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ON MEMORY OF PLATES AND DISHES. IDENTITY NARRATIVES DERIVED FROM THE CROATIAN CUISINE

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The aim of the article is to discuss how elements of food narratives, such as meals and kitchen tools used for cooking are used in order to consolidate and shape Croatian cultural memory, especially in the context of its Mediterranean heritage. For this reason, the texts by Veljko Barbieri, collected in the four volumes under the common and significant title Kuharski kanconijer. Gurmanska sjećanja Mediterana, are analysed. His circum-culinary narratives are a combination of encyclopaedic knowledge, references to historical and literary sources, personal memories and literary fiction. They can be easily inscribed in the Croatian (collective and individual) identity discourse since they are able to strengthen the collective (either national and supranational, or geo-regional) identity, and to construct the cultural memory. They also show Croatia's affiliation to the Western world along with its cultural-civilization rooting in antiquity, the Mediterranean region and Christianity, thus forming a part of the founding memory that develops a narrative about the very beginnings of Croatian presence on this land. The gastronomic narratives serve to create the cultural memory and this a version of history which serves to stabilize the social identity described by Pierre Nora and Andreas Huyssen. Through his stories, Barbieri shapes memory based on the representation of the past. In the analysed narratives, the memory carriers are dishes and plates which find

reference to the oldest history of Croatia rendered by myths and other narratives. Associated with dishes, the pots enable the narrator to recall the past and the identity encoded in individual dishes. They also participate in the processes of repeating, storage and remembering, which generates a symbiotic relationship between man and thing. The memory carriers, that is food and plates depicted in Barbieri's culinary narratives, do not convey their content in a neutral way, but construct their marked images.

Key words: *cultural memory; culinary art; identity; Mediterranean region; Veljko Barbieri*

The subject of my interest are texts by Veljko Barbieri – a Croatian writer known amongst other things for the TV cooking show “Jelovnici izgubljenog vremena” – that have been collected in the four-volume publication entitled *Kuharski kanconijer. Gurmanska sjećanja Mediterana*. The series consists of texts published in the “Nacional” weekly that explore the so-called food culture, as well as cooking and eating methods over the centuries.¹ It also constitutes a specific type of cookery book which includes recipes for individual dishes (three in each “section”²). However, the stories which make up this collection of culinary narratives play (at least from the viewpoint of the culture researcher who at the same time does not have to be a cook) a more important role.³ In the introduction to one of the

¹ In the introduction to the last volume of the work in question, Barbieri informs that in the process of preparation of *Kanconijer* he had the intention to reconstruct the ways on how food was enjoyed from ancient times together with the quest for the stylistic determinants of food typical for each era, and their correlation with the present day as well as their heritage's restoration (Barbieri 2007: 9). In order to understand the significance of food in Barbieri's thinking, the author of the dissertation entitled *Od kuharice do književnosti* refers to the narrative *Prehrana u školjki i krljuštima* (Barbieri 2004: 273–275) in which raw mussels consumed immediately after opening, that is, without any “culinary” interference, are perceived by the author as a nourishment that is to beget its cultural opposition – a culinary art namely, “pojav immanentnu ljudskoj vrsti” (Ivanišević 2017: 146).

² A section is a conventional term which includes one story/essay/narrative along with the following recipes regarding the dishes made of the selected product described in the antecedent text.

³ The problems resulted from the genre classification of the analysed texts have been already mentioned in my article entitled *Od przyjemności podniebienia do satysfakcji tożsamościowych i rozkoszy erotycznych* (2016: 345–358): “Those texts might be defined as the verbal variants of the food code which take various genre forms like folk tale, scientific treatise's imitation, historical overview, or interpretation of the individual dishes' symbolic meaning. In reference to *The Physiology of Taste: Or, Transcendental Gastronomy* by Anthelme

volumes, the author declares that his leitmotif is related to a phenomenon of mouth in motion, since it is simultaneously engaged in eating and telling stories about food. “Written” (where the author’s imagination plays a significant part) and encapsulated in the gourmand’s memory, the stories revolve around the selected comestible product, and represent its natural, culinary and social history, presence in literary works, symbolic or ritual meaning. According to Barbieri, food is a basic source of knowledge of the world. Throughout his reading of the ritual functions of various foods and their messages, the author attempts to penetrate the cognitive value of food, and “the potential of gastronomy to inform our world picture” (Barbieri 2007: 9). The essays in *Kanconijer* refer to the childhood memories and history of the family, as well as to the cultural memory and how this is shaped (Assmann A. 2009; Assmann A. 2013; Assmann J. 2008; Saryusz-Wolska, Traba 2014: 337–338). From the viewpoint of Jan and Aleida Assmann, cultural memory is a kind of collective memory which is mainly perpetuated in writing and rituals. Barbieri draws inspiration not only from the layers of collective memory, his circum-culinary narratives are also immersed in the individual memory, introspective recall, or autobiographical reminiscences (a term of “autobiographical memory” coined by Maruszewski 2005), which does not necessarily mean that they are deprived of literary fiction. Furthermore, they are often submitted to the ideological and national identity determinants that allows the reader to apply a more colloquial and broader understanding of cultural memory to Barbieri’s works. This is in line with the Anglo-American usage of the term, and concerns all cultural contexts of memory, which are also linked with the ideological and social mechanisms.

Brillat-Savarin, Roland Barthes notices that “it leans towards encyclopaedia” (Barthes 2001: 201) – in my opinion, this proposition of the genre classification also renders the character of the work by Veljko Barbieri, which reveals itself as an extensive source of (historical, sociological, geographic, economic, physiological, symbolic, etc.) knowledge regarding the dishes themselves, their natural history along with the “acts” inscribed in mythology, legends, literature, events, etc. Only that some of the presented stories are slightly (sic!) adapted to current needs, and sometimes turn out to be newly invented pseudo-myths (as the myth about Dahomar or the origin of the Kornati and Paklinski archipelagos), tales/fairy tales (born too late in the imagination of the father of the already adult daughter’s father), supplements to the literary events, annotations on their margins (in a form of “intertextual equilibristics”) (Pieniążek-Marković 2016: 347–348). The analysed texts of Barbieri are called by Jelena Ivanišević (2017) gastronomical essays.

The essays provide information not only about the dishes and products (as well as the food itself⁴), but also cast light on the region's history, memory discourse concerning the Mediterranean area together with the special role of Dalmatia, culture, social organization of the certain community, and its relations with neighbours and with the sacred. The gastronomic essays enable the author to create such a version of memory and history that it can stabilize the social identity as described by Pierre Nora or Andreas Huyssen. Through his stories, Barbieri forms the memory which is based on the representation of the past. The culinary tradition of any country, according to the Croatian writer who follows the words of the Catalanian poet Josep Pla, is in fact its map and history immersed in the cooking pot (Barbieri 2007: 19).

Consumption of stories about the old days

The culinary stories-canzones are inscribed in Croatian (individual and collective) identity discourse, and collective (national, supranational, and geo-regional) identities exposes Croatia's place in the Western world. They also help to depict Croatia's civilization-cultural roots in antiquity, the Mediterranean area, and Christianity, and they are part of the founding memory (Assman, J. 2008: 67) developing a narrative on the great beginnings of the Croatian presence in this region. Though the Central European influences are also perceptible, they are clearly located in the background. Nevertheless, both cultural spheres interweave in the personal memories of the author. He presents his childhood as a period divided between his stay in Makarska and *nona's* (his paternal grandmother) Dalmatian cuisine, and the subsequent one stay in Zagreb

⁴ The cuisine is considered as a sort of language which informs about the society's structure (Lévi-Strauss 2008: 63), its culture's expression (Kirshenblatt-Gimblett; Barthes 2000; Łeńska-Bąk), manner of articulation of the group identity along with its relations with other groups, deities (Mennell et al.: 40; Toussaint-Samat), and the dead. The culinary story is at the same time a narrative about a certain vision of the world, the community and the self, about the manners of perceiving and thinking, and introduces itself as a complement of the history of the world (Fernández-Armesto) which tends to illuminate great events and great figures from the perspective of everyday experiences, passions, rituals – especially *rites de passage* (Gennep) – and magic (Mauss), in which it plays a special role (Łeńska-Bąk). The list of references regarding food in literature is very extensive. Besides the above-mentioned sources, for more information consult: Tannahil (1973, Polish ed. 2014), Ashley, Hollows, Jons, Taylor (2004), Higman (2012), Montanari (2011) i in.

which is associated with the Central European cuisine of *babika* Ljuba Hajekova, a daughter of the Czech forester who was sent on the Croatian site of Austro-Hungary in order to take care of the Monarchy forests (Pieniążek-Marković 2015: 327). In the reminiscent-fictional stories of Barbieri, preparation and especially the shared consumption of various dishes remain almost inherently related to the work of recalling and telling individual and collective stories, *tales of long ago* (*priča iz davnina*, Barbieri 2007: 223).

This title of the well-known collection of stories for children by Ivana Brlić Mažuranić is used by Barbieri in his narrative in order to compare Christmas and New Year traditions cultivated by his maternal grandmother in Zagreb with rituals cherished by his paternal grandmother in Makarska (*Novogodišnja perad/New Year's Poultry*, Barbieri 2007: 220–223). His stories, like the works of Brlić Mažuranić who has earned the name of the Croatian Andersen, use a combination of mythical-magical-realistic elements, and the narratives as well as the dishes turn out to be vehicles that bring the readers to the old worlds: “with his tales of long ago, tales from his childhood, grandad used to disrupt the excessive formality of the table manners [...] as I was swallowing the New Year’s poultry cut into small pieces, I was also swallowing the fragments of the world of yesterday” (Barbieri 2007: 223). Through the act of writing and publishing stories told by the already deceased grandparents, Barbieri makes a shift of the past from the communication memory to the cultural one which manifests itself in the material and ritual area (Assmann, A. 2009: 104–106; Assmann, J. 2008: 64–71). The same process concerns the textual commemoration of the messages from the past of the community and its place/space. The narrator’s knowledge as for the commemorated past is derived not only from the oral messages, but also from various documents (including literary works) which are often evoked in order to suggest that the gastronomical stories are of a real origin. What is more, the narrator takes the role of the special carrier of the cultural memory whose equivalent might be found, according to Jan Assmann, among shamans, bards, griots, teachers, writers, artists, scholars, and other treasurers of knowledge (Assmann, J. 2008: 69).

For Barbieri, the culinary themes do not bring themselves only to the manifestation of the cultural memory and affiliation’s mark, but also might be considered as the example of “metaphorical experience of sense of birth, life, and death namely, existence in its fulness” (Barbieri 2007: 19), and as

the sphere giving multifarious pleasures (from sensual to identity ones⁵), sphere which significantly extends beyond the everyday necessity of physiological needs' fulfilment. The Croatian writer's narratives illustrate a range of "low" pleasures since they are capable of e.g. rekindling the past, (re)producing it, as well as creating culturally reach (with regard to the historical layers which remain still alive in the food sphere) and at the same time Arcadian image of the inhabited space conceived as the place in which the natural elements are harmoniously connected with the cultural ones. The landscape of Dalmatia becomes, therefore, a vehicle of the cultural memory, and, perceived as a sign, turns out to be a mnemotopos, in other words, a memorial place (Assmann, J. 2008: 75–76). And even if the food itself does not offer aesthetical pleasure (Korsmeyer 2008: 107–124), the consumption of the dishes that have been typical for this region from ancient times, and possibly enriched with culinary gains of the next eras and cultures (provided by the next rulers and oppressors), leads to the submergence in local myths, legends, works of art, and scenery whose presence significantly affects the aesthetical dimension of the whole work in question.

The space-time of myth and holiday

Barbieri often describes those dishes which allow him to tell stories about the idyllic-pastoral character of the Croatian lands, wherein he emphasizes that their Arcadian colouring was already noticed and appreciated in ancient times when Dalmatia was the main scene for historical facts and events of the time.⁶ In culinary narratives, the subsequent historical eras and the historic dependency of Croatian lands are presented as periods when Croatia belonged to the superior order that guaranteed the possibility to reap from the rich cultural offer (including the

⁵ This issue is discussed in my article entitled *Od przyjemności podniebienia do satysfakcji tożsamościowych i rozkoszy erotycznych* (Pieniążek-Marković 2016: 345–358).

⁶ Due to this, Barbieri underlines that the Argonauts' peregrination was led through the Adriatic islands (*Bravetina od zlatnog runa*, Barbieri 2002: 168–171); Hermes was supposed to visit Hvar (*Prozni sonet o janjetini*, Barbieri 2004: 14); the erotic adventure in which Poseidon and the nymph Dahomar were engaged is related, according to the very same author, with the Kornati and Paklinski archipelagos (*Matar i Kapari nimfe Dahomar*, Barbieri 2002: 91–93) – I have mentioned these events in: *Spożywać cywilizację. Gastronomiczne kartografowanie Kulturowego oblicza Chorwacji* (2013).

culinary one). The particular dish's consumption creates memory (historical, cultural, social, communication) regarding the region's past, memory affected by an aspiration to create the desired image. The result of the mnemonic-imaginative-creative processes takes the form of a mythical and eternally alive space-time, perceived as a realm of permanent synchronicity, in which the mythical gods, heroes, and literary characters are to wake.⁷ The preparation of lamb or mutton dishes thus evokes a lively presence of Zeus, Jupiter, Homer, and Dionysus, especially often recalled due to the cultures of wine making and drinking – all of them belonging to the Pantheon of figures who document and commemorate identification with the classical heritage of the Western Europe. At the same time, the inevitable connotations with Christian inheritance appear, especially in reference to mutton or fish (in the autobiographical identification narrative, the Christmas Eve main course made of a *bakalar* – cod plays an extraordinary role⁸).

Barbieri's tales are steeped in the realm of the sacrum and the atmosphere of incessant celebration and ceremony during which the reproduction of cultural identity takes place. Related to this, the tales in question seem to be a proper illustration of Assmann's thesis which assumes the presence of the sacral element in the cultural memory. The process of recalling and actuating figures of memory (in terms of Assmann) and images of memory (in Halbwachs' terms), which accompanies the acts of eating, is a part of the character of celebration that focuses on the regional specifics, material symbols, events, figures, places, historical facts along with their adherence to the definite space, time, social group; the aforementioned process also participates in the collective identity's

⁷ Cultural memory, according to Jan Assmann, eliminates the difference between myth and history since the researcher regards myth as one of the memory figures: "It does not care about the facts, only remembered history matters. One could say that the cultural memory transforms the factual history into the remembered one, and due to this into myth. Myth is a foundation history which is told in order to explain the presence from the perspective of the origin of the world. [...] By dint of memory history changes into myth. Through this, history does not lose its real dimension, on the contrary, it gains reality in the sense of constant normative and formative power" (Assmann, J. 2008: 68).

⁸ I have discussed this issue in: *Kuharski kanconijer. Veljko Barbieri priča o hrani, djetinjstvu i identitetu* (2018). In Dalmatian Christmas Eve ceremonies, the significance of this fish from the northern seas is astonishing, since it does not belong to the local Christmas food, but to the sailors' travel victuals on their way home.

constitution. “Festivity – besides its many other functions – serves to recall of the foundation past. The identity of the recollecting group is constituted through the reference to the past. [...] The collective identities are of the ceremonial, exceptional character [...] being the subject of the festive and uncommon communication” (Assmann, J. 2008: 68). Barbieri’s texts provide a large number of examples regarding the coexistence of memory figures and celebration which are promoted by the narratives on autumn vintage, young wine testing, feasting, and recalling the oldest stories (including the myths) from the Mediterranean history along with its Croatian part. The narrator, who relates and reconstructs the past, reveals himself as an especially privy instance that knows and sees more than others – he notices, for example, an invisible smoke floating in the air over the sacrificed bodies on the Dalmatian altars dedicated to Diomedes (Barbieri 2007: 188). As a result, such an initiation results in the coexistence of two different dimensions of the present: the present of *Kanconijer’s* narrative time and the present of the past (or of mythical events) that is told. From this temporal point of narrative view, some of the tales, alike the king Argos’ story, are just to transform into myth, although they might be foretold and subsequently recognized by the act of wine consuming: “while new wine is being poured like a story freshly told, yet to become a myth inside the ruby of *babić*, *plavina* or *plavac*, one discerns a thick trace of the legend of the unhappy Danaan” (Barbieri 2007: 188–189).

From immemorial

The Arcadian and marvellous space inhabited by ancient deities and heroes is located generally on the islands and on the coast. Nevertheless, the overland part of Dalmatia, especially the impenetrable and thus very mysterious mountain range of Biokovo, is also involved in the pastoral motif of the mnemonic identity narrative – “the **ramparts** [emphasis in the original – K.P.-M.] separating the visible world from the secret, invisible one” (*Kaštradina biokovskih patriarha/Mutton of the Biokovo Patriarchs*, Barbieri 2004: 265); the real visible world refers to the known seaside, while the secret world gravitates to the impenetrable landscape of the mountains. In these childhood memories, Biokovo reveals itself as a bestiary or as a reserve for all creatures’, the real ones (wolves, eagles, bears, owls, mountain goats, mouflons), as well as those known only from fairy

tales or figments of imagination. The reconstructed space of Croatia turns out to be a venue in which the real meets the supernatural, but this “Noah’s Ark” that links reality with the imagination establishes a realm saturated with the biblical connotations. It is presented, therefore, as a paradisaal-Arcadian space filled with the flocks of sheep, goats, huts of the shepherds-patriarchs equipped with the divine favours who rest around the bonfire with the cauldron on it in which the Biokovo mutton or goat in cabbage is being brewed: “leaning on the Biblican canes and moving among the cattle like forgotten but mighty forefathers” (Barbieri 2004: 266). In the memories from childhood, the Biokovo Croats are thus imagined as a pastoral-agricultural community (“shepherds and occasional farmers”), carried by the holy men as if they were forgotten by God and the world from the time of Moses, a community which deeply care about their herds. This care takes a patriarchal form, and it is clearly related with the male supervision and authority.

The smell of food significantly stimulates events described in the ancient legends and pastoral tales about unearthly creatures and mountain patrons, and also by various literary works (as Kačić’s *Razgovor ugodni*) dedicated to the fights between the Turks and the highlanders from the coastal catchments. The substantialization and actuation of the bygone real-mythical world (“*sa samog ruba mita*”), existing “since time immemorial” until the period of the narrator’s childhood, is made by the taste and smell of food in which he recognizes the archetypal meanings. At the same time, the animation of all the past nexuses occurs as if it does reach the act of the world’s creation: “since the Greek Heroic Age and the stories of the Book of Genesis that are more ancient still, through the Hellenistic and Roman pots praised by Cato and Pliny, one still feels a ghost of the past Roman virtue in the mighty taste of this ancient dish” (Barbieri 2004: 267). In recalling the old times’, Barbieri exposes the permanence of the values which reveals itself in the continuity of the food tradition. The present inhabitants of the depicted space are the heirs of those values. The author also emphasizes the exceptional topicality of the local culinary art which consists of the process of drying meat and preparing dishes made of castrated rams, while in other European regions, namely in Corsica, Provence, Sardinia, Southern Italy, and Greece this tradition tends to disappear. What is more, he briefs about the popularity of the *castrati dalmati* among the gourmets in Venice, Italy, and Dalmatian urban communes.

Always best

The consumption of a specific dish (in this case, mutton) results in the transformation of the current historical time into the mythical one. Furthermore, the space of consumption manifests itself as a realm of the double sacral character derived from the Greek-Roman antiquity and from the Bible, and through this both pillars of the Croatian identity are exposed. Each dish prepared from the local ingredients, as the above-mentioned mutton, is the best in the world and has no equal – this is the favourite statement by Veljko Barbieri. The scope of the Dalmatian “ovčetina” expanded along with the changes of the state borders since the Roman, Byzantine, Venetian, French, Austrian, and Austrian-Hungarian times, when Dalmatia belonged to different countries. In Barbieri’s narratives, the Dalmatian mutton has not only got a unique taste, but it also is an exceptional vehicle of memory,⁹ and due to this the castrated ram’s meat is called a “shadow of the past.” Through the juices that come out during roasting, the author is able to transport himself back to a time when Dalmatia was younger: “From the aforementioned Dionysian spits and grills to meatballs and haunches skewered and roasted, dripping hard with all the time of the Adriatic islands, mountains and the Dalmatian hinterland” (*Dalmatinski škopci za duždevu kuhinju/Dalmatian Mutton for the Doge’s Cuisine*, Barbieri 2005: 149). In the essays by Barbieri, the Dalmatian mutton is also a lifesaving product, so to speak – during the plague epidemic it indeed saved Venice from hunger.¹⁰ The narrator makes use of the significant contrast between the smells, and opposes the Venetian burning with the bracing, saving aroma of the Dalmatian mutton (*Bravetina uz mlado vino/Mutton to Go with Young Wine*, Barbieri 2007: 186–189).

⁹ Memory carriers and memory media are usually treated as synonymous terms, nevertheless memory media mainly refer to the phenomena related with literacy, visibility, and mass communication [35: 213–215], therefore in regard to the culinary narratives the term ‘carrier’ seems to be more accurate.

¹⁰ Barbieri speaks of the year 1600. The great plague in Venice took place in the fourteenth century, and returned to the city dozens of times. In this case, the author refers to the historical events – the fresh and healthy scent of the dried and smoked “kaštradina” was to be the treatment for body and soul amongst the smell of burning (since burning clothes worn by patients or the fumigation of items with the aromatic pine or cypress tar and incense were supposed to save people from the epidemic).

The original character of Dalmatian tradition along with its culinary meaning for the whole Mediterranean area are confirmed, according to Barbieri, by the recipes of the Renaissance origin and the archaeological discoveries which inform about the gastronomical customs of the region since Illyrian times: “Along with the recipes from the Renaissance and later, whose original flicker still graces the horizon of Dalmatian dinner tables, this is the indisputable archaeological evidence in support of the original gastronomic tradition of Dalmatian cuisine, especially concerning mutton and hogget (*Dalmatian Mutton for the Doge’s Cuisine*, Barbieri 2005: 150). On the other hand, the customs and trade documents’ archives contain evidence of the presence of the mutton from the Eastern coast of the Adriatic Sea on the tables in Venice. Barbieri refers to the document from 1173, which mentions “carnis de Romania et Slavina [...] that is to say modern-day Dalmatia, in broad geohistorical terms” (Barbieri 2005: 150). Sheep and mutton meat were regarded as a delicacy in the doge’s palace, especially the risotto and guazzetto (žgvacet). And, again, the dish gives an excuse to talk about the past, and becomes a gateway to history which, despite the dependent character, informs about a membership to the world of central events, and compensates Croatian peripheral inhibitions: “mutton stew with peas, onions and thyme, bathed in white wine, speaks of the time when Dalmatian mutton, Genoan peas and Cretan malvasia were unloaded from ships at the Riva dei Schiavoni, the Slavic dock, the most important Venetian wharf at one point, in front of St Mark’s Basilica, the Doge’s palace and The Leads, the infamous prison” (Barbieri 2007: 151). But is such data about the past revealed in the narratives of *Kanconijer* verifiable?

Food as the carrier of memory and Barbieri’s culinary narratives as the medium of memory, like other memory carriers (media) (Erll 2004), are not a neutral vehicle of the content, but, on the contrary, they construct its visions. The images of the past, although Barbieri willingly refers to the miscellaneous sources, are textual constructions which cannot be assessed by such categories like authenticity or adulteration. In the last volume of *Kanconijer*, Barbieri qualitatively specifies his work as a melancholic cookery book (“melankolična kuharica”) which is born from flavour nostalgia (Barbieri 2007: 209).¹¹ All the stages of the Mediterranean history, author’s

¹¹ Jelena Ivanišević (2017: 144) considers the accuracy of the term ‘nostalgic cookery book’ as for the work of Barbieri which has been proposed by the anthropologist David

memories, and myths are intertwined with these nostalgic moods, and their transformation into the social and cultural memory results in the simultaneous actuation of the mists of history and various mythologies, legends, events described in literary works which consist of the historical-intertextual collection fulfilled by the author's imagination.

Memory of things

The nostalgic memory is stimulated by food, but also by plates and other objects, which comes from the conviction that things are more durable than people and have a special power to transfer specific content from the past to the present (Barański 2007: 20). In the introduction to the third volume of *Kanconijer*, Barbieri writes about the memory coded in the pots, whereas he considers not so much memories through the participation of things, or memories about things, but the things' memory (distinction in: Saryusz-Wolska: 446–451). The author makes use of such terms like: *memorija posude* and *pamćenje predmeta*. Hanging in the kitchen, the old plates made of brass or copper are compared by the narrator to hangmen ("hanging on the kitchen gallows", Barbieri 2005: 7), and to musical instruments – "an orchestra."¹² On the one hand, the plates are, therefore, attributed with subjectivity, and on the other, the message about the culinary activity's location in the area of Fine Arts is sent. The pots thus become instruments serving the art creation/reproduction, or performing the artistic works. They are like devices by which one can bring out the flavours, but as the inanimate subjects they only represent a precious collection. "Musealization" allows the author to cast a better light on the collection, and to take into consideration its significant function in the lives of generations together with the transformations which take place in

Sutton in his monograph entitled *Remembrance of Repasts: an Anthropology of Food and Eating* (2001) for this kind of books which are, alike in Barbieri's case, set around the memory. Among several types of these books, distinguished by Sutton, the work by Barbieri would be classified as a culinary diary in which the recipes, in their illustrative function, remain outside the main text. Due to the fact that diaries taken into account in Sutton's classification should be based only on personal memories, Ivanišević supposes that the British researcher's term finds its purposefulness exclusively in regard to the certain components of the Croatian writer's narratives.

¹² "This orchestra was shining with its coat of kitchen copper like gold-plating on trumpets, trombones, bassoons and horns" (Barbieri 2005: 7).

the subject's kitchen sphere, and are related to the development of civilization and technological progress. The indigenous collection, in contrast to the museum one, does not create a distance from the object. The pots, chinaware, amphoras, water and wine glasses, decanters, salt-cellars, and sugar-bowls are treated in the same way as the family silver collections. Namely, they are subject to a ritual of solicitude (McCracken 1990), and are regularly cherished, however – and this is important in the context of the considerations on remembering – no cleansing agent could wipe out memories of them that is able to erase their layers. In the private (intimate) world, even the old, unappealing, already useless things remain the carriers of memory as temple-kitchen relics. To many meanings of the food code, Barbieri thus adds a sacralisation of the material, tangible sphere. Assigned to the ritual food, the relationship between the apotropaic and communication powers with the realm of sacrum has been examined by the anthropologists for a long time, but Barbieri goes a step further. He perceives the pots as saintly plates identified with chalices and reliquaries which at the same time are a clear manifestation of power (“they ruled the kitchen space”, Barbieri 2005: 7).

Barbieri's narrative perfectly inscribes itself into contemporary fields of human studies, recognized under such appellations like a “turn to materiality,” or “reversion to things” which has been observed since the end of the '90s of the twentieth century. According to Ewa Domańska, this reversion is supported among others by a retreat from textuality and a constructionism which results from the longing for “reality as such”, a real past, since the category of the real is conceived as embedded in materiality (Domańska 2008b: 32–33)¹³. In the kitchen as depicted by Barbieri, the pots, pans, saucepan, or grills manifest the orderly and precious world (“*uređeni i poslagani svijet*”), passed down from generation to generation.

¹³ The orientation towards things is combined by Domańska with a project of non-anthropocentric, which “becomes an alternative to the classical studies on differences between people conducted by history, anthropology and/or sociology. [...] The interest in things and animals along with the accompanying turns (turn to things, turn to materiality, but also a performative turn as well as a turn to self-agency) are not an effect of the intellectual fashions, cognitive curiosity of the vanguard researchers, but result from the growing conviction that the current ways of thinking about the world do not correspond to the occurring changes (genetic engineering, transplantology, psychopharmacology, nanotechnology)” (Domańska 2008a: 11–12) (quot. from Domańska; trans. from Polish to English by A.M.S.).

However, they also accentuate the author's longing for a harmonious world in which every action is taken in accordance with a specific order, and the surrounding material reality is not a common collection of things necessary in everyday functioning, but represents the domain of family values. The narrative on the memory of the things is associated with a genre of biographical, reminiscent writings. From the viewpoint of the child recalled by Barbieri, these plates are conceived as a sort of container of the unknown rather than memories (memory carriers) equipped with an imperceptible base and an appalling, strange inside at which he tried to look at despite his fear: "unknown memory being archived. The same memory that peeked from their interior, terrifying and out of reach to me at the time, inviting me to climb to the table and take a peek inside, into that abyss beyond reach" (Barbieri 2005: 8). This understanding of an object's memory and its subjectivity are not available to the child in a way of his own memory of his own experiences', although they can be "perceived" with the disappearance of the story-teller, which coincides with the irreversible destruction of everyday order of things. From the perspective of Barbieri, a loss of the object generates feelings which might be identified with sudden loss of a loved one.

In addition to the memory of the object (unattainable for the child), a widely available trace of the past of the plates and people function as an external mark of vanishing, patina which transforms itself into memories. This patina turns out to be a layer in which carnality is stored: "There is still flesh in it, the smell and the taste of flesh to be exact, the events well cooked and the crust bitten into, along with the ringing of words, gestures and feelings" (Barbieri 2005: 8). In metaphorical terms, the patina presumably is a material remnant of the temporal strata integrated with the object for which human memory is the only "repository"/store. Speaking of the carnality that lives in the patina and memories, the narrator probably refers to the dishes prepared in the plates. Nevertheless, one cannot rule out that the objects themselves are endowed with character of sensuality which is the obvious attribute of living beings. In consequence of such stylistic effects, the events are cooked, memories are nibbled, and their companions are gestures, words, and feelings. In the culinary discourse of Barbieri, the plates are "materialized interactions" (Tim Dant 2006 after Krajewski 2013: 25), which might be understood as "relationships, associations, and connections objectified in the form of thing in which people enter between themselves and with the environment of their life" (Krajewski 2013: 25).

The effect of subjectivity attached to things is also achieved through the process of equipping them with thinking and feeling abilities (the old plates keep ignoring the new ones' constant arrival in order to retain power in the kitchen). In the perception of the object as the Other, the Croatian writer meets the demand of the sociologist Marek Krajewski, who claims that "Treating the object as a representation of the Other means not only the recognition of its indispensability in our world, but is also synonymous with noticing its ability to act, namely that in the essential way it is like us, however, remains so very different from us. People therefore need to overcome their absolute anthropocentrism, which is a condition of building relationships with the objects." (Krajewski 2013: 15).

An Aladdin spirit and relics of past imperia

The adult narrator recalls the child's feelings which represent a type of dread known from fairy tales. Lifting the cover of the plate enables the old dishes, flavours, and voices to "arise from the grave", the living past emerges from the plates like the genie from Aladdin's lamp, as if once prepared, the dishes had not been consumed earlier but were kept for the posterity: "The lid is lifted, and the memory comes out of the pot. [...] old pots [...] keep their archives, as if old dishes had never been served" (Barbieri 2005: 8). Incomprehensibility and mysterious character of the old plates originate from their unusual appearance and specifics of usage – each of them serves the other dish's preparation. Their potential, therefore, can be activated only by the insider who knows how to control the spirit from the lamp/plate. For the child, the world seems to be an incarnation of singularity, yet for the users (insiders) is a type of handbook on the practiced everyday reality. In this context, Marek Krajewski (following Stanisław Ossowski) states that human being becomes a function of the material objects. Remembering how they serve, he appropriately makes use of them, and they "repay us for storing their identity in our memory not only by expanding the realm of possibilities supplied by nature, but also by remembering and thinking for us" (Krajewski 2013: 10). The object demands repeating the action which is inscribed in it, and in doing so it contributes to the everyday schematisation as well as offers some sense of safety. The pots enable the users to recall the past and identity coded in the dishes, their repeating, storing, remembering, which is guaranteed by the symbiotic relationship between the man and object.

Dishes are memory vaults which might be compared to the treasures of Ali-Baba, in which it is possible to mix the real with the assumed (*pretpostaviti*), the confirmed and documented with the imaginative and narrated and thus fictional: “The worlds mixed in the inscribed and the unscribed memories of that **family** kitchenware” (Barbieri 2005: 10). Some of the described plates originate from worlds which are not so distant, yet they remain foreign and mysterious to the child, and as such they contribute to the development of his imagination. One of the plates coming from the collection of the Ottoman plates and decorations includes the Arabian inscription “Made by Nusret for the glory of Allah,” the engraving of the membership mark might be found on the other one on which there is a name of Prinz Wilhelm – according to the narrator’s “nona”, this object is presumed to come from the Austrian-Hungarian ship sunk off the coast of Zadar. The memories connected with the objects are of uncertain character, the author, therefore, not only doubts the truth of the stories told by his grandmother and his own memory, but he also cannot work out whether they were in fact told (in the form of a good-night story) or, on the contrary, belong to the realm of dreamy fantasies which combine: “valuable kitchen-ware, the faience pots and goblets from an unfortunate shipwreck, a Renaissance ship most likely, retrieved accidentally in the nineteenth century from the waters around the island of Kalamota, like the ones in the family kitchen collection of my great-grandmother Katica Alačević” (Barbieri 2005: 10). The methodological awareness of the author inscribes itself in the way of thinking presented by the contemporary anthropologists which regards stories about one’s own or someone else’s existential experience, which subsequently are passed on to children: “they are being told mainly as a form of entertainment for children, and not as a manifestation of the association with «real life» (however, they can still include a certain “truth”)” (Goody 2012: 31).

Conclusions

The plates and the dishes are passed down from generation to generation along with their narratives, which in the volumes of *Kuharski kanconijer. Gurmanska sjećanja Mediterana* play a superior role. The author reconstructs not as much the past related to the objects, and concerning the practical, usable sphere, as the atmosphere of the house in which he

could have heard/dreamt about the stories illuminating the plates along with the dishes, since they refer both to the food preparation and consumption. The leitmotif of Barbieri's reconstruction, "prepričavanje", and transformation of the oral practices into the written ones is the image of mouth in motion: "the moving mouth and lips", "a mouth that speaks" (Barbieri 2005: 10). According to the author's intention, writing the stories, their materialisation in the form of *kanconijer* is a way of remembering, protection, restoration, or even bringing back to life the objects related with the kitchen together with the dishes and cooks: ("try to remember, keep and renew that "Kanconijer" before the last, futile attempt to restore the taste that is gone and extinct" (Barbieri 2005: 10) – the narratives serve, therefore, as the process of transporting the objects from the communication memory to the cultural one. The analysed texts by Veljko Barbieri confirm the thesis about the inseparable compound between the memory history and media or carriers. According to the Assmanns, memory history keeps following the evolution of the media (printing, photography, digital media have ultimately managed to change the way of the memory functioning), and due to this, Barbieri speaks of the necessity of perceiving also other ("invisible") carriers of the memory along with the mechanisms of noticing, comprehending, reading, interpreting which should be set in motion. The author talks about the memory hidden in the unnoticeable and ordinary everyday life, in the mundaneness of consumption and in the ways objects are used.

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SAŽETAK

Krystyna Pieniążek-Marković

PAMĆENJE JELA I POSUĐA. HRVATSKE KULINARSKÉ NARACIJE IDENTITETA.

U ovome je radu riječ o upotrebi prehrambenog koda (jela i predmeta koji su neophodni za njihovu pripremu) s ciljem oblikovanja i utvrđivanja hrvatskog kulturnog pamćenja, prije svega pamćenja o pripadanju mediteranskome krugu. Predmet analize su tekstovi Veljka Barbierija sabrani u četiri sveska pod zajedničkim, znakovitim naslovom *Kuharski kanconijer. Gurmanska sjećanja Mediterana*. Kulinarski eseji – u kojima je osim enciklopedijskog znanja, pozivanja na povijesne i književne izvore ili osobne uspomene prisutna i književna fikcija – upisuju se u hrvatski identitetski diskurs (kolektivni i individualni), osnažuju kolektivni identitet (nacionalni i nadnacionalni, georegionalni) i oblikuju kulturno pamćenje. Nositelji su pamćenja u istraživanim naracijama jela i posuđe, a njihovo pamćenje obuhvaća najstariju povijest prostora na kojem se odigravaju ispričane priče (uključujući mitove) i gdje se jedu s njima povezana jela. Nositelji pamćenja, koji su hrana i posuđe, kao i mediji pamćenja, koji su Barbierijeve kulinarske naracije (eseji), slično drugim nositeljima (medijima) pamćenja nisu neutralan prijenosnik sadržaja nego čimbenik koji konstruira predodžbe o njima.

Key words: kulturno pamćenje, kulinarstvo, identitet, Sredozemlje, Veljko Barbieri

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