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Dječji folklor između prežitka i prepreke

Polazeći od uloge koju je dječji folklor imao pri inauguraciji riječi folklor, autorica se zadržava na interpretacijama dječjih igara u drugoj polovici 19. stoljeća. Nakon osvrta na višestruka ishodišta folklorističkog interesa za djecu u 1970-im i 1980-im godinama, bavi se tragovima evolucijskih teorija kulture devetnaestog stoljeća u radovima iz toga razdoblja.

Ključne riječi: dječji folklor, folkloristika, antropologija, evolucijske teorije kulture

William Thoms obratio se 1846. čitateljima časopisa *The Athenaeum* s prijedlogom da ubuduće umjesto pojmovna pučka književnost i pučke starine upotrebljavaju "dobru saksonsku složenicu Folk-Lore" (1965 [1846]: 4-5). Pritom ih je pozvao da zapisujući "navike, običaje, obrede, praznovjerja, balade, poslovice i dr. iz starih vremena" unaprijede englesko proučavanje starina, a možda i "buduća izdanja Grimmove Mitologije" (*isto*: 5). O dobro znanom Thomsovu pismu, kojim je u uporabu uvedena riječ folklor, ovom prigodom možda i ne bi trebalo pisati da pri inauguraciji folkloru nisu bila prisutna i djeca. Thoms je, podsjećam, blagotvoran komparativistički učinak svoje terminološke preinake ilustrirao usporedivši igru jorkširske djece s odlomkom iz *Deutsche Mythologie* Jacoba Grimma. Drugim riječima, vjerovanje da kukavica pjeva tek kad se dosita najede trešanja povezo je s igrom u kojoj djeca plešu uokrug trešnjina stabla, ponavljajući stihove: "Kukavice, trešnjino drvo, siđi dolje i reci mi, koliko ću još godina živjeti". Budući da zatim svako dijete zatrese stablo i prema broju opalih trešanja iščita odgovor na otpjevano pitanje, autor riječi folklor zaključio je da ova igra nudi uvjerljivo tumačenje veze između kukavice, trešanja i njihove proročke moći. Time je, kao i toliki drugi, praksu skupine djece preobrazio u pričljiva kazivača jedne, kako je vjerovao, pradaвне kulture na izdisaju. Važno je, međutim, istaknuti da Thoms, za razliku od mnogih poslije njega, pri usporedbi vjerovanja i igre nije pridavao posebnu pozornost činjenici da je riječ o igri koju igraju djeca. Za njega je praksa jorkširske djece bila samo jedan primjer iz "gomile minornih činjenica, od kojih se mnoge, razmatraju li se zasebno, doimaju

tričavo i beznačajno, ali koje promotrene u odnosu na sustav [...] poprimaju vrijednost o kojoj onaj koji ih je prvi zapisao nije ni sanjao da je imaju" (*isto*: 5).

Tek nekoliko desetljeća nakon Thomsova znamenita pisma dječje će igre proučavateljima folklor postati nezamjenjiv analitički materijal upravo zbog svojega atributa. Analiza dječjih praksi ili, Thomsovim pojmovnikom, dječjega folklor kao osobito pouzdanoga glasnogovornika prošlosti svoju je znanstvenu elaboraciju i afirmaciju dosegla tijekom druge polovice 19. stoljeća u radovima nekolicine britanskih folklorista i antropologa, među kojima je danas vjerojatno najpoznatiji Edward B. Tylor. Polazeći od pretpostavke da je "svaka civilizacijska faza izrasla ili se razvila iz faze koja joj je prethodila" (1960 [1881]: 16), Tylor je - kako to sažima Elvin Hatch - smatrao da su u svim društvima "neki drevni obrasci mišljenja i ponašanja preživjeli uvjete u kojima su nastali, te služe 'kao dokazi i primjeri' jednoga ranijega razvojnog stupnja. Primjerice, lukovi, strijele i pračke u modernim su društvima samo igračke, ali i svjedoci djelatnosti kojima su se Europljani nekada bavili sa smrtnom ozbiljnošću" (1979: 40). Prvi je oksfordski profesor antropologije držao, dakle, da "dječje igre, narodne izreke i apsurdni običaji mogu biti praktično nevažni, ali u filozofskom smislu nisu potpuno beznačajni, budući da mnogo govore o najznačajnijim fazama rane kulture" (prema Moore, 2002 [1996]: 30).

Za razliku od učenjaka koji su tijekom 17. i 18. stoljeća u potrazi za prvotnom ljudskom prirodom proučavali, a ponekad i sami stvarali tzv. divlju djecu (usp. Jahoda, 2002: 15-17), Tylor je već i londonske školarce smatrao zanimljivim analitičkim materijalom (Bernard, 2000: 39). Oni su se u središtu njegove pozornosti zatekli, između ostaloga, i uz potporu tzv. fenomena "zaustavljenoga razvoja" (usp. *isto*, 2002: 18) koji se kao općepoznata činjenica u uglednim znanstvenim raspravama zadržao sve do prvih desetljeća 20. stoljeća¹. Riječ je o "činjenici" na koju se Tylor poziva kada piše da djeca drugih rasa do svoje otprilike dvanaeste godine uče jednako dobro kao i bjelačka, ali da zatim zaostaju (prema Hač, 1979 [1973]: 46). Priklanjajući se gledištu da su "primitivni ljudi" nalik djeci i time bliži ranijim obrascima čovjekova mišljenja i ponašanja, on je držao da dječje pjesme, igre i igračke "preslikavaju, u onome što je ujedno i zabava i poduka male djece, rane faze povijesti djetinjastih plemena čovječanstva" (Tylor prema Lévy Zumwalt, 1995: 25)².

¹ Tako, primjerice, Lucien Lévy-Bruhl u *Primitivnom mentalitetu bez sustezanja* piše kako je "poznato da urođenička djeca, gdje god je misionarima pošlo za rukom da održe škole, uče isto tako brzo i isto tako dobro kao i naša, barem do nekog doba, kad se njihov razvitak uspori, a zatim zaustavi" (1954 [1922]: 11).

² Između cijeloga niza proučavatelja kulture koji su kao i Tylor pisali o "djetinjastim plemenima čovječanstva" (usp., npr., Hardman, 2001 [1973]: 595-508; Lévy Zumwalt, 1995: 24-27) u ovoj bilješci izdvojila bih Andrewa Langa i to ne zato jer je on analizirao prakse djece, nego stoga što je svojim iznimno popularnim zbirkama bajki na engleskom jeziku obilježio čitateljske prakse mnogih naraštaja. Gledište da su bajke prikladna literatura za djecu Lang je u predgovorima svojih zbirki promicao tvrdeći da su "djeca kojima su i za koje su [bajke - M. H.] ispričane predstavnici čovjekova ranog doba" (prema Rose, 1985: 56), odnosno, da

Stoga je, primjerice, dječju igru s upaljenom šibicom koja ide od jednog do drugog dječaka sve dok se ne ugasi, tumačio kao "jedan surov običaj manihejaca" da dijete kruži iz ruke u ruku, pri čemu prima ubode nožem sve dok ne umre (Tylor prema Kokjara, 1985 [1971]).

Među autorima koji su slijedili Tylorov pristup dječjim igrama za povijest proučavanja dječjeg folkloru osobito je važna Alice B. Gomme i njezina dvosveščana zbirka *The Traditional Games of England, Scotland and Ireland* (usp., npr., Grider, 1980: 163; Grider, 1995: 13). Zapise više od dvije stotine igara Gomme je popratila iscrpnim komentarima u kojima ih je, između ostaloga, analizirala i kao ostatke negdašnjih praksi, odnosno, prežitke. Polazeći od pretpostavke da su dječje igre "neki od najstarijih povijesnih izvora naše vrste" (prema Lévy Zumwalt, 195: 27), Gomme je u prethodnom odlomku spomenutu igru sa šibicom dovela pak u vezu s običajem "da se klanovima pošalje, kao vatreni znak, vatreni križ koji su svi članovi klana brižljivo čuvali da se ne bi ugasio baš u njihovu selu ili njihovoj kući" (prema Kokjara, 1985 [1971]: 214)³.

Pregledi povijesti proučavanja dječjeg folkloru ističu da je Dorothy Howard 1938. svojom disertacijom o pjesmama suvremene američke djece najavila metodološki i interpretacijski radikalni zaokret, kojeg su 1950-ih popularizirali radovi Ione i Petera Opie (Grider, 1995: 14; Sutton-Smith, 1995: 293-295), napose njihova knjiga *Lore and the Language of Schoolchildren* (1982 [1959]). Riječ je o naslovu koji je do danas - ne samo u matičnoj disciplini - zadržao status jedne od najpoznatijih studija o dječjem folkloru (usp., npr., Jenks, 1999 [1996]: 13; Mitchell, Reid-Walsh, 2002: 118). Nasuprot Gomme koja je igre opisivala na temelju sjećanja starijih kazivača (Grider, 1980: 164), Opie su posredstvom nastavnika iz škola diljem Engleske, Škotske i Walesa te jedne škole u Dublinu surađivali s oko 5000 djece. U svojim studijama oni su, nadalje, ustrajali na deskripciji i sistematizaciji suvremenih dječjih igara, vjerovanja i običaja, potisnuvši pritom komparativnu i historijsku rekonstrukciju igara u bilješke i grafički posebno označene odlomke. Usredotočenost na suvremeni dječji folklor i njegova dokumentacija na temelju iskaza same djece samo su neke od zajedničkih značajki studije bračnoga para Opie i radova koji su objavljeni u desetljećima nakon nje.

Globalni zamah proučavanja dječjeg folkloru (usp., npr., Dovženok, 1981; Virtanen, 1978; Simonides, 1976; Sutton-Smith, 1981; Rajković, 1978; Stanonik, 1984 i dr.) tijekom 1970-ih i 1980-ih imao je, s druge strane, barem još jedno ishodište. Sve veći

su "bajke najstarije priče na svijetu koje, budući da su ih za svoju zabavu izmislili ljudi koji su i sami bili djetinjasti, još uvijek zabavljaju djecu" (Lang, 1892).

³ Igru sa šibicom o kojoj su pisali Tylor i Gomme, spominje i Jelica Belović-Bernadzikowska u svojoj zbirci *110 igara za mladež* objavljenoj najvjerojatnije 1894. Zbirka Belović-Bernadzikowske upućena je ponajprije djeci i njihovim odgajateljima, pa je u njoj opis igre sa šibicom umjesto rekonstrukcijom izvorišta, popraćen komentarom da je to "vrlo šaljiva i zabavna igra. No valja paziti da ne bude vatre!" (1991 [1894]: 32).

interes profesionalnih folklorista i etnologa za prakse djece razumljiv je, naime, i u kontekstu tadašnjeg prevrednovanja zasada i zadataka njihovih disciplina (usp., npr., Bauzinger, 2002 [1971]; Ben-Amos, 1971; Dundes, 1980 [1964]). Kako to ističu osvrtni na tekst Zorice Rajković (1978) o folkloru zagrebačke djece, proučavanje praksi (urbane) djece bilo je sastavni dio tadašnjeg širenja struke na "suvremenu građu ili građu koja se dotad nije smatrala folklorom ili etnološkom" (Rihtman-Auguštin, Turčin, Pavlović, 1979: 179; usp. Povrzanović, 1989: 165; Rihtman-Auguštin, Muraj, 1998: 108). Slično tomu, Lauri Honko je sredinom 1970-ih (doduše s drugim vrijednosnim predznakom) upravo dubinske studije o dječjem folkloru označio kao simptomatične za nova nagnuća u folkloristici (prema Abrahams, 1992: 32). Bibliografije radova o dječjem folkloru (Grider, 1980b; Johnson, McMahon, 1995)⁴ nakon 1960-ih bilježe sve veći broj zbirki, studija, zbornika i disertacija iz tog područja, čime kao da podupiru Honkovu primjedbu⁵.

Višestruka ishodišta folklorističkog interesa za djecu tijekom središnjih desetljeća druge polovice 20. stoljeća razaznaju se i pri pogledu na poseban broj časopisa *Western Folklore*. Već i sam čin što je ugledni folkloristički časopis kao što je *Western Folklore* 1980. cijeli broj posvetio dječjem folkloru govori u prilog tezi da je ta tema i na razini matične discipline bila prepoznata kao aktualna. Pristup većine ondje okupljenih tekstova svjedoči pak i o njihovoj analitičkoj aktualnosti. Naime, etnografske studije Elizabeth Tucker (1980), Roberte Krell (1980) i Jeanne Soileau (1980) zaokupljene su, doduše, "tekstovima", ali pritom nisu - poslužiti ću se riječima

⁴ Dopunu Griderine bibliografije starijim naslovima na engleskom jeziku, kao i studijama o dječjem folkloru u Australiji, Norveškoj, Danskoj, Indiji i dr. vidi u Halpert 1982. Brojem naslova znatno skromniji, ali jezično "šarolikiji" pregled literature o dječjem folkloru vidi u Messerli, 1993.

⁵ Uvid u popise radova, dakako, ne može ponuditi odgovor na pitanje koliko su često tadašnje studije o dječjem folkloru bile potaknute previranjima u matičnoj disciplini, a koliko su s njima bile paralelne; koliko su same prelazile granice ili su širenjem granica one tek bile obuhvaćene. O onom što bi se moglo nazvati "istodobnošću raznodobnog" u proučavanju dječjeg folklor, vjerujem, zorno svjedoče izlaganja s 27. kongresa Saveza udruženja folklorista Jugoslavije održanog 1980.

Gotovo trećina izlaganja u sekciji pod nazivom "Novogodišnji običaji" bila je posvećena djetinjstvu, djeci i/ili njihovim praksama. Raspon pristupa tim temama kretao se od rekonstrukcije ostatka kulta predaka u božićnim običajima koji su povezani s djecom (Matić, 1980) do analize Djeda Mrza kao pedagoškog, socijalizacijskog, društveno-akcijskog i potrošačkog medija (Rihtman-Auguštin, 1980). U sekciji o "graditeljima i nositeljima narodnog stvaralaštva" izloženo je pak pet radova o dječjem folkloru. Jedan od njih sasvim uopćeno, a ne na same predmete i tekstove usredotočeno opisuje igračke i igre pastira u srednjoj Podravini (Kovačić, 1980). Drugi je rad mikrostudija folklornih motiva u vicevima suvremene, uglavnom zagrebačke djece (Lozica, 1980), dok je treći zaokupljen društveno-institucionalnim uzrocima kreativne atrofije brojalice (Bašić, 1980). Dva su izlaganja bila posvećena teoriji i metodologiji proučavanja dječjeg folklor (Orepić-Rajković, 1980; Perić-Polonijo, 1980).

kojima je Brian Sutton-Smith (1990: 17; usp. Hardman, 2001 [1973]: 501-502) opisao radove Ione i Petera Opie - nezainteresirane za svijet u kojem ta djeca žive i za značenja koja ona pridaju svojim praksama. Metodološki i interpretativno one su, čini mi se, bliže tada osobito probitačnim studijama o folkloru na radnom mjestu (usp., npr., Santino, 1978), nego knjizi *The Lore and the Language of Schoolchildren*.

Sylvia Ann Grider, urednica toga broja časopisa, ishodište okupljenih tekstova nije, međutim, locirala u okružju širih epistemoloških previranja u folkloristici. Sve veći interes sjevernoameričkih i europskih folklorista za djecu ona, naime, kontekstualizira isključivo ključnim studijama o dječjem folkloru, među kojima je kao presudnu izdvojila netom spomenutu knjigu Ione i Petera Opie (1980: 164). U istom je tekstu Grider na zanimljiv način reanimirala i na onaj smjer u proučavanja dječjeg folkloru koji se kretao pod stijegom pretpostavljene sličnosti djeteta i pripadnika "primitivnih kultura"; premda je u osvrtu na povijest proučavanja dječjeg folkloru kritizirala pristupe nadahnute evolucijskim teorijama kulture, iste je pristupe ona retorički nasljedovala usporedivši dječje svjetove sa svjetovima australskih urođenika (*isto*: 162). Riječ je o postupku koji nipošto nije usamljen. Tih je godina, primjerice, John McDowell dječje zagonetke interpretirao slijedom Lévi-Straussove koncepcije divlje misli (usp. Lévy Zumwalt, 1995: 28-30), dok je Lea Virtanen u svojoj studiji o dječjem folkloru Finske pisala da se "odjelito dječje tradicije radaju jedino ondje gdje se divlje pleme znano kao djeca može izolirati od odraslih koji ga okružuju i uz pomoć svakodnevnih dodira oblikovati vlastita pravila ponašanja" (1978: 12). Poput Virtanen, i Grider je tek retorički pojmovnik devetnaestostoljetnih radova o dječjem folkloru revitalizirala, pozvavši folkloriste koji su zabrinuti zbog sve oskudnijih istraživačkih stipendija da svojim financijskim nedaćama doskoče tako što će umjesto australskih urođenika proučavati djecu (1980: 162)⁶. Zašto bi, piše, njihov teren bio miljama daleko, ako već u vlastitu dvorištu mogu naći skupinu djece čiji su međusobni odnosi, kao i odnosi među urođenicima, obilježeni tradicijom. Zašto bi, nastavlja Grider, odlazili u Australiju, kad kod kuće imaju dječja igrališta, te mikrokozmose-laboratorije u kojima mogu štošta naučiti o funkcijama i procesima tradicije. Zašto, zaključuje, proučavanje dječjeg folkloru prepustiti drugima, ako razumjeti načine na koje djeca oblikuju i jedni drugima prenose svoje tradicije znači razumjeti tradiciju uopće.

Griderinu usporedbu djece i urođenika moguće je dovesti u vezu s Tylorovom argumentacijom budući da ona, kao i znameniti britanski antropolog, pojmove djeteta i

⁶ Griderina usporedba djece i urođenika parafraza je napomene Ione i Petera Opie da folkloristi i antropolozi već pred vratima svojih domova mogu proučavati kulturu koju razvijeni svijet ne primjećuje i koja na njega utječe onoliko koliko i "kultura nekog osipajućeg domorodačkog plemena što preživljava u zaleđu rezervata" (1982 [1959]: 22). Valja, međutim, primijetiti da usporedba djece i urođenika u njihovim tekstovima ima sasvim različitu funkciju. Dok Opie znak jednakosti između djece i urođenika postavljaju kako bi slikovito opisali izoliranost dječjeg folkloru (usp. James, Prout, 1990: 28-30), Grider uz pomoć iste paralele iznosi argumente za folkloristiku djetinjstva. Opie pišu o načelima dječje kulture, a Grider o koristima od njezina proučavanja.

urođenika rabi kao međusobno zamjenjive. Dakako, način na koji Grider i Tylor zamjenjuju te pojmove ipak se uvelike razlikuje. Tylor djecu uspoređuje s urođenici- ma, jer smatra da su oni kulturno i biološki bliski, dok Grider sličnost djece i urođenika vidi u stupnju prožetosti njihovih kultura tradicijom. Za Tylora je usporedba djeteta i urođenika znanstvena činjenica ovjerena izvještajima upućenih, a za Grider tek metafora. Daleko od namjere da relativiziram ove razlike, napomenula bih da Tylorova i Griderina usporedba djece i urođenika nije bliska samo na leksičkoj, nego i na pragmatičnoj razini budući da oba autora sličnost djeteta i urođenika rabe kao argument u prilog proučavanju dječjeg folklor. Podsjećam, Tylor je svoj interes za dječji folklor opravdavao, između ostaloga, i tezom da dječje pjesme i igre "preslikavaju, u onome što je ujedno i zabava i poduka male djece, rane faze povijesti djetinjastih plemena čovječanstva". S druge strane, Grider se uz pomoć sličnosti djece i urođenika suprotstavlja nekada "uvriježenom gledištu da sve što ima veze s djecom treba prepustiti disciplinama poput pedagogije i psihologije" (1980: 167). Polazeći od metafore da su svjetovi djece, kao i svjetovi australskih urođenika preplavljeni tradicijom, ona iznosi za folkloriste primamljiv argument: razumjeti dječje tradicije znači razumjeti tradiciju uopće.

I Grider i Tylor pozivaju se, dakle, na sličnost djece i urođenika kako bi njome zajamčili svrhovitost proučavanja dječjeg folklor. Oboje slijedom usporedbe djece i urođenika zastupaju tezu da će proučavanje djece matičnoj disciplini donijeti iste blagodati koje joj već donosi proučavanje urođenika⁷. Iz Tylorove perspektive to je značilo da će dječje igre pospješiti rekonstrukciju evolucijskog hoda čovječanstva. Iz Griderine pak da će dječji folklor osvijetliti dinamike i procese tradicije uopće. Tako se uz analitičku ili pak retoričku pomoć pretpostavke o sličnosti djece i urođenika dječji folklor prometnuo u precijenjeni prozor u rane faze kulture, odnosno, u procese i funkcije svojstvene tradicijskim kulturama. Zajamčivši analitičku "ozbiljnost" jednom "trivijalnom" ili, Honkovim riječima, "efemernom" (prema Abrahams, 1992: 32) fenomenu kao što je to dječji folklor, pretpostavka o bliskosti djece i urođenika omogućila je, riječju, prelazak preko "prepreke trivijalnosti" (Sutton-Smith, 1970). Sporno je tek što je cijena tog prelaska bila preobrazba djece i dječjeg folklor u, parafrazirajući Jay Mechlinga (2000), 'tekstove' o kojima se govori i oko kojih se pregovara, a da ti razgovori i pregovori nužno nemaju osobite veze s njima samima.

⁷ Brian Sutton-Smith i Felicia R. McMahon - autori recentnog "programatskog" teksta o proučavanju dječjeg folklor - kreću se sličnim argumentacijskim slijedom kada proučavanje dječjeg folklor opisuju kao "osobito područje u kojem se pionirska istraživanja još uvijek mogu ostvariti, promotri li se on u dosluhu s različitim suvremenim kulturalnim teorijama koje su vrlo ozbiljno pristupale odraslima, ali su se rijetko primjenjivale na odrasle" (1995: 229). Primijenimo li, pišu dalje Sutton-Smith i McMahon, "na djecu one teorije koje primjenjujemo na odrasle članove različitih kulturnih skupina, već bismo mogli napraviti neki napredak" (*isto*: 298).

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Children's Folklore between Survival and Barrier

Proceeding from the role of children's folklore in the inauguration of the term folklore, the author concentrates on interpretations of children's games in the second half of the 19th century. In reference to multiple sources of folkloristic interest in children during the 1970s and 1980s, she deals with traces of 19th century evolutionary theories of culture in the works of that period.

Key words: children's folklore, folklore study, anthropology, evolutionary theories of culture

William Thoms addressed in 1846 the readership of The Athenaeum with the proposal that the terms 'popular literature' and 'popular antiquities' be in future replaced by the "good Saxon compound Folk-Lore" (1965 [1846], 4-5). In his letter, Thoms invited the readers to record "manners, customs, observances, superstitions, ballads, proverbs etc. of the Olden time", in order to advance the English study of antiquities, and possibly also "enrich some future editions of Grimm's Mythology" (*ibid.*:5). There would be probably no reason to mention Thoms's famous letter and his introduction of the term folklore in this context, if children had not been involved in the inauguration of folklore. It will be recalled that Thoms illustrated the beneficial comparative effect of his terminological modification by comparing a Yorkshire children's game with a paragraph of Jacob Grimm's *Deutsche Mythologie*. In other words, the belief that the cuckoo sings only after he has eaten his fill of cherries is linked to the game in which children dance around the cherry tree, repeating the rhyme: "Cuckoo, cherry tree! Come down and tell me, how many years I have to live". Every child would then shake the tree and deduct the answer to the song question from the number of fallen cherries. Based on this, the author of the term folklore concluded that this game offers a plausible interpretation of the connection between the cuckoo, the cherries and their powers of prophecy. Like so many others, he thus turned the practice of a group of children into an eloquent witness of, as he believed, an ancient, vanishing culture. However, it is important to emphasize that

Thoms, as opposed to many of his successors, compared the belief and the game without paying special attention to the fact that it was a children's game. In his view, the practice of the Yorkshire children was just an example of "a mass of minute facts, many of which, when separately considered, appear trifling and insignificant, - but, taken in connection with the system into which his master-mind has woven them, assume a value that he who first recorded them never dreamed of attributing to them" (*ibid*: 5).

Just a few decades after Thoms's famous letter, children's games will due to their attributes become irreplaceable analytical material to researchers of folklore. The analysis of children's practices or, in Thoms's terms, children's folklore as a particularly reliable mouthpiece of the past, reached its scientific elaboration and affirmation during the second half of the 19th century in works of several British folklorists and anthropologists, of which Edward B. Tylor is today probably best known. Based on the assumption that every stage of civilisation "grows or is developed from the stage before it" (1960 [1881]:16), Tylor maintained - as summarized by Elvin Hatch - that in all societies "some ancient patterns of thinking and behaviour survived the conditions under which they originated and serve 'as proof and example' of an earlier stage of development. Bows, arrows and slings, for instance, are only toys in modern society, but also witnesses of activities once practiced by Europeans with deadly seriousness" (1979: 40). In sum, the first professor of the anthropology at Oxford believed that "children's games, popular proverbs and absurd customs can be practically meaningless, but are not fully without philosophical relevance, because they speak volumes about the most important stages of early culture" (acc. Moore, 2002 [1996]: 30).

As opposed to scholars of the 17th and 18th centuries who researched, and sometimes even created the so-called wild children in their search for the original human nature (cf. Jahoda, 2002:15-17), Tylor regarded the London schoolchildren also as interesting analytical material (Bernard, 2000: 39). They came to the focus of his interest also due to the phenomenon of the so-called "arrested development" (cf. *ibid*, 2002: 18), which persisted as a commonly known fact in distinguished scientific discussions until the first decades of the 20th century.¹ Tylor also refers to this "fact" when writing that children of other races learn equally well as white children approximately until the age of twelve, but then their performance falls behind (acc. Hatch, 1979 [1973]: 46). Adopting the viewpoint that "primitive people" are childlike and therefore closer to earlier patterns of human thinking and behaviour, he believed that children's songs, games and toys "reproduce, in what are at once sports and little children's lessons, early stages in the history of childlike tribes of

¹ Lucien Lévy-Bruhl, for instance, writes straightforwardly in his *Primitive Mentality* that it is "well known that native children, wherever the missionaries managed to establish schools, are as fast and good learners as our children, at least to a certain age, when their development slows down and then stops" (1954 [1922]: 11).

mankind" (Tylor acc. Lévy Zumwalt, 1995: 25).² This is why he, for instance, interpreted the children's game where a burning match circulates from one boy to another until it burns out as "a cruel Manichean custom" in which a child is circulated from hand to hand, receiving knife stabs until it dies (Tylor acc. Kokjara [Cocchiara], 1985 [1971]).

Among the authors who followed Tylor's approach to children's games, Alice B. Gomme is particularly important for the study of children's folklore with her two-tome collection *The Traditional Games of England, Scotland and Ireland* (cf., e.g., Grider, 1980: 163; Grider, 1995: 13). This book contains records of over two thousand games, accompanied with comprehensive comments of the author, where she also analysed the survivals of earlier practices. Starting from the assumption that children's games are "some of the oldest historical sources of our kind" (acc. Lévy Zumwalt, 1995: 27), Gomme established a connection between the earlier described matchstick game and the custom "of sending a flaming cross, a symbol of fire, to the clans who then carefully protected it from going out in their village or house" (acc. Kokjara [Cocchiara], 1985 [1971]: 214).³

Overviews of the research history of children's folklore emphasize a radical turn in methodology and interpretation announced in 1938 by Dorothy Howard in her dissertation on the songs of contemporary American children and popularized in the 1950s by the work of Iona and Peter Opie (Grider, 1995: 14; Sutton-Smith, 1995: 293-295), especially their book *Lore and the Language of Schoolchildren* (1982 [1959]). This title still has the status of one of the most famous studies of children's folklore, even beyond its main discipline (cf., e.g., Jenks, 1999 [1996]: 13; Mitchell, Reid-Walsh, 2002: 118). As opposed to Gomme who described games based on memories of old age informants (Grider, 1980: 164), the Opies contacted with the help of schoolteachers some 5000 students in various regions of England, Scotland and Wales as well as in one Dublin school. In their studies, they insisted on the description and systematization of contemporary children's games, beliefs and customs, superseding the comparative and historical reconstruction of games in the form of

² Among a wide range of culture researchers who wrote, like Tylor, about the "childlike tribes of mankind" like (cf., e.g., Hardman, 2001 [1973]: 595-508; Lévy Zumwalt, 1995: 24-27), I would single out Andrew Lang, not because of his analyses of children's practices, but because his extremely popular collections of fairy tales in English language strongly influenced the reading practices of many generations. In the forewords to his collections, Lang promoted the opinion that fairy tales are appropriate literature for children, claiming that "the children to whom and for whom they were told represent the young age of man" (acc. Rose, 1985: 56), i.e. that "these fairy tales are the oldest stories in the world, and as they were first made by men who were childlike for their own amusement, so they amuse children still" (Lang, 1892).

³ The matchstick game described by Tylor and Gomme is also mentioned by Jelica Belović-Bernadzikowska in her collection 110 Games for the Youth, published probably in 1894. Belović-Bernadzikowska's collection is addressed primarily to children and their educators, which is why the description of the matchstick game is not accompanied by a reconstruction of the source, but by the comment that this is a "very funny and amusing game. But, beware of the fire!" (1991 [1894]: 32).

notes and graphically highlighted paragraphs. The research and documentation of contemporary folklore based on children accounts are only some of the common traits of the studies of the Opie couple and the works published in later decades.

The global rise of the study of children's folklore (cf., e.g., Dovženok, 1981; Virtanen, 1978; Simonides, 1976; Sutton-Smith, 1981; Rajković, 1978; Stanonik, 1984 et al.) in the course of the 1970s and 1980s is attributed, on the other hand, to at least one other source. The growing interest of professional folklorists and ethnologists in children practices is also understandable in the context of the revaluation of tenets and objectives of their disciplines which took place in that period (cf., e.g., Bauzinger, 2002 [1971]; Ben-Amos, 1971; Dundes, 1980 [1964]). As pointed out in the reviews of the text of Zorica Rajković (1978) on the folklore of the Zagreb children, the study of the practices of (urban) children in that period was a constituent part of the expansion of the discipline to "contemporary material or the material hitherto not regarded as folklore or ethnological material" (Rihtman-Auguštin, Turčin, Pavlović, 1979: 179; cf. Povrzanović, 1989: 165; Rihtman-Auguštin, Muraj, 1998: 108). Similarly, Lauri Honko marked the in-depth studies on children's folklore in the mid-1970 (however with a different attitude) as symptomatic for the new tendencies in folklore studies (acc. Abrahams, 1992: 32). It should be added that the bibliographies of children's folklore research after the 1960s (Grider, 1980b; Johnson, McMahan, 1995)⁴ include a growing number of paper collections, studies, anthologies and dissertations in that field, which seems to speak in favour of Honk's observation.⁵

⁴ For older titles in English to supplement Grider's bibliography, as well as studies of children's folklore in Australia, Norway, Denmark, India etc. see Halpert 1982. For a linguistically more diversified overview of literature on children's folklore, albeit containing less titles, see Messerli, 1993.

⁵ An insight into the lists of scientific papers can naturally not answer the question how often the studies of children's folklore of that time were induced by new trends in the main discipline and to what degree they occurred simultaneously with them; to what extent they crossed the limits in their own right or were only affected by expanding the limits. What could be called the "simultaneity of the temporally heterogeneous" in the research of children's folklore has been, I believe, vividly borne out by the presentations of the 27th Congress of the Folklorist Associations Union of Yugoslavia in 1980.

Almost one third of the presentations in the New Year Customs section were dedicated to childhood, children and/or their practices. The approaches to these issues ranged from the reconstruction of ancestor cult survivals in children-related Christmas customs (Matić, 1980) to the analysis of Father Christmas as a pedagogic, socialisation, social and consumer medium (Rihtman-Auguštin, 1980). The section dealing with "creators and carriers of popular creativity" included five works on children's folklore. One of them deals with toys and games of shepherds in the region of Podravina in general, without concentrating on the items and texts in their own right (Kovačić, 1980). The second paper is a micro-study of folklore motives in jokes of contemporary, mainly Zagreb children (Lozica, 1980), while the third deals with social and institutional causes of creative atrophy of the counting rhymes (Bašić, 1980). Two presentations were dedicated to the theory and methodology of the study of children's folklore (Orepić-Rajković, 1980; Perić-Polonijo, 1980).

The multiple sources of folkloristic interest in children in the central decades of the second half of the twentieth century are also evident in the special edition of the *Western Folklore*. The fact alone that such a reputed folkloristic magazine as *Western Folklore* dedicated an entire issue in 1980 to children's folklore, supports the thesis that this subject was recognized as relevant also to the centre of the discipline. Also, the approach of most of the collected texts bears witness to their analytical relevance. Indeed, the ethnographic studies of Elizabeth Tucker (1980), Roberta Krell (1980) and Jeanne Soileau (1980) focus on "texts", but without being - as Brian Sutton-Smith (1990: 17; cf. Hardman, 2001 [1973]: 501-502) puts it when describing the works of Iona and Peter Opie - disinterested in the world these children live in and the meaning attributed to their practices by the children themselves. From the methodological and interpretative aspect, they seem to be closer to, for example, the studies of working place folklore, which were particularly frequent at that time (cf., e.g., Santino, 1978), than to the book *The Lore and the Language of Schoolchildren*.

Sylvia Ann Grider, the editor of that issue, did not, however, locate the origin of the collected papers in the context of broader epistemological changes in folklore studies. Instead, she exclusively contextualised the growing interest of North-American and European folklorists in children by the fundamental studies of children's folklore, among which the already mentioned book by Iona and Peter Opie is singled out as the most significant (1980: 164). In the same text, Grider also reanimated in an interesting way the line of the children's folklore research which was based on an assumed similarity between children and members of "primitive cultures". Even though her review of the history of children's folklore studies voiced criticism of approaches inspired by evolutionary theories of culture, she rhetorically trod in the footsteps of the same approaches by comparing the worlds of children with the worlds of Australian aborigines (*ibid*: 162). Such approach is by no means an isolated one. In those years, for instance, John McDowell interpreted children's riddles by following the Lévi-Strauss concept of wild thought (cf. Lévy Zumwalt, 1995: 28-30), while Lea Virtanen wrote in her paper on children's folklore that "a specific children's tradition is born only where a wild tribe known as the kids is able to isolate itself from the surrounding adults and by dint of daily contact to create its own behavioural norms" (1978: 11). Similarly to Virtanen, Grider revitalised the rhetorical glossary of the 19th century works on children's folklore, inviting folklorists who were worried about the continually shrinking research funds to solve the funding

⁶ Grider's comparison of children and natives is a paraphrase of Iona and Peter Opie's remark that folklorists and anthropologists can research - practically at their doorstep - a culture still unnoticed by the developed world and influencing it as much as "the culture of a vanishing native tribe surviving in the hinterlands of a reservation" (1982 [1959]: 22). It must be, however, noted that the comparison of children and natives in their texts serves a completely different function. While the Opies counterpoint children and natives with the purpose of vividly describing the isolation of children's folklore (cf. James, Prout, 1990: 28-30), Grider uses the same parallel arguments for the folklore study of childhood. The Opies write of the principles of children's culture, while Grider writes of the benefits resulting from the study of it.

problems by researching children instead of Australian aborigines (1980: 162).⁶ Why should, she writes, their field be miles away, if they can find a group of children in their own yard whose relationships are, just like relationships between natives, marked by tradition? Why would they, continues Grider, go to Australia, when they have children's playgrounds at home, these microcosms-laboratories where they can learn about functions and processes of tradition? Why, she concludes, leave the study of children's folklore to others, if to understand how children create and pass on their traditions means to understand tradition in general.

Grider's comparison of children and natives can be linked to Tylor's argument, since she, just like the famous British anthropologist, uses the terms children and natives as mutually interchangeable. The ways in which Grider and Tylor interchange these terms are, of course, very different. Tylor compares children to natives because he considers them culturally and biologically similar, while Grider sees the similarity of children in the degree to which their cultures are immersed in tradition. To Tylor, the comparison of children and natives is a scientific fact verified by scholarly reports, to Grider it's just a metaphor. Far from the intention to relativise these differences, I would say that Tylor's and Grider's comparisons of children and natives are not only related on a lexical, but also on a pragmatic level, since both authors use the similarity between the child and the native as an argument in favour of the study of children's folklore. It will be recalled that Tylor justified his interest in children's folklore also by the thesis that children's songs and games "reproduce, in what are at once sports and little children's lessons, early stages in the history of childlike tribes of mankind" (Tylor acc. Lévy Zumwalt, 1995: 25). Grider, on the other hand, uses the similarity between children and natives to oppose the formerly "predominant view that everything related to children should be left to disciplines such as pedagogy and psychology" (1980: 167). Based on the metaphor that the worlds of children, just like the worlds of natives, are submerged in tradition, she presents a very attractive argument for folklorists: to understand children's traditions means to understand tradition in general.

Both Grider and Tylor thus refer to the similarity between children and natives to justify the purposefulness of the study of children's folklore. Both use the comparison of children and natives to support the thesis that the study of children will be as beneficial for the discipline as the study of natives.⁷ From Tylor's viewpoint, this meant that children's games will expedite the reconstruction of the evolution course of humanity. From Grider's perspective, children's folklore will illuminate the

⁷ Brian Sutton-Smith and Felicia R. McMahon - the authors of a recent "programmatic" text on the study of children's folklore - follow the same thread of arguments when they describe the study of children's folklore as "a very special territory in which groundbreaking research can still be accomplished, that is, if we pay it the tribute of considering it in terms of various contemporary cultural theories that are taken very seriously on the adult level but seldom applied to children" (1995: 229). If we apply, continue Sutton-Smith and McMahon, "to children the same kind of theories we apply to adults in distinctive cultural groups, we might make some progress" (ibid: 298).

dynamics and processes of tradition in general. In this way, with the analytical or rhetorical help of the assumption of the similarity between children and natives, children's folklore was turned into an overrated window to earlier stages of culture, or processes and functions inherent to traditional cultures. By attributing an analytical "seriousness" to a "trivial" or, in Honk's words, "ephemeral" (acc. Abrahams, 1992: 32) phenomenon such as children's folklore, the assumption of similarity between children and natives enabled, in sum, the crossing of the "triviality barrier" (Sutton-Smith, 1970). The disputable issue is that the price of this crossing was the transformation of children and children's folklore into, to paraphrase Jay Mechling (2000), 'texts' which are talked about and discussed, even though such texts and discussions do not necessarily have a particular connection to them.

Translated by Sanja Novak