberration is crucial in anthropological writing. Often anthropologists declare "their" community being a "typical" village, while at other times they argue for the opposite. In a few chapters into the text, typicalities may become generalized features and/or vice versa. An example may suffice here. In Hann's study on farmers' collectives in socialist Hungary of the 1970s we are informed that the village, **Tázlár**, which gave the book's title, is not a "model" community of what socialism achieved and is not "typical" of what happened in Hungary after the socialist collectivization of agriculture (1980:ix, 2). Yet, in the concluding section of the book, when Hungary is counterposed with that of Poland, the farming collective of **Tázlár** "...may be more typical of the countries which have undergone mass collectivisation" (Hann 1980:169). This, of course, refers to countries like Hungary. Thus understood, a village, with all its uniqueness and individuality, which is not considered "typical" by the author may, by the end, represent a characteristic "type" of community. And so may ethnographies create their own sense of dialogue and discourse with themselves and the ur-texts they re-write. At the same time, ethnographies contain their own sense of truth as well as the negation for that truth.

8. It is interesting to note how small attention is devoted to the nature of research contexts, the actual fieldwork practice, the mechanism of data gathering, and interviewing by authors in traditional works. At the most, few pages serve to clarify this. We do know that most written work is preceded by years of preparation, reading and analyzing background material, consulting with colleagues who "know" or "who have been there," obtaining various funding, conducting fieldwork and engaging in a post-fieldwork analysis and write-up of data. These steps, and the enormous intellectual energies expelled (not to mention the frustrations, repetitions and simply giving up by many) are never elaborated in detail. For example, the personal side of why certain field locations are selected instead of others; why certain informants and not others are asked to contribute; and why the problems are hidden in coded languages and rarely discussed in detail.

In Edmund Leach's classic study on Burmese Kachins, we find the following statement: "Most of the ethnographic facts to which I refer have been previously recorded in print. Any originality is not therefore to be found in the facts with which I deal, but in the interpretation of the facts" (1970:1). In terms of field work and research we are left in the dark; only some pages later we are offered off-hand remarks such as "In 1940 Hpaland was a community of 130 households" (1970:67), a reference indicating the possible date of Leach's research stay in Burma. Only those who are familiar with Edmund Leach's scholarship, then, may know that in fact the "ethnographic research" he refers to above was conducted in 1939-1945 in Burma, a period during which Leach was an army officer in the Burmese army involved, among other things "in raising a force of Kachin irregulars" (1970:311). After the war the study was written up as a Ph.D. dissertation in 1946 at the University of London. Since I did not have a chance to read that Ph.D. dissertation, I can only assume that research methods, data gathering techniques, surveys and interviews are described there in detail for in **Political Systems of Highland Burma** we are only provided with some remarks about lost field notes, photographs and manuscripts during the war (1970:312).

The French anthropologist Pierre Bourdieu's text (1977) is equally vague and nonchalant: in Note 54 he shares with us some background information about his research: "The research leading up to this study was carried with other projects between 1960 and 1970" (1977:204). He also provides information on the actual locale of his stay in Kabylia as well as collecting genealogies, data he later abandoned in pursuit of other interests.

Eugene Hammel's pioneering work on Serbian godparenthood, to take another example, provides a short glimpse into the data-gathering method: "The analysis is based on the ethnographic literature, on general conversations with Yugoslav ethnographers, and on field work conducted in 1963 and 1965-1966" (1968:5). Then a short list and a map aid the reader about the villages and their geographical location throughout Serbia, Macedonia and Montenegro (Hammel 1968:6-7). Yet, the questions why these villages, who were the informants and why were they selected, based on what criteria, how were interviews conducted, and others are left unanswered by the author. Such a marginal treatment certainly makes anthropological research suspect of lack of rigorous standards and data gathering techniques, a fact which may have prompted Edmund Leach to call anthropology "a monstrous universal form of enquiry" (1982:13).

9. One specific — a certain historical remnant in ethnography — aspect of modernist writing is the selling of the work through an endorsement of a colleague. Edited volumes generally begin with an endorsement justifying the production of the text. An idea of collectivity, such works tend to promote togetherness and comraderie. Here too, just like with book reviews, the presence of scholars asked to contribute is also a question of relationship of to power and closeness to power. Editors generally do not ask a scholar whose views are disregarded by them, or whose views are attacked vehemently and considered marginal.

A heritage of Western literary convention, established or senior scholars are often asked to comment on the work before it is disseminated to the public. This pre-view

is a standard practice yet an interesting idea with complex relationship between authorship and control. It may also be a practice to make up for the "lost dialogues" between authors on the one hand, and authors and their informants on the other. Books reviewed in certain journals and by "in publications" may sell better than those that are not. But the book review literature is another matter that I shall not deal with here. Scholarly endorsement in the book itself, however, may be discussed as a piece of writing which is part of the book yet not an integral part of it. This is a voice within a voice but not of the same origin. An interesting idea — which has relationship with classic texts of dialogues between the master and the pupil — the mixing personal and professional identities resembles actors who are on the stage but are talking from behind the props and the curtain, they are on the stage but outside the "scene." Anthropologists controlling each other's voices and texts this way are may be doing more political selling than they are aware of at first.

A "foreword" or back-sheet recommendation by an established or senior colleague (often more than one), may help the sales of the book, and it also serves as a stamp of approval. The "discipline" speaks out this way; the book is measured and assessed by peers — mostly a blind or anonymous process — and advertised openly in or on the book. This practice paves the way for the monograph to carve its position in the discipline. A case in point is the foreword written by Raymond Firth to Edmund R. Leach's **Political Systems of Highland Burma** (1970). Here we are introduced to the necessity and quality of scholarship of Leach by Firth, a one-time teacher of Leach.

Monographs published in the series often receive high-marks from the series' editor(s). Eugene Hammel's monograph (1968) is introduced by David M. Schneider editor of "Anthropology of Modern Societies Series," a title which may have been influential in modelling later series (i.e. the Rose and Stoller "Contemporary Ethnography" series mentioned above). While we may ponder what the concept of "modern society" the editor and author had in mind — especially in light of Yugoslavia's post-World War II situation — we could also wonder how this book "bridges the gap between "primitive" and "modern" societies by applying the structural-functional techniques of analysis developed in the study of the former to a society that maintained characteristics strikingly reminiscent of them **in Europe** and until the 1940's" (Hammel 1968:VII).

10. Most of the traditional monographs are traditional because they are the product of an author who does not — despite the much debated concept of self-reflexivity — confront his/her sense of what Stanley Diamond called "alienation" (1974:402). Borrowed from marxism, Diamond works with the concept alienation and argues that as anthropologists, whether we know it or not, we are "alienated" three-times over: first in our own societies, second in the profession we have chosen, and, third, we are also estranged in relation to those we are studying. Such is indeed the colonial or the Enlightenment legacy of the science of the "study of man", or the study of cultures. I can only guess now why Diamond — whose anthropological career was far from being smooth — believed in the original alienation of humans in society but I will leave that to a more special treatment later on; however, I have several ideas why as anthropologists we are relegated to a marginalized, often described as "happy-

fun-loving-tribe-hopping" scholarship: for one the long-time hobby-horse of the anthropologist, the concept of culture, despite the enormous intellectual energies spent on it, turned out to be of no great utility. And, second, many of the original subject matters "invented" or capitalized upon by anthropology — such as ethnicity, kinship, human ecology, paleohistory, personality, gender, socialization, and others — were simply conquered by (sub)disciplines and, often, elevated to a separate study on its own terms. These disciplines (area studies, gender studies, cultural studies, ethnic studies, etc) tend to surpass anthropological studies and perform much better as related but separate field of inquiries.

The third form of alienation mentioned by Stanley Diamond is even more serious than the first two. Exploitation of groups and individuals by anthropologists in the field is not a topic raised at the American Anthropological Association meetings. Neither is the question: who benefits from our researches? Applied anthropology and politically committed and involved scholarship aside, most of us are only takers and not givers. While few anthropologists may be able to offer a Jeep to their informants (as Maurice Godelier has done with the Baruya people in New Guinea), most of us could only return small tokens such as the monographs we produce on them. While I am aware that this is sensitive topic requiring a more detailed discussion, it must be mentioned that many researchers feel identified with their subjects of study **as long as they benefit from it** (after all the communities and the "subjects" rarely if ever receive any royalties from books and films published about them, and rarely get "promoted" because of the monographs and books written); or, in other instances, many of us are involved with certain issues **as long as we are interested in that group or topic**. One also receives invitations to teach at certain departments, to give papers at conferences and offer seminars outside one's home university because one is involved with "hot" issues and fashionable topics.

Professionals often change their research topic, leave their original field work site for another "more challenging area," or take up other interests in topics quite different from their previous involvement. True as it may be: few of us think of working with one particular group or region or topic throughout one's productive life. Edmund Leach published on Burma and Ceylon; Chris Hann on Hungary, Poland and Turkey; Joel Halpern on Serbia, South East Asia and the Alaskan Inuits. Yet, few of us have a possibility to study two-three completely different cultures; and while some of us managed to do so, many would consider such idea as an aberration. Those who are able to shift their attention from their own lives to the various others' many times over must still confront the problem voiced by Diamond. As the critique of post-modern writing reveals (Chicago Multicultural Studies Group 1992; Fabian 1990; Mascia-Lees, Sharpe and Cohen 1989; Pool 1991; Ulin 1991), this issue is yet to be addressed by (post-modern) anthropologists.

Thus, our alienation, indeed, is a hefty and quite serious burden to deal with. I guess most of the post-modern turn in anthropology (and the related disciplines of history, sociology, ethnic/gender/cultural studies, literature, filmmaking etc) has come about because of the internal need to cope consciously with this alienation. And, moreover, if this alienation is present in our discipline, which I think it is, than it is even more manifest at every instance when there is a disguised return to the basics of

modernist anthropology, a "return to the paranoia of general knowledge" (Smith 1989:168).

### Conclusion

The debates concerning Otherness and representation has helped anthropology to emerge out of its insipid stagnation. Yet, despite all postmodernist claims, the agendas of the various protagonists are too diverse to form an argument with coherence and applicability, and, with statements often contradicting one another, postmodernist texts exist in vacuum that is undefined and "addressing political topics at a very general level" (Poster 1992:576). This provided food for thought for much criticism from the left and feminist scholarship. What I wish to stress is that all this rush to discover "new writing modes," "fresh approaches," and iconoclastic visual representations — of which few would be considered "new" even though they may seem somewhat unique or inventive at the time of their publication — brings to mind the question of how much more advanced we are in our quest of knowledge. Is it, as Edward Said argues, that at the close of modernism "Europe and the West, were being asked to take the Other seriously" (1989:223); or is it the coming of different times when anthropologists must realize that they have to take themselves more seriously. Are anthropologists (the modernist invention of the old-time ethnographers) today with the aid of poststructuralism and postmodernism, able to critically re-examine their functions as researcher, fieldworker, friend, family member, teacher, colleague, and member of society with all the possible frames of mind and identities which make up such a construct? Is it really anthropology, or just a trendy way of selling diaries, travelogues and monographs, under the aegis of a particular scholarship, which may still be produced by those whom Stanley Diamond once termed ironically the "anthropologist-entropologist" (1974:403)? Maybe this is what is at the heart of most of our controversies, reemerging periodically, and keeping us at each others' throats. Maybe the constant search for reinventing new styles and arguments is only an illusion of a discipline which does not know (or does not want to know) that it exist? Maybe writing is one of the ways to arouse excitement in our regular daily activities **most of which are not conducted in the field but spent remembering being there**. It may be appropriate to close with a quote of Jean-Jacques Rousseau, perhaps more pertinent today than ever before, who in his **First and Second Discourses** (1964), wrote:

For the three hundred or four hundred years since the inhabitants of Europe have inundated the other parts of the world, and continously published new collections of voyages and reports, I am convinced that we know no other men except the Europeans...Under the pompous name of the study of man, everyone does hardly anything except the study the men of his country (1964:114).

In the age of symians, cyborgs and inhumans — as well as the AIDS pandemic, population explosion, and continual political upheavals — when global ethnoscaples pervade our lives have we managed to really study the various meanings of "men" in our countries? In short, are we much better off since we re-invented anthropology?

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#### *Povzetek*

#### **Pisati etnografijo in pisati samega sebe**

V tem članku želi avtor kritično pretresti načine, kako so se antropologi sporazumeli o pisanju antropologije. Posebej dokazuje, da so "interpretativni" in "postmodernistični" preobrat - "kriza reprezentacije v humanističnih znanostih", da uporabimo ta jezik, sprožili živahne debate in pripomogli k diskusiji o nadaljnjih teoretičnih ciljih, ki se niso obravnavali do sredine 80. let (subjektivnost, stili pisanja, glasovi itd.) Vendar pa se iz takih diskusij izpuščajo važna vprašanja, zakaj občutijo antropologi ali etnografi iz različnih kulturnih okolij potrebo po drugačni "reprezentaciji" in zakaj so raziskovalci odtujeni. Hkrati lahko etnografija (ali njen širši ekvivalent, antropologija), če hoče ostati zvesta deklariranim ciljem - kritičnemu pristopu k človekovemu napredku in raznovrstnosti - brez veliko brskanja po duši in bičanja same sebe - nadaljuje z ohranjanjem tistega, kar je specifično za področje samo: ločitev lastnih proizvodov (vizualnih in tekstualnih) od drugih disciplin, s katerimi pa mora vendarle ostati v tesnem in prijateljskem stiku.

Avtor se najprej pomudi ob razlikah med "domorodskimi" etnografi in amerškimi antropologi, med etnografijo in etnologijo, med Volkkunde in Völkerkunde. Vendar se mu zde te razlike manjše, če gledamo tako na ameriške antropologe kot na evropske etnografe kot na študente kulture, hkrati nosilce in proizvajalce kulture, "pisce" kulture. Ne glede na zgodovinske razlike sta si evropska in ameriška učenost podobni v tem, kar E. Said označuje kot zanimanje za drugačno ali tuje. Tudi etimološko se etnografija in antropologija ne ujemata, vendar tako ameriški kot evropski antropologi prakticirajo isto: raziskovanje in pisanje ali znanstvene razprave o kulturah in ljudstvih. Rezultat njihovega dela je literarnost ali tekstualnost - opis

kulture, ki je drugačna od lastne; če pa gre za lastno, je ta opisana s konceptom in vrednotami drugačnosti in tujosti. Pisca tega članka pa moti, če se vsiljuje tekstualnost (oz. vizualnost) namesto kulture, ki naj bi bila opisana, če je v središču pozornosti avtor s svojo duhovitostjo, argumenti in žargonom.

Avtor članka se nato podrobno loti modernističnih etnografij (modernističnih v postmodernističnem pomenu). Zanje je najprej značilen funkcionalističen način stilistične predstavitve. Etnografska in "kulturološka" besedila trpajo naša življenja v akademске in popularne medije. Tudi zunaj etnografije in antropologije avtorji pišejo in ustvarjajo na ta način vse od zgodnjih 80. let, hkrati pa znotraj stroke tožijo o "smrti etnografije" (Clough 1992). Gre le za smrt določenega tipa antropologije; morda skuša postmodernizem iznajti "radikalno anti-etnologijo, anti-univerzalizem, antidiferencializem" (Baudrillard 1993: 147). Čeprav so že prej obstajala klasična antropološka dela take vrste, je bil deležen pojem "pisanja" ali "tekstualnosti" osrednje pozornosti z objavo G. Marcusa in M. Fischerja, *Anthropology as Cultural Critique* (1986), J. Clifforda in G. Marcusa, *Culture: The Poetics and Politics of Ethnography* (1986) in S. Tylerja, *The Unspeakable* (1987). Že prej je C. Geertz trdil, da je etnografsko opazovanje tudi proizvod kulture, ki se dokončno oblikuje v besedilu, torej se sama kultura utelesi kot besedilo; odtod pojem "kultura kot tekst".

Eno najmočnejših razprav o postmodernistični etnografiji sta napisala Marcus in Cushman (1982:25-69). Njune večkrat upravičene kritike, večinoma usmerjene proti predstavam 18. stol. o racionalnosti in objektivnosti, dopolnjuje avtor s svojim pregledom modernističnih etnografij. Odkriva tiste značilne poteze, ki prevladujejo v pisateljskih stilih različnih avtorjev:

1. Opisi se zmeraj ujemajo s prevladujočimi znanstvenimi modeli - analize prilagajajo podatke, da ustrezajo deklariranemu cilju. Etnografije večkrat odkrivajo več o svojih literarnih nasledkih kot o družbi, ki jo nameravajo predstaviti.

2. Zaimek "jaz", ki predstavlja osebni, individualni stil, je v etnografiji večkrat zavestno pregan in zamenjan s 3. osebo ednine ali celo s 3. osebo množine. Veliko etnografov čuti, da se s tem izognejo "subjektivnosti" in "popolni osebni vpletenosti".

3. V funkcionalističnem izročilu so tudi kraj, čas in informatorji manipulirani v skladu s cilji študije. Večkrat so sploh izpuščeni, uporabljajo se psevdonimi, ki naj "zaščitijo identiteto"; spet drugje pa so navedeni popolni podatki. Anonimnost je včasih potrebna, prinaša pa s seboj več protislovij, med njimi tudi vprašanje raziskovalčevega omalovaževanja informatorjev.

4. Tradicionalni opisi uporabljajo "racionalno" razdelitev besedila na uvod, tematska poglavja, sklep, opombe, dodatke, pa na glavno besedilo in različne podtekste, kjer najdemo bolj osebna stališča. Tako se razlikujejo različni "glasovi" avtorja: osebni in profesionalni, objektivni in subjektivni itd.

5. Avtorji pogosto na dolgo in široko dokazujejo, da njihova študija upošteva perspektivo (preučevanih) ljudi. To je rezultat premika v 60. letih; besede in koncepti niso avtorjevi, skozi njegov glas govorijo "ljudje sami".

6. Večina znanstvenih del je popačenih z lokalnim in/ali poklicnim žargonom. To igra pomembno vlogo v razvrščanju avtorjev na profesionalce in amaterje, folkloriste in etnografe, antropologe in etnologue itd. Dvig jezika domačinov v jezik avtorja naj bi bralcu dokazalo avtentičnost raziskave; vendar utegne tudi prikrivati nesposobnost modernistične antropologije, da bi namesto dialoga z informatorji, ki poteka med raziskavo, ponudila svoj proizvod, monografijo - monolog.

7. Način modernističnega pisanja niha med posploševanji in posebnostmi. Nekateri opazovani



pojavi postanejo premajhni, da bi bili pomembni v raziskovalčevih očeh, drugi zavzamejo osrednji položaj; tako monografije, ki naj bi vsebovale izenačenost, ustvarjajo vtis, da so nekateri objekti ali obredi značilni za neko skupnost ali področje, drugi pa ne. Sortiranje ali izključevanje je še večje, ker avtorji često izberejo za ilustracijo gradiva ključne skupine, družine in posameznike, kar vodi k teoretiziranju in posploševanju. Obstajajo celo študije o posameznikih.

8. Zanimivo je, kako malo pozornosti se posveča naravi raziskovalnega konteksta, dejanskemu terenskemu delu, mehanizmu zbiranja podatkov in intervjuvanju. Večinoma služi osvetlitvi tega nekaj strani, čeprav vemo, da so pred pisanjem leta priprav, branja in analiziranja poprejšnjega gradiva, posvetovanj s kolegi, terenskega dela in analize po terenskemu delu. Te stopnje in ogromne intelektualne energije niso nikoli podrobno obdelane. Tako npr. ni obdelana osebna plat izbire: zakaj ta lokacija, ta informator in ne drug.

9. Poseben vidik modernističnega pisanja je promocija dela s priporočilom kolega na začetku samega dela. Tu gre za idejo skupnosti in tovarštva, pa tudi - prav tako kot pri knjižnih ocenah - za vprašanje razmerja in bližine moči. Tudi naprošeni komentar uveljavljenega znanstvenika pred samim razpečevanjem knjige je kompleksno orodje medsebojnega nadzora.

10. Večina tradicionalnih monografij je tradicionalnih, ker so proizvod avtorja, ki se - kljub toliko omenjanemu konceptu avtorefleksivnosti - ne sooča z občutkom tistega, kar je S. Diamond imenoval "alienacija" (1974:402). Diamond si je izposodil koncept alienacije od marksizma. Trdi, da so antropologi, pa naj se tega zavedajo ali ne, "odtujeni" trikrat: prvič v svojih lastnih družbah, drugič v izbranem poklicu, tretjič pa tudi v razmerju do tistih, ki jih preučujejo. Avtorju članka se zdi najresnejša tretja odtujitev: na zborovanjih ameriških antropologov ni slišati vprašanj o izkoriščanju skupin in posameznikov na terenu, niti vprašanja, kdo ima koristi od antropoloških raziskav. Večina antropologov so samo jemalci in ne dajalci. Mnogo raziskovalcev se identificira s subjekti svojih preučevanj samo, dokler imajo od tega korist, mnogo se jih ukvarja z nekim vprašanjem samo, dokler jih tema zanima.

Avtor meni, da je postmodernistični preobrat v antropologiji (in sorodnih disciplinah) nastopil v precejšnji meri zaradi notranje potrebe, spoprijeti se s to odtujitvijo. In če je ta odtujitev že navzoča v antropologiji, je le-ta še bolj očitna, kjerkoli gre za zakrinkano vrnitev k temeljem modernistične antropologije, "vrnitev k paranoji vseobčega znanja" (Smith 1989:168).

V sklepu članka ugotavlja avtor, da so debate o drugačnosti in reprezentaciji pomagale antropologiji iz njene plehke stagnacije. Kljub vsem postmodernističnim zahtevam in iskanju "novih načinov pisanja" in "svežih pristopov" pa oživlja vprašanje, koliko je stroka napredovala v iskanju znanja. Gre za to, da se ob koncu modernizma, kot dokazuje E. Said "od Evrope in Zahoda zahteva, da jemlje drugega resno" (1989:223). Ali pa gre morda za prihod drugačnih časov, ko morajo antropologi spoznati, da morajo jemati resneje tudi sebe same.

Ali je v dobi bolnikov, ki žive le, ker so priključeni na medicinske aparature, nečlovečnosti, kot tudi pandemije aidsa, populacijske eksplozije in nenehnih političnih pretresov, ko globalni etnični prebegi prodirajo v naša življenja, stroka uspela res proučevati različne primere "ljudi" v naših deželah? Na kratko, ali smo dosti na boljšem, odkar smo znova izumili antropologijo?