

Ines Prica, Tea Škokić (ur), *Horor, porno, ennui; kulturne prakse postsocijalizma*, Biblioteka Nova etnografija, Zagreb 2011, ISBN 978-953-6020-68-3

“Changes as an inevitable period of transition, which itself is unclear if it is an acute or chronic condition in this region, almost simultaneously produce completely opposite feelings. Fear of the new, excitement for the possibilities that changes produce, and finally, boredom as an anticlimax, coming with the knowledge that accepting important values and practices does not necessarily bring feelings of content.”

This is a segment of the collection of scientific papers “Horror, porno, ennui; The Cultural Practices of Postsocialism”, published by the Institute of Ethnology and Folklore in Zagreb, Croatia, edited by Ines Prica and Tea Škokić. The anthology constitutes of several important choices of scientific papers, and its study subject consists of ways to solve postsocialist, transition (in-between) difficulties in everyday life. The anthropological, ethnographic and cultural criticisms give space for conceptualization of the so-called “restless anthropology” which develops a troubling cultural, social, political and economic reality. This collection of scientific papers, “Horror, Porno, Ennui; Cultural Practices of Postsocialism” does not only present a usual establishment on social status – as a condition of trouble, it itself goes against the peaceful role of noting in the attempt to understand the world in which we work, the community in which we live.

In the collection, one of the scientific papers is the study by Orlando Obad who, through interviews with Croatian students, does research on the students’ perceptions concerning the “West”. According to Obad, the students do not have “experience” with life during communism, the students do not feel any symbolic load from that time, so with little interest on the politics and the meaning of continuous ambiguous social coding of the messages, Obad’s informants in his article “Balkan Lights” may not have understanding on the symbolic geography as a silent foundation of the treaty by the political elites on the approach towards the unquestionably political goal of the state. However, they do feel that from a certain perspective, EU membership is a question of determination, and from another – something that must represent a choice among others.

Dr. Ljupčo S. Risteski, in his article “Himalayan yet ours” reveals how statements connected to the Macedonian nation and the Himalayan group Hunza shows a certain reticence of Macedonian post socialist society caught in the “circular” determination of its own identity.

Jasmina Husanović and Damir Arsenijević recognize a “new place” for the “Bosnian-Herzegovian” resistance against the dominant normalization of the discourses.

Bilijana Žikić’s text, as part of this collection, is based on the analysis of magazines in Slovenia, Croatia and Serbia which can critically promote emancipatory and democratic ideas, in the meantime publishing pornographic photographs of women, by taking the visual identity of tabloids. Pornographic images of the female body in magazines are often justified as an attack on patriarchy, in other words are quasi-emancipatorian as a presentation of sexual women, which during the time of socialism was not an ac-

completable feat. The whole absurdity of objectification, dehumanization, fragmentation of the body is revealed only when a man takes on the pornographic position.

Ildico Erdei talks about the consequences of the unusual cultural practice in the placing of monuments of pop heroes in small villages in Banat, Serbia. The consequences of the placing of pop hero monuments, Erdei takes not as the result of the cultural monument itself, but as the anticipation of the future of the community. So, one of the monuments, in this case the monument of Rocky Balboa, has smaller important influence as a monument rather than as a “symbol”, which has potential to produce meaning in the community. The monument of Rocky attracted large media attention, and with that, it stimulated the socio-economic development of the community. In this sense, all statues that have been placed function as empty symbols that are constantly filled with new, contemporary meanings in accordance to the momentary needs for amortization of the damage and maximization of profit.

Tomislav Oroz analyzes the historical personality of Matija Gubec, presented as a subject of various interpretations in various ideological systems. Thus, his person in socialism is presented as an honest villager, a revolutionary, a fighter for justice, while in the 1990s he is presented in the context of the fight against magnates and the tycoonization of Croatia.

Renata Jambrešić Kirin does a comparative analysis of the film narrations of war crimes in Serbian film “Ordinary people” by V. Perišić and the Croatian “Black people” by G. Dević and Z. Jurić. These anti-war films take on a postmodernist ironic distance towards the position of the observer, while Suzana Marjanić talks about the guerrilla activism and highlights several direct artistic interventions in the reality.

In several words, this book presents a collection of scientific papers by authors such as Ines Prica, Orlando Obad, Ljupčo Risteski, T. Škokić, Ildico Erdei, Oroz, B. Žikić... all of who have a large and important role as scientists and professors in the former Yugoslav republics. Their papers are excellently put together in a compact edition, and its goal is to bring light to the following problems through anthropological, ethnological and sociological perspectives:

The epistemological conditions on self-interpretation and self-presentation in the post-Yugoslav culture of transition; understanding of post-Yugoslav societies in the newest social and humanistic theories; the status of the “Balkan” discourse in the anthropology of post socialism; cultural heritage and social memory of socialism – from reinterpretation to nostalgia; phenomena and everyday habits, public and popular culture in post-socialism, the mosaic of cultural identities in transition which confront the challenge of European integration and globalization; decoration of bodies – the desires and risks in a postsocialist culture; and many other anthropological, ethnological and sociological problems.

Gjoko Atanasov