

Orvar Löfgren

THE NATIONALIZATION OF CULTURE

(position paper by Ivona Opetcheska Tatarchevska)

Orvar Löfgren has clearly and logically guided us through the theses about the nationalization of culture, through the abstracts of his colleagues, whom he worked with on a project in the late 1980s. The same issues strongly touch upon and relate to our project as well.

Perhaps the most useful for my project is the section of the article on the historical perspective of researching the building of national identity. It is essential how the historians have accepted culture as a historical parameter, but it is also quite significant how the anthropologists have accepted the challenge to research the historical and political perspective of culture. The insight into their intertwined theses, dilemmas and conclusions has provided me with a clear positioning and a more confident presentation of my own views on institutionalizing the folk culture within the nation-building process of the Macedonian state.

Identifying practically all parameters a nation could be presented by, or the sort of self-presentation a people might accept, including the national flag, the anthem, the sports representations, various folk genres, etc., would help the process of in-depth development of my fundamental idea and its opening up towards an intellectual dialogue.

One aspect in particular has grabbed my attention. It is **Orvar Löfgren's** regard of the beginnings of the nation-building phenomenon. Where and who by these processes are begun.

This issue is crucial, since the countries in which he and his colleagues have done their research, Sweden and Hungary, had different experiences in different social contexts.

Diametrically opposed to one another in the initiatives for building the national identity, we have learned that in Sweden it is the intellectuals who carry out the process, while in Hungary the crucial burden, perhaps, falls onto the folk culture.

Hereby we come to one of the crucial theses in my research:

Where does that process of building the national identity begin in Macedonia? And how involved is the folk dance scene in the process?

Löfgren's methodological approach is particularly significant; I have found it clear, and its conclusions systematically arranged.

He pays great attention to the question what common culture promotes, or what the community members know about their culture, through which Löfgren has also implied questions on the **standardization** and **integration** of certain phenomena and their placement on the pedestal of the national cultural heritage.

For a moment we have also touched upon the cultural myths, and the amount of baggage they bring on the national cultural scene as well.

Löfgren has systematically led us from the possible ways of defining the national culture towards the methodology of its standardization as such, but also discusses the instruments that make it what it is. **Communication** always enters as one of the key phenomena, as an arena of promotion, debate, segregation or aggregation of phenomena promoted, including the mass media, the stage, the oral transfer of knowledge, the formal transfer of knowledge, etc.

That is precisely what Löfgren has suggested: making a study of the forms of the nationalization of culture through institutions, agencies, media and arenas, as he calls them.

Löfgren has placed the re-examining of national identities not only at the beginning of his paper but also on page 18, where he elaborates the **disintegrative forces**. He finds them in *regionalism* (which we call *local patriotism*), in the *accusation on ethnic, religious or ideological grounds*, which as a foundation for disintegrative processes could easily be recognized in Macedonian reality as well.

This comprehensive reading offers so many forms of integration, that is notions of disintegration, in one place, that it enables a bird's-eye view and a possibility to understand the whole of the problem. With the help of this paper, my approach to the process of investigating the building of the national identity in Macedonia, through institutionalizing the folk dance scene as the predominant culture phenomenon in it, seems clearly defined.