

Book Reviews

Book Review

Davor Rodin

Predznaci moderne
(*Forewarnings of Modernity*)

Politička misao, Zagreb, 2004, 293 pages

The collection of studies by Davor Rodin, distinguished Professor of philosophy at the Faculty of Political Science in Zagreb, bears a rather strange title of *Forewarnings of Modernity*. In recent Croatian philosophical-political science literature this is a rare example of an attempt to radically appropriate the modernity's mind-set for the openness of political thought about the "new situation". It is also rare that a philosopher emphatically positively uses the concept of postmodernity at the time when almost all "postmodernists" in Croatia and elsewhere are renouncing that fluid notion that has since 1979 – when Jean-Francois Lyotard published his acclaimed work *La condition postmodern* (The Postmodern Condition) – signified all the contradictory attempts at overcoming the epochal project of modernity. To be precise: Rodin's usage of the term postmodernity has philosophically much more to do with the German appropriation of mind-set (studies by Wolfgang Iser are paradigmatic in that context) than with the internal and external "history" of a controversial term – a word – of cultural and political program. The title of Davor Rodin's book reflects the wish to describe the phenomena of the so-called postmodernist twist in the constitution of a new historical world on the debris of modernity and to explain them by means of appropriate theoretical speech. The "fore" in the forewarnings of something

happening "now" and "here" as the postmodern adventure of the being and the man is not only an inkling or emanation of a latent possibility as potential reality but just what is manifested in forewarnings. Forewarnings hint at the historico-philosophical opening of something "new", a semiotic and hermeneutic circle of thought in time, which means an entirely and fundamentally different constitution of the reality of historical world in global age.

In his introduction, Rodin explicitly limits his intention to understand postmodernity as openness of political thought irreducible to legal, economic, historical, and social phenomena. This severance suggests an attempt of liberating the political from any related sphere of reduction. The thinking of the political in the "forewarnings of postmodernity" as a matter of fact means returning dignity to the political. Rodin's call for the autonomy of political thought turns out to be a break with the metaphysical tradition of western history. Above all this means breaking off the causal or teleological connection with other areas. By liberating the political from its cause/consequence, means/purpose, requires an openness of political thought in general. Political activity is not reducible to anything but to the individuality of self-definition. The same applies to all other areas, from religion to art. Unlike political philosophy and political theory, thinking politics in postmodernity is rooted in the pre-logical and pre-scientific activity. Political philosophy from Aristotle to Hegel explained political activity logically and scientifically rationally while modern political theory focuses on the idea of the construction of a rational political community of sensible beings.

For Davor Rodin the problem is not the analysis of the credibility of various contemporary theories of postmodernity

as a 1) “new cultural paradigm” (British and American “cultural studies”); 2) literary and artistic style following the period of historical avantgarde (Peter Bürger); 3) period of the deconstruction of modern identities (cultural anthropology, sociology of postmodernism); 4) condition of postindustrial western societies in which liberal-democratic ideology and the development of information technologies define the entire *Systemwelt* and the *Lebenswelt* (Manuel Castells). The basic question of the book *Forewarnings of Postmodernity* is whether an entirely different outlook for political thought and action can ensue from the experiences of postmodernity as the temporalization of the present. The positive appropriation of what postmodernity contains does not mean anarchy and relativism. On the contrary, this is just an insight: only with postmodernity can one understand the authenticity of the political phenomenon. It can no longer be causally or teleologically grounded. And finally, globalism and globalizational processes cannot, according to Rodin, be seen from the perspective of modernity from Kant to Hegel.

The opening chapter “Pioneers of postmodernity” deals with the rationale of saying goodbye to the old modern methodology. For Rodin, postmodern political thought means introducing a new metatheory of science that is strictly anticausal and antiteleological. Consequently, human activity as well the eminent political action do not possess a cause and a purpose in transcendentalism and absolute spirit. It is autopoetic, irreducible to ultimate causes and supra-defining structures. The most remarkable achievement of the postmodern theory of science, according to the author, is that sciences do not discover natural laws but try to explain natural acts since the nature and the society are extra-scientific environment for sciences. The paradigm change commenced in the 20th century with Husserl, Heidegger, and Wittgenstein. Unlike the philosophy of consciousness, the intersubjectivity in

Husserl’s phenomenology, the concealed being that opens into an event (Ereignis), which is Heidegger’s discovery, and Wittgenstein’s grammatical twist, lead us into postmodernity. These are the basic forewarnings of the new constellation of the relationship between the world, the society, the nature and the man.

Davor Rodin henceforth makes a lucid diagnosis of postmodernity. Namely, each farewell from the modern metatheory of science does not constitute only a paradigm change but the design of a new project. No return to a beginning, dawn or an original discovery of being is possible. The problem of the beginning or advent is expressed radically in the following way: “Authenticity is a novelty that has never been, and not an ancient beginning which we can return to, therefore it threatens every paradigm. This is the difference between the old metaphysical and the postmodernist understanding of the world” (Rodin, 2004: 22). This is central to the insight about the fate of the political thought of postmodernity. The critique of logocentrism and scientism of the entire metaphysical tradition as undertaken by the mentioned thinkers – and in political theory by Carl Schmitt, in sociology by Niklas Luhmann, and in philosophy by Jacques Derrida as a genuine representative of postmodernity – means that the cosmopolis in this global era cannot be the political project of postmodernity. Moralistic pacifism and cosmopolitanism cannot be the solution of the problem of the relationship between the nation-state and the global order founded on the tenets of the universal project of the Enlightenment.

Rodin shows that Kant’s and in general the modern construction of the cosmopolitan order as the primacy of universal reason over the natural order of the “excluded” is no longer an alternative to the chaotic condition of world order. This assumption is juxtaposed to the theories of globalization as a continuation of the project of modernity by other means

(Martin Albrow, Ulrich Beck, Anthony Giddens). In the non-repressive world of the multicultural, postmodern irreducibility of different historical and cultural worlds, political action cannot be reduced to the fulfillment of the demands of the rational and universal illusion of an integral mind of history because we are witnesses to the existence of a plethora of different worlds. They cannot be explained from the perspective of the causal-teleological scheme of the European/western logocentrism. Hence the need to define the new rules of the game in the postmodernist state of difference, deconstellations, and the disintegration of the universal subject of history. For Davor Rodin this is the reason why the understanding of John Rawls' political liberalism and the theory of overlapping consensus of all political subjects of a community constitutes an adequate description of the reality of the culturally, historically and hermeneutically different participants of communication.

The assumption that God of postmodernity is *communication* ensues from the observed – let me add to Derrida's scheme – grammatological twist. Truths and procedures in the media world of transparency are not transcendently guaranteed. They are communicationally forever changeable, replaceable, and open to various interpretations. In that chaotic and indeed extremely uncertain project of globalism as exterritoriality and extemporality, Rodin argues that political action directed at creating a new global order on the old foundations of modern logical-scientific transparency is not viable. There can be no talk of old wine in new bottles. Either postmodernity *is* the opening of a new project as the epochality of the world, or it is nothing. This is the assumption we could apodictically derive from Rodin's thinking. For him, it is an emphatic "novelty", entirely different from all sorts of gimmicks of modernity.

The most provocative political assumption of the book *Forewarnings of*

Postmodernity is undoubtedly the claim that in globalism, which is not an ideology but a hermeneutical state of the world in general, the project of global democracy and cosmopolis means a loss of credibility of the meaning of democracy and the legitimacy of its project. It is interesting that Rodin denies globalism any ideological content although in the seminal works on that subject, e.g. Ulrich Beck, globalism is explicitly defined as the ideology of neoliberalism in the creation of a "new world order". For Beck globalism is the ideology of globalization and not something positive, neutral, epochally new. Rodin did not specify terminologically what he means by globalization and what by globalism, so that misunderstandings are simply a given. The mentioned assumption in the context of Rodin's advocacy of the authenticity of postmodernist political thought is extremely stimulating. Namely, for the postdemocratic, multicultural reality of today's world the rules of the modern concept of the nation-state do not apply. Thereby the right question is whether cosmopolitan democracy as a global order of freedom can still be democratic in the original sense. Rodin carefully challenges the linearity of progress from Hegel's and Marx' understanding of history and time. In almost all the theories on globalization and the new postmodern identities, it seems that the metaphysical horizon of the temporality of history (Hegel-Marx) is uncrossable; in other words, it does not even try to deconstruct/destroy in the name of the primary openness of the new set. For David Held, for example, cosmopolitan democracy is a historically imperative sequence of the evolution of demos-polis towards the community of cosmopolitan citizens. Where is the problem? In the very necessity and the notion of development. Hence Rodin's justified objection concerning the end of causality and the teleologicality of history.

Davor Rodin's book gives rise to the inevitable, yet paradoxical question. And thence lies my most serious objection to

this otherwise exceptionally valuable book. If there are no transcendental sources, eternal truths, and the universal mind, that used to determine the fate of the Western man and his fixed identity, how is it possible to talk of the authenticity of the political thought of postmodernity? At the age of communication and pragmatic consensuality the story of "authenticity" seems unviable. Are the concepts of identity and authenticity still appropriate in explaining what the forewarnings of postmodernity do not define, but make room for the emergence of sudden manifestations? Can postmodern political thought overarch the differences between culturally pluralist worlds without at the same time reducing the meaning of the political to the mere Lyotard's "temporary contract" or the consensual practice of irreducible subjects of politics? Rodin's thinking of liberating the political for the individuality of decision-making and the credibility of action poses a number of questions but does not offer simple answers. This suffices for the possibility of critical action.

Žarko Paić

Book Review

Vlasta Ilišin (ed.)

Mladi Hrvatske i europska integracija
(*Croatian Youth and European Integration*)

Institut za društvena istraživanja u Zagrebu (Institute for Social Research), Zagreb, 2005, 354 pages

The reviewed book is a compilation of studies within the project "Young People and European Integrational Proc-

esses" of the Institute for Social Research in Zagreb. The coordinator and editor is Vlasta Ilišin. The compilation is a follow-up to an earlier publication from 2002, *Young People on the Eve of the Third Millennium*, edited by Vlasta Ilišin and Furio Radin, based on the project "Youth Value System and Social Changes in Croatia". The continuity of the research and publication ensures a certain degree of comparability of the results which contributes to the book's scientific value and appeal.

Most studies in the anthology interpret the data collected during the researchers' field work in February and March 2004 by personal polling of the respondents in two samples: the basic sample of 2,000 respondents aged 15 to 29 (inclusive) and the control sample of 1,000 respondents, aged 30 and older. The samples' representativeness was ensured by its three-tiered structure: place of residence (village, town, or city), region, and gender. The survey was carried out in 56 Croatian towns and 119 villages. The average age of the respondents in the basic sample was 23, and in the control sample 50.

Apart from the same empirical material, the studies use a similar method of its presentation. Following the precise instructions of the research coordinator and the compilation's editor, the contributions in a standardized way present the frequency of the survey responses, the cross-tabular tables with the statistically significant variable correlations and the factor analysis of certain groups of the variables. The selected method of the presentation of the empirical material is well laid out and easy to grasp even for a less proficient reader (although, of course, some parts require familiarity with the basic methods of statistical analysis). It is also worth noting that all the studies of the 2004 poll results use as their comparative material the data from a similar 1999 research and the available data from the research carried out on the population of the EU countries in 2004

and the 13 candidate-countries in 2002, and especially the data from the 1997 and 2001 studies of the EU youth.

Here are the outlines and the commentaries of the studies in the anthology.

The introduction by Vlasta Ilišić “Young people, Croatia, and Europe: introduction to research” thematically and empirically contextualizes the entire research. On the one hand, the author points out the relevant features of the transformation of the Croatian political system after 1990 and relates it to the parallel process of the expansion of European integration (the two waves of EU expansion, in 1995 and in 2004, increased the number of member-countries from 12 to 25). On the other hand, the text outlines major theoretical approaches to youth research (youth here refers to adolescents and young adults between the age of 15 to 29): one theory focuses on the role of young populations as social development resources (human capital perspective), while others see young people as a social problem i.e. a group facing specific problems of socialization and integration into social institutions (particularly labour market and political institutions). The author’s competence in both subject areas is borne out by 44 references. At the end of the text the author describes the research methodology. The text is a very good introduction into the issues examined in the studies.

The study “EU’s political axiology: objectives and values of European integration” by Damir Grubiša is the only contribution in the compilation that does not interpret the survey’s data but deals with the emergence and evolution of the European Union as a new sort of political community and with the ideas of the European integration and federalism after World War Two. The text is valuable because of the author’s extensive knowledge of the evolution of the European integration and for the original interpretation of the evolution of the value concepts in the process of EU expansion and

strengthening. The author concludes that the EU Constitution, although undoubtedly a compromise from the value perspective, is a result of the new quality of European integration and the value definition of European identity. At the same time, the debates accompanying the ratification of the Constitution in the EU countries have shown that the gap between the European political elites and their citizens has been widening, which has no doubt contributed to the failure of the constitutional referendums in France and Holland.

Vlasta Ilišić’s text “Political values, attitudes, and youth participation: continuity and change” is the central text both by its size and scope. Following up on her previous research, the author enumerates a whole array of political views and values and patterns of Croatian youth behaviour. Here are the highlights.

The data on youth party identification show an increase in the support for the HDZ, the HNS, and the HSP, and the drop in the support for the SDP in comparison to the 1999 data. There are big differences in party preferences of various youth subgroups (usually due to regional affiliation, rural or urban environment, and religiosity). The structure of party identification in 2004 was more similar to the one of the older population than in 1999. Young people are more accepting of the fundamental constitutional values, although still not as much as the older population. The data concerning the trust in social and political institutions mostly correspond to the data of other recent research. (Young people trust the Catholic Church most, followed by the institution of the President of the Republic and the military, while the judiciary, the government and the parties enjoy very little trust.) There is a difference, however, concerning the relatively high trust in the media, especially television and radio, which is somewhat more present among the young than the older respondents. Young people are more liberal than the older ones in their accep-

tance of socially problematic and/or stigmatized phenomena (from premarital sex to homosexual marriages), and are more tolerant of the activist or marginal groups.

In their perception of political priorities and Croatia's biggest challenges, the views of the young and the elderly population largely correspond: economic issues and goals are high on the list, while external security, interethnic relations, religious communities, and (unfortunately) environmental pollution (though environmental protection is ranked somewhat higher, in the upper third of the priorities) are trailing behind. There are interesting differences in the perception of the causes of economic and social problems in Croatia: young people blame the war and its consequences more than older people, while at the same time to a significantly smaller degree blame corporate crime and immorality of *nouveau* entrepreneurs.

Finally, the author analyzes the interest of young people in politics and the readiness for political participation. A positive shift in comparison to 1999 is the smaller percentage of those not interested in politics at all, but the degree of interest of young people for politics is still significantly lower than the interest of the older population. The similar distribution of views can be seen in the responses to the questions concerning the frequency of conversations about politics with parents and friends. The cross-tabulation of the responses with the socio-economic variables and party identification show that only religiosity and youth provenance are not correlated to the indicators of interest in politics. It is rather worrisome that the involvement of young people in all types of organizations and associations dropped in comparison to 1999; as many as two thirds of young people are not involved in either. The willingness of young people to commit themselves to different forms of public engagement is also very low: most young people are ready to participate only in

elections and signing petitions, while a much smaller percentage is willing to take part in other public activities.

And finally, it should be noted that the author presents very valuable information on youth in Croatia and in an appropriate comparative context. In a certain sense, the presented data are sobering: they demonstrate a high degree of conformism and political disinterestedness of young people, whose attitudes do not deviate significantly from the older population's attitudes. More comforting is the fact that this convergence is based on the acceptance of democratic values; the biggest problem is that the involvement of young people in different forms of public activities is exceptionally lacking. In designing a proper response to this, one should not forget that young people are not a homogeneous group, they differ in educational level, socio-economic status, degree of religiosity and (significantly) their regional affiliation.

In her text "Human rights as a ticket to democratic Europe", Dunja Potočnik offers an array of interesting insights on how young people evaluate human rights and compares their assessment to the attitudes of the older respondents. The ranking of individual rights and freedoms is mostly the same for both groups of participants, but as a rule the percentage of acceptance among older respondents is a few percents higher than in the younger group. The most important feature of the Croatian situation is that the acceptance of the third-generation human rights (the so-called social rights such as the right to education and to work) is bigger than the acceptance of the classical liberal individual rights (such as the right to property and the equality before the law). In their evaluation of human rights in Croatia, young people were less critical in 2004 than in 1999 (about half of them think that the rights are fully or mostly respected), but they are still more critical than the older participants. Young people think that the media, the religious institutions and the government equally pro-

mote human rights and freedoms while – surprisingly – the role of the judiciary and the opposition is perceived as much less significant. The crosstabulation shows that there are above all significant differences in the perception of the role of the civil sector in the exercise of human rights.

Furio Radin's study "National affiliation and attitude to Europe" focuses on the analysis of the structure of the attitudes of young people to nation and national identity and their views of Europe. The most interesting finding is that from a number of variables – as indicators of the respondents' attitudes to their own (Croatian) and other nations – three factors can be isolated: national identification, ethnocentrism, and cosmopolitanism. The highest correlation is between the factor of ethnocentrism and the socio-economic and political characteristics of youth as well as with the negative bias to Europe. Interestingly enough, there is no statistically significant correlation between the factor of cosmopolitanism and the positive bias to Europe.

Vlasta Ilišin and Ivona Mendeš in their study "Youth and European Union: perception of integration consequences" analyze various aspects of EU perception among the survey's participants as well as the views on the process of Croatia's EU accession. It is rather interesting that both the young and the old participants harbour a neutral image of the EU, while in the assessment of the consequences of Croatia's joining the EU Eurosceptics prevail; only about one fifth of the respondents expect big benefits for Croatia from its EU membership. The young respondents who favour the HDZ and the HSP share practically the same perceptions of the EU; a slightly more positive bias can be found among the supporters of the HNS, while a much more negative bias is shared by the HSP supporters. The second important finding is that among the young people the level of Euro-enthusiasm decreases with education and age; in other words, the more educated

the participants are and better informed, the less they tend to have an optimistic outlook of Croatia's EU membership. An analysis of the potential winners and losers in Croatia's EU membership came up with four groups: the group of potential losers (i.e. those who do not expect any improvements) includes all socio-economically minor groups, from farmers and retired people to workers, the unemployed, and civil servants; the potential winners are inhabitants of some Croatian regions and young people; the certain winners are members of two groups: the owners of certain competences (those who speak foreign languages, professionals, managers) and the members of the political and economic elites. In the end, the authors analyze personal expectations of young people regarding Croatia's EU membership. Similar to other young people in the EU countries, young people in Croatia expect from Croatia's EU membership above all employment, educational opportunities and the prospects of permanent residence in other EU countries. Regarding the latter, almost two thirds of the young people (as opposed to about one third among the older group) want to go abroad for a longer period or permanently. Permanent residence abroad is more often an option for the unemployed, non-religious or confessionally unaligned, the participants with a positive bias to EU and, understandably, those who do not feel as Croatian citizens. There is also a surprising comparative finding that a significantly smaller percentage of young people in Croatia is committed to their national identity than in the expanded EU (73 versus 86 percent). The weaker European identity in Croatia than in the EU members (54 versus 68 percent) is expected and understandable.

Ivona Mendeš in her article "Young people and their knowledge of the European Union" analyzes the information habits of young people and their knowledge of the EU. Young people in Croatia are exposed to television and radio much less than the older population; approxi-

mately the same percentage in both groups read newspapers (about 50 percent of the respondents); young people use the information from the Internet much more often (but still only about one quarter of them). However, the structure of the information that young people pay attention to in the media is not satisfactory: about two thirds of them watch out for the information about entertainment and sport (about half), and only one tenth seek the information on political life, the functioning of governmental institutions and the European Union (which is three to four times less than in the general population in the other EU candidate-countries). Young people, similar to the older participants, have an unrealistic perception of how well they are informed about the EU and the process of EU accession: although more than half of them claim they are well informed about the EU (as opposed to only 25 percent of the respondents in the expanded EU), the citizens of the member countries know more about the EU institutions than the Croatian participants in both samples. In sum, there is an information deficit which the citizens are obviously not aware of.

To conclude: the reviewed book can count on broad readership because of its subject and quality. It primarily caters for researchers and university professors and students of various social sciences, but it will also be of interest to journalists, politicians, and other informed readers interested in Croatia's EU accession. In Croatia there is still a paucity of quality political science and sociological studies. The reviewed book is an important step forward in overcoming that shortage.

Nenad Zakošek

Book Review

Stjepan Malović (ed.)

Bogatstvo različitosti
(*Wealth of diversity*)

Sveučilišna knjižara, ICEJ and SCE,
Zagreb, 2004, 160 pages

The book *Bogatstvo različitosti* is a part of the research *Mediji i društvo* (Media and Society) of the Faculty of Political Science and the research of the *Media Minority Center*. It is a joint project of the publishing houses Izvori, the International Centre for Education of Journalists (ICEJ), with the financial support of the OSCE Mission in Croatia.

The project systematically investigates the relationship between the media and the national minorities in the context of the Croatian society, providing the examples of the attitude of the Croatian print media to the Croatian national minorities. The subject of the relationship between the media and the national minorities, though studied and researched in Croatia, most often remains outside the reach of the general public. That is why this project and the publication of the book is welcome news. The book is intended for the representatives of the non-governmental organizations, for the journalists, for the representatives of international organizations tasked with the monitoring of the reports about the minorities, for the students of journalism, as well as for the general public.

The editor is Stjepan Malović, and the project assistants and contributors are Thomas A. Bauer, Alemko Gluhak, Siniša Tatalović, Gordana Vilović, Igor Kanižaj, and Stojan Obradović. The authors stress the importance and the role of the media in reporting on the national minorities as well as the stereotypes, the problems and the trends.

In his paper Siniša Tatalović places the Croatian national minorities in the social-political context and points out that the question of the normative regulation and the exercise of the national minorities¹ rights has become an “important yardstick and test of the democratization of the society” (13) since it has represented an obstacle since the early 1990s. Croatia, despite its post-war and transitional problems, has managed to create a comprehensive model of the protection of the national minorities at the state, regional and local levels, and has brought it into line with the European practice and standards. This is a model of cultural autonomy by which the national minorities are integrated – but not assimilated – into the Croatian society. According to the accepted model, most ethnic rights of the national minorities are exercised via the government institutions (the principle of integration), while a smaller portion of the minority rights is exerted via the non-governmental associations of the national minorities (additionally preventing the assimilation). Tatalović also writes about the political rights of the national minorities in Croatia and their implementation, and points out that since 2000 there have been normative² and social shifts. However, the stereotypes about the national minorities (or only about some national minorities) still abound. A valuable effort in the direction of their eradication should be the joint activities of the national minorities’ NGOs in building a political culture and raising the tolerance levels. This requires an educational reform to incorporate the principles of multiculturalism and interculturalism into all aspects of classroom activities (22). The most pressing prob-

lems in the context of the realization of the minority rights are the return of the displaced persons and resolving the problem of their status (the Serbian national minority), and the social and integrational problems (the Roma national minority). The author concludes that the cultural autonomy rights are best exercised by the members of the national minorities that used to enjoy those rights before the establishment of the independent Croatia, while the members of the peoples of the former SFRY are still in the organizational stage of their campaign for the full exercise of their minority rights.

The media are undoubtedly one of the key factors affecting the process of integration and assimilation, as well as the formation of the stereotypes regarding (certain) national minorities. Stjepan Malović points out that the “pluralism of the media (...) is a guarantee that the unilateral will, even of the majority, will not be effected at the expense of the minorities” as the “pluralism of the media can be a corrective to the ‘collective misunderstanding’” (31). The freedom and the independence of the media are the prerequisites to this corrective function. Together with the widespread post-war political threats to the independence of the media, the liberalization of the media market is increasingly economically threatening the independence of the media, largely due to the ownership concentration. By catering for the mass audience, the depth of the media message is dwindling, and the use of stereotypes is on the increase. Malović writes about the practice in other countries with a special emphasis on the Croatian practice, pointing out that the way in which the media report about the minorities is one of the indicators of the democratization and the maturity of the Croatian society. The use of stereotypes is an accepted way of presenting national characteristics (the thrifty Scotsman, the formal Englishman) in the whole world. Nevertheless, the line between humour and xenophobia, racism and hate speech is very

¹ According to the 2001 census, the members of 22 minority communities in the Republic of Croatia make up 7.47% of the population (14).

² In 2002 the Constitutional Law on the National Minorities Rights was passed, OG 155/02.

thin. "The manner in which the media represent, focus on and give voice to various actors in the society can unintentionally nourish the racist discourse instead of fighting against it" (33). The chief conditions for raising the general quality of the media – and consequently the coverage of minorities – are the independence and the education of journalists.

Presently, Westeuropean countries are trying to find an answer to the question how to report on national minorities and for national minorities. The author also asks which is more necessary: the minority media or the coherent and unbiased reporting on minorities in the major media. The minority media as well as the specialized radio and TV programs on national minorities are often labeled as the ghettoization and the isolation of national minorities from the rest of the society. In its program strategy, the Swedish public television SVT professes that the only proper attitude to the members of the national minorities is to include them into all forms of journalistic reporting and in the even-handed style of reporting about the minorities and about the majority population. In line with this policy, more members of the national minorities can be seen on the Swedish TV screens in the capacity of reporters or hosts despite their imperfect and highly accented Swedish.

Thomas A. Bauer looks into the cultural issues of diversity. First he asks why it is necessary to cultivate diversity and points out that the purpose of his paper is "to focus on the cultural problems of diversity regarding the critical references for the purpose of the identification of ethnocentrism within the framework of the cultural explanation of communication or communication theory based on the explanation of culture" (47). His theoretical framework is the culturological understanding of communication. The task of the democratically organized society is to facilitate transcultural communication with minorities so that "minorities

realize themselves as an integrated and totally accepted social body in the society they live in" and that the society is aware of the cultural and the social power of minorities. Concerning the philosophical problems of cultural crossing, Bauer emphasizes the concept of the trinity of pluralism, universality and unity as the fundamental measures of the relationship between diversity and uniformity. The main problem is that of perception. The only solution for the author is the rationality of communication with its subtypes: ethical, esthetical, and pragmatic rationality. The "cultural rationality of communication is the means (...) that may manage conflicts and crisis" (52). Namely, numerous political or national communities faced with a variety of minority groups in their political or national framework are still not used to acknowledge differences as the ways of expressing unity. It is obvious, claims Bauer, that the differences in cultural symbols (language, media, values, cultural rituals of minorities) jeopardize political and national identities because they create a new form of "cultural citizenship" (60). Bauer's culture of diversity is demonstrated in practice as the political understanding of interdependence in politics, economy, and social organization of public life. The task of the media is to be the society's critic, which requires "the media culture that attends to the contribution of all participants – peoples and institutions – in which owners, editors, journalists and the public – each within their abilities – share the responsibility of public consciousness." (66).

In Croatia the level of decency, fairness and impartiality in reporting about the activities of the members of the national minorities is still not satisfactory. Gordana Vilović poses the question: "How to fight against the *journalistic incidents* – boycotting, favoring the majority nation, humiliation, discrimination, and politically incorrect speech regarding the minority national groups?" (74). Citing the examples from the Croatian pa-

pers, the author points out how the promotion and the frequent repetition of linguistically inappropriate language have turned the journalists into the chief promoters of the politically incorrect language. The violations of the journalistic ethics and the complete lack of humanity in journalists often results in the “badly-written and disgraceful texts in which the names of the members of the national minorities are accompanied by the label of their ethnic affiliation, which immediately puts them into a special category of people” (75). The research has shown that hate speech has vanished from the Croatian media; the characteristic forms of non-ethical behaviour are: suppressing information, fomenting prejudice and stereotypes, using politically incorrect language, and promoting intolerance and bigotry (78). The analysis of the reports in the minority media show that they are ethically proper but often do not reach the majority nation; the so-called ghettoization of minority topics. The author concludes that we cannot be satisfied with the media ethics in covering the national minorities. One of the ways in which a balance in reporting on the minorities might be achieved is to give a more prominent role to the journalists from the national minorities in shaping the contents of the majority media.

A research about the coverage of the minorities in the Croatian dailies was carried out during the 2003 parliamentary election campaign. The articles from five dailies were analyzed. In his paper Igor Kanižaj gives a detailed account of the findings of this research, also including the results of the previous research divided into two phases. The first was a separate research that was part of the international project of the *Media Diversity Institute* from 2001. In the period from 1 November to 1 December of that year the articles from two major Croatian dailies – *The Jutarnji list* and *The Večernji list* were analyzed. The second phase of the research refers to the separate research within the research *The Media and Society* for the period 14 April to 14 May

2003 during which the articles from *The Jutarnji list*, *The Večernji list* and *The Slobodna Dalmacija* were analyzed. The studies showed that the reporting about the national minorities primarily depends on the overall political stability and the quality of inter-ethnic relationships in the country. The stereotypes and the prejudices affecting the prevailing perception of the majority-minority relationships are widespread and deeply entrenched and as such are reflected in the newspapers. Furthermore, the minorities are mostly reported about from the perspective of politics, while their cultural, economic, and social activities are overlooked. The dominant topics are the ethnic events from the region, the investigations of past crimes, and the war crimes trials. Most reports are about Serbs, Jews and the Croats from Bosnia and Herzegovina. The reporting is depersonalized, fostering generalization (94). One of the findings of the last research is an increase in the number of sensationalist headlines.

Such research is extremely valuable as this provides the framework and the basis for shaping the strategy of fostering the minorities’ communication activities. If the Croatian journalists, as well as the representatives of the government and the civil servants perceive and present the minority problems primarily as a political issue, it is difficult to expect that the public’s perception will be significantly different. The journalists’ responsibility is not negligible. Kanižaj concludes that they “have to respect all the postulates of the journalistic ethics, the codes of behaviour, but also show the appropriate sensibility, responsibility, and humanity when reporting on the minorities, having in mind that their work promotes social tolerance” (110).

The last part of the book *Wealth of Diversity* contains two more specifically conceived texts. The first is by Stojan Obradović, about the media coverage of the refugee problem, particularly about the role of the media in helping the refugees. This problem is still a burden for

the Croatian society, and according to the author only the systematic informational and educational efforts of the media can contribute to its resolution. The second text deals with the linguistic issue. Its author, Alemko Gluhak, provides a history of the changes in the meaning of the word *nation* and the adjective *national* in the Croatian media in the 1990s. The author points out the ambiguity of those words as they are used in two different meanings, state- and people-related.

This book will undoubtedly contribute to a better understanding of the minorities and bolster their position in the society. As Malović pointed out in the introduction “the majority nation is enriched with the minorities; by respecting their customs we demonstrate how much we respect our own; by being versed in the minority languages we show respect for our own; the diversity of cultures eventually makes for the wealth of the entire society” (9). The media are expected to be the promoters of dialogue and tolerance, advocates of pluralism and diversity.

The book lacks a wider analytical appraisal of the Croatian media that would include radio and TV, not solely at the national but also at the local level since the biases and the expressions of national intolerance are more pronounced at the local level. Also, it would be useful to look into the attitude of the minority media towards the majority population. In any case, the book is a contribution to a very important and interesting social and political debate and may serve as a guideline for the future studies of the relationship between the media and the national minorities.

Viktorija Car

Book Review

Srdan Dvornik, Vedran Horvat
(eds.)

Slaba društva i nevolje s pluralizmom
(*Weak Societies and Troubles with Pluralism*)

Fondacija Heinrich Böll, Zagreb,
2005, 158 pages

The considerably vivid intellectual scene of former Yugoslavia developed an interest in the theory of civil society and pluralism. This scene was always academically interesting, although, in the context of the totalitarian regime, its political influence was minor. After the fall of the communist regimes, the scene re-oriented itself and tried to find its new social purpose. Acting, first and foremost, in what is known as the non-governmental sector, it stayed very critical to new governments and political elites. It is in this light that we should approach the book, titled *Slaba društva i nevolje s pluralizmom* (*Weak Societies and Troubles with Pluralism*), a collection of essays presented at the conference of the same title, held on 18th March 2005 in Zagreb. The collection contains, apart from essays presented, a selection of the debate held at the conference. The conference gathered known activists, researchers and academics from the territory of former Yugoslavia, mainly from Croatia and Serbia (Žarko Puhovski, Ivan Šiber, Milan Podunavac, Vukašin Pavlović, Jovica Trkulja, etc.). Some of them, such as Puhovski, Srdan Dvornik i Alija Hodžić, are ‘veterans’ of ‘the socialist civil society’ of the 80’s. Presentations were also held by Bodo Weber from the University in Hannover and Nicole Lindstrom from the Central European University in Budapest.

The collection of essays *Slaba društva i nevolje s pluralizmom* appeared at a sensitive moment for the non-governmental sector in Croatia. The basic question was how to maintain the civil society when “foreign investments have dried up as the region went out of style” (Puhovski). This realistic argument is based on the fact that the geo-political interest of liberal West moved eastwards, towards the Ukraine, Belarus and, in some cases, even further. The fact that foreign investors are not interested in maintaining civil society for its own sake opened the question of the roots of such a society in Croatia. All of this prompted some of the authors to discuss the meaning of pluralism in general, as the opening essays of the collection prove.

Texts in this collection that are representative of the above are “Introduction” written by editors Srđan Dvornik and Vedran Horvat and “Political Pluralism without Social Foundations” by Žarko Puhovski. Dvornik and Horvat diagnosed the state of civil society in Croatia by claiming that “effective pluralism” has not been established yet. The reason for this is the strong domination of the state over the society in countries of former Yugoslavia. What happened in these societies are mere “superficial and cosmetic changes” that had not brought any “real structural changes” (8). This, as a consequence, means that in these societies there is no “internal creation of modality that would maintain differences” (9). This type of analysis shows that in post-communist regimes society is not autonomous enough. The question arises if this is still a convincing analysis. The distinction between state and society, with its roots in the 17th and 18th centuries, is questionable by today’s standards. That is, the liberal, neutral state, which the authors seem to be thinking of, ceased to exist during the 20th century due to the weakening of the dualist concepts of state/society or government/people. Through this process economic and social problems became the problem of the state. In the 20th century, parallel

to the welfare state, there exists the socialist state, which in its own way erased the distinction between state and society. Therefore, the fading of the clear boundary between state and society is not only present in the post-communist states of the former Yugoslavia, but is a process well on its way in the West in last hundred years or so.

Puhovski is more consistent in his approach to the problem of pluralism. He begins analyzing the concept itself by introducing the thesis that ethical pluralism is at the core of all discussions on pluralism. When attacking the concept of pluralism, one should not argue that there are no differences, but that “there is a higher value, which makes emphasizing the existing differences unnecessary”. After this useful clarification, Puhovski introduces the thesis about “imagined pluralism” in post-communism. Pluralism was created by a political decision “to change the way in which the political game is played, so as to introduce ... a different model from the old one, in which, in general, the monolithic character of the system was the protected norm” (16). In short, as the author suggests, the basic problem lies in the fact that in the old regime the communist in power imposed a type of pluralism that had no “social legitimacy” (17). It was this thesis that guided the rest of the debate at the conference.

The participants of the conference disagreed on the nature and the source of pluralism. Although there was talk about “imported civil society”, i.e. unoriginality of pluralism, part of the participants (Podunavac, Pavičević i Lindstrom) still look towards the EU and the process of Europeanization as a source of pluralism, i.e., civil society. Nerzuk Čurak from the Faculty of Political Science in Sarajevo posed an important question: Who belongs to civil society? Is it only the progressive forces or do also rightist, regressive and conservative forces belong here? The participants of the conference could give no clear answer to this question.

Most of them, while accepting the concept of ethical pluralism, are not keen on including the rightist forces in the civil society. This opened the question of, what Pukovski called, the politics of the Enlightenment in a paradoxical way. By this he means “the assumption that one group of people knows what is best for the community and therefore introduces one method for the community, one policy that is good for the community” (17). This is the policy based on the principle of paternalism, which originates from the assumption, “I know what is good for you”. Puhovski believes that this was the policy favored by the communist nomenclature, which in the 90’s “switched to new parties and continued to be in power under new assumptions”. This is an interesting thesis, but it is worth noting that people involved with “leftist” civil society are behaving in the same way, although they are politically less successful than their communist counterparts. The paternalism of the ideologists and theorists of civil society is based on the fact that they do not perceive civil society solely as a sphere of influence but as a conception of good that needs to be promoted at the expense of other values.

Judging on the character of the discussion at the conference, the presentation of Ivan Šiber “Zemlje u tranziciji između demokratske norme i autoritarne svijesti” raised special interest. This author analyzes the chances of liberal democracy by taking into account the social movements that brought it about and the political agenda of the leaders of these movements. From the presentations made by political theorists we should mention those of Milan Podunavac (“Politički konsenzus u duboko podijeljenim društvima”) and Đorđe Pavičević (“Nestabilna javnost te nevolje s pluralizmom”), the latter giving a comprehensive account of the notion of public starting from Kant through Bentham to Rawls.

The essays in this collection are thematically wide-ranging, the topics in-

clude: clarifying such notions as pluralism, public and civil society, the problem of Europeanization of ex-Yugoslav countries, and the fashionable “search for the political”. It is also worth noting that these essays are of varying quality. In general, the collection gives a relatively good overview of the theoretical and political situation that has characterized the ex-Yugoslav societies for the last 20 years. For this reason, it can attract the attention of all those interested in the comparative politics of the countries of the former Yugoslavia.

Tonči Kursar